

Analysis of Social Marketing Effect on Addiction and its Prevention

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Abstract

Adolescents and young adults are among the most important demographic groups in Iran who are continuously in danger of drug abuse. They face various social, identity, occupational, family and individual crises through life. Lack of proper skills to deal with those crises might push them toward narcotics. Developed countries have been using social marketing for the last 4 decades in various, limitless fields like smoking, crime prevention, social participation, health promotion, environment conservation, etc. This research analyzes the effect of social marketing on addiction and its prevention. To that end, 300 male high school students in District 3 of Isfahan were randomly selected as the sample, and data were collected through questionnaires. For data analysis and hypothesis test, SPSS 18 and AMOS 20 were used. The results indicate that social marketing has a positive and significant effect on addiction and its prevention.

Key words: Marketing, Social Marketing, Addiction, Addiction Prevention

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Introduction

Marketing and market management is the management of demand process, which is an important field of management. Its main duty is to recognize the human needs and demands and to satisfy them through the process of resource exchange. Marketing management not only includes searching for higher demands, it also deals with changing or, in some cases, reducing demands. It tries to change the amount, time and nature of demands depending on the environmental circumstances. In the other words, marketing management controls demands (Youn Kim & Gyou Lee, 2014: 27). To bring about positive social changes, social marketing uses principles and techniques the roots of which can be traced back in trade marketing. Social marketing can improve social welfare by promotion of proper products and services and prevention of inefficient products and services (Serrat, 2010:73). Kotler & Zaltman (1971) describe social marketing as the design, implementation and control of programs involving the product planning, pricing, communication, distribution and market research that prepare the target audience to accept postulated social ideas. As it was confused with social promotion and communications, Andreasen (1993) revised the definition, describing social marketing as application of trade marketing techniques in analysis, planning, implementation and assessment of programs designed to influence voluntary behavior of the audience to reach social welfare (Alves, 2010:288). Social marketing can be used in any fields and situations which require attention to, and assessment of, an individual's behavior (Chang, Yu & Lu, 2014: 26). In the past, social marketing was assumed as useful only for the end customer (for example the adolescents who are on drug); on the contrary, its methods and techniques can be used to change the behavior of the key figures whose cooperation contributes to the success of the plan (Andreasen, 2002: 3). Some uses of social marketing are as follows: smoking (MacAskill et al, 2011), gambling (Powell & Tapp, 2008), crime prevention (Homel & Carroll, 2009), conservation of natural and environmental resources (e.g. reducing consumption of energy, water, electricity, natural gas, petrol, and other fuels), green marketing (e.g. reducing the pollution of environment, air, soil, rivers, hills and cities), preventive actions (e.g. against conflagration, gas intoxication and poisoning), social, cultural and economic participation, voter turnout, membership in communities, associations and networks, health-related issues (periodical medical and dental check-ups and mental and psychological tests), avoiding detrimental habits and changes in lifestyle (e.g. avoiding obesity and advising physical activity) (Crié & Chebat, 2013: 123). Kotler and Lee (2008) evaluate the application of social marketing in the fields like social health improvement (e.g. AIDS, obesity, children pregnancy, pneumonia etc.), prevention of injuries (vehicular crashes, domestic violence, drowning etc.), environment conservation (water and air quality and habitat protection) and supporting communities (voting and voluntary activities) as important. Therefore, this research puts forward a conceptual model to analyze the effect of social marketing on addiction and its prevention, seeking the answer to the key question as to what effects social marketing has on addiction and its prevention.

Theoretical Literature Review

This research analyzes the effect of social marketing on addiction and its prevention. First, a brief look is taken at social marketing, addiction and its prevention. Then, the relationship between them is considered.

Social Marketing

From the first time social marketing emerges in the early 1970, we have witnessed a significant increase in the application of trade marketing to advance social interests. If the current status of social marketing is compared with its status in the past, a remarkable growth can be seen in the scope, nature and realm of social marketing (Nadushan & Davarpanah Jazi, 2011: 21). Social marketing involves adopting a social strategy to effectively encourage individuals to change behavior. In this kind of marketing, resources are used efficiently and implemented gradually with precise planning (Youn Kim & Gyou Lee, 2014: 27). Opel et al (2009) consider social

marketing a model – a behavior-changing model – and believe that social marketing is a process contributing to the advantage of an individual and a society by using the principles of traditional marketing. Conroy and Allen (2011) believe that behavioral changes are materialized when an individual goes through multiple stages and enjoys fundamental backing at each stage. Dann (2008) describes social marketing as a tool to facilitate adopting positive behaviors and giving up negative ones. He believes that social marketing is a useful tool by the help of which individuals can be encouraged to adopt a behavior in the short or long run so that a certain type of social objective is accomplished. Corner and Randall (2011) describe social marketing as a framework to design a behavior change program by the help of which the possibility for a project to be successful is maximized. In another definition provided by the International Social Marketing Association (ISMA), European Social Marketing Association (ESMA) and Australian Association of Social Marketing (AASM) in 2013, social marketing is regarded as development of marketing concepts and their integration with other approaches, which is able to influence individual and collective behavior in order to reach social interests. Contrary to trade marketers, social marketers do not support a special organization; therefore, they do not make an effort to increase its financial interests (Bhattacharyya, 2014: 71). Social marketers seek socially constructive interests which prevent unfavorable social problems whose roots can be traced back to human behavior (Martin et al, 2013: 1219). However, as far as interests are concerned, they should be considered from the audience's view, since the interests are formed in the mind of the audience, consumers or users. In this regard, Crawshaw (2013) believes that if social interests are to be materialized, they become reality by encouraging individuals to select better options through their lives rather than making structural and systematic changes. In fact, social marketers try to change the beliefs institutionalized in the minds through time, as a result of which the consumer's health is adversely affected, so that they can solve social problems (Bartkowski et al, 2011: 966). However, employing social marketing to solve all social problems and difficulties is not a proper practice, since blind employment of marketing principles in all social issues results in uncoordinated and inconclusive activities (Youn Kim & Gyou Lee, 2014: 27). Social marketers should also have a proper understanding of causes and origins of social problems so that they can work out solutions which are effective and have positive results (Barrie, Jones & Wiess, 2011: 71).

Addiction and its prevention

Addiction is among the most important issues after unemployment and expensiveness in Iran. Iran and other developing countries are witnessing high rate of narcotic abuse (Madani & Razaghi, 2007: 75). Narcotics refer to the drugs (such as opium and morphine) whose moderate doses lead to dulling the senses, relieving the pain and inducing a deep sleep but in excessive doses they lead to stupor, coma and convulsion (Young et al, 2014: 29). Narcotics have been classified in different manners based on different point of views. Legally, opiates and hash and the likes fall into a same group and other narcotics fall into another group with respect to the sentences associated with their use. Medically, classifications have been made in a different manner with respect to their type and effect, including sedatives, hypnotics, tranquilizers, stimulants and delirium drugs (Karami & Etemadifard, 2010: 25).

Human health and social development have an essential link. What considered a threat to health is a threat to social development too, and what promotes the society's health will result in social development (Nejati et al, 2014: 21). Addiction is a process not an incident, and it is called a family disease, since it engages all family members, those who have a close tie with the family and consequently the whole society (Sekhavat, 2004: 11); therefore, in all societies more emphasis is usually put on prevention rather than treatment. Literally, prevention is defined as "stopping something bad from happening". Prevention should be looked at in context; in criminal law it is defined as "detering the crime" and in medicine as "the keeping of an illness from happening". Regarding addiction, prevention means "taking measures to reduce the affliction of endangered groups" and it also sets the stage for the factors that deter individuals from taking drug (Asaadi, 2002: 54). Any phenomenon or organization arising from the fabric of society should have some functions which serve the public so that it can operate as a coordinated set to deliver its services to its respective audience. Social marketing is not an exception (Berouki, Kamarzin and Zare'e, 2014: 145). We are living in the age of communication, with increasing number of news networks and newspapers indicating the role played by the mass media in informing the public. Media campaign refers to employing a set of media platforms, including visual, auditory, written and electronic media, billboards, CDs, forums and the likes, all of which follow a particular behavioral objective regarding social harms, addiction etc. To obtain success in media-communicated messages, techniques of social marketing should be employed (Ngai, Tao & Moon, 2015: 33).

Research question

Does social marketing have an effect on addiction and its prevention?

Methodology

This is an applied research, with respect to its objective, and descriptive-correlational research, with respect to its type. Statistical population of it included the male students attending high schools in District 3 of Isfahan. The sample size was put at 300. The questionnaire was composed of two parts. The first part contained demographic variables like gender, age and job experience. The second part measured the variables applicable in this research. The grading scale for each question was from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The validity of the questionnaire content was confirmed by professionals. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability. To that end, a primary sample including 30 questionnaires was distributed. The collected data were used to calculate the Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha for all questions relating to the available variables in the analytic model of the research was 0.83, which was acceptable.

Data analysis

First, measurement patterns are tested for fitness. Table 1 contains indexes of pattern fitness.

Table 1: General indexes of measurement pattern fitness

Construct	Index	Social Marketing	Addiction
	CMIN/df	1.67	2.35
	P	0.07	0.057
	GFI	0.93	0.90
	RMR	0.94	0.30
	CFI	0.96	0.94
	RMSEA	0.06	0.05

Measurement patterns had a good fitness; in the other words, general indexes confirmed the fact that the data properly supported the patterns. After the measurement patterns were evaluated and confirmed, in the second step, structural equations are analyzed for fitness to test the hypotheses. Table 2 contains general indexes of model fitness. The results from the provided data in Table 2 are as follows:

Table 2: Indexes of model fitness

indexes	CMIN/df	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	IFI	RMR
Value	2.89	0.07	0.95	0.91	0.97	0.98	0.98	0.04
Acceptable Scope	>1	<0.08	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	Close to Zero

The results indicated that the route analysis was a proper model. Chi-square value was normal (2.89), which was between 1 and 3. RMSEA value was 0.07, which was a right value. GFI and AGFI and three indexes of NFI and CFI and IFI were all close to or above %90. Finally, the value of RMR was close to zero. Fitness index values for the pattern were all within the acceptable scope and they indicated a good fitness of pattern by the data and also indicated that the collected data well support the pattern. The hypothesis, together with regression coefficients and the value of the hypothesis-related partial index, is available in Table 3.

Table 3: Hypothesis test results

Hypotheses	Sample Size	Level of significance	Correlation coefficient	Test result
Addiction and its prevention → Social marketing	300	0.000	0.44	verification

(Source: Amos output)

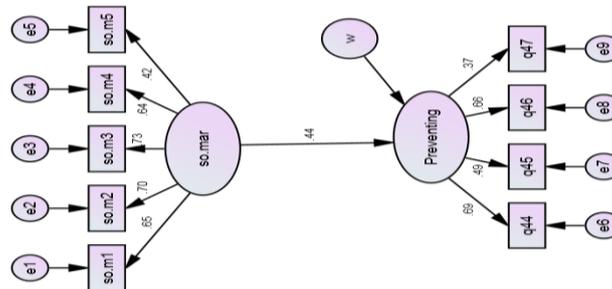


Figure 1. Structural equation pattern

Result and discussion

The results from the research question analysis indicated that social marketing affects addiction and its prevention. Route analysis results suggested that social marketing affects addiction and its prevention with a coefficient of 0.44. Adolescents and young adults are among the most important demographic groups in Iran who are continuously in danger of drug abuse. They face various social, identities, occupational, family and individual crises through life. Lack of proper skills to deal with those crises might push them toward narcotics. Developed countries have been using social marketing for the last 4 decades in various, limitless fields like tobaccos, crime prevention, social participation, health promotion, environment conservation, etc. The research was designed to analyze the effect of social marketing on addiction and its prevention. The results from the evaluation of strategic factors indicated that the education system is not in a favorable condition to prevent drug abuse regarding its internal environment, and its weaknesses outweigh its strengths. Regarding the external environment, it has obtained little success in facing threats and taking the opportunities to prevent drug abuse. Regarding the research findings, with external threats and opportunities and internal strengths and weaknesses being recognized, better policy-making and planning to prevent drug abuse, particularly in school-driven programs, seems necessary. Therefore, the necessity to employ social marketing in the society is felt more than any other time. Social marketing provides the professionals with a baseline; structurally, the best social marketing program is based on the collected information to recognize demands, needs and stimulants for the target audience encouragement. The current research indicates that social marketing is very flexible, having the potential to be

employed by various stakeholders like media, target audience and lawmakers. Social marketing can also be applied to deal with a target audience who is in different stages of awareness and responsiveness regarding the problems and behaviors. In the other words, for a group who are yet to pay attention to the problem, emphasis is put on the awareness, but, for a group who are obliged to exhibit a behavior, emphasis is put on its keeping. Finally, there are three major reasons why social marketing deserves attention in the future research:

- 1- Social marketing helps you approach your target audience;
- 2- Social marketing helps you design your messages to address the special needs of your target audience.
- 3- Social marketing helps you bring about stronger and more durable changes in the behavior of your target audience.

The current research had some limitation, since it dealt with a critical issue which is of great importance to today's society. One limitation was that it covered high schools and male students, while a research covering other grades and female students might produce different results. Other researchers are recommended to conduct such kind of research in other provinces and counties too.

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