

## **Using social media to create engagement: a social marketing review**

### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** Recognising the potential of social media as an integral driver of communication that can create engaged communities through dialogic or two-way conversations, this study seeks to identify and describe the use of social media in creating participants' engagement in various social marketing programmes conducted worldwide between 2005 and 2017.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Twenty-nine social marketing programmes were identified using systematic literature review procedures.

**Findings:** The majority of the identified programmes used Facebook, and social media were mostly employed to share content-based information in an attempt to connect with target audiences, raise awareness, and reach less accessible populations with programme messages. Social media served as an extended channel to traditional media efforts and very few programmes used social media to create mechanisms for supporting their target audiences' ability to revisit their social media communications and encourage them to act as advocates for the programmes' activities.

**Research limitations/implications:** The analysis presented in this paper is limited by the information provided in the identified studies.

**Originality/value:** Despite the growing popularity and significance of social media as a channel for consumer engagement, little has been done to synthesise how social marketers are incorporating the use of social media in their social marketing programmes. This research fills this gap by providing systematic understanding of the use of social media in social marketing programmes to date.

**Keywords:** social marketing, social media, engagement, Web 2.0, user-generated content, systematic literature review

## **Introduction**

Social marketing has been used to promote a variety of public health and social wellbeing programmes, such as reducing alcohol harm (Kubacki et al., 2015a; Rundle-Thiele et al., 2015), improving rates of physical activity (Stead et al., 2006; Xia et al., 2016), and promoting healthy eating habits (Carins and Rundle-Thiele, 2014). It has also been used to promote behavioural change regarding sustainability issues, such as encouraging energy efficiency and water conservation (Lynes et al., 2014). Over the last decade, social marketers have been increasingly relying on digital tools such as social media to create engagement with target audiences (Kubacki et al., 2015b). Previous research that has used social media in social marketing programmes has demonstrated that interactions on social media can lead to engagement, which ultimately provides benefits to audiences and organisations (Moorhead et al., 2013; Neiger et al., 2012, 2013; Sashi, 2012; Ashley and Tuten, 2015). However, despite the initial attempts to incorporate social media into social marketing and health communications programmes (Moorhead, et al. 2013; Neiger et al., 2012, 2013), our understanding of how social media are used to create engagement in social marketing programmes remains limited, with several authors suggesting that social marketers struggle to understand the utility of social media (Dooley et al., 2014; James et al., 2013; Justice-Gardiner et al., 2012; Korda and Itani, 2013; Neiger et al., 2012, 2013; Overbey et al., 2017), and how they can be leveraged to foster engagement with target audiences (Neiger et al., 2012, 2013). In an attempt to address this gap, this study describes a systematic literature review of the use of social media in creating participants' engagement in various social marketing programmes conducted worldwide between 2005 and 2017.

## **Consumer engagement**

The concept of engagement is defined differently across a variety of disciplines, such as sociology (Jennings and Zeitner, 2003), psychology (Achterberg et al., 2003; Tsai et al., 2009), educational psychology (Fredricks et al., 2004; London et al., 2007) and organisational behaviour (Bejerholm and Eklund, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Marketing scholars interpretation of engagement in a digital age has evolved to focus on the consumer rather than the organisation, emphasising that consumer engagement is a behaviour (Hollebeek, 2011; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014; Kumar and Pansari, 2016; Verleye et al., 2013; Verhoef et al., 2010) which involves active participation through co-creating value activities (Brodie et al., 2011; Sashi, 2012; Verleye et al., 2013) and contributions (Kumar et al., 2010). Sashi (2012) explained that consumer engagement is a process of value creation that consists of personalised experiences with “informed, networked, empowered and active customers increasingly co-creating value with the organisation” (p. 267). Engagement between organisations and existing or potential consumers – and among consumers themselves – allows consumers to co-create value by “generating content, providing feedback, disseminating information and becoming advocates for the organisation among their peers” (ibid., p. 267).

Alternatively, some marketing scholars consider engagement as referring to engaging consumers at a single touch-point with the organisation. For instance, Sterne (2010) described engagement as a simple response to marketing efforts. Sterne's understanding of engagement was further developed by Neiger et al. (2013) who identified three levels of engagement – low, medium and high – acknowledging the importance of their hierarchy in terms of creating various activities with consumers that eventually permit consumers to become participants and partners in their relationship

with the organisation. However, they defined the first stage, low engagement, as one-way messaging in which the audience passively consumes the organisation's content by following or subscribing to social media channels. Although, this level of engagement is crucial in providing information to audiences and in transacting them to the second stage of engagement, defining a one-way communication as "low engagement" is incongruent with the understanding of engagement as active participation through co-creation (Brodie et al., 2011; Sashi, 2012; Verleye et al., 2013). Indeed, there should be a starting point for a long-term relationship; however, Neiger et al.'s (2013) conceptualisation of engagement - as connections between individuals that lead to long-term relationships - defies labelling their first level as engagement.

Van Doorn et al. (2010) further distinguished engagement from mere liking of a product or service, describing it as a stronger state of "connectedness" between consumers and organisations. Hence, consumer engagement on social media extends on a continuum, from a simple "like" on Facebook to content creation in the form of commenting on a post or uploading a video on YouTube (Mandiberg, 2014). Each level of engagement creates a different benefit for the organisation. Therefore, considering consumer engagement as a multi-stage continuum, in this study we adopt Sashi's (2012) model of consumer engagement to provide a foundation for developing a systematic understanding of how social media is being used in social marketing programmes. Unlike Neiger et al. (2013), Sashi's (2012) framework distinguishes between one-way and two-way communication, labelling two separate stages as "connection" and "interaction" (p. 261). According to Sashi (2012), the process of creating consumer engagement should lead to enduring long-term relationships in which engaged consumers become partners who collaborate with marketers in the value-adding process to better satisfy their needs, as well as the needs of other consumers. While other approaches to consumer engagement have tended to "confuse intermediate stages in the customer engagement cycle with customer engagement itself" (Sashi, 2012, p. 260), Sashi's process of building engagement constitutes a customer engagement cycle consisting of seven stages of engagement: connection, interaction, satisfaction, retention, commitment, advocacy, and engagement. Understanding these levels of engagement may help social marketers determine their desired outcome and, therefore, affect their chosen communication activities. The interactive nature of social media facilitates conversations between individuals and marketers, creates communities, and involves consumers in content generation and value creation. Accordingly, social media facilitates progression from one stage of the consumer engagement process to another to establish stronger relationships between marketers and consumers.

### **Social media: definition and use**

The introduction of social media has offered interactive opportunities that have allowed marketers to foster consumer engagement and build ongoing relationships (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Sashi, 2012). The term "social media" refers to "tools for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques – such as web-based, mobile technologies – to turn communication into interactive dialogue" (Coulson, 2013, p. 1). The terms Web 2.0 (Dooley et al., 2014; Mandiberg, 2014) and user-generated content (Macario et al., 2013; Mandiberg, 2014) have been often used interchangeably with social media to emphasise their unique characteristics which allow audiences to create content (Dooley et al., 2014; Mandiberg, 2014) and interact with one another (Coulson, 2013; Dooley et al., 2014), as well as with organisations (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Dooley et al., 2014; Lipschultz, 2014; Neiger et al., 2012,

2013; Sashi, 2012). Social media also offer an inexpensive way to reach large audiences, and overcome geographic barriers (Dooley et al., 2014; Gamble and Gilmore, 2013; Korda and Itani, 2013). All of those unique features of social media offer interactive opportunities that allow marketers to foster consumer engagement and build ongoing relationships (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Sashi, 2012).

Providing those opportunities, social media have transformed the way consumers interact with one another and with organisations. A comprehensive review of the use of social media in tourism and hospitality highlighted the strategic importance of social media for tourism competitiveness (Leung et al., 2013). Another study concluded that social media have a significant positive effect on brand equity in the retail of luxury brands (Godey et al., 2016). Other research has indicated that social media have become an integral element of brand communities (Laroche et al., 2012), fandom (de Vries et al., 2012), retail (Rapp et al., 2013), as well as in public health and health promotion (Bannor et al., 2017; Chen and Shi, 2015). This transformation has altered the way organisations are spending their marketing budgets. A recent report details that organisations are increasing their social media spend to connect with consumers or prospects, who spend most of their media time on social media (eMarketer, 2014).

Extensive research shows that social media are more powerful channels than traditional media in building intimate relationships with consumers due to their enhanced popularity among audiences (Bannor et al., 2017), interactive nature, and their capacity to facilitate the development of consumer networks (Westberg et al., 2018). Fostering consumer engagement on social media has become an important strategy in health communication and behaviour change (Bannor et al., 2017; Chen and Shi, 2015; Korda and Itani, 2013; Luxton et al., 2012; Neiger et al., 2012, 2013; Webb et al., 2010). In a systematic review that assessed the use of social media for food risk communication, Overbey et al. (2017) confirmed that 83% of the analysed studies asserted the benefits of social media for social marketing communication in impacting knowledge and behaviours. They explained that these benefits included the ability of social media communication to impact public knowledge and shape public opinion, and the impact of social media-based intervention on increased self-reported change in behaviours and preventive actions. Engaging consumers with social media messages is also an effective strategy to improve knowledge and understanding of specific health and social issues (Korda and Itani, 2013; Luxton et al., 2012; Mo and Coulson, 2008; Webb et al., 2010), by means of providing consumers with a sense of connectedness and social support (Chou et al., 2009; Luxton et al., 2012), and allowing them to freely discuss issues in anonymous or identified contexts (Korda and Itani, 2013; Luxton et al., 2012). For example, a study into the use of social media in suicide prevention described how an innovative social media page provided users with an anonymous, personalised and interactive way to feature their own experiences, while including links to professional help and educational resources for suicide prevention in regular social media messages (Luxton et al., 2012).

A systematic review focusing on health communication among the general public, patients, and health professionals identified several benefits of social media, including increased levels of interactions, increased availability and accessibility of health information, and increased levels of peer and emotional support (Moorhead et al., 2013). Similarly, a study exploring the effect of social media on individuals with HIV found that social media have a positive impact on increasing informational and

emotional support (Chen and Shi, 2015). Another study into the effectiveness, evolution and dynamism of health communication on social media also indicated that health professionals and members of the public believed that social media were effective channels for sharing health-related messages (Bannor et al., 2017). The study provided further evidence to suggest that consumers perceived health-related messages on social media in a serious and trusted manner and health professionals believed that social media were more effective than traditional media mainly due to the loss of popularity of traditional media among target audiences. Indeed, strategies that encourage engagement and content creation on social media have the potential to embed behavioural change messages in the lives of consumers (Luxton et al., 2012; Westberg et al., 2018).

Previous studies into the use of social media in social marketing programmes have demonstrated that engagement on social media can provide mutual benefit that involves audiences as partners of organisations (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Neiger et al., 2012, 2013; Sashi, 2012; Thackeray et al., 2008). For instance, social media have been used to engage populations in emergency preparedness and response efforts (Neiger et al., 2012). Following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, an open-source Web platform known as Ushahidi was introduced to link health care providers to those with supplies (Merchant et al., 2011; Neiger et al., 2012), while victims who were trapped under the ruins used Facebook to reach out for help (Neiger et al., 2012).

Despite social media's significance to the field of social marketing, various scholars have highlighted a lack of knowledge of how to effectively communicate via social media (Dooley et al., 2014; James et al., 2013; Justice-Gardiner et al., 2012; Neiger et al., 2012, 2013; Overbey et al., 2017). Research has identified that the use of social media in social marketing in the public and non-profit sectors still involves one-way communication, similar to traditional media (Neiger et al., 2012, 2013). In addition, social marketing practitioners often lack sufficient knowledge on using social media and managing their communication (Dooley et al., 2014). For example, social marketing participants in Dooley et al.'s (2014) study mentioned in in-depth interviews that some platforms are not well understood and are time consuming to learn. Another systematic review concluded that suggestions for social media best practices and study designs have been highly inconsistent among studies, making it difficult for programme managers to operationalise them (Overbey et al., 2017). They also identified the need for more evidence-based suggestions in establishing guidelines for social media use in social marketing programme promotion. Particularly in the public and non-profit sectors, limited budgets and time constraints restrict capabilities to leverage social media to its full potential. Accordingly, there is a pressing need for social marketers to better understand optimal approaches when utilising social media platforms so as to encourage engagement that leads to long-term relationships with target audiences. In light of this gap in the existing literature, the aim of this systematic literature review is to identify and describe the use of social media in creating participants' engagement in various social marketing programmes conducted worldwide between 2005 and 2017.

## **Methods**

This systematic literature review followed PRISMA guidelines, as outlined in Moher et al. (2009) and Liberati et al. (2009). A search was conducted in June 2017 to identify 31 articles describing 29 different social marketing programmes published between 2005 and 2017, retrieved from nine different databases: EBSCO Host (all databases),

Emerald, Expanded Academic ASAP, Informit Search (multiple databases), Ovid (all databases), ProQuest (all databases), ScienceDirect, Scopus, and Web of Science.

The most comprehensive set of search terms was identified based on various scholars' identifications of different types of social media (Dooley et al., 2014; Mandiberg, 2014; Sterne, 2010), and terms used in a previous social marketing systematic literature review (Kubacki et al., 2015b). The terms included:

digital\* OR online\* OR internet\* OR mobile\* OR "social media\*" OR "social network\*" OR "collaborative project\*" OR blog\* OR "content communit\*" OR "online communit\*" OR "online support group\*" OR "virtual world\*" OR "discussion board\*" OR "discussion forum\*"

AND

intervention\* OR "randomi?ed controlled trial" OR evaluation OR trial OR campaign\* OR program\* OR study OR studies

AND

"social marketing"

The use of question marks (?) in database searches allows for both British and American spelling to be identified and included, so no articles are omitted on account of spelling differences. Moreover, the use of asterisks (\*) allows for different search term endings, such as singular and plural forms. In each database, the search was limited to English language, peer-reviewed, full article texts that were available online. Abstracts, article titles, keywords, and subjects were examined to identify all records that matched the above-mentioned search terms. A total of 802 studies were retrieved (see Table 1 for details).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

All downloaded records were collated using Endnote, and 326 duplicate records were removed. The researchers then reviewed the titles, keywords, and abstracts of the remaining 476 articles, and excluded 452 references that included non-English-language articles, non-peer-reviewed records, records that did not self-identify as social marketing, records that did not report the use of interactive social media, conceptual studies, theoretical studies, methodological studies, review studies, or formative studies. Twenty-four unique studies remained following the application of all exclusion criteria (see Figure 1 for a flowchart).

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Backward and forward searching were used to identify any studies that might have been missed in the systematic literature review search. Backward searching was completed by examining the reference lists of the 24 studies for further sources that may have provided additional information regarding studies that potentially fit the search criteria. The identified sources were located and examined in the same way as the original records, through abstracts, article titles, keywords, and subject analyses. Forward searching was conducted using author and intervention names to search within Google Scholar to locate additional studies related to specific programmes, as well as additional studies undertaken by the authors. The backward and forward searches yielded seven additional studies, yielding a total of 31 social marketing studies for analysis (see Figure

1). All identified relevant excerpts were reviewed by two researchers to extract information related to the use of at least one social media platform.

### **Findings and discussion**

The findings section begins with an overview of the identified programmes followed by communication strategies on social media and their effectiveness, and concludes with an assessment of social media engagement.

#### *Programme overview*

Thirty-one studies were identified in this review, covering 29 different social marketing programmes, with four articles covering two programmes (Evans-Lacko et al., 2013; Sampogna et al., 2017) and (Tobey and Manore, 2014; Tobey et al., 2016) (see Table 2). The majority of the identified programmes were conducted in developed countries, including the United States (n=17), Canada (n=2), Australia (n=2), the United Kingdom (n=2), and other European countries (n=2). The remaining programmes were conducted in China (Liu et al., 2016), Mexico (Picazo-Vela et al., 2016), and Turkey (Purdy, 2011). Only one programme did not specify the location (Taubenheim et al., 2008). The programmes targeted a diverse range of audiences. The most commonly targeted age group were adults (12 programmes); specific communities, such as Hispanic cancer survivors (Justice-Gardiner et al., 2012), gay communities (Adam et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2016), and pregnant African American women (Kennedy et al., 2013) were also targeted.

All the identified programmes were conducted between 2007 and 2016, with varying durations, except for one programme, which was based on an interactive website along with other social media platforms, that was created in 1998 (Nicholas, 2010), and another that did not specify the time of delivery (James et al., 2013). The programmes covered a variety of health and social issues. Twenty-five programmes focused on health-related issues, such as promoting testing for HIV and Chlamydia (Adam et al., 2016; Friedman et al., 2014); promoting health-related products such as condoms, sun protection, and respiratory protective devices (Liu et al., 2016; Purdy, 2011; Pounds et al., 2014; Potente et al., 2011); aiming to reduce alcohol consumption (Atkinson et al., 2011; Thompson et al., 2012); promoting organ donation (Brzeziński and Klikowicz, 2015); promoting health knowledge such as preconception, heart disease, and vaccination (Dixon-Gray et al., 2013; Taubenheim et al., 2008; La Torre et al., 2014); promoting a healthy lifestyle (increasing physical activity, or addressing obesity, eating habits, prevention of type 2 diabetes) (Woolley and Peterson, 2012; Frerichs et al., 2015; Gase et al., 2015; George et al., 2016; James et al., 2013; Khurshid et al., 2015; Picazo-Vela et al., 2016; Rogers et al., 2017, Tobey and Manore, 2014); promoting health resources (tobacco quit-line, mental health resources, and cancer survivors health resources) (Kennedy et al., 2013; Nicholas, 2010; Justice-Gardiner et al., 2012); and preventing drug abuse (Macario et al., 2013). Only four programmes covered social issues, such as reducing stigma and discrimination against individuals with mental health issues (Evans-Lacko et al., 2013; Sampogna et al., 2017), reducing stigma against LGBT individuals (Adam et al., 2011; Hull et al., 2017), and reducing adolescent dating abuse (Lambert et al., 2014).

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

#### *Communication strategy on social media and its effectiveness*

The most commonly used social media platform was Facebook (n=23) (e.g., Adam et al., 2016; Dixon-Gray et al., 2013; Evans-Lacko et al., 2013; Sampogna et al., 2017; Kennedy et al., 2013), followed by YouTube (n=13) (e.g., Atkinson et al., 2011; Brzeziński and Klikowicz, 2015; Picazo-Vela et al., 2016), Twitter (n=11) (e.g., Brzeziński and Klikowicz, 2015; Lambert et al., 2014), and blogs (n=7) (e.g., Atkinson et al., 2011; Macario et al., 2013). Other platforms were also used in 15 programmes, such as discussion boards, community forums, and interactive websites (n=7) (e.g., Adam et al., 2011; George et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2016); mobile applications (n=3) (e.g., James et al., 2013; Khurshid et al., 2015); MySpace (n=3) (e.g., Dixon-Gray et al., 2013; Nicholas, 2010); Pinterest (n=2) (Lambert et al., 2014; Tobey and Manore, 2014); Flickr (n=2) (Lambert et al., 2014; Purdy, 2011); Instagram (n=1) (Brzeziński and Klikowicz, 2015); and social bookmarking (n=1) (Taubenheim et al., 2008). Only one programme did not specify which social media platforms were used (Gase et al., 2015).

Fifteen programmes did not develop specific content that suited the nature of social media, and simply utilised social media to connect with their audiences while relying on the same content as that used in traditional media. For instance, Dixon-Gray et al. (2013) mentioned that social media were mainly used to promote their radio campaign through posting their radio episodes on Facebook and MySpace. However, fourteen studies developed media content specifically for social media platforms. This content included the following categories: informational content (n=11), such as articles related to news, laws, promotion, and press releases (e.g., La Torre et al., 2014); videos (n=11) (e.g., Atkinson et al., 2011); graphics, images, or visuals (n=9) (e.g., Brzeziński and Klikowicz, 2015); recruitment of consumers as advocates (n=3) (e.g., Evans-Lacko et al., 2013); gaming (n=3) (e.g., Adam et al., 2011; Friedman et al., 2014; Nicholas, 2010); social posts (n=2), such as social marketers interacting with consumers during programme events (e.g., Brzeziński and Klikowicz, 2015); widgets (n=1) (Taubenheim et al., 2008); and paid advertisements (n=1) (Woolley and Peterson, 2012).

The effectiveness of social media communication was evaluated and reported in 24 studies. These can be further categorised into awareness and interaction measures (n=24) and conversion measures (n=12). Awareness and interaction measures included the number of views (n=16) (Evans-Lacko et al., 2013; Frerichs et al., 2015; Sampogna et al., 2017); likes (n=11) (Liu et al., 2016; Rogers et al., 2017); fans, friends, or followers (n=10) (James et al., 2013; Justice-Gardiner et al., 2012; Woolley and Peterson, 2012); comments (n=10) (George et al., 2016; Hull et al., 2017); and shares or re-tweets (n=9) (La Torre et al., 2014; Picazo-Vela et al., 2016). Conversion measures included a subscription to a website or blog (n=12) (James et al., 2013; Justice-Gardiner et al., 2012); taking action such as signing declarations for organ donations after death (Brzeziński and Klikowicz, 2015), contacting a health professional (Nicholas, 2010), increase in sales (n=5) (Brzeziński and Klikowicz, 2015; Friedman et al., 2014; Nicholas, 2010; Purdy, 2011); and ordering promotional items (n=1) (Brzeziński and Klikowicz, 2015).

Of the 24 studies that evaluated social media effectiveness, 22 reported that social media effectively impacted their programmes. For example, Evans-Lacko et al. (2013) mentioned that regular updating and use of a variety of content, including information content, pictures, and links, were effective in maintaining communication with their existing social media followers, as well as in reaching new audiences. Similarly,



Brzeziński and Klikowicz (2015) explained that developing two-way communication through social media was associated with contributing to the main objective of their programme – i.e., increasing the number of people who signed a declaration of intent to donate organs. However, two programmes reported that although their communication attracted audiences at the beginning of the programme, this decreased over time (Atkinson et al., 2011; Picazo-Vela et al., 2016). Atkinson et al. (2011) explained that the content used on social media negatively impacted the effectiveness of social media and resulted in audiences' rejection of the programme. However, they also indicated that they had not developed an appropriate social media strategy, stating, "in the rush to incorporate the Internet in the health promotion portfolio, little consideration has been given to the content of online interventions, and the research base that should inform it" (p. 464).

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

### *The use of social media to create engagement*

Further analysis of the use of social media was guided by the customer engagement cycle described by Sashi (2012) to assess the use of social media in creating consumer engagement in social marketing programmes. Sashi (2012) distinguished between seven levels of engagement: connection, interaction, satisfaction, retention, commitment, advocacy, and engagement. These are discussed hereafter.

#### Connection

According to Sashi (2012), connection refers to interactions that aim to establish a connection between marketers and consumers. Various scholars have pointed out the viral nature of social media that allows messages to transmit rapidly from one individual to another (Gamble and Gilmore, 2013; Men and Tsai, 2014; Miller, 2013). In the identified programmes, social media were used to increase reach with target audiences (n=27), disseminate information (n=13), and drive traffic to the programmes' websites (n=8). For example, in Dixon-Gray et al.'s (2013) study, social media were used to reach their target audiences. Specifically, they used social media to promote a radio campaign, as well as to provide additional information about the programme. Justice-Gardiner et al. (2012) utilised social media to increase awareness about their programme, and provide outreach information to a difficult-to-reach segment (i.e., Hispanic cancer survivors), their families, and their providers.

#### Interaction

Interaction, according to Sashi (2012), allows for a continuous dialogue with consumers. Sixteen programmes used social media to facilitate some form of interaction between social marketers and their target audiences, as well as between audiences and their peers. For example, Atkinson et al. (2011) indicated that social media were primarily used to engage youth in peer-to-peer conversations about the negative consequences of binge drinking. In addition, Brzeziński and Klikowicz (2015) and Tobey and Manore (2014) highlighted the significance of two-way communication in building communities, in which discussions aimed to facilitate the formulation of opinions and encourage consumers to act. Moreover, Nicholas (2010) explained that by establishing a "supportive community", audiences become more comfortable addressing problems and seeking help (p. 87). He also pointed out that audiences value social media for their ability to encourage self-expression, stating, "people are increasingly looking to the internet to express themselves creatively and to document

and share personal experiences” (p 87). Moreover, Taubenheim et al. (2008) explained the importance of social media interaction to support social marketing programmes, commenting that social media “have helped to humanize a serious issue surrounded in an atmosphere of social support and concern” (p. 65).

### Satisfaction

Satisfaction in Sashi’s (2012) cycle is understood as an intermediate stage that is essential for consumers to stay connected, continue to interact, and progress towards engagement. Some scholars have also referred to this as sentiment (Gordon, 2012; Lipschultz, 2014; Sterne, 2010). Gordon (2012) explained that beyond quantitative data that can be measured, such as likes and shares, qualitative insights about sentiment could be measured through the analysis of comments to gain a richer understanding. Moreover, quantitative sentiment analysis on social media could also be obtained using automatic tools that are capable of extracting subjective information from texts in natural languages to capture opinions and feelings (Pozzi et al., 2017).

Only six programmes measured consumer satisfaction with social media content (Adam et al., 2011; Atkinson et al., 2011; James et al., 2013; Macario et al., 2013; Potente et al., 2011; Woolley and Peterson, 2012). Satisfaction was measured through a range of different methods, such as analysing audience comments (Adam et al., 2011; Atkinson et al., 2011; James et al., 2013), rating blog posts (Macario et al., 2013), and surveys (Potente et al., 2011; Woolley and Peterson, 2012). James et al. (2013) and Macario et al. (2013) highlighted social media’s importance in allowing social marketers to gain insights into consumers’ reactions to the information and behaviour change intentions from analysing comments.

### Retention and commitment

Retention can result either from overall satisfaction over time or highly positive emotions (Sashi, 2012), while commitment can result from both loyalty, resulting from a rational decision (such as a lack of choice or switching costs), and delight, resulting from emotional bond and trust (Sashi, 2012). Five programmes involved mechanisms for supporting and measuring their target audiences’ ability to revisit their social media communications. For example, Adam et al. (2011) and Macario et al. (2013) observed that audience members who subscribed to their programs’ social media platforms tended to retain their subscriptions. In addition, Brzeziński and Klikowicz (2015) indicated that social media posts encouraged consumers to visit and register their participation in the programme via the programme’s website. However, two programmes encountered a decline in viewership over time (Atkinson et al., 2011; Picazo-Vela et al., 2016). For example, Picazo-Vela et al. (2016) explained that although increases in the number of people joining their Facebook page was evident in the first three months, people subsequently started to unfollow their page. However, none of the programmes reported their audiences’ commitment to the programme.

### Advocacy and engagement

Advocacy occurs when delighted consumers interact with others in their social networks to spread the word about their positive experiences (Sashi, 2012). Engagement occurs when consumers are both delighted and loyal (committed), and have strong emotional bonds, along with relational exchanges, with organisations. Consumer engagement expands the role of consumers by including them in the value-adding process as advocates and co-creators of value (Sashi, 2012). Three programmes

aimed at establishing a higher level of engagement with target audiences by having them participate as advocates for the campaign activities, such as creating campaign communications (Liu et al., 2016; Macario et al., 2013) or initiating conversations with their network to advocate for the campaign (Evans-Lacko et al., 2013). For example, Liu et al. (2016) explained that participants were recruited via social media through an open contest to develop an informational video. Finally, consumers of one programme were further encouraged to engage in creating the programme's activities (Evans-Lacko et al., 2013). In this programme, Evans-Lacko et al. (2013) explained that their objective behind using social media was to drive target consumers to action, such as helping to organise a local event focusing on engaging the community or organisations in fighting stigma and discrimination toward people with mental health problems.

### **Conclusions, limitations, and future research**

This research employed systematic literature review procedures to identify and describe the use of social media in creating participants' engagement in various social marketing programmes. The most commonly used platform was Facebook, followed by YouTube, Twitter, and blogs. Although the interactive nature of social media offers a variety of communication opportunities (Brzeziński and Klikowicz, 2015; Moorhead et al., 2013; La Torre et al., 2014; Westberg et al., 2018), less than half of the assessed programmes reported creating content that was specific for their communication via social media. The most commonly shared content type was information-based content and videos, followed by images. Some programmes also used online games, consumer recruitment, social posts, widgets, and paid advertisements. James et al. (2013) and Picazo-Vela et al. (2016) have emphasised the importance of developing content that is relevant to audiences. James et al. (2013) stated that poor content impacted the effectiveness of their messages, and improving the content affected audiences' reactions to their social marketing programme. Indeed, Pang and Kubacki (2015) stated that one of the key challenges facing social marketing campaigns lies in executing messages that are linked to their audiences' lives, with many organisations adopting "purely theoretical and abstract" concepts and ideas that may not resonate with audiences, thus minimising the effectiveness of social marketing messages as reminders or warnings (p. 92).

The effectiveness of social media communication was evaluated in the majority of programmes based on the number of views, followed by likes, fans, and traffic to the programmes' websites. Sterne (2010) explained that these measures are used to assess awareness through social media communication, while other measures could assess "engagement, persuasion, conversion and retention" (p. 15), such as second-degree impressions, sentiment, number of interactions, and conversions to purchases. Similarly, Gordon (2012) distinguished between four types of measures – see, say, feel, and do – to assess social media communication effectiveness. Other scholars emphasised the importance of measuring interaction through the "content the user spends time creating" (Lipschultz, 2014 p. 108), "customer sharing", and "authentic insights" (Miller, 2013, p. 89).

Various characteristics of social media, such as their potential regarding bilateral communication, interaction, and content creation, make them distinct from traditional media, and highlight the increasing importance of such platforms for social marketers to engage with their target audiences. Although social media have been shown to be effective in reaching large audiences inexpensively (Dooley et al., 2014; Gamble and Gilmore, 2013; Korda and Itani, 2013), they can be particularly useful to social

marketers attempting to build lasting relationships with their target audiences and are effective in fostering long-term behavioural change (Bannor et al., 2017; Chen and Shi, 2015; Korda and Itani, 2013; Luxton et al., 2012; Neiger et al., 2012, 2013; Webb et al., 2010). All the social marketing programmes included in this review used social media primarily to connect with target audiences, raise awareness, and reach less accessible populations (Dixon-Gray et al., 2013; Justice-Gardiner et al., 2012). Furthermore, our findings indicate that only half of these programmes used social media to interact with target consumers (Atkinson et al., 2011), encourage peer-to-peer discussions (James et al., 2013; Macario et al., 2013), and form communities in which opinions and values were commonly shared and diffused to others (Brzeziński and Klikowicz, 2015). In addition, only a handful of studies in this review reported using social media to facilitate satisfaction, retention, commitment, or advocacy.

Although all the identified programmes recognised the effectiveness of social media in engaging audiences, most of them used social media for one-way messaging, in a similar way to traditional media. Social media's main advantages include their ability to facilitate ongoing interaction between social marketers, target audiences, and others in the audiences' networks, and in providing means for audiences to produce their own content (Coulson, 2013; Gamble and Gilmore, 2013; Sashi, 2012), act as advocates (Neiger et al., 2013; Sashi, 2012), and engage as partners to the organisation (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Coulson, 2013; Gamble and Gilmore, 2013; Neiger et al., 2013; Sashi, 2012). However, such potential has not been fully utilised by social marketing programmes to date.

This systematic literature review was limited by the inclusion and exclusion criteria employed in the process. For example, all included studies were self-identified as social marketing studies. However, there might be other studies that have reported the use of social media and marketing tools and techniques, which may not self-identify as social marketing studies. Therefore, future reviews should consider broadening their focus to include other behaviour change and public health interventions that report on the use of social media marketing. For instance, the use of additional search terms such as "behaviour change", "health promotion" and "health communication" could yield additional results. Further, the analysis detailed in this review was limited by the information provided in the identified studies. It was not possible to ascertain whether reporting on the use of social media in different programmes included all relevant information, which may have led to under-reporting. Moreover, there is an opportunity for further reviews to focus on the use of social media in social marketing programmes that have not been reported in peer-reviewed journal articles, yet have been reported in market research or government and industry reports. Further reviews could also focus on programmes that can be observed and analysed, focusing on some of the key indicators included in this study, while they are being delivered. Finally, future researchers could also examine the use of the latest technologies in building engagement in social marketing. For instance, the use of augmented reality, virtual reality, gamification, and mobile applications could be investigated to identify the best practices for promoting consumer engagement in social marketing programmes.

### **Practical implications**

The findings of this study could be utilised in future social marketing programs using social media to create consumer engagement. While the evidence base continues to grow, several different strategies can be used to address the limitations identified in this

review. For example, social marketers should customise social media messages accounting for users' characteristics, their information preferences, and their preferred social media platforms to enable the generation of unique and platform-specific content (Korda and Itani, 2013; Luxton et al., 2012; Sashi, 2012; Westberg et al., 2018). Despite the differences between social media and traditional media, the current study clearly indicates that content created for traditional media is often reused on social media. Therefore, more effort needs to be made to create content specifically for communication via social media to better utilise the interactive and communal nature of this medium. The current study highlights the significance of creating interactive communication that entices consumers to engage with social media content and initiates dialogic exchange. As social media provide micro-targeting opportunities, unique content should be developed for specific target audiences and platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram) to take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by different social media platforms, supplementing basic provision of information to encourage two-way communication and formation of communities.

Being the first study in social marketing to employ Sashi's (2012) customer engagement cycle framework to assess consumer engagement with social marketing campaigns via social media, this research sheds light on activities on social media that could provide social marketers with the opportunity to better engage with consumers. For example, having a programme's campaign go viral on social media will help raising awareness, and establishing a connection between the social marketers and their audience; however, interaction can be attained by encouraging conversations among target audiences and marketers. Moreover, social media can facilitate assessment of consumers' satisfaction through sentiment analysis of their posts and comments, or through surveys. Consumers' retainment to the programmes' communication and their commitment to the programmes are important factors for maintaining an enduring relationship with consumers. Furthermore, social media offer the opportunity for crowdsourcing and recruitment of active consumers to advocate for the programmes' causes. Finally, engagement with programmes can be driven using social media by involving consumers in creating programmes' activities and designs both online and offline (Evans-Lacko et al., 2013).

This study also highlights the importance of building relationships with consumers through engaging them in social marketing programs using social media, while articulating practices on social media that could be applied to attain a variety of engagement levels beyond basic connections (including interaction, satisfaction, retention, commitment, and advocacy). Social media users should be better utilised as partners and advocates, not just passive recipients of information. Finally, the findings of this study suggest that the effectiveness of social media communication was often evaluated using the numbers of views, likes, fans and website traffic. However, different levels of engagement can be assessed using, for example, second-degree impressions, user satisfaction and sentiment, number of interactions, sharing and co-creating behaviours, to ensure a better understanding of the diverse nature of engagement in social marketing programs via social media.

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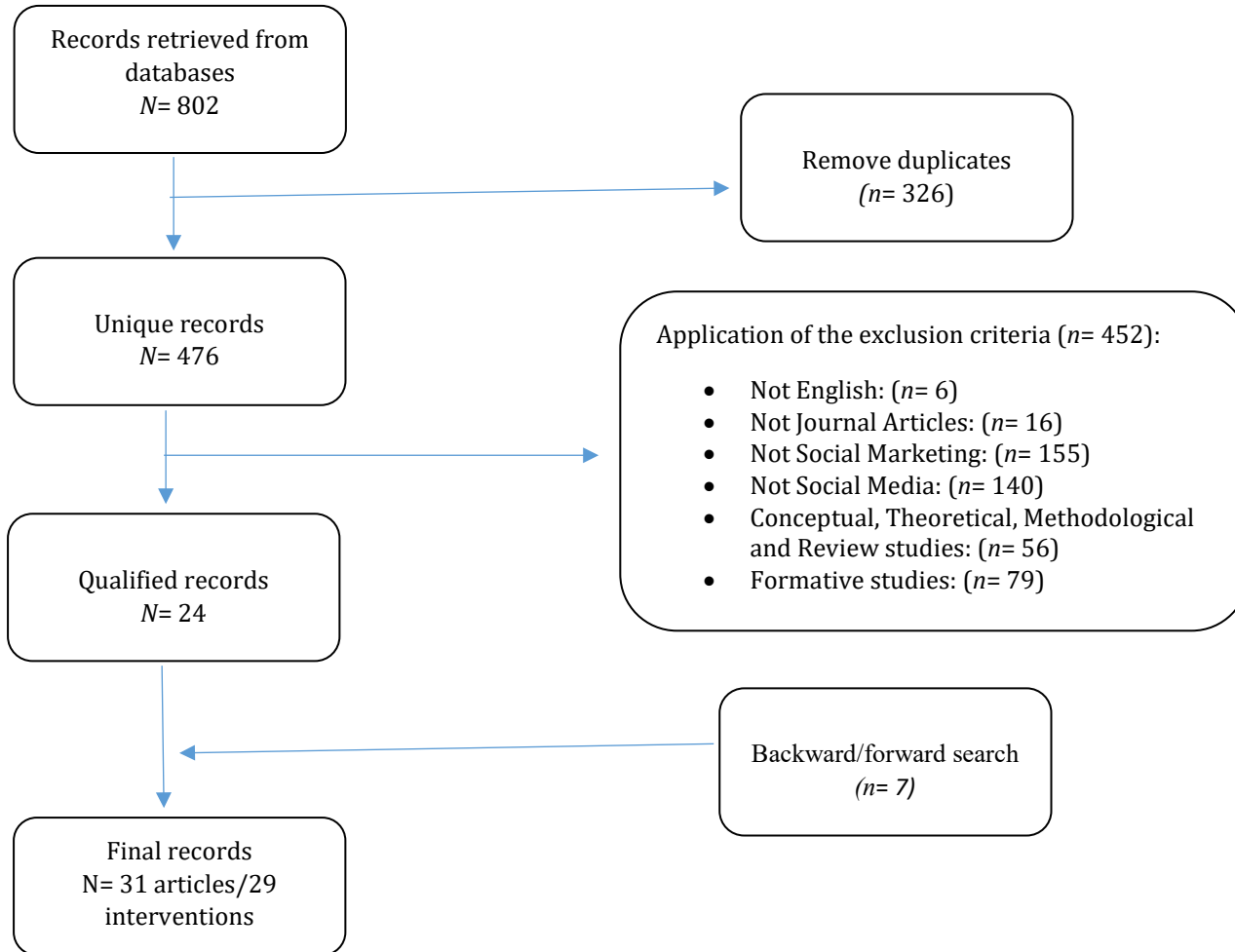
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**Table 1: Search results**

<b>Databases</b>	<b>#Abs</b>	<b>#Title</b>	<b>#Sub /Key</b>	<b>Total</b>
EBSCO Host (all databases)	23	2	11	33*
Emerald	0	0	0	0
Expanded Academic	3	1	12	13*
Informit Search (multiple databases)	0	0	0	0
Ovid (all databases)	95	30	6	131*
ProQuest (all databases)	73	2	25	95*
ScienceDirect	0	0	0	0
Scopus	365			365
Web of Science	N/A	4	165	165*
<b>Total</b>				<b>802</b>

\*Duplicates are automatically removed by the database system

**Figure 1: Flowchart of the literature search process**



**Table 2: Programme overview**

#	Program	Location	Intervention Year	Target Audience	Intervention Objective
1	HIV Testing (Adam et al., 2016)	Canada	2011-2012	Gay community	Promote HIV Testing
2	The Morning after the night before (Atkinson et al., 2011)	UK	2009-2010	18-24y	Reduce alcohol consumption
3	Statement of intent for organ donation (Brzezinski & Klikowicz, 2015)	Europe	2010-2014	18-35y	Promote organ donation
4	Love and Hate (Dixon-Gray et al., 2013)	US	2009-2010	18-29y, born in US & Latin decedents	Increase preconception health knowledge
5 a&b	England's Time to change (Evans-Lacko et al., 2013; Sampogna et al., 2017)	UK	2009-2011	20s-40s	Reduce mental health related stigma and discrimination
6	Salud ABLÉ Omaha (Frerichs et al., 2015)	US	2011-2013	Midwestern Latino community - Youth and Parents	Address obesity
7	Choose Less, Weigh Less portion (Gase et al., 2015)	US	2012-2013	N/A	Reduce meals' portion sizes
8	Our Health is in our Hands (George et al., 2016)	US	2011-2013	18-64y. Black or Hispanic	Reduce obesity and increase prevention of type 2 diabetes
9	Acceptance Journeys (Hull et al., 2017)	US	2011-2015	30+y. Black	Reduce stigma against LGBT
10	4-Day throw-away (James et al., 2013)	US	N/A	19-40y with children 10ys or younger	Raise awareness about the recommended storage time for leftovers

11	LiveStrong (Justice-Gardiner et al., 2012)	US	2009	Hispanic/Latino Cancer Survivors	Increase usage of cancer navigation resources
12	One Tiny Reason to Quit (Kennedy et al., 2013)	US	2009-2011	18-45y. Pregnant African American women	Promote tobacco quit-line
13	Text4health (Khurshid et al., 2015)	US	2012-2012	18-44y. Low-income, African Americans	Prevention of type 2 diabetes
14	The Italian Alliance for Vaccination (La Torre et al., 2014)	Europe	2012-2013	Italian healthcare workers	Promote vaccination
15	BMJ Open (Liu et al., 2016)	China	2015-2016	16+y. MSM	Reduce risk of HIV
16	Reach Out (Nicholas, 2010)	Australia	1998	16-25y	Encourage help seeking for mental health problems
17	Puebla Sana (Healthy Puebla) (Picazo-Vela et al., 2016)	Mexico	2011-2012	Youth in urban areas	Promote good health habits
18	Smart Farmers Wear Masks (Pounds et al., 2014)	US	2012-2013	Farmers	Promote farmers' respiratory protective device
19	Fiesta Online (Purdy, 2011)	Turkey	2009-2010	N/A	Encourage condom use
20	The Bigger Picture (Rogers et al., 2017)	US	2013-2015	High school children	Preventing type 2 diabetes
21	The Heart Truth (Taubenheim et al., 2008)	N/A	2007-2008	40–60y women	Increase awareness of heart disease
22	Before One More (Thompson et al., 2012)	US	2010	Undergraduate college students	Reduce high-risk drinking
23 a & b	Food Hero (Tobey and Manore, 2014; Tobey et al., 2016)	US	2009-2009	18+y Low income mothers	Improve family fruit and vegetables intake

24	Hivstigma.com (Adam et al., 2011)	Canada	2008-2009	Gay men	Reduce stigma against gay and bisexual men
25	Get Yourself Tested (Friedman et al., 2014)	US	2009-2011	15-25y. Sexually active women & partners	Promote chlamydia screening
26	Keep it strong (Lambert et al., 2014)	US	2010-2012	11-14y	Reduce adolescent dating abuse
27	NIDA (Macario et al., 2013)	US	2009-2011	Teens	Promote prevention of drug abuse
28	It's a beautiful day for cancer (Potente et al., 2011)	Australia	2008-2009	14-24y	Promote prevention of skin cancer
29	Get up and do something (Woolley & Peterson, 2012)	US	2009	18+	Increase physical activity





8	Our Health is in our Hands (George et al., 2016)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓							✓				✓		
9	Acceptance Journeys (Hull et al., 2017)	✓					✓									✓	✓	✓		
10	4-Day throw-away (James et al., 2013)	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓			✓	✓	
11	LiveStrong (Justice-Gardiner et al., 2012)	✓	✓				✓								✓				✓	
12	One Tiny Reason to Quit (Kennedy et al., 2013)	✓					✓													
13	Text4health (Khurshid et al., 2015)	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓												
14	The Italian Alliance for Vaccination (La Torre et al., 2014)	✓					✓								✓	✓	✓			
15	BMJ Open (Liu et al., 2016)					✓	✓	✓				✓				✓	✓			
16	Reach Out (Nicholas, 2010)			✓		✓	✓	✓						✓					✓	✓
17	Puebla Sana (Healthy Puebla) (Picazo-Vela et al., 2016)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓					✓		✓			
18	Smart Farmers Wear Masks (Pounds et al., 2014)			✓																
19	Fiesta Online (Purdy, 2011)	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓		✓		✓	✓	✓

20	The Bigger Picture (Rogers et al., 2017)	✓	✓				✓							✓	✓					
21	The Heart Truth (Taubenheim et al., 2008)	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
22	Before One More (Thompson et al., 2012)	✓					✓							✓					✓	
23 a& b	Food Hero (Tobey and Manore, 2014; Tobey et al., 2016)	✓	✓	□		✓	✓	✓							✓		✓	✓	✓	
24	hivstigma.com (Adam et al., 2011)				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓				✓	✓	
25	Get Yourself Tested (Friedman et al., 2014)	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓							✓	✓			✓	✓
26	Keep it strong (Lambert et al., 2014)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓						✓		✓	✓		✓	
27	NIDA (Macario et al., 2013)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	✓	
28	It's a beautiful day for cancer (Potente et al., 2011)	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓		✓	✓		
29	Get up and do something (Woolley and Peterson, 2012)	✓					✓		✓					✓	✓					