

# **Social Marketing for Social Change: The Case of Egyptian Social Marketing Campaign on Parental Behavior**

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## **Abstract**

Social marketing would improve overall health, boost awareness, and cause behavioural changes. This paper is the first paper to present the effect of a social marketing campaign, undertaken by the Egyptian government, in addressing parental behavior. The nature of this work is exploratory in nature, following a qualitative approach. The authors collected data in two consecutive phases: 1) In-depth interviews were held with social marketing experts who are in charge of this campaign 2) In-depth interviews were conducted with parents that marketers consider to be from their target audience because they have children who fall in the target's age range. The study assesses the response of parents to this social marketing campaign and serves as a foundation for further research and discussion on social marketing discipline.

**Key words:** Behavioural change; Positive parenting; Social impact

## **1. Social Marketing and Behavioral Change**

Keeping girls in schools in developing countries, inducing parents to stop abusing their children, assisting teens resist smoking and implementing awareness campaigns for family planning are all examples of social marketing initiatives to influence and change certain behaviors (Harvey, 1999). Social marketing is a multifaceted and ever-evolving field that is well positioned to affect social change (Dibb, 2014; French & Gordon, 2020; Gordon et al., 2016; Lee & Kotler, 2019). The main objective of social marketing is to influence behaviour and attitude, but not to promote idea (Andreasen, 1994). Although “public sector marketing” is the umbrella word for this type of marketing, when referring to voluntary behaviour modification for the benefit of an individual or society as a whole, the phrase “social marketing” is preferred (Grier and Bryant, 2005). According to Spotswood et al. (2021), Social marketing is still a useful tool for planning and conducting intervention programmes aimed at changing people's behaviour for the development of their individual and society health and well-being (Carins & Rundle-Thiele, 2014; Gordon, Zainuddin, & Magee, 2016).

Furthermore, social marketing can be applied to national and even global issues; it is about changing behaviors, attitudes or beliefs to create societal change. Social marketing is fundamentally political, particularly when undertaken by public sector entities, such as policies and ideologies. Accordingly, the decision for what values to be changed or redeveloped needs

to be questioned and analyzed for its political importance and assumption of public approval (O'Shaughnessy, 1996). Scholars agree that social marketing should not only be concerned with human's behaviour change, but also should extend investigations to the social and environmental factors that perpetuate and lead to such behaviour. This can be attained by examining the environmental factors, which is a macro level approach of horizontal and vertical intervention (Manoff, 1985). Citizens may take control of their own behaviour change exchanges and become change agents. Social marketing is mostly used to try to impact individual-level behaviour change or a "habit". It infers that individuals can change since they are in control of themselves and with smart and well-structured processing will choose to enhance their behaviour. However, many individuals are not fully aware or may lack the cognitive rationality in certain incidents to come up with logical choices.

The purpose of Baptista et al. (2021) study is to conceptualize the possible positive contribution of social support to social marketing as a tool for behaviour modification. Although various techniques have been proposed for efficient social marketing, there are considerable consensus in the literature that three primary aspects are fundamental to social marketing: the exchange principle, a consumer-centered approach, and a long-term focus. People's behaviours are based on subjective cost-benefit analysis and the evaluation of alternatives, according to social exchange theory. As a result, social marketers must create strong incentives by stressing how the advantages of their goods surpass the related costs (Luca & Suggs, 2013; Baptista et al., 2020). According to Grier and Bryant (2005), social marketing is a consumer-centered, research-driven approach to encouraging voluntary behaviour change in a target population, which means that people's needs, values, and preferences are assessed and considered before a behaviour change strategy is chosen, planned, and implemented (Baptista et al., 2020). A long-term focus in social marketing indicates that interventions are planned, and that behaviour modification can be sustained over time (Glenane-Antoniadis et al., 2003).

## 2. Social Marketing and Parental Behaviour Change

According to Latipah et al. (2020), the family is the smallest unit that, via parenting, plays a critical role in the education of children. Parenting is defined as any acts that are part of a continuous process of interaction that influence not only the kid, but also the parents, and are carried out by adults to children from the time they are born until they reach maturity in order to protect, teach, punish, and offer guidance. To prevent intolerance in pre-school children, sustained good parenting must be done in the home, school, and community.

Children's growth is heavily influenced by the kind of parenting they get. An "encouraging parenting style," according to Silburn et al. (1996), is linked to significantly decreased incidence of mental illness in children. From birth until maturity, parents have a wide variety of influence on their children's lives (Bibi et al. 2013). Children are the most significant stage of a person's life (Caucutt & Lochner, 2020).

Over the last two decades, researchers have looked at the parenting methods that help or hinder parents' ability to maintain sensitive harmonization to an adolescent's dynamically

changing needs (Smetana 2017), but no study had been designed to illustrate the effect of a social marketing campaign on parental behaviour, especially in Egypt.

The current study is developed to present the effect of an Egyptian social marketing campaign undertaken by the government in addressing parental behavior. This article is focusing on the effect of “CALM-NOT-HARM” social marketing campaign that was developed in Egypt in October 2019 under the auspices of the ministry of education and technical education, the National Council of Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

### **2.1. Positive Parenting “Calm-not-Harm”**

Egypt has witnessed a tremendous development in social marketing campaigns especially during the years from 2018 till present. The campaigns aired included, but not limited to, bullying and misbehavior, anti-drugs, healthy lives, and birth control. Most of these campaigns were developed by the Egyptian government across various ministries including, the ministry of education and technical education, the ministry of health and population and the ministry of social solidarity. These ministries have developed such social marketing campaigns while partnering with global entities, such as UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO) and other governmental entities like NCCM.

In September 2019, the Egyptian ministry of education and technical education, UNICEF and NCCM launched positive parenting campaign “Calm-not-Harm” to end violence against children. The objective of this campaign is to reinforce the ethical values and disciplines while dealing with children and to support their psychological and mental wellbeing.

According to UNICEF press release in September 2019, Children’s emotional and social developments are influenced by physiological changes along with the gender and other social traditions stereotyped by parents, friends, or the community around. For instance, in 2015, a study conducted by UNICEF and NCCM, showed that parents were the main drivers of violence, followed by peers then teachers, it was shown that half the children surveyed (ages 13-17) had been beaten in the year preceding the research. However, around 70 percent had suffered some form of emotional abuse.

### **3. Aim of the Study**

According to McKenzie-Mohr (2011), community based social marketers emphasize direct assessments of behaviour change while performing evaluations. The information gathered from the evaluation may be utilized to fine-tune the marketing plan even further. Despite the field’s impressive development of research and techniques, social marketing professionals have yet to attain the potential required for effective behavioral change work (McKenzie-Mohr & Schultz; 2014; Wymer; 2011). Although, the compelling potential that digital technologies give social marketers to co-create mutually advantageous identities, surroundings, exchanges, and behaviors, their adoption and integration have only recently been explored (Kubacki et al., 2015; Shawky et al., 2019).

Since all social marketing campaigns compete with existing behaviors or habits, it is very hard to change this misbehavior or unfavorable habit swiftly. Besides the difficulty of accepting changes in existing behaviors, many of these campaigns worldwide lack sustainable strategy. There is a major gap in the discipline's progress when it comes to openness and critical reflection on social marketing projects that do not provide the expected results (Cook et al., 2020, Akbar et al., 2021).

During the current period of the 21st century, social marketing can be considered in its growth phase, particularly in Egypt as it is the focus of this study. Yet, the social marketing field is at risk due to the following challenges lack of clear understanding about the field, there is no correlated implementation between the field and approaches to social change, limited application of social marketing in the context of positive parenting and a lack of programs to deliver a road map for others to follow.

The current study assesses the response of parents to “Calm Not Harm” social marketing campaign launched in Egypt and serves as a foundation for further research and discussion on social marketing discipline.

#### **4. Research Methodology**

The nature of this work is exploratory in nature, following a qualitative approach. This study adopted the case study research method (Yin, 2003). The choice of the case method was motivated by the fact that the study of the effect of social marketing campaign on parental behavior represents a contemporary phenomenon (context of real life). In addition, this method allows to study the phenomenon more in depth than a large-scale survey or an experimental research (Dufour, Fortin, & Hamel, 1991).

The authors collected data in two consecutive phases: 1) Interviews were held with social marketing experts who are in charge of this campaign 2) in-depth interviews were conducted with parents that marketers consider to be from their target audience because they have children who fall inside of the target age range.

There are two research questions in this study as follows:

RQ1: What is the social marketing strategy implemented in developing “Calm-not-harm” campaign?

RQ2: How impactful does “Calm-not-harm” campaign had on parents while bringing up the children?

To answer RQ1, four in-depth interviews were conducted with social marketing experts who developed the “Calm-Not-Harm” Egyptian campaign to know more about the campaign objective, key message, and the reasons of developing this campaign. Accordingly, the following questions were formulated:

<b>Table 1</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
Q1	What was your objective when developing “Calm-not-harm” campaign?
Q2	What is the key message of this campaign?
Q3	Who were you targeting in “Calm-not-harm” campaign?
Q4	What would be the most effective way to guarantee the success of any social marketing campaign?

Based on the answers of RQ1 and to answer RQ2, a set of questions were conducted with parents whose children are in the age of 8 to 15 years old. Social marketers who developed “Calm-Not-Harm” campaign consider these parents to be from their target audience. The authors conducted 30 in-depth interviews with parents to see their opinions about the Egyptian social marketing campaign “Calm-Not-Harm” and if this campaign has an impact on changing the way parents bring up their children. The following questions were asked:

<b>Table 2</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
Q1	How many children do you have? Their age? Their gender?
Q2	What is your overall opinion about the “Calm-not-harm” campaign? What are the main messages you got from the campaign?
Q3	After watching the campaign, what makes you most nervous or harsh with your children?
Q4	How can you avoid this harsh attitude? Will positive parenting campaigns help?
Q5	How does this campaign affect the way you deal with your children?
Q6	In what ways would you consider changing some of your attitudes toward your children after watching this campaign?
Q7	To what extent and impactful you think this kind of social behavior campaigns is useful to provide parents with insightful techniques while bringing up their children?

## 5. Results

A total of four interviews were conducted with social marketing experts, scholars and “Calm-Not-Harm” campaign developers to understand deeper their objective of the campaign and know further with statistics about the response of parents to “Calm Not Harm” social marketing campaign. The first interview was conducted with Mrs. Asmaa Beshir, the ex-child protection program manager at NCCM. Mrs. Beshir stated that “Calm-Not-Harm” campaign was developed according to recommendations for a research study conducted in 2015 regarding the children’s misbehavior. This study was conducted in three main governorates in Egypt, which are Cairo, Alexandria and Assuit. The results of the study has shown a positive correlation between the misbehavior of children and parents being aggressive together or with their children.

Furthermore, Mrs. Beshir mentioned that the key message for this campaign is to showcase to all caregivers, whether parents, teachers at schools or trainers at clubs, the negative consequences on children when being harsh or aggressive with children. She highlighted that even the verbal violence of parents may lead to undesirable psychological and physical state



on children. The campaign's objective is to show all caregivers better ways to calmly deal with their children. Besides, Mrs. Beshir stated that "Calm-Not-Harm" campaign is targeting all caregivers among all social classes as this problem is affecting all socio-economic classes.

The success of "Calm-Not-Harm" campaign, Mrs. Beshir added, was due to the fact that the whole campaign was based on a study conducted among parents; accordingly, the campaign was trying to provide different solutions to a problem that all caregivers are witnessing. Moreover, "Calm-Not-Harm" campaign has depended on various means of communication, such as Television commercials, social media awareness posts, radio ads and public service announcements.

Another interview was conducted with Mrs. Iman Mohsen, the child protection program director at NCCM. Mrs. Mohsen assured that "Calm-Not-Harm" campaign is a very successful one as until nowadays, which is three consecutive years after the campaign's launch, the hotline dedicated for child protection offered by NCCM is still receiving calls asking for consultancies for positive parenting. Mrs. Mohsen added "definitely with not the same frequency of the campaign launch, yet several ones are received monthly." Besides, Mrs. Mohsen added that the Egyptian ministry of education and technical education is supporting this initiative of positive parenting by providing easy access to schools to train teachers on positive behavioral interactions with students. This is done along with the workshop that are offered to parents on positive discipline at the NCCM premises on a regular basis.

Other two in-depth interviews were conducted with Mr. Jonathon Crickx, chief of communication- UNICEF Egypt, and Mrs. Hala Abu Khatwa, communication specialist-UNICEF Egypt, who confirmed that "Calm-Not-Harm" campaign main message is to highlight that violence towards children has drastic harmful consequences and that children are born totally naïve. Consequently, the way the caregivers deal with or in front of the children develop their behavior and attitude which at the end shape the community's behavior. Mr. Cricks and Mrs. Khatwa added that "Calm-Not-Harm" campaign was so powerful campaign and achieved success due to the campaign existence everywhere, on different media channels and on-ground as well through direct interaction with people in clubs and hypermarkets. They added as well that the key performance indicator (KPI) for the success of this campaign was measured by the large number of phone calls received on the hotline from parents asking about positive parenting discipline adding "the hotline dedicated for this campaign was announced in all the campaign's media communications."

Based on the answers of RQ1 highlighting that parents among all social classes were the main target for "Calm-Not-Harm" campaign and to answer RQ2, in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 parents in the age group of 32 to 44 years old and who have children in the age group from eight to 15 years old. The participants had children in both gender, boys and girls.

## **5.1: Parents' feedback on "Calm-Not-Harm" campaign**

### **Parents' opinion on the campaign**

When parents were questioned about their opinion about the campaign, most of them agreed that it is an integral one to educate parents about positive parenting as not all parents are very familiar with this concept. The majority of the participants agreed that the campaign showed the parents the kids' perspective, as many of the parents were never putting themselves in their kids' shoes. Most of the participants' opinions towards the campaign were very similar and no major differences were found according to the age, gender or social class.

### **The campaign key message**

All participants agreed that children should not be part of parents' problems. Meanwhile, parents should separate their work challenges from their family quality time. Another crucial message of the campaign that one of the participants mentioned is that parents should ensure their kids' psychological growth and mental health. Other participants perceived the campaign's key message in terms of raising awareness of caregivers on how to deal with adolescents during their sensitive ages of growth.

## **5.2: Parents' harsh attitude with their children and ways to avoid this attitude**

### **Parents' harsh attitude with their children**

The vast majority of the parents who participated in the interviews mentioned that they get nervous either when their children ignore their behavioral directions or do not obey them. Many of the participants mentioned as well that the work load stress has major impact on the way parents deal with their children, whereas a few mentioned that unorganized homes filled with toys everywhere might lead them to become nervous.

### **Advices for parents to avoid the harsh attitude**

Some parents mentioned that they follow social media pages addressing positive parenting claiming that they use social media for an average of two to three hours a day, so they invest their time and this social media tool in learning better ways that would help in bringing up their children. Others mentioned that reading books about positive parenting might help, while the majority believe that the most impactful tool to avoid being nervous from the kids is to watch several campaigns like "Calm-Not-Harm".

Other participants think that a constant following up and intervention of both the mother and the father in their kids' daily activities is the most integral as this will help them monitoring any misbehavior and be able to fix. However, few participants agreed that when parents practice activities with their children, it helps all family members to release the negative vibes.

### 5.3: “Calm-Not-Harm” campaign impact on parents

#### Ways parents consider changing in their attitude after watching the campaign

Most participants agreed that the campaign has explicitly encouraged them to always be calm with their children in order not to affect them negatively. All participants agreed that they should be patient and listen more to their children’s needs. Most of the working mothers who participated in the interviews agreed that they should devote more time for their children and never compromise their children’s needs with any workload.

#### Techniques provided to parents to utilize while bringing up their children

The majority of the participants praised “Calm-Not-Harm” campaign for providing all the audiences with a hotline number for free consultation on positive parenting. Only one participant mentioned that she has already contacted the hotline for parental consultation. They all acclaimed that the success of the campaign was so much linked to the call-to-action concept as in the ending statement of the campaign it was mentioned that “for any advices or needed consultation, you can call on 16000.”

Parents’ opinion about “Calm-Not-Harm” campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A crucial campaign to educate parents on positive parenting and how being harsh on children might deteriorate their self-esteem</li> <li>• Great deep campaign as the kids’ perspective is vital</li> <li>• Very idealistic campaign</li> <li>• I wish I could be calm all the time, but unfortunately, I lose my temper sometimes, yet this kind of campaigns help us drastically as parents</li> <li>• It’s an excellent campaign which develops opportunities to discuss critical issues in our society...</li> <li>• It’s really helpful to provide us mirror of our behavior towards children</li> </ul>
Key messages parents got from the campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children should not be part of parents’ problems</li> <li>• Parents should never shout to children just because they are struggling with other challenges</li> <li>• Parents and children should be friends</li> <li>• How to control our reaction towards our kids in order to ensure healthy mental and psychological growth</li> <li>• Increase awareness of caregivers on how to deal with adolescents during the critical age of growth</li> </ul>
Parents’ are harsh/ nervous with their children when	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children neglect or ignore their parents’ behavioral directions</li> <li>• All the time I am trying to explain why I am doing a single action or behavior or why I am preventing them from doing something, but they never obey my words regardless that my son is smart enough to understand me</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children do not obey us or lose their manners</li> <li>• Loaded with work and find messy homes from the kids' toys</li> <li>• Children consume a lot of time in doing the minor things of the daily routine, such as brushing teeth, waking up...etc.</li> </ul>
<p>Ways to avoid this harsh attitude</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow on social media the pages addressing positive parenting</li> <li>• Read more about positive parenting</li> <li>• Watch various positive parenting campaigns as it impacts the parents drastically</li> <li>• Parents should be more patient</li> <li>• Learn more about positive parenting either through reading, watching movies or campaigns related to this topic. Media affect our life and the way we think so it will help all parents a lot</li> <li>• A constant intervention of both the mother and the father and always be kind to our kids and each other definitely</li> <li>• Try to do outdoor activities all together as a family to release any negative energy</li> <li>• If I am not so stressed, I will definitely be calmer</li> <li>• By discussing the reasons behind any problem</li> </ul>
<p>The impact of “Calm-Not-Harm” campaign on parents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It helped in showing parents how their children are seeing the situation from the children's perspectives</li> <li>• Parents should consider the children's inner peace</li> <li>• It affected parents greatly as most of us are now aware of the positive parenting concept</li> <li>• Parents have to stop their nervous attitude towards their children and start to think from the kids' perspective</li> <li>• It showed me what is happening behind the scenes when I got nervous from my kid.</li> <li>• It encouraged me to self-control my reactions without negatively or unintentionally affecting my child</li> </ul>
<p>Ways parents consider changing in their attitude after watching the campaign</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents should control their anxiety and not to be nervous as much as possible</li> <li>• When children take wrong actions, parents should start talking to them in a calm way first without shouting</li> <li>• Keep trying to change their harsh attitude so that not to affect the children negatively</li> <li>• Being patient and listen more</li> <li>• Allocate more time to the children and be very calm with them</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents should motivate and encourage their children with praise</li> </ul>
Techniques provided by social marketing campaigns for parents to utilize while bringing up their children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a hotline for parents to call and ask for advices. I believe this is very beneficial</li> <li>• Offering a free consultancy service for all parents to learn the best ways to bring up their children</li> <li>• Highlighting how parents’ aggressive attitudes are harmful for our children mental health is very significant</li> <li>• Although positive parenting might lead children to disrespect their parents in some incidents, yet it remains a crucial topic to be communicated to parents and would be very useful the availability of the free consultancy service</li> <li>• Spreading awareness among parents</li> <li>• Giving parents a reminder for this kind of issue is extremely useful to keep an eye on their attitudes</li> </ul>

## 6. Discussion and managerial implications for social marketing experts

### Campaign Success Factors:

The success of “Calm-Not-Harm” campaign was measured through the massive number of calls received to get consultancies on positive parenting. Accordingly, it is obvious that the existence of call-to-action for free consultation or service is crucial in the success of any social marketing campaigns that aim to develop social change. In addition, another significant variable to be considered when developing social marketing campaigns is to develop a campaign that would help in solving a societal challenge. Therefore, a community study should initially be conducted to investigate the challenge and design the social marketing campaign consequently. As reported by McKenzie-Mohr (2011), the steps of community-based social marketing start by detecting the behavior we aim to change then identifying the hurdles that prevent individuals from participating in the activity as well as what would inspire them to do so.

The main objective for attaining a successful social marketing is social or behavior change as gaining acceptance of the concept to change without taking actions is never considered success (Zucker, 1983). Accordingly, for the field to reach its maximum potential, there is a need for an extensive and committed private sector involvement to allocate resources for positive parenting workshops and free consultation for all parents along with developments of academic programs.

Because its major objective is ultimately societal welfare, social marketing has fundamentally political roots (Lazer and Kelly, 1973). The governmental support contributed to the success of this campaign.

**Intervention-level approach for individual change:**

Furthermore, to add to the success of any social marketing campaign, an intervention-level approach is necessary to be used as social marketing shares the challenges encountered by all systemic approaches to creating change; it competes with “habit”. Social marketing can succeed at the “intervention” level by boosting the percentage of interventions that focus on individual change over approaches that stress community mobilization or institutional change (Andreasen, 2002).

It is very difficult to amend an attitude or a habit especially for parents. However, the merit of intervention-level approach is that it focuses on individual change by being practiced by the whole community. For instance, the campaign focused on three different scenarios for positive parenting, such as parents in the house, teachers at the school and trainers at the club. The main message for the campaign is that all of those who have the full authority in any place should always be calm with the children and try to understand the challenges that might be hindering the children’s ability to perform their best.

**Policies implementation**

In addition, socially constructed policies with penalties should be considered for those parents, educators or trainers who misuse their power and results in raising children who suffer from mental and psychological health. Besides, media advocacy role for positive parenting should be prioritized as most of the participants in the interviews mentioned that they spend a minimum of 14 hours per week on various media channels.

Accordingly, the suggested model to be used according to the study’s methodology and results is the “Health Belief Model”. According to Champion & Skinner (2008), susceptibility, seriousness, advantages and obstacles to a behavior, signals to action, and, most recently, self-efficacy are all ideas in the Health Belief Model that predict why individuals would take action to avoid, screen for, or control medical conditions. For this study, it will be communicated information about the risks of being aggressive with the children and the benefits of being calm to change the knowledge, attitudes, and intentions of target individual.

**7. Conclusion**

The study of social marketing provides an interesting insight into the whole process of creating awareness about parental behaviour. It assesses the response of parents to “Calm Not Harm” social marketing campaign launched in Egypt and serves as a foundation for further research and discussion on social marketing discipline. The ideas expressed in this paper have implications for a great deal of future research. The results of this study may not be generalized to other populations since it solely focused on a social marketing campaign in Egypt. Accordingly, it would be suggested to tackle other countries. The combination between the quantitative and qualitative data can make it possible to expose relations which are not projecting to the researcher and prevent him of being carried by sharp impressions, but distort, while being based only on qualitative data (Eisenhardt, 1989).

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