

## **The Effect of Social Networks on Oral Advertisements and Tourists' Feelings in Northern Iranian Rivers**

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### **Abstract**

*Social media act as a dominant digital channel of communication, and in recent years, the use of social media in the tourism industry has also become very common. The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of social networks on oral advertisements of tourists regarding the role of feelings. This research is based on descriptive-survey method. The required information in this study is gathered through a questionnaire and a library and the statistical population of the tourists' research is in the Tajan River of Sari. The sample size is 383 subjects determined using Cochran's formula and Cronbach's alpha for the whole questionnaire was 0.89. The results of the research show that the social networks are effective on the feelings of the tourists. Therefore, in general, recognizing the feelings of the tourists to the destination should be done according to their desire to carry out advertisements and provide services. In addition, it was found that oral advertisements have a significant effect on the feelings and increasing the resurgence of the tourists to the region. According to the findings of the research, the tourists still trust oral advertisements carried out in the city more than the advertisements provided from the social networks.*

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**Keywords: social networks, oral advertisements, tourists, feelings, rivers in northern Iran**

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### **Introduction and statement of the problem**

Tourism is important in the global economy and is one of the main sources of foreign exchange earnings in countries (Hudson et al., 2015). With the growth and development of this industry, trade and competition have expanded. According to the World Tourism Organization, the industry has created 215 million jobs around the world, including about 7.4 percent of global employment is included. The second half of the twentieth century should be called the age of the tourism industry. In order to succeed in this industry, in addition to having the conditions of the tourism, it should be scheduled to attract the tourists and better introduce its facilities and conditions to the world tourism markets, because the domestic tourism is the only flow of factors inside the country and it will not add something to this society (Nasrollahivosta et al., 2013). Basically, the tourists need information about the destinations to choose their destination. They constantly collect information from mass media including TV, Internet satellite, and so on. Usually, however, the tourists prefer to receive a significant portion of their information from unofficial sources, including relatives, friends, acquaintances, and others (Severi et al., 2014). Those avoiding risk, unlike risk-takers, collect more information about a product or service (Hudson et al., 2016). Research has shown that oral advertisements have a significant impact on the reduction of consumer perceived risks, especially in the service sector, and the tourism industry, which is an industrial service, benefits from the advantages of oral advertisements for the tourists (Rusli, 2013). Social media as a dominant digital channel of communication is emerging, and although 67% of Internet users use social media (Pew Research Center, 2012), few people have knowledgeable about how social media affect the affections of brands and how social media-based relationships lead to desirable outputs, such as positive oral communication (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Also, using innovative approaches, river planning and sustainable development should not

follow a top-down approach. Public consultation and interaction with local communities are considered vital steps in planning and implementing measures for different river approaches, such as river regeneration. At the same time, these measures require the need for effective collaboration between the various levels of administration, including the preparation and implementation of strategic documents (Mousazadeh, 2018: 9) that the tourism around urban rivers is one of these sustainable river development approaches. Considering the importance of the tourism industry in Iran and especially the northern green areas of the country which are attractive areas for the tourism, the main objective of this study is to examine the effects of the social networks on oral advertisements regarding mediating role of the feelings.

#### **Rivers and tourism**

The climate and geography of the region are among the factors influencing the design of the city, so that the overall form of cities and urban spaces is influenced by the overall natural environment of the region. These factors, along with the responses to environmental concerns that have emerged in recent decades, point to the need to pay attention to the nature of the cities. In this regard, with regard to the expansion of the cities, the rivers are among the last spaces that express the presence of nature in cities, so that the ecological design of these natural spaces with the aim of developing tourism can provide suitable tourism spaces for people living in the city and even the surrounding towns in addition to supply the natural potentials of cities (Divsalar et al., 2015: 2). Urban rivers are also an important factor in shaping structural and functional changes in the cities and are an important tool for urban development and planning. It is an issue that addresses the attention of urban and regional experts to the use of such a space in the development of the cities, especially attracting the tourism in recent years (Mousazadeh & Izsak, 2018: 1). In northern Iran, due to the problems in the rivers and the problems caused by the rise of the Caspian Sea, since 1993, the river boundary group has been promoted to the River and Coastal Engineering Department. In 2007, the River and Coastal Engineering Bureau was established to carry out engineering works on the rivers and coasts, and is currently active

(Mousazadeh & Izsak, 2018) that this in turn could be a source of strength for the northern rivers in the interest of tourism officials.

#### **Investigation of oral advertisements**

Oral advertisements are a very important advertisement tool for organizations. According to research, oral advertisements are not as effective as traditional advertisements (Mazarol et al., 2007). Marketers are actively struggling to influence customers, but sometimes they ignore the fact that customers are constantly communicating with each other, and the most influential and effective one can happen here (Akbari and Tavakkoli Girsaraei, 2014). Oral advertisements have been considered by many marketers today. Previous studies have shown that oral advertisements can have a significant effect on consumer purchasing behaviors and their satisfaction with company products and services. Usually services are of an empirical nature and hence their evaluation is difficult before the visit. Consequently, the perceived risk is usually higher when it comes to services compared to purchasing goods. Researches have repeatedly shown the importance of oral advertisements for the customer in shaping attitudes towards making decisions about the tourists and reducing the risk associated with decisions. Sclares says that oral advertisements are essential for the success of service providers (Wangenheim & Bayo, 2004).

#### **Investigations of social networks, feelings**

Social media are one of the newest achievements of information technology and a new approach to marketing. On the other hand, the unlimited communication of the users in these media leads to interactions with users (Mollahosseini et al., 2014). The emergence of social media, the use of these media has become an integral part of the lives of many people and has had a direct impact on all aspects of their lives (Kirchner et al., 2010). Over the past decade, the use of social media has increased significantly (Moreno et al., 2012); the use of social media has also increased the multiplicity of citizenship. According to the definition of social media, the Internet media, which provides an online connection for users for quick and easy interaction, are introduced (Ahmadi, 2014). It defines social media as the online community of internet users who are willing to establish the relationships with other users in the domains of interest to both

parties. Citizens use social media as a communication tool (Hanson et al., 2011). The feelings of the customers are important. The welcome to social networks is that the Internet users can find the answer to most of their online needs on these websites.

Tangberg describes the social function of virtual networks in four categories:

- **Statement function:** Since people are willing to identify themselves and their group, they effectively express themselves in these networks.
- **Social function:** Being together and communicating create a sense of community among people and present advertisements in this section among friends.
- **Ad-hoc function:** Through communicating, people can share in each other's information.
- **Control function:** Communication in social virtual networks creates common actions and changes in the environment.

These functions are seen not only in interactive and virtual communication networks, but also in real communication networks. In the meantime, particular attention should be paid to the social function that plays a very important role in communicating in cyberspace (Moreno et al., 2012).

#### **Investigation of the feelings**

Researchers working on ads and advertisements have been interested in the feelings of the consumer and how to respond to marketing promotional activities from the past (Nasrollahivosta et al., 2013). In fact, human feelings play an effective role in his decision. Even logical people are involved in their own decisions when making decisions. Unfortunately, marketing does not pay much attention to these factors. But it is interesting to know that if the tourism experiences a good feeling in its first experience when it comes to dealing with the environment, it will forever find a positive mentality. On the contrary, this is true, which means that the tourist's discontent will create in his first experience a sense of constant hatred. Therefore, the attention to the feelings of the tourist is a long-term investment method for attracting the tourists and from the basic principles of marketing. For example, suppose you first travel to a tourist area, but you do not have enough space and services in that area. Certainly, this mentality will make it no longer be possible under any circumstances.

On the other hand, your friends and acquaintances are forbidden to go to this tourist area. Therefore, sometimes even a bad experience causes a negative perception of a feature and can affect a larger group of tourists (Pentina et al. 2013). According to these interpretations, Hudson et al presented a model in 2015 based on these issues that the assumptions and objectives of this research are based on that model. To do this, the following model is used to test the research hypotheses.

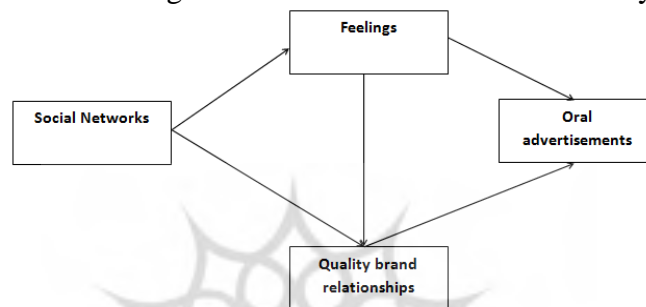


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Research (Hudson et al., 2015)

### Research method and data analysis

The method of collecting data in this research is based on library method and cross-sectional survey method. Initially, the researcher used 80 percent of digital resources and existing books to collect the required information. According to this topic, the subject area of The Tajan River in Sari and our statistical community are the tourists in the area. The timeframe of this study was carried out in summer and spring of 2018 due to the increase in the volume of tourist arrivals in these two seasons. Then, to collect information about the goal, the data were collected through a questionnaire. By collecting distributed questionnaires from the tourists, it has been observed that 383 questionnaires were entered into the software for statistical analyses that this number was calculated using the Cochran's formula. Another significant point is the percentage of complete responses to questionnaires, which in this research is 93.75% and Cronbach's alpha for the entire questionnaire was 0.89. Then, the information is addressed to the hypotheses in order to facilitate easier access to the response of the hypotheses analyzed through the required tests.

### Descriptive findings

In this section, the descriptive findings of the questionnaire are presented. In other words, these findings indicate the demographic

characteristics and socio-economic features of the statistical sample (tourists).

**Table 1: Individual-Social Features of Individuals**

Gender	Age	Marital status	Level of education	Monthly income				
Male	24-34	40.20	Illiterate	2.08	Less than 800 thousand	10.96		
	35-44	22.97	Single	%34	Under the diploma	6	800 thousand	32.14
	45-54	21.93			Diploma	11.48	1200 thousand	25.32
Female	55-64	9.39	Married	%66	Associate's Degree	19.84	1600 to 2 million USD	16.71
	+64	5.48			Bachelor's degree	378.85	More than 2 million USD	14.88
					Master's degree and higher	22.71		
Employment	Industry	Services	Employee	Self-employed	Unemployed			
	13.31	29.76	31.33	23.49	2.08			

Source: Research Findings, 2018

**Analytical findings of the research**

The first hypothesis related to the subject of research is that there is a significant relationship between the type and extent of using social networks with the feelings of tourists that the relationship may be desirable or undesirable, then, the study of the status of each of the indicators of this component and the hypothesis is discussed. In order to achieve the goals of the first hypothesis, Cramer, Spearman and linear regression tests have been used with regard to the type of indicators in the component of the tourism outcomes.

**Table 2: Fi Camer statistical test to measure the extent of the use of social networks in stimulating the feelings of tourists**

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Sample size	Cramer test statistic	Significance level
Emotion of the feelings of tourists	Very little less than an hour	383	0.046	NS 0.602
	1 to 5 hours during the day	383	-0.247	0.006*
	6 to 10 hours during the day	383	0.346	0.000*
	11 hours to the top during the day	383	-0.174	0.046**

Result: The findings of the research, 2018, level of significance up to 99% (\*), level of significance up to 95% (\*\*), insignificance (NS)

According to the above Table, which measures the extent of the use of social networks on the feelings of tourists through Cramer test, it can be concluded that the most effect in two levels of use is 1 to 5 hours and it has been 6 to 10 hours so that it shows a significant level of 99% in these two times, but the point to consider in this section is that

the excessive use among high-end users for 11 hours reduces its effect on the feelings. This lifetime is due to its reduced impact due to excessive use and low consumption during high usage hours. However, it should be noted that the users who use very little time or less than an hour do not normally have an effect, so that the insignificance of this section can be expressed in terms of the significance level of 0.602. However, this category is also undeniable.

**Table 3: Spearman test to measure the impact of different social networks on the feelings of tourists**

	Item	Sample size	Speaking test statistic	Significance level
The amount of excitement in tourists	Facebook	383	0.260-	0.004*
	Twitter	383	-0.083	<sup>NS</sup> 0.383
	YouTube	383	0.117	<sup>NS</sup> 0.200
	Telegram	383	-0.170	0.000*
	Instagram	383	0.319-	0.000*
	Others	383	0.250-	0.016**

Result: The findings of the research, 2018, level of significance up to 99% (\*), level of significance up to 95% (\*\*), insignificance (NS)

According to the above Table, using Spearman's statistical test to measure the effectiveness of different social networks on the amount of stimulation of the feelings of tourists, taking into account the responses of tourists and the outputs of this statistical test, we can argue that social networks, telegrams and instagrams from the tourists' point of view have been able to greatly influence the feelings and attraction of tourists, so that in these three networks, a significant level of 99% is observed, and in the section dedicated to other networks due to the variety of scumbags in this section have a significant level of 95 percent, which has been influenced by WhatsApp and Imo networks to a large extent, but YouTube and Twitter networks have not had a significant impact on tourists due to its poor performance and inactivity within the country.

**Table 4: The summarized model and estimated parameters for mapping the relationship of social networks with the feelings of tourists visiting the region**

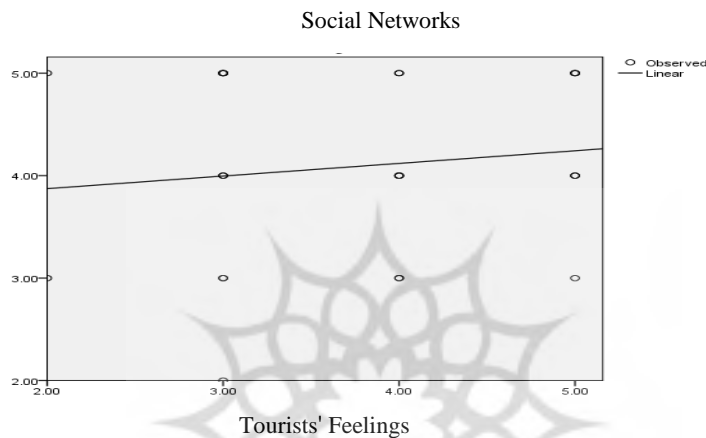
Equation	Variables	Sub-variables	Summarized model					Parameter Estimation	
			Square regression	Anova coefficient	Degree of freedom 1	Degree of freedom 2	Significance level	Fixed	Variable
Linear regression	Social networks	Feelings	0.016	0.359	1	22	0.019**	3.62	0.123

Result: The findings of the research, 2018, level of significance up to 99% (\*), level of significance up to 95% (\*\*), insignificance (NS)

According to the above Table, which through linear regression model measures the relationship between social networks and the feelings of



tourists referring to the region, according to the output figures derived from this model, it can be argued that this relationship is directly and social networks have directly influenced the emotional characteristics of tourists visiting the region, which can be seen in the estimation of the final parameters. Finally, to illustrate this relationship, a linear regression diagram is drawn up that explicitly states this issue.



**Diagram 1: Linear regression to draw how social networks communicate with the feelings of tourists visiting the region**  
Sources: Research Findings, 2018

**B) The second hypothesis of the research**

The second hypothesis related to the subject of research is that there is a meaningful relationship between oral advertisements and the feelings of tourists and their desire for travel, which may be desirable or undesirable, then it will examine the status of each of the indexes of this component and the hypothesis are discussed. In order to achieve the goals of the second hypothesis of research, given the types of indicators available in this section of the research, the tests of factor analysis, Kolmogorov and one-sample t-test have been used whose results are as follows.

**Table 5: The Effectiveness of oral advertisements on the feelings and increasing tourists**

Row	Item	Factor load
1	Your interest in tourism in the region with regard to river recognition	0.564
2	Oral advertisements make the person familiar with new areas.	0.644
3	Oral advertisements reduce advertisement costs.	0.345
4	Oral advertisements have a great effect on the feelings of tourists due to their close relationship	0.854
5	Oral advertisements motivate tourists through their impact on their emotions.	0.846
6	The quality of oral advertisements affects the growth of tourism in the river.	0.833
7	Oral advertisements can satisfy people's feelings to increase their attention to the characteristics of river tourism.	0.854

Sources: Research Findings, 2018

First, before testing the effective factors of oral advertisements on the feelings and attracting tourists, we evaluate them through a factor analysis model in order to find out which of the indicators would have the greatest impact from the viewpoint of tourists of The Tajan River in Sari. The most important factor was obtained by statistical analysis of factor analysis. Oral advertisements have a great effect on the feelings of tourists due to their close relationship. Oral advertisements have been designed to satisfy people's sentiment to increase their attention to the characteristics of river tourism, as the most important influential factors in the view of citizens and tourists, each of which has been studied with different grades. The results of the technique of factor analysis for oral advertisements on tourism and their feelings indicate that the two items, "oral advertisements, have a great effect on the feelings of tourists due to their close relationship" and "oral advertisements can satisfy people's feelings to increase their attention to the characteristics of the region's tourism" are considered as the most important items. These two items, in total, determine 68.9% of the total variance with (KMO = 0.656) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.71 and a factor of 0.854.

**Table 6: Evaluation of the results of citizens and tourists' opinions about the effect of oral advertisements on the feelings and increasing travel desire of tourists to the study area using Kolmogorov and one sample t-test**

Item	Sample size	Kolmogorov's test statistic	Significance level of Kolmogorov	Degree of freedom t	Amount of T test statistic	T significance level T
Your interest in tourism in the region with regard to river recognition	383	0.231	0.000*	382	21.12	0.000*
Oral advertisements make the person familiar with new areas.	383	0.285	0.000*	382	35	0.000*
Oral advertisements reduce advertisement costs.	383	0.249	0.000*	382	12.36	0.000*
Oral advertisements have a great effect on the feelings of tourists due to their close relationship	383	0.286	0.000*	382	16.23	0.000*
Oral advertisements motivate tourists through their influence on their feelings.	383	0.231	0.000*	382	27.60	0.000*
The quality of oral advertising affects the growth of tourism in the river.	383	0.224	0.000*	382	6.84	0.000*
Oral advertisements can satisfy people's feelings to increase their attention to the characteristics of river tourism	383	0.293	0.000*	382	9.45	0.000*

Result: The findings of the research, 2018, level of significance up to 99% (\*), level of significance up to 95% (\*\*), insignificance (NS)

According to the results of the Kolmogorov test, which is taken to evaluate the normal distribution of data, with regard to the significance level assigned to each of the components of the oral advertisement section affecting the feelings and travel desire of tourists by considering the amount of test statistic assigned to each subset, it can be concluded that with respect to the significance of the value of 0, 000 indicates the rejection of the zero assumption. That is, there is no reason to confirm the hypothesis that "the sample is of normal distribution." In other words, the distribution of this sample is not normal and there is a difference between the data in this distribution test. In general, people's opinions differed from responding to the sections related to this Table. In order to complete the function of this test, we use the following test (one sample t) which is due to the use of the sample typing test due to the normal distribution of data in the Kolmogorov test, which failed to research the goal through that test, that is why one sample t-test of the supplement is used in this section. According to the results of one sample t-test in the above Table, which evaluates the opinions of tourists on the influence of oral advertisements on their feelings, and the assessment of the normal distribution of responses by taking into account the previous test and this test, ultimately the power based on the outputs of this parametric test stated that the significance of the effect of this kind of advertisement was very high, which is highly influenced by most of the measured components. This category can be derived from the test statistic and the significance level of 99 percent was recovered from all the components except for a measured component. Finally, it can be argued that according to the outputs of this test and the previous supplementary test, it can be stated that the hypothesis is confirmed. However, it is necessary to mention that only the component of oral advertisements reduces the cost of advertising. It shows insignificance that from the perspective of tourists and citizens, its reason is the comparison with the social networks that in the shortest time, it can cover many people in comparison with the oral advertisements.

### **Conclusion**

According to the analyses presented in the research findings carried out in the statistical section, it can be argued that social networks have

been able to have a positive effect on feelings, so local and national officials should also align these networks with the national emotions and culture so that the use of these networks cannot be regarded as a social problem and can be used to develop the city's tourism and satisfy the individual and social needs of individuals. Therefore, with these interpretations, given the previously mentioned issue, the research hypothesis is confirmed and the only major issue is whether, despite the cultural invasion, through social networking that is more and more up-to-date, it can have a positive effect in the future, or whether this effectiveness of development of these networks in contrast to the present is negatively affected that in order to prevent this issue needs the national planning and coordination and in this regard, the next hypothesis, which is stated in this paper, also refers to this issue. Considering the popularity of traditional advertisements in Iran and Sari, the issue is that oral advertisements have a positive and significant effect on the feelings of tourists and increasing the desire to enter the region. As previously stated, due to the lack of confidence of people in social networks due to the lack of precise source and precise guidance on advertising in this sector, oral advertisements still have a greater impact on the feelings and increasing the desire of tourists to the region, so that according to the findings of the research, the tourists still carry out oral advertisements in the city more than trust the advertisements provided by social networks. Therefore, addressing on reducing the costs of oral advertisements is necessary by increasing confidence over social networks.

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