

# **Sociological Study of Consumer Media Effects on Lifestyle with regard to Individual Characteristics (Case Study: Youth of Rural and Nomadic Areas in Gilane Gharb Province)**

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## ***Abstract***

The purpose of this study was to consider the effects of consumer media on lifestyle with regard to the individual characteristics (case study: youth of rural and nomadic areas in Gilane Gharb Province). For this purpose, theoretical framework of thinkers such as Bourdieu and Chaney has been used. The research method was descriptive. The statistical population of this research was rural and nomadic youth of Gilane Gharb. The sample size was 381 persons based on Cochran's formula. Research findings show the separated effects of social class, marital status, and gender variables on lifestyle based on the value of F test were not meaningful. That is the average of lifestyle is not different statistically, but the separated effect of variables such as age, educational level, number of household members and occupational groups on lifestyle based on the value of F test was meaningful. Regarding the effect of media consumption on lifestyle based on F test, there is a significant difference in lifestyle based on the media consumption.

***Keywords:*** Individual characteristics, Social behavior, Youth, Media consumption, Lifestyle.

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## **1. Introduction**

For a long time, the mass media has been a messenger of all new, fashionable and advanced things from goods to thought and technique to values, west to east, center to periphery, city to village and high levels of the society to low levels. The media have incited people to seek better material conditions. In addition, mass media have the ability to diminish the influence of traditional values and help individuals to exceed the intellectual limits of their social environment or to privatize certain social domains. There are some perspectives that indicate media have been able to replace old and diverse value systems with a set of modern and coherent values that are not so restrictive but the coherent task of maintaining a large and differentiated society is far better than older religious family (Coyle, 2004, p.93).

The media also include press, television, Internet, satellite, book, video and so on. The place of the media used in our everyday life is certainly important because of every minute of the day or hours of our lives we are dedicated to the media and they are part of our social life. Without the media, we may not even be able to adjust our relationships with others or plan for our lifestyle. In addition, the media provide an important part of our leisure time and help us with mental health. No one can doubt the fact that the mass media have dramatically changed the daily lives of the people. A simple benchmark or indicator of the reality is the amount of time people spending with the mass media. Public media, undoubtedly, occupy a lot of other social activities (Gybynz & Wimmer, 2002, p. 63).

The activity of media and radio and the expansion of the roads which led to the development of communication among the cities can be considered as the first changes in the pattern of rural and nomadic communication. Radio, by producing and broadcasting messages tailored to urban culture, has paid attention to the urban lifestyle of rural and nomadic area. Asphalted roads, along with the expansion of the use of private and public cars at the villages and tribes provided more opportunities for face-to-face contact for rural and nomadic area with cities. After that, we will gradually reach to TV and phone. It should be noted that communication in all of its forms and methods will

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increase the information and, consequently, new knowledge of affairs and devices.

In the last half century, the villages of Iran have undergone significant changes in terms of lifestyle and fundamental cultural values. In the villages of Iran, there is a kind of "Iranian rural modernity". For example, consumption based values or symbolic values of goods are also seen in villages. The traditional view is that the village was the birthplace of the "Folklore" or "Ethnic culture" habitat which has now been eliminated. Instead, the same media or popular products have been replaced.

As a result of the media culture of rural areas and structural changes, other socialist values have been plagued and individualistic values have been developed. This has caused fundamental differences between generations and their children. It is no easy to see the distinct cultural difference between rural and urban youth, although they are still different in special contexts. The mass media classify their audiences based on their lifestyle and make them more credible. The age of marriage has also risen in the rural communities of Gilane Gharb. As the motivation for work has come down, the divorce has been increased and the spirit of collaborative work and social solidarity has diminished. Therefore, my goal in this research is to study sociologically effects of the consumer media on lifestyle with regard to individual characteristics.

## **2. Review of the Literature**

In order to address Bourdieu's theory in connection with this study, it is necessary to understand Bourdieu's culture. Bourdieu claims that "culture as a symbol of music reproduce the domination of the social class to a point where the dominant classes can impose cultural values, criteria and tastes on the entire society (Seydman, 2013, p. 199). In this way, Bourdieu's critical view is to expose the mechanism of power and domination in the new society and it indicates that human social behavior is not entirely based on the knowledge and choice. He injects media preferences into dominant classes with the help of symbolic violence to lower classes.

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Chaney (1996) believes that contemporary culture is still exposed to social and cultural changes in the sense that contemporary mass societies have entered to the lifestyle stage. The idea of culture as the whole way of life was based on the common tradition and social identity, now it has lost its capacity to define the existence of a social class as a whole (Chaney, 1996, p. 77). According to the Chinese viewpoint, traditional views of culture have given a way to new social forms. One of the important issues of this new social form is the growth of lifestyles. Lifestyle is based on resources provided by choices in the field of consumption. These choices are based on the conservation of the symbolism presented in the contemporary culture. Indeed, lifestyle is contrary to the traditional perception of leisure-time and cultural industries and consumer patterns. This lifestyle is retrospectively created by those who are investing in this field. Here, lifestyle patterns are unstable and can be reformulated (Taylor, 2002, p. 481). According to Chaney, transformations and identity changes in villages are the reasons for more communication between the community and villages. He believes that lifestyles are subjected to renew exposure and open communication. What made this theory clear was the evolution of identity and the dramatic changes in villages with the advent of technology.

Among the theories that deal with long-term effects of the media, one of the most important theories is Theory of Cultivation of Graber (1969) which emphasizes the gradual and long-term effects of the media, in particular television, on the formation of the audience's image about the surrounding world and their conceptualization of social reality. The main witness to the Theory of Cultivation has been the analysis of the systematic content of American television which has been carried out for several years in a row by Graber and his colleagues. Graber argues that the importance of the media is not in forming the masses, but in creating the common ways to select events (Coyle, 2004, p. 99). The results of the study by Graber suggest that it has been found TV as a pivotal position in the daily lives of humans which has led to its overcoming symbolic environment of human and other means of understanding the world. According to Graber, television message is far from the realities of the fundamental aspect, but because of its repeated repetition it is ultimately

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accepted as a consensus in the society (Coyle, 2004, p. 400). So, according to his research based on the comparison of high-consumption and low-consumption audiences, it has been come to the conclusion that television-consuming and low-energy audiences typically respond differently, and even these differences appear in a number of important variables such as age, education, news study and even gender (Sorvin & Tankard, 2011, p. 390). Cultivation refers to the four-step process in order to provide a view of television as a penetrating cultural medium. They call the first stage "system analysis of the message", that is, the analysis and evaluation of images, themes, values and roles are continually being broadcasted on television. The second step is to set questions about the social realities of the viewers. The third stage is to examine the audience to determine when people are watching TV. Finally, the fourth stage compares the conceptualization of high-consumption and low-consumption (Baran & Davis, 2000, p. 315). And shortly, popularization means that television covers common perspectives and represents a kind of homogenization of views (Mehdizadeh, 2011, p. 68). The escalation occurs when the audiences adapt and match television programs in their everyday life. In other words, everything that is seen on TV screen is a reminder of their real life, so the effect of Cultivation in a particular group of people increases in this case. By adding these two concepts to the theory of Cultivation, Graber concluded that television interacts with other variables in a way that watching TV will have a strong impact on others (Sorvin & Tankard, 2011, p. 392).

In fact, this theory explains the main reason why people use a particular medium for functional reasons and provides the audience with the needs that individuals face to the media to address it. Now, though media can satisfy the individual's needs well and there is a consistency between the content of the media and the individual's needs, the person is satisfied and pleased, otherwise, his needs will not be satisfied and he will be discarded from the media. The main assumption of this theory is that they provide the most satisfaction to them. The degree of satisfaction depends on the needs and interests of each person (Windal et al., 2008, p. 274). However, this choice can be influenced by other issues such as the conscious reflection of the experiences in media. The key hypothesis of this approach is that the audience is informed and based on

the motive chosen by the media and content (Hormoz, 2001, p. 148). In fact, the view of use and satisfaction assumes the audience's activity is certain. He believes that the audiences are aware of what and why they are doing. So, they can provide credible reports of their media satisfaction.

### **3. Hypotheses**

1) There seems to be a significant difference between the age, media consumption and rural and nomadic lifestyle.

2) There seems to be a significant difference between the education level, media consumption and rural and nomadic lifestyle.

3) There seems to be a significant difference between the men and women, media consumption and rural and nomadic lifestyle.

4) There seems to be a significant difference between marital status, media consumption and rural and nomadic lifestyle.

5) There seems to be a significant difference between the social class, media consumption and rural and nomadic lifestyle.

6) There seems to be a significant difference between number of household members, media consumption and rural and nomadic lifestyle.

7) There seems to be a significant difference between the occupational groups, media consumption and rural and nomadic lifestyle.

### **4. Methodology**

In this research, the descriptive method has been used for considering the nature of the subject. Therefore, the statistical population of this study is all young people aged 16- 40 years in Gilane Gharb Province. 381 persons were selected as a sample size. After determining the statistical sample, a multistage cluster sampling method was used to select the sample from the statistical population. The data were analyzed by SPSS software using two levels of descriptive and inferential statistics.

### **5. Descriptive Findings**

The survey of respondents by gender shows that most of them are women with 52.7%. The age distribution of respondents shows that their ages were

between 16 and 40 years old and most of them (41.8%) were between the ages of 29 and 35 years. The marital status of respondents shows that 50.2% of the respondents are married. The educational level of the respondents indicated that 24.27% had the BA. Degree, 19.8% had a under diploma and the same were illiterate. The number of six-person households was 17.7%, seven people 4.5%, eight people 4.5%, and two people 6.6% and 2.9% did not announce the number of their family members.

The distribution of respondents, according to the amount of use of consumer media, shows that respondents use not only consumer media related to the early stages of modernity, but also gradually using consumer media associated with the late modern age. While 41.6% of them use radio, 51.9% of them use book, 42.4% of them use the satellite, and 54.3% of them use Internet and social networks, including consumer media. The results also indicate that radio and satellite are among the least popular media outlets. This is while television is one of the most widely used consumer media. So that 96.3 percent of respondents use this media.

## **6. Data Analysis**

H1: There seems to be a significant difference between age, media consumption and the rural and nomadic lifestyle.

The results of table (1.1) show that the separated effect of age variable on significant lifestyle is significant (sig= 0/197; F=1/486). The lifestyle is different among age groups. Regarding the effect of the variables of consumer media on lifestyle based on the F test (sig= 0/007; F=1/926), we have a significant difference in lifestyle based on media consumption. That is, different age groups with different media consumption have different lifestyles. However, the interaction between age and consumer media and the simultaneous effect of these two independent variables on the dependent variable of lifestyle are statistically significant (sig= 0/042; F=1/613). In other words, the average of lifestyle in media consumption of age groups is not equal. The other result of this table is the value of R squared at the bottom of the table. This coefficient shows an adjusted value of 438%. The two variables

of age and consumable media have been able to explain 482% of the variance of the dependent variable of lifestyle.

**Table 1. Two-way variance analysis of variables between age, media consumption and lifestyle**

Source of change	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Average squares	F	Sig
Between whole groups	296253/417	197	1503/824	1/959	0/004
Inside of whole groups	11469492/161	1	11469492/161	14943/495	0/000
media Consumption	167025/898	113	1478/105	1/926	0/007
age	7985/171	7	1140/739	1/486	0/197
media Consumption * age	95306/212	77	1237/743	1/613	0/042
Error	34538/583	45			
Total	17914515/...	381			

a. R Squared = .896 (Adjusted R Squared = .438)

Table 1 compares the difference between the average of lifestyles in rural and nomadic areas with different age groups. According to the results of this table, the age group of 20-24 years in terms of lifestyle is different with two age groups of 25 to 29 years.

**Table 2. Bonferroni test and two-way analysis of variance between two variables of age and lifestyle**

Age(I)	Difference of Averages	Standard error	Sig	Highest level	Lowest level
Age(J)					
20-24					
25-29	27/6715	6/71656	0/004	5/3654	49/9776
25-29					
20-24	27/6715-	6/71656	0/004	49/9776-	5/3654-

H2: There seems to be a significant difference between the education level, media consumption and the rural and nomadic lifestyles.



The results of Table 2 show that the separated effect of media consumption on lifestyle is significant (sig=0/014; F=1/853). That is, statistically, the average of lifestyle is different from the media consumption. Regarding the effect of education level on lifestyle based on the F test (sig= 0/057; F=2/363), there is a significant difference in lifestyle between educational groups with different media consumption. That is, groups with different media consumption have different lifestyles. However, the interaction between the education level and consumer media and the simultaneous effect of these two independent variables on the dependent variable of lifestyle are statistically significant (sig= 0/051; F=1/598). In other words, the average of lifestyle of media consumption in each of these six groups is not equal. The other result of this table is the value of R squared at the bottom of the table. This coefficient shows an adjusted value 457%. The two variables of education and consumable media have been able to explain 457% of the variance of the dependent variable of lifestyle.

**Table 3. Two-way variance analysis of variables between education level, media consumption and lifestyle**

Source of change	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Average squares	F	Sig
Between whole groups	301116/333	202	1490/675	-	0/005
Inside of whole groups	29675/667	1	741/892	-	0/000
media consumption	155324/682	113	1374/555	1/853	0/014
Education level	8766/187	5	1753/237	2/363	0/057
media Consumption*	99582/619	84	1185/507	1/598	0/051
Education level					
Error	29675/667	40			
total	17914515/...	381			

a. R Squared = .910 (Adjusted R Squared = .457)

Table 3 and 4 compare the differences between the average lifestyle of rural and nomadic areas with different education groups. The average life style of education is less than 0.001.

**Table 4. Bonferroni test, two-way analysis of variance between two variables of education level and lifestyle**

Education level(I) Education level(J)	Difference of Averages	Standard error	Sig	Highest level	Lowest level
Illiterate diploma	-25/9167	5/55987	0/001	8/5598-	43/2735-
Associate BA	32/8333- 35/5833-	6/47705 5/27456	0/000 0/000	12/6132- 19/1172-	53/0534- 52/0495-
MA and higher sub diploma BA	29/0833- 20/1570-	7/86284 5/44226	0/010 0/010	4/5371- 3/1673-	53/6296- 37/1466-
diploma Illiterate	25/9167	5/55987	0/001	43/2735	8/5598
Associate Illiterate BA	32/8333 35/5833	6/47705 5/27456	0/000 0/000	53/0534 52/0495	12/6132 19/1172
Illiterate sub diploma MA and higher	20/1570 29/0833	5/44226 7/86284	0/010 0/010	37/1466 53/6296	3/1673 4/5371

H3: There seems to be a significant difference between men and women, media consumption and rural and nomadic lifestyle.

The results of Table 5 show that the separated effect of media consumption variable on significant lifestyle is significant (sig=0/008; F=1/650). The effect of gender variable on lifestyle is not significant on the basis of the F test (sig=0/416; F=0/668). That is, statistically, the average lifestyle of women and men is the same and not different. However, the interaction between gender and consumer media and the simultaneous effect of these two independent variables on the dependent variable are statistically significant (Sig=0/252; F=1/183). In other words, the average lifestyle of media consumption in the groups is not equal. The other result of this table is the value of R squared at the bottom of the table. This coefficient shows an adjusted value of 256%. The two variables of gender and consumable media have been able to explain 256% of the variance of the dependent variable.

**Table 5. Two-way variance analysis of variables between women and men, media consumption and lifestyle**

Source of change	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Average squares	F	Sig
Between whole groups	245399/583	158	1553/162	1/528	0/016
Inside of whole groups	14222418/937	1	14222418/937	13990/507	0/000
media consumption	189497/345	113	1676/968	1/650	0/008
Women and men media	679/087	1	678/087	0/668	0/416
Consumption* women and men	52925/292	44	1202/847	1/183	0/252
Error	85392/417	84			
Total	17914515/...	381			

a. R Squared = .742 (Adjusted R Squared = .256)

H4: There seems to be a significant difference between the marital status, media consumption and rural and nomadic lifestyle.

The results of Table 6 show that the separated effect of marital status (sig=0/646;F=0/556) on lifestyle is significant. Statistically, the average lifestyle of married, single and divorced is not different. There is a significant difference in lifestyle between married, single, divorced and deceased wife with different media consumption. The married, single and divorced have different lifestyles with different media consumption. However, the interaction between marital status and consumer media and the simultaneous effect of these two independent variables on the dependent variable of lifestyle are statistically significant (Sig=0/473; F=1/011). In other words, the average lifestyle of media consumption in the marital status is not equal. The other result of this table is the value of R squared at the bottom of the table. This coefficient shows an adjusted value 208%. These two variables of marital status and consumable media have been able to explain the variance of the dependent variable of lifestyle.

**Table 6. Two-way variance analysis of variables between marital status, media consumption and lifestyle**

Source of change	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Average squares	F	Sig
Between whole groups	244155/167	162	1507/131	1/392	0/049
Inside of whole groups	2040551/689	1	2040551/689	1884/235	0/000
media consumption	190423/176	113	1685/161	1/556	0/018
Marital status	1806/880	3	602/293	0/556	0/646
Media consumption*	50383/943	46	1095/303	1/011	0/473
Marital status					
Error	86636/833	80	1082/960		
Total	1791451/...	381			

a. R Squared = .738 (Adjusted R Squared = .208)

H5: There seems to be a significant difference between the social class, media consumption and rural and nomadic lifestyle.

The results of Table 7 show that the separated effect of social class on lifestyle is significant (sig=0/976; F=0/117). Regarding the separated effect of media consumption (sig=0/028; F=0/479), there is a significant difference in the lifestyle between the upper, lower, medium, very high and very low levels of media consumption. In other words, the average lifestyle of media consumption in the social class is not equal. The other result of this table is the value of R squared at the bottom of the table.

Two variables of social class and consumable media have been able to explain 158% of the variance of the dependent variable of lifestyle.

**Table 7. Two-way variance analysis of variables between social class, media consumption and lifestyle**

Source of change	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Average squares	F	Sig
Between whole groups	229560/083	154	1490/650	1/296	0/091
Inside of whole groups	3204704/544	1	3204704/544	2785/821	0/000
Media consumption	192221/939	113	1701/079	1/479	0/028
Social class	538/286	4	134/571	0/117	0/976
Media consumption*	37446/912	37	1012/079	0/880	0/662
Social class					
Error	101231/917	88	1150/363		
Total	1791451/...	381			

a. R Squared = .694 (Adjusted R Squared = .158)

H6: There seems to be a significant difference between the number of household members, media consumption and the rural and nomadic lifestyle.

The results of Table 8 show the separated effect of the number of household members on lifestyle based on the F-test (sig=0/215; F=1/447). In fact, the number of household members with different media consumption has different lifestyles. There is a significant relationship between the effect of media consumption and lifestyle (sig=0/007; F=2/021). That is, statistically, the average lifestyle is different from the media consumption. In other words, the average lifestyle of media consumption in the seven household groups is not equal. Another result of this table is the value of R squared at the bottom of the table. The adjusted value shows that the two variables of the number of household members and consumable media can jointly explain 418% of the variance of the dependent variable.

**Table 8. Two-way variance analysis of variables between the number of household members, media consumption and lifestyle**

Source of change	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Average squares	F	Sig
Between whole groups	1476/804	203	1476/804	1/858	0/012
Inside of whole groups	9217987/029	1	9217987/029	11596/029	0/000
Media consumption	181568/124	113	181568/124	2/021	0/007
Number of household members	1150/316	7	1150/316	1/447	0/215
media consumption*	98148/605	83	98148/605	1/448	0/085
Number of household members					
Error	31000/833	39	31000/833		
Total	17914515/...	381			

. R Squared = .906 (Adjusted R Squared = .418)

H7: There seems to be a significant difference between the occupational groups, media consumption and rural and nomadic lifestyle.

The results of Table 9 show the separated effect of occupational groups on the lifestyle based on the value of the F test (sig=0/089; F=1/979). There is a significant difference in lifestyle between occupational groups and different

media consumption. The effect of consumer media on lifestyle is significant ( $\text{sig}=0/066$ ;  $F=1/493$ ). That is, statistically, the average lifestyle is different from the media consumption. However, the interaction between occupational groups and consumer media, and the simultaneous effect of these two independent variables on the dependent variable of lifestyle are statistically significant ( $\text{sig}=0/251$ ;  $F=1/207$ ).

**Table 9. Two-way variance analysis of variables between occupational groups, media consumption and lifestyle**

Source of change	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Average squares	F	Sig
Between whole groups	289937/883	198	1464/332	1/577	0/037
Inside of whole groups	11779194/598	1	11779194/598	12686/211	0/000
Media consumption	156694/065	113	1386/673	1/493	0/066
Occupational groups	11022/521	6	1837/087	1/979	0/089
Media consumption*	88549/796	79	1120/883	1/207	0/251
Occupational groups Error	40854/167	44	928/504		
Total	17914515/...	381			

a. R Squared = .876 (Adjusted R Squared = .321)

Table 10 compares the difference between the average lifestyle of rural and nomadic and different occupational groups.

The average lifestyle of the occupational group is significant for the agronomist. Average lifestyle of the herdsman and employee group is at a level less than 0.000, occupational group of worker and employee at a level less than 0.00, occupational group of employee and unemployed at a level smaller than 0.003, occupational group of employee and herdsman at a level less than 0.049.

**Table 10. Bonferroni test, two-way analysis of variance between two variables of occupational groups and lifestyle**

Occupational group (I)	Difference of Averages	standard error	Sig	Highest level	Lowest level
Occupational groups (J)					
Agronomist					
Employee	-37/5606	9/29619	0/004	7/5852	67/5360
Herdsman					
Employee	51/5398-	8/43922	0/000	24/3277-	78/7519-
Unemployed	20/7281-	6/40892	0/049	0/0627-	41/3935-
laborer					
Employee	43/8589-	9/54324	0/001	-13/0869	74/6308-
Employee					
Agronomist	32/8333	9/29619	0/004	67/5360	7/5852
Herdsman	51/5398	8/43922	0/000	78/7519	24/3277
laborer	43/8589	9/54324	0/001	74/6308	13/0869
Unemployed	30/8117	7/36636	0/003	54/5644	7/0590
other Occupational	31/3545	7/68678	0/004	56/1404	6/5687
Unemployed					
Herdsman	35/5833	6/40892	0/049	41/3935	0/0627
Employee	30/8117	7/36636	0/003	7/0590	54/5644
Other occupational ststus	31/3545-	7/68678	0/004	6/5687	56/1404-

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

From Bourdieu's point of view, consumption should be regarded as a bunch of social and cultural practices. Some families in the working class may be likely to earn more income than many middle-class families but according to Bourdieu, these cultural and symbolic factors affecting their cultural model are not merely incomes. The tendency of people to specific artistic patterns and styles is largely due to their socialization at home, school, and society (Moqaddas Jafari, et al., 2007, p. 86).

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