The Importance of Citizen Participation in Organizing Urban Propaganda (A Case of Mashhad city, Iran)

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Abstract

Mashhad is one of the largest pilgrimage metropolises in eastern north of Iran. The current study has been done to identification of urban propaganda pathology in Mashhad city and improved the role of citizen’s participation in promotion of urban landscape in the cast study region. Statistical society of this research includes 70 experts of Mashhad municipality. The majority of population are male (83.1%) and the overwhelming majority have BA degree (47.5%) with mean age of 33.48 and 8 years of experiences. Results showed that the most important factor in organizing and achievement of municipal propaganda is citizen participation. Also, this paper was presented some solutions to attract the citizen participation in Mashhad municipality programs. According to this fact, Mashhad municipality and other local organizations have to done the necessary planning for improving the urban landscape and take step towards desirable, effective and soothing environmental Graphic.

Keywords: Citizen Participation, Municipal Propaganda, Mashhad Municipality

Introduction

Mashhad is the capital city of Khorana Razavi Province, in the North East of Iran. It has an area of 148 km² and its current population is 2.8 million. It has witnessed rapid growth in the last three decades, mostly because of its economic, social and religious attractions. Since 1987, its population has grown 3.6 times while its extent at the same time period has doubled (Rafiee, 2007; Mahiny & et al, 2009).

It is located in north east of the country close to the borders of Afghanistan and Turkmenistan (Astaneh Quds, 2013; Mashhad Municipality, 2013). Mashhad as other shrine cities in the world has different potential’s in the field of attraction urban tourism. In this between, advertising as a powerful tool has a key role in exacerbated of this process (Tavakoli & Heydari, 2012; Feizabadi & et al, 2012). In this paper we analysis the importance of citizen participation in urban propaganda in Mashhad city by statistical and observations methods. Municipal propaganda is responsible to transmit messages as subset of environmental graphic with which it is easily possible to put educational, cultural, social, economic, commercial and political messages in public view and direct them toward better life and how to live (Asadollahi, 2009). Nowadays, Technology is the main stimulus of rapid development in the world. Technology leads to manufacture, production and their variety in human life, so it is necessary to establish a supply and demand market. In this era, advertising is the most important tool to achieve these relationships (Heydari & Fanni, 2013; Hejazi, 2013; Qanbari, 2013). In 1994, the first banner advertisement was introduced, and as a result, a new realm of advertising emerged. It was then that the idea that the Internet could be used as a marketing communication tool became a reality. In the ten years since, the Internet advertising industry has exploded. By the end of 2003, annual online advertising revenues reached $9.6 billion in the United States, an increase of almost 33% over 2004, of which display advertisements accounted for approximately 19%. Online advertising revenues continue to increase, and are estimated to exceed $12.5 billion for 2005, a 30% increase over 2004 (Lohia, Donthu & Yaveroglu, 2007). There are many definition of urban advertising that much organization’s applied it to promotions and marketing such as IAA and IMA. One of the most famous of
these definitions is any form of impersonal introduction and promotion of thoughts, goods and service that is performed by mass media via payment and a certain sponsor seeking to influence in specific audience (Grigor, 2002). Good advertising is a necessity, in other word it is essential for communication as well as to describe and express products and proceedings along with individual demands and thought. Municipal propaganda is a science and art to shape how to use various forms, designs and colors to receive systematic and planned message and improve and simplify municipal relationships and communication. In this area, it is important to make more beautiful urban landscape or consideration factors such as environmental psychology of each district of city, culture and social nature of each one as well as issues including nature, environment and traffic rules (Yekpesar, 2009). On the other hand, service organizations seek to provide high quality service for customer and interaction in operational level. Nature of service requires active cooperation of customer to provide service. So in organizations with the need of customer cooperation in providing service, lack of necessary cooperation makes the optimal process difficult to do (Gronross 1984, Parasuraman et all 1988). Experience has shown that governmental plans without people participation become ineffective. Moreover, the most important advantages of beneficiaries’ participation is protection and control of existing arenas which play an important role to continuing operation and make an appropriate bed. Also it suggests that participation provides a necessary field to identify and guide talented people and utilize their abilities in managing own affairs and execute. Participation is felt more than ever in Iran, therefore, empowerment of people, reduce municipal problems and achieving development which depended on transition from traditional society to modernity, is considered as fundamental issue in municipal management. It only is achieved by proper usage of power and existing talents of citizens in participation program framework (Qrachorlo et al, 2007). However, many large cities of Iran are not in compliance with development process of population in cities and urban management is faced with a challenge. Meantime, lack of attention to the future and municipal capacities and in other word, lack of systematic sight to advertising issue along with physical components and urban soul, has been created damages and challenge. So it is essential to survey impact of citizen participation to fix damages and in other word organizing municipal advertising.

Background
Municipal propaganda is a set of promotional media in urban space that is affected mostly by progress of promo affairs and considered as one of the main part of campaign (Ahangari, 2005; Counseling Engineers DHV). Now, cities are filled with graphical informative symptoms and other elements around the world which considered as a regulator and helpful factor as well as an economic development tools for managers and anchors to execute rules and regulations. Nowadays, important cities are in competition with each other in the field of trade and tourism around the world and continue to find more attractive and illustrative tools to guide and draw attention of visitors. Visual signs of service, traffic signs, and written and visual guidance systems in public and private places, commercial advertisement and dozens of other elements play an important and undeniable role to provide service, guide, facilitate municipal traffic and transportation and convey information (Dehqhan, 1994). There are three important stages in environmental advertising. First stage is seeable graphic and design. “Good visibility” is important issue in this stage. For this, graphical tricks must be applied to make it visible for you. Next step is message transmission and finally is proper understood of the idea behind the work (Ebrahimzade & Kohzad, 2010). The aim of environmental advertisement is idea behind the work that should influence in your
thinking. As can be inferred from the title, Outdoor Advertising refers to a group of advertising media installed in the surroundings and settled in visible and publicly. On the other hand, based on academic definition, outdoor advertising refers to any kind of advertisement out of customer purchase end point (Hamsi, 1981).

Environmental Advertising can be divided into two groups in an overall classification:

Indoor Advertising: this advertising is defined in roofed and surrounded space. Special features of this group are included low distance between supervisor and statue and consequently required elegance to provide effects of advertising, dimension limitations and being safe from environmental damages (sunshine, wind, rain …).

Outdoor Advertising: it refers to any kind of advertisement outside roofed space. This group is not restricted by dimension and proposed method. For example, the distance between supervisor and statue is variable and they are exposed to different natural and other damage. Therefore, they are also known as environmental, outside, street and out of home advertising (Haman, 2009). In other word, these places consisted of all urban public places, floor and rim of sidewalk and roadway routes, bridges and surfaces and buildings' roof and framework of urban furniture, vehicles, light legs, wall of installed statue in city, city sky (aerial advertising), seeable trees and mountains situated in city territory and any places in sight of public, consequently outdoor people must be addressed by installing advertising tools where there is no any legal prohibition for installing panel and count as municipal propaganda bed. All these affairs should be organized by doing all proceedings related to policy making and identifying and organizing different urban activities and identifying applicants, required licensing, locating, fixing the problems, attempt to supply required facilities, providing executive regulations and guidelines, establishing monitoring systems, prevent violations, gathering or any proceedings to provide more favorable municipal propaganda service.

Study area

Mashhad is the capital city of Khorasan Razavi Province, in the North East of Iran. It has an area of 148 km2 and its current population is 2.8 million. It has witnessed rapid growth in the last three decades, mostly because of its economic, social and religious attractions. Since 1987, its population has grown 3.6 times while its extent at the same time period has doubled (Rafiee, 2007).

![Fig. 1. Map of case study area.](http://www.ijmsbr.com)

Methodology
The research method we have used is based on the descriptive-analytical approach. We used a documental method to collect information. In order to applied methodology is based on correlation, field and survey methods. Statistical society of current research was including 70 experts in the field of advertising in municipal service staff and affiliated companies to Mashhad municipality. According to characteristics of population, sampling method is simple random sampling without replacement and each expert is considered as a sample. Morgan's sample size estimation table was used to determine size of sample, so 59 experts were selected as final sample. Research variables are including municipal propaganda as independent variable, and dependent variable is citizen participation in improving status of municipal propaganda. According purposes of study, the best tools for gathering data is a questionnaire. After several studies and interview with experts and people, a questionnaire consisted of 24 questions was provided.

Fig. 2. Conceptual diagram of Research.

Results
Reliability and Validity of Questionnaire
Reliability of questionnaire is approved according to being standardized questionnaire. Also, Alpha Cronbach is used to approve validity of questionnaire, so internal validity of questionnaire is approved according to determined coefficient of Alpha for questions.
Table 1  
Rating table to items of questions in research questionnaire  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completely Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Completely Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2  
Alpha Cronbach coefficient table for research variable  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Questions Headline</th>
<th>Alpha Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Citizen participation in improving status</td>
<td>0.7677</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Internal validity is confirmed according to appropriate coefficient of alpha.

Findings
- 83.1% of respondents were male and 16.9% female.
- Regarding education, 23.7% had advanced diploma and less, 47.5% Bs, 28.8% Ms and higher. Average of sample age was 33.48 years with standard deviation of 7.655. Youngest person was 23 years old and oldest 56 years old.
- Average of job experience of sample was 7.8 years with standard deviation of 7.112, the less experience was 1 year and the most experience 24 years

Hypothesis: citizen participation is not favorable in improving municipal propaganda status
As regards, being unfavorable variable of citizen participation in improving municipal propaganda status have normal distribution, so single sample parametric t test will be used for testing hypothesis. If we assume that:
\[ H_0 : \mu \leq 3 \]
\[ H_1 : \mu > 3 \]
A rule of thumb is to test the null hypothesis against hypothesis 1, as below: If and only if, P-value 0.05, then null hypothesis is rejected and hypothesis 1 is accepted,

Table 3  
Student t test results table for being unfavorable variable of citizen participation in improving municipal propaganda status  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>T Statistic</th>
<th>Freedom Degree</th>
<th>Significant Level of Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.719</td>
<td>7.83</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.00001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As you can see in above table in \( \alpha = 0.05 \), null hypothesis is rejected because of significant level of 0.00001 and H1 will be accepted. It means citizen participation is not favorable in improving
municipal propaganda status according ideas of experts in Mashhad municipality. Also this study outlined the lack of citizen participation in improving and organizing municipal propaganda status that is more important than other factors and in the first priority with the average of 3.73.

**Conclusion**

Results of testing hypothesis approved that citizen participation is not favorable in improving municipal propaganda status. Indeed, part of irregular urban layout is due to lack of citizen participation and affected by municipal propaganda and existing problem in municipal landscape. In other hand, citizen participation is necessary and important to organize this situation.

**Suggestions**

1. Firstly, participation must be occurred in governing system. It means associations involved in municipal propaganda and have assigned themselves a high volume of advertising must provide a mechanism for coordination. These associations and executive systems must form an active teamwork and make required policies for better and effective execution of rules and codify regulations and control execution of their beneficiaries. Some of these associations are including municipality, trade unions and associations.

2. Different educational packages for citizens must be provided under social and educational specialists monitoring to observe municipal rules and adherence to ethics of citizenship in different levels and ages in Mashhad.

3. Public training must be provided to maintain urban landscape based on citizen participation and emphasize on urban landscape as well as municipal propaganda that must be considered as effective component in urban landscape by virtual, video and environmental media under communication specialists monitoring.

4. Informing citizens regarding importance of environmental graphic and urban landscape and their sensitivity based on accepting social responsibility to opposite against destroying urban landscape and how to properly use from outdoor advertising bed.

5. Acquaintance with municipal propaganda topic and method of citizen participation in improving and organizing it by local and school community councils in Mashhad.

6. Informing citizens about pre and postoperative data of municipal propaganda licensing to increase effective participation. This information must be included sufficient details and easily accessible, because receivers of information always suffer from lack of information and in citizens' point of view these are organizations that don't provide sufficient information.

7. Establishing binding and legal stimulus is essential to better perform duties by citizens.

8. New electronic design method must be provided to receive licensing service from municipality by citizens as well as training them about added value of this method than other licensing methods.

9. Motivational strategies should be provided to strengthen customer tendency for participation and compensate the cost of participation as well as valorize that in order to encourage beneficiaries of municipal propaganda spaces.

10. Municipality involvement against citizenship complaints is important same as enhancing tendency to participation. Indeed, citizen complaints against trespass can be considered as a way to participate after providing service. While lack of achievement to high quality urban landscape in spite of citizen efforts, re- inciting for citizen participation will be highly difficult. So municipality should provide a powerful mechanism to deal with complaints against illegal advertising and consider individual citizen as an observer in this field.

**Resources**


http://www.ijmsbr.com