

Elements and an Empirical Analysis of an Integrated Social Marketing Model in Hungary

Abstract:

This presentation moves beyond the institutional approach to social marketing and interprets this marketing as an integrated model and practice with the objective of providing more complex solutions to social problems and promoting achieving social objectives. The research program, which has been in progress for two years, interprets social marketing as being a stakeholder management shaping behaviours acting along value communities. The presented empirical representative questionnaire inquiry assesses sensitivity, undertaking activities and feeling of responsibility of Hungarian citizens towards social problems. This presentation also analyses the connections between values importance, problem-relatedness, individual responsibility, information gathering habits and hindering-factor approaches, that is, Hungarian behavioural elements of integrated social marketing applications.

Keywords:

Social problem identification, value community, stakeholder management, integrated social marketing, theory of reasoned-action, theory of planned-behaviour,

1. Introduction

Social marketing has become the most frequently used compound word in the technical literature of marketing theory in the past few years, since more and more areas, environmental, climate and health situations as well as difficulties experienced in the operation of public administration cry out for new problem solving practices, new approach and behaviour. In a situation like this social responsibility, responsible behaviour in social issues and its encouragement make solution opportunities of social marketing more important.

The social marketing concept was first introduced by Kotler and Zaltman (1971) for planning and execution of marketing programmes targeting the acceptance of social and societal solutions, that is, social marketing is the application of the ideas, processes and practices of the marketing discipline to improve conditions that determine and sustain personal, social and environmental health and well-being. Later the original definition was given a broader interpretation and a deeper social insight. Social marketing has been defined as "the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution, and evaluation of programs designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of their society" (Andreasen, 1995). Kotler, Roberto and Lee (2002) defined social marketing as the use of marketing principles and techniques to influence a target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, modify, or abandon a behaviour for the benefit of individuals, groups or society as a whole.

The definition of social marketing applied by us is as follows: planning, organisation, execution and control of corporate and institutional marketing strategies and marketing activities and their integration, which are directly or indirectly targeting social tasks and problems. There are two directions in fundamental marketing theories, namely institution-oriented and problem-oriented perspectives (Bruhn-Tilmes 1994). The institution-oriented perspective focuses on organisational peculiarities while discussing marketing issues, for instance, public-service institutions (railways, post office, public utilities and public transport), state or state-controlled institutions (health and social organisations), political

organisations, cultural and religious institutions, civil and non-profit foundations. In our problem-oriented social marketing research programme that has been in process for two years we attempt to build a coordinated and integrated marketing model of activities for solving problems (activities with several players, different directions and motivations, etc.). Areas requiring an integrated approach are as follows: place marketing dealing with city and regional developments and population well-being as well as marketing related to environmental protection issues, health protection, rehabilitation, humanisation of working life, poverty, aiding problems, leisure time issues, decreasing and prevention of delinquency, development of education and training, or minority, culture and value protection.

2. Social marketing model and a framework of its analysis

Despite the extensive technical literature, social marketing raises a series of unsolved scientific and professional tasks alongside with providing analyses of numerous circles of questions. There used to be debates and reservations against non-profit oriented marketing approach, but currently these debates are primarily related to the content of plural approach in marketing science mentioning the interpretability of marketing (Bruhn-Tilmes 1994).

Scholars have rarely reached a univocal agreement on the marketing framework and scope, for instance, how many issues the non-business marketing covers or how corporate marketing is linked, if linked at all, to the increased social responsibility of corporate marketing practices (CSR). On the basis of both international and Hungarian research results it can be claimed that in most cases the empirical and foundation research are of partial extension, are built on a partial area and partial correlation and the formulated answers fail to provide a complex frame for marketing of multiplayer, environment, market and social mechanisms, which can be attributed to the lack of didactically built interpretation and modelling of frames of social marketing due to both broader and narrower approach. The status quo of social marketing has continuously been shaped, developing for the past few decades. It has become more accurate and more extended. Our research programme is built on two starting professional approaches and their connection:

- Firstly, the goal of social marketing is to establish value communities with the objective of exerting influence on behaviour that assists providing solutions for those who are affected by the social problem.
- Secondly, we assume that handling social problems and their marketing support can be performed successfully only within a conscious and coordinated stakeholder management. (Ruckh-Noll-Bornholdt (2006))

The essence of social marketing lies in activities along particular (social) values, since in order to achieve some activity, we look for individuals and organisations that possess the identical values and are open towards these values. Consequently, the analysis of these values is a basis of social marketing, since it is becoming more and more difficult to judge and understand what values someone has. Social marketing performs activities on the market of internal values where identical objectives mean identical wishes. For instance, conservatives and liberals have different views on freedom and their wishes regarding this issue are different as well. It is absolutely not easy to reconcile different interests. In order to make competent people and organisations sit at the same table, being extremely accurate in handling values and in establishing behavioural standards is of utmost importance. Values direct practical work, activities and acceptance of particular things. The clearer standpoint regarding values is taken, the easier we loose those who think differently. Deep relationships are established only along identical values. There are two value-strategy alternatives in social marketing belonging to dealing with different problems even in the case of responsible and coordinating organisations: searching for values that can be represented for the largest possible public or specializing in one value group.

The problem solutions and activists of social marketing affected by a lot of players and a huge amount of different relationships require an increasingly complex handling. It is no mere chance that its processes occur in the form of a more and more specific stakeholder management. As we know, in a broad sense of this word, a stakeholder is any identifiable group or individual who can affect the achievement of an organisation's objectives or who is affected by the achievement of an organisation's objectives. In a narrow sense of this word, a stakeholder is any identifiable group or individual on which an organisation is dependent for its continued survival (Freeman-Reed 1983). In our case, stakeholders are those who affect and influence the solution of a particular social problem by their actions and behaviour in a favourable or unfavourable way. In social marketing practices, typical stakeholders and roles are as follows: problems, performance targeters and their clients, organisations, stakeholders within an organisation, private supporters, collaborating partners, state and municipality institutions, regulating authorities, services, consultants, public, enterprises, communication-channel players, competitors, counter-interests and so on. Stakeholders have different decision-making and behavioural roles, for instance, several of them can become marketing targeters as 'clients', while the majority players are common executors and participators in achieving the set social objectives and interests. One of them performs the role of a coordinator and an integrator. Civil and non-profit organisations or a state-run institution often belong to coordinators and integrators. Thus, social marketing is not simply a marketing of civil and non-profit organisations, but these organisations undertake activities and feel great responsibility for solving social issues and problems, since they do not consider it a problem if the manager and the coordinator of a problem solution is a civil organisation. The success of a marketing activity aimed at solving societal problems, depends on accurate planning and strategic prudence. Every problem solution requires identifying organisation(s), which is/are interested, involved, undertaking and responsible for the tasks and which are initiators and executors or even coordinators of the execution in the social marketing processes. This is followed by defining social and action priorities. As a result of limited resources and in order to handle social problems successfully, criteria with the largest impact have to be determined and on their basis those concerned are chosen and roles are assigned. After this those who are concerned are segmented to make handling of particular target groups easier (status, political views, whether the organisation is against or in favour of this, how active or passive they are, how close the relationships are). Then, stakeholders have to be understood, their motivation, expectations, attitude to a particular problem, setting stakeholders' behaviour and identification of his/her behaviour with organisations. Consequently, social marketing becomes an activity linked to particular organisations. In order to shape the strategy and program of social marketing, it is necessary to examine, how the concerned experience social problems, how they tolerate the problem, how they are related to the problem, along what values they act, what obstacles they face, who or what the obstacles are, what values they have, what the motivations are and what actions they are interested in regarding a particular problem.

3. Method and results

The presented empirical survey, which is a part of a complex research project, examines the behaviour of the Hungarian population. The project aims at explaining the participation of the population and individuals in recognising and handling social problems, and at identifying factors of their expected activities with the objective of laying the foundation of the opportunities for integrated social marketing approach. A questionnaire survey was conducted in July and August 2011 when the interviewees questioned Hungarian citizens over the age of 18 and compiled a representative sample consisting of 1603 respondents taking into consideration their age, gender, region and place.

The research examined several areas of social problems with special attention to environmental problems, their handling and easing, environmentally conscious behaviour and activity. Its models and solutions were encouraging for us. Several studies built on Ajzen and Fishbein's reasoned-action theory and on Ajzen's planned-behaviour theory, since both theories are related to the development of a conscious behaviour. In the theory of reasoned action (TORA) Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) emphasized that attitudes do not have a direct impact on behaviour. They affect only the intention to act. However, the intention to act is a function of several factors such as attitudes and subjective norms and the relative importance related to them. TORA was further developed into the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen1991), which was also used in the construction of our model.

The questions included in our questionnaire examined the following:

- what social problems and how important they are considered by the population
- how mature the individuals are with respect to the problem,
- what individual and other organisational responsibility and opportunities are felt in handling the problems,
- what characterises people's intention to gather information,
- what conscious behaviour and civil organisational activities the population undertake to handle the problems,
- what obstacles the respondents feel in solving social problems

The questions aimed at testing our starting model of creating value communities and the stakeholder management in operation. Factors influencing the population's responsibility, conscious decisions, participation in activities of civil organisations, that is, taking part in a particular value community and the correlations of findings:

- whether the declared values have an impact on the circle of experienced social problems and their importance,
- to what extent the evaluation of seriousness of a problem is related to personal involvement in them,
- how the importance of the problem, personal involvement, individual responsibility and evaluation of the task are related,
- what relation is between the involvement in a particular problem, responsibility, action and participation in the work of a civil organisation.

The sensitivity of the Hungarian population reflects the first ten most important problems and they ranked them in the following order: 1. increase in poverty and inequality, 2. increasing impacts of delinquency, 3. deterioration of job opportunities, 4. adverse impacts of alcohol, cigarette and drug consumption, 5. environmental pollution and its impacts, 6. minority issues and protection, 7. unhealthy way of life and comfortability, 8. inequality and backwardness areas and communities, 9. increasing difficulty in getting access to education and training, 10. low birth rate. Out of nineteen circle of problems six are likely to get systematised in factors (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's Measure of Sampling Adequacy: 0,775; significance level of the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: 0,000, Total Variance Explained: 60,9%), where an external and evaluated as distant group of problems (hunger, drinking water, wars, epidemic, ethical and religious conflicts), an unfavourable circle of phenomena related to lifestyles (unhealthy ways of life, alcohol, cigarettes and drugs, environment, minority issues), a factor of regional and community problems, and factors hindering individual efforts (educational and training conditions and free-time spending).

When the seriousness of social problems was evaluated two major segments were distinguished: one was a problem-sensitivity and pessimistic group (53,4%), where mainly old (46-60), retired, less educated, coming from the most backwards regions of Hungary were selected and the other group was more optimistic, considering the problems less serious, (46,6%) encompassing young, more educated people and entrepreneurs who lived in a more

developed areas. The correlation of involvedness illustrates interesting results: the nine circle of problems over 50% are as follows: 1, increase in poverty and inequality, 2. increasing impacts of delinquency, 3. environmental pollution and its impacts, 4. deterioration of job opportunities, 5. unhealthy way of life and comfortability, 6. adverse impacts of alcohol, cigarette and drug consumption, 7. minority issues and protection 8. inequality and backwardness areas and communities, 9. conditions for spending the free time in a reasonable way.

Kahle's (1983) The List of Values (LOV) was applied for evaluating the scale of values, priorities and some particular values of the population, which resulted in the following findings: Security, Sense of accomplishment, Sense of belonging, Self-respect, Warm relationships with others Self-fulfilment Fun and enjoyment in life, Being well respected, Excitement. It is an interesting correlation that the young, people with secondary education, white collar workers, students and families with several children belong to this segment and consider value to be more important.

When evaluating communication means and sources of gathering information about social issues, it turned out that alongside the electronic and printed media the information obtained from friends and acquaintances was considered the most important and alongside internet information the respondents mentioned their workplaces as a source of information. However, very few respondents mentioned civil organisations and events. One of the emerging segments is of low-information intensity (59%); the other group uses passive instruments (23%), whereas the third group prefers the active ones (27%).

Factors hindering the solution of social problems were evaluated as of major importance, which included lack of financial resources, the strengths of business values, lack of political willingness, lack of collaboration of the concerned, lack of assigning tasks and defining those responsible, however, the individual responsibility was at the end of the list. It is interesting to note that every factor is on one factor, whereas there is one segment that gives a lower evaluation to the importance of obstacles and is characterised by a less responsibility hindering behaviour.

The measuring of conscious participation of individuals in solving social problems was extended to different civil and professional organisations (charity, green, cultural, sports and so on). Low active participation was measured with the exception of organisations belonging to some religion (20%). There was an identifiable segment where people expressed their intension to increase their activity in this kind of work (18,4%).

On the basis of the evaluation of the mentioned responses, an explanatory model was created (Figure1.) in which statistical methods were applied to assess the relationship between particular factors and correlations explaining behaviour. All the factors in the model, without any exception, underwent a period of operationalization in the form of a variable set each of which was reduced to one variable for analyses. The applied method selected for performing reduction depended what measuring scale the variable set contained measured variables. The principal component analysis was applied, when the mean and the frequency of a particular response were calculated. The common feature of the methods was that the obtained variables, without any exception, could be measured on the proportional scale and a stochastic connection was established between them, this enabled the pair analysis of stochastic connection between them by applying the Pearson simple linear correlation coefficient. The Figure shows these correlation coefficients and supplements them with the fact that the T-tests was run to test the significant character of the correlation and signalled a significant connection. In all cases variable pairs involved in the experiment showed a significant connection.

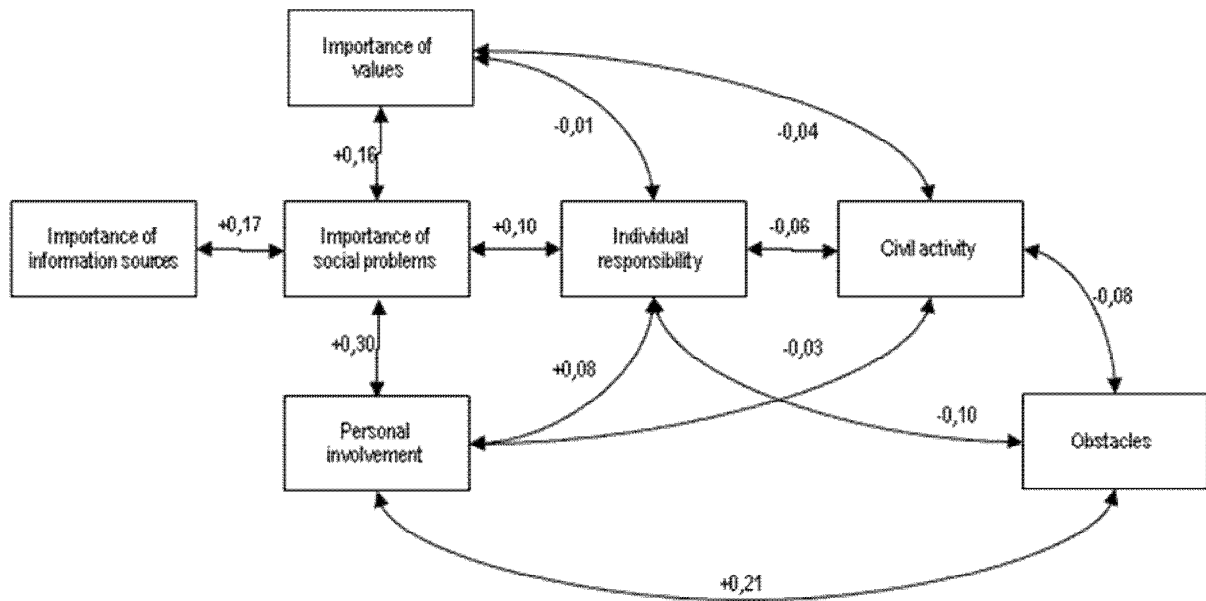


Figure 1. Model of social-problem sensitivity (Our own source)

The findings show that a relatively weak positive relationship strengthens our assumptions that the stated scale of values, the importance of values, the experienced problems and their seriousness correlate, the difference between the direct involvement and the seriousness of the experienced problems has the strongest correlation and shows that the respondents are mainly deal with their own and directly experienced problems and try to find solutions to them. The more serious the social problem is, the more the individual responsibility is felt, the more the activity increases, however, civil organisational activity is not linked to this. This is mainly due to the fact that Hungary is weak both in an organisational sense and instruments and is strongly attached to state institutions for some reasons. It also has an underdeveloped civil sphere. The relationship between factors hindering direct involvedness emphasises shifting personal responsibility and low activity of respondents to external factors. A very weak relationship was measured between individual greatness, the extend of individual responsibility and the role of hindering factors.

4. Research implications and limitations

The presented findings of an empirical research examined only one slice of our model of an integrated social marketing approach, namely, the related decision and activity behaviour of the population. In our first approach, we managed to prove that values, personal involvement and gathering information habits exert an effect and correlate with the assessment of the importance of social issues, which have an impact on individual responsibility and task undertaking willingness. Our measurements show the effects of the current situation of the Hungarian society and limits arising from the underdeveloped civil sphere. At the same time it can be noticed that the needs and the tasks of the integrated social marketing value strategy and stakeholder management orientation, the content directions of opinions and behaviour and the elements of the applied marketing system of instruments. The limitations of the research findings are that the effects and correlations of connections with other social marketing individuals concerned are not attached to this, as it was seen in further elements of our programme and which is required for an integrated approach, its planning and developing execution processes. Its seems sensible to conduct further analyses of parameters of the explanatory factors of the current behaviour model.

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