



A systematic review of stakeholder involvement in social marketing interventions



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ABSTRACT

Stakeholder theory implies that involvement of stakeholders in intervention planning, implementation, and evaluation stages may enhance marketing outcomes. A systematic literature review was conducted to identify social marketing interventions published in peer reviewed journals whose reported aim was to reduce harm caused by alcohol from 2000 to May 2015. This paper considers the extent of stakeholder involvement in key stages of social marketing interventions, namely the formative research, implementation, and evaluation stages. The number of stakeholders was greatest in more complex community settings when compared to more narrow settings such as universities and schools. A restricted stakeholder focus was observed for evaluation. Stakeholder theory, a widely used management theory, can guide downstream social marketing intervention planning and design, implementation, and evaluation to deliver sustainable programmes. Limited stakeholder involvement in social marketing interventions limits their potential. Given limited stakeholder involvement was identified in the current review, the use of a broader array of stakeholders in formative research and evaluation is recommended to optimise behavioural outcomes.

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CHINESE ABSTRACT

利益相关者理论表明利益相关者参与干预规划、执行和评估阶段可以改善社会营销的效果。本文对2000年至2015年5月期间经过同行评审的杂志上发表的旨在降低饮酒危害的社会营销干预进行了系统性的文献综述。本文探讨利益相关者在社会营销干预各个关键阶段（即形成性研究阶段、执行阶段和评估阶段）的参与程度。相比大学或学校这种比较单一的背景，越复杂的社区，利益相关者的人数就越多。本研究观察了一小组利益相关者以便进行评估。利益相关者理论广泛用于管理理论中，可以指导下游社会营销干预的规划设计、执行和评估，以创造可持续的项目。利益相关者参与社会营销干预的程度有限，它们发挥的潜力也会受限。鉴于当前研究中发现的利益相关者的参与度有限，建议在形成性研究和评估阶段拓宽利益相关者的范围，以获得更优化的行为性结果。

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1. Introduction

Alcohol consumption can be harmful to the individuals consuming alcohol, their friends, families and society at large. According to the World Health Organisation, 2.5 million deaths are attributed to alcohol-related consequences (WHO, 2011a), which represents 4% of all preventable deaths worldwide (WHO, 2011b). Sixty major types of diseases and injuries are caused by alcohol, and the most common ones include a broad range of cancers, cardiovascular diseases, foetal alcohol syndrome and gastrointestinal diseases (WHO, 2011b). Considerable evidence indicates that individuals misusing alcohol are two to four

times more likely than the general population to die prematurely (Room et al., 2005). Of further concern, the impact of alcohol consumption extends beyond the individuals who drink alcohol, with both short- and long-term consequences of high-risk drinking reported. For example, the actions of intoxicated persons can lead to alcohol-related negative consequences, such as traffic accidents and hospitalisations (Laslett et al., 2010). Some estimates indicate that nearly half of the Australian population (10.5 million people) report being negatively impacted by the drinking of a stranger (Laslett et al., 2010).

A considerable body of research has been undertaken to understand how the harm from alcohol consumption can be minimised. Different approaches to minimise harm caused by alcohol include educational interventions (Bingham et al., 2010; Schwinn and Schinke, 2010), law enforcement (Dula et al., 2007; Wechsler et al., 2003), and social marketing (Rothschild, 1999; Rundle-Thiele et al., 2013). While considerable gains have been made to combat harmful alcohol drinking, ongoing risky drinking suggests that additional

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research attention is warranted. Management theories such as the systems theory (Kelly, 2013), chaos theory (Levy, 1994), contingency theory (Hofer, 1975), strategic management theory (Hitt, 2011), and stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) have long been used in commercial settings; however, the use of management theories in social marketing settings remains limited (for review of theories and models used in social marketing, see for example Luca and Suggs, 2013, and Truong, 2014). Given that calls have been made (see Rundle-Thiele, 2013) to extend theory use beyond dominant psychological and sociological theories, research investigating the extent that consideration of stakeholders has occurred in downstream social marketing interventions is warranted. The aims of the current study are twofold. First, this paper seeks to establish the extent different groups of stakeholders are used in social marketing interventions aiming to minimise harm from alcohol consumption. Second, this paper distinguishes stakeholder theory from important social marketing approaches, such as systems thinking and co-creation. This paper contributes to the literature by illustrating the importance of adding a stakeholder perspective in addition to value creation and where relevant systems thinking within the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of downstream social marketing interventions permitting sustainable interventions to be delivered by social marketers.

2. Social marketing perspective

Social marketing, since it was first defined by Kotler and Zaltman (1971), has been used to change a broad range of behaviours, including (but not limited to) obesity (Francis and Taylor, 2009), drink and drug driving (Clapp et al., 2005; Dula et al., 2007), smoking (Egger et al., 1983; Lefebvre and Flora, 1988), and alcohol consumption (LaBrie et al., 2007; Lederman and Stewart, 2005). Drawing on its parent discipline of commercial marketing, which largely drew on economics and psychology, social marketing has evolved over the last forty years into a discipline in its own right (Rundle-Thiele, 2013). There is a considerable body of evidence suggesting that social marketing can be implemented to change behaviour (Carins and Rundle-Thiele, 2014; Kubacki et al., 2015). According to one of the leading social marketing scholars, Alan Andreasen (2002), social marketing interventions at the downstream level aiming to change behaviour should be competitively minded, audience centred, employ a full marketing mix to extend beyond mere messaging and take competition into account to offer a compelling exchange for the target audience. Carins and Rundle-Thiele (2014) recently demonstrated in their systematic review of social marketing interventions targeting healthy eating that when social marketing is applied using more of the Andreasen's (2002) criteria, social marketers are more likely to achieve desired behaviour change.

Our understanding of social marketing employed in this study stems from a recent consensus definition of social marketing endorsed in October 2013 by the International Social Marketing Association (ISMA), European Social Marketing Association (ESMA) and the Australian Association of Social Marketing (AASM), which states that:

“Social Marketing seeks to develop and integrate marketing concepts **with other approaches** to influence behaviours that benefit individuals and communities for the greater social good. Social Marketing practice is guided by ethical principles. It seeks to integrate research, best practice, theory, audience and **partnership insight**, to inform the delivery of competition sensitive and segmented social change programmes that are effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable” (AASM, ISMA, & ESMA, 2013; emphasis added)

A key point to note is the acknowledgement in the recent consensus definition of social marketing that social marketing seeks to establish effective partnerships and integrate marketing concepts with

other approaches, which may include management theories. However, social marketing as a discipline has been criticised for scant usage of theories (Luca and Suggs, 2013; Rundle-Thiele, 2013), despite assertions that theory use can improve social marketing effectiveness (Lombardo and Leger, 2007). To date, the theories that have been used in social marketing remain limited to consumer behaviour, sociological, and behavioural theories (Luca and Suggs, 2013; Truong, 2014). The study by Luca and Suggs (2013) highlighted limited application of theory in intervention designs with only 6 out of 17 studies reporting theory use. A review of the literature indicates that commonly used theories in social marketing include the theory of planned behaviour (Stead et al., 2005), the health belief model (Julinawati et al., 2013), and the stages of change transtheoretical model (Gallivan et al., 2007). These models provide a dominant focus on the individual. Given calls to move social marketing upstream (Hoek and Jones, 2011), and the need to take a macro level view, theories that stretch beyond one stakeholder group are needed (Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014). Taken together, there is evidence indicating a limited repertoire of theories being used in social marketing, which may provide too much emphasis on the targeted individuals in intervention design, planning, implementation, and evaluation. The continued dominant use of theories such as the theory of planned behaviour is surprising given that studies show that intentions do not always lead to behaviour change (Holdershaw et al., 2011), which according to Andreasen (2002) is the focus and ultimate goal of social marketing interventions. Additional theoretical perspectives are warranted to extend understanding of how behavioural change can be better achieved by social marketers. As stated in Walsh et al. (1993), application of theory assists to develop understanding in social marketing and provides an important framework to teach the next generation of social marketers (Rundle-Thiele, 2013).

Social marketers need to consider alternative theoretical perspectives to extend our understanding of how social marketing may be better applied to enhance outcomes and deliver sustainable interventions (Gordon et al., 2010; Spotswood et al., 2012). Scarcity of time, financial and natural resources has been detailed broadly in the management literature (Appelgren and Klohn, 1999; Engwall and Jerbrant, 2003), and management thinking is grounded on managing those limited resources in the most effective manner to achieve organisational goals. Stakeholder theory, a widely used management theory, is proposed as an additional approach to guide the management of social marketing programmes ensuring that stakeholders are considered in intervention design, planning, implementation, and evaluation. A stakeholder perspective implies applying a managerial and stakeholder-oriented perspective in social marketing planning, programme design, delivery, and evaluation.

3. Stakeholder theory

Thirty years ago R. E. Freeman (1984) proposed a strategic concept to describe a firm and its networks, stating that “[a]ny group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of a corporation’s purpose” (p. iv) is a stakeholder. Formulation of stakeholder theory was the result of work aiming to improve the survival probabilities of corporate companies in a competitive market economy through understanding the “needs and concerns” of stakeholder groups and to gain the support of those groups with the ultimate aim of sustaining and improving performance.

Successful companies have a tendency to consider stakeholder groups in decision making (Bryson, 2004). In fact, Donaldson and Preston (1995) suggested there might be a positive correlation between a company’s success and the number of stakeholders that are taken into account during planning and decision making processes. Moreover, interconnectedness that is caused by globalisation has increased the importance of considering stakeholders as there are many parties who affect and are affected by a firms’ survival,

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