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SOCIAL MARKETING INITIATIVES ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS. CASE OF METAVERSE

The article deals with social marketing activities nowadays require modern approaches and solutions. It is said that such instrument can be platform of metaverse. It is noteworthy to highlight that with metaverse approaches social marketing practitioners can address and tackle multiple social problems and causes existent in a set society or part of population. With its wide range of capabilities like content sharing, constant messaging and data-driven analytics the overall evaluation and assessment of a social problem or cause within a set target audience can be made in a smoother way. It needs to mentions that still the right formulated communication pattern for resolution of the set social problem is crucial for any social marketing framework or programme. The article revealed that by constructing a clear and sound message of communication plan of social marketing programme combined with multiple tools of metaverse the social marketing researchers and practitioners can observe, adjust and improve the level of life in a set part of society or population at large. The point of view is that these methods also play a crucial role in the analytics department for every institution working on resolution of social problems and causes.

Besides, the article also touches upon the world accomplishment. It states that in today's implementation world of traditional ways and approaches for running social marketing frameworks and programmes is not enough to capture the other significant part of population which is resident on diverse digital platforms and spaces. The article reveals that with such digital solutions social marketing practitioners can attract the communities and parts of population that is affected by a certain social problem or cause and is not found through the traditional forms and ways of tackling these issues existent in the society. It informs that one of such platforms is known to be metaverse, that provides multiple ways of connecting and communication with the users through graphical figures and representation in digital space. The article also considers social marketing running on metaverse space can be beneficial to the other parties as collaboration make way for more enhanced and moderate path for resolution of social problems and causes that are existent in set target audiences or parts of population.

Key words: *sociology, social marketing, digital platforms, metaverse, social marketing frameworks.*

Introduction. The term of social problem has been noted by several sociologists and researchers throughout the last century. The ground form of the opening for a social problem consists of a certain condition in society that results in particular instability or crisis in a set society, which is needs to be addressed by the respective individuals and authorities. One of the early definitions of social problem was provided by Cooley in the following way: "A social problem is any process or condition that injures some part of the social order and that is believed to be undesirable by a significant number of people" [8]. Merton had a similar view on the term: "A social problem exists when a significant number of people in a society agree that a particular condition is injurious and that something should be done about it" [30, pp. 672]. In early body of literature on the respective term the conditioning in the set society played a huge role, which had to be

addressed by relevant governmental bodies. A more complex definition of social problem was provided by Lauer in the following manner: "A social problem is a condition or issue within society that disrupts the stability, harmony, or functioning of social institutions and produces negative consequences for individuals or groups" [22]. This statement explains the connectives of respective institutions and their operational structure, which can be disrupted by a collective problem occurred in a particular society.

By the beginning of the 21st century the challenges and problems in different parts of societies across the globe have remained and became more interconnected, due to globalisation and vast urbanisation of highly populated areas. Thus, the definition of social problem has become more oriented towards resolution of existing social problems in a particular part or society at whole. Thompson, Hickey and Thompson have

noted a definition with a focus on possible social causes that an individual or group can face in a particular society: "A social problem is an issue within society that makes it difficult for people to achieve their full potential. Poverty, unemployment, unequal access to education, racial discrimination, and many other issues have been called social problems" [37]. In another definition provided by Leon-Guerrero the possible declines level of life in societies due to occurring or exciting social causes is addressed: "A social problem is a social condition or pattern of behaviour that has negative consequences for individuals, our social world, or our physical world and that is widely recognized as a condition or pattern of behaviour that needs to be addressed" [26]. A more recent research of Best has the following definition for the term: "A social problem is a claim that a particular issue is harmful to society and needs to be addressed. Such claims-making activities often involve identifying a condition or behaviour as a problem, explaining why it is a problem, and proposing solutions" [5].

Each of the mentioned above openings for term of social problem has its own representation in time and place of it being issued. Several authors have continued the thought and ground of first term generations and have clarified the fundamental understating of social problem definition. However, the life standards and way of living have evolved through time and keep changing, thus the set term is still evolving, as the individuals, target groups and communities in different parts of society.

Social Marketing. Within significant research in the field and extended interest in the topic the first definition of the term was published in the work of Kotler and Zaltman in 1971 as: "Social marketing is the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research" [19, pp. 3–12]. It was identified that social marketing involves a set of activities to reach the resolution of a specific social problem or cause for the general or a specified target audience. In this matter Andreasen clarifies the term in the following manner: "The application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution, and evaluation of programs designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of their society» [2].

Most of the early social marketing initiatives were mainly concerned with the well-being industry and social security of general society. From that perspec-tive many social marketing programs were originated to resolve the social problems and causes of well-being sphere and partly were related to medical research and analysis. In this scenario a bigger target audience was selected within the research process, mainly a particular market, European, Asian, African, or American, to generalize the outcomes of the research and provide extended research data. From this a definition of social marketing by Lefebvre comes along in the following manner: "The application of marketing principles to shape markets that are more effective, sustainable, and just in advancing people's well-being and social welfare" [25, pp. 54–72]. Another definition of social marketing term in relation to institutions was generated by Baptista, Pinho, and Alves and noted as: "It can apply not only to the behaviour of individuals but also to that of professionals, organizations, and policymakers, meaning the contextual actors that can influence individuals' behaviour change" [4, pp. 57–94].

The fast-changing world and conditions of different parts of society have become a new challenge for social marketing researchers and practitioners. Social marketing frameworks and programs are now need to be more detail oriented and specific to the characteristics of a respective target audience or part of society. Thus, social marketing process holds a significant inner scope that has to be well designed and executed for clear vision of the social marketing program and resolution of the existing social problems in respective part of the population.

Marketing Mix. The importance of a marketing mix in almost any social marketing approach has to be impeccable. A well-tailored social marketing program always includes a detailed marketing analysis prior to formulation of key communications and identification of channels for the message to the target audience or certain part of society. When conducting such type of methodological research, the clarification of the methods that are to be used and identification of the right target audience is important. In case of social marketing investigations implementation of 4 P's can be fruitful to the general research. In this setting product is the desired social actions and the possible benefits that come along with the offers. Presenting the target audience with both the positive and negative aspects of the effects require critical thinking. The intended destination of the behaviour that the chosen audience is expected to exhibit is more closely linked to the place factor. The price component should motivate the audience because it is tied to not just the monetary side but also other intangibles like time and the desire of the chosen

audience. One of the most important components of the entire campaign is the fourth element, promotion, which takes many different forms in which the target audience will interact with the core idea of the social marketing campaign's communications plan [14, 2022]. All steps in marketing mix analysis clear the path to formation of principle parts of the social marketing communication plan and its seamless execution process.

Communication in Social Marketing. In any circumstance, communication is essential to transmitting the key objectives of social marketing campaigns and their aims to the intended audience. Andreasen suggests that: "To build an effective communication campaign to change the behaviour, understanding of the needs and perceptions of specific target audience is necessary" [3]. Thus, it is crucial to develop a concrete and impactful message to communicate in with the target audience where it holds the concerns, needs and interests of the target audience [27]. Moreover, it is important to put a certain amount of effort to better understand the knowledge and believes of target people along with their expectations from the process of communication [16, pp. 461–471].

Key components of communication in social marketing practices include the following:

1. Audience Segmentation

The technique of breaking up a large target audience into more uniform subgroups according to shared traits is known as audience segmentation. As a result, more specialised and successful communication techniques are possible [35, pp. 267].

2. Message Design

It is critical to craft communications that appeal to the intended audience. In order to maximise their impact, messages should be motivational, culturally aware, and unambiguous. Theories like the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Health Belief Model are frequently used in this regard [28].

3. Channels of Communication

It is crucial to choose the right channels (such as social media, mainstream media, and interpersonal communication) in order to successfully engage and reach the target audience. The sort of message being sent and the media consumption patterns of the audience are major factors in selecting the appropriate channel [36, pp. 338].

4. Two-Way Communication

Social marketing places a strong emphasis on the value of two-way communication, in which audience input is actively sought out and incorporated into the campaign. According to Andreasen [1], this kind of interaction builds trust and raises the possibility of behaviour modification.

5. Persuasion and Influence

A key component of social marketing is the application of persuasive communication strategies. Attitudes and behaviours can be strongly influenced by techniques including emotional appeals, narrative, and the utilisation of reliable sources [7].

6. Evaluation and Feedback

It is essential to regularly review communication tactics in order to determine their efficacy and make any required modifications. Commonly used metrics include reach, engagement, and behaviour change [29, pp. 543].

Forms of Communication. Setting goals for a specific social cause, such poverty, overpopulation, or deforestation, and developing the essential procedures that will result in the development of a social marketing campaign are the first steps in any social marketing planning process. The next stage is to define the target audience, which is selecting a target group from each social group and giving information about them, including their occupation, educational background, and other pertinent characteristics. The selection of the intended target audience is the first step in crafting a clear and concise message. This element is one of the most crucial ones in the whole social marketing planning strategy since it distributes the main message to the selected target group via the authorised channels [direct or indirect, digital or traditional]. The entity may choose to send the message directly to media outlets, through media agencies, or through digital books, magazines, journals, and posts on social media. Additionally, physical publications like books, newspapers, magazines, and journals can be used to distribute it. An illustration of various social media marketing communication forms is provided below, along with corresponding examples:

Metaverse. The merging of virtually improved physical reality with physically persistent virtual reality has produced the metaverse, a shared virtual environment. It is made up of an extensive network of interconnected 3D virtual worlds that allow users to communicate in real time with other users and computer-generated environment. The idea, which has gained popularity recently because to developments in blockchain, augmented reality, and virtual reality, is the next stage of the internet's growth [31, pp. 486]. The word "metaverse" first appeared in science fiction in Neal Stephenson's 1992 book "Snow Crash", where it discusses a virtual reality-based internet replacement. The metaverse, which has enormous promise for a number of industries, including social
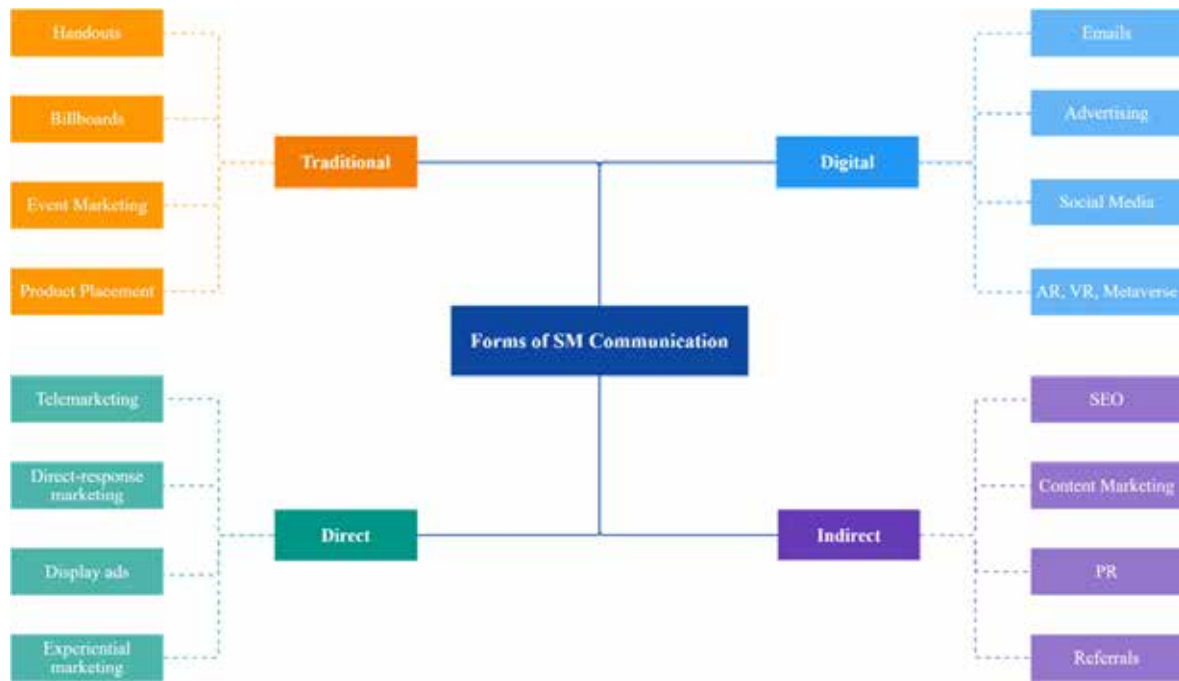
Chart 1. Forms of Social Marketing Communications

Source: Self elaboration based on several publications [20], [12], [15], [32]

marketing, is now a real, growing reality rather than a work of fiction [23].

In order to promote actions that benefit people and communities for the greater good of society, social marketing makes use of marketing concepts [24, pp. 54]. By incorporating social marketing into the metaverse, new channels for influence, engagement, and interaction are made possible. Through immersive experiences, tailored interactions, and a deeper connection with consumers, the metaverse may greatly improve social marketing initiatives [10]. The increased degree of user participation offered by the metaverse is one of its main benefits for social marketing. To reach audiences, traditional social marketing uses media including radio, television, and social media platforms. Though useful, these techniques might occasionally come across as impersonal. On the other hand, people can connect with campaigns in a more dynamic and participative way in the highly interactive metaverse [33, pp. 512]. Non-profit organisations, for example, have the ability to build virtual environments that replicate the circumstances and difficulties encountered by the populations they seek to assist. Users may investigate these settings, getting a firsthand look at the problems at hand, which may inspire and emotional response from the audience. According to Skjuve and Brandtzaeg [34], an immersive experience has the potential to raise awareness and motivate users to take action, such as volunteering or making donations.

Effective social marketing requires a high level of personalisation and customisation, which the metaverse offers. Campaigns may be customised to each user's tastes, habits, and demographics in a virtual environment. By gathering and analysing data from the metaverse, marketers may accomplish this personalisation and craft more profoundly meaningful messages for their target audience [10]. For instance, a metaverse social marketing campaign with a health theme can modify its content according to a user's virtual interactions and interests. The campaign can provide tailored health advice, reminders, and support networks to users who regularly visit virtual exercise centres or health-related seminars, therefore increasing the message's relevance and effect [38, pp. 1–15].

Because the metaverse is social by nature, it is a perfect venue for establishing communities and encouraging communication. Social media marketing initiatives may take use of this feature by setting up online communities where people can interact, exchange stories, and offer support to one another. Environmental organisations, for example, can set up online hubs where people can work together on sustainability initiatives, take part in online workshops, and discuss environmental issues. Users may be inspired to adopt and encourage sustainable behaviours in the real world by these interactive, group experiences, which can foster a feeling of community and shared responsibility [18, pp. 351].

The introduction of novel fundraising options by the metaverse has the potential to revolutionise the way social marketing campaigns generate funds. Events that are virtual, including concerts, art shows, and charity auctions, can take place in the metaverse and reach a worldwide audience without being limited by physical places. Gamification features may be used into these events to increase participant engagement and enjoyment of the fundraising process [21, pp. 12]. Furthermore, contributors' trust is increased by the metaverse's use of blockchain technology, which makes transactions safe and transparent. Donation incentives can be derived from non-fungible tokens (NFTs), which are digital assets that indicate ownership. To support conservation efforts, a wildlife conservation campaign may, for example, sell NFTs of artwork featuring endangered animals [9].

For accountability and ongoing development, social marketing efforts must be measured for their impact and efficacy. With the use of the metaverse's sophisticated analytics and data gathering tools, marketers can monitor user interactions, engagement levels, and changes in behaviour in real time. This data-driven strategy offers insightful information on the campaign's effectiveness and potential areas for development [6, pp. 1–22]. For instance, a metaverse anti-smoking campaign can track how users engage with informational materials, take part in online support communities, and make use of quit aids. Social marketers may choose the most effective tactics and messaging by analysing this data to assess the campaign's success in lowering smoking rates [13]. With its immersive experiences, tailored exchanges, and creative methods of involvement and fundraising, the metaverse offers social marketing a revolutionary possibility. Social marketers may produce more powerful and successful campaigns that connect intimately with audiences, build communities, and promote good social change by utilising the metaverse's special qualities. The metaverse will surely be crucial in determining how social marketing develops in the future as it continues to grow [17, pp. 317].

Conclusion. All in all, application of metaverse practices for resolution of social problems and causes within a certain target group or part of society can be quite beneficial to both public and private institutions that issue the social marketing framework and programmes for such digital spaces. Moreover, metaverse practices can provide good overview to the possible missing spots that can occur in real life social marketing initiatives. Below are some key aspects and points regarding the metaverse applications with social marketing practices:

1. Metaverse opens up a bigger stage for immersive communication and channelling within target groups and communities;

2. Implementation of gamification processes ease the way of interaction with platform itself as well as the individuals using the creative space;

3. It is more proficient to adapt and modify content across the platform as it speeds up the process of assimilation and integration;

4. Real time data collection and impact assessment takes the metaverse practices to a superior level;

5. Possibility of cross-platform integration with seamless experiences and constant messaging opportunities creates a complex space where individuals are always connected and communities are interacting in a more engaged way.

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Махмудов Х. Р. ІНІЦІАТИВИ СОЦІАЛЬНОГО МАРКЕТИНГУ НА ЦИФРОВИХ ПЛАТФОРМАХ. ВИПАДОК МЕТАВСЕСВІТУ

У статті йдеться про те, що діяльність соціального маркетингу сьогодні потребує сучасних підходів та рішень. Кажуть, що такий інструмент може бути платформою метавсесвіту. Варто відзначити, що за допомогою підходів метавсесвіту практики соціального маркетингу можуть вирішувати та вирішувати численні соціальні проблеми та причини, що існують у певному суспільстві чи частині населення. Завдяки широкому спектру можливостей, як-от обмін вмістом, постійний обмін повідомленнями та аналітика на основі даних, загальна оцінка соціальної проблеми чи справи в межах встановленої цільової аудиторії може бути здійснена плавніше. Слід зазначити, що правильно сформульований комунікаційний шаблон для вирішення поставленої соціальної проблеми є вирішальним для будь-якої структури чи програми соціального маркетингу. Стаття виявила, що шляхом побудови чіткого та обґрунтованого повідомлення комунікаційного плану програми соціального маркетингу в поєднанні з кількома інструментами метавсесвіту дослідники та практики соціального маркетингу можуть спостерігати, коригувати та покращувати рівень життя певної частини суспільства чи населення загалом. . Точка зору полягає в тому, що ці методи також відіграють вирішальну роль у відділі аналітики для кожної установи, яка працює над вирішенням соціальних проблем і причин.

Крім того, у статті йдеться про світові досягнення. У ньому стверджується, що в сучасному світі реалізації традиційних способів і підходів до реалізації структур і програм соціального маркетингу недостатньо, щоб охопити іншу значну частину населення, яка проживає на різноманітних цифрових платформах і просторах. Стаття показує, що за допомогою таких цифрових рішень практики соціального маркетингу можуть залучити спільноти та частини населення, які постраждали від певної соціальної проблеми чи причини, а не через традиційні форми та способи вирішення цих проблем, існуючі в суспільстві. У ньому повідомляється, що однією з таких платформ є метавсесвіт, який забезпечує численні способи підключення та спілкування з користувачами за допомогою графічних фігур і представлення в цифровому просторі. У статті також розглядається, що соціальний маркетинг, який працює в просторі метавсесвіту, може бути корисним для інших сторін, оскільки співпраця відкриває шлях для більш розширеного та поміркованого шляху вирішення соціальних проблем і причин, які існують у визначених цільових аудиторіях або частинах населення.

Ключові слова: соціологія, соціальний маркетинг, цифрові платформи, метавсесвіт, фреймворки соціального маркетингу.