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Thema:
Consumers' attitudes toward Cause-Related marketing
_a comparison between Iran and Germany_

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**List of Contents**

**Chapter 1. Introduction**

1.1. Background of the research ................................................................. 1
1.2. Statement of the Problem ........................................................................ 3
1.3. Research questions ................................................................................... 5
1.4. Applications of research .......................................................................... 6
1.5. Structure of the research ......................................................................... 7

**Chapter 2. Review of the Literature**

2.1. Overview of Cause-Related Marketing and brand perception .................. 9
2.1.1. Cause-Related Marketing strategy ....................................................... 9
2.1.2. Consumer Attitude toward CRM strategy .......................................... 10
2.1.3. Consumer Attitude toward CRM brand ............................................ 11
2.1.4. Skepticism toward CRM advertisement or claim ............................... 12
2.1.5. Brand personality of CRM brand ...................................................... 15
2.1.5.1. Overview of brand personality ....................................................... 15
2.1.5.2. The primary Brand personality scale ............................................. 17
2.1.5.3. Criticizing the Aaker’s scale .......................................................... 18
2.1.5.4. Developing New Brand Personality Scales .................................... 22
2.1.5.5. CRM brand personality scale ....................................................... 26
2.1.6. Brand image of a CRM brand ............................................................ 30
2.1.7. Warm glow and CRM brand ............................................................... 33
2.1.8. Purchase Intention .............................................................................. 34
2.2. Consumers characteristics ...................................................................... 36
2.2.1. Susceptibility to interpersonal influence ............................................ 36
2.2.2. Religiosity ......................................................................................... 39
2.3. Culture ..................................................................................................... 41
2.3.1. Introduction ....................................................................................... 41
2.3.2. Culture and consumer behavior ........................................................ 42
2.3.3. Cultural dimension and consumers behavior ...................................... 44
2.3.3.1. Power Distance ............................................................................ 44
2.3.3.2. Individualism-Collectivism ........................................................... 45
Chapter 4. Methodology and analysis of the hypotheses .................................................. 69
4.1 Research method ........................................................................................................... 69
4.2 Research instrument ....................................................................................................... 69
4.3 Data collection and sampling ......................................................................................... 72
4.4. Missing data .................................................................................................................. 73
4.5. Measurement of the research constructs ...................................................................... 74
4.5.1. Reliability analysis .................................................................................................... 74
4.5.2. Validity analysis ........................................................................................................ 75
4.5.2.1. Convergent Validity .............................................................................................. 75
4.5.2.2. Discriminant Validity ............................................................................................. 77
4.6. Data analysis .................................................................................................................. 79
4.6.1. Justification of analysis techniques ........................................................................... 79
4.6.2. Structural model result ............................................................................................. 81
4.6.3. Results of hypothesis testing ..................................................................................... 83
4.6.3.1. Impact of skepticism toward CRM advertisement on attitude toward CRM strategy and brand personality ................................................................. 83
4.6.3.2. Impact of attitude toward CRM on brand personality ............................................................... 84
4.6.3.3. Impact of CRM brand personality on CRM brand image ............................................................ 85
4.6.3.4. Impact of CRM brand image on purchase intention ........................................................................ 86
4.6.3.5. Impact of warm glow on purchase intention and brand personality ............................................. 87
4.6.3.6. The moderation effect of susceptibility ......................................................................................... 88
4.6.3.7. The moderation effect of religiosity ............................................................................................. 89
4.6.4. Cultural differences hypotheses .................................................................................................. 90
4.6.4.1. Cultural differences and the effect of CRM skepticism ............................................................... 90
4.6.4.2. Cultural differences and the effect of susceptibility on brand image and brand purchase ...................... 92
4.6.4.3. Cultural differences and the effect of religiosity on altruistic brand personality and warm glow ................................................................. 92
4.6.5. Mean Cultural differences ........................................................................................................... 93
4.7. Summary of Hypotheses’ results .................................................................................................. 95

Chapter 5. Conclusions, Discussion, and Suggestions for Future Research ........................................... 97
5.1. Discussion ........................................................................................................................................... 97
5.1.1. Skepticism toward CRM and attitude toward cause-related marketing strategy .................. 97
5.1.2. Brand personality ........................................................................................................................ 100
5.1.2.1. Altruistic and egoistic brand personality ............................................................................... 100
5.1.2.2. Brand personality and attitude toward CRM ........................................................................ 103
5.1.2.3. Brand personality and skepticism toward CRM advertisement ........................................ 104
5.1.3. CRM brand image ....................................................................................................................... 106
5.1.4. Warm glow perception ............................................................................................................... 108
5.1.5. CRM purchase intention .............................................................................................................. 111
5.1.5.1. The level of CRM purchase intention ..................................................................................... 111
5.1.5.2. Purchase intention and brand image ....................................................................................... 112
5.1.5.3. Purchase intention and warm glow .......................................................................................... 113
5.1.5.4. Simultaneous analysis ............................................................................................................. 114
5.2. Conclusion .......................................................................................................................................... 117
5.3. Theoretical and practical implementations ..................................................................................... 121
5.4. Limitation and suggestions for future researches ........................................................................... 123

6. References ............................................................................................................................................. 126

7. Appendixes .......................................................................................................................................... 133
Appendix 1. Questionnaire ..................................................................................................................... 133
Appendix 2. Missing data analysis for Iran sample .............................................................................. 135
Appendix 3. Missing data analysis for German sample ........................................................................ 136
List of Tables

Table 2.1: Brand personality measurements cited in (Liu et al., 2016) .................................... 20
Table 2.2: Negative Brand Personality traits. (Haji, 2014) ....................................................... 24
Table 3.1: Summary of hypotheses .......................................................................................... 67
Table 4.1: Demographic characteristics .................................................................................. 73
Table 4.2: Reliability analysis (Alpha Cronbach and Composite reliability) ......................... 75
Table 4.3: Convergent validity analysis ................................................................................. 76
Table 4.4: Statistics for validity analysis of constructs ............................................................ 78
Table 4.5: Correlation estimation of attitude toward CRM with other research constructs ...... 78
Table 4.6: Goodness of fit indices for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) ......................... 79
Table 4.7: Goodness of fit for structural equation model ......................................................... 82
Table 4.8: Hypotheses test in model 1 ................................................................................... 83
Table 4.9: Hypotheses test in model 2 ................................................................................... 83
Table 4.10: Hypotheses test in model 3 ............................................................................... 83
Table 4.11: Mean scores of the normative susceptibility (H6) ............................................. 88
Table 4.12: Unstandardized regression weights of the CRM brand image on purchase intention and chi-square difference test and critical ratio (H6) .................................. 88
Table 4.13: Mean scores of the religiosity (H7) ...................................................................... 89
Table 4.14: Unstandardized regression weights of the altruistic brand personality on warm glow and chi-square difference test and critical ratio (H7) ........................ 90
Table 4.15: Results for independent sample t-test ................................................................. 94
Table 4.16: Results for independent sample t-test ................................................................. 94
Table 4.17: Summary of results ............................................................................................ 95

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: The brand personality scale proposed by Aaker (J. Aaker, 1997) ................. 18
Figure 2.2: A New Measure of Brand Personality (Geuens et al., 2009) ..................... 23
Figure 2.3: Non-profit organization (NPO) brand personality (Venable et al., 2005) .... 25
Figure 2.4: Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) brand personality (Heidarian, 2016) ...... 27
Figure 2.5: Comparison of Hofstede cultural dimensions between Iran and Germany (Hofstede et al., 2010) .................................................................................. 49
Figure 3.1: Study Framework ............................................................................................. 67
Figure 4.1: Model 1 of the structural model ............................................................... 80
Figure 4.2: Model 2 of the structural model ............................................................... 81
Figure 4.3: Model 3 of the structural model ............................................................... 81
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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the research

One of the favorite strategies for gaining competitive advantage is Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) (Webb & Mohr, 1998). CRM is a marketing communication tool which connect a charity and its cause with a company or a brand to donate a portion of company’s revenue to the cause. It can be defined as a particular kind of advertising strategy, telling consumers that the company is doing something good for the charity. It is also a kind of strategic corporate social responsibility (CSR) action tend to show other-serving or altruistic motives of the companies. CRM leads to achieving company’s goals like increasing sales and market share, enhancing corporate and brand images (File & Prince, 1998; Kropp, Holden, & Lavack, 1998; Ross, Stutts, & Patterson, 1991). Higher purchase intention associates with positive motivation for contributing in CRM campaign (Hammad, El-Bassiouny, Paul, & Mukhopadhyay, 2014) along with the utility that consumers obtain from the campaign (Müller, Fries, & Gedenk, 2014) which known as “warm glow” (Andreoni, 1989). Warm glow is related to prosocial behavior which is deliberate, voluntary and beneficial for others like helping or sharing (Kropp et al., 1998). Consumers who like to participate in prosocial behaviors are likely to have a positive perception toward Cause-Related Marketing (Kropp et al., 1998). The key benefit of a CRM campaign is warm glow feeling for consumers (Müller et al., 2014). Consumers can be encouraged to experience warm glow feeling when they perceive the company motivation for CRM campaign as other-serving rather than self-serving. Consumers are skeptical whether the claim made by the CRM advertisement is true and it is due to its corporate social responsibility for altruistic motives (Ross et al., 1991; Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). Scholars argue that a low level of consumer skepticism toward CRM advertisement when they are less skeptical (Mohr, Ergülu, & Ellen, 1998), positively impacts purchase intention (tactical approach) and brand image (strategic approach).
(Barone, Miyazaki, & Taylor, 2000; Müller et al., 2014; Webb & Mohr, 1998). Positive impact of CRM on brand image and purchase intention is considered as indicators of a successful CRM campaign. Consumers evaluate companies’ intention by several factors which are related to motivational attribution (Tsai, 2009). These factors play an influential role in the success or failure of CRM campaign because such process determines consumers’ perceptions of corporate motives for CRM engagement which can be negative or positive toward CRM brand image and CRM purchase intention (Fries, 2010). Positive attribution or negative attribution emerges about the company’s motives to be perceived as altruistic or egoistic respectively (Gao, 2009). Differences in attitude toward CRM are also directly correlated with personal characteristics and different cultures (Lavack & Kropp, 2003). There are considerable differences between the cultural backgrounds of consumers in different countries. As the countries differ in their social, economic and political conditions around the world, the perception of the consumers in different countries vary and they respond differently to different types of CRM activities. The differences in perceptions may be explained by CRM strategy is relatively new or unknown strategy in some countries. Also, cultural differences in values may play a role in shaping attitudes toward Cause-Related Marketing. To evaluate the effect of culture on consumers’ behavior studies, most researchers have used the Hofstede dimensional model of national culture for cross-cultural studies (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Based on this model, values can place upon five main cultural dimensions. These dimensions are power distance (equality versus inequality), collectivism (versus individualism), uncertainty avoidance (versus uncertainty tolerance), masculinity (versus femininity), and long-term orientation (versus short-term orientation) (Hofstede, 1984). This framework adopted in this project to operationalize the concept of cultural differences. Some specific cultural characteristics can have a more prominent role in consumer’s perception toward CRM brands like religiosity, the level of being susceptible and
skepticism (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989; Huff & Kelley, 2003; Kropp, Lavack, & Silvera, 2005; Lau, 2010; Lwin, Phau, & Lim, 2013). Since CRM brand connects to helping and altruistic behavior, it has been shown that there is a positive correlation between CRM purchase intention along with altruism and religiosity (Hammad et al., 2014). Also, consumer’s susceptibility can be another significant factor for having a positive attitude toward CRM because it positively correlates with values that trigger CRM purchase (Kropp et al., 2005). As a result, considering religion and susceptibility of consumers specifically which are also related to cultural differences can bring a clearer picture of how personal characteristics and culture affects attitude toward CRM.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

CRM programs have been used for decades as a competitive advantage for companies to differentiate themselves from their competitors. These programs are very successful in developed countries and have produced tremendously beneficial results for the companies (S. M. Smith & Alcorn, 1991; Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). While CRM programs have long been popular in the United States in early 1980s and other developed countries like Germany since 2002 according to Bonstein, (2005) as cited in (Moosmayer & Fuljahn, 2010), there is some evidence that CRM is also becoming popular in developing countries (Hammad et al., 2014; Heidarian & Bijandi, 2015). Although there is a significant amount written about Cause-Related Marketing in countries like Germany, CRM has received little attention in Iran. Hence, consumers in the latter country are less familiar with this strategy. In a previous research, the role of Cause-Related Marketing on brand image perception in the garment industry in Iran was examined (Heidarian & Bijandi, 2015). It was shown that Cause-Related Marketing gives something extra to the consumer (“warm glow”) that increases the utility and perceived quality for them, and thus has a direct and positive effect on brand image. Although these results correspond to studies in developed countries, the role of culture has not been integrated into this research. There are several
studies about Cause-Related Marketing strategy and related variables in different countries and cultures, but there are few studies regarding comparing these variables in cross-cultural studies. There are a few examples of cross-culture studies in CRM context such as the comparative study of moral emotions in the US and Korean (J.-E. Kim & Johnson, 2013) and attitude toward CRM between Canada, Australia, Norway, and Korea (Lavack & Kropp, 2003). Lavack and Kropp (2003) find that there is a less favorable attitude toward CRM in countries where CRM was not adequately developed and attitude is also related to the consumers’ values. Since cultural values play a role in shaping attitudes toward cause-related marketing (Lavack & Kropp, 2003), still more research is needed to explore the role and importance of other CRM related variables in a cross-culture study to see how different consumers’ perceptions are? Moreover, though CRM has confirmed to be successful in Western countries, it would be interesting to see if it is also an appropriate marketing tool for companies targeting developing countries like Iran, despite less familiarity of consumers in Iran. It would be interesting to see if CRM can be an appropriate marketing strategy in Iran? To answer these questions, a comparative analysis is conducted to find out the moderating role of culture in shaping consumers perceptions of CRM brand among Iranian and German consumers. As a result to fill this gap in this thesis it is going to study how CRM brand is perceived in two culturally different countries. This would create a clearer understanding of cultural differences especially regarding some specific factors like religion, susceptibility and skepticism and their impact on CRM brand and help marketers to apply the strategy more effectively. The variables include attitude toward CRM, skepticism toward CRM advertisement, CRM brand image, CRM purchase intention and warm glow with a particular emphasis on CRM brand personality. To the best knowledge of the author, there is no specific study regarding CRM brand personality. CRM brand personality can be a significant factor in this strategy because consumers’ skepticism toward the motivation of the campaign may
let them perceive the brand positively as well as negatively. As a result, finding how consumers perceive CRM brand personality seems to be essential for marketers. The reason is that brand personality plays a major role in advertising and promotional efforts (J. Aaker, 1997; Plummer, 1985) and it enables firms to communicate the brand more effectively to their consumers (Batra, Lehmann, & Singh, 1993; Sheena, 2012). Additionally, it allows marketers to create a distinct and meaningful image in the minds of consumers (Liu, Huang, Hallak, & Liang, 2016). Therefore, the measurement of brand personality is critical to CRM marketing activity. It also helps to create a more realistic view of consumers’ expressions toward brands and use the distinctive brand personality as a competitive advantage for companies.

Therefore, a comparative study between Iran and Germany can identify and analyse similarities and differences between countries with different cultures toward CRM brand to fill the gap in the literature besides introducing CRM brand personality. Furthermore, the research can recognize how these variables interact with each other and influence the effectiveness of CRM strategy in two different cultures.

1.3. Research questions

The purpose of the current study is to contribute to a developing body of research in the emerging area of Cause-Related Marketing in a cross-cultural context. As discussed in the preceding section, there is a need to understand if Cause-Related Marketing strategy can reach its successes criteria differently in different countries. Also, how different consumers perceive CRM brand in different culture by analysing the CRM brand variables besides introducing CRM brand personality. Therefore, the specific research questions are:

A: What is consumer’s response concerning (1) skepticism toward CRM claim (2) attitude to the strategy, (3) attitude toward CRM brand personality, (4) attitude toward the CRM brand image and (5) CRM purchase intention (6) Warm glow?
B: Do consumers respond differently to Cause-Related Marketing in Iran in comparison to Germany?

C: Can cultural characteristics of the countries explain these differences?

In examining these research questions, some hypotheses developed in Chapter 3. These hypotheses result from a review of the extant literature in Cause-Related Marketing and other relevant areas such as consumer behavior, brand image, brand personality, marketing communications, warm glow, and cultural differences.

1.4. Applications of research

The current study is expected to provide several theoretical and practical contributions to the current understanding of cause-related marketing. The study will add to the body of knowledge on the cause-related brand. It will present an integrated model of CRM brand based on consumer perceptions by considering the most relevant CRM brand variables affecting consumer’s perceptions and intentions and the relationships between those. It is expected that the research can provide suggestions for future research. Researchers can explore how CRM brand can be perceived in different cultures to apply CRM strategy more effectively. Besides, testing the CRM brand personality scale in this study will be a valuable tool to measure a CRM brand personality because it would help in better-targeted messages (Venable, Rose, Bush, & Gilbert, 2005). The research helps to increase the knowledge of how to address different consumers with different cultures. Notably, the study would help company’s decision makers to design and implement policies and strategies to improve their relationships with consumers through CRM and create positive influence by considering cultural differences. The implications of the research will be relevant for national and international companies who want to increase the knowledge about cultural differences to market their brands abroad more effectively.
1.5. Structure of the research

The research includes five chapters. The current chapter (chapter 1) introduces the research formulation. It also justifies the reason for the undertaken study as research problem and presents the research questions and structure.

Chapter 2 provides a theoretical background and literature in three parts. The first part reviews the existing literature on cause-related marketing, brand image, brand personality, skepticism toward CRM claim, purchase intention and other relevant marketing literature relevant to the aims of this research. The second part integrates the consumer’s characteristics like susceptibility and religiosity. The importance of these characteristics on the CRM related variables is argued in this part. In the third part, culture as the principal moderator in this research is introduced. Culture and its elements are defined along with a description of how these cultural dimensions affect consumer’s behavior to provide insight into predicting consumer’s behavior. In this part, the differences between Iranian and German culture is discussed and it is the basis for cultural differences hypotheses.

In chapter 3, the research hypotheses and framework are developed based on the literature in chapter 2. Hypotheses consist of three types. The first type is related to the relationship between CRM brand variables. In the second type, the hypotheses are related to the moderation effect of consumer’s characteristics like religiously and susceptibility on the relationships between CRM brand variables. The last kind of hypotheses compares the moderation role of culture in the above relations.

In chapter 4, the research method, instrument and samples, are explained. Then the validity and applicability of the questionnaire are tested. Finally, hypotheses are tested using SPSS and AMOS software.
Finally, chapter 5 presents the discussion of the findings by integrating and concluding the obtained results. Following this, conclusion and theoretical and practical implementations are discuss. The last part of the thesis provides the limitation and suggestions for future researchers.
Chapter 2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Overview of Cause-Related Marketing and brand perception

2.1.1. Cause-Related Marketing strategy

Varadarajan and Menon have defined Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) as “the process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when consumers engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives” (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988, p.60). Some others extend the terms and defined CRM as “the general alliance between businesses and non-profit causes that provide resources and funding to address social issues and business marketing objectives” (Cui, Trent, Sullivan, & Matiru, 2003, p.310). Despite the extensive range of definitions the central element is the beneficial relationship between a company and a cause (or charity) for both parties.

Three stakeholders involve in CRM with different motivations and interests including companies, non-profit organizations (NPOs) and consumers (File & Prince, 1998). They can benefit from CRM campaign simultaneously. Regarding non-profit organizations, they can benefit from CRM primarily by financial support as well as increasing public awareness about their services (File & Prince, 1998). CRM helps companies to benefit from CRM strategy as a competitive advantage. In a competing market, companies use CRM to differentiate themselves from competitors (Gupta & Pirsch, 2006) because these days consumers see the product attributes such as price or quality of different brands relatively homogenous. For the company, the possible benefits of increased sales can be moderated by the risks of perceived exploitation by consumers (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). However, generally, consumers have favorable attitudes toward companies which are participating in Cause-Related Marketing (Ross et al., 1991). Companies use CRM to show their responsibility toward society to better communicate with potential target...
consumers (Gupta & Pirsch, 2006). In fact, Cause-Related Marketing can fulfill business objectives like increasing sale or improving brand attitude besides helping and supporting a cause or charity. As a result, it can be a win-win strategy. Regarding consumers’ benefits, Strahilevitz & Myers (1998) claimed that consumers experienced an inherent advantage when they support a cause in the form of feeling good (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Consumers like to justify their purchases or compensate their guilt by giving something back to the community (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). CRM products can provide an external value to consumers to express themselves as a social consciousness person by CRM purchase (Webb & Mohr, 1998) or enhance their self-esteem (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). As a result, Cause-Related Marketing offers an extra opportunity by adding value to the regular purchase (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998) and stimulating the emotional benefits of consumers.

2.1.2. Consumer Attitude toward CRM strategy

Although CRM strategy looks beneficial, the success or failure of CRM strategy is determined by how consumers perceive and behave toward this strategy (Lavack & Kropp, 2003). The success or failure depends on how consumer see corporate motives for CRM engagement (Tsai, 2009).

Previous studies have examined consumer attitude toward the Cause-Related Marketing (Barone et al., 2000; Kropp et al., 1998; Lavack & Kropp, 2003; Ross, Patterson, & Stutts, 1992; Ross et al., 1991). The evidence shows that Cause-Related Marketing strategies can generate a more favorable attitude toward a sponsoring company and products or services (Ross et al., 1992, 1991). More specifically, Smith and Alcorn (1991) found that almost half (46%) of the consumers in their survey were more likely to switch brands to support a brand which is using CRM strategy (S. M. Smith & Alcorn, 1991). Nearly 30% of respondents expressed that they preferred to buy products only because of the CRM campaign (S. M. Smith & Alcorn, 1991). On the other hand, studies also revealed that
CRM strategy might generate an adverse effect on consumer attitude toward the sponsoring firms (Webb & Mohr, 1998). In fact, the inconsistency of how to apply CRM strategy is a function of consumer skepticism about firms' self-serving motives for profits rather than charitable causes (Webb & Mohr, 1998). That is, consumers can become suspicious about CRM strategy to what extent it can be considered as cause beneficial or cause exploitative. However, generally, researchers indicated that consumers have a favorable view of both Cause-Related Marketing strategy and the companies that engage in this strategy (Ross et al., 1992, 1991).

2.1.3. Consumer Attitude toward CRM brand

Companies use CRM strategy trying to influence the consumer's behavior and perception of a company or a brand. The opinions and attitudes of consumers are essential to the progress of CRM programs (Lavack & Kropp, 2003). The reason is that consumers’ perceptions of a brand can be negative or positive and it depends on several factors which motivate consumers to participate in CRM campaign (Fries, 2010). Consumer’s perception of the company is positive when they perceive altruistic motivation of the company for supporting a cause, while negative perception occurs when the motivation of the company is perceived as egoistic (Gao, 2009). Altruistic motives refer to the consumers’ perception of the company’s motivation for doing something good for others while egoistic motives refer to do something good only for self-interest (Tsai, 2009) or abusing the cause for increasing the sale rather than supporting it (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006). Perceiving the motives as egoistic leads to negative attribution toward the CRM claim (Gao, 2009). The perception of altruistic rather than egoistic motivations about the company’s intention leads to a higher purchase intention (Barone et al., 2000; Boenigk & Schuchardt, 2013; Ellen et al., 2006). Altruistic perception creates a more favorable brand image (H. J. Kim, Kim, & Han, 2005; Müller et al., 2014). When consumers perceive the company’s motives for conducting such a campaign as altruistic like supporting a cause and being responsible
for the society, they have a more positive attitude toward the brand. Therefore, consumers feel good to participate in a supportive CRM campaign, and this feeling positively influences participants’ purchase intentions (J.-E. Kim & Johnson, 2013). It can help consumers to show themselves as social conscientious and caring person (Webb & Mohr, 1998). In contrast, if consumers recognize that there are egoistic motives for making profits by the company, they become skeptical about the communicated altruistic motives in the CRM advertisement (Webb & Mohr, 1998). They may respond negatively to CRM campaign because not only the company is perceived as doing something egoistically but also consumers feel manipulated or deceived (Forehand & Grier, 2003) and assume the purchase of the CRM brand as an egoistic dimension of the CRM campaign. As a result how consumers perceive CRM brand is vital for marketers.

2.1.4. Skepticism toward CRM advertisement or claim

In this research, consumer skepticism involves the skepticism towards advertising and marketing, Cause-Related Marketing in particular. Skepticism toward advertisement is defined as a general distrust toward the claim made by the advertisement (Obermiller & Spangenberg, 1998). Mohr et al. (1998) state that skepticism differs from cynicism, they define cynicism as enduring disbelief of others; while skepticism is a response which is different and it depends on the content of the communication. Although skepticism seems to be an influential negative factor for advertisement, it is a beneficial skill which protects consumers against false or excessive advertising (Koslow, 2000) and inaccurate claims (Mohr et al., 1998). Honesty from marketers’ side is needed to make the advertisement believable for consumers and overcome advertisement skepticism (Obermiller, Spangenberg, & MacLachlan, 2005). Forehand and Grier (2003) noted two forms of skepticism: dispositional and situational skepticism. Dispositional skepticism refers to the tendency to be suspicious of others’ motives, which is related to the concept of cynicism. Marketers cannot solve this kind of skepticism (Y. J. Kim & Lee, 2009; Mohr et
al., 1998). Situational skepticism refers to the temporary state of distrust (Forehand & Grier, 2003). They found that situational skepticism affects consumers’ attribution of motive and overall skepticism toward the firm. Dispositional skepticism can be cultural (Huff & Kelley, 2003) and it is affecting situational skepticism and overall skepticism toward the claim (Mohr et al., 1998).

In the context of CRM, although companies can benefit a lot from CRM engagement, it is not as simple as just taking part in CRM campaign because there is a high level of skepticism toward such program that unifies the interests of charity and business (Barone et al., 2000). Companies need to communicate and advertise their CRM campaign to the consumers. Communicating CRM as particular kind of Corporate Social Responsibility is essential because if consumers do not know about the CRM engagement of a company, they cannot account for the good a company does for the society and reward them for the good that they do (Gupta & Pirsch, 2006). That is particularly sensitive aspect of CRM advertisement, as it tends to increase consumer skepticism (Singh, Kristensen, & Villaseñor, 2009). When companies communicate their CRM activity with the consumers to let them know about the social causes they are involved and support, they face one of the most significant problems of CRM communication, which is minimizing consumer skepticism (Forehand & Grier, 2003). Skepticism toward CRM not only refers to consumers’ level of trust (e.g. if a company actually donates the specified amount) but also relates to how consumers perceive a company’s motives to engage in CRM (either cause beneficial or cause exploitive) (Barone et al., 2000; Webb & Mohr, 1998). Half of the respondents in the research of Webb and Mohr (1998) perceived the firm’s motive as being “self-serving” and expressed negative attitudes toward CRM mostly because of skepticism toward implementation and/or doubt about firm’s motives. Consumers assess the motives of why the company is engaged in CRM. Nevertheless, consumers show interest in and appreciate the company for CRM engagement which leads to a higher purchase. Webb
and Mohr (1998) argue that consumers are likely to respond negatively to CRM campaigns when they have a high level of skepticism. The most common reasons that increase skepticism are self-serving intentions, doubt about honesty of the campaign (Webb & Mohr, 1998). As a result, the major factor which makes consumers skeptical toward CRM is how consumers perceive motivations behind the CRM campaign.

When consumers evaluate company’s motives for engaging in CRM, they tend to either think of it as altruistic motives or egoistic motives. If consumers perceive a company’s CRM motives as egoistic, they get suspicious about the honesty of the company’s concern for the social cause which they are supporting. When this happens consumers’ skepticism is increased and in turn leads to the rejection of the CRM (Bronn & Vrioni, 2001; Webb & Mohr, 1998) and change the purchasing behavior adversely (Hammad et al., 2014). Studies about advertisement skepticism show that when a person is highly skeptical of CRM advertisement, they perceive the validity of a CRM claim to be low (Anuar & Mohamad, 2012). As a result, it can be a great help when developing campaign strategies to have a more understanding of the level of skepticism in target consumers. Although it is almost impossible to influence the opinion of cynicism, due to their long-lasting beliefs (Mohr et al., 1998), different studies reveal several factors which trigger motivational attribution that can mediate a consumer's level of skepticism. For instance campaign duration, specifically longer durations or repeated support, positively influence how a consumer perceives the company’s motive for CRM engagement (Brink, Odekerken-Schröder, & Pauwels, 2006; Chéron, Kohlbacher, & Kusuma, 2012; Cui et al., 2003). The same applies when the company-cause fit is high (Chéron et al., 2012). Regarding the donation description and donation size, the exact amounts are shown to be more trustworthy and consequently reducing skepticism (Webb & Mohr, 1998). Further larger donation amounts contribute to higher perception of altruism and lower skepticism (Y. J.
Kim & Lee, 2009; Webb & Mohr, 1998). Also, studies show that as knowledge about CRM increased, skepticism towards CRM reduced (Borrn & Vrioni, 2001; Webb & Mohr, 1998).

On the other hand, when consumers perceive CRM campaign as cause supportive, altruism motivation is associated with the campaign. Altruistic motives express real concern for the social cause which a company has decided to support. Hence, consumers are more likely to reward the company for their CRM activity (Gupta & Pirsch, 2006). Researchers argue that when consumers have low level of skepticism, they perceive higher accuracy of a CRM claim leading to more favorable attitudes towards CRM campaigns (Anuar & Mohamad, 2012; La Ferle, Kuber, & Edwards, 2013; Webb & Mohr, 1998). However, companies are likely to convey both egoistic and altruistic motives, as long as altruistic motives are obvious, consumers tend to tolerate self-serving motives (Ellen et al., 2006).

2.1.5. Brand personality of CRM brand

2.1.5.1. Overview of brand personality

During the last two decades, both academics and marketing practitioners have shown an increasing interest in brand personality (J. Aaker, 1997; Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003; Geuens, Weijters, & De Wulf, 2009; Venable et al., 2005). Brand personality defines as “the set of human personality traits that consumers attribute to or associate with a brand (Aaker, 1997, p.347). Also, Azoulay & Kapferer have defined brand personality as “the set of human personality traits that are both applicable to and relevant for brands” (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003, p.151). Brand personality is the central part of brand associations; it is the human characteristic that consumers can allocate to a specific brand which they feel with all associations. In fact, all brand associations can directly or indirectly generate the brand personality traits in consumer’s mind. Studies show that a well-established brand personality impacts consumer’s perception positively. It’s benefits are increasing consumer brand attitudes and purchase intentions (Freling, Crosno, & Henard, 2011),
evoking emotions in consumers (Biel, 1993), perceiving higher quality (Ramaseshan & Tsao, 2007), influence positively on product evaluation with higher number of brand associations (Freling & Forbes, 2005) increasing brand equity, and levels of trust and loyalty (Fournier, 1998; Freling et al., 2011).

Personality could be an essential variable for brand’s selection by consumers. Studies showed that consumers are likely to build relationships with brands (Maehle & Shneor, 2010). They can allocate human personality to brands, leading to improve their interaction with the brand (J. Aaker, 1997; Geuens et al., 2009; Maehle & Shneor, 2010) by creating symbolic representations. Consumers build the relationship with the brand because they choose brands based on the symbolic associations and meanings they give to brands (D. Aaker, 1996; Belk, 1988). They can communicate something about themselves by buying brand similar to their personalities. They tend to use the brand and products that match with their personality traits; this is known as self-concept theory (Sirgy, 1982). Self-concept is a multidimensional construct including actual-self-image, ideal-self-image and social self-image. Actual-self refers to how a person perceives herself/himself; ideal-self refers to how a person would like to perceive herself/himself; and social-self refers to how a person presents herself/himself to others (Sirgy, 1982). Hence, brand personality is a useful factor in the consumer’s choice, because it allows consumers to express his/her self or his/her ideal self and reinforce their self-image (Belk, 1988; Sirgy, 1982).

Brand personality also plays a significant role in advertising and promotional efforts. It enables firms to communicate the brand more effectively to their consumers (Batra et al., 1993; Sheena, 2012). It allows marketers to create a distinct and meaningful image in the minds of consumers (Liu et al., 2016). Thus, marketing practitioners have become increasingly aware of the importance of building a clear and distinctive brand personality. Therefore, the measurement of brand personality is critical to marketing activity, because recognizing the potential associations provide a good basis for understanding and shaping
consumer preference (Maehle & Shneor, 2010; Sirgy, 1982). Regarding CRM brand, since consumers can perceive the motivation behind CRM claim as self-serving or others-serving (Webb & Mohr, 1998), there can be a specific brand personality worth to study to improve the brand communication with the consumers.

2.1.5.2. The primary Brand personality scale

Concerning products and brands, humans seem to like to anthropomorphize objects to improve their interactions with the nonmaterial aspect (Brown, 1991). Consumers also can assign human characteristics to brands (J. Aaker, 1997) and build a relationship with brands (Fournier, 1998). Thus, if brands, like individuals, can be described with adjectives, the Big Five in psychology can be used and be relevant to the brand personality that can be perceived by consumers (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003). Therefore, it is possible that the Big Five structure also extends to brand personality. The five-factor model of personality has five basic dimensions: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Jennifer Aaker’s (1997) study has attempted to make the concept clear and build a scale to measure brand personality. Aaker followed Costa and McCrae personality inventory (NEO-PI-R) (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The Aaker’s study is based on a specific definition of the brand personality concept. She explores brand personality framework based on big five dimensions to describe and measure the “personality” of a brand in five core dimensions, each divided into a set of facets. The scale is a model to evaluate the profile of a brand by using a comparison with a human being (J. Aaker, 1997). Aaker developed a 45-item Brand Personality Scale that encompasses five broad dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness (Figure 2.1). She has used primarily positive traits because the ultimate use of the scale is to determine the extent to which brand personality affects the probability that consumers will like the brands or products not to avoid (J. Aaker, 1997) which afterward has increased criticisms about the scale.
It is interesting that three of the five dimensions are based on Costa & McCrae (1992) human personality characteristics (J. Aaker, 1997). Agreeableness and sincerity both catch the idea of warmth and acceptance; extraversion and excitement both catch the sensation of sociability, energy, and activity; conscientiousness and competence both catch responsibility, dependability and security (J. Aaker, 1997). Sophistication and ruggedness differ from Big Five of human personality, indicating that brand personality may operate in different ways. Since sincerity, excitement, and competence relate to human personality, sophistication and ruggedness show the dimension that individuals like to have (J. Aaker, 1997).

2.1.5.3. Criticizing the Aaker’s scale

Aaker’s brand personality scale (BPS) represents the most prominent operationalization of brand personality. This scale measures to what extent a brand can possess any of these personality traits. However, Aaker’s scale has recently received criticism on several grounds. Despite criticisms, Aaker’s model used widely in scholarly research including
service area (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Freling & Forbes, 2005; Gordon, Zainuddin, & Magee, 2016).

The first criticism is related to the definition of brand personality, which is too broad and encompasses elements of brand identity and image (Liu et al., 2016). The description also contains several other characteristics (such as age (young), gender (feminine)) besides personality (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003). For example, some adjectives like the upper class are not related to brand personality and more related to the user profile (Geuens et al., 2009).

Second, as it has been discussed before, Aaker (1997) asserts that some adjectives that describe human personality traits are irrelevant to brands. Geuens et al. (2009) argued that the framework not fully reflect the dimensions of openness and neuroticism, only three of five-factor of this structure are related to Big Five dimensions including sincerity, excitement, and competence. Sophistication and ruggedness do not associate with any of the Big Five dimensions.

Third, the model does not reflect negative human traits, like unreliability or selfishness; these are rarely reflected in brand personalities, and the ruggedness dimension of the original study cannot include negative traits, it indicates a strong, outdoorsy, tough and masculine character (J. Aaker, 1997). J. Aaker has focused on desirable brand personality factors (J. Aaker, 1997), while to have a comprehensive personality scale to fit with consumers’ expressions, the scale should contain both positive such as extraversion and negative such as neuroticism dimension (Haji, 2014). Having a scale to include both positive and negative personality is especially important regarding products and brands which try to make an emotional relationship with consumers like Cause-Related Marketing products.
Fourth, testing the model in other countries shows that some dimensions are dependent on culture (Liu et al., 2016). For example, researchers have found that only three of the five factors were valid in Spain (sincerity, excitement, and sophistication) and the rest of them replaced by peacefulness instead of ruggedness and competence changed to passion. In Japan four of the five factors appeared, whereas Peacefulness again replaced Ruggedness (J. Aaker, Benet-Martínez, & Garolera, 2001). This shortcoming led several researchers to construct a country-specific brand personality scale (Table 2.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Similar dimension</th>
<th>Different dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aaker (1997)</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>commercial brands</td>
<td>Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, Ruggedness</td>
<td>Peacefulness (Japan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaker et al. (2001)</td>
<td>Japan and Spain</td>
<td>commercial brands</td>
<td>Sincerity, Excitement, Sophistication, Competence</td>
<td>Peacefulness Passion (Spain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim, Han, and Park</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>commercial brands</td>
<td>Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, Ruggedness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caprara et al. (2001)</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>commercial brands</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agreeableness Emotional Stability Extroversion Openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smit et al. (2003)</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>commercial brands</td>
<td>Competence Excitement Ruggedness</td>
<td>Gentle Distinction Annoyance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helgeson and Supphellen (2004)</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>retailers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Modern Classic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td>Informality Machismo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sung and Tinkham (2005)</td>
<td>The United States, Korea</td>
<td>commercial brands</td>
<td>Competence Ruggedness Sophistication</td>
<td>Likeableness Trendiness Traditionalism Western Ascendancy (Korea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venable et al. (2005)</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Non-profit organizations</td>
<td>Sophistication Ruggedness</td>
<td>Integrity Nurturance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekinci and Hosany (2006)</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Tourism destinations</td>
<td>Sincerity Excitement</td>
<td>Conviviality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murphy et al. (2007)</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Tourism destinations</td>
<td>Exciting Sincere Sophisticated</td>
<td>Upper class Honest Tough (Whitsundays) Outdoorsy (Cairns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnjak, Bochmann, and Hufschmidt (2007)</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>commercial brands</td>
<td></td>
<td>Drive Conscientiousness Emotion Superficiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grohmann (2009)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>commercial brands</td>
<td></td>
<td>Masculine Feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaplan et al. (2010)</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>place brand</td>
<td>Excitement Competence Ruggedness</td>
<td>Malignancy Peacefulness conservatism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee and Back (2010)</td>
<td>Southern region, United States</td>
<td>business hotel</td>
<td>Competence Sophistication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chu and Sung (2011)</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>commercial brands</td>
<td>Competence Excitement</td>
<td>Traditionalism Joyfulness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Different dimensions” in table 2.1, indicate that there is no absolute and comprehensive brand personality scale to be generalizable for all brands and products in different countries and contexts. As a result, developing brand personality scale especially for a specific type of brand would be beneficial to help marketers to have a deeper understanding of consumer’s perceptions of the brand.

2.1.5.4. Developing New Brand Personality Scales

To address criticisms, researchers have tried to develop alternative brand personality scales. Geuens et al. (2009) developed a new scale that has been found to be valid and reliable across brands, product categories, and cultures. They have tried to indicate the importance of investigating the ‘Emotional Stability’ factor of brand personality and include the negative dimension of human personality (neuroticism) and develop a more generalizable scale for different research purposes and across countries. By using the precise definition of Azoulay and Kapferer (2003) regarding brand personality and Big Five human personality, Geuens et al. (2009) have proved that their scale is reliable and valid in various categories. They claim that the scale can be used for studies of across multiple brands of different product categories, for studies across different competitors
within a specific product category, for studies on an individual brand level, and for cross-cultural studies. The identified factors are as follows: responsibility, activity, aggressiveness, simplicity, and emotionality (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2. 2. A New Measure of Brand Personality (Geuens et al., 2009)

Geuens et al. (2009) assert that the scale shows an affinity with the Big Five human personality dimensions (with responsibility relating to conscientiousness, activity to extraversion, emotionality to emotional stability/neuroticism, aggressiveness to agreeableness, and simplicity to openness), with the reduction of negative items of neuroticism dimension. Their five-factor solution containing 12 items was limited to personality traits as detailed in Figure 2.2. Responsibility captures some traits of the sincerity and competence dimension and activity captures some traits of the excitement of Aaker’s scale. The other three dimensions, emotionality, aggressiveness and simplicity are derived from human personality traits only (Geuens et al., 2009). Although they attempted to explore the negative brand personality trait, they failed to provide a complete understanding of negative brand personality traits that are reflective of consumer’s anxious, tense or frustrated emotions (Haji, 2014). Because in the judging procedure the traits like “envious, withdrawn, and fretful, etc.” from the trait list were deleted by judges (Geuens et al., 2009), which correspond more to the neuroticism factor of the Big Five human personality factor. The elimination was based on the inappropriateness for a brand to have negative traits (Geuens et al., 2009).
Because of the absence of negative brand personality in Aaker and Geuens et al. scales, Haji (2014) has developed a negative brand personality scale to show that brand can also be perceived negatively. As it has been discussed before, scales of brand personality try to cover all Big Five personality dimensions. Although the five dimensions of Geuens et al.’s scale are relevant to brand personality, the model could not reflect consumers’ negative emotions. They justified the deletion of negative traits in the judging process by the absence of this dimension in previous brand personality studies (Geuens et al., 2009). Haji (2014) defined negative brand personality as a set of characteristics ascribed to a brand by the consumer which reflect emotions associated with tension, anxiety or frustration. It was important that the items of Negative Brand Personality were not the direct antonyms of the positive traits established in Aaker’s (1997) brand personality framework. The results of factor analysis of the traits indicate that five factors are showing negative brand personality including egotistical, boring, lacking logic, critical and socially irresponsible which, together, captured consumers’ emotions that stimulate tension, anxiety or incongruity (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Negative Brand Personality traits. (Haji, 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of factor</th>
<th>Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egotistical</td>
<td>Pompous, Snobby, Brash, Vain, Arrogant, Pretentious, Flaunt, Stubborn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boring</td>
<td>Boring, Monotonous, Dull, Lonely, Anti-Social, Cheap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially Irresponsible</td>
<td>Immoral, Unethical, Deceiving, Deviant, Fake, Manipulative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Confused, Mischievous, Rebellious, Selfish, Barbaric, Judgmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking Logic</td>
<td>Delusional, Weird, Unstable, Naive, Superficial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In another research, Venable et al. (2005) have tried to apply brand personality dimension to the non-profit organization. They considered social exchange theory and trust as essential factors in consumers' decisions for donating money, time, or in the type of goods or services to such organizations (Venable et al., 2005). They have found that brand personality and its dimensions for a profit-based company may not be consistent with a non-profit organization. Since a non-profit organization tends to be more social than
economic, social exchange theory can play a critical role in explaining why donors are given (Venable et al., 2005). They have found that people can differentiate between non-profit organizations from commercial brands. They developed a brand personality scale for non-profit organizations (NPO) including personalities of integrity, nurturance, sophistication, and ruggedness (Figure 2.3).

Two of the four dimensions (sophistication and ruggedness) are similar to Aaker’s brand personality (1997), and the other two dimensions (integrity and nurturance) demonstrate the theoretical basis of social exchange and trust in the non-profit context.

The most critical factor is integrity with the highest loadings in confirmatory factor analysis test. Integrity demonstrates the importance of trust and the efficient use of donations. Nurturance shows the social benefits that people expect from a non-profit organization.

The research indicates that there are also similarities between the brand personalities of non-profit organizations and consumer brands. Sophistication and ruggedness dimensions are similar to brand personality which was found by Jennifer Aaker (1997). Besides, Venable et al. (2005) asserted that sincerity might include in integrity dimension because it is a more general form of trust or a unique aspect of sincerity in non-profits context which both contain honesty as a trait.
2.1. 5.5. CRM brand personality scale

In another research, a new brand personality scale has been developed by considering the nature of CRM brands (Heidarian, 2016). The idea is based on the inapplicability of current brand personality scales (e.g., J Aaker, 1997; Geuens et al., 2009; Haji, 2014; Venable et al., 2005) for evaluating consumer’s perception of CRM brands. Since the literature shows that the majority of scales are related to consumer’s goods and services primarily for commercial purposes, the current scales may not be extensible to all type of products. In comparison with other products or strategies, Cause-Related Marketing creates an added value which can be perceived as negative or positive and directly affect consumer’s response. It tries to provide the emotional as well as the rational engagement for the consumers (Gao, 2009). For example, the most reliable scale belong to Geuens et al. (2009) cannot be used for CRM products, although they claim that their scale is applicable for all type of products and in different cultures. Because the scale fails to contain the negative brand personalities. Also, regarding Venable’s (2005) scale, although some dimensions like integrity, ruggedness, and sophistication are related to the usual brand, the scale could not be applicable for CRM brands while the nature of CRM brands is different from NPOs. The reason is that Cause-Related Marketing usually creates an opportunity for non-profit organizations and for-profit corporation to benefit financially from a partnership, and it is considered as social marketing (Kropp et al., 1998). Also, the Haji’s negative brand personality scale cannot be suitable, because a Cause-Related Marketing brand can produce negative or positive perception. Therefore, there is a need to evaluate a more relevant brand personality scale in the context of Cause-Related Marketing to recognize the unique dimensions regarding CRM products in comparison to normal brands. As a result, the specific dimensions of CRM brand personality have been developed theoretically by integrating the existing knowledge of the brand personality and considering the main difference between CRM brand and usual brands. The main
different of CRM brand is that they claim to do something altruistically for a third party like public issues, environmental issues, cultural issues, etc. This difference between CRM brand and other brands can be perceived altruistic-oriented or egoistic-oriented. Since positive attribution emerges in case of altruistic perceptions about company’s motives, whereas negative attribution appears in case of egoistic perceptions (Gao, 2009), it has been suggested that consumers may perceive the CRM brand personality by these characteristics named as altruistic and egoistic. Altruistic orientation emerges when consumers see the brand is doing something for others while egoistic orientation emerges when they see the brand is doing something for its interest. Therefore, two personality dimension of egoistic and altruistic may reflect the main difference between CRM brands and non-CRM brands (Figure 2.4) (Heidarian, 2016). These personalities can be described by possible adjectives. The adjectives have been developed by the use of definition of egoistic or altruistic personality, CRM features and current brand personality scales.

Figure 2.4. Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) brand personality (Heidarian, 2016)

The traits for Egoism were selected based on traits in negative brand personality scale of Haji, the definition of egotistic personality and CRM features. Based on definition of egoism, for an egoistic person, individual self-interest is the actual motive of all conscious actions. It is one of the negative human personality which means caring too much about yourself and not about other people (“www.merriam-webster.com,” n.d.). Egoistic
individuals have a strong tendency to talk about themselves in a self-promoting way, and they may be arrogant, snobbish and boastful with the sense of their importance (Kowalski, 1997). Researches have been found that being egoistic provide a strong tendency for egoistic individuals to deserves themselves more for a limited resource (Wade-benzoni & Tost, 2009). Like an egoistic person, these characteristics can also be perceived by consumers for a CRM brand, since CRM can be seen as a way to show the brand is better than other brands just because of supporting a cause while it is caring for its own interests to increase the sale which can be arrogant and snobbish. Based on CRM literature, consumers can perceive the brand as self-serving (Tsai, 2009). Self-serving is the condition of having or showing concern only about your own needs and interests which consistent with selfish personality and being egoistic (www.merriam-webster.com, n.d.). Also, a CRM brand which advertise its good deed can be considered as pretentious which is related to being boastful as an egotist person. As a result, self-serving or egoistic personality of a CRM brand can be demonstrated by traits like snobby, arrogant, selfish and pretentious (Heidarian, 2016). These traits are also included in the negative personality scale of Haji. As a result, the traits of snobby, arrogant, selfish and pretentious were chosen for this research because these traits seem to be enough to describe a CRM brand which has an egoistic or self-serving personality in judging process.

The second dimension is altruistic orientation. The traits for altruism selected based on Venable et al. (2005) brand personality scale, the definition of altruistic personality and CRM features. Based on definition of altruism, an altruistic person have or show an unselfish concern for the welfare of other people (“www.merriam-webster.com,” n.d.). It has been shown that empathy and social responsibility are the core variables of the altruistic personality (Bierhoff & Rohmann, 2004). Altruistic person understands other people’s feelings and problems and cares for them. Empathy encompass a broad range of emotional state and consumers’ emotional responsiveness to others’ well-being (Bekkers,
Hence, altruistic people can be responsible and emotional. These traits can also be perceived by consumers for a CRM brand, since CRM brand is going to help and care for the society. Being responsible is an important characteristic of CRM campaign to show the commitment of the company toward the society (Y. J. Kim & Lee, 2009). Responsible is also one of the traits in Geuens et al. (2009) and Venable et al. (2005) scales related to NPOs organization and usual brands. This indicates that the social issues and problems are altruistically crucial for the brand when consumers perceive the brand as a responsible one. Regarding emotional trait, since CRM brand tries to make an emotional bond between consumers and brand (Gupta & Pirsch, 2006), they may recognize the brand as emotional. Because consumers may perceive a common emotional concern between CRM brand and themselves toward the issues in the society which is also related to the nurturance dimension of Venable et al (2005) scale. These traits can reflect the altruistic orientation of CRM campaign based on the definition of altruistic person.

Based on CRM literature, other characteristics that can show the altruistic orientation of a CRM campaign can be relatively close to nurturance and integrity dimension of Venable et al. (2005) brand personality scale which were the most crucial dimension of the brand personality regarding NPOs. Although the nature of NPOs is different from CRM brands, the integrity dimension and its traits seem to be essential for consumers who are concerned with the efficiency or effectiveness of the CRM campaign. The integrity dimension is based on trust theory which is a crucial factor for consumers for participation in a charitable campaign (Venable et al., 2005). This is because consumers are worried about the result of the CRM campaign (Webb & Mohr, 1998). As a result, if consumers perceive a CRM brand as effective or having a positive influence on the society, then it means that the brand is doing something beneficial for other-serving purposes. Also, being honest is another crucial characteristic which consumer should perceive in CRM campaign. Webb & Mohr (1998) found that it was important for consumers to trust the
campaigns which are honest. Perception of honesty is related to the perception of other-serving motivations of the company (Müller et al., 2014). Honesty is a trait, included in Venable et al., (2005) and J. Aaker, (1997) scales associated with both usual and NPOs brands. As a result, the integrity dimension of Venable's scale which is important for charitable giving (Venable et al., 2005) can be divided into honesty and effectivity and responsibility to describe an altruistic CRM brand. These traits are essential to perceive the CRM brand as an altruistic person because it means that the brand is truthful and do something effective for others.

As a result the traits of effective, responsible, emotional and honest are selected to assess if consumers can recognize the CRM brand as an altruistic person.

2.1.6. Brand image of a CRM brand

The term of brand image has been extensively defined and used. However, the general agreement of the definition is that brand image is what consumers attach to a brand by the rational or emotional perceptions (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990) or “how a brand is perceived by a consumer” (D. Aaker, 1996, p.71). Keller (2003) defined brand image as perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory. The definitions of the brand image present a consumer-oriented approach by focusing on consumers’ perceptions through direct or indirect experience with the brand. When a brand image is favorable, it would have a positive influence on consumer behavior towards the brand in terms of increasing loyalty, commanding a price premium and generating positive word of mouth (Vöckner, Sattler, & Kaufmann, 2008). Studies show that brand image is an essential factor which influences brand equity (Keller, 1993). It is the central field of marketing because it presents both for tactical marketing mix issues, also for strategic strategy due to the ability to build long-term brand equity (Koubaa, 2008).
One of the fundamental purposes for running a CRM campaign for companies is to enhance brand image (File & Prince, 1998; S. M. Smith & Alcorn, 1991). This is considered as a strategic approach because it can create a positive attitude toward the brand for consumers (Müller et al., 2014). Since a favourable brand image influence consumer’s intention to give money, time, or in-kind services to NPOs (Venable et al., 2005), by linking the brand name with a worthy cause, the company hopes to enrich its brand identity in the minds of consumers (Lavack & Kropp, 2003). This will ultimately enhance brand image and thereby increase sales. Based on Keller’s assertion, a positive brand image could be established by connecting the strong, favorable, and unique associations with consumers’ memories about the brand through marketing campaigns (Keller, 1993). Lynch & Chernatony (2004) suggest that brands which are related to emotional values are more durable due to creating an emotional relationship between consumer and product or brand. Hence, associating a brand with ethical and social issues makes the bond with the brand stronger (Berry, 2000). Consequently, CRM can be considered as an important source of sustainable competitive advantages through focusing on the emotional side of brand image. While CRM campaign seems to improve brand image, this effect depends on how consumers perceive the CRM brand. Consumers can have a negative or positive perception of the CRM brand which is related to several factors influencing them to perceive the brand as more favorable or not (Fries, 2010). Studies show that CRM can enhance brand image which ultimately leads to higher purchase intention (Müller et al., 2014; Wu & Wang, 2014).

Different brand image constructs have been used by the researchers and they have measured and categorized the brand image dimensions. There has not been an agreement on how to measure brand image and its dimensions. Some have suggested brand image in the form of one-dimensional concept (Kwun & Oh, 2007; Ryu, Han, & Kim, 2008), while others propose a multidimensional structure of brand image. For example, brand image
has studied as to be favorable/unfavorable or good/bad for consumers’ overall perception as a one-dimensional concept (Kwun & Oh, 2007) which is consistent with brand attitude (Keller, 1993).

On the other hand, other researchers have suggested multidimensional structures; for example, functional and symbolic concepts of brand image (Chiu, Lin, Hsu, & Chen, 2011; Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990; Kennedy, 1977). The functional brand image explains product-related attributes in satisfying consumer’s needs and, the symbolic brand image explains non-product related attributes of the brand to satisfy higher-level needs of consumers. This aspect of a brand image helps consumers in getting social approval or personal expression that can maintain or enhance their self-esteem (Keller, 1993). Martínez et al. (2014) have used Kennedy (1977) brand image dimensions to evaluate the effect of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on hotel brand image and loyalty. It contains two main components: the functional and the emotional dimension. The functional dimension is related to physical characteristics, while the emotional dimension is associated with a psychological dimension manifested through feelings and attitude. Also, Müller et al. (2014) have modified Völckner et al. (2008) scale to evaluate brand image in the Cause-Related Marketing context. They have measured CRM brand image on Likert scales (bad/good, not likable/likable, low quality/high quality, not trustworthy/trustworthy, unpleasant/pleasant, unattractive/attractive). In another research, Koubaa (2008) has found that brand image is multidimensional and the dimensions differ from the country of production. According to different explained dimensions, the emotional part of brand image is separated when consumers evaluate the brand image as a multidimensional construct. The emotional dimension corresponds to brand personality. Studies argue that although there are some similarities between brand image and brand personality, brand image and brand personality are two separate constructs (D. Aaker, 1996; Batra et al., 1993; Biel, 1993; Keller, 1993). Brand image is rooted in tangible and intangible product
attributes, where the former refers to physical and functional benefits and the latter to emotional attributes (Biel, 1992). According to Biel, brand personality is based on soft or intangible associations, taking the emotional side of brand image. Considering brand personality as a part of brand image (Biel, 1993; Keller, 1993; Plummer, 1985), it can affect brand image because in this research brand image has been assumed as a one-dimensional construct similar to brand attitude.

Brand attitude can shape consumer behavior and is determined by the importance and relevance of the brand’s attributes and benefits (Keller, 1993). To create a positive attitude toward the brand, the consumer should perceive the brand as a mean to satisfy their wants or needs by its attributes and benefits (Keller 1993). These attributes or benefits can be product-related or non-product related but must be important to the consumer. Hoeffler and Keller (2002) suggested that corporate social marketing, which includes cause-related marketing is an effective way in developing positive associations for a brand and thus increasing the willingness for purchase.

2.1.7 Warm glow and CRM brand

When consumers donate, the act of giving provides the opportunity for consumers’ self-image to be considered as an altruistic, empathic, socially responsible, or influential person (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011) which increase a positive mood in consumers. This positive mode can be experienced by reduction of guilt sense, satisfying a desire to be thankful or act as a moral person (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). The positive mood or feeling is known as warm glow. Warm glow is an intrinsic benefit in the form of feeling good about supporting a worthy cause (Andreoni, 1989; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). It is a psychological benefit that donors give themselves as a result of donating and acting in a good or moral way. People enjoy the act of helping because they can reduce feelings of guilt, they act based on social norms or act based on specific self-image like being altruistic (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). Bekkers & Wiepking, (2011) argue that not only individuals
who have an altruistic self-image like to make a donation but also they want to reinforce this image. Besides, promoting self-image, individuals can benefit from the act of giving by enhancing their self-esteem (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). As a result, a good feeling of helping can promote consumers self-image as well as their self-esteem. Hence, the good feeling from helping can motivate individuals to commit prosocial behaviours. CRM provides this opportunity for consumers by allowing them to contribute to a cause and satisfy their desires for helping and improving society, which lead to higher purchase intentions (Andrews, Luo, Fang, & Aspara, 2014). Thus, consumers can benefit from warm glow feelings through their charity-related purchase (Andrews et al., 2014) to justify their purchases or compensate their guilt (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Warm glow has been found to be the most important underlying process for CRM purchases (Andrews et al., 2014; Fries, 2010). According to the warm glow concept, the good feelings of consumers from helping charitable causes motivates them to respond to CRM favourably (Andrews et al., 2014; Fries, 2010; Müller, Fries, and Gedenk, 2014).

2.1.8. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the probability that a consumer will buy a particular product/service (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). Purchase intention is a predictor of actual buying behavior, and the effect of CRM on purchase intention has been examined empirically (Andrews et al., 2014; Hammad et al., 2014; J.-E. Kim & Johnson, 2013; Tsai, 2009). In CRM, purchase intention reflects the desire of a consumer to buy a product which is promoted by helping a cause through a purchase. In the following the basis for CRM purchase intention has been discussed.

People extend their self-identity by what they possess or are going to possess (Belk, 1988). This fundamental idea of self considerably influences consumer behavior and is the driving force behind many marketing plans. By associating brands with personality traits and hence building brand personality, marketers provide consumers with self-expressive
or symbolic benefits (Batra et al., 1993) which is connected with self-concept theory. Consumer’s self-concept interacts with brand image and brand personality as they are related to consumers’ feelings and perceptions toward a brand. These concepts (actual-self, ideal-self, and social-self) then affect consumer feeling toward purchase goods to express their identity. Aforementioned is done by attempting to match a brand’s personality with the consumer’s self-concept. Consumers reach "self-congruity" when a brand’s personality and the consumer’s self-concept are equivalent. This congruity plays a vital role in purchase motivation which affects the consumer’s brand preference and purchase intention (Sirgy, 1982). As a result, brand personality allows consumers to evoke the type of person they are or the person they want to be seen (J. L. Aaker, 1999). Consumers choose brands according to how they give symbolic associations and meanings to brands (Belk, 1988), they strengthen self-image (Belk, 1988; Sirgy, 1982) and obtaining self-expressive benefits (Keller, 1993). A CRM brand can evoke consumers feeling in terms of social approval and self-respect (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). Consumers get social approval when using a specific brand results in other people have positive feelings about them. This approval may directly come from confirmation of the consumers using the brand or may result from the product attributions to consumers (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). To evoke these types of feelings, CRM campaign may need to provide consumers with external symbols to show the consumers’ connections with the brand in form of ribbons, buttons, t-shirts, and so on (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). Social approval can be corresponding with self-expressive benefits to reinforce social self-image. Self-respect happens when the brand makes consumers feel better about themselves like a sense of accomplishment or fulfillment. To evoke these feelings, CRM campaign should admit consumers that they are doing the right thing and thus they feel good about themselves (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002).
Therefore, when there is a higher perception of altruistic rather than egoistic for the CRM campaign, consumers can experience a good feeling by the act of helping results in a higher purchase intention (Barone et al., 2000; Boenigk & Schuchardt, 2013; Ellen, Mohr, & Webb, 2000) and express themselves as a social consciousness person by CRM purchase (Webb & Mohr, 1998). Social consciousness is a prosocial behavior, and studies presented that consumers who indicate higher levels of engagement in prosocial behavior have more positive attitudes towards CRM and further indicate higher purchase intention for CRM-labelled products (Chéron et al., 2012; Cui et al., 2003; Youn & Kim, 2008). As a result, consumers can benefit from CRM purchase by getting social approval or enriching their self-respect by using a CRM brand which has positive associations.

2.2. Consumers characteristics

Although the literature review shows a positive effect of CRM strategy on brand perceptions, the efficiency of CRM depends on how consumers perceive the CRM brand. Different individual factors have studied in previous researches like religiosity, empathy, altruism and susceptibility, etc. In this research susceptibility and religiosity are selected to see how these personal variables can influence consumer’s propensity to support a cause through CRM purchase. Although the effect of these variables on the CRM brand has been studied before, these variables have not considered as a moderator on the relationships between CRM related variables. The author chose these factors because of possible influential effect in a cross-culture study which will be described in the following.

2.2.1. Susceptibility to interpersonal influence

Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel (1989) defined consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence as: “The need to identify or enhance one’s image with significant others through the acquisition and use of products and brands, the willingness to conform to the expectations of others regarding purchase decisions, and/or the tendency to learn about products and services by observing others and/or seeking information from others”
Susceptibility to interpersonal influence is manifested in three different forms: utilitarian, value-expressive, and informational which are categorized in two dimensions: informational and normative components (Bearden et al., 1989). Utilitarian influence and value-expressive influence are grouped in normative influence category (Bearden et al., 1989). Informational susceptibility scale measures how an individual likes to gather information about products and services by observing or gaining information from others directly while the normative susceptibility scale measures the degree of individuals’ need to use a brand/product to identify or enhance their images in the eyes of others which is known as value expression (Kropp et al., 2005). Also, normative susceptibility shows the degree of individual’s willingness to meet the expectations of others in their purchase decisions which is a utilitarian form of susceptibility (Kropp et al., 2005). In other words, high susceptibility to interpersonal influence level shows a tendency to be influenced by others in making decisions, whereas a low susceptibility to interpersonal influence level provides more independence in the decision-making process (Lalwani, 2002).

Several studies have used this scale to examine various consumption-related factors. For example, a research in North America about the susceptibility of smokers shows that smokers are less susceptible to interpersonal influence than non-smokers. The reason can be because individuals who are highly susceptible to interpersonal influence like to get rid of social pressure from friends and family, as well as from public anti-smoking media and as a result become non-smokers (Kropp, Lavack, & Holden, 1999). In another research, it has found that susceptibility to interpersonal influence and children fashion is positively associated with the display aspects of clothing like brand name and what others wear (G.M. Rose, Boush, & Friestad, 1998). Boush et al. (1994) found that consumers who are more susceptible to interpersonal influence tend to be less skeptical about advertising. Also, Netemeyer et al. (1992) found that consumers who are susceptible
to interpersonal influence are more expected to purchase products that they perceive will let others have desirable attributions about them.

Since the normative susceptibility measures the extent that people act based on others’ expectations to get rewards or avoid punishment, it is interesting for marketers in the consumer behavioral context (Kropp et al., 2005). Batra et al. (2001) pointed out that those consumers with a higher level of susceptibility to normative influence are more likely to purchase products with visible benefits searching for respect and a sense of belonging. In addition, consumers feel good by using a brand which makes others look at them more favorably, and this is known as social approval (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002).

Consumer behavior toward CRM can be affected by the susceptibility. Participating in CRM campaigns can be determined by the influence of the social dimension of the cause, family or friends’ opinions, or just general acceptance or rejection (Kropp et al., 1998). CRM purchase can provide the opportunity when consumers are looking for gaining approval or affirmation of others and use their purchases to identify with other people (or improve their image) and a willingness to conform the expectations of others in making purchasing decisions. The purchase of CRM brand can lead to gain approval by others and others can see the person as social consciousness and altruistic person. Another reason that shows the importance of susceptibility to CRM purchase is some values which are related to CRM attitude. Values such as warm relationships, self-fulfillment, and security have found to have a positive correlation with attitudes toward CRM (Kropp et al., 1998). Also, these values are significantly associated with consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (Kropp et al., 2005). As a result, it seems that normative susceptibility can be a significant factor in CRM purchase decision. Studies reveal that consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence is not a significant factor in the consumers’ attitudes towards CRM brand (Kropp et al., 1998). However, in another research, a considerable difference in normative susceptibility between countries and
cultures has been found (Kropp et al., 2005; Mourali, Laroche, & Pons, 2005). The result shows higher susceptibility among Korean participants rather than other participants from Australia, Canada, and Norway (Kropp et al., 2005). As a result, normative susceptibility seems to be an important factor in a cross-culture research to find the differences.

2.2.2. Religiosity
Religiosity or religious involvement is defined as “belief in God accompanied by a commitment to follow principles believed to be set by God” (Vitell, Paolillo, & Singh, 2005, p.157). Religion represents a fundamental part of society in most cultures and is undoubtedly linked to many aspects of people life and behavior (Mokhlis, 2006). It has a significant influence on people’s attitudes, values, and behaviors on both individual and social levels. Religion and its associated practices often play a fundamental role in influencing many important life events. It affects people experiences (e.g. birth, marriage, and funeral rites), values (e.g. moral values of right or wrong), shaping public opinion on social issues (e.g. cohabitation, family planning, organ donation) and what is allowed and forbidden for consumption (e.g. restriction on eating and drinking) and many other aspects (Mokhlis, 2006). However, these norms vary between different religious and the degree that people keep them (Mokhlis, 2009). Religious commitments and beliefs also influence people’s feelings and attitudes towards consumption (Vitell et al., 2005).

The importance of religious value systems in consumer behavior has been studied. Regardless of different degrees of religious commitment, religiosity is linked and correlated to particular consumer lifestyles. Consequently, “religiosity is a viable consumer construct because it correlates with lifestyle variables such as opinion leadership, risk avoidance, credit purchase, and life satisfaction” (Essoo & Dibb, 2004, p.686). Therefore, religiosity is an important value in shaping individual’s behavior toward buying products (Lau, 2010).
The related literature shows the aspects of consumer behavior that can be affected by religion. Delener (1990) described religion as one of the most important cultural influences on consumer behavior. In this study, the effects of religious factors on perceived risk in purchase decisions was explored. The findings suggested that Catholics were more likely to be sensitive to any potentially negative consequences of their automobile and microwave oven purchase decisions compared with the Jews. In another research about the effect of religion on the purchase decision, the findings demonstrated that for major durable goods in Catholic households, husbands were the major influence on most of the purchase decisions. In contrast, in Jewish households, husbands and wives shared equally in making the most purchase decision (Delener, 1992). Also, Essoo (2001) argued that Catholic consumers are more thoughtful, traditional and demanding in their shopping behavior compared with the Hindu and Muslim consumers. In a research by Kim et al. (2004), they have found that there is a significant difference in perceiving advertisement as controversial between four religious groups (Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and non-religious believers) especially for Islam followers. Moreover, it has been shown that highly religious individuals are looking for quality in products when they shop and they are most likely to be concerned with price deals (Mokhlis, 2009). It plays a significant role in influencing social and consumer behavior (S. Kim et al., 2004).

Religious individuals have more altruistic values and helping behavior is more common among them (T. W. Smith, 2006). In most religions, there is a strong emphasis on helping behavior and therefore it can trigger people as well as business’s leaders to engage in social responsibility programs (Hemingway & Maclagan, 2004) because religion provides the reason for being ethical (Christie, Kwon, Stoebert, & Baumhart, 2003). As a result, it is believed that religious involvement affects consumers’ tendency for taking part in prosocial behaviors with having a higher likelihood of offering donations and supporting causes for religious individuals compared to non-religious ones (Bekkers, 2006; T. W.
Moreover, studies proved that religion plays a vital role in predicting donation behavior (Lwin et al., 2013) which have a significant influence on experiencing a “warm glow” from the act of charitable donations (Andreoni, 1990). As a result, religious individuals can experience a higher good feeling when they help through donating in comparison to non-religious individuals. Because based on the above arguments, helping behavior can be a part of their religiosity and having a good feeling by acting based on religious rules. Therefore, religiosity can affect CRM purchase via having a higher warm glow feeling when they make a donation which is directly related to CRM strategy. Also, Hammad et al. (2014) in a study regarding CRM campaign, have found a positive relationship between company attitude and CRM purchase intention along with altruism and religiosity. They show that consumers with a higher level of religiosity have more positive motivational attribution toward CRM campaign. All these prove the substantial role of the religion in the CRM campaigns.

2.3. Culture

2.3.1. Introduction

Culture is a complex phenomenon and is built up of different components, like religion, standards, language, norms, and values (Foscht, III, Swoboda, Morschett, & Sinha, 2008). National culture can be defined “as values, beliefs, norms, and behavioral patterns of a national group” (Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez, & Gibson, 2005, p.357). Culture is recognized as a fundamental factor defining and explaining differences in value systems (Geert Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Hofstede (1980) defined culture as “…the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another” (p. 25). Hofstede classified differences between cultures into the five areas which are showing stable patterns of characteristics. Based on Hofstede model each country has a score in the range of 0-100 scale in each dimension. The model includes the following dimensions:
• Power distance, describing the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. (p.61)

• Individualism versus collectivism, ranging from societies in which the ties between individuals are loose to societies in which people are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups. (p.92)

• Uncertainty avoidance, referring to the degree to which the members of a culture feel tolerant of uncertain or unknown situations. (p.189)

• Masculinity versus Femininity, ranging from societies in which social gender roles are distinct to societies in which social gender roles tend to overlap. (p.140)

• Long-term orientation versus short-term orientation, indicating societies’ time horizon with long-term oriented societies to attach more importance to the future while short-term oriented societies share values related to the past and the present (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010, p 239).

Hofstede’s cultural framework create an opportunity for cross-country research which nowadays is one of the most frequently tools in culture-specific studies (Foscht et al., 2008; De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Although the country scores initially were provided in the early 1970s, many replications of Hofstede’s study on different samples have confirmed that the country ranking in his data is still correct (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011).

2.3.2. Culture and consumer behavior

Culture has a fundamental power in shaping human behavior. Individuals in the same culture have similar values (Leung et al., 2005) which are likely to affect consumer’s behavior and purchase decisions. Cultural values are transmitted from one generation to another (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010). As a result, values are kept over time and, therefore, they have an impact on the choices that individuals make regarding consumer decisions
from everyday products to important purchases (Luna & Gupta, 2001). The cultural value system includes cultural elements that people have in common with the group to which they belong, as well as particular values unique to every individual (Luna & Gupta, 2001). Social culture and regional subculture, as well as family values, all have an impact on the shaping individual's values. Therefore, people experience advantages and disadvantages of a specific culture which may become the main factor affecting consumers purchase decisions (De Mooij, 2010). Differences found in consumer’s perception and patterns among various ethnic groups. For instance, researchers have found differences in consumer behavior such as brand personality (J. Aaker et al., 2001; Sung & Tinkham, 2005), brand perception (Erdem, Swait, & Valenzuela, 2006; Foscht et al., 2008), purchase behavior (Bathaee, 2014), consumer behavior (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011), moral emotions (J.-E. Kim & Johnson, 2013) and CRM attitude (Lavack & Kropp, 2003) in different cultures. Lavack and Kropp (2003) have found that attitudes toward CRM are different between countries with different cultures which is related to their values. In their study, they have shown that novelty of CRM is directly related to how consumers perceive CRM as a positive strategy. In the country which was the least for existing CRM campaign, consumers had the least positive attitude while in countries with well-established CRM, consumers had a higher positive attitude toward CRM. They argue that CRM can be not transferable in some countries because of the lower level of acceptance. Also, the result in this research shows that consumers who rate values like self-fulfillment, self-respect, warm relations with others, security, and sense of belonging as more critical values, have a higher level of a positive attitude toward CRM. Self-fulfillment is defined as “find peace of mind and to make the best use of your talents”, self-respect as “being proud of yourself and confident in who you are”, warm relationships with others as “having close companionship and intimate friendship”, security as “being safe and protected from misfortune and attack” and sense of belonging as “being accepted and
needed by friends, family and community” (Kropp et al., 1998, p.14). Due to differences in these values, consumers respond differently to CRM strategy (Lavack & Kropp, 2003).

To sum up, consumers’ culture not only shapes their’ needs but also it affects the way of developing marketing strategies to create a more effective marketing strategy when targeting consumers from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, researchers and marketers need to know cultural differences to better understand the consumers’ behaviors. Marketing researchers have usually used Hofstede cultural dimensions to show the differences between consumers behavior (Erdem et al., 2006; Luna & Gupta, 2001) with emphasizing on the individualism-collectivism dimension. Hence in the following, it is going to explain how each dimension of culture can affect consumer behavior to generate a basis for consumer’s behavior predictions in this study.

2.3.3. Cultural dimension and consumers behavior

2.3.3.1. Power Distance

The power distance is the extent of inequality acceptance by individuals (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). In countries with high power distance, a person’s position is more important than in countries with low power distance (Foscht et al., 2008; De Mooij, 2011). Therefore, the social status should be recognizable, hence the other people understand the differences and respect him/her, this can happen by buying expensive and luxury products (De Mooij, 2011). The emphasis lies on prestige and wealth; therefore, personality traits that are useful for social classification are more critical in societies with high power distance compared to cultures with low power distance (Hofstede, 1984). Also, power distance makes consumers distrust brands and authority (Erdem et al., 2006), because of the unequal distribution of power. In the high power distance culture, individuals tend to be hierarchic in their decision making and personal relationships (Erdem et al., 2006). De Mooij (2011) asserts that people in cultures with a high level of power distance tend to be controlled by the superiors for making decision whereas, for low power distance, all
consumers of the product make the decision. Moreover, according to Rose et al.’s (2002) study about purchase decision for individuals in high power distance cultures, it has been shown that people (especially woman and children) are expected to respect standards, norms, and superior member's decisions.

2.3.3.2. Individualism-Collectivism

Individualism versus collectivism defines as people looking after themselves and their immediate family only while people belonging to collectivistic culture look after them in exchange for loyalty (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). This dimension describes the relationships that individuals have with each other. According to Hofstede (1984), this dimension is one of the core values that specify the form and harmony of a society in which individuals live together. In individualistic cultures, people are “I” while in collectivist cultures they are “we” (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). For individualistic people, self-realization and individual freedom are critical factors, whereas in collectivistic cultures group cohesion is more important (Foscht et al., 2008). Collectivistic societies are characterized by large families and their responsibility towards the group (Foscht et al., 2008). Regarding decision-making, in collectivistic societies the goals of in-groups are more important than individual goals, resulting in more trust on the brand choice of the group as a whole (Erdem et al., 2006). On the other hand, individualistic consumers are likely to give priority to personal benefits over public benefits or interests (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010).

In collectivistic cultures, people's identity derived from the social system to which they belong, and they are afraid of losing their face (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Also, it is essential to assert that in collectivistic cultures, building a relationship and create trust before doing business is important (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Individualists prefer stability in their attitudes, feelings, and behaviors. Stability may imply that the behavior of consumers can be predicted from their attitudes toward products, services, and brands,
whereas, in collectivistic cultures, there is not much stability in the relationship between attitude and future behavior (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Collectivistic cultures are more likely to choose products and brands that could be accepted and liked by others (Bathaee, 2014). Also, brand image is more prominent in collectivistic culture than individualistic one (Corbu, 2009; Johansson, Ronkainen, & Czinkota, 1994). Individualists use brands to differentiate themselves from others, while collectivists use brands to confirm their similarity with members of their reference group (Luna & Gupta, 2001). Members from individualistic cultures tend to be more self-centered and self-reliant; this leads to trust others until there is a reason not to trust (Chong, Yang, & Wong, 2003). Individualists have a high tendency to trust in general, while in collectivistic cultures, it is less likely to trust someone from outside the group (Chong et al., 2003). Collectivist consumers are likely to rely on information sources like family and friends, while individualist consumers’ decisions are based on information gathered through personal experiences and via media (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010; De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011).

Studies show the importance of individualistic-collectivistic features in adapting advertisement styles (Luna & Gupta, 2001). In collectivist cultures, the advertisement should focus on status, symbolism, prestige, family or in-group benefits (De Mooij, 2011). However, in an individualist culture, the advertisement emphasizes on features like design and performance (Soares, Farhangmehr, & Shoham, 2007). Individualists like to know about the capabilities of the product before they purchase while for collectivists other factors for decision-making are also important such as symbolism (De Mooij, 2011). Another significant effect of culture are emotions which can be specific to each ethnic group. Mooij, (2011) indicated that ego-focused emotions like pride could derive from individualism whereas high collectivism results in more other-focused emotions like sympathy.
2.3.3.3. Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance determines the degree that people feel threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity and try to avoid these situations (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). This concept relates to seeking for stability, predictability, and low-risk experiences (Hofstede, 1984). Cultures with a high level of uncertainty avoidance prefer rules and structure for life, and they are less open to change (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). They also tend to make relationships with established brands because the risks associated with known brands, as well as the information costs, are lower than those for new and unknown brands (Erdem et al., 2006).

2.3.3.4. Masculinity-Femininity

The masculinity versus femininity dimension can be defined as follows: The dominant values in a masculine society are achievement and success; the dominant values in a feminine society are caring for others and quality of life (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Feminine cultural values like caring for other people and quality of life (Hofstede, 1984) can be an influential factor in applying CRM strategy in a specific culture. In feminine societies, both men and women could be modest and caring while in masculine societies men should be and women can be assertive and ambitious (Geert Hofstede, 2011). In feminine societies, there is a sympathy for weakness while in masculine societies being strong is admired (Geert Hofstede, 2011). Regarding advertisement, in masculine cultures, men preferred the egoistic advertisement and women prefer the altruistic one while in feminine cultures, where men are allowed to be nurturing, the opposite is the case (Nelson, Brunel, Supphellen, & Manchanda, 2006). In masculine cultures, the role of male and female in society are more determined, whereas in feminine cultures the roles cover each other (Geert Hofstede, 2011; De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Regarding purchase decision in a masculine society, consumers prefer to experience challenging and new procedures whereas feminine society prefers routine procedures (Bathaee, 2014). Also, in
masculine societies people put more value on performance and achievement; therefore, well known, luxury brands or products such as jewelry are related to show one’s success (De Mooij, 2011). He indicated that in feminine culture decision are made through the family while in masculine culture the superior of the family takes most of the choices. The feminine societies also have both greater emotional intensity and greater emotional expressiveness than the masculine societies (Paez & Vergara, 1995).

2.3.3.5. Long-term Orientation

Long-term versus short-term orientation is the extent to which a society exhibits a pragmatic future-oriented perspective rather than a short-term point of view (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Individuals of societies with long-term orientation are perseverant and thrifty and invest for the future while societies of short-term orientation, by contrast, put more importance on the past, and the present and they pursue happiness rather than peace of mind (Geert Hofstede, 2011; De Mooij, 2011). With short-term oriented thinking, people put future in the hands of God, and they tend to be more religious (Hofstede et al., 2010). In short-term orientation societies, there is more social spending and consumption while in long-term orientation societies, large savings is encouraged and funds are available for investment (Geert Hofstede, 2011).

2.3.4. General Cultural Differences between Iran and Germany

To clarify the difference between Iran and Germany, in this project the Hofstede cultural dimensions are applied to compare two culturally different countries (Fig 2.5). By comparing Iran and Germany along the five dimensions according to their cultural dimension indexes, some tentative conclusions may draw.

As the figure 2.5 shows, Iran and Germany have different cultural indexes in some aspects like power distance, individualism, masculinity and long-term orientation which is discussing in the following.
First, regarding power distance, Iran with score of 58 is considered to have a higher level of power distance in comparison to Germany with score of 35. The score of Iran is nearly twice as that of Germany, which means that Iran is centralized while Germany is almost decentralized and supported by a strong middle class (Geert Hofstede, 2011; Geert Hofstede et al., 2010). Germany is not surprisingly among the lower power distant countries (score 35). The communication is direct and participative, and there is a tendency for disliking control (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010). Individuals in Iran are supposed to distrust brands and also benefit more from the symbolic association of the brand.

Second, in the individualistic dimension, Germany with score of 67 has a higher level in individualism than Iran with score of 41. Iran is considered as a collectivistic society with score of 41. Hence, in this country, the emphasis is supposed to be on a close long-term commitment to the group, like family. Loyalty is the central element that can outweigh other social rules. The society expects and develops strong relationships in a way that each member of the group takes responsibility for other members. Other-focused emotions are higher and people like to be accepted by others. They care for the symbolic associations of what they possess beside its function. On the other hand, German society is an actual individualist culture (67) with small families and focusing on the relationship between parent and children rather than extended family. There is a strong belief in the ideal of
self-actualization (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010). They are going to be more stable in their attitudes. There is also a more ego-focused emotions and they like to differentiate themselves from others by using brands and products.

Third dimension is masculinity. Germany (66) has a higher score than Iran (43) in masculinity, which indicates Germany is more masculine than Iran. Iran with a score of 43 on this dimension is considered a relatively feminine society. In the feminine cultures, the focus is on “working to live” (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010). People are considered as caring, they put more value on equality as well as unity and quality. Well-being is important, and the status is not shown. On the other hand, Germany with a score of 66 is considered as a masculine society. Performance and being strong are highly valued. People focus on “live to work,” and they are looking for obtaining self-esteem from their tasks (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010). They like to experience new products. The status of individuals is important and is often shown, especially by cars, watches and technical devices (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010).

Fourth dimension is uncertainty avoidance. Germany (65) has a slightly higher score than Iran (59) for uncertainty avoidance. Both countries have high uncertainty avoidance. Cultures with a high level of uncertainty cannot tolerate unusual behaviors and ideas and they are looking for stable situations (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010). In these cultures, there is a need for existing rules even if the rules never seem to work. Also, security is an essential element in individual motivation and details are necessary to create certainty (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010).

Fifth dimension is long-term orientation. Germany (83) is strongly oriented toward long-term versus short-term than Iran (14). Germany’s score is more than sextuple of Iran score, which indicates the German culture takes a long-term view of outcomes compared to short-term orientation in Iran. Those with a culture which scores high on long-term
orientation encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future. Iran has a weak score of 14 indicates that it has a strongly normative cultural orientation. Individuals in such cultures have a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and they focus on achieving quick results. They are supposed to be more religious and like to spend on social consumption. Germany’s high score of 83 indicates that there is a strong propensity to save and invest for future (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010).

2.4. Summary

This chapter provides the background relating to the various variable which affects the Cause-Related Marketing brand relevant to this research. The intention of this chapter was, first of all, to give the reader a basic understanding of the concept of CRM. With the aim to analyse consumers’ response to CRM, some concepts related to consumer behavior were added and explained like consumer attitude toward CRM, brand image, skepticism toward CRM advertisement as well as introducing new scale for CRM brand personality. The focus was on consumers’ perception and attitude toward CRM, which can be modified by consumers’ characteristics. In the second part, the consumers’ characteristics like susceptibility and religiosity were explained. Moreover, in the third part, the significant role of cultural differences was considered. A summary of cultural dimension and its effect on consumer behavior was discussed. The chapter ends with a comparing the cultural index of Iran and Germany as the research samples.
Chapter 3. Developing of hypotheses

3.1. Identifying the main CRM brand variables

3.1.1. Skepticism toward cause-related Marketing

When consumers face a CRM advertisement, based on signaling theory they use the messages of the claims appeared in the CRM advertisements as a signal or cue to form their judgments about CRM campaigns and brands.

As it was discussed in chapter two, an important issue has arisen regarding whether or not consumers view CRM with skepticism. Consumer skepticism toward CRM is a challenge for companies because donation to a particular cause is connected with buying of a product (Singh et al., 2009). Thus, consumers often perceive CRM as an exploitation of a cause for a company’s self-interest (Cui et al., 2003). This perception influences them to response to CRM negatively (Bronn & Vrioni, 2001; Hammad et al., 2014; Singh et al., 2009) especially when they do not have knowledge about CRM (Bronn & Vrioni, 2001).

Webb and Mohr (1998) assume that skepticism towards CRM claims is derived from the cynicism towards advertising in general and consumers’ lack of trust in advertising. Previous studies propose two kinds of motivations for companies for using CRM strategy: self-serving (egoistic) or other-serving (altruistic) (Cui et al., 2003; Webb & Mohr, 1998). Skepticism toward CRM advertisement are higher when a CRM brand is perceived to participate mainly to enhance higher sales and profits or advertising the CRM campaign. Consumer skepticism toward CRM is often determined by whether the CRM campaign is perceived as cause-beneficial or cause-exploitative (Webb and Mohr ,1998) related to situational skepticism (Forehand & Grier, 2003) which can be higher for individual with a stronger predisposition to doubt (Forehand & Grier, 2003; Webb & Mohr, 1998). Thus, skepticism toward advertisement claim directly affects brand perceptions by influencing response to ad claims (Obermiller & Spangenberg, 1998). Haji (2014) asserts that skepticism about the CRM campaign is likely to decrease the positive beliefs through the
negative attitudes and, consequently, consumers characterize a brand with a negative brand personality. As a result, when consumers are skeptical toward the CRM advertisement which is the extent that they perceive the motivation behind the CRM claim as self-serving by the claim attributions, they may characterize the brand as an egoistic person. Also, consumers’ skepticism toward CRM may cause them to perceive the CRM strategy as less positive because of considering the CRM strategy as a way to increase sales, especially when they are not familiar with CRM. In contrast, if consumers’ perception company intention would be other-serving, they would be less skeptical toward CRM ad and so characterize the brand as an altruistic person. Based on the explanation above, the first hypothesis is postulated as follows:

\[ H_1a: \text{Skepticism toward CRM advertisement negatively affects consumers' attitude toward CRM strategy.} \]

\[ H_1b: \text{Skepticism toward CRM advertisement negatively affects altruistic brand personality perception.} \]

\[ H_1c: \text{Skepticism toward CRM advertisement positively affects egoistic brand personality perception.} \]

### 3.1.2. Consumer Attitude toward CRM and Brand Personality

Attitude is used as a basis for consumers’ general judgment toward an advertisement or a brand or a firm, because it can form the ground for consumer behavior (Keller, 1993). As it was explained before, generally there is a positive attitude toward CRM strategy (Ross et al., 1992, 1991) and CRM can be viewed as a tool to help a cause which is the basis for CRM appeal (Kropp et al., 1998). Consumers see CRM strategy as a way for the company to show their responsibility toward the society (Cui et al., 2003) and thus perceive the company and its brand positively. Consumers’ positive attitudes toward the CRM which may come from their previous knowledge or is taken from the advertising claim affect their assessment toward the brand. As a result, how consumers perceive CRM strategy influence their attitude toward the CRM brand and may help them to recognize
the CRM brand with human characteristics. Since there is a general positive attitude toward CRM strategy for its good intention, consumers can perceive the CRM brand as more other-serving rather than self-serving. As a result, when there is a favorable attitude toward the CRM, consumers may perceive other-serving motivation of the company for supporting a cause and then characterizing the brand with altruistic personality. On the other hand, when consumers’ attitude is positive, they are less likely to perceive self-serving motivation of the company and thus less likely to characterize the brand with egoistic personality.

As a result, how consumers perceive CRM strategy which is advertised by a brand, can influence them to attribute human personality to the CRM brand. Hence, the second hypotheses are postulated as follows:

\[ H2a: \text{A favorable attitude toward CRM positively affects altruistic brand personality perception.} \]

\[ H2b: \text{A favorable attitude toward CRM negatively affects egoistic brand personality perception.} \]

### 3.1.3. Brand Personality and Brand image

As it was discussed in the previous chapter, brand image and brand personality are not identical. Brand image relates to the set of associations connected with the brand that consumers keep in memory, whereas brand personality is based on soft associations, taking the emotional side of brand image (Keller, 1993) and it helps marketers build and maintain brand image (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002).

Cause-Related Marketing is a long-term strategy to enhance brand image (Müller et al., 2014). For several years, more than 80% of consumers have regularly reported that they have a more positive image of companies using CRM (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001). According to Keller (1993), a positive brand image is formed by generating strong, favorable and unique associations to the brand in the memory (Keller, 1993). As a sub-branch of brand image (Biel, 1993; Keller, 1993; Plummer, 1985), brand personality can
affect brand image. CRM brands are trying to stimulate consumers’ emotions to persuade them to participate in a CRM campaign. It can be concluded that how consumers perceive the brand personality of CRM can influence brand image because the central part of CRM is engaging the emotions and brand personality is the emotional part of brand image. As a result, brands that are perceived as socially-motivated (altruistic brand) by the consumers should generally be perceived as having a more positive brand image than a profit-motivated (egoistic brand) brand which is based on Keller (1993) explanation of how a positive brand image is formed. Therefore, a brand that is perceived as socially-motivated should create more favorable associations and create a more positive image. As a result, consumer’s perception of CRM brand personality ultimately affect brand image, when they perceive brand as altruistic, the image of the brand will improve and makes the brand more favorable, while if they perceive CRM brand as egoistic, the image of the brand will become less favorable and consequently it will have a negative effect on the brand image (Heidarian, 2016). As a result, the third hypotheses are postulated as follows:

\[ H_{3a}. \text{Perception of altruistic CRM brand personality positively affects CRM brand image.} \]

\[ H_{3b}. \text{Perception of egoistic CRM brand personality negatively affects CRM brand image.} \]

### 3.1.4. Brand image and purchase intention

Studies have found that brand image is one of the critical factors which directly influence purchase intention (Lien, Wen, Huang, & Wu, 2015; Webb & Mohr, 1998). Also, according to Keller (1993), a positive brand image should increase the probability of brand choice. Hence, the symbolic associations of a CRM brand which enrich brand image give the opportunity to consumers to meet the higher level needs like gaining social approval or for self-expressive purposes (Keller, 1993) or differentiate themselves (Luna & Gupta, 2001) by their purchase. As a result, CRM brand can increase the probability of purchase intention because of creating a more favorable brand image by emotional associations in the consumers' mind. Therefore the fourth hypothesis is postulated as follows:

\[ H_{4}. \text{Perception of CRM brand personality positively affects purchase intention.} \]
**H4: A more favorable CRM brand image leads to higher CRM purchase intention.**

### 3.1.5. Warm glow and Brand Personality and purchase intention

It has been proved and discussed that consumers experience a good feeling when they help and support an issue (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998) which has a positive impact on brand choice (Fries, 2010). Therefore, the purchase of a CRM product which is linked to a cause via CRM brand would be a double reward for the consumers, namely the use of the product and the additional moral benefit in the form of a positive feeling about having done something beneficial.

*H5a: A more warm glow feeling leads to higher CRM purchase intention.*

As it has been argued in chapter two, it is expected that brand personality influences consumers’ good feeling in helping behavior and consequently encourage them in engaging in CRM campaign. It can be assumed that when the personality of the brand is in accordance with the consumer personality or to their ideal personality, it may increase the degree of warm glow feeling leading to higher purchase intention. As it was discussed, CRM brand can be perceived as altruistic or egoistic one. When consumers perceive the brand as altruistic; consumers may see the brand as a responsible, honest, effective and emotional person who is going to do something altruistically for the society. As a result, based on self-concept theory, the perception of altruistic brand personality can increase the degree of warm glow feeling because consumers may see their actual image, ideal image or social image matches with altruistic brand personality and build an emotional relationship with the brand. This helps them to enjoy from act of helping by satisfying the needs for self-expressive or approval. On the other hand, if consumers perceive the brand as an egoistic person, they may find the brand as a person who is arrogant, snobby, selfish and pretentious which is abusing an issue to increase his/her benefits. Perception of egoistic traits will reduce the degree of warm glow feeling because consumers may not experience a good feeling by building an emotional relationship with an egoistic brand. As
a result, according to self-concept theory, by the perception of altruistic brand personality, consumers can find the brand as an altruistic person who cares for the society and experience higher level of warm glow feeling to show themselves as a social consciousness or altruistic person by CRM purchase to gain benefits and enhance their self-esteem. On the other hand, when they perceive the brand as egoistic, they do not experience a high level of good feeling by engaging in a CRM campaign because they would like to refuse to build a relationship with an egoistic brand to express themselves.

$H_{5b}$: Perception of altruistic CRM brand personality positively affects warm glow feeling.

$H_{5c}$: Perception of egoistic CRM brand personality negatively affects warm glow feeling.

3.2. Consumers characteristics hypotheses

In this part, it is going to integrate the effects of susceptibility, and religiosity of consumers on the above relationships.

3.2.1. Susceptibility to interpersonal influence

According to Hypothesis 4, brand image may affect purchase intention. Since susceptible individuals are likely to purchase products which can make others have a more favorable attitude about them (Netemeyer et al., 1992), the effect of this relationship may increases when normative susceptibility of consumers is higher. This function can be described by the definition of normative susceptibility that the normative susceptible individuals need to use a brand/product to identify or enhance their images in the eyes of others. These group of consumers prefers to meet others expectations in their purchase to get social approval. To get this approval, they are going to use brands or products with visible benefits (Batra et al., 2001). CRM purchase can provide this opportunity for susceptible consumers to get approval and identify themselves with others and improve their social image. Consumers who use CRM brands can be recognized as an altruistic or social consciousness person by others (Webb & Mohr, 1998). Moreover, using a brand which has a favorable brand image can lead to more social approval and feeling good. This can be
especially regarding CRM brand which generally has a positive brand image (Ross et al., 1991) because of positive evaluations of consumers of such programs (Barone et al., 2000; Ellen et al., 2000; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). As a result, it seems that consumers with a higher level of normative susceptibility can be affected more by the favorable brand image of CRM brand influencing purchasing intention. That is because they can receive social approval namely by using a brand which has a favorable association resulting in impressing people whom he/she cares. Regarding the above explanation, the sixth hypothesis is postulated as follows:

\[ H_6: \text{Normative susceptibility moderates the relationship between brand image and purchase intention positively: higher susceptibility will lead to a stronger relationship between brand image and brand purchase.} \]

3.2.2. Religiosity

According to the literature in chapter 2, religion can play a significant role in CRM, because CRM is directly related to doing something altruistically and it can provide an opportunity for consumers to express their altruistic personality. As a result, when consumers find the personality of the CRM brand as altruistic one in congruence with their personality, they can experience higher warm glow feeling by participating in a CRM campaign to show or enhance their altruistic personality by helping. It is supposed that this relationship can be affected by the degree of religiosity, because altruistic behaviors are more common among religious individuals (T. W. Smith, 2006). Religious individuals have a more positive attitude toward helping behavior. As a result, they may perceive the altruistic brand personality of CRM congruent with themselves and benefit from expressing themselves as the religious and altruistic person leading to higher warm glow feeling. Religious people may be more interested in participating in CRM campaign to gain moral benefit in the form of feeling good about having done something good for society and this leads to experiencing higher warm glow feeling (Andreoni, 1989). Therefore,
religiosity can act as a moderator for the relationship between altruistic brand personality and warm glow. Regarding the above description, the seventh hypothesis is postulated as follows:

\[ H7: \text{Religiosity moderates the relationship between altruistic brand personality and warm glow positively: higher religiosity will lead to a stronger relationship between altruistic brand personality and warm glow.} \]

3.3. Integrating the role of culture

3.3.1. Consumers characteristics and cultural difference

Regarding the cultural differences which have discussed in part 2.3.3, it is going to integrate cultural differences in skepticism toward CRM, susceptibility, and religiosity variables, to see how consumers with different cultures (Iran versus Germany) can perceive CRM brand and behave differently.

3.3.1.1 Skepticism toward Cause-Related Marketing and cultural differences

As it has been discussed before in hypothesis 1, skepticism toward CRM advertisement may affect negatively on consumer’s attitude toward CRM as well as CRM brand personality. It seems that the strength of these relationships can be affected by culture because the dispositional skepticism is a culturally related variable (Huff & Kelley, 2003) which affects situational skepticism (Webb & Mohr, 1998). Since skepticism toward CRM and its negative effects is challenging for marketers, it would be helpful to see if consumers with different culture perceive these effect differently.

It is assumed that consumers who have the culture which triggers the higher skepticism, in general, should experience a higher negative impact of skepticism toward CRM on attitude and CRM brand personality. The reason is that skepticism touches the egoistic motivation of CRM and then trigger the negative effect. It has been said that “an individual with a stronger predisposition to doubt the motives for a commercial message would be more likely to doubt the substance of the message” (Mohr et al., 1998, p.33). As
a result, when consumers are more skeptical in general, they can be more affected by skepticism toward CRM advertisement and have less favourable attitude toward CRM strategy and CRM brand personality. The cultural dimensions that can influence skepticism are power distance and individualism. According to Hofstede cultural dimensions, cultures with a high level of power distance are likely to distrust brands and powerful organizations. It can be concluded that individuals in such cultures may be also skeptical to charities and companies. Moreover, collectivist cultures (like Iran) prefer to improve relationship before doing business: this relationship brings trust for them. On the other side, cultures with a high level of individualism (Germany) have trust in general. Also Huff & Kelley, (2003) asserted that collectivistic cultures have less trust propensity than individualistic cultures. Regarding, the power distance index score in Iran and Germany which is 35 and 58, as well as individualism index score which is 41 and 67 respectively (Hofstede et al., 2010); it can be suggested that Iranian consumers may be more skeptical. Although being skeptical may lead to being more affected by the negative effect of skepticism toward CRM advertisement on attitude toward CRM and CRM brand personality, the role of other cultural dimensions cannot be ignored. Other cultural characteristic like being responsible in collectivistic society and femininity may weight out the negative effect of being skeptical on this relationships because of stimulating of emotions which is related to CRM strategy. As a result, the eighth hypothesis is postulated as follow without a specific direction:

**H8a:** Concerning attitude toward CRM, the negative effect of CRM skepticism on Cause-Related Marketing will be significantly different for Iranian consumers compared to German consumers.

**H8b:** Concerning brand personality of CRM brand, the positive effect of CRM skepticism on perceiving the CRM brand as egoistic will be significantly different for Iranian consumers compared to German consumers.
Concerning brand personality of CRM brand, the negative effect of CRM skepticism on perceiving the CRM brand as altruistic will be significantly different for Iranian consumers compared to German consumers.

### 3.3.1.2. Susceptibility and cultural differences

According to hypothesis 6, normative susceptibility may moderate the relationship between CRM brand image and CRM purchase intention. Since culture can explain the different degree of susceptibility (Mourali et al., 2005), consumer’s culture may play an important role in this regard. Kropp et al. (2005) have found that there is a significant difference in consumers’ susceptibility between countries and cultures. Moreover, Mourali et al. (2005) found that individualism has a significant negative effect on consumer susceptibility to normative interpersonal influences. Negative effect means that a higher level of individualism will lead to lower levels of susceptibility to normative interpersonal influences and a higher level of collectivism will lead to higher levels of susceptibility to normative interpersonal influences. The individualism index score for Iran and Germany is 41 and 67 respectively (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010). According to the individualism index scores, it can be suggested that Iranian consumers may be more susceptible to normative influences because of the higher collectivistic nature of their society (Mourali et al., 2005). Iranian consumers seem to be more concerned about the opinions of others because collectivistic orientation considers the group to be more important than the individuals (Kropp et al., 2005). As a result, they may likely to benefit more from social approval by purchasing a CRM brand which has a favorable brand image.

**H9:** The relationship between brand image and purchase intention is higher for Iranian consumers than German consumers, because of higher normative susceptibility.

### 3.3.1.3. Religiosity and cultural differences

According to hypothesis 7, religiosity may affect the relationship between brand personality and warm glow. Religion is a cultural phenomenon which can play a significant role in shaping consumers behaviors. As a result, the moderation effect of
religiosity may also be affected by consumer's cultures. The reason is that different religious groups such as Muslims, Christians, and Buddhists have various beliefs and these beliefs cannot be avoided when a society is analyzed (S. Kim et al., 2004). Religious commitments and beliefs influence people's feelings and attitudes towards consumption (Hammad et al., 2014; S. Kim et al., 2004). According to the CIA World Factbook, around 90–95% of Iranians associate themselves with the Shi’a branch of Islam (“CIA and Index-mundi,” n.d.). Therefore most of the individuals in Iran considered themselves as a religious person. Also, Christianity is the largest religion in Germany, with an estimated 57.9% of the country's population (“CIA and Index-mundi,” n.d.).

In addition, according to Hofstede cultural dimensions, when a country has a low level of long-term orientation, it is perceived as a religious country. Considering this research and comparison between Iran and Germany, the long-term orientation index score for Germany is 83 whereas for Iran is 14. The level of short-term orientation in Iran is considerably higher than Germany. As a result, based on cultural dimension Iran is more religious country than Germany. Hence, Iranian individuals are supposed to be more influenced by religion than Germans regarding being affected by perceiving the brand as more altruistic and experiencing higher warm glow feeling. They may experience higher warm glow feeling by participating in CRM campaign to act based on religious rules. As a result, the tenth hypothesis is postulated as follow:

\[ H10: \text{The influence of altruistic brand personality on warm glow is higher for Iranian consumers than German consumers, because of higher religiosity.} \]

### 3.3.2. Culture and different perceptions

Since culture affects consumer attitude toward CRM, it has been assumed that there should be differences in the level of consumers’ perceptions toward CRM brand variables. Studies show that individuals who like to participate in prosocial behaviors will be more likely to find Cause-Related Marketing promotions appealing and they have more
tendency to purchase CRM products which depend on consumers’ values (Kropp et al., 1998). They argued that CRM attempts are likely to be most successful when directed at those who tend to place greater importance on self-fulfillment, self-respect, warm relations with others, security, and sense of belonging. These values are associated with self-esteem and helping behavior (Lavack & Kropp, 2003). Lavack et al. (2005) argue that individual values are related to the individualism-collectivism dimension of Hofstede’s (1980). They assumed that based on the characteristics of the Hofstede’s individualism-collectivism dimension, self-fulfillment and self-respect should be more important in individualist countries because for them self-realization, and individual freedom and goals are important factors (Erdem et al., 2006; Foscht et al., 2008). Individualists give priority to the personal benefits while self-fulfillment sense could be more important for a group level in a collectivist society (Kropp et al., 2005). For collectivistic society, group’s goals are more important than individual goals (Erdem et al., 2006). The value of “warm relationships with others” is likely to be more important in a collectivist society (Kropp et al., 2005) because in such culture, group cohesion is more important (Foscht et al., 2008) and the emphasis is on “we” than “I” (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Also, having a higher sense of belonging is one of the characteristics of collectivistic cultures (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). People get their identity based on the social system to which they belong (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Moreover, the sense of security which is related to the uncertainty avoidance dimension, is almost the same and high in both countries. This means individuals in both cultures are looking for the sense of security. As a result, based on these values it can be said that both countries can be affected by CRM strategy differently because of differences in these values.

As a result, it seems that these values can be triggered differently in each culture. Also other cultural values may help individuals to be more positive toward CRM like femininity or power distance. Iran with a higher level of femininity (Iran 57 and Germany 34) can be
considered as more caring and emotional. Hence, Iranians may be more interested in participating in a prosocial activity like CRM campaign. In addition, Iran with power distance index 58 is assumed a culture with relatively high power distance rather than Germany with 35 index. Since cultures with a high level of power distance put more value on the symbolic benefits of the brand, individuals in such culture may be affected more by symbolic association of a brand like CRM brand. All these together mean that Iran with a high level of femininity, collectivism and power distance may have more positive attitudes toward CRM strategy, brand image, and purchase intention while the role of some other values like self-fulfillment, self-respect cannot be ignored. The reason is that these values are important for individuals in individualist culture and these values have more in common with engaging in prosocial behavior as well as other internal values like warm relationship or sense of belonging which is important in collectivistic society. In addition, CRM is not as popular in Iran as in Germany. As a result, cultural variables like knowledge and internal values can make Germans to be more positive toward CRM.

Moreover, it has been argued that individuals with different cultures perceive brand personality of products differently (J. Aaker et al., 2001). So CRM brand personality including egoistic and altruistic traits may be perceived differently in these countries. Altruistic brand personality includes traits like emotional and responsible which are close to the characteristics of individuals who have less individualism and less masculinity. People in collectivistic culture feel more responsible toward each other and they have more “other-focused” emotions (Bathaee, 2014) which can be related to altruistic personality of CRM brand. Since, researchers have found that consumers tend to build a relationship with brands and products that are match with their personality traits, Iranians may perceive the altruistic personality of CRM brand more than Germans. This can be also described by individualistic culture of Germans that they have more ego-focused emotions (Bathaee, 2014). On the other hand, since Iranians are more emotional because of a higher
level of femininity (Paez & Vergara, 1995), and emotional individuals react more strongly toward negative impressions (Cho, 2006), if they get negative impression from the brand, they may recognize the brand as more egotistical. This is in line with Kitayama et al. (2006) argument that individuals in individualistic culture experience higher positive emotions than collectivistic culture when they perceive a situation as positive and less negative in negative situation. Hence, based on cultural characteristics, it is hard to guess which country can see the brand as more altruistic or egoistic.

Regarding warm glow feeling, culture with a higher level of long-term orientation may not purchase a CRM brand just for feeling good because they are considered to be thriftier than short-term orientation cultures. In contrast, cultures with a low level of long-term orientation (Iran) put more value on present and happiness; this may lead to having more purchase intention besides feeling good because of enjoying to be caring and helpful which are the characteristics of cultures with a low level of masculinity and individualism. Warm glow can be affected by the individualism-collectivism dimension characteristics in a way that emotions work. De Mooij, (2011) indicated that ego-focused emotions like pride could derive from individualism culture whereas high collectivism results in more other-focused emotions like sympathy. Other-focused emotions are “associated with others in a social context or close others and are consistent with the need for unity, harmony, and the alignment of one’s actions with those of another” (J. Aaker & Williams, 1998, p.242) which are also regarded as types of moral emotions (J. Aaker & Williams, 1998). Also, cultures with a high level of collectivism (Iran rather than Germany) prefer to purchase brand which other members of the group buy, this leads to being accepted by others. As a result, if a reference group would accept the CRM brand, individuals in collectivist cultures experiencing a good feeling to purchase a CRM product. All together mean that feeling good by purchasing CRM (warm glow) would be higher in Iran rather than Germany.
As a result, although it seems that some CRM brand variables like brand image, purchase intention, and warm glow would be higher in Iran rather than Germany, it is hard to postulate them as above. The reason is that the critical role of skepticism could not be ignored which is directly and indirectly behind of all these variables as well as consumers knowledge about CRM which would be higher in Germany. Individuals with a high level of power distance culture might be more skeptical about brands and authority (Erdem et al., 2006; Geert Hofstede, 2011). Regarding this research Iran with index of 58 in power distance is assumed to be more skeptical rather than Germany with index of 35 as well as level of collectivism (Huff & Kelley, 2003). As a result, based on above description, some hypothesis can be postulated regarding the level of differences between Iran and Germany without clear direction. These hypotheses reveal how culture can affect consumers’ perception toward CRM. Therefore the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth hypotheses have been developed as follows:

**H11**: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ skepticism toward CRM advertisement between Iran and Germany.

**H12**: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward Cause-Related Marketing between Iran and Germany.

**H13**: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward altruistic brand personality between Iran and Germany.

**H14**: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward egoistic brand personality between Iran and Germany.

**H15**: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward CRM brand image between Iran and Germany.

**H16**: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward CRM brand purchase between Iran and Germany.

**H17**: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ warm glow between Iran and Germany.
3.4. Research framework

According to above hypotheses, we develop the research framework as follow in Figure 3.1.

![Figure 3.1. Study Framework](image)

3.5. Summary of hypotheses

To have a better overview of the research, we summarized the hypotheses in a table (3.1) in this part.

Table 3.1. Summary of hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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| **H1** | **H1a.** Skepticism toward CRM advertisement negatively affects consumers’ attitude toward CRM strategy.  
**H1b.** Skepticism toward CRM advertisement negatively affects altruistic brand personality perception.  
**H1c.** Skepticism toward CRM advertisement positively affects egoistic brand personality perception. |
| **H2** | **H2a.** A favorable attitude toward CRM positively affects altruistic brand personality perception.  
**H2b.** A favorable attitude toward CRM negatively affects egoistic brand personality perception. |
| **H3** | **H3a.** Perception of altruistic CRM brand personality positively affects CRM brand image.  
**H3b.** Perception of egoistic CRM brand personality negatively affects CRM brand image. |
| **H4** | **H4.** A more favorable CRM brand image leads to higher CRM purchase intention. |
| **H5** | **H5a.** A more warm glow feeling leads to higher CRM purchase intention. |
H5b. Perception of altruistic CRM brand personality positively affects warm glow feeling.

H5c. Perception of egoistic CRM brand personality negatively affects warm glow feeling.

H6: normative susceptibility moderates the relationship between brand image and purchase intention positively: higher susceptibility will lead to a stronger relationship between brand image and brand purchase.

H7: Regarding CRM brand, religiosity moderates the relationship between altruistic brand personality and warm glow positively: higher religiosity will lead to a stronger relationship between altruistic brand personality and warm glow.

H8a: concerning attitude toward CRM, the negative effect of CRM skepticism on Cause-Related Marketing will be significantly different for Iranian consumers compared to German consumers.

H8b: concerning brand personality of CRM brand, the positive effect of CRM skepticism on perceiving the CRM brand as egoistic will be significantly different for Iranian consumers compared to German consumers.

H8c: concerning brand personality of CRM brand, the negative effect of CRM skepticism on perceiving the CRM brand as altruistic will be significantly different for Iranian consumers compared to German consumers.

H9: The relationship between brand image and purchase intention is higher for Iranian consumers than German consumers, because of higher normative susceptibility.

H10: The influence of altruistic brand personality on warm glow is higher for Iranian consumers than German consumers, because of higher religiosity.

H11: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ skepticism toward CRM advertisement between Iran and Germany.

H12: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward Cause-Related Marketing between Iran and Germany.

H13: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward altruistic brand personality between Iran and Germany.

H14: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward egoistic brand personality between Iran and Germany.

H15: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward CRM brand image between Iran and Germany.

H16: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward CRM brand purchase between Iran and Germany.

H17: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ warm glow between Iran and Germany.
Chapter 4. Methodology and analysis of the hypotheses

4.1 Research method

The research proceeds on a deductive approach as it discusses the issues raised in various existing theories of CRM concerning consumers’ perception, attitude, and behavior. Hypotheses are developed in this approach and survey strategy is designed to test the hypotheses (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The survey strategy usually associates with the deductive approach, and it allows the researcher to analyse the data quantitatively by using descriptive and inferential statistics (Saunders et al., 2009). The procedure includes the use of primary data from a purposeful questionnaire which makes this research to be quantitative (Saunders et al., 2009). Data was collected from university students in Iran and Germany as target population. From a statistical standpoint, structural equation modeling (SEM) and independent student t-test seem to be appropriate to test the hypotheses.

4.2 Research instrument

As mentioned before, the questionnaire was designed to measure all the research constructs and examine the hypotheses. The original questionnaire was in English which was translated into Persian by the author and into German by native Germans. As a pre-test to check if the questionnaire was understandable, it was tested with five respondents in both countries. Only some small language adaptations were made after the pre-test. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part was related to the measurement of the research constructs by using existing scales from the previous studies except for CRM brand personality construct which has been already explained in the literature review (2.1.4.5).

The questionnaire started with a description of the CRM offer in a specific situation as follows:
Imagine you are in a supermarket and want to buy detergent. You see an advertisement for one of a famous detergent brand with name A which claim that for each pack sold, 5% percentage of the sale price will be donated to an environmental issue in the country. You have tried the brand A before, and you were satisfied with the product. Also, the price and quality are the same as the brands that you usually use. This kind of campaign, where a business company offers to contribute a specified amount of money to a designated cause is called Cause-Related Marketing (CRM).

Thus, a CRM campaign established under this scenario. The company (brand A) supported a local environmental issue and was going to donate 5% of each detergent sale to the cause. All the participants were asked to read this scenario about a fictitious CRM detergent brand and answer the questions regarding their personal opinion. Bigné-Alcañiz (2009) suggested that to avoid consumers’ evaluations that may come from previous knowledge related to the specific brand, it is better to use a fictitious rather than real brand. The detergent is related to the fast moving consumer good (FMCG) which is a successful partner for CRM campaigns (Subrahmanyan, 2004).

In the current study, brand image was considered as a one-dimensional construct equivalent with brand attitude. Because the purpose of this study is to provide an integrated result of the relationships between CRM related variables and brand image rather than identifying brand image dimensionally. The scale included three adjectives “favorable”, “good”, and “likable”. Respondents were required to give their overall opinion as a consumer toward a CRM brand image using a 5-point Likert scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Attitude toward CRM strategy was evaluated by the same items as for CRM brand image.

Reasonable adjectives measured brand personality of CRM which were divided into two categories (egoistic and altruistic). Egoistic dimension included snobby, arrogant, selfish and pretentious traits and altruistic dimension included honest, effective, emotional and responsible traits. Respondents were asked to rate how the brand personality traits can
describe the CRM brand as a person in the questionnaire. The traits were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with anchors (1) not descriptive at all and (5) extremely descriptive, consistent with J. Aaker's (1997) study.

Purchase intention was measured by three items: 1. I would actively seek out brand A product in a store to buy. 2. I would buy brand A product if I happened to see it in a store to purchase it. 3. I would prefer brand A to other brands. The first two items were adopted from Baker and Churchill’s (1977) scale as cited in Bearden et al. (1993). The author added the last item to the questions related to the purchase intention. Purchase intention was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with anchors (1) definitely not and (5) definitely yes.

The items to measure advertisement skepticism toward CRM claim were adapted from Mohr et al. (1998) including four questions: 1. most statements made by a company in advertising or package labels about supporting a cause are true. 2. Most statements made by a company in advertising or on package labels about supporting a cause are intended to mislead rather than to inform the consumer. 3. Consumers would be better off if such statements were eliminated from advertising or package labels. 4. I do not believe most statements regarding support of a cause in advertising or on package labels. It measured how consumers view communicated claim with skepticism. The questions were measured by the 5-point Likert scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

Warm glow is measured with three items according to the scale used in several studies (Andreoni, 1989; Müller et al., 2014). The items were: 1. when I purchase brand A, I feel good because I do not only spend money for myself but also for other people. 2. I feel comfortable if I donate for a good cause by purchasing brand A. 3. I am pleased that I do not only get a product by purchasing brand A but that I also do a good deed at the same
time. The Likert scale points for warm glow was the same for skepticism toward advertisement.

Religiosity was measured by three items, 1. My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life (with anchors (1) Very untrue and (5) Very true) 2. I would rate the strength of my religious affiliation to be (with anchors (1) Very Weak and (5) Very strong). 3. I am a religious person (with anchors (1) strongly disagree and (5) strongly agree). The first two items were adapted from Hammad et al. (2014) study, and the author added the last one.

Susceptibility was measured by adopting four items of the normative susceptibility scale from Bearden et al.'s (1989) Study including: 1. I purchase the products until I am sure my friends approve of them 2. It is important to me that others like the products and brands that I buy. 3. I like to know what brands and products make good impressions on others. 4. I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same products and brands that others purchase. These items were measured using a five-point Likert scale with anchors (1) strongly disagree and (5) strongly agree. The second part of the questionnaire was related to some demographic information about the respondents to get an overview of the respondents. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

4.3 Data collection and sampling

The questionnaire was distributed to a non-probability convenience sample (i.e., students) from two different countries, Iran and Germany. These countries were chosen because of variability in cultural dimensions (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010). The study was carried out in both countries using the questionnaire as mentioned above with 31 items (Appendix1). The data gathered from the university students. All respondents were volunteers, and no incentive offered for the respondents’ participation. In total 564 responses are generated, 318 respondents for Iran sample and 246 respondents for German sample. Based on Hair
et al (2010) the sample size was adequate. They suggested that for multivariate analysis, the sample size should be 10 times or more (20) as large as the number of variables that should be analysed. In this research the total number of variables are nine and then the minimum sample size was 180. They also argued that multivariate analysis allows for differences in group size (Hair, William, Barry, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The respondent profile is summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1. Demographic characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Iran</th>
<th>Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>318 students</td>
<td>246 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No religion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>missing</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4. Missing data

After collecting and entering the data into the SPSS software, the analysis process started with handling missing data. By using the Missing Value Analysis function in SPSS in Iran sample, 24 items out of the 31 items contained missing data, ranging from 1 case to 11 cases, with the maximum of 3.5% for two items (Appendix 2). These items were related to religious questions, showing that 11 respondents out of 318 respondents (3.5%) refused to answer religious questions. The Little’s MCAR method to test MCAR (missing completely at random) was adopted by using SPSS to examine if the data were missing completely at random or not (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) to ensure that Missing data were spread randomly across items and there is no systematic pattern. Although statistically
non-significant result is desired, the Little's MCAR test was significant in the case of Iran
sample indicating that the missing data is not completely at random (MCAR) and there
can be a systematic relationship between missing data. As a result, the missing data
cannot be completely at random rather random (MAR: Missing at random) or non-random
(MNAR: Missing not at random). Since the percent of missing value for each item is less
than 5%, it has been assumed the missing data as MAR (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Also,
missing data with a maximum of 5% or even 10% is not considered to be large and
problematic (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003).

In the case of German sample, 18 items from 31 items contained missing data, ranging
from 1 to 5 cases with a maximum of 2 percent for one item (Appendix 3). The result of
the Little’s MCAR test was insignificant with Chi-Square = 284.528, DF = 318, Sig. =
0.912, which supports that the data is truly MCAR. Based on the types of missing data,
there are many different methods and strategies proposed for handling missing data. The
most common approach is Expectation maximization (EM) method which is available for
randomly missing data and completely random missing data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).
Therefore, EM estimates were used to substitute the missing data for both samples.

4.5. Measurement of the research constructs

4.5.1. Reliability analysis

Churchill (1979) point out that a desirable outcome for scale development is when scales
produce a satisfactory alpha coefficient and the items load on their respective constructs.
Therefore, a reliability measure in the form of Cronbach’s alpha was initially undertaken
to assess the internal consistency of research constructs. Table 4.2 displays Cronbach’s
alpha for each construct. All the constructs in both samples have satisfactory reliability
except for two constructs (Altruistic brand personality and CRM purchase intention ) in
German sample that have the alpha coefficient below 0.70 which is considered to be
acceptable based on the minimum value of Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.60$) (Hair et al., 2010).
In addition to the alpha test, a more strong measure was adopted to assess the reliability of the constructs through composite reliability (CR) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Composite reliability estimates of 0.7 or higher are considered as desirable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010) and acceptable if CR ≥ 0.60 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Results for composite reliability documented in table 4.2. Calculations in Table 4.2 show that composite reliability for all research constructs have good internal consistency.

### Table 4.2. Reliability analysis (Alpha Cronbach and Composite reliability)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research constructs</th>
<th>Iran</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Iran</th>
<th>Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>Composite</td>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>Composite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cronbach</td>
<td>reliability</td>
<td>Cronbach</td>
<td>reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward CRM</td>
<td>0.863</td>
<td>0.865</td>
<td>0.806</td>
<td>0.807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM brand image</td>
<td>0.868</td>
<td>0.870</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td>0.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruistic brand personality</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td>0.642</td>
<td>0.662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egoistic brand personality</td>
<td>0.762</td>
<td>0.773</td>
<td>0.843</td>
<td>0.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM purchase intention</td>
<td>0.812</td>
<td>0.812</td>
<td>0.678</td>
<td>0.705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm glow</td>
<td>0.844</td>
<td>0.845</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skepticism toward CRM adver</td>
<td>0.795</td>
<td>0.799</td>
<td>0.703</td>
<td>0.713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>0.846</td>
<td>0.851</td>
<td>0.879</td>
<td>0.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susceptibility</td>
<td>0.736</td>
<td>0.742</td>
<td>0.826</td>
<td>0.836</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.5.2. Validity analysis

#### 4.5.2.1. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity means that different items belonging to a specific construct should have a high proportion of variance in common (Hair et al., 2010). Factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and Composite reliability (CR) have been used to measure the convergent validity of the questionnaire which is supported by researchers (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010). When the factor loadings are greater than 0.50, the average variance extracted (AVE) of 0.50 or higher, they are indicators for showing an adequate convergence at the construct level (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010). The items related to each construct of the study were entered into a principal component analysis with varimax rotation separately to investigate the underlying structure of the
scales. The factor loadings of all the items for each sample ranged from 0.547 to 0.936 which support an acceptable convergent validity at the item level.

Also, by running confirmatory factor analysis using Amos software, the AVE of each construct were obtained. Table 4.3 shows the measurements of convergent validity for research constructs. All the constructs except for susceptibility and egoistic brand personality in Iran sample and altruistic brand personality, CRM purchase intention and skepticism toward CRM advertisement in German sample, were in the acceptable range. The AVE for these constructs showed relatively low AVE value, but the constructs have been accepted because Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Hair et al., (2010) argue, AVE is often too conservative, and validity can establish through CR alone. They argued that if AVE is less than 0.5, but composite reliability is higher than 0.6, the convergent validity of the construct is acceptable. According to the above explanation, all constructs expressed satisfactory convergent validity in each sample. To shed further light a discriminant validity test was conducted in the next section.

*Table 4.3. Convergent validity analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research constructs</th>
<th>Iran</th>
<th>Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude toward CRM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM attitude1</td>
<td>0.904</td>
<td>0.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM attitude2</td>
<td>0.858</td>
<td>0.857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM attitude3</td>
<td>0.897</td>
<td>0.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CRM brand image</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand image1</td>
<td>0.900</td>
<td>0.853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand image2</td>
<td>0.861</td>
<td>0.895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand image3</td>
<td>0.908</td>
<td>0.881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Altruistic brand personality</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest</td>
<td>0.802</td>
<td>0.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>0.805</td>
<td>0.547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>0.798</td>
<td>0.691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>0.835</td>
<td>0.775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Egotistic brand personality</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snobby</td>
<td>0.777</td>
<td>0.839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrogant</td>
<td>0.846</td>
<td>0.894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selfish</td>
<td>0.822</td>
<td>0.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretentious</td>
<td>0.606</td>
<td>0.790</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is used to measure the degree that each construct differs from other constructs (Hair et al., 2010). At the construct level, it is considered to be acceptable when Maximum shared squared variance (MSV), and Average shared squared variance (ASV) are less than AVE (Hair et al., 2010).

- **MSV < AVE**
- **ASV < AVE**

Table 4.4 shows the constructs’ measurements for AVE, MSV, and ASV for both samples. As indicated in table 4.4, discriminant validity seems to be acceptable at the construct level except for attitude toward CRM construct in German sample showing a poor discriminant validity with AVE (0.582)<MSV (0.646).

To ensure discriminate validity for attitude toward CRM construct in German sample, another method was used for assessing discriminate validity. Based on Gaski and Nevin

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRM purchase intention</th>
<th>Purchase intention1</th>
<th>0.839</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>0.450</th>
<th></th>
<th>0.705</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purchase intention2</td>
<td>0.866</td>
<td>0.591</td>
<td>0.812</td>
<td>0.761</td>
<td>0.770</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purchase intention3</td>
<td>0.853</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Warm glow              | Warm glow1          | 0.888|  |  |  | 0.892 |  | 0.755 |
|                        | Warm glow2          | 0.864|  0.645 | 0.845 | 0.936 | 0.909 |
|                        | Warm glow3          | 0.869|  |  |  |  |  |  |

| Skepticism toward CRM advertisement | CRM skepticism1 | 0.764|  |  |  | 0.784 |  | 0.713 |
|                                      | CRM skepticism2 | 0.836|  0.500 | 0.799 | 0.749 | 0.593 |
|                                      | CRM skepticism3 | 0.756|  |  |  | 0.593 | 0.785 |
|                                      | CRM skepticism4 | 0.797|  |  |  |  |  |

| Religiosity             | Religiosity1       | 0.854|  |  |  | 0.870 |  | 0.720 |
|                        | Religiosity2       | 0.894|  0.657 | 0.851 | 0.915 | 0.916 |
|                        | Religiosity3       | 0.885|  |  |  |  |  |  |

| Susceptibility          | Susceptibility1    | 0.732|  |  |  | 0.767 |  | 0.564 |
|                        | Susceptibility2    | 0.801|  0.423 | 0.742 | 0.874 | 0.862 |
|                        | Susceptibility3    | 0.804|  |  |  | 0.862 | 0.755 |
|                        | Susceptibility4    | 0.644|  |  |  |  |  |  |

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

---
(1985) test, the discriminant validity is provided when the correlation coefficient of each construct is lower than the individual Cronbach's α reliability coefficient. The correlation estimation of attitude toward CRM with other research constructs is available in table 4.5.

Table 4.4. Statistics for validity analysis of constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research constructs</th>
<th>Iran</th>
<th>Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AVE</td>
<td>MSV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward CRM</td>
<td>0.683</td>
<td>0.607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM brand image</td>
<td>0.692</td>
<td>0.607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruistic brand personality</td>
<td>0.541</td>
<td>0.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egotistic brand personality</td>
<td>0.471</td>
<td>0.199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM purchase intention</td>
<td>0.591</td>
<td>0.516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm glow</td>
<td>0.645</td>
<td>0.516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skepticism toward CRM advertisement</td>
<td>0.500</td>
<td>0.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>0.657</td>
<td>0.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susceptibility</td>
<td>0.423</td>
<td>0.139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5. Correlation estimation of attitude toward CRM with other research constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research constructs</th>
<th>CRM Ad</th>
<th>Skepticism</th>
<th>Susceptibility</th>
<th>Religiosity</th>
<th>Warm Glow</th>
<th>Purchase Intention</th>
<th>Brand image</th>
<th>Altruistic brand personality</th>
<th>Egotistic brand personality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward CRM</td>
<td>-0.470</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.527</td>
<td>0.462</td>
<td>0.663</td>
<td>0.346</td>
<td>0.351</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 4.2 and 4.5, attitude toward CRM has less correlation coefficient than Alpha Cronbach per constructs which provide the discriminant validity. As a result, generally, the results show the acceptable convergent validity and discriminant validity for each construct.

Also, the result of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with AMOS makes the model valid in each sample. For both samples all factor loadings were significant, and the CFA results indicate a model fit with acceptable fit indices. Table 4.6 lists the recommended threshold and actual values of some fit indices which are the most widely used indices for overall model fit (Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000). Except for GFI, other fit indices have a better
value than the recommended amount, showing a good fitness (Gefen et al., 2000). As a result, it is considered to be a good fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data.

Table 4.6. Goodness of fit indices for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chi²/df</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>AGFI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threshold</td>
<td>&lt;3</td>
<td>&gt;0.90</td>
<td>&gt;0.80</td>
<td>&gt;0.90</td>
<td>&lt;0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1.892</td>
<td>0.871</td>
<td>0.839</td>
<td>0.923</td>
<td>0.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1.504</td>
<td>0.863</td>
<td>0.828</td>
<td>0.941</td>
<td>0.045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Chi²/df is the ratio between Chi-square and degrees of freedom; GFI is Goodness of Fit Index; AGFI is the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index; CFI is the Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA is Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

4.6. Data analysis

4.6.1. Justification of analysis techniques

After confirming the fit in the measurement model, the hypotheses were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) using AMOS V.22 software which enables the estimation of the measurement model together with the entire structural model. Structural Equation Model (SEM) is a multivariate procedure that combines aspects of factor analysis and multiple regression to simultaneously examine a series of interrelated dependent relationships among the observed variables and latent constructs as well as between several latent constructs (Hair et al., 2010). In this manner, the estimated coefficient of each path and each item-loading are more accurate because of all the other correlations and item-loadings work together. Therefore, the SEM has been used to indicate the regression weights of each path between variables to identify the direction and magnitude of the relationship between them. Since the nature of this research is a comparative study, the results have been displayed based on unstandardized estimation. The reason is that unstandardized estimates are based on raw data or covariance matrixes. When groups have different variances, unstandardized estimated coefficient are preferred because it shows the absolute effect and not relative to the mean and variances (Garson, 2007).
As presented in figure 3.1, in this research latent variables are CRM attitude, CRM brand image, skepticism toward CRM advertisement, CRM brand personality, CRM purchase intention, warm glow, religiosity and susceptibility as moderators. Except for skepticism toward CRM advertisement which is an exogenous variable, the rest of the variables are endogenous.

As it was clear in figure 3.1, consumers may recognize the CRM brand personality as egoistic or altruistic. Altruistic and egoistic brand personality should be correlated because they are not acting independently from each other and egoistic brand personality is the counterpoint of altruistic brand personality. When consumers select egoistic traits the probability of selecting altruistic traits is lower and in reverse. These correlations are -0.248 and -0.355 for Iran and Germany respectively. As a result, in the model, the correlation between these two variables cannot be ignored. Since altruistic and egoistic brand personality are considered as endogenous variables in the model and in the structural model analyzing by AMOS there could not be a correlation path between two endogenous variables, it has been decided to divide the model to three separate models. This division converts these two endogenous variables to exogenous variables in model 2 which ables AMOS to consider them as to be correlated. As a result, six models will be discussed in total (three models for two samples, see figure 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3).

![Figure 4.1. Model 1 of the structural model](image-url)
As for all variables, the absolute values for skewness and kurtosis are smaller than 2 for the former and smaller than 7 for the latter; there exists no evidence for substantial departure from normality (West, Finch, & Curran, 1995). Thus, Maximum-likelihood estimation (MLE) has been employed for estimating the model.

Also, potential differences between Iran and Germany as well as moderation analysis are tested by critical ratio difference test as well as chi-square difference test using multiple-group analysis in AMOS (Hair et al., 2010).

4.6.2. Structural model result

Figure 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 present the analyzed models and hypotheses. The structural model fit is analyzed for each group and model separately as well as when two samples are together in the multi-group analysis. The structural models show a good fit with the data.
in comparison with fit criteria; all indices are above the threshold which is shown in table 4.7.

Table 4.7. Goodness of fit for structural equation model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threshold</th>
<th>Chi²/df</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>AGFI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;3</td>
<td>&gt;0.90</td>
<td>&gt;0.80</td>
<td>&gt;0.90</td>
<td>&lt;0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1.902</td>
<td>0.938</td>
<td>0.912</td>
<td>0.959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1.949</td>
<td>0.918</td>
<td>0.884</td>
<td>0.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>2.684</td>
<td>0.920</td>
<td>0.884</td>
<td>0.936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2.193</td>
<td>0.918</td>
<td>0.880</td>
<td>0.946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1.531</td>
<td>0.974</td>
<td>0.951</td>
<td>0.991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1.638</td>
<td>0.965</td>
<td>0.934</td>
<td>0.986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Chi²/df is the ratio between Chi-square and degrees of freedom; GFI is Goodness of Fit Index; AGFI is the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index; CFI is the Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA is Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

To compare the fit criteria of the models in both samples as well as their path coefficients (regression weights), critical ratio and the chi-square difference test were carried out by using multi-group analysis. The chi-square difference test for comparison of two sample in each model indicates that the models are significantly different from each other with CIMIN= 46.389, df= 16 and p<0.001 for model 1 and CIMIN= 57.563, df= 14, p<0.001 for model 2 and CIMIN= 37.065, df= 8 and p<0.001 for model 3.

Hypotheses were tested as they are shown with arrows in figure 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. Table 4.8 displays the structural relationships among the studied constructs; unstandardized regression weights and their level of significance as well as the chi-square difference test and critical ratio for comparing the relationships between two samples for model 1, and table 4.9 and 4.10 show the same values for model 2 and 3 respectively. Also, in this research the confidence interval is assumed at 95% (Sig<0.05).
Table 4.8. Hypotheses test in model 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Iran</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Δχ²</th>
<th>Critical ratio for differences</th>
<th>Results of differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>regression weights</td>
<td>result</td>
<td>regression weights</td>
<td>result</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2a</td>
<td>0.316***</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>0.211*</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>Ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2b</td>
<td>-0.268***</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>-0.250*</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>Ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1a</td>
<td>-0.508***</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>-0.527***</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>Ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1b</td>
<td>-0.456***</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>-0.364***</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>Ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1c</td>
<td>0.289***</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>0.348**</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>Ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Ns (not significant); *** (p<0.001); ** (p<0.01);* (p<0.05)

Table 4.9. Hypotheses test in model 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Iran</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Δχ²</th>
<th>Critical ratio for differences</th>
<th>Results of differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>regression weights</td>
<td>result</td>
<td>regression weights</td>
<td>result</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3a</td>
<td>0.569***</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>0.593***</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>Ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3b</td>
<td>-0.187**</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>-0.149*</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>Ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5b</td>
<td>0.468***</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>1.003***</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5c</td>
<td>-0.264**</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>0.035 (Ns)</td>
<td>rejected</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Ns (not significant); *** (p<0.001); ** (p<0.01);* (p<0.05)

Table 4.10. Hypotheses test in model 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Iran</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Δχ²</th>
<th>Critical ratio for differences</th>
<th>Results of differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>regression weights</td>
<td>result</td>
<td>regression weights</td>
<td>result</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>0.166**</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>0.341***</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5a</td>
<td>0.533***</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>0.316***</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Ns (not significant); *** (p<0.001); ** (p<0.01);* (p<0.05)

4.6.3. Results of hypothesis testing

4.6.3.1. Impact of skepticism toward CRM advertisement on attitude toward CRM strategy and brand personality

H1a: Skepticism toward CRM advertisement negatively affects consumers’ attitude toward CRM strategy.

H1b: Skepticism toward CRM advertisement negatively affects altruistic brand personality perception.

H1c: Skepticism toward CRM advertisement positively affects egoistic brand personality perception.
Hypotheses H1a, H1b, and H1c are supported in the model in both samples. Table 4.8 shows a significant negative relationship between skepticism toward CRM advertisement and attitude toward CRM. The results provide evidence to prove H1a in both samples with regression weights of -0.508 and -0.527, p<0.001 for Iran and Germany respectively. Hence, in both samples when respondents are skeptical toward CRM advertisement, it affects the perception of the CRM strategy negatively, and these relationships are not statistically different between the samples.

Also, Table 4.8 shows a negative relationship between skepticism toward CRM advertisement and perceiving the brand as altruistic for both samples with regression weights of -0.456, and -0.364, p<0.001 for Iran and Germany respectively. The results prove that when consumers have higher skepticism toward CRM advertisement, they are less likely to perceive altruistic brand personality of CRM brand which supports the direction and significance of H1b. Further analysis indicates that this effect is not significantly different between samples.

Besides, Table 4.8 also displays a significant positive relationship between skepticism toward CRM advertisement and egoistic brand personality (H1c) in both samples with regression weights of 0.289, p<0.001 and 0.348, p<0.01 for Iran and Germany respectively with no significant differences between samples. Hence, when consumers have higher skepticism toward CRM advertisement, they are more likely to perceive egoistic brand personality of CRM brand in both samples.

4.6. 3.2. Impact of attitude toward CRM on brand personality

H2a: A favorable attitude toward CRM positively affects altruistic brand personality perception.
H2b: A favorable attitude toward CRM negatively affects egoistic brand personality perception.

Hypotheses H2a and H2b assuming that when consumers have a positive attitude toward CRM, they are less likely to perceive an egoistic brand personality and they perceive the brand as more altruistic.
In both samples, table 4.8 shows a significant positive relationship between attitude toward CRM and altruistic brand personality with regression weights of 0.316, p<0.001 and 0.211 p<0.05 for Iran and Germany respectively which further analysis shows no significant difference between the samples. Hence, the more the respondents perceive CRM strategy positively, the more they characterize the brand with an altruistic brand personality which supports the direction and significance of the hypothesis H2a.

Regarding egoistic brand personality table 4.8 shows a significant negative relationship between attitude toward CRM and egoistic brand personality with regression weights of -0.268, p<0.001 and -0.250 p<0.05 for Iran and Germany respectively. This support H2b, indicating that when respondents perceive CRM strategy positively, they are less likely to characterize the brand with an egoistic brand personality. Moreover, in the further analysis, the chi-square test and critical ratio proved no significant differences between Iran and Germany regarding this relationship.

In sum, the results prove that consumers’ perceptions of altruistic or egoistic brand personality are directly affected by consumer’s attitude toward CRM for both samples.

**4.6. 3.3. Impact of CRM brand personality on CRM brand image**

\[ H3a. \text{Perception of altruistic CRM brand personality positively affects CRM brand image.} \]

\[ H3b. \text{Perception of egoistic CRM brand personality negatively affects CRM brand image.} \]

Hypotheses H3a and H3b assuming that when consumers perceive CRM brand personality as altruistic, they will have a more positive brand image toward the CRM brand and when they see the CRM brand as egoistic one, CRM brand image will be perceived negatively. These hypotheses are supported in the model in both samples as shown in table 4.9.

Table 4.9 shows a significant positive relationship between perceiving altruistic brand personality of CRM brand and brand image with regression weights of 0.569 and 0.593,
p<0.001 for Iran and Germany respectively which support H3a. Hence, the results show that in both samples when respondents perceive the CRM brand as altruistic one, they have a more positive attitude toward brand image. Also, non-significant chi-square and critical ratio indicate no significant differences between Iran and Germany in this relationship.

Also, table 4.9 shows a significant negative relationship between perceiving egoistic brand personality of CRM brand and brand image with regression weights of -0.187, p<0.01 and -0.149, p<0.05 for Iran and Germany respectively. Hence, it supports hypothesis H3b for both samples. The result indicates that respondents’ perception of egoistic brand personality leads to having a negative brand image. Although for both samples the negative relationship between perceiving egoistic brand personality of CRM brand and brand image was proved, they were not very strong. Also, further analysis proved no significant differences between Iran and Germany in this relationship.

In sum, the result indicates that consumers’ perception of brand personality considerably affects brand image, especially regarding altruistic brand personality perception while the negative effect of egoistic brand personality on brand image is weak.

4.6.3.4. Impact of CRM brand image on purchase intention

H4: A more favorable CRM brand image leads to higher CRM purchase intention.

Hypotheses H4 assuming that when consumers perceive CRM brand image positively, they are more likely to have the intention to purchase which is proved in model 3 (see table 4.10). Table 4.10 shows a significant positive relationship between brand image and purchase intention with regression weights of 0.166, p<0.01 and 0.341, p<0.001 for Iran and Germany respectively which supports H4 for both samples. Further analysis shows a significant difference between Iran and Germany in this relationship. German
respondents are more affected by CRM brand image toward purchase intention in comparison to Iranian respondents.

4.6. 3.5. Impact of warm glow on purchase intention and brand personality

*H5a.* A more warm glow feeling leads to higher CRM purchase intention.

*H5b.* Perception of altruistic CRM brand personality positively affects warm glow feeling.

*H5c.* Perception of egoistic CRM brand personality negatively affects warm glow feeling.

The results support hypotheses H5a, H5b, and H5c in the model in both samples except for H5c in German sample. Table 4.10 shows that H5a is supported with regression weights of 0.533 and 0.316, p<0.001 in Iranian and German sample respectively. H5a indicates that consumers are highly affected by warm glow feeling toward CRM purchase intention. Further analysis shows that although Iranian respondents are more influenced by warm glow feeling in comparison to German respondents toward purchase intention, this difference is not significant.

In addition, the significant positive regression weight of altruistic brand personality and warm glow feeling in both samples indicates that respondents’ warm glow feelings are highly affected by perceiving altruistic brand personality with regression weights of 0.468 and 1.003, p<0.001 (table 4.9) for Iran and Germany respectively, supporting H5b. Also, further analysis proves a significant difference between Iran and Germany regarding this relationship. The data shows that German respondents are more affected by the perception of altruistic brand personality toward warm glow feeling in comparison to Iranian respondents.

Also results in table 4.9 show that in Iran sample, respondent’s warm glow feelings are affected negatively by perceiving egoistic brand personality while warm glow of German respondents is not affected by egoistic brand personality perception. The regression weights for this relationship are -0.264, p<0.01 and 0.035 p>0.05 for Iran and Germany.
respectively indicating the support for H5c in Iran sample. Further analysis shows significant differences between Iran and Germany in this relationship.

4.6.3.6. The moderation effect of susceptibility

H6: normative susceptibility moderates the relationship between brand image and purchase intention positively: higher susceptibility will lead to a stronger relationship between brand image and brand purchase.

To test the H6, respondents in each sample were divided into two groups based on the mean of normative susceptibility. Mean obtained by taking an average of the items related to the normative susceptibility construct in SPSS. Then the mean was divided in a manner that if the normative susceptibility mean value exceeded the sample mean, the respondents were considered as having a high normative susceptibility and if the value of normative susceptibility was below the sample mean they were considered as having a low normative susceptibility (making a dummy variable). Table 4.11 presents the mean scores of the normative susceptibility for each sample. The independent sample t-test shows that there is a significant difference in normative susceptibility between Iran and Germany with t= 17.011, sig= 0.000 with higher susceptibility for Iranian.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>0.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By running multiple group analysis in AMOS, different regression weights for each category were obtained (Table 4.12).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>susceptibility</th>
<th>regression</th>
<th>Δχ²</th>
<th>Critical ratio</th>
<th>result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0.225**</td>
<td>Ns</td>
<td>0.999</td>
<td>No moderation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>0.095 Ns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0.428**</td>
<td>Ns</td>
<td>0.995</td>
<td>No moderation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>0.257**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Ns (not significant): *** (p<0.001); ** (p<0.01)* (p<0.05)
As table 4.12 revealed, in German sample, respondents with high and low susceptibility are affected by brand image of CRM leading to higher purchase intention. Although in this sample, respondents with lower susceptibility were influenced more by brand image toward purchase intention in comparison to respondents with higher susceptibility, this difference is not significant. As a result, the moderation effect of susceptibility is rejected for German sample.

In the case of Iran sample, respondents with a higher level of susceptibility are not affected by brand image of CRM toward purchase intention. In this sample, although respondents with lower level susceptibility were influenced by brand image leading to purchase intention, the difference between respondents with low and high susceptibility was not significant. As a result, H6 also rejected for Iran sample.

### 4.6. 3.7. The moderation effect of religiosity

**H7:** Regarding CRM brand, religiosity moderates the relationship between altruistic brand personality and warm glow positively: higher religiosity will lead to a stronger relationship between altruistic brand personality and warm glow.

The positive and significant relationship between altruistic brand personality and warm glow was tested in model 2. To examine the moderation effect of religiosity, the same procedure as for H6 was repeated. It was expected that higher value in religiosity leads to the stronger influence of altruistic brand personality on warm glow. A dummy variable was made by dividing the consumers to high religiosity (values more than the mean of religiosity), and low religiosity (values less than the mean of religiosity), the mean of religiosity is shown in table 4.13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>0.975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The independent sample t-test indicates a significant difference in religiosity between Iran and Germany with \( t = 20.227 \), \( \text{sig} = 0.000 \) with higher religiosity for Iranian.
By running a multiple group analysis in AMOS, the test is going to show how the regression weights are different within the samples and if these differences are significant (table 4.14).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>religiosity</th>
<th>regression weights</th>
<th>Δχ²</th>
<th>Critical ratio</th>
<th>result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0.255*</td>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>2.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>0.588***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0.809***</td>
<td>Ns</td>
<td>0.901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.096***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Ns (not significant); *** (p<0.001); ** (p<0.01); * (p<0.05)

As the table 4.14 indicates that in both samples respondents with a higher level of religiosity are more affected by perceiving the CRM brand as altruistic leading to higher warm glow feeling which is consistent with the expected direction. In Iran sample, the difference of regression weights between high and low religiosity is considerable. Iranian respondents are highly affected by religiosity, they are more likely to be affected by an altruistic brand in experiencing a good feeling of helping. The result supports the moderation effect of religiosity (H7) for the relationship between altruistic brand personality perception and warm glow feeling for Iran sample with significant chi-square and critical ratio.

While in Iran sample, there is a considerable difference between respondents with low and high religiosity, regardless of religiosity German respondents experience a good feeling by helping when they see the brand as altruistic one, indicating the rejection of H7 for German sample with non-significant chi-square and critical ratio.

4.6.4. Cultural differences hypotheses

4.6.4.1. Cultural differences and the effect of CRM skepticism

H8a: Concerning attitude toward CRM, the negative effect of CRM skepticism on cause-related Marketing will be significantly different for Iranian consumers compared to German consumers.


\textit{H8b: Concerning brand personality of CRM brand, the positive effect of CRM skepticism on perceiving the CRM brand as egoistic will be significantly different for Iranian consumers compared to German consumers.}

\textit{H8c: Concerning brand personality of CRM brand, the negative effect of CRM skepticism on perceiving the CRM brand as altruistic will be significantly different for Iranian consumers compared to German consumers.}

In these hypotheses, it was assumed that cultural differences affect differently on the relationship between skepticism toward CRM advertisement and attitude toward CRM as well as brand personality which have already tested in table 4.8.

In general, H8a is identical to H1a when it is tested between two samples to see if there is any significant difference. As table 4.8 and H1a revealed the negative effect of skepticism toward CRM advertisement on attitude toward CRM is supported in both samples. Although there is a slight difference in this relationship between Iran and Germany with higher effect for German sample, these differences are not statistically significant (see table 4.8). Non-significant chi-square, as well as critical ratio, provide support to the rejection of H8a.

Like H8a, H8b is identical to H1c when it is tested between two samples. Table 4.8 supports the positive effect of skepticism toward CRM advertisement on perceiving brand as egoistic which is already tested in H1c. Although there is a higher effect of ad skepticism on egoistic personality in German sample, the chi-square test and critical ratio show no significant difference between Iran and Germany (see table 4.8). Therefore H8b is also rejected in this research.

H8c includes H1b when the difference is tested between samples. Testing H1b revealed a significant negative relationship between advertisement skepticism and altruistic brand personality (table 4.8). The result of the chi-square test and critical ratio reveal no significant difference between samples regarding this relationship indicating the rejection of H8c.
These results indicate that regardless of the consumers’ culture, the way that they are affected by skepticism toward CRM advertisement toward CRM strategy and brand personality perception works the same across the samples.

4.6.4.2. Cultural differences and the effect of susceptibility on brand image and brand purchase

H9: The relationship between brand image and purchase intention is higher for Iranian consumers than German consumers, because of higher normative susceptibility.

Hypothesis 9 has three steps. First, the relationship between brand image and purchase intention should be analyzed and be significant, second, check if susceptibility of consumers moderates this relationship and third if this relationship is stronger for Iranian sample compared to German sample.

The first part of H9 has been already analyzed in table 4.10. The results proved a significant positive relationship between brand image and purchase intention in both samples which is similar to Hypothesis 3. The second part also has been already tested in hypothesis 6. Non-significant chi-square, as well as critical ratio between high and low level of susceptibility for each sample, shows no moderation effect in the relationship between brand image and purchase intention in both samples. As a result, because of the rejection of the second part, H9 should be rejected. That is because the higher susceptibility in Iranian respondents not only does not moderate this relationship but also this effect is significantly higher for German sample with a significant chi-square as well as the critical ratio for differences. Therefore, the result rejects H9.

4.6.4.3. Cultural differences and the effect of religiosity on altruistic brand personality and warm glow

H10: The influence of altruistic brand personality on warm glow is higher for Iranian consumers than German consumers, because of higher religiosity.
Like H9, Hypothesis 10 should be analyzed in three steps. First, analyzing the relationship between altruistic brand personality and warm glow, second, whether religiosity moderates this relationship and third whether this relationship is stronger for Iranian sample compare to German sample.

The first part of the hypothesis (step one) tested in H4b with regression weights of 0.468 and 1.003, p<0.001 (table 4.9) for Iran and Germany respectively, which supported the first step of the analysis. The second step has been already tested in H7 in which a moderation effect of religiosity was found in this relationship only in Iranian sample. The third part was also analyzed in table 4.9, showing a significant difference between Iran and Germany regarding the impact of altruistic perception on warm glow feeling with higher effect for German sample.

Although religiosity moderates the relationship between warm glow and altruistic brand personality for Iranian sample, this effect is significantly higher for German sample. This indicates that regardless of religiosity of German respondents, they are more affected by altruistic brand personality toward feeling good which provide the basis for the rejection of H10.

4.6.5. Mean Cultural differences

The independent sample t-test was performed to compare the mean differences of research constructs between Iran and Germany. Table 4.15 shows the mean differences of the research constructs based on Levene’s variance test.

As table 4.15 shows, Hypotheses 11,12,14,16 and 17 were supported indicating a significant difference between Iran and Germany regarding means levels while the significant difference between altruistic brand personality and brand image were rejected. The data revealed higher skepticism toward CRM advertisement, higher positive attitude toward CRM for German sample while Iranian respondents have more intention to
purchase and experiencing higher warm glow feeling besides perceiving higher egoistic brand personality.

Table 4.15. Results for independent sample t-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H11</th>
<th>Skepticism toward CRM advertisement</th>
<th>Iran's mean</th>
<th>2.8565</th>
<th>-4.300***</th>
<th>562</th>
<th>supported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany's mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.1121</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H12</td>
<td>Attitude toward CRM</td>
<td>3.6581</td>
<td>-2.32*</td>
<td>558.605</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.8103</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H13</td>
<td>Altruistic brand personality</td>
<td>3.4132</td>
<td>1.029 NS</td>
<td>561.951</td>
<td>rejected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3478</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H14</td>
<td>Egoistic brand personality</td>
<td>2.5170</td>
<td>8.217***</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.9810</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H15</td>
<td>CRM brand image</td>
<td>3.5810</td>
<td>-1.640 NS</td>
<td>560.788</td>
<td>rejected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.6873</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H16</td>
<td>CRM purchase intention</td>
<td>3.5358</td>
<td>7.021***</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.0393</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H17</td>
<td>Warm glow</td>
<td>3.7664</td>
<td>4.128***</td>
<td>479.658</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.4417</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Ns (not significant); *** (p<0.001); ** (p<0.01);* (p<0.05)

To better show the possible cultural difference in this research, the brand personality traits were compared between samples to have more understanding of how these traits are perceived. Table 4.16 shows the mean differences between the brand personality traits based on Levene's variance test.

Table 4.16. Results for independent sample t-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H11</th>
<th>Snobby</th>
<th>Iran's mean</th>
<th>2.31</th>
<th>3.665***</th>
<th>539.257</th>
<th>Different</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arrogant</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>6.621***</td>
<td>547.057</td>
<td>Different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selfish</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>5.899***</td>
<td>533.550</td>
<td>Different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretentious</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>9.959***</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>Different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H12</td>
<td>Honest</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.160Ns</td>
<td>555.323</td>
<td>No different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>0.318Ns</td>
<td>555.525</td>
<td>No different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.974***</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>Different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>-1.676Ns</td>
<td>559.493</td>
<td>No different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Ns (not significant); *** (p<0.001); ** (p<0.01);* (p<0.05)
Table 4.16 shows that except for honest, effective and responsible trait the rest of traits are perceived differently between Iran and Germany. Iranian respondents rate the egoistic brand personality traits as more descriptive in comparison to German respondents.

4.7. Summary of Hypotheses’ results

To sum up, Table 4.17 summarizes the results of all proposed hypotheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Iran</th>
<th>Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1a: Skepticism toward CRM advertisement negatively affects consumers’ attitude toward CRM strategy.</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1b: Skepticism toward CRM advertisement negatively affects altruistic brand personality perception.</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1c: Skepticism toward CRM advertisement positively affects egoistic brand personality perception.</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2a: A favorable attitude toward CRM positively affects altruistic brand personality perception.</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2b: A favorable attitude toward CRM negatively affects egoistic brand personality perception.</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3a: Perception of altruistic CRM brand personality positively affects CRM brand image.</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3b: Perception of egoistic CRM brand personality negatively affects CRM brand image.</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4: A more favorable CRM brand image leads to higher CRM purchase intention.</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5a: A more warm glow feeling leads to higher CRM purchase intention.</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5b: Perception of altruistic CRM brand personality positively affects warm glow feeling.</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6c: Perception of egoistic CRM brand personality negatively affects warm glow feeling.</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6: normative susceptibility moderates the relationship between brand image and purchase intention positively: higher susceptibility will lead to a stronger relationship between brand image and brand purchase.</td>
<td>rejected</td>
<td>rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7: Regarding CRM brand, religiosity moderates the relationship between altruistic brand personality and warm glow positively: higher religiosity will lead to a stronger relationship between altruistic brand personality and warm glow.</td>
<td>supported</td>
<td>rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8a: concerning attitude toward CRM, the negative effect of skepticism on cause-related Marketing will be significantly different for Iranian consumers compared to German consumers.</td>
<td>rejected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8b: concerning brand personality of CRM brand, the positive effect of skepticism on perceiving the CRM brand as egoistic will be significantly different for Iranian consumers compared to German consumers.</td>
<td>rejected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8c: concerning brand personality of CRM brand, the negative effect of skepticism on perceiving the CRM brand as altruistic will be significantly different for Iranian consumers compared to German consumers.</td>
<td>rejected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H9: The relationship between brand image and purchase intention is higher for Iranian consumers than German consumers, because of higher normative susceptibility.</td>
<td>rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>H10: The influence of altruistic brand personality on warm glow is higher for Iranian consumers than German consumers, because of higher religiosity.</td>
<td>rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>H11: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ skepticism toward CRM advertisement between Iran and Germany.</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>H12: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward cause-related marketing between Iran and Germany.</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>H13: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward altruistic brand personality between Iran and Germany.</td>
<td>rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>H14: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward egoistic brand personality between Iran and Germany.</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>H15: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward CRM brand image between Iran and Germany.</td>
<td>rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>H16: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ attitude toward CRM brand purchase between Iran and Germany.</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>H17: There is a significant difference in the mean level of consumers’ warm glow between Iran and Germany.</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5. Conclusions, Discussion, and Suggestions for Future Research

5.1. Discussion

This study represents a significant contribution to the CRM literature in various aspects. It would offer a better understanding of consumers’ attitudes toward CRM brand: a better picture of how cultural variations would impact the CRM brand perceptions.

5.1.1. Skepticism toward CRM and attitude toward cause-related marketing strategy

In this study, it was assumed that consumers’ attitude toward CRM strategy is positive and different between samples and skepticism toward CRM advertisement was predicted to influence consumers’ attitude toward CRM negatively and differently. Hypotheses H12, H11, H1a, and H8a contained the above assumptions. The results supported three of the four hypotheses.

H11 confirmed a significant difference in the mean level of skepticism toward CRM advertisement between Iran and Germany. In both cultures respondents had a moderate skepticism toward the claim with the mean level of 2.85 and 3.11 for Iran and Germany respectively. It was assumed that Iranian respondents would be more skeptical toward CRM strategy due to some cultural characteristics and because of less established CRM, but the data indicated higher skepticism toward CRM for German sample. The assumption was according to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions that cultures with higher level of power distance (like Iran) or collectivistic orientation leads individuals to be more skeptical while cultures with a higher level of individualism (like Germany) have trust in general (Huff & Kelley, 2003). The nature of ad skepticism which is derived from the cynicism towards advertising (Webb & Mohr, 1998) may explain the results. An individual with a higher propensity to doubt (lower trust propensity) would express more doubt toward the motives for a commercial message (Mohr et al., 1998) affecting skepticism toward the claim (Mohr et al., 1998). Trust propensity as a control variable was tested to see if the higher skepticism toward CRM advertisement was because of lower trust
propensity. The result showed that there is no significant difference in the level of trust propensity between Iran and Germany with a mean of trust=2.60 for Iran and 2.64 for Germany (t= -0.856, df= 561.936, p=0.392) which is in the opposite of Huff & Kelley’s (2003) finding. As a result, the level of trust (dispositional skepticism) cannot be the reason why German respondents have higher skepticism toward CRM advertisement. Another reason that can explain the result is advertisement knowledge. Boush et al. (1994) assert that when there is a higher knowledge about how advertisements works, the level of skepticism is increased. Therefore it can be concluded that higher skepticism toward CRM advertisement in Germany can be due to the higher knowledge of German consumers about advertisements.

In addition, H12 confirmed the positive attitude toward CRM strategy in both countries which was affected by culture. Consumers’ perception toward CRM strategy can be shaped by consumers’ previous knowledge about CRM or by the CRM claim in the advertisement. The result showed a higher level of positive attitude toward CRM for German sample with a mean of 3.81 in comparison to 3.65 for Iran. The less established CRM strategy in Iran in comparison with Germany can explain a less positive attitude toward CRM in Iran (Lavack & Kropp, 2003). Being more familiar with CRM might explain the higher positive attitude in Germany through their previous experiences about CRM campaigns. The data shows that only 40.9% of respondents in Iran had known CRM strategy while this percentage was 85.8 for German respondents (see Table 4.1).

Besides, it was argued that consumers’ skepticism toward CRM advertisement influences them to perceive the CRM strategy negatively. H1a confirmed the negative effect of CRM skepticism on attitude toward CRM strategy with regression weight of -0.508 and -0.527 p<0.001 in Iran and Germany respectively. Although it seems that skepticism toward CRM had a greater negative impact on attitude toward CRM in Germany, H8a showed no significant difference between Iran and Germany regarding this effect. As it can be
seen there was a strong negative effect toward CRM strategy when consumers were skeptical toward CRM advertisement in both samples which clears the sensitivity of CRM advertisement. This is because the claim in the CRM advertisement should diminish the skepticism to improve attitude while its effect is reversed.

Since consumers may get acquainted with CRM by its advertisement and it is a relatively less established or unknown strategy in Iran in comparison to Germany, it is interesting to find out how previous knowledge about CRM can affect consumers attitude toward CRM. Hence, further analysis was conducted. The analysis revealed that previous knowledge about CRM played a more important role in Germany than Iran. The negative influence of skepticism toward CRM advertisement on CRM attitude was -0.465 when respondents had a previous knowledge about CRM while it was increased to -1.005 when there was no previous knowledge whereas these values were -0.456 and -0.516 for Iran sample respectively. It can be concluded that in German sample, when consumers do not know CRM strategy, CRM advertisement highly shapes their attitude. This is an important finding shows when there is no previous knowledge about CRM strategy and when consumers get acquainted with this strategy by CRM advertisement there would be a strong negative effect on perceiving CRM as a positive strategy when they are skeptical toward the CRM advertisement especially in individualistic countries. This might be explained by the individualistic culture that their attitudes and decisions are based on their personal information or obtained from media while collectivists rely more on information sources like family and friends (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010; De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Since this strategy is not well-established in Iran, obtaining such information from these sources are not very likely, result in a weak moderating effect of previous knowledge on attitude toward CRM in Iran. The findings suggest that in countries which CRM is well developed, increasing consumers’ knowledge through media
cause to lower effect of skepticism on CRM related variables which is in line with other researchers’ findings (Bronn & Vrioni, 2001; Webb & Mohr, 1998).

However, the data proved positive attitude toward CRM in both countries which correspond with others’ study’s findings (Ross et al., 1991; S. M. Smith & Alcorn, 1991; Webb & Mohr, 1998; Youn & Kim, 2008). Also, a positive attitude toward CRM in Iran extends the Hammad et al. (2014) results which claim that CRM strategy is getting popular in developing countries.

In sum, the findings clarify the importance of skepticism toward CRM advertisement on the consumers’ attitude toward CRM in both counties with different cultures which is stronger for consumers who have less knowledge about CRM, especially in Germany. Since skepticism toward CRM is high in both cultures, a more understanding of how to reduce skepticism in target consumers is essential. When applying marketing strategies, companies can reduce the consumers’ skepticism for example by more extended support, fitting the cause with the company, larger donation size and increasing knowledge about CRM (Brink et al., 2006; Chéron et al., 2012; Cui et al., 2003; Webb & Mohr, 1998).

5.1.2. Brand personality

5.1.2.1. Altruistic and egoistic brand personality

In this research, the new scale of CRM brand personality including altruistic personality and egoistic personality was tested. Altruistic personality contained honest, effective, emotional and responsible personality items and egoistic personality held snobby, arrogant, selfish and pretentious personality items. The validity and reliability tests proved that egoistic and altruistic constructs were valid in the questionnaire and it was able to measure the consumers’ perceptions of the altruistic or egoistic CRM brand personality.
H13 and H14 assessed how consumers perceive the CRM brand as altruistic and egoistic. The results revealed a considerably higher mean level for altruistic personality (Germany mean: 3.34, Iran mean: 3.41) in comparison to egoistic personality (Germany mean: 1.98, Iran mean: 2.51) in both samples. The results indicated that respondents were likely to perceive the brand as more altruistic than egoistic showing that they perceived the CRM brand is doing something for others and helping a cause rather than the company itself. Although there were no significant differences between Iran and Germany regarding altruistic brand personality (H13), egoistic brand personality was perceived differently with higher mean level for Iran sample (H14).

It should be noted that in further analyses significant differences were found between Iran and Germany regarding the mean level of personality traits except for honest, effective and responsible traits. This is in line with Aaker et al, (2001) argument that differences in brand personality perception are predictable between cultures.

Regarding altruistic personality, respondents in both countries perceived the effective, responsible and honest traits not significantly different. The only exception was emotional trait. German respondents rated the brand as emotional significantly lower than Iranian respondents, indicating that they could not recognize the CRM brand as emotional as Iranian do. The cultural differences can describe the different perception of brand personality traits. Iranians with a higher collectivistic and femininity culture are considered to be more caring and emotional. These cultural characteristics were expected to influence them to have a more perception of the emotional personality trait in the CRM brand. This is based on consumers’ values and beliefs of a culture which can be represented in the symbolic meaning of the brand (Aaker et al. 2001). While culture influenced the emotional personality traits, there was no effect for other altruistic traits indicating that regardless of consumers’ culture, they recognized the CRM brand as effective, responsible and honest. In both countries, the effective and responsible traits
perceived as the most describing traits for a CRM brand with the highest mean levels among other traits in both samples. Perception of these traits by consumers are essential for CRM brand because, it means that the brand follows the main purpose of CRM strategy. It shows that the company is responsible toward the society and doing something effective for an issue. As a result, companies can benefit from the positive consequences of this perception by creating a more favorable brand image and higher warm glow feeling leading to purchase intention which would be beneficial for the companies and the cause through higher donation.

Considering the egoistic brand personality traits, as H14 revealed a significant difference between Iran and Germany in all egoistic traits (see table 4.17). Iranian respondents perceived the CRM brand as more egoistic than German respondents. Culture may explain the higher level of egoistic perception in Iran sample. A relatively high power distance and collectivist characteristics in Iran can describe the perception of egoistic brand personality. As it was argued, high power distance cultures make individuals to distrust brand and powerful organizations as well as charities which can make respondents pessimistic toward the CRM claim in the questionnaire. Although there was no significant difference between the level of trust between Iran and Germany, it can be said that assuming Iranian respondents consider the CRM claim does not belong to their groups, they are more likely to recognize the brand by egoistic traits. The reason can be explained by collectivistic cultures which they are very cautious to trust someone from outside the group (Chong et al., 2003). As a result, Iranian respondents can have a more egoistic perception toward the CRM brand when they perceive self-serving motivation of the brand resulting in a more negative outcome. Based on Kitayama et al (2006) argument, collectivistic people usually experience more negative feeling in a negative situation. As a result, since Iranian respondents perceive egoistic intention from the company, they are more likely to be negative in this situation in comparison to Germans.
In sum, the specific dimensions of CRM brand personality indicate that respondents perceive both egoistic and altruistic personality in CRM brand. However, altruistic personality and its traits were considerably more important and descriptive for respondents compare to egoistic personality. The low mean level of egoistic in both samples show that the perception of egoistic brand personality in this research scenario was not strong. The results proved that the perception of other-serving motivation was considerably higher in comparison to self-serving motivation in both samples. Respondents see the brand as more altruistic than egoistic. This is an important finding for CRM because Ellen et al. (2006) asserted that consumers can tolerate self-serving motivations of the company as long as altruistic motivations weigh out. This scale creates a more realistic view of consumers’ expressions toward CRM brand and helps marketers to shape consumers’ preferences in promotional efforts and advertising.

5.1.2.2. Brand personality and attitude toward CRM

In this study, it was assumed that consumers’ attitude toward CRM strategy would affect consumers’ perception of CRM brand personality. Hypotheses H2a, H2b contained above assumptions. The results supported the hypotheses.

H2a and H2b confirmed the effect of attitude toward CRM strategy on brand personality perception. It was concluded that when consumers perceive the CRM strategy as a positive one, it influenced the perception of altruistic brand personality positively and egoistic brand personality negatively.

H2a found a positive relationship between attitude toward CRM and perceiving brand as an altruistic one. When consumers have a positive attitude toward CRM strategy, they perceive altruistic or other-serving motivation of the company for supporting a cause which is in accordance with Ellen et al. (2000) argument. The positive perception of CRM strategy can correspond with what consumers like about companies to do as their social
responsibilities. Hence, they can see the CRM brand as an altruistic person who cares for others. While the data proved that there is a higher positive attitude toward CRM in Germany than Iran and no difference in perceiving the CRM brand as altruistic, the positive influence of attitude toward CRM on perceiving altruistic brand personality was found to be not significantly different between samples.

On the other hand, H2b confirmed a negative relationship between consumers’ attitude toward CRM and perceiving the brand as egoistic one. When consumers perceive the CRM strategy as positive, they are less likely to perceive the brand as egoistic. The reverse argument can be also true, if consumers consider CRM strategy as negative strategy, they can see the CRM brand as an egoistic person who cares for himself and describe him by egoistic items. Regardless of a higher positive attitude toward CRM in Germany and higher egoistic perception in Iran, the relationship between attitude toward CRM and egoistic brand personality was found to be not significantly different between cultures.

As a result, the data revealed that how consumers perceive a CRM brand personality is directly influenced by how they perceive the CRM strategy.

5.1.2.3. Brand personality and skepticism toward CRM advertisement

The effect of skepticism toward CRM advertisement on consumers’ perception of CRM brand personality was assumed to be different between two samples. Hypotheses H1b, H1c, H8b and H8c contained above assumptions. The results supported two of the four hypotheses.

As table 4.8 shows, there is a negative relationship between skepticism toward CRM advertisement and perceiving the brand as altruistic. When consumers were highly skeptical toward CRM advertisement they were less likely to recognize the CRM brand as altruistic (H1b) which was not significantly different between samples (H8c rejected).
Also, the data revealed there was a positive relationship between skepticism toward CRM advertisement and perceiving the brand as egoistic. When consumers were highly skeptical toward CRM advertisement, they recognized the CRM brand as more egoistic (H1c) which was not moderated by culture (H8b rejected).

Although skepticism toward CRM advertisement should cause consumers to perceive brand personality as more egoistic, the absolute value of regression weights of skepticism on altruistic brand personality was higher in comparison to egoistic brand personality in Iran and almost the same in German sample. In other words, the negative effect of skepticism on altruistic personality was higher than the positive effect of skepticism on egoistic. The result contradicted Haji (2014) argument who asserted that skepticism toward CRM causes characterizing a brand with more negative traits in comparison to less positive ones. The reason can be described by the mediation effect of attitude toward CRM strategy. Further analysis proved a partial mediation of attitude toward CRM in the effect of skepticism toward CRM advertisement on brand personality in both samples. The direct effect of advertisement skepticism on altruistic and egoistic brand personalities without the presence of attitude toward CRM was -0.636 and 0.452 for Iran and -0.512 and 0.512 for Germany respectively. These values were reduced to -0.456, 0.289, -0.364 and 0.348 respectively in the presence of attitude toward CRM. As a result, the data found that attitude toward CRM highly mediated and explained the influence of advertisement skepticism on brand personality perception.

The mediation effect of attitude toward CRM reveals that how consumers perceive brand personality of CRM brand is considerably related to how they perceive the CRM strategy and its altruistic motivation through the advertisement or previous knowledge. This can show the importance of CRM communication to correctly deliver the company’s motivation message to consumers which is the core part of CRM efficiency (Barone et al.,
As a result, the advertisement is a critical point in CRM promotion campaign to convey altruistic motivation of the company.

In total, the results indicated that the effect of variables like skepticism toward CRM advertisement and attitude toward CRM on altruistic and egoistic brand personality perception is independent of culture. However, culture affects the egoistic brand personality and its traits as well as emotional traits for altruistic brand personality. The result suggests that companies should focus on how to advertise the altruistic motivation of CRM campaign although some degree of egoistic motivation is tolerable for consumers.

5.1.3. CRM brand image

It was assumed that consumers’ perception of CRM brand image will be positive and different between samples and brand image will be affected by brand personality perception. Hypotheses H15, H3a, and H3b contained above assumptions. The results supported two of the three hypotheses.

The data supported positive brand image in both samples with means of 3.58 and 3.69 in Iran and Germany respectively. Having a favorable brand image toward a CRM brand which was proved in this research was consistent with other studies findings (H. J. Kim et al., 2005; Mohr et al., 2001; Müller et al., 2014). Although it was argued that some cultural features cause different perceptions toward brand image (Corbu, 2009; Erdem et al., 2006; Johansson et al., 1994), in this research, culture was found to not affect CRM brand image. In both cultures, there was a high favorable brand image in spite of less established CRM strategy in Iran rather than Germany and differences in consumers’ cultural values.

Moreover, the influence of brand personality on brand image proved in both samples (H3a and H3b). There was a strong positive relationship between altruistic brand personality perceptions and favorable brand image in both samples (H3a). It can be said that when
CRM brands were perceived as altruistic by the respondents, they generally had a more positive attitude toward brand image due to its positive associations. The reason is that an altruistic brand creates a more favorable and stronger association in the consumer’s mind, shaping a positive brand image (Keller, 1993). The positive perception of brand image is also in line with Kim et al. (2005) argument.

Besides, H3b proved a weak negative relationship between egoistic brand personality perception and brand image in both samples which were not significantly different between them. The findings revealed that the perception of an egoistic brand makes the brand associations less favorable, causing less positive brand image. In both samples, this effect was not very strong which is a significant finding. It shows that although consumers have some degree of egoistic personality perception, it is tolerable to some extent for consumers and they do not react strongly negative to weaken brand image.

In sum: Brand personality as a sub-branch of brand image (Biel, 1993; Keller, 1993; Plummer, 1985) can have a positive as well as a weak negative effect on CRM brand image. Due to the generating both positive and negative brand personality in CRM brand, it is essential that consumers recognize the brand as an altruistic one. The reason is that CRM brand personality can create a set of associations linking the brand with helping a cause and enables consumers to hold the brand in memory by making an emotional bond with consumers and then reinforce the brand. Since an egoistic brand can be held in the consumers’ memories like an altruistic brand and creating a brand image is a long-term strategy, it is essential to develop an altruistic brand personality and reduce the perception of egoistic personality to create a positive and favorable brand image.

According to above descriptions, in this research egoistic brand personality cannot diminish brand image as altruistic personality can improve it for both samples. It can be seen that CRM creates a favorable brand image which is in accordance to Müller et al.,
(2014) and Mohr et al., (2001) findings. This is helpful for CRM marketers that brand image as a long-term strategy can be affected strongly and positively by perception of altruistic personality.

5.1.4. Warm glow perception

It was assumed that consumers will experience warm glow feeling differently between samples and warm glow will be affected by consumers’ perception of CRM brand personality which may be moderated by the degree of consumers’ religiosity. Hypotheses H17, H5b, H5c, H7 and H10 contained above assumptions. The results supported two of the five hypotheses for German sample and four for Iranian sample.

The data supported a satisfactory warm glow feeling in both samples with means of 3.76 and 3.44 in Iran and Germany respectively which is consistent with other studies findings (Andrews et al., 2014; Fries, 2010; Müller et al., 2014). There was a significant difference between samples (H17). Iranian respondents experienced warm glow higher than German respondents which were expected by cultural features.

The collectivistic culture of Iranians can explain why they experience a higher level of good feeling. Warm glow is related to prosocial behavior (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011) and some cultural features in collectivistic societies can highly persuade individuals to participate in pro-social behaviors. De Mooij (2011) asserted that high collectivism cultures have more other-focused emotions like sympathy which are a type of moral emotion (J. Aaker & Williams, 1998) which is directly related to feeling good of helping. Moreover, values like warm relationships are more important in collectivistic societies which increase prosocial participation (Kropp et al., 2005). As a result, the collectivistic culture of Iranians, as well as femininity and short-term orientation, make them experience a higher level of warm glow. Proving warm glow as a culturally related
variable would be very important because warm glow has been found to be the main determinant for CRM purchase (Andrews et al., 2014; Fries, 2010).

H5b confirmed a strong positive influence of perceiving the CRM brand as altruistic on warm glow feeling in both samples, especially in Germany. The regression weights were 0.468 and 1.003 for Iran and Germany which were significantly different from each other. An altruistic brand provide the opportunity for respondents to build a relationship with the brand and experience a good feeling through their help to express their personalities. Consumers feel good to express altruistic characteristics if they personally have them or like to have or show them. When altruistic behaviors are encouraged in a society, consumers may like to show themselves as an altruistic person to get approval. In the other word, consumers can benefit from the positive feeling through helping by building a personal relationship with the altruistic brand. This happen by finding the altruistic brand consistent with their personality or ideal personality to reinforce their self-esteem by enjoying from social approval or self-expressive benefits through act of helping.

Furthermore, the significant differences between samples in the relationship between altruistic brand personality perception and experiencing a good feeling by helping can be derived from differences in values. Based on self-concept theory, it seem that German respondents can build a relationship with an altruistic brand more than Iranian consumers. This means that German respondents can interact to the altruistic brand to express self, ideal or social personality and this gives them a feeling good about their act of helping. The higher effect can be justified based on Kitayama et al (2006) argument that people in individualistic culture experience more positive feeling in a positive situation in comparison to collectivists when it is related to feel of superiority, pride and self-esteem.
In addition, H5c confirmed a negative relationship between egoistic brand personality perception and warm glow feeling only in Iran. In Iran, when respondents perceived the brand as an egoistic one, they were more likely to refuse to build an emotional relationship with the brand through brand personality and this affected the warm glow feeling negatively. That is because consumers do not like to show themselves as an egoistic person who is abusing a cause. Therefore, they cannot find the brand match with their personality or ideal personality, so they do not experience a good feeling by making an emotional connection with an egoistic brand by helping a cause. While in Iran, respondents’ feelings were affected negatively by egoistic personality, German respondents’ warm glow feelings were not affected by that. This can be also justified by emotions. Since Iranians are considered to be more emotional, the negative emotions by the perception of egoistic brand personality cause more negative results while Germans as individualistic people are supposed to be more stable in their attitudes, feelings, and behaviors (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). As Kitayama et al (2006) pointed, in a negative situation, individualists feel less negative than collectivists. This is an important finding because it shows that consumers’ feeling which is fundamental in CRM success play a more sensitive role in a collectivistic culture than in individualistic culture. This may also show that German respondents accept the egoistic motivation of the CRM brand more than Iranian which makes them to not to influence their warm glow feelings negatively.

Moreover, it was discussed that religiosity could trigger the relationship between perceiving CRM brand as altruistic and warm glow and this should be higher for Iran sample in comparison with German sample because of higher religiosity in Iran. H7 and H10 contained these assumptions. H7 was accepted for Iran and rejected for Germany. As a result, in the Iranian sample, religiosity influenced respondents to have a more warm glow feeling when they perceived the brand as altruistic. An altruistic brand personality perception provides the opportunity for a religious person to express his or her religiosity.
and experience a good feeling by that. No moderation effect of religiosity for German sample may indicate that perception of altruistic personality does not evoke religious beliefs. Therefore, regardless of the level of religiosity for them, they feel good when they see the brand as an altruistic one and can enjoy from enriching the self-esteem. As a result, consumers can express themselves when they see the brand match with their personality or ideal personality and these feelings are related to religious beliefs for Iranian respondents and not related to religious beliefs for German respondents. The results show that religion can play an important role in Iran to shape consumers preferences and behaviors which is a useful finding for marketers to how to use or deal with religiosity when running a CRM campaign in a persuading way.

As a result, the data showed that although the effect of altruistic brand personality on warm glow is significantly higher in Germany than in Iran and their good feelings of helping are not affected negatively by egoistic personality, the warm glow was significantly higher in Iran.

5.1.5. CRM purchase intention

5.1.5.1 The level of CRM purchase intention

In this study, respondents had a high purchase intention toward CRM brand in both samples with mean level of Iran (3.53) and Germany (3.04). H16 supported a significant difference between samples with higher purchase intention for Iranian respondents. Proving high purchase intention toward CRM brand in this research is in accordance with others study’s findings (Barone et al., 2000; Boenigk & Schuchardt, 2013; Ellen et al., 2006).

Higher purchase intention for Iranian respondents was expected because of cultural differences. These dimensions could be collectivism and femininity. Sung & Tinkham (2005) asserted that in addition to products’ attributes, collectivistic individuals care for
symbolic association with the product. This characteristic can lead to higher purchase intention, because CRM brand tries to build an emotional relationship with consumers by symbolic benefits. Consumers use these symbolic benefit for self-expressing (Keller, 1993). As a result, the symbolism of CRM brand can make collectivistic people to have more intention to purchase. In addition, feminine culture leads to having values to be caring (Hofstede, 1984) which might be another reason why Iranian respondents had a higher purchase intention. Individuals in feminine cultures may like to behave based on these values and care for others’ life or quality of life. As a result, although CRM brand is not well established in Iran as it is in Germany, higher purchase intention can be a decisive factor for marketers to benefit from a higher sale.

5.1.5.2. Purchase intention and brand image

The positive effect of brand image on purchase intention was tested through hypothesis H4 which was proved to be significant for both samples. The positive relationship indicated when respondents had a more favorable brand image, they were likely to have higher purchase intention which proves others study’s findings (Barone et al., 2000; Ellen et al., 2000; Lien et al., 2015; Webb & Mohr, 1998).

Although there was a higher purchase intention for Iranians because of cultural characteristics and no difference in the perception of brand image, further analysis indicates a moderation effect of culture in this relationship. The data revealed that purchase intention of German respondents was more affected by brand image with regression weight of 0.341 in comparison to Iranian respondents with regression weight of 0.166. This prove the importance of brand image influence on purchase intention for German respondents. They put more importance on brand image regarding their CRM purchase in comparison to Iranians.
In addition, it was supposed that the consumers’ normative susceptibility should modify this relationship. That is because consumers who are more susceptible is proved to have a higher purchase intention (Kropp et al., 2005; Netemeyer et al., 1992) to gain others approval, respect and a sense of belonging (Batra et al., 2001; Netemeyer et al., 1992). Since a higher level of collectivism will lead to higher levels of susceptibility (Mourali et al., 2005), Iranians were supposed to be more affected by this variable in comparison to Germans. These assumptions were tested through H6 and H9 which were rejected in both sample. The result showed that consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence is not influential factor to persuade consumers for CRM purchase. Also, higher susceptibility for Iranians as a collectivistic culture in comparison to Germans as an individualistic culture was in accordance with Mourali et al. (2005) results. As a result, in both samples, respondents are not affected by brand image regarding purchase intention to get social approval or being accepted by others to reinforce their social image. Hence, a higher effect of brand image on purchase intention in German sample can be explained by their individualistic culture which causes them to use brands to differentiate themselves and to meet the self-respect needs.

5.1.5.3. Purchase intention and warm glow

In this research, the positive relationship between warm glow and purchase intention was assumed and tested by H5a. H5a proved a strong positive impact of warm glow on purchase intention in both samples which is in accordance to others research findings (Fries, 2010; Müller et al., 2014). The results showed that feeling good about helping can highly persuade respondents to make a purchase. Although there was a higher purchase intention as well as higher warm glow feeling for Iranians because of cultural characteristics, further analysis reveals no moderation effect of culture in this relationship. This means that regardless of consumers’ culture, feeling good about helping highly influence them for CRM purchase.
5.1.5.4. Simultaneous analysis

In this research, it was supposed that brand image and warm glow affect consumers’ purchase intention directly. The data showed significant relationships between these variables in both samples which were significantly different in the mean level of warm glow, purchase intention and the relationship between brand image and purchase intention.

For German sample, the regression weights of the relationships between brand image and purchase intention, and warm glow and purchase intention were 0.341 and 0.316 respectively which described 52% of purchase intention while these values were 0.166 and 0.533 for Iran sample which described 54% of purchase intention. As it is clear, for German sample, both warm glow and brand image played a significant role for consumers’ purchase intention. In Iran sample, although the effect of brand image on purchase intention was significant, the effect of warm glow on purchase intention was significantly higher than brand image. The differences between samples might be explained by mediation role of warm glow. Further analysis showed that the effect of brand image on purchase intention was 0.628 and 0.425 for Iran and Germany respectively without the presence of warm glow feeling. These values were reduced to 0.166 and 0.346 when warm glow was added to the equation. Therefore, warm glow highly mediated the relationship between brand image and purchase intention especially in Iran. For Iran sample, it can be concluded that when a CRM brand is stimulating warm glow feeling, the brand image does not play the strongest role as when there was no warm glow feeling. For them a favourable CRM brand image also leads to having a good feeling of helping, resulting in purchase intention.

The result is important for marketers because cultures like Iran are more sensitive to feelings which can have either advantages or disadvantages for CRM. In case of German sample, as the data showed the effect of brand image on purchase intention was slightly
higher than warm glow on purchase intention, and no significant difference was found between these regression weights. This indicated the importance of brand image and warm glow on their CRM purchase intention. As a result, the significant difference between Iran and Germany in the relationship between brand image and purchase intention can be explained by warm glow feelings which was higher in Iran sample.

Based on Hoeffler & Keller (2002) arguments, CRM purchase provides the opportunity for consumers to express themselves and get social approval or self-respect which is the function of why consumers buy CRM. It can be said that if susceptibility moderated these relationships, respondents would have purchase intention to get social approval and reinforce their social image. As it was shown in H6, no moderation effect of susceptibility was found on the relationship between brand image and purchase intention in both samples. It can be concluded that in both samples respondents did not look for social approval by their purchase through brand image. As a result, it is assumed that a favorable CRM brand image amplified by its altruistic personality provide opportunity for respondents to extend their self-respect needs in both samples especially in Germany. The reason can be explained by culture difference that individualists put more value on self-respect values. Another reason for that can be also related to individualistic culture of Germans that they like to show their differences. This may let them to be highly affected by a favourable CRM brand image toward purchase intention to be different (Luna & Gupta, 2001) and extend the self-image. Another reason for higher effect of brand image on purchase intention can be the stability of German consumers which is also related to individualistic culture of them. They are assumed to be stable in their attitudes, feelings, and behaviors (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). As a result, since the stimuli in this research was a detergent brand that respondents were used and knew before and they were satisfied with that, Germans respondents may have a more stable behavior toward the detergent brand. As a result, promoting the brand with CRM strategy does not trigger
warm glow as the main underlying factor for CRM success like in Iran. They may behave more stable and still choose the brand because of its favorable brand image.

On the other hand, warm glow was found to be an important factor affecting CRM purchase in both samples. It should be noted that further analysis showed a moderation effect of susceptibility on the relationship between warm glow and purchase intention in Iran. For respondents with low susceptibility, this effect was 0.409 while it was 0.769 for high susceptible respondents. This indicates that consumers in Iran are affected by feeling good on purchase intention when they are susceptible to get social approval and be accepted. This can be explained by collectivistic culture of Iranian that they like to be accepted. Also, it can be concluded that in both samples, respondent are assumed to satisfy their self-respect needs by making a CRM purchase when they feel good about helping.

Therefore, for Iran sample, the act of helping let them to satisfy their needs for social approval and self-respect more than brand image. The reason is that collectivistic cultures have more other-focused emotions and they are more affected by feelings in their decisions. This can result to be highly influenced by warm glow feeling toward purchase intention in comparison to brand image. The culture make them to feel responsible for each other and to be caring and look more for harmony and unity. Collectivistic culture make them to like to get social approval by acting based on social values. Also, having a short-term orientation help them to engage with feeling more than Germans. They may not consider as thrifty as Germans with a long-term orientation, and this can cause them to make a purchase highly because of utility that they receive from helping. As a result, the CRM brand purchase can help them to fulfill their needs for social approval by showing their personalities or ideal personality or obtain self-extend benefits by experiencing a good feeling about themselves through act of helping rather than brand image.
In sum, consumers in both samples are highly likely to make a CRM purchase. They can benefit from CRM symbolic association to experience a good feeling by the act of helping or using a favorable brand image. Making a CRM purchase may help them to improve their self-image or get social approval. Based on above argumentation it can be concluded that in Germany both warm glow and brand image play a significant role in CRM success while in Iran warm glow is the most important factor. German respondents can benefit from extending a self-image not only by using a CRM brand which has a favorable brand image through its altruistic personality but also their good feelings highly stimulated by altruistic brand toward purchase intention. However, the data shows that in Iran sample, getting social approval and enhancing self-respect is highly dependent to good feelings. Since feelings are much more important in the collectivistic culture, confirming altruistic motivation by CRM advertisement is more critical in such cultures.

5.2. Conclusion

The thesis began with an introduction to the concept of cause-related marketing and a discussion of the need for further research in this field. Cause-related marketing is a commercial partnership between a business and non-profit organization which the business provides support to the non-profit organization when consumer make a purchase. This strategy originated in the United States and the concept has been developing since that point. There was a need for research in this area due to the investment and growth in this strategy in the world. In addition, both academic and practitioner indicated strong consumer support for the concept of cause-related marketing; however, there are risks relating to the strategy for consumer perceptions of exploitation of the cause by the marketer (Ross et al., 1992; Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). Since cultures can shape individual behaviors and perceptions, understanding how individuals in different cultures perceive this strategy is essential. There has been limited research to date regarding the effectiveness of this strategy, in developing countries
comparing to developed countries. As a result, the research tried to address the following questions as initially outlined in Chapter 1:

A: What is consumer’s response concerning (1) skepticism toward CRM claim (2) attitude to the strategy, (3) attitude toward CRM brand personality, (4) attitude toward the CRM brand image (5) CRM purchase intention and (6) Warm glow?

Based on the data analysis, in particular, it was found that there is a high skepticism toward CRM advertisement in both samples. Respondents in both samples were generally positive toward CRM strategy, CRM brand image, and purchase intention. They perceived CRM brand as altruistic as well as egoistic one while perception of altruistic brand personality was significantly higher in both samples.

B: Do consumers respond differently toward cause-related marketing in Iran in comparison to Germany?

The results showed higher positive CRM attitude and higher skepticism for German sample and higher warm glow, purchase intention and egoistic brand personality perception for Iran sample. Also, no significant difference has been found in perceiving favorable CRM brand image and altruistic brand personality between samples. Regarding the relationships between these variables, some important differences were found. The effect of brand personality on the warm glow feeling as well as the effect of brand image on purchase intention were different between samples. Egoistic brand personality did not affect warm glow feeling in German sample while Iranian were highly affected negatively. Nonetheless, Germans were more influenced by altruistic brand personality in comparison to Iranians.

C: Can cultural characteristics of the countries explain these differences?

It was supposed that based on cultural characteristics, skepticism toward CRM advertisement might be higher for Iranians while the data provides opposite evidence.
The result can be justified by higher knowledge of advertisement of German respondents. Also, higher positive attitude toward CRM for German sample can be explained by higher knowledge about CRM in Germany and because the strategy was relatively new and unknown in Iran as a developing country. Previous knowledge about CRM was found to be an influential factor in Germany more than Iran. When German respondents did not know CRM, they highly affected by skepticism toward CRM. The cultural explanation is through individualistic culture of Germans that they rely on the information they get through media.

The analysis of CRM brand personality provided interesting results, indicating that although respondents recognized the CRM brand by egoistic brand personality in both samples, the perception of altruistic brand personality outweighed the egoistic one. Also, differences were found regarding personality traits which were explained by collectivistic, femininity and power distance cultural features. Despite the negative effect of skepticism toward CRM advertisement on brand personality, consumers’ perception of brand personality was highly affected by their positive attitude toward CRM. They perceived the CRM brand as more altruistic. The altruistic perception is fundamental for a CRM brand because perceiving brand as altruistic directly affect brand image and warm glow which ultimately leads to higher purchase intention. Perceiving the CRM brand with altruistic brand personality can be a good indicator for ensuring that the brand has met the main purpose of CRM strategy. The reason is that perceiving the brand as more altruistic than egoistic shows that consumers believe the CRM brand is doing something altruistically and not mostly for egoistic purposes.

Altruistic personality of the CRM brand evoke consumers’ self-image (actual image, ideal image or social image), and this feelings and perceptions will be projected on to the brand. This makes the brand image as more favorable and create a good feeling by participating in a CRM purchase to satisfy self-expressive benefits. By perception of altruistic brand
personality, consumers can enrich their self-image, get social approval and experience a good feeling about themselves by helping a cause. Also, this perception enhance brand image, making consumers to purchase a favorable CRM brand. Although in both countries these relationships were significant, how these relationships works, were different across countries indicating the importance of culture in applying CRM strategy. The higher warm glow and purchase intention were expected for Iran because of collectivistic, short-term orientation and femininity cultural characteristics. The data showed that Iranians are more evoked by warm glow feeling in comparison to brand image. For Iranians feeling good about helping was more important than using a CRM brand because of its favorable brand image while in Germany both brand image and warm glow affected purchase intention strongly.

German respondents not only cares how they can experience a good feeling by helping a cause through their purchase but also how they can differentiate themselves while for Iranian consumers the emphasize in CRM purchase is more on having a good feeling about helping. In both samples, it was found that getting social approval does not affect consumers to make a CRM purchase because of its favorable brand image while in Iran sample it makes them experience a good feeling by their help. This can be explained by the collectivistic culture of Iranian who look for harmony and being accepted by others which can be triggered by helping behavior. In addition, religiosity was found to be an important variable in Iran sample. It affects consumers to experience a higher level of warm glow feeling when they perceive the brand as altruistic.

In sum, the results show the importance of culture in applying CRM strategy. It can be said that CRM in a collectivistic culture like Iran can be successful as well as individualistic country like Germany. Although Iranian consumers were less familiar with this strategy, the benefits of CRM were similar in case of brand image and higher
for purchase intention. The research found that emotions play a stronger role in Iran and it is more critical to evoke proper emotions by CRM campaign.

5.3. Theoretical and practical implementations

The present research extends prior researches by creating a clearer understanding of how cause-related marketing affects brand perception and how consumers behave in two different cultures. The findings are important because a significant aspect of CRM campaign is to build an effective relationship based on consumers’ behavior and perceptions. As a result, considering the different perception of CRM brand in different cultures helps strategists to communicate more effectively with consumers and benefit from the CRM strategy. It helps marketers to design the CRM campaign based on the different perception of individuals in Iran and Germany. The result might be applied to other collectivistic and individualistic cultures.

The results of the current study offer insight into various implications for CRM campaign regarding tactical success (purchase intention), strategic success (brand image), brand personality and warm glow in different cultures. Hence, this research contributes to practical marketing management by providing a new perspective on how CRM brands can be successful in two different cultures (Iran vs. Germany) which are discussed in the following.

The study examines the existence of a specific brand personality related to the CRM brands. Prior researches mainly focused on the development of different brand personality scales in different cultures, but not specifically related to CRM brands. The research offers a CRM brand personality scale which marketer can use to find out to what extent consumers perceive the brand with altruistic traits or egoistic traits. When altruistic traits outweigh the egoistic traits, it indicates that the CRM campaign meets the purposes of CRM strategy to do something altruistically for the society. If egoistic traits dominate
the altruistic traits, then marketers have to improve the CRM campaign to does not damage brand by CRM strategy.

The results support that although Germans have a higher positive attitude about CRM strategy, Iranian consumers respond more positively to CRM. Thus, CRM campaigns can be particularly more suitable for achieving tactical benefits to Iran in comparison to Germany. Despite the fact that CRM strategy is not well established in Iran in comparison to Germany, marketers can benefit from increasing sale by CRM.

According to the practical outcomes, brand personality seems to be perceived positively which is an important predictor for warm glow, brand image as well as purchase intention. This finding can be of interesting practical application as it reveals that despite the skepticism toward CRM advertisement, consumers’ perception of CRM brand personality is altruistic. The results provide such a valuable guide for marketers in making a powerful brand personality regarding CRM brand by emphasizing on altruistic traits in the advertisement or CRM campaign.

Different perceptions in personality characteristics can guide marketers to concentrate on the specific traits on the advertisements and CRM campaign to encourage consumers to perceive the brand as an altruistic one. For example in Iran, emphasizing on four personality traits would be beneficial while in German consumers are likely to see the brand as a responsible, effective and honest and not emotional in comparison to Iran sample. This help to make the brand more relevant to the market. Since in both countries, the most important traits in CRM brand were responsibility and effectiveness, when a market in a specific culture does not see the brand as responsible and effective, then a firm has to use promotional strategies that emphasize on these characteristics. As a result, the firms need to modify the communicated CRM message in a way that emphasizes the characteristics that enable consumers to perceive the brand as altruistic.
Also, marketers should pay significant attention to the CRM campaign in cultures like Iran because they are more sensitive to emotions and if the communicated message evoke negative perception, they are more likely to see the brand as self-serving and egoistic one leading to decreasing the positive feeling toward helping and diminishing brand image. It was shown that religion plays a significant role in consumers’ behaviors in Iran. This helps marketers to develop the CRM strategy in such culture by emphasizing on religious beliefs.

Moreover, it was shown that consumers’ knowledge about CRM is more important in Germany than Iran. Lack of knowledge considerably affects consumers’ perceptions in Germany negatively. Thus it is suggested that marketers should increase consumers’ knowledge about CRM via media while in Iran this knowledge might be effective when they obtained through the word of mouth.

Another key implication of this finding is that CRM programs may be more effective for people who experience a good feeling when they help somebody or something. The findings show that in the presence of warm glow, the effect of brand image on purchase intention was not very strong in Iranian sample while for German sample both warm glow and brand image play an important role for consumers. Marketers can benefit from this findings in a way that in Iran communicated message of CRM brand should be more on evoking feelings toward helping behavior through emphasizing on the altruistic motivation of the company. In the case of German consumers, the CRM advertisement not only should trigger consumers feeling by helping but also it should emphasize on making a distinctive brand image in the consumers’ mind.

5.4. Limitation and suggestions for future researches

There are several limitations of this research that need to be mentioned and can be addressed in future researches.
First, the sample selection limits the ability to generalize the findings to the overall population. A convenience sample of students was used representing Iran and Germany. This sample was selected to satisfy the requirements of an experimental design for a homogeneous sample, as well as due to budgetary considerations. That is because, it is claimed that younger consumers respond more favorably to cause-related marketing (Youn & Kim, 2008). As a result, their responses may differ from typical consumers. Further studies can use a larger random sample from a more diverse population to make the results stronger.

Second, this study is limited to a fictitious laundry detergent brand related to fast moving consumer good. As a result, the findings may not relate to durable goods or services, or even other fast-moving consumer goods. Furthermore, the elements of the stimuli may also limit the generalizability of the study, for example, mentioning a specific environmental issue. The use of a different type of products, services as well as issues or non-profit organizations may elicit different results. It is suggested that this study should be replicated using a number of other CRM brands and product categories to determine whether these results can be extended to other conditions.

Third, the scale of CRM brand personality was measured by a limited number of brand personality traits. Further research with more extensive sets of personality traits through more different CRM brands in various categories and causes are needed to provide a more valid scale for CRM brand personality assessment.

Fourth, the moderation role of religiosity was accepted in Iran sample and further analysis shows the moderation effect of religiosity on other variables like purchase intention and warm glow. Therefore, it is suggested that future research explore the critical factor of religiosity affecting consumer’s purchase intention in Iran.
Fifth, using AMOS software provide a limitation for assessing the whole model simultaneously because it does not allow to have a correlation relationship between two endogenous variables (egoistic and altruistic brand personality).

Finally, the cultural dimensions are not measured in this research. Future research should include the cultural dimensions in the analysis, in order to get a complete insight into the effect of culture on consumer’s responses toward CRM.
6. References


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Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Imagine you are in a supermarket and want to buy a detergent. You see an advertisement for one of a famous detergent brand with name A which is claimed that for each pack sold, 5% percentage of the sale price will be donated to an environmental issue in the country. You have tried the brand A before, and you were satisfied with the product. Also, the price and quality are the same as the brands that you usually use. This kind of campaign, where a business company offers to contribute a specified amount of money to a designated cause is called Cause-Related Marketing (CRM).

Dear respondent:
We want to study how a Cause-Related Marketing strategy shapes consumers’ attitude, and behavior. By answering the questions below, you help us in our research. Please express your idea by filling each row separately.

- Have you ever seen a Cause-Related marketing campaign for any type of products or services? Yes □ No □

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<thead>
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<th>Statement</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<td>I perceive this strategy as favorable</td>
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<td>I perceive the image of brand A as good</td>
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- Imagine brand A as a person, to what extent does each of the following traits can describe the A brand?

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<th>not descriptive</th>
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<th>Probably not</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Probably yes</th>
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<tr>
<td>I would actively seek out A brand product in a store to buy.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I would buy A brand product if I happened to see it in a store to purchase it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would prefer the A brand to other brands.</td>
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<table>
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<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I purchase A brand, I feel good because I do not only spend money for myself but also for other people.</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable if I donate for a good cause by purchasing A brand.</td>
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</table>
I am pleased that I do not only get a product by purchasing A brand but that I also do a good deed at the same time.

Most statements made by a company in advertising or package labels about supporting a cause are true

Most statements made by a company in advertising or on package labels about supporting a cause are intended to mislead rather than to inform the consumer

Consumers would be better off if such statements were eliminated from advertising or package labels

I do not believe most statements regarding support of a cause in advertising or on package labels.

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My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life

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I would rate the strength of my religious affiliation to be

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<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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I am a religious person.

I purchase the products until I am sure my friends approve of them

It is important to me that others like the products and brands that I buy

I like to know what brands and products make good impressions on others

I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same products and brands that others purchase

Gender: Female □  Male □
Religious: ...........
Age: .....
## Appendix 2. Missing data analysis for Iran sample

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a. Number of cases outside the range (Q1 - 1.5*IQR, Q3 + 1.5*IQR).
## Appendix 3. Missing data analysis for German sample

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a. Number of cases outside the range (Q1 - 1.5*IQR, Q3 + 1.5*IQR).
B. Indicates that the interquartile range (IQR) is zero.