

## Research Paper

## Analysis of the effects of mass media on rural social trust reduction: A case study of Kenvist rural areas in the county of Mashhad

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**ABSTRACT**

Mass media draw upon the meanings and values prevailing in everyday life and exert profound effects on the social entity of villages. They affect all individuals and social aspects and play a decisive and meaningful role in the beliefs and attitudes of members of the society. They are also an important source of promoting, propagating or changing the values of rural communities, including social trust. Given the role that mass media have in social trust, the present study examines the impact of mass media on reducing the social trust of villagers. The research is an applied study conducted by a descriptive-analytical method. Kenvist rural district was selected as the study area. To determine the number of sample villages according to the NO formula and from 23 villages that had over 200 people each, 11 villages with the highest population were selected for the case study. Also, the sample size was determined to be 196 persons by using Cochran's formula. The data extracted from questionnaires were analyzed by SPSS and GIS software programs and through ARAS techniques. The findings showed that satellite programs have had the most effects on decreasing the social trust among villagers. Also, according to the village ranking, the villages of Shotorak and Kenargoosheh have received the most and the least influence from social media in this regard respectively.

**Key words:**

Mass media, Social trust, Social networks, Rural development, ARAS technique

**Extended Abstract****1. Introduction**

One of the most important issues in discussion of the expansion of sustainable development in rural area is the role of mass media. These media have proved to have a prominent role in shaping the process of social, economic and fundamental construc-

tion of villages. Therefore, mass media and the press play important roles as the bearers of culture values, information and new ideas in various aspects of comprehensive development, especially in villages a the marginal areas in developing countries. They have become the dominant reality in societies today, leading to certain social behaviors. With the increasing use of mass media in the society and the amazing impact of them on life, it can be argued that social trust has also been affected. In addition to providing information to their audience, mass media provide

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interpretations and analyses for people and form part of the epistemic system of individuals. Hence, nowadays, people's optimism, pessimism, or motivation for different affairs is largely influenced by the type and the content of mass media messages. The magnitude of these effects varies from place to place in terms of factors such as media diversity, usage, function, age, gender, freedom of speech, and the social control of virtual spaces.

## 2. Methodology

The present study is a descriptive-analytical piece of research. Social trust was measured with 21 options at three levels including individual trust, general trust and institutional trust. Each level was evaluated with 16 items in the form of scientific and documentary materials, films, serials, entertainment programs, economic programs, and news and information. To determine the sample villages, from 23 villages that had more than 200 residents, 11 with the highest population were selected using the NO formula. The sample size was determined to include 196 people using the Cochran formula with an error of 0.07. Cronbach's alpha test was used to assess the reliability of the data. The result showed the high reliability of the questionnaire in this research.

## 3. Results

Through examining the mean of the research variables in the studied villages, it was understood that satellite, among the mass media, has the greatest impact on reducing the level of social trust with the mean 2.95, while the television has the least impact with the mean 1.87 in the studied villages. The findings of the research also showed that, among the mass media, there is only a positive and direct but weak relationship between the use of television and the decrease of social trust. In contrast, there is a negative relationship between the use of the other media and the reduction of social trust. This means that, as the use of these media increases, there is a faster and faster reduction in social trust. Based on the results of the analysis of the route, it can be said that satellite has the most effect on the reduction of social trust in the studied villages. The spatial analysis of the results also showed that the impact of mass media on reducing social trust in the village of Shotorak is more and in Goshekenar is less than that in the other villages. This can be related to the population and distance of these two villages from Mashhad metropolitan.

## 4. Discussion

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of each mass medium on the level of social trust in villages of Mash-

had County. Social trust denotes to people's commitments and expectations that they have to and from one another, organizations, and institutions related to social life. It is, indeed, next to a generalized mutual relationship. Theoretically, the concept of social trust has been considered as the most important dimension of social capital both directly and indirectly. The focus on this concept derives from sociology which was formed mostly to study the issue of social order and development. From the sociological point of view, at least three types of trust are recognized: interpersonal trust, institutional trust and generalized trust. Mass media are also referred to as all impersonal tools whereby visual and audio messages are transmitted directly to audiences. TV, satellites, radio, newspapers, the Internet and magazines are among these media. Today, one of the most noticeable influences of mass media is the change they can make in the sense of social trust among their audience towards various political, economic, social and cultural issues. In rural areas, however, changing the level of social trust and the extent of contribution of each mass medium is proportional to the type of the available media, the access of villagers to them, the cultural characteristics, and the system of values held by villagers. All these tokens make villages different from cities.

## 5. Conclusion

In general, the findings of the research are consistent with the results of many other studies in this field, such as [Javaheri and Balakhani \(2010\)](#), [Ahmadi et al. \(2013\)](#), [Fazel et al. \(2013\)](#), and [Sharifzadeh et al. \(2015\)](#). As a matter of fact, mass media play a significant role in reducing social trust, and this reduction depends on the accessibility and use of these tools. Finally, according to the results obtained, the following suggestions are provided:

- Promoting the people's culture and awareness for the use of mass media
- Considering the influence of mass media on the people for planning and development
- Strengthening the sense of social trust by modifying the media performance and reflecting social realities
- Diversifying the domestic media programs to adapt them to the tastes, needs and values of rural people.

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### Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest

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