

An Analysis of Social Marketing Theory and the Dilemma of Marketing between Societal Values and the Demands of Globalization

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Abstract:

The topic of consumption and the consumer has become one of the controversial topics, particularly with the shift in the values of production and consumption, as well as the relationship between the producer, the seller and the consumer. This triad has been influenced by the values of globalization and social changes the international community has witnessed following the industrial revolution, technological advancements and digital revolution. This has led to the rise of modern values and ethics in economics and product marketing, especially with the emergence of electronic or digital marketing, in addition to the shift from the traditional consumption to the electronic consumption, which has affected the ethics of marketing, consumer products and the ethics of consumer behavior itself. This has prompted researchers, social theorists and economists to develop modern theories in order to study the marketing ethics and consumption patterns. Marketing and consumption are both linked to the social aspect of the consumer, which means that the impact of the social environment on the consumer, the producer and the marketer is what determines the marketing pattern and ethics.

Keywords: Marketing, societal values, globalization

Introduction:

Marketing is one of the most important activities carried out by business organizations; and determines their success. The importance of this activity stems from the fact that it coordinates the tasks and duties of other activities within business organizations and guides them toward a fundamental goal that is achieving greater satisfaction of consumer needs and desires. This goal can be achieved as an inevitable and automatic result of fulfilling the fundamental objectives that business organizations strive for. In addition, the survival and continuity of business organizations in carrying out their economic activities in the business world, as well as their growth, are primarily linked to the presence of effective marketing units within their organizational structures that are capable of successfully marketing their products in the markets they operate in.

On the other hand, marketing plays a distinctive and significant role in achieving the economic growth and prosperity at the level of national economies in different countries that is no less significant than the role it plays in achieving the objectives of business organizations. The establishment of a developed and efficient marketing system in any

country in the world that successfully promotes its products in the market will certainly increase the commercial exchange with other countries to its own benefit, generate profits and attract hard foreign currencies. This eventually leads to an economic development, an increase in life standards of individuals in society, and an improvement in their quality of life. This, of course, cannot be acquired without an advanced production system integrated with a successful marketing system. Quantitative and qualitative excellence in goods and services alone is not enough to achieve higher economic development rates, there must be an advanced and effective marketing system capable of distributing this quantitative and qualitative production of goods and services in markets of all kinds, whether local, regional, or international.

With the development of economics technologies and the pursuit of nations for global dominance through marketing and globalization of their economies, lifestyles, and social values considering that product marketing involves persuading consumers to purchase and consume products that meet their needs, lifestyles, and social values. Ultimately, the term “Social Marketing” has emerged, through which, nations, societies, and various business organizations seek to promote their ideas, concepts, and values within local and international communities. It is considered a modern term in the field of social sciences. We shall address through the article the concept and theory of social marketing that seek to balance societal values and the demands of globalization. In this article, we shall review the theory of social marketing and analyze its dimensions within Algerian society.

I. Definition of concepts:

1- Concept of Marketing:

Marketing is that management process through which goods and services move from concept to the customer. Marketing has less to do with getting customers to pay for a product as it does with developing a demand for that product and fulfilling the customer's needs. According to the **American Marketing Association (AMA) Board of Directors**, Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.¹

Dr. Philip Kotler defines marketing as “the science and art of exploring, creating and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines, measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which segments the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services.”²

Lamb, et al (2007:7) say marketing is about anticipating and satisfying consumer needs by means of mutually beneficial exchange processes and doing so profitably and more effectively than competitors by means of efficient managerial processes.³

The word “**marketing**” derives from the Latin term “**Marcatus**”, which means “**market**,” and derives from the Latin word “**Mercari**,” which means “**shop**.”⁴

Marketing is a human activity seen by some people as the process of buying and selling, others see it as a set of activities performed to deliver a product, be it goods or services, from the institution or the place of production to the consumer at the right time and place.

There are also those who view marketing as the activities and practices that inform the customer of a product's features, characteristics, and benefits through promotion. The concept of marketing has expanded to include any exchange between two or more parties, not only in the realm of consumer and industrial goods, but also regarding the exchange of ideas, production, consumer, and marketing values. These increase the scope and scale of marketing for products beyond physical goods, given that consumers base their commercial transactions on their social values and social consumption patterns. Consequently, social marketing plays a significant role in influencing consumers and their behavior.

Today, Marketing principles and concepts are successfully deployed in promoting services, ideas, organizations, and people. There are multiple types of marketing such as the marketing of banking, tourism, and hotel services as well as the marketing of ideas, such as anti-smoking campaigns, and even the marketing of people, such as presidential candidates at the national level or within various institutions. Marketing does not always require monetary compensation.

Accordingly, the purpose of marketing lies in offering the right product at the right price in the right place, as well as informing consumers of the product's availability and provide them with information that convinces them to accept it.

2- Concept of Economic Globalization:

Economic globalization "pertains to deeper integration and more rapid interaction of economies through production, trade, and (unregulated) financial transactions by banks and multinational corporations, with an increased role for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as the more recent World Trade Organization" (p.35) ⁵

Globalization fundamentally refers to the removal of structural barriers, effectively accelerating the degree of interconnection among human societies. Rather than a singular force, economic globalization is a multifaceted framework defined by its objectives. It is usually categorized into political, cultural and administrative globalization. Perhaps the most significant and influential form of globalization that is almost viewed as a way of colonialism is the economic globalization. Therefore, what do we mean by economic globalization?

Economic globalization is a concept based on liberalization of international trade, promotion of capital flows and movements on a global scale by removing economic borders between nations in order to make the world a one unified market ruled by the mechanisms of supply and demand.

Currently, the momentum of economic globalization is surging dramatically, driven and backed by the most influential political, economic, and financial powers within the world's primary capitalist hubs. The core purpose of these institutions is the propagation of market economy, implementing privatization and downsizing the state's role in economic. The purpose behind this is the liberalization of goods and capital movement, therefore paving the way for a unified global market where products and services can be seamlessly commercialized.⁶

3- Values:

values here are numerous definitions –or rather explications of meaning –available in the sociological literature. Most of them can be classified into two groups: ‘values’ as something directly attached or ascribed to preferred objects and ‘values’ as (enduring) beliefs or conceptions that construe something as preferable or desirable⁷

The concept of values is often fraught with ambiguity mainly because it has attracted the attention of many researchers across a wide spectrum of disciplines. Consequently, scholars have struggled to establish a precise definition of the term values. This divergence is rooted in their distinct theoretical backgrounds; including theology, psychology, sociology, economics and linguistics. Each field views the concept through its own specialized lens. For instance, Parry defines values as interests suggesting that if anything draws the attention of the human then it automatically acquires value. Other scholars such as Bogardus, view values as synonymous to attitudes, which is a view shared by many psychologists who consider values and attitudes as two sides for the same coin. Meanwhile, Clyde Kluckhohn defines values as inherent ideas about what is ultimately desirable or undesirable⁸.

Values are seen as beliefs that drive preferential behavior, serving as essential criteria to choose behavioral alternatives available to an individual in any given situation. Consequently, an individual's adoption of specific values enables us to predict behavioral patterns that align with those core beliefs. Ultimately, values determine and guide behavior, directing our choices among behavioral alternatives in various situations. In addition, they determine the type of behavior desired in a situation where multiple behavioral alternatives exist. It is believed that diversity in the spheres of life and behavior leads to a diversity of value systems that guide an **individual's behavior**.⁹

II. Social Marketing: Balancing Social Values and the Demands of Globalization

1. Social Marketing:

The term “social marketing” was coined by Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman in 1971. At the time, it was used to describe marketing actions that could change social behavior. Social marketing should not be confused with social advertising or even social communication. In the words of Kotler and Zaltman: “Social marketing is the design, implementation, and monitoring of programs designed to influence the acceptability of social ideas and that embeds planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research considerations.”¹⁰

Social marketing is recognized as a uniquely specialized discipline within general marketing discourse. Marketing nowadays has evolved from solely exchanging goods to encompass services, ideologies and social values. It has become common to deploy the term Social Marketing that includes the use of marketing principles and skills alongside creative media dynamics to propagate ideas, cultural values, or behavioral patterns that are beneficial to society.

The formal adoption of social marketing as an academic discipline dates back to 1970, when Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman argued that the principles of marketing used in promoting basic products to consumers could also be applied in promoting ideas, approaches and behaviors. This approach was utilized in several domains such as family

planning programs, substance abuse interventions, and heart disease prevention, and blood and organ donation campaigns. Given the fact that entities providing social products and services tend to refer to traditional marketing methods with minimal to no promotional backing, the product or service remains accessible to a limited audience only.

Consequently, the significance of social marketing became evident in addressing societal issues to serve a broader public audience, aiming to alter behaviors and habits while provisioning accurate, accessible information tailored to the target demographic. Furthermore, social marketing is deeply intertwined with the concept of social responsibility. The marketer seeks to promote an idea, value or a specific behavioral pattern with the intent of achieving a specific impact on individuals' perception or behavior.

The definitions of social marketing are numerous, reflecting the complexity of concepts associated with society, the individual, and the varying perspectives of researchers and authors. Therefore, we will highlight the most prominent of these definitions and examine their economic and social dimensions. This approach provides a better understanding of the connection between marketing in general and social marketing in particular to the values of traditional society on one hand and the demands of globalization and modernization on the other.

Among the most important of these definitions, we highlight the following:¹¹

- "It is the marketing of ideas designed to change behavior by utilizing marketing techniques and methods. It involves collaboration with decision-makers, specialists, and stakeholders through programs aimed at driving societal change."
- "Social marketing is the influencing of social behavior to benefit the target audience and society at large, rather than the marketer."
- "Social marketing is the process of utilizing commercial marketing techniques to influence public opinion, with the objective of urging individuals to adopt new behaviors that improve their quality of life and health, thereby advancing society as a whole."

Based on the three definition mentioned above, it is evident that social marketing operates based on three fundamental principles which serve as shared objectives sought by both the individual and society. The process of marketing relies on modern marketing techniques in cooperation with specialists and societal decision-makers to effectively influence and change specific behaviors among community members, ultimately achieving the public interest of the entire society.

Consequently, the most important actors in social marketing are individual community members, modern techniques, decision-makers, and specialists. Looking back at our contemporary society as a case in point, we can look at the awareness campaigns conducted by various associations, as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across different sectors. Each association or organization targets a specific audience and a particular behavior, both of which adapt to the changes in lived social reality. For instance, in the event of the spread of a certain disease or epidemic, every organization in its respective field addresses ways to prevent this disease within its specific domain. Environmental protection associations conduct awareness campaigns on personal hygiene and environmental cleanliness while consumer protection groups educate

the public on rational and healthy consumption patterns. These examples illustrate how social marketing keeps pace with societal developments and changes, whether positive or negative. In general, its objective is to improve the well-being of both the individual and society as a whole. To optimize the efficacy and scientific validity of their awareness campaigns, these organizations routinely rely on the expert insights of psychologists, sociologists, physicians, educators, and other specialists, thereby enhancing the credibility of its efforts. In their communication with the public, these professionals rely on tangible and intangible techniques and resources that enable them to achieve their objectives quickly and effectively.

In the following section, we will discuss the most important social marketing techniques and their advantages.

2. Social Marketing Techniques and Their Advantages:

Social marketing techniques do not differ from the marketing techniques employed by commercial companies to target consumers and drive product acquisition. This indicates that social marketing is a standardized structural process designed to develop product-marketing programs, albeit directed toward a more humanitarian purpose.

However, the key distinction between social marketing and its commercial counterpart lies in its objectives and intended outcomes, whereby the intended benefit is for the individual and society rather than for the campaign organizer or the product-launching corporation.

Broadly defined, social marketing is the promotion of goods and products to generate tangible and intangible profits for the marketing campaign initiator, be it a corporation, factory or institution, often irrespective whether the general public benefits from it or not. Conversely, social marketing advocates for the public interest of the individual and society regardless whether the marketer derives any benefit from it or not. Consequently, the domain of social marketing has characteristics and features that distinguish it from commercial marketing as follows:¹²

- Social marketing consists of various components that stem from diverse and multifaceted systems, including health education, marketing, promotion, anthropology, and social psychology. Its primary objective is help individuals adopt healthy behaviors regarding their diet, daily routines, or interactions with their environment. Hence, protecting them from various diseases, particularly those linked to specific lifestyles that negatively affect human health. Therefore, it is imperative to change this system and adopt a modern lifestyle and system in line with the developments and requirements of the times. At this point, individuals often experience a conflict between the values of their traditional society that is embodied by their lifestyle, and the values of modernity, which this lifestyle can no longer accommodate in its traditional form, as it must be changed or modified. Therefore, social marketing plays a significant role in promoting the need for behavioral change for the well-being and health of the individual and the safety of society as a whole.

- Social marketing has recently become a distinct entity and is now recognized as a modern branch of marketing with an integrated framework independent of economic and commercial marketing models. Crucially, its execution relies on experts, particularly in human development, given that its foundational objective is to cultivate awareness across

all classes of society. By striving to reshape or refine societal values for the collective good, social marketing fosters human development, which in turn acts as a catalyst for sustainable development. Consequently, social marketing a significant role not only in social development but also in economic development, as it significantly complements commercial marketing by facilitating public persuasion regarding promoted goods. Therefore, it can be considered the latest achievement of the modern era in the field of marketing.

- The term "social marketing" is frequently misused to describe any promotional initiative originating from a healthcare facility or social institution, irrespective of the intended beneficiaries or the methodology employed to develop the campaign. Social organizations and institutions often use social marketing to propagate specific ideas, theories, and lifestyles across various domains of life. Social marketing shares the same characteristics and features as traditional marketing, but it applies to ideas rather than material goods and products. Its emergence is a direct result of technological advancements in media and communication, which have interconnected the globe into a unified information network where individuals, communities, and nations compete to assert their economic, political, and social dominance by promoting their ideas, values, and culture. This process is called social marketing. It is a term that has emerged from technological development and economic and cultural globalization, as illustrated by the theory of social marketing, which we will address in the following section.

3- Theory of social marketing :

In 1995, Stanley and Dennis outlined the primary features of social marketing theory that can be summed up in the way ideas embraced by the social elite are promoted so that they become recognized as having social value. The theory is based on the principle of using various communication tools such as media campaigns, personal communication, public relations and staged events to promote social ideas, with the aim of achieving the widest possible dissemination of the topic and influencing the public to adopt behaviors that align with the proposed idea.¹³

Social marketing theory has emerged among various contemporary communication theories, combining the results of research on persuasion and the diffusion of information, within the framework of social systems and psychological trends, facilitating the circulation and influence of information. Social marketing theory addresses how ideas embraced by the social elite are promoted to become recognized¹⁴ as having social value. Social marketing theory proceeds through a series of steps, which we summarize as follows:¹⁵

Step 1: this step focuses primarily on raising public awareness on the matter, given that promotion without an audience has no purpose or meaning. This is achieved through media campaigns designed to intensify the required knowledge surrounding the target matter. Modifying behavior, particularly when it comes to a social behavior deeply rooted in the traditional culture of a society and embedded in the daily practices of individuals, can only be accomplished by increasing and intensifying information regarding the intended issue. For instance, consumer protection organizations seek to promote healthy consumer behavior and instruct consumers on managing budgets that align with their

purchasing power, while keeping pace with contemporary lifestyles so as not to be left behind. Consequently, such associations and organizations work to increase awareness campaigns to guide the consumer, defining specific target demographics based on the objective of the campaign.

Step 2: after raising public awareness on the matter through targeted campaigns, the second step reinforces the first by supplementing media messages with interpersonal communication. Direct communication is essential between the campaign organizers and the target audience whose behavior or beliefs are to subject to influence. This influence happens through direct communication with the targeted public through visits and informal discussions alongside the continuous broadcasting of communication messages across media channels. Despite the rapid advancement of modern media, traditional communication via direct interaction between sender and receiver remains historically one of the most effective methods as direct communication and interaction help influence the target group and facilitate the delivery and explaining of the idea to the recipient. Therefore, media campaigns alone are not sufficient to promote an idea, as it is necessary to back them up with field visits, meetings, and direct lectures with the public. This direct interaction between the public and the promoting institution, organization, or entity increases the degree of trust and reassurance. Election campaigns are the best example for this dynamic where candidates engage directly with the public to maximize influence and secure their trust.

Step 3: At this stage, the public has already formed a foundational conceptual understanding of the subject matter. The campaign organizer's main task is now to cultivate a clearer mental image that explicitly links the issue to the public's own interests. This can be achieved by stimulating public engagement with the new concepts, using information and ideas that connect the proposed notion directly to their economic, social, or personal welfare. Every organization or association has a specific objective it seeks to achieve by presenting a specific topic or idea that generally strives to promote its project by aligning its goals with the goals and interests of the target audience. This refers to linking society's reality to its future through two aspects: first, by explaining what the future of the society would look like after implementing the ideas of the proposed initiative and achieving its goals, second, by not implementing the ideas of the initiative and convincing the public that achieving those goals would enhance society's well-being and stability.

Step 4: Once the issue has integrated into the reality of the community, the stage of internalizing and embodying the campaign's core concepts begins. This can be achieved by developing new, "more complex" narratives, based on the impacts of the previous step. This involves embodying the abstract theoretical concept in the field, transforming it into a practical application that manifests in reality through new behaviors that replace old ones. This process aims to achieve specific behavioral outcomes such as clear decision-making processes and the adoption of definitive actions, highlighting the depth of the target audience's commitment to the newly adopted ideas.

Step 5: after implementing the campaign's core concepts, and the pursuit of its defined goals, the focus shifts to consolidating this achievement, ensuring its sustainability,

and preventing the public from reverting to old behaviors, especially since the latter are rooted in traditional societal values. Whereas, modern practices are a product of modernity and globalization that still feels foreign to tradition. Consequently, it is essential to organize more events to sustain the public interest in the matter. These initiatives must be reinforced by comprehensive media coverage that encourages active public participation in the events. Preferably, this media coverage should be descriptive and critical of the reality of society, contrasting the positive objectives achieved through the adoption of new concepts against the outcomes of obsolete behaviors. This enables the individual to understand the vital importance of the issue to both personal welfare and the broader development of society.

Step 6: This stage focuses on embedding the concept by actively reinforcing its adoption, directly urging the audience to take specific actions that reflect the marketed ideology once it is proven that the preceding steps have achieved their goals. During this phase, the public transitions from being a mere recipient of new concepts to active participants who work to preserve them, promote them within society, and ensure their continuity across generations through social conditioning that will reshape its strategy in light of the changes resulting by the matter.

Marketing theory is an extension of the persuasive and information diffusion theories. This theory has several approaches reflecting specific methods and techniques used for influencing. Among these approaches are methods and techniques designed to encourage audiences to engage with promotional content and campaigns whether concerning individuals or organizations. Other methods include embedding mental images, stimulating the audience and enticing them to seek information. Ultimately, the models of this strategy rely on persuasive media strategies that avoid social conflict. These strategies cannot be applied to situations where conflict arises however; they are applicable to standard forms of information diffusion and marketing matters of public interest.¹⁶

Conclusion:

Social marketing theory highlights that an individual's mental image of the world is shaped by the information and ideas they consume across various media platforms. Building a mental image requires a process of influence and persuasion free from differences and conflicts. The theory also emphasizes that institutions and organizations strive to build their own public image by relying on media and on direct and indirect communication with society.

According to social marketing theory, the media raises public awareness through media campaigns designed to increase knowledge to modify behavior through maximizing the amount of information conveyed, thereby influencing the target audience. These media messages are systematically reinforced through interpersonal communication channels and sustained exposure across various communication platforms. Consequently, the audience becomes engaged in forming a mental image shaped by the information and ideas presented. At this stage, the communicator strives to build a distinct mental image that aligns the matter with the audience's interests and aspirations. In a further phase, the organizing entity designs new messages to achieve specific behavioral outcomes such as decision-making. This is followed by organizing specific events to sustain interest in the topic and ensure extensive media and public coverage. Finally, the audience is incited to

take a concrete action that reflects the concept, driven by a call to adopt the core ideas emphasized in the communicative messages.

Furthermore, social marketing is not restricted to a specific domain, it is essential across all spheres of human social life especially given the developments that human society has witnessed, which have impacted various aspects of life and, in turn, had a direct impact on traditional customs and traditions through the phenomenon of globalization. While globalization carries universal human and social values, these values are not necessarily present in all societies worldwide. There are traditional societies that still resist the values of modern globalization out of fear of losing their traditional identity. In this context, social marketing plays a major role in clarifying and interpreting those values and their importance to both the individual and society as they work to keep up with global progress and achieve sustainable development.

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