Application of Social Marketing Mix Strategies During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Hari Singh Saud

Asst. Professor

Department of Management

Far Western University

Mahendranagar, Kanchanpur

Email: saud.hari75@gmail.com

Abstract

Social marketing tends to use commercial marketing tools and strategies to change people's behaviour for the betterment of the individual. Social marketing campaigns are used to deliver messages to the target groups. Social marketing campaigns disseminate information to the target groups to bring awareness about social causes or issues. The campaign provides messages to modify the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of a large proportion of the population. This paper discusses the 8 Ps of social marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion, public, policy, partnership, and purse strings) and its application during the global pandemic of COVID-19. The comprehensive qualitative synthesis did of previously published information. The original research articles were extracted from google scholar in November 2021 by using search keywords "social marketing" OR "social marketing mix" AND "COVID-19" OR " Coronavirus Disease 2019". The study's primary finding of this paper was that social marketing mix strategies (8 ps) had significantly applied to increase public awareness during the global pandemic of COVID-19. In addition, the research paper identifies some emerging areas for future research. The quantitative review techniques would be a valuable future extension such as systematic, bibliometric, and meta-analysis. This research paper offers an application of social marketing mix strategies to prevent such a pandemic and provides a guide for future research on social marketing mix.

Keywords: Social marketing mix, campaigns, coronavirus, strategies, 8 Ps, health behaviour

Introduction

Social marketing seeks to alter target audiences' behaviour for the better. It uses conventional marketing strategies and tools to offer goods and services to target audiences to change their behaviour. It is not focused on making money but on social welfare(Uslay et al., 2009). Social marketing aims to raise awareness of a particular issue or cause(Hagues et al., 2018). We could say that social marketing promotes actions that benefit both the individual and the larger community. The welfare of individuals, groups, the public, or the community is primary goal of social marketing(Haynes-Maslow et al., 2020). Instead of competing products, social marketing competes with people's unpleasant thoughts, behaviours, and actions(Alves, 2010). Mainly, it lowers obstacles and emphasizes advantages. Social marketing employs commercial marketing strategies and tools or techniques to influence the behaviour of specific groups of people to improve their lives or the entire society(Andreasen, 2003).

The beginning of the term "Social marketing" is linked to an article by G.D. Wiebe asking, *"Why can't you sell brotherhood and rational thinking like you sell soap?"* in 1952. He suggested that marketing could be used to solve social problems. When Kotler & Zaltman published an article on social marketing in the 1970s, the term "social marketing" gained popularity. They discussed whether social marketing ideas, principles, and techniques could be used to achieve societal objectives like brotherhood, safe driving, and family planning. (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). They brought a new dimension to the marketing field; then, social marketing was widely used in social causes, problems, or social issues. In today's world, social marketing is increasingly being used as a tool for increasing awareness of a wide variety of topics such as prevention of HIV/aids, alcohol, quitting smoking, education(Kotler & Lee, 2009), helmet use, reducing drink driving(Flaherty et al., 2020), organ donation(Čož & Kamin, 2020), water, sanitation, and hygiene (Yates et al., 2018), reproductive health, malaria, tuberculosis(Firestone et al., 2017), promoting family planning, oral rehydration, childhood vaccination, encourage breastfeeding, nutrition(Fox, 1988), to quit smoking (Kotler, 1980), health promotion, disease prevention, sexually transmitted infections(STDs), physical activity(Luca & Suggs, 2010). Social marketing has been seen as very effective in solving social issues by changing individuals, groups, and society's behaviour.

The social marketing campaign is an organized strategy using communication to affect positive change in human behaviour. The campaign promotes a product or idea through different media, including television, radio, print, online, and digital or social media platforms(Hagues et al., 2018). The critical dimension social marketing campaigns' is creating awareness (Flaherty et al., 2021). Various (governmental, non-governmental,

social, and business) organizations have used social marketing campaigns using commercial marketing tools and techniques or strategies to influence human behaviour positively.

Social marketing mix strategies are currently used to raise health-related awareness(Haynes-Maslow et al., 2020) to prevent the spread of COVID-19 diseases. It has been highly implemented in reaching its objective of increasing public awareness. Infectious illness caused by a recently discovered coronavirus called COVID-19 (WHO). It causes a problem in the respiratory system and shows mild to moderate respiratory disease(Mannan & Farhana, 2021). Unfortunately, many people have been infected and lost their lives due to this virus. Therefore, social or physical distancing from infected people is the best way to prevent and slow transmission. Therefore, controlling the coronavirus largely depends on sanitation', social isolation and healthy behaviour.

Social marketing campaigns build solid public knowledge of a problem or issue through media, messaging, and other print and digital communication mediums(Haynes-Maslow et al., 2020). These campaigns target many people and generate specific results or achieve goals organized with non-profit motives. Despite this, many businesses, health-related organizations, government agencies, and other social organizations use social marketing mix strategies to raise awareness among the general public to prevent the disease. The following research questions (RQs) were not adequately answered based on the previous literature: RQ1. Are the 8 Ps of the social marketing mix applied during Global pandemic of COVID-19? RQ2. What are the implications of social marketing mix strategies in the ongoing global pandemic caused by COVID-19? And how these 8 Ps are effective? This review paper aims to provide researchers and social marketers information about components of social marketing mix and to analyze the application of social marketing mix strategies to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic by analyzing existing literature.

Literature Review

In the health sector, social marketing strategies play a vital role in positively influencing human behaviour or creating health consciousness. This review paper argues that by organizing social marketing mix strategies, positive public awareness can be made. Furthermore, these social strategies programs can play a crucial role in preventing diseases like COVID-19. Social marketing strategies have been highly influential in health sectors for public awareness. Social marketing strategies promote health-related issues. Many researchers claim that these types of strategies successfully generate health-related awareness. Some related articles are reviewed as follows.

Research conducted in Bangladesh aims to assess the effect of preventive measures to control the coronavirus spreading. The study was related to education-based

public awareness programs in healthcare systems like social distancing, reducing crowds, encouraging people to test, etc. (Abdulla et al., 2020). This study showed that health-related behaviour could be changed through public awareness programs. Another study was conducted to determine the knowledge levels, attitudes, practices, and prevention of COVID-19 among the Bangladeshi population. The awareness program was run through television, social media, newspaper advertising, miking, and other informal sources(Rahman et al., 2020). According to the study's findings, the general public was adequately informed about infection-related treatment options, modes of transmission, the availability of medicines, and the value of isolation and quarantine. Public and private organizations coordinated the marketing strategy to disseminate information about the COVID-19 pandemic through various media. However, the study also showed that the public's perception of its practical application was poor. Social marketing strategies were more successful at spreading information or messages about COVID-19. Like this, Mubeen et al. (2020) conducted a study in Pakistan on young adults regarding their knowledge and awareness of the spread and prevention of COVID-19. This study evaluated the efficacy of COVID-19 awareness campaigns. It demonstrated that there was a high and noticeable level of awareness regarding transmission through contact with an infected person. It also revealed that women had marginally superior knowledge to men. Participants over other media preferred social media by more than two-thirds. In addition, the study concluded that the respondents knew (Mubeen et al., 2020) little about fatality rates, symptoms, incubation times, and presentation.

Another research was carried out in Pakistan regarding the blood donor mobilization campaigns using Whatsapp during covid-19. It revealed that the blood donation campaign using Whatsapp was highly effective. This initiative was organized during the lockdown due to the shortage occurred of blood in hospitals; the Whatsapp campaign was conducted by requesting blood donations through messages and videos. After getting messages, many people visited for blood donation, i.e., more than usual. The popularity of Whatsapp also supported enhancing the campaign's effectiveness (Waheed et al., 2020). The study concluded the campaign played a significant role in creating public awareness for donating blood, and among female donors were more than males. Correspondingly, Bastola and Dhungana (2021) conducted a study in Nepal to measure the impact of COVID-19 awareness on health-related behaviour among adolescents. This study revealed that more than 90% of adolescents had an excellent understanding of COVID-19, and there was a significant impact on the children having highly educated and high family incomes. Hand washing, using sanitizers, and staying home activities were seen as influential among most of the population (Banstola & Dhungana, 2021). In addition, it was found that those with technical training

(in fields like engineering, nursing, and science) exhibited healthy behaviours. The results of this study support the findings of the studies mentioned above, showing the effectiveness and influence of social marketing strategies aimed at raising public awareness of health issues.

In the same way above studies were also supported by Thanh et al.(2020). In this study, a communication campaign was organized by the government of Vietnam using different media to control and prevent COVID-19. The researcher analyzed the impact of government campaigns on public perception using qualitative research tools and a stimulus-response model focusing on cognitive, emotional, and behavioural responses to communication stimuli (Tam et al., 2021). The research demonstrated that people acquired good knowledge about symptoms and prevention measures, which is also helpful in safety-seeking health-related behaviour. It also focused on the communication messages and channels that contributed to the success of government campaigns to control and prevent by providing trustworthy, credible, and accurate information.

Furthermore, a study by Karn et al.(2020) in Nepal researched the knowledge and perception of coronavirus in different demographics, ethnicities, education, and area groups. The information was disseminated through news, online media, Viber, Facebook, and government websites (Karn et al., 2020). The study found that the general public obtained adequate knowledge regarding transmission modes and preventive measures for COVID-19 from the campaign in Nepal. However, most of the participants of this study have an awareness and understanding of COVID-19. Furthermore, it claimed that adults above the age of 29 have more knowledge than younger people and highly educated people than less educated people. Another study was carried out in Indonesia related to the influence of social media on the handwashing behaviour, mask-wearing, and social distancing of Indonesian students (Wardani et al., 2020). Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp were the most widely used social media for running the campaign. This study disclosed hand washing, physical distancing, and mask-wearing behaviour were highly constructive through social media to the target groups of students. Therefore, social media were widely used and effectively spread knowledge and implemented behaviour regarding preventing covid-19 disease and blocking transmission by changing health precaution-related behaviour.

Similarly, a study in Malaysia examined the effects of perceived threats and social media exposure to COVID-19 on mental health. The study found that people felt mental illness due to severe danger and fear towards the covid-19. It also disclosed adult participants' fear, anxiety, depression, and stress. The world is being challenged by the coronavirus and negatively affected the health sector and the whole economic system. Behaviour change campaigns were crucially helpful in changing people's perceptions (Fadzil

& Lourdunathan, 2020). Another study was conducted in Jordan to measure the effectiveness of public health awareness and behaviour change using an integrated model. (Al-Dmour et al., 2020).

Another research was organized to measure the effectiveness of the "I am engaged" campaign run by the government of Italy through social media. This campaign focused on community-based practices for improving health-related literacy. It revealed remarkable public health engagement towards behaviour change, enhancing literacy, and preventing the spread of COVID-19. Using the Facebook hashtag, Facebook posts, live videos, and video testimonies posted in this campaign to encourage people, creating awareness and literacy about people's behaviour change (Graffigna et al., 2020). The study also claimed that the outstanding performance on behaviour change increased due to the social media engagement campaign. Thus this campaign was highly innovative and significantly valuable in providing public literacy and awareness. It is similar to the above research studies. Social media played a vital role in creating public awareness to prevent the spread of COVID-19. A dramatized health messages study was conducted in Nigeria to analyze the effect of Youtube animated cartoons on health behaviour concerning covid-19. This study measured social media users' exposure and recall capacity and found that animated cartoons significantly affected exposure and recall. Memory was highly predictable the health behaviour (Onuora et al., 2021). Comparatively, the recall was more important than exposure. On the other hand, it affirmed that internal susceptibility and perceived seriousness were significant in predicting the Youtube animated cartoons on the health behaviour of social media users. Thus all the above studies regarding social marketing strategies were highly successful in changing human behaviour related to health issues in the case of COVID-19 and played a vital role in changing human behaviour positively.

Methods and Procedures

We conducted a narrative review as a comprehensive qualitative synthesis of previously published information to identify the application of social marketing mix strategies. In this study, the researcher scanned journal articles related to the topic based on the available literatures and study materials related to health awareness campaigns focusing on knowledge, attitude, perception and behavior change. The data used in this research were extracted from Google Scholar in November 2021, using query or keywords "social marketing" OR "social marketing mix" OR "social marketing campaign" OR "social marketing intervention" OR "effectiveness of social marketing campaign" OR "effectiveness of social marketing" AND "COVID-19" OR "Coronavirus" OR "Sars-Cov-2" OR "COVID -19 infection" OR "COVID -19 pandemic" OR " COVID -19 prevention" OR "Coronavirus

disease 2019". The years 2019 to 2021 have been chosen for this study to obtain an all-encompassing picture of the research conducted in this area. A literatures covering the years 2019–2021 was conducted to better understand the application of the social marketing mix strategies.

The seventeen out of fifty downloaded articles were included in this review paper which met the search criteria, whether they met the following inclusion criteria: (1) full text available; (2) articles using a primary data source related to awareness intervention, and (3) articles focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, exclusion criteria were: (1) studies without original data and (2) studies published in the English language were evaluated and are not related to increase awareness interventions . This paper consists of an introduction, literature review, methods, discussion and results, and the conclusions and discusses the limitations.

Results and Discussion

The Social Marketing mix is the integration of all components that helps to create awareness among targeted audiences and the general public(Karimi et al., 2020) regarding long-term interests in social issues. First, Kotler and Zaltman(1971) addressed the social marketing mix's 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion). Later on, the additional 4 Ps (public, partnership, policy, and purse strings) were developed in social marketing. Finally, the eight p's (product, price, place, promotion, public, policy, partnership, and purse strings) have been widely used as social marketing mix strategies(Jha, 2014; Maleki et al., 2021). These 8 P's of social marketing strategies are discussed as follows.

Product

The product comprises several tangible and intangible characteristics, such as the manufacturer's packaging, colour, price, and prestige in the market(Karimi et al., 2020). Products may be tangible or intangible that must satisfy human needs. An physical product is not necessary for social marketing(Mostafavi et al., 2021). The product should address or solve the problem, cause, or issue(Kobayashi et al., 2013). The products are health-related counselling(Mostafavi et al., 2021), practices, and ideas(Ismail et al., 2022). The products are counselling, getting facemasks, maintaining social distancing, focusing on a doctor visit if symptoms are seen, washing hands from time to time, and using sanitizer(Banstola & Dhungana, 2021; Sharma et al., 2021; Soon et al., 2021; Wardani et al., 2020), vaccine(Mubeen et al., 2020; Rai et al., 2021) behavioral rules, and adopt hygiene norms(Graffigna et al., 2020), facilitate better self-care(Chisadza et al., 2021), promotion of blood donations(Waheed et al., 2020) to prevent coronavirus diseases. The product should solve specific problem and generate ideas or knowledge.

Price

An essential component of the social marketing mix is price. In social marketing, the term "price" refers to the willingness to bear time-related, psychological, financial, and social costs(Mostafavi et al., 2021). Price is the amount that spend in terms of money, physical labour, time, or any other resource(Karimi et al., 2020) to obtain the good or service or to get benefits by the customers or target audiences. This price may be monetary or intangible sources of value, such as time, effort(Mostafavi et al., 2021), and psychological barriers(Kobayashi et al., 2013). Thus in social marketing price may be monetary or non-monetary. For instance, the cost of facemasks(Tam et al., 2021), hand sanitizer, soap, and doctor's visits(Al-Dmour et al., 2020; Hossen et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2021), similarily cost of testing, equipment, beds, ventilators, and PPE(Chisadza et al., 2021; Hussain et al., 2021) are some of the economic price of engaging in these behaviours. The intangible prices include time, potential physical, mental, social or psychological stress or discomfort(Mostafavi et al., 2021), and increase in stigmatization negative attitudes from neighbours and society(Rahman et al., 2020). Anxiety/depression, fear, blood pressure issues, and fatigue are suggested as products by (Fadzil & Lourdunathan, 2020; Hussain et al., 2021), loss of quality life is used by (Graffigna et al., 2020), and socializationby (Ismail et al., 2022) as a price.

Place

The place is an activity that manages the flow of products and services from suppliers to buyers or users to meet their needs and wants by establishing connections with numerous intermediaries in commercial marketing. The place is characterized by a favorable physical and social environment for the benefit of the intended audiences(Mostafavi et al., 2021). It explains how the product or service is delivered to the desired audiences or customers(Karimi et al., 2020). When and where the target consumers or audiences will carry out the behaviour or access service is an important question that needs to be answered(Kobayashi et al., 2013). It is an option that is both pleasurable and practical(Mostafavi et al., 2021), which increases the likelihood of people being adopted. According to the studies mentioned above, the places where these educational and medical services are provided may be medical installation(Ismail et al., 2022), local clinics, hospitals, isolation centres(Hossen et al., 2020), self-isolation, quarantine(Rai et al., 2021), hospital blood bank(Waheed et al., 2020), quarantine (Rahman et al., 2020) and workplaces, or residential areas, depending on the requirements of the target audiences.

Promotion

The promotion aims to build public knowledge of a problem or issue through media, messages, and other digital or social communication mediums. The promotion is comprised of several channels that encourage people to engage in healthy behaviors in social marketing(Mostafavi et al., 2021). It disseminates information to target many people to influence human behaviour(Karimi et al., 2020) and generates specific results or achieves targeted goals. In social marketing, promotional activities run with non-profit motives(Kobayashi et al., 2013) and media play a significant role in communicating messages. In the this study, promotion was done through videos shared through the WhatsApp group(Waheed et al., 2020), voice, and SMS messages(Tam et al., 2021), Online news(Banstola & Dhungana, 2021), messages through mobile, and miking(Rahman et al., 2020), hoarding boards, display, Posters and billboards(Hossen et al., 2020), online media, Viber, Facebook, and government websites(Karn et al., 2020) radio, television, print media(Rahman et al., 2020; Rai et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2021), health education interventions are given through social media(Al-Dmour et al., 2020; Fadzil & Lourdunathan, 2020; Soon et al., 2021; Wardani et al., 2020), public mass media campaigns(Mubeen et al., 2020), and community outreach through phone calls and messages.

Table 1

Strategies Social Marketing Mix

Components	Strategies
Product	Maintaining social distancing, reducing crowd, encouraging people for testing, treatment, transmission mode, medicine availability, fatality rates, symptoms, blood donor mobilization, hand washing, using sanitizers, and staying home, safety-seeking health-related behaviour, the message regarding transmission mode and preventive measures, mask-wearing, and health-related literacy, focusing sanitation behaviour change, messages through news, and entertainment in social media, exposure and recall programs,
Price	***Non-monetary:*** fear, anxiety, depression, and stress among people, perception. ***Monetary:*** testing price, medicine price, price of facemasks, sanitizers, soaps,
Place	Isolation and quarantine area, visit for blood donation, i.e., hospitals

Promotion	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Facebook hashtag, Facebook posts, Facebook live videos, and video testimonies, phone calls and text messages, Youtube animated cartoons, Whatsapp messages about symptoms and preventive measures, television, newspaper advertising, miking, and other informal sources, youtube videos, news, online media, Viber, and government websites.
Public	Young adults, male and female, adolescents, different demographics, ethnicities, education and area groups, government authorities, and community-based practices improve positive behaviour.
Partnership	Private and public organizations, local, state, and central governments organizations, NGOs,
Policy	Lockdown, healthy-related guidelines,
Pursue strings	NGO foundations, private donations, and corporate social responsibility funds local, state, and central governmental institutions' grants, etc.

Public

Public are important aspect in social marketing intervention, the public can be categorized into two groups, i.e., external and internal. External groups include the target audiences, policymakers(Rai et al., 2021), or beneficiaries, and internal groups contain the employees or administrative staff educated for implementing or providing the program or services. In this study, the public was all age groups of target audiences(Fadzil & Lourdunathan, 2020). The general public, doctors, nurses, other health workers, administrative staff(Rai et al., 2021), lab and technical staff, and volunteers(Waheed et al., 2020) were included as public. Mostly the medical personnel and vulnerable groups are treated as public.

Partnership

The partnership is a strategic collaboration with other communities or organizations to increase the effectiveness and accessibility of programs. Social-cultural issues make a real challenge in implementing programs. Organizations need to form alliances with other communities and organizations to achieve goals. It is not necessary to have similar destinations, to be identified and collaborated with, and coordination with a competitor is sometimes required to reach the target groups. In social marketing, partnerships play a crucial role in successfully implementing interventions. In the above literatures, governments collaborated with NGOs(Hossen et al., 2020), local or federal governments(Mongilala et al., 2020; Rai et al., 2021), private or business organizations(Sharma et al., 2021),

medical organizations(Hussain et al., 2021), service clubs, media, and educator and psychologist(Fadzil & Lourdunathan, 2020) other social organizations. Very few studies applied or used the term public were found.

Policy

The policy is fundamental for decision-making. Organizational performance is directed and governed by a set of guidelines or policies, a collection of plans and ideas. The policy included a lockdown, government orders to keep a certain distance physically or socially, the availability of resources, a change in behaviour, etc. The policy aspects of the above studies focused on increasing access to health behaviour by using facemasks, maintaining social distancing, visiting doctors, washing hands from time to time, and using sanitizer(Banstola & Dhungana, 2021), guidelines for quarantine, isolation, travel restrictions, testing and contact tracing of suspected people(Sharma et al., 2021), resistance to crowded places visit(Soon et al., 2021)to prevent coronavirus diseases. The governments also launched health insurance and community outreach programs. In many countries, the government promoted and provided subsidies(Wardani et al., 2020) to research organizations.

Purse String

Purse string is related to the right or power to manage the disposition of money. It denotes sources of funds. Primarily, it answers the question, from where do we get funds? Who are the stakeholders? What are the expectations of stakeholders? To whom is information disseminated for the utilization of funds? Most of literatures showed purse string aspect through funds from NGO foundations, private donations(Hussain et al., 2021), corporate social responsibility funds(Onuora et al., 2021), local, state, and central governmental agencies or institutions' grants, etc. The social marketers should manage a fund for the development and sustainability of campaigns. Few of the above studies discussed about pursestrings.

Conclusions

The primary aim of the study was to review the applications of various social marketing mix strategies. Individuals, communities, and society are at the centre of social marketing's activities. Therefore, COVID-19 health-related behaviour promotion is a focus of social marketing campaigns. The studies investigated awareness, knowledge, behaviour change, implementation of health messages, etc. Many previous studies have shown social marketing mix strategies were applied in creating public awareness for positive health behaviour change (Abdulla et al., 2020; Bae et al., 2021; Banstola & Dhungana,

2021; Chisadza et al., 2021; Hossen et al., 2020; Hussain et al., 2021; Karn et al., 2020; Mongilala et al., 2020; Onuora et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2020; Rai et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2021; Siddique et al., 2020; Soon et al., 2021; Tam et al., 2021; Tolga Şentürka, 2021; Waheed et al., 2020; Wardani et al., 2020) and the strategies components were product, price, place, promotion, public, policy, partnership, and purse strings. The interventions have significantly influenced the behaviour regarding using face masks and sanitizers and maintaining social distancing. These strategies are applied in delivering information about the prevention of COVID-19 in literatures from different countries. social marketing mix strategies were applied to influence people's health-related behaviour during a pandemic of COVID-19. According to the literarures these strategies have successfully achieved the target goals by making people aware of it. It changes human health behaviour or creates health consciousness and positive public awareness. Human health behaviour regarding face masks, sanitizers, and social distancing changed significantly, such as hand washing, sanitizers, and staying home(Al-Dmour et al., 2020; Fadzil & Lourdunathan, 2020; Graffigna et al., 2020; Mubeen et al., 2020; Stead et al., 2019). Therefore, strategies were precious in providing public literacy and awareness.

This study is based on the literature review of desktop work. Seventeen published articles were reviewed to evaluate the application of social marketing mix strategies regarding the global pandemic of COVID-19. The narrative literature review technique was used in this study. The following research questions have remained unanswered in the past and need to be addressed: how can social marketing mix strategies influence the behaviours of individuals and society or community? How can innovations be used to improve preventive health behaviour? The use of social marketing practices and innovation from various subject areas can be explored using a variety of theoretical models. Bibliometric analysis, meta-analysis, scoping and systematic reviews are alternatives to narrative reviews.

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