

The Effect of Social Marketing on Customer Satisfaction with Regard to the Moderating Role of Environmental Approach

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors affecting customer satisfaction through social marketing features with regard to the moderating role of environmental approach in Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality. For this purpose, aspects and parameters related to the research variables were identified by referring to conducted studies and based on these variables, a questionnaire was designed based on of 28 questions whose reliability was confirmed by the elite in the field of management. The study population are all contacts of the organization of transportation and traffic of Mashhad Municipality; the sample size of which is 220 people by using Cochran formula. Also, to test the hypotheses of this research, Pearson correlation coefficient test and multiple regression are used and the results suggest that the environment moderates the correlation between social marketing and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality.

Keywords: Social marketing, customer satisfaction, environment, Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality.

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Introduction

Social marketing is a process that by using the principles and techniques of marketing, creates, communicates, and transfers value in order to influence the target community behavior and thereby, in addition to the target community, benefit the society entirely. For almost forty years, the use of commercial marketing principles and techniques is proposed in order to advance the social goals and experts are seeking to replicate the success of the business sector to solve social problems.

This approach, called social marketing, uses the principles and techniques of commercial marketing for the transmission of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors in community. Francis Bacon, the famous English philosopher and founder of empirical philosophy, was one of the first people who tried to formulate and define assumptions, concepts and methods of modern science by resorting to philosophy and philosophical studies (Chalmers, 1994, 13). The aim of social marketing is not merely trade and exchange process, but it has a greater purpose and that is to influence the actions and behavior of individuals in the community (Khorshidi and Moghadam, 2003: 141). Social marketing approach is the most comprehensive and influential approach in voluntary behavior change. There are various approaches in the field of social change, such as health education, health promotion, social advertising, and public relations. The purpose of social marketing perspective is that the organization must determine the demands and interests of the target market to maintain or improve the welfare aspects of the customer and their community (Parsaeian, 2005: 955). One of the best ways to get insight on the behavior that social marketers wish to influence is to enter the field and understand customer behavior (Andreessen, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

Social marketing is a field in new science that seeks to fulfill social goals and objectives by using commercial marketing techniques. Based on the concept of social marketing, marketing directors of firms have to consider important factors such as the demands of consumers and the interests of society in short and long terms in setting their marketing strategies and policies. Social marketing approach for behavioral change is to offer alternatives to the social environment so that people would voluntarily embrace the target behavior based on cost-benefit exchange. Social marketing is effective when the costs of the current behavior are tangible for society, and people do not expect to receive early individual interest.

One of the debatable topics in the field of social marketing is that in the age of environmental problems, lack of natural resources, rapid population growth, global inflation and negligence of social services, is mere marketing enough? Such concerns and conflicts makes us closer to the concept of social marketing (Beshly Soleimani, 2012: 28). One of the most important issue and challenges is devoting attention to various aspects of attracting communication and customer retention. Increase in production capacity and surplus of goods by advances in technology and improvement of systems and procedures, diversity of products and increased competition, rising customer awareness and many other factors have led to this problem and have placed attracting customers and their maintenance among the concerns of managers today (Mirakzadeh

and Bahrami, 2011: 39). In today's competitive economy, customer-orientation and customer satisfaction are the first business law and disobeying them will lead to the removal from the market. Companies always want to raise their customer satisfaction in order to create loyalty in them to achieve profitability; consequently, it is important to measure customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is the result of comparing the performance of the supplier with customer expectations (Delkhah and Divandari, 2005). A customer-oriented organization cannot be successful without developing a proper communication with its customers and in today's quality-oriented and customer-centered world, the work target customer and customer orientation are the foundations of in all business and economic activities (Young et al., 2008). Social marketing aims to introduce a new behavior to provide the personal interests of the target community so that they would choose it voluntarily. Social marketing is not just a set of techniques and tools for creating social change, but it also represents a new way of thinking and ideology which can pave the way for more extensive and effective social change. Developing a coherent and unified theory of social marketing is able to provide reasonable solutions to problems which modern societies deal with. Considering research literature, the absence of a coherent and systematic scientific research in this field is evident more than ever; therefore, the main question that has occupied the researcher's mind is that whether social marketing and environmental factors affect customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality.

Research Questions

Primary Questions

- 1) Is there a significant correlation between social marketing and customer satisfaction in Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality?
- 2) Does the environment moderate the correlation between social marketing and customer satisfaction in Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality?

Secondary Questions

- 1) Is there a significant correlation between trust and customer satisfaction in Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality?
- 2) Is there a significant correlation between communication and customer satisfaction in Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality?
- 3) Is there a significant correlation between conflict and customer satisfaction in Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality?
- 4) Is there a significant correlation between competence and customer satisfaction in Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality?

Table 1 Summary of domestic research literature

Research Title	Researcher(s)	Year	Result
Studying the effect of social marketing factors on National Bank brand value from the customer perspective	Sadeghi and Anvari	2012	Social marketing has the greatest effect on brand name satisfaction.
The concept of social marketing and its effect on the banking industry.	Amani and Zarei	2014	Social marketing philosophy is considering the interests of customers along with the interests of banks
The effect of the repurchase trust through customer satisfaction in online shopping	Akhoundi	2014	Indirect effect of trust in repurchase is more of its direct effect through customer satisfaction.
Evaluating the correlation between relationship marketing and policyholders' satisfaction	Hesaraki	2014	There was a significant correlation between relationship marketing, particularly between trust and satisfaction of policyholders
Examining the role of trust in customer identification and customer satisfaction in the correlation between customer loyalty and Corporate Social Responsibility	Molavi Bistooni	2014	There was a significant positive correlation between trust, satisfaction, identification and customer loyalty
Investigating the effect of factors affecting customer satisfaction with an emphasis on internal marketing	Maddah	2014	There was a significant positive correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment with service quality and between customer satisfaction and service quality
Identifying and prioritizing of effective components of relationship marketing to increase customer satisfaction	Mahboubi	2015	Variables of trust, commitment and Conflict Management are of the greatest importance in customer satisfaction.
Examining the role of credit companies in corporate social marketing	Inoue and Aubry	2011	Sports organizations are effective tools for beneficial social behavior in corporate social marketing.
Equipping and rethinking social marketing mix	Gordon	2011	The need for social marketing is developing new marketing mix.

Research Conceptual Model

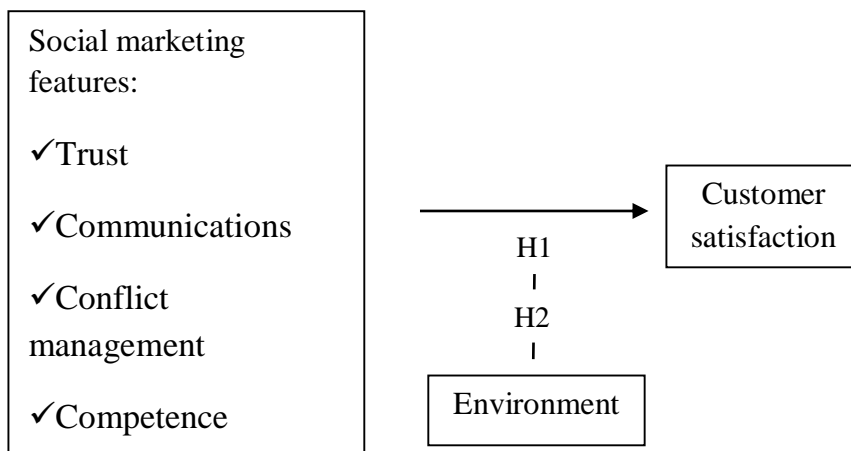


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Model

Research Method

This research is practical in purpose and descriptive survey in nature in which data in the field of the concepts of social marketing, customer satisfaction, and attention to the environment are collected through library method and reading books and articles in this area. The statistical population of this study is all the customers of Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality. Sampling method of this study is simple random sampling and based on Cochran formula, sample size is 222 people. To collect information and statistical data of the research, questionnaire is used. Experts approve the validity of the questionnaire developed in this study. SPSS software will be used for data analysis.

Table 2 The reliability coefficients of the questionnaires.

Questionnaire Name / Aspects	No. of Items	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Social marketing	15	73%
Customer satisfaction	7	71%
Environment	7	79%

Research Data Analysis

Table 3 Research descriptive statistics

Feature	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	33	85%
	Female	189	15%
Age	Under 30 years	25	11%
	30-40 years	87	39%
	40-50 years	84	38%
	Over 50 years	26	12%
Education	High school diploma	24	11%
	Associate's Degree	71	32%
	Bachelor's Degree	84	38%
	Master's Degree	34	15%
	PhD Degree	9	4%

Inferential Statistics

The first primary research question: Is there a significant correlation between social marketing and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality?

Table 4 Correlation between social marketing and customer satisfaction (N = 222)

Pearson correlation coefficient	Customer satisfaction	Sig.
Social marketing	0.762	0.000

According to Table 4, Pearson correlation coefficient between social marketing and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality is 0.762 and since the value of the standard error is (0.000) and smaller than 0.01, there is a significant positive correlation between social marketing and customer satisfaction at 99% level. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant correlation between social marketing and customer satisfaction at 95% level in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality.

The second primary research question: Does the environment moderate the correlation between social marketing and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality?

Given that this question has a moderator variable, in the first model, the direct relationship between the independent variable, social marketing, on the dependent variable, customer satisfaction, will be examined; then, in the second model, the moderating role of the environment in the correlation between social marketing and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality will be discussed. The rate of change in R² represents the moderating role.

Table 5 Results of the research model

Model	Coefficients	Standard deviation	Standardized coefficients	T	Probability value	F	Probability value	R ²
Invariant	0.602	0.218	0.000	2.755	0.006	184.579	0.000	0.457
Social marketing	0.797	0.059	0.676	13.586	0.000			
Invariant	0.635	0.214	0.000	2.962	0.003	101.264	0.000	0.482
Social marketing	0.772	0.058	0.655	13.320	0.000			
Environment	0.179	0.056	0.157	3.193	0.002			
Invariant	0.879	0.246	0.000	3.579	0.000	69.754	0.000	0.491
Social marketing	0.705	0.067	0.599	10.582	0.000			
Environment	-0.801	0.495	-0.703	-1.619	0.107			
Environment *Marketing	0.261	0.131	0.875	1.993	0.048			

Table 5, shows that based on the first model, social marketing is effective on satisfaction from services to a value of 0.797 and in the second model which the moderating variable of the environment is added to the regression equation model, the effect of social marketing and environment are estimated 0.772 and 0.179, respectively and in the final model, social marketing and the environment are effective on satisfaction from services to values of 0.705 and -0.801, respectively but the interaction between social marketing and environment causes a decrease in satisfaction from services to a value of 0.261 that according to the regression coefficient of determination, the model explains 49% of satisfaction dispersions and the model is statistically significant on 5 percent level. Also, the results of Table 5 show that the first and second equation are different ($b_2 \neq 0$) and based on the third equation, we can see that the interactive coefficient of social marketing and environment is rejected to be zero ($b_3 \neq 0$) and on this basis we can say that the environment in this equations is moderating and given the probability value ($0.048 = P$), it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is approved on 5% level and the environment can moderate the correlation between social marketing and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality.

The research first secondary question: Is there a correlation between trust and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality?

Table 6. The correlation between trust and customer satisfaction (N = 222)

Pearson correlation coefficient	Customer satisfaction	Sig.
Trust	0.534	0.000

According to Table 6, Pearson correlation coefficient between social marketing and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality is 0.534 and since standard error value is (0.000) and smaller than 0.01, there is a positive and significant correlation between trust and customer satisfaction on 99% level; thus, we can conclude that there is a positive and significant correlation between trust and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality.

The research second secondary question: Is there a correlation between communications and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality?

Table 7 Correlation between communications and customer satisfaction (N = 222)

Pearson correlation coefficient	Customer satisfaction	Sig.
Communications	0.519	0.000

According to Table 7, Pearson correlation coefficient between communications and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality is 0.519 and since standard error value is (0.000) and smaller than 0.01, there is a positive and significant correlation between communications and customer satisfaction on 99% level; thus, we can conclude that there is a positive and significant correlation between communications and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality.

The research third secondary question: Is there a correlation between conflict management and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality?

Table 8 Correlation between conflict management and customer satisfaction (N = 222)

Pearson correlation coefficient	Customer satisfaction	Sig.
Conflict management	0.458	0.000

According to Table 8. Pearson correlation coefficient between conflict management and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality is 0.458 and since standard error value is (0.000) and smaller than 0.01, there is a positive and significant correlation between conflict management and customer satisfaction on 99% level; thus, we can conclude that there is a positive and significant correlation between conflict management and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality.

The research fourth secondary question: Is there a correlation between competence and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality?

Table 9. Correlation between competence and customer satisfaction (N = 222)

Pearson correlation coefficient	Customer satisfaction	Sig.
Competence	0.762	0.000

According to Table 9, Pearson correlation coefficient between competence and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality is 0.762 and since standard error value is (0.000) and smaller than 0.01, there is a positive and significant correlation between competence and customer satisfaction on 99% level; thus, we can conclude that there is a positive and significant correlation between competence and customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality.

Research Conclusion and Proposals

One of the main obstacles in the way of attaining customer satisfaction, are paying attention to different aspects of attracting customers, how to communicate with customers and finally, customer retention. Despite advances in technology and the expansion and improvement of systems and production methods and increased competition and diversity of products, higher levels of customer awareness and many other factors also contributed to this problem and finally attracting more customers and more importantly maintaining them as loyal customers are among the priorities of managers' concerns today. One of the important tools that can be an effective help in this way is the use of social marketing. According to the results of the study, there is a significant correlation between social marketing and customer satisfaction and all aspects of social marketing including (trust, communication, conflict management and competence) have a significant correlation with customer satisfaction in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality. It can be concluded that managers of this organization can increase customer satisfaction with an emphasis on proper implementation of Social Marketing and its aspects in particular. Studying social marketing as one of the dependent fields of commercial marketing is not right. Because despite several similarities with commercial marketing, social marketing is an independent field and is significantly different in terms of goals, objectives and organization. If we study the responsibilities and duties of social marketers rigorously and precisely, we observe that social marketing has its roots elsewhere. Moreover, the role of its aspects must be considered more than before in order to increase customer satisfaction. Our findings in this theory are consistent with the results of studies conducted by Sadeghi and Anvari (2012), Hesaraki (2014) and Maddah (2014). Sadeghi and Anvari (2012) studied the effect of social marketing factors on National Bank brand value from the customer perspective in which the effect of all these factors on all aspects of brand name value was evaluated and according to Bonferroni test results; social marketing has the greatest effect on brand name and customer satisfaction. Hesaraki (2014) evaluated the correlation between relationship marketing and policyholders' satisfaction and concluded that there is a significant correlation between relationship marketing and customer satisfaction. It should be noted that relationship marketing is quite close social marketing and they are quite similar in terms of aspects except in one case. The results of studying the second primary research question confirmed the moderating role of the environment on the correlation between social marketing and customer satisfaction. The findings of this study are consistent with the results of studies

conducted by Etesami (2011), Inoue and Aubrey (2011). Etesami (2010) in a study entitled "Analysis of the impact of social marketing on the preservation of urban green space, case study: Isfahan", with the aim of analyzing the impact of social marketing on the maintenance of urban green space in Isfahan city, came to the conclusion that the use of social marketing is effective on the acceptance of citizens' behavior regarding the preservation of green space in Isfahan city. Also, Inoue and Aubrey (2011) examined the role of credit companies in corporate social marketing and stated that the main objective of corporate social marketing (CSM) is to convince people to have socially beneficial behaviors. In this study, social marketing programs are studied in professional sports organizations. The projects are conducted in areas such as health and education of the youth, conservation of the environment, community involvement and intercultural understanding. Research findings show that professional sports organizations can be an effective tool for beneficial social behaviors to increase their credibility in corporate social marketing. In this regard, considering the research and the verified correlations, some recommendations can be proposed in order to improve the current condition of the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality.

- Given that there is a significant effect between trust and customer satisfaction, some strategies must be considered to increase customer trust that will lead to their satisfaction. In organizations like transportation and traffic, executives and managers need to focus beyond their marketing strategies regarding customer satisfaction so that their provided services will gain the customers' trust.
- One of the aspects social marketing that affects customer satisfaction is communications. Given that this relationship is proved, it is recommended to use customer relationship management system to receive valuable recommendations from experts and citizens toward improving and promoting services. In this regard, online communication could be established with clients to answer questions. In addition, clients can present their experience and suggestions through this (online communication) and it will help to increase client satisfaction.
- It is recommended to use social marketing capabilities in order to further familiarize citizens with the diversity of municipal services and transportation and traffic organization in particular.
- Many clients are not aware of the extensive services in the Organization of Transportation and Traffic of Mashhad Municipality. It is recommended to further expand the level of service advertising of this organization and to take more advantage of audiovisual media. Social marketing seems necessary in this notification. It might be said that using traditional methods of marketing have not been highly effective and more attractiveness must be added to it.
- Offering a reward to employees who work for client satisfaction.
- Using new technologies such as the Internet and electronic services and even taking advantage of social networks in order to expand communication and understanding of the organization of citizens' needs seem necessary.

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