

The impact of visual media in promoting rural consumption (Case Study: Rural District of Tabadakan city of Mashhad)

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Today, rural areas are among the places heavily influenced by visual media advertisements. Due to the fact that villagers are exposed to media advertisements, and given the structures that have come about, villagers have become a consumer-oriented society, rather than seeking to purposefully increase the production. Besides, today media outlets no longer inform people about the villagers' needs, rather they advocate a new sense of life by promoting urban lifestyle. Therefore, visual media currently affect the life of villagers, and consumerism has significantly increased among them, whose outcomes could be seen in their behavior or everyday lifestyle. At the same time, today one of the important issues is the strong tendency of villagers to adopt consumerism despite their productive nature. In the meantime, visual media in different ways have increased the intensity and rate of consumerism in rural areas, as one can see physical manifestation of consumerism in rural areas. Accordingly, the main goal of the present study is to analyze the impact of visual media advertisements on promoting consumerism among villagers. Accordingly, the main question of the study is as follows: How much do the advertisements run by visual media outlets affect the extent of consumerism in the study area?

Methodology

This study is an applied one, conducted in a descriptive-analytical method. The study was carried out at two levels: library research and field works. Based on the library research and the review of the related theoretical framework, in this study, the visual media variable was defined with six indicators and 21 items, and the consumer-driven variable was defined with 3 indicators and 9 items. In order to operationalize the indicators of the study, Tabadekan rural district (Dehestan) was selected. Ten villages of more than 200 households were selected from this rural district. Based on Cochran formula and with error rate of 0.07% for households in the sample villages, the sample comprises 196 people, which is calculated in proportion to the number of households in every village. To analyze the data, descriptive and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation test, simple linear regression, and chi-square) were used in SPSS software package. To rank the villages in terms of consumerism, we used VIKOR analysis, and to display the rank obtained from the VIKOR analysis, we have used GIS.

Results and discussion

Based on the literature on the impact of visual media on consumerism, with a special emphasis on rural areas, 30 items in the form of 6 indicators of consumerism and 3 indicators of visual media in the analysis framework of the VIKOR model and Pearson correlation test, simple linear regression and Chi-square were investigated. The results suggest that the highest average

consumerism was in Khosh Hava village with an average of 2.96, and the lowest average consumerism was found in Andarokh village with an average of 2.35. Besides, there is a direct relationship and moderate to strong correlation between the variables of consumerism and three indicators of visual media as the variable of the study. According to the results of regression, visual media have an effect on increasing the consumerism. Accordingly, it may be concluded that the increased use of visual media and their advertisement and even exposure to media content in the study area have provided a suitable background for consumerism, which have raised the consumption level of households in the villages of the study area. Further, the results of using the VIKOR technique in measuring the level of consumerism show that villages of Khosh Hava and Ali Abad are the most consumerist villages, and the villages of Farrakhand and Andarokh were the least consumerist ones.

Conclusion

Overall, this study shows that the factors affecting the level of consumerism in the study were the main roads (Kelat and Jadeh Ciman) going round and through these villages, the proximity of villages to the city center, and close contact with urban areas, easy access roads for villagers to consumer markets, interurban bus coverage for these villages, the expansion of the television coverage in all villages, and the heavy traffic of citizens to these villages. These factors can increase the level of consumerism in other areas, which not only will not be to the benefit of rural households, but also increase the consumption level of other villagers. Finally, one may conclude that the focus on planning how to use the visual media and how to expose the content of the media and the overall cultural activities in this field will reduce the level of consumerism in unnecessary areas of the villagers' life. It should also be acknowledged that the influence of visual media on the promotion of consumerism in closed communities or *Gemeinschaft* is greater. Therefore, in rural areas, consumerism is more visible, as the villages have limited and deep contacts. The organic willfulness of the villagers is based on the common sense and experience, i.e., taste and tradition, and every movement and change such as the promotion of consumerism through visual media is created to serve the unity and the community, that is why consumerism in rural communities, which are a kind of closed society or *Gemeinschaft*, is more visible.

Keywords: consumption, visual media, Media Advertising, Rural areas, Tbadkan District, Mashhad Township