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## **BILLBOARDS, BANNERS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper first analyzes the content of billboards and banners on highways in Tehran and sees these panels as a public medium. Then, it evaluates the impact of the contents of these panels on the citizens of the 6th region of Tehran. The purpose of this study is to determine that what kind of messages transmit through billboards and banners and how much they are successful. To achieve this, we first used content analysis method and photography technique to photograph panels which selected randomly in fall 2013 in Tehran highways. After determining panels' content, we used survey method and questionnaire technique to measure the effectiveness of contents on the citizens of the 6th region of Tehran. In this part, we used cluster random sampling. The result shows that 83.7 % of panels teach social and moral responsibility. 14.1% teach social participation and 2.2% teach political literacy. This result suggests that the teaching offered in the city mainly creates minimal citizen and does not pay attention to educate maximize citizen. Also, the total average of effectiveness of panels is obtained equal to 3.01, which shows a relatively high figure. Meanwhile, the billboards and banners with moral themes with an average of 3.64 had the greatest impact. After them, training with themes of Laws and Regulations with mean of 3.32 and the Environmental Protection with mean of 3.28 had the highest.

**Keywords:** *Astrocytes Panel, Billboard, Citizenship Education*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The increasing trend of urban and urbanization has led to major changes occur in cities in terms of quality and quantity. On the one hand, the extent and scope and with better word the spatial expansion of cities has gained and on the other hand, personal and social characteristics of urban residents have undergone fundamental changes. The man in the city is constantly exposes to a variety of stimuli, observes, are treated, multiple and sometimes contradictory messages receive and interpret them, and in dealing with the reality outside the mind, often without self knows, learns, and makes self. Among the various factors, the media as an affective part of social and cultural life of citizens have accepted and considered as one of the main constituent elements of social life in modern societies. Among these the use of billboards that are attractive among environmental media, are becoming more popular every day, so that they form part of the identity of the metropolis. In fact, billboards like phone booths and bus stations and ... are considered as part of the symbol of a city. Perhaps the reason is that they are more capable than other media to transfer the most possible inquiry in the shortest time with the least words. It is no doubt that these days people are driving more time than before and this entail that billboards have expanded in city space. Although there are variety of themes for billboards and banners such as billboards with theme of information, cultural, educational, commercial, social, aesthetic and artistic, in this study, we consider only the billboards and banners with social themes in Tehran and observe these type of panels as effective media in educating citizens and analyze the following instances:

1. The contents of messages
2. The rate of panels influence on Citizenship Education

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In other words, in this study we first inquire this issue that "What values and messages on billboards and banners are expressed in Tehran?" And then "how much these panels affect as a medium on the citizenship education?"

Every day, number of billboards, banners and their audience is increasing in the cities. Since these panels transfer information to people or prevalent specific beliefs in the community, it is important to study what kind of messages is published, which values are transmitted by these messages and how it can effect on people.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

Using the ideas of Weber and Durkheim, citizenship education as a component of social phenomena citizenship lead to political, social, cultural participation and social sense of community and will ultimately be strengthen social cohesion and social order. Durkheim believes that dominant social fact is not seen. It is concealed and displays another element for representing of himself. This view is also seen in uncritically Linguistics Saussure. From Saussure's view the language is a system of signs. Signs are composed and signified of two parts. Signifier is shapes and indicative of the symptoms. For example, audio or video specifies form of words on paper. Signified must be understood through the concepts and meanings. The relationship between sounds and sign language is not a fixed relationship but it is optional layouts. Meaning will be made through the choice and combination of signs around the settlement and replacement. According to Saussure's semiotics discussion although billboards are not linguistic, they are significant and should be analyzed in relation with all its components. Meanwhile, the concept of a billboard that appeared at first glance can only be the representative of dominant fact, which is not seen. (Barker, 2009: 166)

In another discussion, the vision of Harold Lasvl says that care environment and create solidarity between the various components of society in response to the environment in which the transmission of cultural heritage makes from generation to generation, is the main task of means of communication. Meanwhile, some others consider role of recreational, news, homogenization, notification and sense of community. (Saroukhani, 1993: 84)

In terms of Jurgen Habermas, the public sphere needs to achieve social consensus in which human beings can talk and decide freely, wisely and away from the domination. Habermas defined the public sphere as a social fact. In fact, the public sphere is the realm of social life in which the exchange of information, ideas and opinions on matters of public concerns happens and in resulting, the public opinion in various areas is formed. But since nowadays a lot of people cannot physically be present together, using appropriate media in less distorted communication is essential. (Ritzer, 2010: 693-695)

"Pierre Bourdieu emphasizes on the dialectical relationship between objective structures and subjective phenomenon. According to him, on the one hand there are objective structures which are based on the objective forms. On the other hand, if someone asked to study daily individual and collective efforts which cause change or retain these structures, review should consider the subjective forms". (Ritzaer, 2010: 674)

Objective structures can be considered as the social, cultural and environmental facilities. According to Bourdieu, the objective structures are independent of consciousness and volition of agents that can lead operations and subjective forms and humans collide through objective structures with the social world.

### **Definitions of Concepts**

In this paper, several concepts are used that are defined below:

Any signs including verbal, visual or audio that can produce mean, call message. Expression of the message that is selected for expressing purpose, forms message content. Therefore, the content of any message contains the information set that sender selects, processes, and then provides it. (Mohsenian Rad, 1995: 220)

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Urban advertising is information structures and affecting elements of the city in the quality of civic life. The huge panels that provide suitable space for advertising in the government, craftsmen and suppliers of goods, will be told Billboard. Practically, to each external space that advertising is installed on there is said billboard.

Citizenship education is growth and development of potential of individuals and groups in order to participate and act consciously and responsibly in social, political, economic and cultural life. The trainings include human rights, sustainable and comprehensive development, ethics and values, peace, social equality and respect to differences. (Lotf Abadi: 2006)

Citizenship education is based around teaching "ethics and social responsibility", "strengthen community participation" and "developing political literacy". (Zakaei, 2002)

While citizenship education implies an active and participatory learning process (Eftekharzade, 2009) minimal model of citizenship (citizenship education towards MIN) and maximal model (educating citizens towards MAX) represents distinct between civic education and citizenship education. On the one hand, citizenship has structural and political dimensions and on the other hand has the emotional aspect that is related to culture and individual identity. At the minimum level, citizens are supposed to have knowledge about their responsibilities, rights, identities. Meanwhile, the maximum level include security, active participation, political literacy and minimum income. (Mahmudi, 2011)

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to answer the research questions, first we used content analysis to analyze the contents of billboards and banners in Tehran, Then used survey and questionnaire to evaluate the effectiveness of these contents on citizens of 6th region of Tehran.

### **1. Content analysis**

#### **1-1 statistical population**

Statistical population of the first part of this study is contents of billboards and banners with social themes (including texts and images) in Tehran. Sampling was conducted using a photographic technique. We took photos of all billboards and banners which were installed on highways in Tehran (capital of Iran) on fall 2013. After omitting the duplicate panels, 135 types of signs were recorded and were coded from 1 to 135.

#### **1-2 description Criteria**

In this paper, the description criteria which is based categories, is citizenship education.

#### **1-3 Classify according description criteria**

At this level, three categories are used: Moral and social responsibility, social participation, political (knowledge) literacy. In order to analyze the research findings, the implication of minimum and maximum citizen are used.

#### **1-4 unit recording**

The unit recording is a significant part of the content which is selected and put in related category and will be counted. In this study, the unit recording is each existing billboards and banners after omitting duplicate sample.

#### **1-5 Identify elements of each category**

In the first part of the study, a inverse questionnaire was designed to classify content of panels. Then all contents have been carefully studied and according to description criteria, their subjects specified and were recorded in the questionnaire. To avoid bias, the questionnaire was reviewed several times with different people and the final classification was obtained.

#### **1-6 Information Process and Conclusion**

After data collection, they were processed using SPSS software and were placed in distinct tables. Finally, summary and conclusions have been made.

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**1-7 measurement instruments**

In this part, inverse questionnaire was designed consisted of 5 categories of questions. Each set of questions is needed in order to answer the research questions.

**2. Survey**

**2-1 statistical population and sampling method**

Statistical population of the second part of research is citizens of the 6th region of Tehran, capital of Iran. Sampling method of this part is a random cluster. According to this, two districts were selected randomly among 6 districts of this region, which are district 3 and 4. Considering that each of these districts is divided into three neighborhoods, four neighborhoods were selected randomly that are including neighborhoods of Abbas Abad, Behjat Abad, shariati and Fatemi. According to the streets and house numbers in every neighborhood, 350 house numbers were randomly selected and questionnaires were distributed among their residents who have observed at least one of the billboards or banners on the city. Due to falling questionnaire and the cost and time constraints, the 274 completed questionnaires were obtained.

**2-2 Measurement instruments**

Measurement instrument of this part of research is questionnaire. For each of the categories obtained through content analysis of panels, some statements were designed to measure the influence of contents on citizens. Statements use Likert spectrums with 5 options from completely agree to completely disagree.

**2-3 Pilot test**

To assess the internal validity, the questionnaire was distributed among 50 persons and Cronbach's alpha was calculated. Finally, after removing 3 statements of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was equal to 0.8.

**2-4 Information Process**

After completing the questionnaires, the data were processed by SPSS software. Therefore, the mean of data is used to measure the influence.

**Findings**

Results of the first part of study show that the moral educations with 21.5 percent and religious values with 19.3 percent are the highest frequencies, respectively (Table 1). Besides, 68.1 percent of panels were banners. (Table 2)

**Table1: List of categories in respectively frequency**

| percent | Message categories                                  |    |
|---------|---|----|
| 21.5    | Moral Education                                     | 1  |
| 19.3    | Religious values                                    | 2  |
| 14.1    | Follow the rules                                    | 3  |
| 11.9    | Civic participation                                 | 4  |
| 10.4    | Environmental Protection                            | 5  |
| 7.4     | Loyalty and commitment to social - political values | 6  |
| 4.4     | Wise judgment in social relations and decisions     | 7  |
| 4.4     | Education Training                                  | 8  |
| 2.2     | Criticism   | 9  |
| 2.2     | Health  | 10 |
| 1.5     | Political Tolerance                                 | 11 |
| 0.7     | Political Participation                             | 12 |
| 100     | Sum   | 13 |

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**Table2. Percentage frequency of Media type**

| percent | Media Type |   |
|---------|------------|---|
| 31.9    | Billboard  | 1 |
| 68.1    | Banner     | 2 |

Three different modes of representation including photography, graphics and painting, were studied that among these, photography and graphics equally have accounted for 37.8 percent. In any of panels are not used the method of painting. (Table 3)

**Table3. Percentage frequency of representation modes**

| Percent | Modes of representation |   |
|---------|-------------------------|---|
| 37.8    | Photography             | 1 |
| 37.8    | Graphics                | 2 |
| 0.0     | Painting                | 3 |
| 24.4    | None                    | 4 |

According to investigating three groups of picture elements including text, image, and combined text and image, the highest element in the panels is related the combining text and image with 65.2 percent. (Table 4)

**Table4. Percentage frequency of the types of picture elements**

| Percent | Types of picture elements |   |
|---------|---------------------------|---|
| 65.2    | Combining text and image  | 1 |
| 32.6    | Text                      | 2 |
| 2.2     | Image                     | 3 |

Among different kinds of notes on panels including poetry, slogans and text, text with 84.4% is allocated the maximum frequency to itself. (Table 5)

**Table5. Percentage frequency the types of writing**

| Percent | Types of writing |   |
|---------|------------------|---|
| 3.0     | Poetry           | 1 |
| 9.6     | Slogan           | 2 |
| 84.4    | Text             | 3 |
| 3.0     | No writing       | 4 |

The overall results of inquiring contents of billboards and banners in Tehran show that 83.7 % of panels teach social and moral responsibility. 14.1% teach social participation and 2.2% teach political literacy. (Table 6)

**Table6. Dimensions of Citizenship Education**

| Frequency | Percent | Contents             |   |
|-----------|---------|----------------------|---|
| 113       | 83.7    | Responsibility       | 1 |
| 19        | 14.1    | social participation | 2 |
| 3         | 2.2     | Political literacy   | 3 |
| 135       | 100     | Sum                  | 4 |

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The second part of the study show that among the 274 completed questionnaires, 51.3% was male and 48.7% was female, age range was 18 to 58 years. Total mean of impact of panels has resulted equal to 3.01 that show a relatively high figure. Meanwhile the panels with themes of moral educations with mean of 3.64 had the greatest impact. After that, panels with themes of laws and regulations with mean of 3.32 and environmental protection with mean of 3.28 are the greatest, respectively. (Table 7)

**Table7. List of categories based on the average impact**

| The mean of impact | Categories  |    |
|--------------------|---|----|
| 3.64               | Moral Education                                     | 1  |
| 3.32               | Compliance  | 2  |
| 3.28               | Environmental Protection                            | 3  |
| 3.11               | Civic participation                                 | 4  |
| 3.10               | Education training                                  | 5  |
| 3.08               | Criticism   | 6  |
| 3.04               | Religious values                                    | 7  |
| 2.99               | wise judgment in social relations and decisions     | 8  |
| 2.95               | Health  | 9  |
| 2.84               | Loyalty and commitment to social - political values | 10 |
| 2.55               | Political Participation                             | 11 |
| 2.16               | Political Tolerance                                 | 12 |
| 3.01               | Total mean  | 13 |

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

As Fereshte Kordestani (Kourdestani, 2011) and also Shahrooz Foroutankia (Foroutankia , 2011) have emphasized in their researches on the impact of learning trough media on social behaviors, we have achieved to this important in this research. Note that previous researches, including research of Fahime Pahlavan (Pahlavan, 2009), have focused only the content of advertising panels, however, this research is considered the panels with social-ethical theme as a medium for citizenship.

Billboards and banners in cities are the phenomenon of urban space. Newspaper or magazine audience can ignore its contents with flipping them. TV watchers can also turn the TV off or to be oblivious to it. But it is not possible for people to ignore panels in the city. They must endure it. The dramatic growth of billboards and banners installed in Tehran illustrates that in the body of this city, trough the stack of cars and humans, this form of media is discussed as a vital element in the civic life. In summary, we can say that according to the content analysis, panels’ theme tend to social and moral responsibility issues and they pay less attention to social participation and political literacy teaching. In other words, according to the themes and categories such as: discipline, following the formal rules, adherence to religious and ethical values and so on, and abundance of them, it seems that to the lowest level of citizen has been paid more attention which is desired in acquiring minimum citizen. Also, the total average of effectiveness of panels is obtained equal to 3.01, which shows a relatively high figure. This indicates the high potential of this media in social and cultural educations including citizenship education. The billboards and banners with moral themes that had the highest frequency are also accounted greatest effect. While, issues such as religious values with high frequency could not influence well.

Some of panels despite the high frequency have not been able to influence well. This rooted in poor planning and a lack of creativity, stereotyped messages, and inaccuracies in installation location. With a little care and creativity in presentation and design of content, using appropriate sizes and fonts, accuracy in color and readability can make this media more effective .Besides, The lack of some concepts in the context of panels including strengthening dialogue and partnership skills, effective communication skills, accountability and strengthening political tolerance is completely obvious and it seems that in order to use



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the full potential of this media, we need to spread the range of themes of panels towards the maximum citizenship.

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