

AN ANALYSIS OF MASS MEDIA ROLE IN SOCIAL CHANGES OF TEHRAN CITIZENS

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, visual, audio and written media are considered as the main sources of creation and dynamism of culture, so that with the introduction of mass media into society, power has undergone changes and the obedience of the society has been affected by latent and intangible methods of persuasion and propaganda. Some scholars have considered social changes to be due to the media and their strong role in people's lives. Regarding this, many theories have been proposed considering the effect of mass media on social change. However, each of the theories stated has dealt with only a particular aspect of the main function of the media in making social change. The present study examined some of the theories expressed regarding this and presented a comprehensive model to evaluate the effect of media on social change. The method used was survey. The population of the study was all residents of Tehran, of whom 334 were randomly selected and examined. Data collection tool was a structured questionnaire. The results of path analysis showed that the model derived from the literature review has a suitable fit. This means that meeting psychological and actual needs of the audience indirectly affects the social changes created, and presenting similar solutions to the audience by the media and the social organization of media directly explain social change.

Keywords: Media, Social changes, Path analysis, Tehran.

INTRODUCTION

Mass media (from the press, cinema, radio and television to computer games, music CDs, and DVD, the Internet, and satellite networks) are the communication means of the new civilizations, whose basic feature is their high power and abilities and broad action scope (Casseo, 2005). One of the important tasks of the media, like broadcasting, is the creation of the necessary changes in the attitudes and political and social orientations. The audience receives various messages, each of which has a various attitude, from the environment, confirms some, and rejects some other. The part absorbed affects the audience attitude and makes the behavior stable (Mokhtari, 2009). The information coming from the media is all firstly about the news, reports, and largely forms the public's perceptions of reality. Thus, the incidences, thoughts, and the concepts by which the individuals organize their own views of the social reality mainly come from media (Lazar, 2001).

The media try to affect the audience by agenda setting and then representation. (Rabiee and Ahmadzadeh Namvar, 2008). In this process, the media indirectly and directly affect people's thoughts and beliefs that finally lead to the social change. There are many fundamental theories in this regard. In mass theory, the media is defined as a guide by meeting the psychological needs of the individuals. The media are referred to as powerful guides in this theory (Mehrdad, 2001). In Marxism theory, the media have been introduced as ideologies, whose base of activity is exploitative relationships conceal, social organization, and legitimate capitalism (Schiller, 1996). Herbert Marcuse believes that the media has the provoking role of the real needs in social

changes (Nouri et al., 2007). In change theory, the role of the media is the transfer of individual values and innovations, social provocative, psychological and mental stimulation, and the strengthening of conscience (Mostafavi Kohangi, 2015). In Cultivation Theory, it is believed that the media make people resemble. According to the theorists of this theory, the media make all people show similar reactions to national and international events. Indeed, this theory believes that the role of media is to create common ways of using the product (Ghasemi, 2006). Charles Lindblom believes that at the start of the twenty-first century, the use of force and explicit deterministic methods gradually waned. However, the spread of a variety of mass media and their presence in different aspects of life constitutes the best and most effective tool for the proper solution of the relations between the rulers and people, and the various people (Ahrari, 2004). In fact, media today have become an important means of influencing sociocultural spheres to bring about calm and low cost changes (Mokhtari, 2007). Many studies have shown that the media directly and indirectly affect social changes. McGuire (1984) examined the effect of media on advertising and consumption and purchasing, effect on political gatherings and participation in polls, the effect of announcements and public service calls, the effect of political propaganda on ideology, and the effect of the media on social control (Percy, 2001).

In his study of the effect of the media on social changes in India, Awatadi (2016) concluded that television programs directly or indirectly affect the social minds that could be recognized as social and cultural attributes and lead to the social change among the individuals.

In examining the role of the media in social change, Hupper and Philo (2013) concluded that the media play a major role in informing what is happening in the world. According to them, mass media focus on general interest by setting different programs. This is while they present some media programs, such as political ones by limited media.

In examining the role of the mass media in recent changes in Egypt, Shidi (2011) argued that the role of these media in the changes made depends on the personality of the media. Social wisdom can boost the world's awareness of a problem, and provide people with accurate information to help each other no matter where they live. Shidi considers using social media dangerous for social changes.

Davy et al. (2012) considers the social turmoil that started on December 17, 2010 in Tunisia and quickly spread to the Middle East and North Africa to be mixed with the technological and digital revolution. According to him, the potential role of mass media in these changes is so varied. In the stated changes, by facilitating dialogue among activists and users of the media and mass communication networks, the media organize and coordinate their demands and allow the process of social change.

Braga (2007) considers the Albanians' migration to Italy as the result of Italian TV effect. He believed that about 50 years of the Albanian media was under control. However, due to geographic proximity, many Albanians could receive the signal from the media and under the influence of mass media, programs migrate to this country as one of the greatest social changes of the century. He admits that facing Italian television significantly increased immigration to Italy from other countries. La Ferrara (2006) indicated that the mass media not only transmits political information but also can make deep developmental changes by changing the values and behaviors.

Other scholars, such as Halesty (1996), considered the media effective on the thoughts and opinions of policymakers. Here, Haroldassoul (1948), a significant researcher of



communications, cited Shamam (2002), identified the most influential communications media in the community in three types: supervisory environment, linking different sectors of society and transferring their cultural heritage. Hui (1995), McCabeans and Shaw (1972), Pige (1996) and Zalor believe that media have a direct effect on the formation of public opinion. Groswiller (1996) states the role of the media in people's interpretation of political information. Regarding this, Bennett (1997) concluded that the media coverage of the event affects the public thoughts concerning foreign policy issues. This is while Shapiro and Jacobs (2000) have described the complexities of the world as a new opportunity for policy makers of media leaders. According to the studies done, the main functions of the media are as follows: 1) informing unction (providing the necessary information regarding the events and conditions of the community, showing the power relations, facilitating innovations, adapting, and progress); 2) communicator (justifier, interpreter, and advisor on the events meanings and information, supporting the authority and its values, socializing, creating a bridge between scattered activities, consensus builder, prioritizing, and announcing the status). Other functions are: 3) continuation (representing the dominant culture and identifying the cultural subcultures referring to the advancements of the new culture, the integration and preservation of common values), 4) providing entertainment (entertainment provider, distraction from problems, soothing nerves, and reducing social tension), and 5) mobilizing (media are the factor for struggle for social purposes in the political arena, warfare, economics, work, and sometimes religious affairs). It should be noted that it is not easy to categorize or rank the above items based on importance. Moreover, one cannot organize them based on frequency or incidence (Mehrdad, 2001). However, given the circumstances and needs of each of the above have particular advantage. By examining the theories and researches in this regard, the following model is presented showing the way media behaves in social change. In the proposed model, by fulfilling the psychological and real needs, the media stimulate the audience, and then provide the social changes through providing the same solutions and social organization.

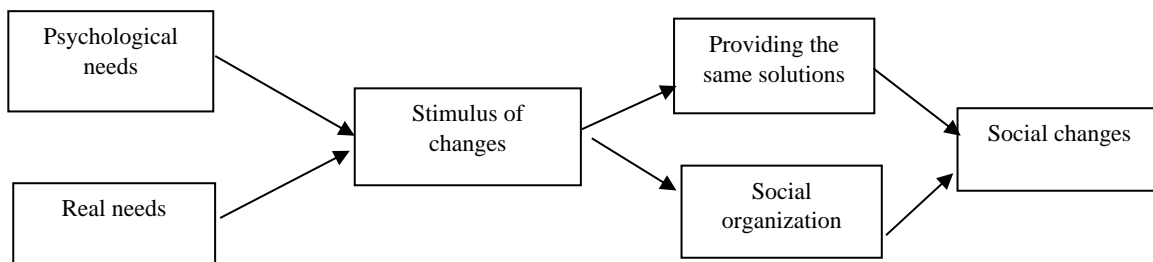


Figure 1: The proposed model of the structural relationship between social change and different media roles

Hypotheses and questions

1. The function of addressing the audience's actual needs in the media is an indirect positive predictor of the social changes resulting from this role of the media
2. The function of addressing the psychological needs of the audience in the media is indirectly a positive predictor of social change from this role of the media.

3. The function of providing the same solution to the audience in the media is a positive predictor of the social change from this role of the media
4. The social media organization function is a positive predictor of social change resulting from this role of the media
5. Social stimulus function is indirectly a positive predictor of social change from this role of the media by solving its psychological and practical needs.

METHODS

This study was survey-correlational using path analysis method. Path analysis is a statistical method for applying multi-variable regression standard beta coefficients in structural models. The purpose of path analysis is to obtain quantitative estimates of causal relationships (univariate and covariate co-action) between a set of variables. Creating a causal model does not necessarily mean causal relationships among the variables of the model, but this causality is based on correlational assumptions and the research theory and background. The path analysis indicates that which path is more important or significant. The path coefficient is calculated based on the standardized regression coefficient. A variable is assumed as a function of other variables and its regression model is shown. Regarding this, for each of the specified paths, the standardized regression coefficients (or path coefficients) are calculated. These coefficients are obtained by structural equations; i.e., the equations that determine the structure of the given relationships in a model. Here, a dependent variable (social change) is expressed by several independent variables (psychological needs, real needs, social stimulus, social organization and providing the same solutions). In this study, interviews and questionnaire were used or data collection. The validation of a structured researcher's questionnaire was approved by reviewing the literature and based on the opinion of the faculty members of Razi University. The reliability of the questionnaire obtained 0.87 using Cronbach's alpha, which showed the reliability of the tool used. The population was all families in Tehran. Using simple random sampling, 334 people were selected and studied. SPSS was used for data analysis.

RESULTS

Table 1: based on the descriptive findings of the sample, 134 were men (40.4% of the total sample) and 198 women (59.6%).

Table 1: Frequency distribution of the respondents based on gender

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| Male | 134 | 40.4 |
| Female | 198 | 59.6 |
| total | 334 | 100 |

Respondents' age

In the present study, most of the respondents were at the ages range of 36 and 45 (37%), and the lowest were at the age range of 76 and 85. Age information of the respondents has been given in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by age

| Respondents' age | Frequency | Percentage | Cumulative percentage |
|------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------|
| 15-25 | 48 | 14.4 | 14.4 |
| 26-35 | 100 | 29.9 | 44.3 |
| 36-45 | 104 | 31.1 | 75.4 |
| 46-55 | 42 | 12.6 | 88 |
| 56-65 | 16 | 4.8 | 92.8 |
| 66-75 | 18 | 5.4 | 98.2 |
| 76-85 | 6 | 1.8 | 100 |
| Total | 334 | 100 | |

Education

According to the results in Table 3, 23.1% of respondents had high school diploma, 16.1% associate's degree, 32.7% bachelor's degree, 18.5% master's degree, and 9.5% had PhD.

Table 3: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to education

| Education | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| High school diploma | 78 | 23.1 |
| Associate's degree | 54 | 16.1 |
| Bachelor's degree | 110 | 32.7 |
| Master's degree | 62 | 18.5 |
| PhD | 32 | 9.5 |
| Total | 334 | 100 |

**Marital status**

As shown in Table 4, most of the respondents were married (64.1%) and 35.9% were single.

Table 4: Frequency distribution of respondents by marital status

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| Single | 120 | 35.9 |
| Married | 214 | 64.1 |
| Total | 334 | 100 |

The results of path analysis, as shown in Table 6, show that presenting identical solutions and social organization by the media account for 8% and 74% of the social changes of the subjects, respectively. Figure 2 shows how communication and degree of correlation play two important roles in the social organization of the media, as well as providing the same solutions for the media in creating social change.

Social changes = $-524221.0 + 0.0$ providing the same solutions $08 + 0.0$ social organization 74

Table 5: Model fit (Model Summary)

| Model | Sum of squares | Degree of freedom | Mean squares | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|------|-------|
| Regression | 10.57 | 2 | 5.37 | 2.39 | 0.113 |
| Residual | 51.56 | 332 | 2.24 | | |
| Total | 62.34 | 334 | | | |

Table 6: The coefficients of factor loadings applied in the regression equation

| Model | Non-standardized coefficient of determination | | Standardized coefficient of determination | T | Sig. |
|------------------------------|---|-----------|---|-------|------|
| | B | SD | Beta | | |
| Constant number | -524221.16 | 693500.71 | | -0.75 | 0.45 |
| Providing the same solutions | 8283.38 | 16330.11 | 0.088 | 0.50 | 0.61 |
| Social organization | 66035.62 | 15419.22 | 0.746 | 4.28 | 0.00 |

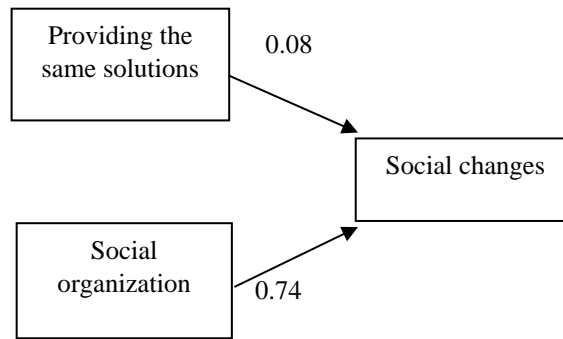


Figure 2: The structural relationship between social change, social media organization roles and providing the same solutions

The results of tables 7 and 8 show that media provocation role explain 44% of the role of providing the same solutions by the media. Since it was seen in the previous section, providing the same solutions by the media is one of the causes of social change by the media, one can argue that the media stimulating function indirectly, leads to social change. Figure 3 shows the relationship between creating the same solutions and the provocation role of media.

Providing same media suggestions = 06.38 + 44.0 the provoking role of the media

Table 7: Model fit (Model Summary)

| Model | Sum of squares | Degree of freedom | Mean squares | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|-------|------|
| Regression | 845.08 | 2 | 845.08 | 6.001 | 0.02 |
| Residual | 3379.52 | 332 | 140.81 | | |
| Total | 4224.61 | 334 | | | |

Table 8: The coefficients of factor loadings applied in the regression equation

| Model | Non-standardized coefficient of determination | | Standardized coefficient of determination | T | Sig. |
|-----------------------------|---|------|---|------|-------|
| | B | SD | Beta | | |
| Constant number | 38.06 | 5.85 | | 6.49 | 0.000 |
| Provoking role of the media | 3.68 | 1.50 | 0.447 | 2.45 | 0.022 |

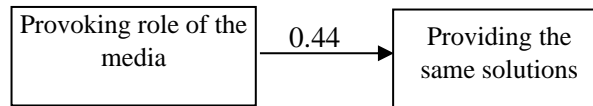


Figure 3: The proposed model of the structural relationship between the provoking role of social change and the role of providing the same solutions

Tables 9 and 10 indicate that media-provoking role explains 90% of the social organization by the media. This means that the provoking role of media, applied by specific and frequent programs, explains about 90% of the social organization that leads to social change. Figure 4 shows the relationship between social organization and the provoking role of media. Social organization = 3.44 + 0.9 provoking social change.

Table 9: Model fit (Model Summary)

| Model | Sum of squares | Degree of freedom | Mean squares | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|---------|-------|
| Regression | 3050.117 | 2 | 3050.117 | 102.189 | 0.000 |
| Residual | 716.344 | 332 | 29.848 | | |
| Total | 3766.46 | 334 | | | |

Table 10: The coefficients of factor loadings applied in the regression equation

| Model | Non-standardized coefficient of determination | | Standardized coefficient of determination | T | Sig. |
|--------------------------|---|------|---|--------|------|
| | B | SD | Beta | | |
| Constant number | 3.443 | 2.69 | | 1.27 | 0.21 |
| Provoking social changes | 6.994 | 0.69 | 0.90 | 10.109 | 0.00 |

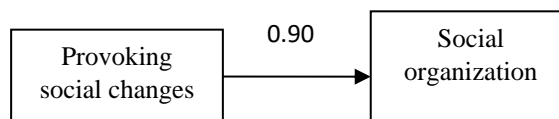


Figure 4: The proposed model of the structural relationship between the role of provoking social change and the role of the social organization of the media



The role of meeting the psychological needs of 44% and the role of meeting the audience's actual needs explains 33% of the role of media provocation. This means that by meeting the psychological needs of the audience by 44%, the media lead to stimulating the audience to make social changes, and by meeting the real needs of the people, the media provoke 33% of them to create social changes.

Table 11: Model fit (Model Summary)

| Model | Sum of squares | Degree of freedom | Mean squares | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|------|-------|
| Regression | 10.75 | 2 | 5.34 | 2.39 | 0.113 |
| Residual | 51.56 | 332 | 2.24 | | |
| Total | 62.34 | 334 | | | |

Table 12: The coefficients of the factors applied in the regression equation

| Model | Non-standardized coefficient of determination | | Standardized coefficient of determination | T | Sig. |
|---------------------------------|---|------|---|-------|------|
| | B | SD | Beta | | |
| Constant number | 3.34 | 0.75 | | 0.44 | 0.00 |
| Meeting the psychological needs | 0.42 | 0.20 | 0.43 | 2.06 | 0.05 |
| Meeting the real needs | 0.38 | 0.24 | 0.33 | -1.57 | 0.13 |

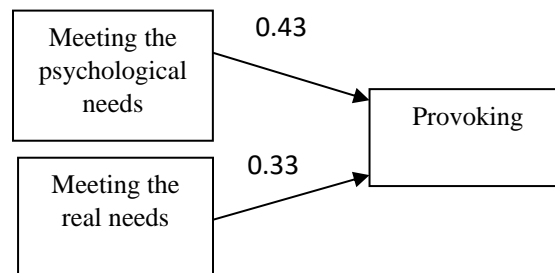


Figure 5: The proposed model of the structural relationship between the provoking role of the social change of the media and meeting the psychological and real needs of the audience

Finally, for the final confirmation and verification of the model of Figure 1, the product of the coefficient of determination of each path was summed up and determined that all the independent variables in Figure (1) explained 42% of the social changes of respondents.

$$0.316 = (0.8) \times (0.9) \times (0.43)$$

$$-0.113 = (0.78) \times (0.44) \times (0.33)$$

$$0.429 = 0.0 + 316.113$$

Figure 6 shows the direct and indirect effects of independent variables defined in social change. As is seen in the figure below, by meeting the psychological and real needs of the audience, media provoke and motivate them. Here, with the provision of similar solutions and social organization that they create in their programs, provide a framework for social change among people.

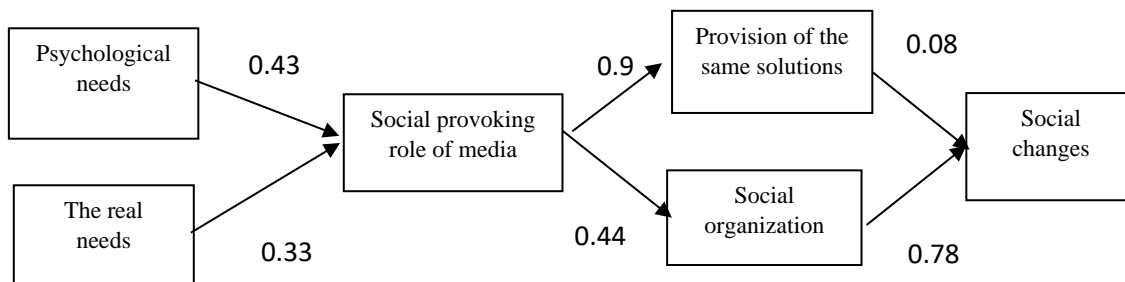


Figure 6: The proposed model for the structural relationship between the role of the media in social change and the effect of each of the variables

CONCLUSION


The results indicated that social changes are affected by various factors. The media play a major role here, which is applied by many factors. According to experts and scholars, the role of the media in creating social changes was drawn in the conceptual model of the research. In this project, many factors affect the social changes due to media functioning. Meeting the psychological and real needs of the audience provokes them to find the ideal conditions and reality of their lives. The results showed the positive effect of two important functions on meeting the psychological needs of individuals on their provocation of social change at 43% and meeting the real needs of the audience at 33%. If the real and psychological needs of individuals are met, the audience's need for social conditions increases and they want to create a desirable atmosphere by the government and their participation as much as possible. If possible, establishing effective communication between the government and the nation is surely possible with the maximum cooperation of the government and the nation. For instance, to reach the objectives of cultural development, the positive and constructive customs, environmental preservation and related media-related goals for positive change, with the cooperation of public officials and people, can achieve significant successes, witnessed in the last few years. Moreover, when people are motivated enough to make the desired changes, the media play their part in social organization of individuals as target groups with specific functions, and creating the ideal and constructive ways to make social changes. In this study, 44% of creating optimal strategies is explained by provoking and stimulating the audience, and 90% of providing the desired solutions is explained by this. The results show that when the desired motivation is created in the audience, by applying appropriate approaches, one can create the context needed to make the expected changes. This is while, 78% of social change is explained by social organization, applied by the media. This means that the media can pursue their goals by creating social organization as various programs for achieving social changes. Ultimately, about 42% of social changes was explained by direct and indirect effects of different media functions in the study.



This figure shows the important and principled effect of the media on making social change in the desired direction. This means that, to reach positive changes in line with the goals of the state and the nation, the media can create the context for the expected changes by investing in effective and appropriate programs. The media can reach accurate plans by changing the mindset of the audience by creating the desired programs to achieve the desired social changes, such as environmental protection, efficient energy consumption and other general-purpose goals. Thus, the following suggestions are presented as follows:

- Principal attention to meeting the real needs of individuals, such as economic and social problems in the media to motivate social change.
- Considering the television and radio programs necessary to meet the psychological needs of people, such as the needs of entertainment and mental needs (with mental health counseling programs, and so on) to create the necessary context for reaching the desired social changes.
- Applying accurate planning to create the necessary coordination between different programs that work in the same direction with the same purpose to reach similar and applicable solutions in anticipation of expected changes.

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