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PARTNERSHIP IN SOCIAL MARKETING PROGRAMS. SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE COMPANIES AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS' ENGAGEMENT IN SOLVING SOCIETY'S PROBLEMS

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Abstract

The development of social marketing, as an important area of analysis and research, has opened up multiple opportunities for organizations to engage in society's problems. Whether we talk about non-profit organizations engaged in health or environmental programs or private companies willing to act responsibly, their goal is a common one: to help improve people's lives by promoting responsible behaviour in society.

This paper aims to extend the area of research for "cause-related marketing" by highlighting the importance of partnerships between non-profit organizations and companies based on social responsibility. As a result, the article proposes and analyzes four features of social partnership: motivation, promotion, efficiency and law effect.

The study examines the Romanian consumers' opinions regarding the need of collaboration between corporations and non-profit organizations for achieving common social goals. Using the structural equation model, the paper describes the relations between each of the variables considered and social partnership and measures the extent to which these variables can influence the collaboration between organizations. The article tests and then proposes a model of the considered variables. The results obtained describe the characteristics of social partnership marketing programs and their importance for the consumer.

Keywords: partnership, cause-related marketing, social problems, non-profit organization, socially responsible company, social marketing program

JEL Classification: M31, M14, L31

Introduction

Cause-related marketing principles are considered today the key factor of success of a social partnership program. Initiated by corporations, cause-related marketing mainly aims to meet both the interests of socially responsible companies and non-profit organizations

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(Wymer, 2003). Studies show that the effectiveness of these strategies is due, on the one hand, to reputation of the company among consumers and, on the other hand, the non-profit organizations' credibility in using money in a responsible manner (Dahan and Doh and Oetzel and Yaziji, 2009). Today, cause-related marketing is a key tool in promoting social causes, being successfully used in achieving consumer loyalty and their accountability.

This paper discusses the issue of partnership in social marketing programs, highlighting its benefits and its risks while providing recommendations. The practical part of this paper is based on an online survey among Romanian consumers regarding the characteristics of social partnership programs. In this direction, the article analyzes the dependence of the variable "importance of social partnership for consumers" with the following independent variables: "motivation", "promotion", "efficiency" and "law effect". All four independent variables represent the following: motivation - social or material involvement of organizations, promotion - the number and quality of promotional means used, efficiency - the ability to inform people and the expected impact, law effect - the extent to which the program may make changes to legislation. Data obtained from the survey was analyzed using the QMS E-views Software.

The resulting model shows that partnership represents an opportunity for non-profit organizations and corporations. With its help, social problems – whether they're regarding health, the environment or education – are reduced and customers are more open to the philanthropic activities of organizations.

1. Partnership in social marketing programs

Social marketing programs are primarily aimed at influencing consumer's behaviour in a way beneficial to society. To achieve its objectives, the organizations often decide initiating partnerships with other companies interested in the social issue in question. In choosing a reliable partner, an organization, whether it is a non-profit or private one, should consider the following aspects: common market segments, compatible mission and values, good market image, similar reputations and adequate resources (Lefebvre, 2006).

Between non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies we can distinguish different forms of partnership. (Table no. 1) The first form, the partnership between two or several non-profit organizations, represents the object of study of social marketing discipline. Defined by Philip Kotler (1971), social marketing is now having a remarkable success, representing a valuable resource for the non-profit organizations worldwide. Unlike other specializations of marketing, the objectives of a program initiated by a non-profit organization will always be immaterial and will all target consumer welfare. This, together with the noble goals pursued in society, lead to social marketing representing today one of the most valuable instruments of social communication.

Partnership between two or several socially responsible companies represents the object of study of corporate social responsibility, a new business philosophy that involves the use of social marketing's principles to maximize positive effects for consumers and society. A socially responsible company will seek primarily to achieve material goals – the increase of consumer's number, the increase of purchased products, the improvement of image fidelity, etc., and the social objectives having a secondary role. However, corporate initiatives to get

involved in society are always welcome, due to the increased number of social issues that need addressing.

Table no. 1: Forms of partnership between non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies

	Non-profit organizations	Socially responsible companies
Non-profit organizations	Social marketing	Cause-related marketing
Socially responsible companies	Cause-related marketing	Corporate social responsibility

The last type of partnership, the partnership between non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies represents the object of study of cause-related marketing. Cause-related marketing is defined as a commercial activity which non-profit organizations and corporations form, a partnership to achieve mutual benefits (Adkins, 1999). As a specific corporate social responsibility initiative, cause-related marketing involves donating a sum of money by a company for a social cause in order to improve the reputation of the company, promoting its value and customer loyalty.

The evolution of partnerships between non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies is based on three stages, summarized in figure no. 1. In the first stage the partnership is missing, the organizations carrying out programs for similar social causes but on a separate base. Typically, such programs are initiated by well-known organizations that have experience in the market and have sufficient funds to conduct a social marketing program.

In the second stage, organizations decide to collaborate but the information exchange is not done effectively. In this case, organizations rely on resources and skills that they do not have or do not fully control. Moreover, the lack of experience, the lack of trust and of communication can lead to misunderstandings even when the organizations share common values and commitments. However, the lack of communication is not always a problem. Interaction between non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies is often difficult even when information is shared. Confidential information such as research projects, strategic plans and internal audit can help non-profit organizations become better partners, but at the same time, it can turn them into direct competitors (Dahan and Doh and Oetzel and Yaziji, 2009). As a result, the partnership will not be effective and the program will not generate the desired impact.

In the last stage, the resources and expertise of the organization complement each other, making the partnership a success. Thus, socially responsible companies will benefit from the predicted financial gains, while the non-profit organization will enjoy the desired social impact.

In Romania, partnerships between non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies are common enough. Romanian social marketing programs aim to bring improvements in various areas: education, health, environment, human rights, culture, sports, personal safety (e.g. road safety, domestic violence) and civic involvement (e.g. volunteering, voter participation).

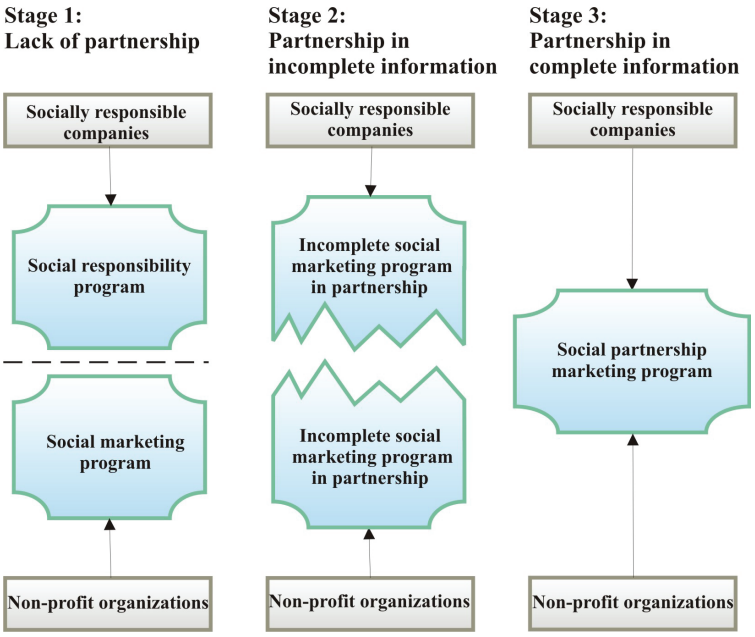

Figure no. 1: The evolution of partnership between non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies

Source: Created after Dahan, N.M. et al, 2009. *Corporate-NGO Collaboration: Co-creating New Business Models for Developing Markets.* Amsterdam:Elsevier Ltd, p. 329.

Among the most popular social marketing programs undertaken by non-profit organizations we can be mention: "Now more than ever!" - Maltese Aid Service in Romania and the Habitat for Humanity Romania Association (July 2010), "Save Roşia Montana Campaign" - Alburnus Maior Association and Partnership Foundation (May 2005) or "Mental Health Caravan" - Câmpulung Moldovenesc Mental Health Centre in partnership with the Horizons Foundation (February 2008).

Social marketing programs undertaken by socially responsible companies are: "Take care of your and your loved ones' heart" - Medsana and Becel (September, 2010) or "Take action" - Stiletto.ro and KLM Airlines (October 2008).

The most requested type of partnership remains the one between non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies, because of the benefits brought on both sides. Such programs are: "Together we overcome autism" - Vodafone and Civil Society Development Foundation (November, 2008), "Move Your Lips" – The Body Shop, MTV and Staying Alive Foundation (March 2008) or "Osteoporosis prevention campaign" – Sensiblu Foundation and Sanofi-Aventis company (April 2009).

2. Stages in establishing a partnership between non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies

Establishing partnerships between non-profit organizations and companies based on social responsibility involves tracking several stages, also presented in table no. 2. Perhaps the most important step, setting partners, requires first a careful analysis of the market. In this stage there will be identified opportunities for social involvement and the costs and benefits of changing social behaviour. Stage two will focus on consulting researches in the field, interviewing experts and carrying out exploratory studies (Gowran, 2005).

In the third stage organizations will enhance the visibility of the program through: television, radio, media, non-conventional communication channels (e.g. sponsorship, exhibitions), websites, opinion leaders speeches, etc..

The fourth stage involves consultation and evaluation activities like: product sales analysis, estimated number of distributed materials and market studies. The last stage encourages organizations to continue social programs by creating new, more extensive and more effective programs.

Table no. 2: Stages in establishing the partnership between non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies

Stage	Main activities
1. Setting partners	- Identify potential partners; - Setting introductory meetings; - Setting the principles of cooperation; - Identification of social and material benefits;
2. Studying the social problem	- Establish a common vision concerning the social problem; - Establishing common objectives; - Information sharing;
3. Setting and conducting of the proposed activities	- Setting the activities; - Conduct information and education program on targeted audiences; - Setting tools to measure results;
4. Evaluate and control of the program	- Review activities and partnership; - Review objectives; - Research consumer opinion on carried activities;
5. Planning new courses of action	- Promotion of program's results; - Establishing new lines of action.

Source: Created after Gowran, S., 2005. *Opening doors: school and community partnership in poverty awareness and social education initiatives.* Dublin: Publisher Combat Poverty Agency, pp. 30-31.

3. Studying the importance of partnerships between non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies among Romanian consumers

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this research is to examine the importance of partnership between non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies among Romanian consumers.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

1) Determine the number of consumers that have heard of social marketing programs based on partnerships between social organizations and socially responsible companies.

2) Identification of the most popular social marketing programs based on partnership.

3) Determine the general attitude of consumers regarding the social marketing programs in partnership developed in Romania.

4) Identify the importance of partnership between non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies in solving the problems of society.

5) Determine the demographic features of respondents.

3.3 Assumptions

One must define the following assumptions:

H1 – The importance of social partnership depends directly on the motivation of organizations involved.

H2 – The importance of partnership depends directly on the means used for promotion.

H3 – The importance of partnership depends directly on the effectiveness of social programs.

H4 – The importance of partnership depends directly on the estimated legal effect.

3.4 Methods

In order to study the impact of partnership in social marketing programs, there was collected information through methods of direct research. These methods assume the gathering of information directly from individuals, either through traditional means: face-to-face or by phone, or through online means: email or Internet. Because, in most cases, the online means are faster than the traditional ones, and attract consumers more easily, the research used an online survey to reach its objectives.

The study used a questionnaire with 14 items of which the first two were introductory questions, the following five questions were used in constructing the econometric model and the last seven questions were demographic ones. The main role of preliminary questions was to establish the current state of knowledge. Answers to questions used in the

performance model were measured using a proportional type scale. The research used especially primary information sources and was conducted in August-September 2010.

3.5 Participants

A total of 91 respondents participated in this study. Most respondents are young people, aged up to 24 years, who attended higher education. The sampling method used was random sampling.

3.6 Data analysis and results

In conducting the data analysis it was considered a multiple regression model with a dependent variable: importance of partnership and four independent variables: motivation, promotion, efficiency and law effect. Links between variables were measured using a proportionate scale with 5 levels, 1 - totally disagree, 5 - total agreement. (Table no. 3) Data were processed using QMS E-views Software.

Table no. 3: Proportionate scale with five levels

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
Significance	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

For each considered variable there were calculated three statistical indicators: mean, median and standard deviation. (Table no. 4)

Table no. 4: Statistical indicators obtained for the considered variables

	Mean	Median	Standard deviation	Sample
Importance of partnership	4,22	4,00	,84	91
Motivation	2,61	3,00	1,227	91
Promotion	2,05	2,00	,873	91
Efficiency	3,97	4,00	,881	91
Law effect	3,39	3,00	1,104	91

Next, there were examined simple correlations between the variables of the regression model. (Table no. 5)

Table no. 5: Simple correlations between considered variables

	Importance of partnership	Motivation	Promotion	Efficiency	Law effect
Importance of partnership	1,00				
Motivation	0,14	1,00			
Promotion	0,47	0,20	1,00		
Efficiency	0,63	0,20	0,02	1,00	
Law effect	0,07	0,17	0,02	0,09	1,00

Correlation coefficients indicated values below 0.5, except the correlation between the importance of partnership and efficiency where the correlation value of 0.63 was slightly exceeded. Therefore we can say that there aren't independent variables strongly correlated.

From table no. 6 we can draw the following conclusions: appropriate coefficients of motivation and promotion are negative (motivation = −0.285 and promotion = −0.518), hence there is an inverse relationship between these variables and import of partnership.

The model is considered valid because the Prob (F-statistic) is 0 and the value of R-squared (coefficient determined) is close to 1.

Based on information obtained in the table no. 6, the following regression equation was defined:

import_partnership = 3,136 – (0,285x motivation) – (0,518x promotion) + (0,681x efficiency) + (0,054x law_effect) (1)

where:

import_partnership – importance of partnership

law_effect – law_effect.

Table no. 6: Features of multiple regression model

Dependent Variable: IMPORT_PARTNERSHIP				
Method: Least Squares				
Date: 09/18/10 Time: 13:48				
Sample: 1 91				
Included observations: 91				
Variable	***Coefficient***	***Std. Error***	***t-Statistic***	***Prob.***
C	3.136512	0.281566	11.13955	0.0000
MOTIVATION	-0.285533	0.038517	-7.413109	0.0000
PROMOTION	-0.518779	0.051830	-10.00922	0.0000
EFFICIENCY	0.681600	0.051748	13.17144	0.0000
LAW_EFFECT	0.054390	0.041152	1.321694	0.1898
R-squared	0.762276	***Mean dependent var***		4.219780
Adjusted R-squared	0.751219	***S.D. dependent var***		0.840664
S.E. of regression	0.419306	***Akaike info criterion***		1.152947
Sum squared resid	15.12032	***Schwarz criterion***		1.290906
Log likelihood	-47.45909	***F-statistic***		68.94087
Durbin-Watson stat	2.325443	***Prob(F-statistic)***		0.000000

Significance of regression model parameters was analyzed using the Wald Test. (Table no. 7). Since the associated probabilities are 0.00 and Fisher and hi-square values are very high, we conclude that the parameters are significantly different from 0.

Table no. 7: Wald Test

Wald Test: Equation: COLLINEARITY			
Test Statistic	***Value***	***df***	***Probability***
F-statistic	1898.421	(5, 86)	0.0000
Chi-square	9492.107	5	0.0000
Null Hypothesis Summary:			
Normalized Restriction (= 0)		***Value***	***Std. Err.***
C(1)		3.136512	0.281566
C(2)		-0.285533	0.038517
C(3)		-0.518779	0.051830
C(4)		0.681600	0.051748
C(5)		0.054390	0.041152

Next step was to check the validity of model assumptions.

1) The assumption of the normality of errors (Figure no. 2)

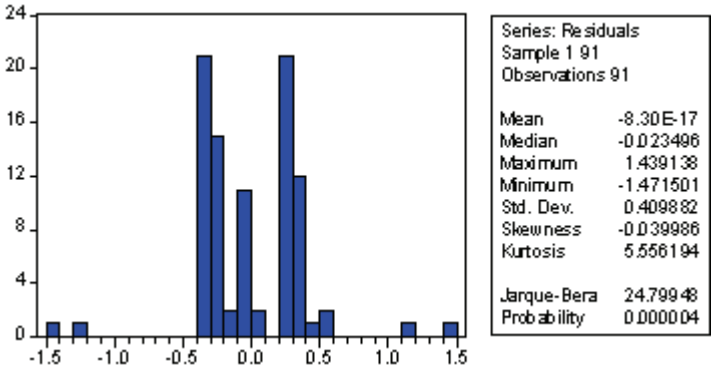

Figure no. 2: Error Histogram

To check whether residues have a normal distribution the Jarque-Bera test was used. Since the value calculated by Jarque-Bera test is lower than the value of Chi-square (χ^2) and the associated probability of 0.000004 is less than 0.05, then we conclude that the errors do not follow a normal distribution.

2) The assumption of errors autocorrelation (Table no. 8)

Table no. 8: Breusch-Godfrey Serial CorrelationTest

Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test:			
F-statistic	1.586068	Probability	0.210798
Obs*R-squared	3.311430	Probability	0.190955

Test Equation:
Dependent Variable: RESID
Method: Least Squares
Date: 09/18/10 Time: 13:59
Presample missing value lagged residuals set to zero.

Variable	*Coefficient*	*Std. Error*	*t-Statistic*	*Prob.*
C	0.172399	0.296238	0.581961	0.5622
MOTIVATION	0.004556	0.038780	0.117486	0.9068
PROMOTION	-0.007735	0.051740	-0.149493	0.8815
EFFICIENCY	-0.029286	0.053998	-0.542357	0.5890
LAW_EFFECT	-0.015074	0.041974	-0.359117	0.7204
RESID(-1)	-0.185710	0.115389	-1.609435	0.1113
RESID(-2)	0.060994	0.111940	0.544884	0.5873

R-squared	0.036389	***Mean dependent var***	-8.30E-17
Adjusted R-squared	-0.032440	***S.D. dependent var***	0.409882
S.E. of regression	0.416478	***Akaike info criterion***	1.159835
Sum squared resid	14.57010	***Schwarz criterion***	1.352978
Log likelihood	-45.77249	***F-statistic***	0.528689
Durbin-Watson stat	1.946346	***Prob(F-statistic)***	0.785032

To verify the assumption of errors independence, two tests were applied: Durbin-Watson test and Breusch-Godfrey test. Durbin-Watson test value is found in the table that describes the multiple regressions model (table no. 6) and is 2.32.

This value means that errors are not auto-correlated. Since the Durbin-Watson test value is between two limits with a probability of 95%, results that residuals do not present first-order autocorrelation.

Breusch-Godfrey test can be analyzed from two viewpoints: the Fisher test value and the LM test value. The value associated with Fisher test (F-statistic) is 1.58, which indicates no autocorrelation of first order. The same result was highlighted from applying the LM test (R^2=3,311).

3) The assumption of errors homoskedasticity

To test the residuals variance, the White test was applied. Heteroskedasticity, the lack of equal dispersions, was verified by analyzing the determination coefficient (R^2= 30,16). The value obtained is higher than the one existed in table, therefore we can say that there is no heteroskedasticity between the model errors. (Table no. 9)

Table no. 9: White Test

White Heteroskedasticity Test:			
F-statistic	5.081793	***Probability***	0.000038
Obs*R-squared	30.16237	***Probability***	0.000198

Test Equation:
Dependent Variable: ***RESID^2***
Method: Least Squares
Date: 09/18/10 Time: 14:03
Sample: 1 91
Included observations: 91

Variable	*Coefficient*	*Std. Error*	*t-Statistic*	*Prob.*
C	-1.017302	1.112937	-0.914070	0.3634
MOTIVATION	-0.509789	0.144603	-3.525442	0.0007
MOTIVATION ^2	0.112292	0.028219	3.979294	0.0001
PROMOTION	-0.468250	0.411832	-1.136992	0.2589
PROMOTION ^2	0.143199	0.097450	1.469464	0.1455
EFFICIENCY	1.366095	0.738833	1.848990	0.0681
EFFICIENCY ^2	-0.170570	0.089706	-1.901432	0.0608
LAW_EFFECT	-0.453666	0.184176	-2.463219	0.0159
LAW_EFFECT^2	0.060240	0.028948	2.081004	0.0406

R-squared	0.331455	***Mean dependent var***	0.166157
Adjusted R-squared	0.266231	***S.D. dependent var***	0.356632
S.E. of regression	0.305492	***Akaike info criterion***	0.559875
Sum squared resid	7.652678	***Schwarz criterion***	0.808202
Log likelihood	-16.47433	***F-statistic***	5.081793
Durbin-Watson stat	1.925253	***Prob(F-statistic)***	0.000038

4) The assumption of errors multicollinearity

The correlation matrix identified reverse relationship between the importance of partnership and the following variables: motivation (-0.143), promotion (-0.47) and law effect (-0.08). The only positive correlation was between the importance of partnership and efficiency (0.636). (Table no. 10)

Table no. 10: Correlation matrix

	IMPORT_ PARTNER SHIP	**MOTIV ATION**	**PROMO TION**	**EFFICIE NCY**	**LAW_EF FECT**
IMPORT_PARTNERSHIP	1.000000	-0.143327	-0.470374	0.636231	-0.082727
MOTIVATION	-0.143327	1.000000	-0.208021	0.207763	0.179112
PROMOTION	-0.470374	-0.208021	1.000000	-0.027259	0.023281
EFFICIENCY	0.636231	0.207763	-0.027259	1.000000	-0.093680
LAW_EFFECT	-0.082727	0.179112	0.023281	-0.093680	1.000000

Following the verification of these assumptions, we can conclude that the proposed model is valid.

Conclusions

In this article, the author tried to present to interested experts and researchers in the field some important aspects of social partnership marketing programs. Thus, there were described and exemplified three types of relationships between organizations: the relationship non-profit and non-profit organization, the non-profit organization - socially responsible company and the relationship between several socially responsible companies. The emphasis was on the partnership among non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies. In this aspect, it was presented the evolution in time of this form of partnership and there have been proposed stages to achieve a successful partnership.

The practical part of this paper analyzed the relationship between the importance of partnership and four variables: motivation, promotion, efficiency and law effect. The proposed model was tested using the QMS E-views software program by identifying relevant statistical indicators. Model validity was checked by analysis of four assumptions: the assumption of errors normality, the assumption of errors autocorrelation, the assumption of errors homoskedasticity and the assumption of errors multicollinearity. Following this analysis, the model was declared valid.

In conclusion, the partnership between non-profit organizations and socially responsible companies is now a valuable tool in promoting social causes. Using the organizations will be able to make a significant contribution in reducing the problems of society, encouraging the adoption of a more responsible behaviour and maintaining social involvement. Some limitations of this paper are: a limited number of researches in the field and the fact that the sample consisted, mainly in students.

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