

Applications of Social Marketing in Road Safety of Georgia

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Abstract—The aim of the paper is to explore the role of social marketing in changing the behavior of consumers on road safety, identify critical aspects and priority needs which impede the implementation of road safety program in Georgia. Given the goals of the study, a quantitative method was used to carry out interviews for primary data collection. This research identified the awareness level of road safety, legislation base, and marketing interventions to change behavior of drivers and pedestrians. During several years the non-governmental sector together with the local authorities and media have been very intensively working on the road safety issue in Georgia, but only seat-belts campaign should be considered rather successful. Despite achievements in this field, efficiency of road safety programs far from fulfillment and needs strong empowering.

Keywords—Road safety, social marketing interventions, behavior change, well-being.

I. INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH the key goal of most of the marketing strategies was mainly to increase a company's profitability; today a major emphasis is replaced on the formation and maintenance of sustainable, partnership relations with consumers. Social marketing with its huge significance has proven there is no alternative to public interests and that fulfilling thereof is the warranty of economic welfare and human development. Achieving success in improving people's well-being, positively influencing social condition, social justice and equity are some of the focus points of social marketing. Social Marketing is one of the modern trend of marketing, which aims not only to focus on the markets and needs of consumers, but to examine how marketing can be used as a strategy for changing behavior of the consumers for empowering well-being of the population. The main objective of social marketing is to solve crucial social problems, to formulate and develop new social product to benefit not only individuals, but society as a whole. Social marketing is the formation, implementation and control of a program intended for a target group to share a social idea, cause and experience. It is based on the sharing of social ideas, motives and experience to provide for the welfare of the society. By means of commercial marketing, it introduces social changes in the society and influences consumer behavior.

Road safety is crucial current social issue in Georgia. The number of fatal road accidents in Georgia is twice as high the average number of the European Union member states [1]. In

the frame of the Association Agreement (AA /DFCTA) with EU Georgia aims to achieve EU standard road safety. Fulfilling commitments stemming from the Association Agreement, Georgia prepared Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan [2]. Georgia is among the first group of 22 countries to submit a voluntary review of its road safety plan to the United Nations (UN) High level Political Forums (HLPF) in 2016. The government intends to change Georgian consumer's attitudes and behavior towards road safety through empowering public awareness and education programs on road safety. In order to facilitate changing behavior of the consumer, it is urgent to increase the attention and responsibility of the drivers and passengers, to influence on their personal values, emotions, lifestyles and etc. Despite some remained problems belt safe campaign was successful in Georgia. Many promotional campaigns were conducted on the road safety in Georgia, named as Don't Drink and Drive, For Your Sake and Safety, Paint Safety, which was initiated by Ministry of Internal Affairs. Georgia elaborated National Plan Strategy for road safety and take responsibility its implementation. The document contains concrete and new, stricter regulations on roads. In 2016 Parliament of Georgia approved amendments to the Road Traffic law introducing the so-called demerit points system (DPS) in Georgia. Under the DPS every driver will receive a reserve of 100 points. For each traffic violation, in addition to a monetary penalty, the points will be deducted from a 100 point "allowance". Given actions will encourage the consumer about the risk factors and dangerous behaviors, more attention should be paid to the needs of pedestrians.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The paper relies on the different scientific publications on social marketing and policy papers of International and Georgian scientists. Social marketing is influencing behavior, utilizing a systematic planning process, that applies marketing principles and techniques, capturing on priority target audience segment and delivering a positive benefit for society [3], [4]. It is aimed at achieving social impact through the application of marketing concepts and techniques to social issues ranging from the prevention, detection, and treatment of diseases to environmental sustainability and social justice. It focuses on the target audience, the long-term demand for the public utility customer behavior command. Social marketing is focused on people, their wants and needs, aspirations, lifestyle and freedom of choice aiming aggregate behavior change [5]. According social marketing education is significant to influence on the audience for increasing their

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awareness. In order to create favorable environment, it is important to change behavior of individuals and community [6]. Empower legislation base for improving regulation norms of drivers and pedestrians, which will help policy makers and public policy providers to improve behavior of users and format new social product [7], [8].

McKenzie-Mohr combines social marketing with community-based use especially for promoting environmental behavior change. CBSM is a practical approach that focuses on removing structural barriers that prevent people from changing their behavior. It has been successfully used to encourage people to adopt a number of sustainable behaviors [9]. To have real impact on the customer, it needs to create awareness and interest of target customers, change their attitudes and empower them to act. Combining social marketing with CBSM is frequently used to promote environmental behavior change. Community-based social marketing is strong instrument to influence on consumer's perception, attitude and behavior change through interactive method. Community-based social marketing promotes direct initiatives more efficient than mass media advertising separately. It demonstrates, how to motivate desired behavior change, how to overcome existing barriers and provide adequate regulation of the environment [10], [11].

To change the individual's behavior for the public good, very impressive paper had been provided by Brogan and Partners company named as "Eight Strategies to motivate behavior change: social marketing the Brogan way". It includes the following strategies: (1) Showing the consequences of risky behavior; (2) Showing the consequences of risky behavior on others; (3) Using publicly celebrated figures and people with a consolidated reputation; (4) Empowering people to take personal responsibility; (5) Appealing to an intervenor to affect the situation; (6) Casting kids to get more attention; (7) Using guerrilla marketing tactics; (8) Engaging partners, stakeholders and main beneficiaries and target groups as social program in the conversation [12].

Many factors influence the road safety, among them are driver behavior, construction and condition of the vehicle and condition of infrastructure [13]. World Health Organization underlines, that social marketing campaigns facilitate changing road users' knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding key risk factors and increasing their awareness about enforcement [14].

As it was mentioned, one of the core concepts of social marketing is behavioral influence, a range of different researches analyzing, combining qualitative and quantitative data gathering has been used and synthesized to plan, deliver and review intervention that create value for citizens emphasizes Jeff French [15]. From the point of Les Guttman influencing road safety requires making changes in norms and cultural conceptions of broader issues in society, he considers that social media could be a starting point for attention and to persuade consumers to be safer [16]. New information and communications approaches to road safety advertising and social marketing are exciting and developing field highlights

Jan Faulks, Australian scientist in his work [17]. Many researchers underline, that there are a growing number of younger drivers with an increased dependency on mobile devices, resulting frequency being used whilst driving to access social media [18], [19]. Social media is very popular in Georgia, which enables a consumer to get in contact with a desirable company, ask questions and receive answers. Facebook is the most popular social network on the seat belt campaign in Georgia [20]. Due to the joint action of government, business, and society the formation of new-behavior consumption of safety belts have been conducted [21].

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The materials for this study were collected from scholar and policy papers, statistical data. For obtaining new original data, quantitative and qualitative research methods have been applied. Formulated the working hypothesis and questionnaire, the methods of focus groups and expert interviews were applied. Approximately of 500 drivers and pedestrians were interviewed by online. A survey was done on a structural questionnaire, which was divided into three blocks, namely, demographic information, attitudes of drivers and pedestrian on road safety and marketing communications affecting behavior. Respondents of the study were individuals, who have an experience of driving. Women respondents (59%) were the majority, comparing with man (41%). The 55% respondents 21-35 ages, 37% were 35-45 ages. Most of them, 75 % were employed and had their own income, 25% were unemployed. To measure the attitude and behavior of drivers and pedestrians, five-point Likert scale was used (with possible answers agree, strongly agree, agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree). The focus group interviews were provided to the representatives of civil society and government working on road safety issue. The questioner was particularly focused on the consequences of the seat belt campaign in Georgia. Identified consumer's knowledge of traffic rules, usage of a mobile phone whilst driving, pedestrian safety etc. The research results were analyzed using statistic software SPSS for Windows. The confidence interval was 95%.

IV. FINDINGS

The research survey reveals, that social marketing campaign on the seat belt is successful. In result of the campaign drivers and passengers obtain knowledge about the seat belt usage while driving. Most majority respondents consider that seat belt reduces the risk injury and it is necessary to wear seat belt, in case that driver is driving carefully. Wearing seat belt had significantly increased and reached 89% and 71% for drivers and passengers respectively. The survey points up consumer's perception and attitude regarding the safety road issue in the country, which is not positive and impact on the efficient action of road safety campaigns (as shown in Fig. 1).

The research refers, that the respondents' demographic features strongly influence on consumer behavior, according

their ages, gender, and social status. Most of the respondents of the survey emphasize, that drivers and pedestrians are not well inform about their responsibilities and obligations. The qualitative research with representatives of civil society approve hypothesis, that most marginal group of safety road is pedestrians, they are mostly unprotected segment, particularly children and old ages people. The teaching safety skills should be considered as long-term interventions for ensuring an effective behavior changing campaigns in Georgia.

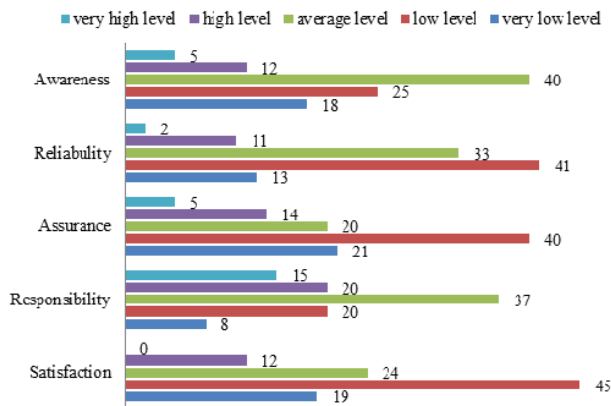


Fig. 1 The level of consumer awareness, reliability, assurance, responsibility, and satisfaction regarding to safety road (in %)

The survey determined the following topics:

- For the majority of the respondents the causes of many accidents on the road are high speeding the car driving. It should be noted that the discourse on the safety issue increased among different stakeholders of the society, unfortunately hypotheses approve that the priority in Georgia is still given to the car drivers rather than the pedestrians.
- Most of the respondents argued that it is urgent to increase tight restrictions for the driver on high speeding. They considered that promotional campaign's impact on the consumer's attitude and motivation is very low.
- The respondents confirmed, that using of mobile phone is ordinary for them while driving. Almost half (49%) of respondents answered that they use a cell phone while driving, 32 %, read and send messages. The majority of them are young drivers. Only 25 % respondents answer they never make the call while driving. The habit of young driver's habit checking their phones is major challenges for road safety authorities to overcome [22].
- 80% respondents underline that last period dramatically increase the problem of pedestrian safety, due to lack of knowledge and awareness on the road safety rules and regulations from the drivers and pedestrians' sides.
- 45% respondents identified that they cross the road where prohibited pedestrian crossroads. Only 17 % answered, that they never cross the prohibited pedestrian crossroads.
- Respondents agreed, that social marketing intervention on road safety are very successful, when it supported by

efficient marketing communications. 55 % of 45-60 ages respondents preferred traditional road safety advertising via media such as television, print media, and radio. From the point of 80 % respondents of 20-35 ages the social media marketing effective influencing on the drivers and pedestrian positive behavior. From the points of respondents Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and YouTube are the most popular sites in Georgia. It should be noted, that participatory nature of social media helps to interact with consumers on road safety problems and reach a wide range of audiences.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Despite significant steps to ensure road safety for consumers, there is need to address a number of other areas in order to improve road safety issue in Georgia. The international experience of social marketing should be thoroughly studied and adapted to the Georgian reality to make social values and welfare available for all citizens of Georgia, to leveraging road safety improvements in the country. Georgian government together with key stakeholders continuing work on the implementation of the Road Safety Strategy, Multi-stakeholder dialogue and effective cooperation across different sectors are the foundation to improve the road safety situation, peoples' attitudes, and behavior [23]. Effective mass media campaigns, traditional or social media attract attention of all citizens of the country and will stimulate and support behavior change for the well-being of the population. The social media marketing campaign aims to ensure the positive changes of road users, to demonstrate best practices of different cities on road safety rather to claim drivers don't increase high speeding, not to have mobiles while driving and etc. It is significant to facilitate the motivation of citizens to make every city of Georgia pedestrians friendly.

Social marketing campaign on road safety never be sufficient without the joint coordinated work of government, civil society, and business. According the consumer's opinion, the situation on the roads is remained very dramatic, the consumer still does not feel safety on the road traffic. Effective social marketing interventions of road safety should guarantee of all consumers in the country.

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