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FEATURE

**APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY OF SOCIAL MARKETING
STUDIES BETWEEN 2000 AND 2009**

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Abstract. *Our world is often plagued by preventable challenges which range from sicknesses like diabetes and AIDS to environmental issues like global warming. As a result, there are several interventions implemented by individuals and organizations to redress these social ills. Social marketing is one of the tools that have been used in such interventions. However, the intervention programs do not seem to have been implemented in a predictable and systematic manner. Therefore, this appreciative inquiry study was conducted on social marketing papers on the ABI database published between 2000 and 2009 identifying the best practices in the discipline and eventually designing a propositional model in social marketing. Consequently, the study highlights nine social marketing theory statements as well as suggests ways in which social marketing practice can be reimagined and executed.*

Keywords: social marketing, social marketing propositional model, appreciative inquiry, grounded theory

Introduction

Social marketing (SM) has the potential to elicit desired changes when used as an intervention in societal problems in areas which range from cancer detection to environmental preservation (Evans, 2008; Kemp & Eagle, 2008; Longest, Beaufort B & Rohrer, 2005; Ludwig, Buchholz, & Clarke, 2005; Watson, Tomar, Dodd, Logan, & Choi, 2009). On the other hand, appreciative inquiry is becoming increasingly popular because of the benefits it presents through imagination, inquiry, conversation and connection (Lewis, Passmore, & Cantore, 2008). Appreciative inquiry is particularly useful because, it helps to inspire and

co-create a desired ideal. Furthermore, it is not diagnostic, but can be best designed to effect change in the practice of social marketing. Interestingly however, appreciative inquiry has not been used much in marketing (Crick & Crick, 2016). As a result, this study draws on appreciative inquiry to understand how SM practice can be improved using a positive interventionist approach. The following research questions are addressed:

1. What lessons can be drawn from the extant studies on SM between 2000 and 2009 in terms of their best features, drawbacks, key variables, and collaborating disciplines. [Discovery]
2. How can the lessons from the extant literature be harnessed in building comprehensive conceptual framework depicting SM best practice? [Dream]
3. How can the envisioned social marketing best practices be used to design the best of that can be? [Design]
4. What needs to be done to deliver this envisioned SM design into a successful practice? [Destiny]

This appreciative inquiry targeted 35 journal articles from the ABI database on social marketing published in international peer-reviewed journals, between 2000 and 2009. Elements of grounded theory as well as appreciative inquiry were used to analyze the articles. The paper contributes a grounded understanding of social marketing by proposing a social marketing conceptual framework as well as envisioning an SM best practice.

The next sections present the study's literature review, methodology, findings as well as conclusion. The findings are presented as follows: first the lessons drawn from extant studies, followed by a framework depicting the variables and relationships evinced by the studies, then a propositional model on SM, and finally, an outline of how the envisioned social marketing framework can be practiced.

Cursory Review of Literature

It is important to begin with a brief description of SM and to separate it from commercial marketing (CM). Andreasen defines SM as, "the application of commercial marketing concepts and tools to influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences to improve their lives or the society for which they are part." (cited in Lee, N., & Kotler, 2016, p. 9). The tactical elements of CM can be summed up by the marketing management process as it is illustrated by Kotler-research, segmentation, targeting, positioning, branding, and marketing mix (Kotler, 1999). On the other hand, the distinction between (SM) and (CM) is probably of interest to many. The key distinction is that the two do not share

the same bottom line. While CM focuses on satisfying human needs and is driven by profit, SM focuses on effecting behavior change for the benefit of affected individuals as well as society. So, shareholders may be the major beneficiaries of CM, while individuals and societies are the beneficiaries of SM campaigns (Andreasen, 2006; Lee & Kotler, 2016; Lefebvre, 2013).

The application of marketing to areas outside the profit-making realm has been successful. For example, marketing has been extended to fields like the public and nonprofit sectors. However, some are still skeptical about the appropriateness of using marketing outside of the commercial realm citing its side effects (Andreasen, 2006; Lefebvre, 2013). In spite of that, Lefebvre (2013) argues that anyone trying to make a difference in this world should not look further than social marketing. SM impacts five major areas of behavior, namely health, the environment, injury prevention, community involvement, and financial behaviors (Lee & Kotler, 2016).

SM is not the only solution to social problems. Advocacy, innovation, technology, infrastructure, science, corporate business practices, funding, and legislation are among the solutions that can be used to address social problems (Andreasen, 2006). However, Lefebvre (2013) highlights that all these options bring about partial relief. Since marketing has proved to be a key success factor for behavior change in CM, it can achieve the same or more in SM.

CM has proven to be a very effective agent behind positive behavior change among individuals as well as in transforming society (Andreasen 2006; Lefebvre, 2013). Even the criticism leveled against CM, for example that it promotes materialism, only serves to testify to its forcefulness (Andreasen 2006; Lefebvre 2013). Hence, since SM piggybacks on CM, it is logical to expect it to be as effective as CM.

Social marketing has enjoyed considerable success in addressing social ills (Andreasen, 2006; Lee & Kotler, 2016; Lefebvre, 2013). The specific success stories cited include eradicating polio in India, encouraging the use of contraceptives in Southern Africa, as well as addressing cardiovascular diseases in Western countries. As a result, this study sought to appreciate the studies on SM marketing between 2000 and 2009 in order to illustrate possible SM marketing best practices.

Methodology

The study used appreciative inquiry primarily as a methodology and secondarily as a social constructionist epistemology (Stadler & Fullagar, 2016). As a methodology, the study employed the four 4 D phases: discovery, dream, design, and destiny (Bushe, 2013; Lewis, Passmore, & Cantore, 2008; Somerville & Farner, 2012; Terec-Vlad & Trifu, 2014). By identifying exceptional elements,

techniques, and collaborating disciplines in the articles under review, the study sought to highlight what worked well in the extant studies, while presenting them as opportunities for learning. Similarly challenges and limitations were not ignored but also considered as foci for learning. Figure 1 below outlines the article search process while Figure 2 outlines the appreciative inquiry protocol that was used.

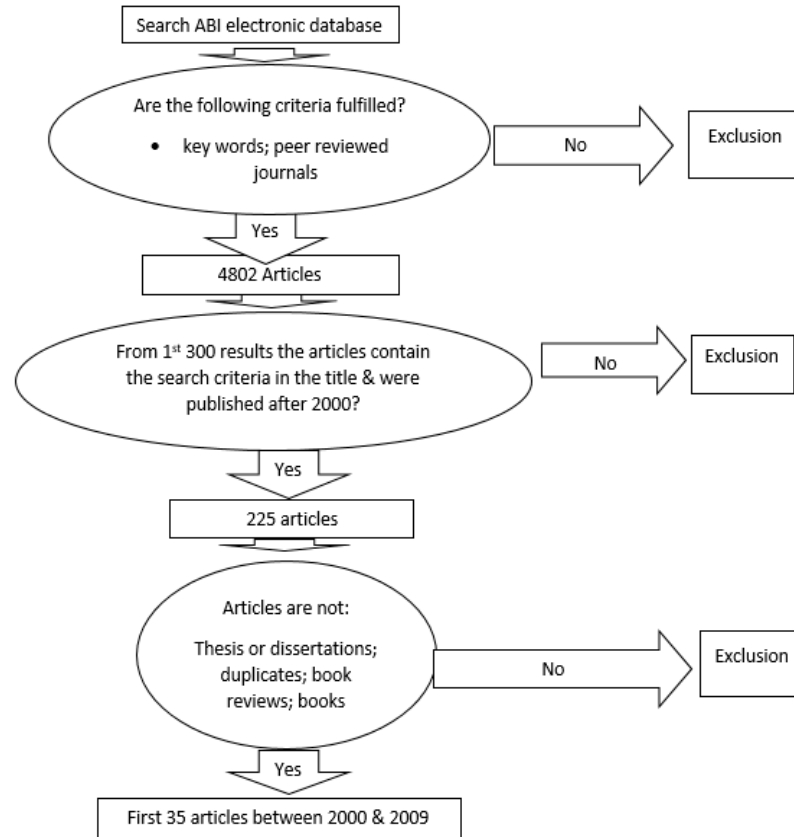


Figure 1. Article search process: Adapted from Hohenstein, Feisel, and Hartmann (2014).

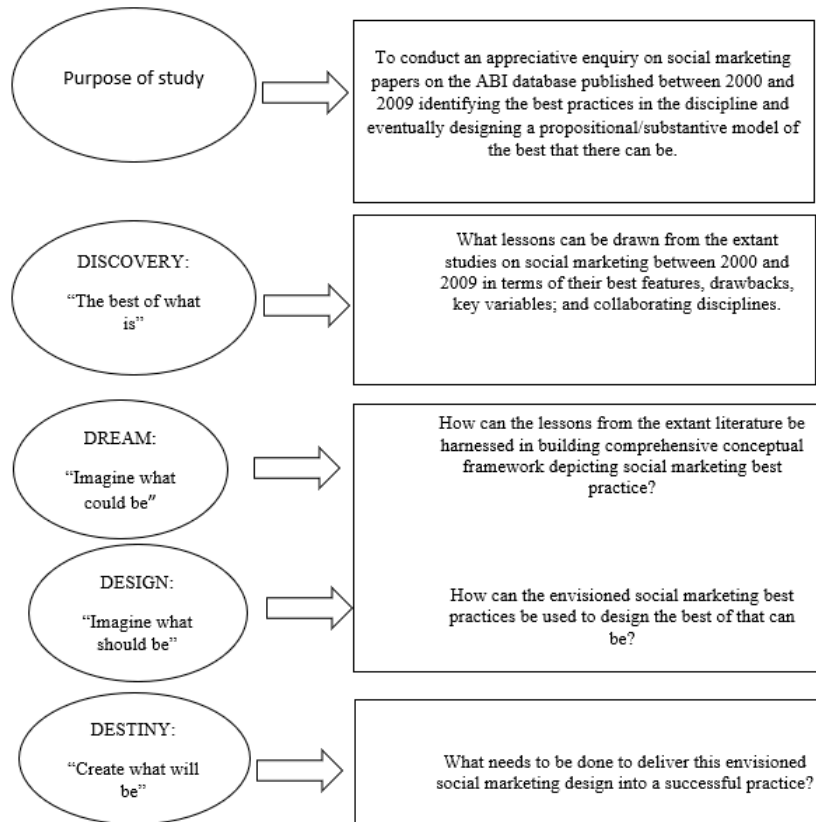


Figure 2. Appreciative inquiry protocol: Adapted from Fernando (2010).

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using elements of grounded theory. Secondary data like articles is a potent but often overlooked data source for grounded theory (Holton & Walsh, 2017). On the other hand, Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) highlight how appreciative inquiry and grounded theory harmonize and complement each other. This view is corroborated by Fernando (2010) who fused the two approaches in their study observing how both approaches are rooted in data. As such, this study pursued a similar approach where appreciative inquiry was used to discover lessons from extant studies and grounded theory was used to dream and design social marketing best practice based on the lessons drawn from extant studies.

The data analysis followed descriptions on how to generate a grounded theory as outlined by Fernando (2010), Holton and Walsh (2017), Palka, Pousttchi, and Wiedemann (2009), as well as Rose, Spinks, and Canhoto (2015). First, emergent ideas on each article were noted to match the headings in the database. The ideas were selected where the same thread of meaning occurred in different words, similar words, phrases, or repeated sentences; as well as the attached importance placed on different concepts by the author. As the researchers, we placed more emphasis on the first and third criteria based on both qualitative and quantitative assessments. Second, emergent categories inferred by the data were selected and named. These served as the units of analysis. Third, connections were made between the data and finally the categories were integrated to form a theoretical framework. Pursuant to that, the 4 D cycle of appreciative inquiry was consummated.

Results

This section analyses and presents the four Ds as they were evinced and interpreted by the researcher.

Discovery—Lessons Drawn: Best Features, Drawbacks, Key Variables, and Collaborating Disciplines

Discovery comes first in the appreciative inquiry process. The phase is about identifying what is already working well. As such, the extant studies were evaluated in order to identify social marketing best practices. Nine key lessons can be drawn from the extant literature on social marketing. The first seems like a given, but is worthy of mention; that is, the intended outcome of social marketing interventions is behavior change. This is followed by an equally important observation that successful interventions focus on the motivation of the target behavior. Third, it is evident from the extant studies that contemporary marketing practices are the backbone of social marketing. Even though social marketing is a

distinct discipline, it draws from commercial marketing. Fourth, it seems that partnerships, policy advocacy, and peer advocacy play a distinct role in social marketing and can be considered as additional social marketing mix elements. Five, there are notable disciplines that inform social marketing practice ranging from education to anthropology. Next, there are eight key variables which make a difference in social marketing which were evinced by the extant studies. These variables are outlined in Table 1 below. They include edutainment, peripheral persuasion, and functional literacy. Seven, it seems evident that social marketing interventions target multiple levels from the individual to institutions, right up to the community. Eight, there are ethical considerations which are peculiar to social marketing which need to be considered. Finally, all the preceding lessons culminate into a social marketing intervention framework. Table 1 below illustrates how the lessons were drawn and how they can be linked to different authors and studies.

Table 1
Discovery: Lessons Drawn

Theory Statements	Author(s)	Categories	Themes	Core Concepts
1. Behavior change is the key outcome of social marketing interventions	(Bright, 2000) (Bright, 2000; Dinan & Saragant, 2000; Bryant et al., 2001) (Reichert, Hekler, & Jackson, 2001) (Schallenberg et al., 2001) (Johnson, Balloun, Bedstrom, & Anderson, 2007)	Behavior modification is the key outcome in social marketing Behavior change as the key outcome variable for social marketing/especially of the economically disadvantaged Bryant et al.)	Behavior change	Behavior change
2. Behavior motivation should be the key focus for successful social marketing interventions	(Dinan & Saragant, 2000) (Batoric, 2009) (C. T. Donagan, 2009) (Watson et al., 2009)	Successful social marketing focuses on behavior motivations	Behavior motivations	Behavior motivations
3. Contemporary marketing practices (CMP) is the bedrock of social marketing interventions	(Bright, 2000) (Bryant et al., 2001) (Dinan & Saragant, 2000) (Reichert et al., 2001) (Icard, Bourjaily, & Siddiqui, 2003) (Batoric, 2006) (Karul, Subramanian, & Karul, 2007) (Fanning, 2006) (Katrinoedes, Grant, & Mckeehan, 2007) (Donagan, 2008) (Darrow & Biersteker, 2008)	a) Contemporary marketing practices are a key pillar for social marketing b) Two-way communication in social marketing (CMP) c) Effectiveness of sexual appeals in advertising: more positive attitudes social appeals (liberal, attention getting, dynamic, effort to increase interest, (CMP) d) The nature of the message, source, channel, and target influence the effectiveness of a social marketing communication effort. (CMP) e) Peer power decreases as the number of siblings increase (CMP) f) Relationship based social marketing campaigns may be more effective than transaction based approaches (CMP) g) Social marketing can be used part of a commercial marketing strategy (CMP) h) Marketing focuses on customer centeredness, research based decisions, as well as religious adherence to 4 p. & (CMP)	Relevance of CMPs in social marketing Derived contemporary marketing practices used in commercial marketing and relevant to social marketing marketing communications, consumer behavior, relationship marketing, marketing research, marketing mix, branding as well as CMP as highlighted by Corstella et. al	CMPs in social marketing
	(C. T. Donagan, 2008)	i) Contemporary Marketing Practice Framework (CMPF) - (Corstella et al., 1997) cited: Transaction Marketing (TM), Database Marketing (DM), e-Marketing (EM), Interaction Marketing (IM), Network Marketing (NM), - The contemporary marketing framework allows for TM, DM, EM, IM and NM to be practiced together, at varying levels of use or different degrees of intensity. j) Social marketing branding is very important in social marketing. (CMP) k) Social marketing and city branding (CMP)		
	(Ryan, 2008) (Russell, Sullivan-Mort, & Hume, 2009)			

Theory/Statement	Author(s)	Categories	Themes	Core Concepts
4. Partnerships, Policy Advocacy, & Peer Advocacy can be considered as additional Social Marketing	Diana & Sargeant, 2000 (Gregson et al., 2001) (Ludwig et al., 2005) (Shire & Morris, 2006)	Derived Social Marketing additional Ps. Mix (a) Partnerships; (b) Policy; (c) Peer agents	Derived Social Marketing additional Ps. Mix (a) Partnerships; (b) Policy advocacy; (c) Peer advocacy	3 Ps
5. A Social Marketing Intervention Framework (SMIF) is founded on the CAP and cemented by additional social marketing elements.	(Bryan et al., 2001) (Stead, Gordon, Angus, & McDermott, 2007) ^a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) "as basic principles, (1) consumer orientation, (2) use of marketer's full conceptual framework to design behavior change interventions; (3) recognition of competition; (4) reliance on formative research to understand consumers' desires and needs; (5) segmentation of populations and careful selection of target audiences; and (6) continuous monitoring and revision of program tactics to achieve desired outcomes. Social marketing is not a theory - rather it is framework deriving from multiple disciplines. In 2002, Anderson identified what he termed six essential benchmarks of a "prime" social marketing intervention, one, which applies social marketing throughout rather than as an add-on (see Table 1) - behavior change, consumer research, segmentation & targeting, marketing mix, exchange, competition" (cited in (Stead et al., 2007)) 	Social Marketing Framework(SMF) with novel CAP overlaps. Further, use of area specific special(SMF) Social marketing Intervention design elements, Social Ecological Model, as well as Program Customization.	Social marketing intervention framework
	(Ollabady, Zine, Scobari, & Zainiga, 2001)	b) The use of the principles of public health needs marketing		
	(Ollabady et al., 2007)	c) Area specific training in areas health topics subjects for the social marketing campaign is focused e.g. trained HIV counselors		
	(Gregson et al., 2001)	d) The Social-Ecological Model as an intervention framework in social marketing (SMF)		
	(Farr & Eyma, 2005; Ollabady et al., 2007)	e) Program customization enhances effectiveness of social marketing (1) enhancing desirability to the audience, (2) enhancing familiarity and acceptance		
		f) improved communication between implementers and participants		
		g) reducing limiting factors like cost		
		h) targeting target population input		
	(Piggford, Racht, Harter, & Harter, 2008)	i) The design of social marketing campaigns generally involves three elements - advocacy, motivation, and education"		
	(Lougnet, Baudrot B & Rohrer, 2005)	j) Overcoming barriers to effective communication enhances social marketing intervention		
	(Bartlett, 2006)	k) Doctors, politicians, and consumer activists sometimes base their actions on popular opinion that may not necessarily be supported by empirical data		
6. Social marketing is established by concepts from multiple disciplines.	(Bryan et al., 2001) (Anthonyson, 2004) (Ludwig et al., 2005) (Haining, 2006) (Gering & Williams, 2007) (Dowse, 2007)	Education, government policy, psychology, health, legal structures, communication, consumer research, health promotion, sociology, science, and anthropology	Key disciplines that complement social marketing	Key disciplines that complement social marketing

Theory Statements	Author(s)	Categories	Themes	Core Concepts
7. Eight variables can be associated with successful implementation social marketing intervention campaigns	(Reichert et al., 2001) (Therios, Olsen, Ramegl, Kaona, & Quick, 2002) (Ludwin et al., 2005) (Rosenberg, 2006) (Kemp & Eagle, 2009)	Key variable 1- Peripheral persuasion -persuasion is the result of peripheral issues like a sexual appeal in advertising Key variable 2 -motivational interviewing Key variable 3 - Use of placebo cards Key variable 4 – Free service attracts clients Key variable 5 - Functional literacy	Key Social Marketing variables Marketing variables	Key Social Marketing variables Marketing variables
	(Evans, 2008)	A considerable part of the population may not understand the messages provided	Key variable 6 - Social Modeling	Psychologists as well as mainstream marketers are already using this concept
	(Evans, 2008)	Key variable 7: Imagery	Can be useful promoting social ideals and behavior	Key variable 8 - Entertainment
	(Evans, 2008; Ganesasundaram & Henry, 2009)	Entertainment sometimes called “educational entertainment” or “entertainment-education” is particularly useful in reaching out to children and adolescents	Social marketing operates at various levels -social, community, institutional, organizational, interpersonal, and individual	Multiple level intervention campaigns
8. Successful social marketing interventions campaigns target audiences at multiple levels	(Gregson et al., 2001, C. Domegan, 2007; C. T. Domegan, 2008)	Unique ethical considerations for social marketing -e.g. notwithstanding the noble desired behavior change social marketing should not violate human rights	Ethical considerations	Ethical considerations
9. There is need to address the unique social marketing ethical considerations when embarking on social marketing interventions	(Breakey, 2002; Muisam & Tretim, 2002; Kemp & Eagle, 2008)			

Dream—Envisioned Social Marketing Best Practice

The dream phase in appreciative inquiry is concerned with conceiving scenarios that can work better than the current. Therefore, this section outlines a dream of how social marketing can be based on the extant studies reviewed. The extant studies suggest that social marketing focuses on behavior. It seeks to influence behavior towards what is considered ideal. It seems logical then to focus intervention programs on the assumed causes of the undesirable behavior. Hence, the suggested Basic Social Marketing Intervention Framework depicts behavior change as an outcome, behavior motivation as an antecedent, and the social marketing intervention as the intervening variable. The intervention framework summarizes the lessons drawn in the discovery stage. Finally, the shared compelling vision is one of social responsibility, social stewardship, social empowerment, as well as social engagement. A combination of intervention, the shared vision along with the interventions are expected to bring about the desired behavior change resulting in benefits to sociality at large.

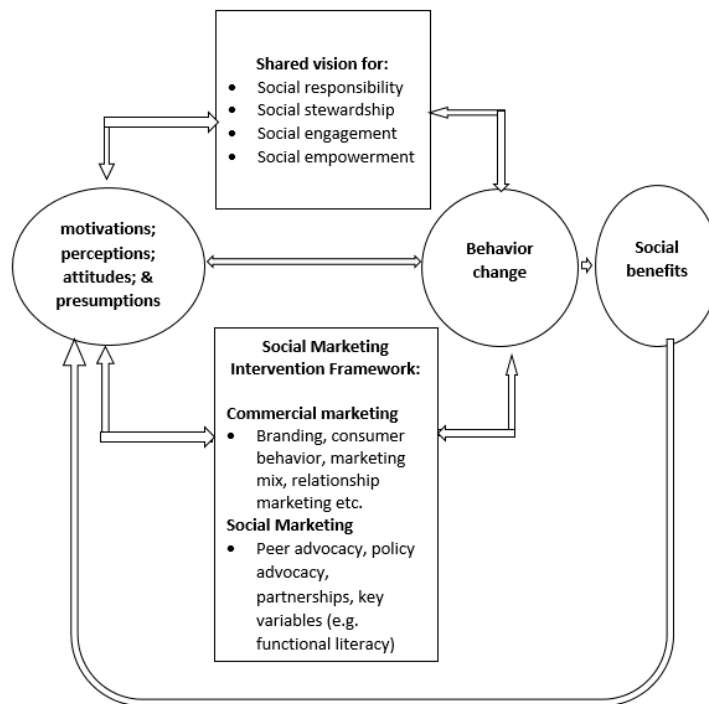


Figure 3. Basic Social Marketing Appreciative and Intervention framework

Design—Consummation of Social Marketing Best Practice

The design phase in the appreciative inquiry process comprises planning and prioritizing that which would work well. Hence, this section outlines how a social marketing model should be. Figure 4 below presents a propositional model highlighting how social marketing best practice should be. It improves the basic model discussed in figure 3 by incorporating and illustrating the lessons learned during the discovery stage.

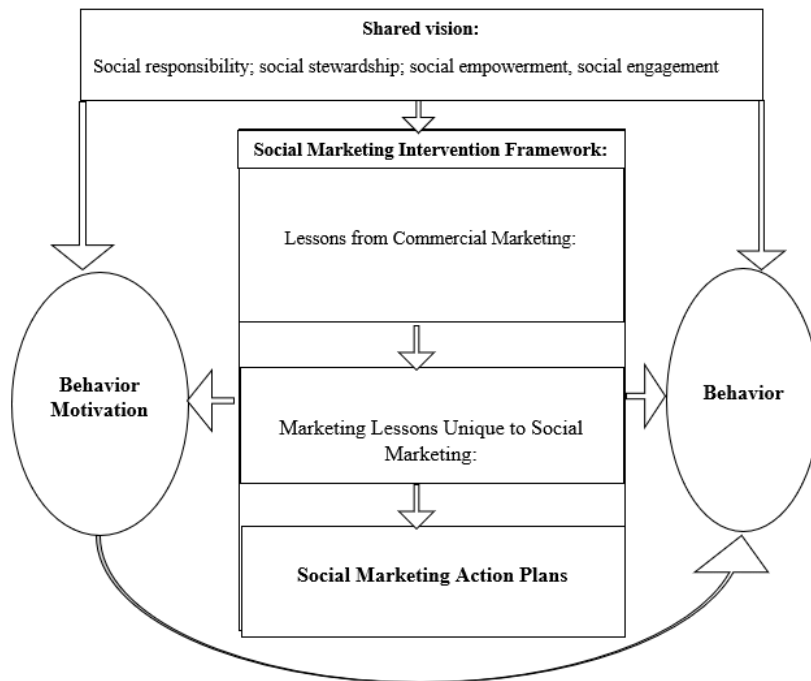


Figure 4. Propositional Model

Destiny

The destiny phase is the last in the appreciative inquiry process. It looks at how the envisioned design can be implemented. Implementation involves planning; as such, the implementation of the proposed propositional model should be part of an overall planning regime. Elements of social marketing must be catered for at both strategic and tactical levels.

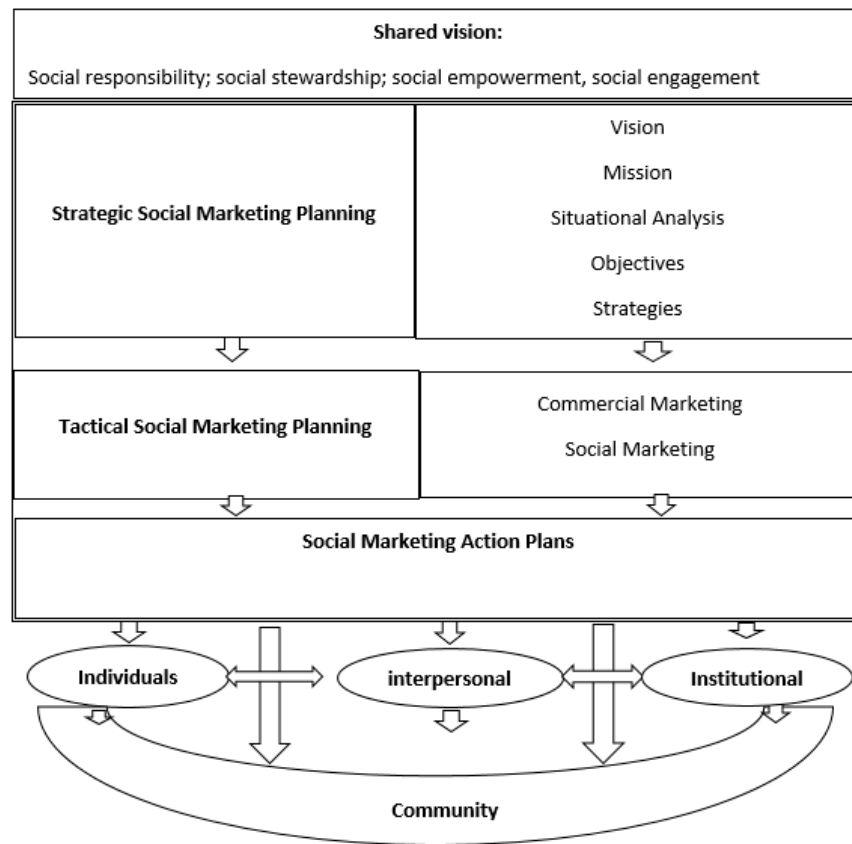


Figure 5. Social Marketing Implementation Propositional Model

Figure 5 above illustrates how the strategic and tactical elements of social marketing can be implemented. The major highlight of the implementation program is that the implementation should cover the different levels that concern social marketing intervention from the individual to the community.

Discussion

The starting point of the study was to conduct an appreciative inquiry of extant studies in social marketing in order to identify lessons and best practices in social marketing. The data analysis was founded on grounded theory. The study has identified the following theory statements which inform social marketing best practice:

1. The intended outcome of social marketing interventions is behavior change.
2. Successful social marketing interventions focus on the motivation of the target behavior.
3. Contemporary marketing practices are the backbone of social marketing.
4. Partnerships, policy advocacy, and peer advocacy play a distinct role in social marketing and can be considered as additional social marketing mix elements.
5. A Social Marketing Intervention Framework (SMIF) is founded on the CMP and cemented by additional social marketing elements.
6. There are notable disciplines that inform social marketing practice ranging from education to anthropology.
7. There are eight key variables evinced by the extant studies that may significantly influence social marketing practice (e.g. edutainment, peripheral persuasion, and functional literacy)
8. Social marketing interventions target multiple levels from the individual to institutions, right up to the community.
9. There are ethical considerations which are peculiar to social marketing which need to be considered.

In addition, the study outlined a basic social marketing intervention and appreciative framework, a propositional model as well as an outline of how the model can be implemented.

The implications of the lessons drawn seem to be that most of social marketing practice piggybacks on commercial marketing. This makes it easy to implement social marketing programs. On the other hand, there are issues which are distinct to social marketing which need to be considered if social marketing programs are to be effective. The implementation of the envisioned design rests on the consciousness as well as comprehension of planning frameworks as they

are discussed by numerous scholars, including Robins and Decenzo (2001) as well as Smith, Berry, and Pulford (1997).

Conclusion

In this study, appreciative inquiry allowed the harnessing of social marketing best practices using grounded theory methods. The paper proposes that social marketing intervention frameworks need to address the motivation of behavior if the proposed behavior change is to be successful. Further, the study presents a propositional model and suggests that its implementation rest on the strategic marketing planning and implementation framework. Most of the tenets of social marketing have their roots in the commercial marketing framework, but there are key issues unique to social marketing which need to be addressed in the process.

Some limitations have been highlighted. The systematic review was constrained to the ABI database selected by the researchers and articles matching the search terms. All other relevant articles in in other databases were thus omitted. Citation analysis can also generate potent articles. Other researchers can thus address these issues when they conduct further studies on the subject under review.

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