

# Analyzing the Effect of Persuasion Component on the Audience

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## Abstract

Nowadays, persuasion is considered as one of the most pivotal components of social influence. It can promote or change the current attitude of the audience. Considering this component, the main objective of persuasion is creating motivation in the audience to meet their needs. Therefore, the current research aims at analyzing the effect of persuasion on the audience. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods have been used in this research. The researcher has used both library and field methods as well as Delphi method to gather data. Also, one-sample t-test has been used to analyze the validity of the findings. The results indicate that in addition to the attraction criterion, some other criteria including excitement, feelings, and verbal skills affect the attitudes of the audience. Also it can be concluded that both persuasion model and validity have significant effects on persuasion component. On the other hand, the objective and validity of the audience don't have significant effect on the audiences' persuasion.

**Keywords:** media, persuasion, validity

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays persuasion is one of the most pivotal components in soft power and social influence, because by using this method the opinions and wills of people can change without any imposition on the others. The main thought of the persuasion origins from far pasts. In the past before the public communications, people used the words "rhetoric" and "wordiness" for indicating the art of using language for influencing on the other people's judge. In the periods that the people's voice was the only public communication means, they used the persuasion for encouraging the other people by having the purpose of transmogrification of beliefs and behaviors. The advertisement brokers believe that speech and behavior techniques of the political figures can be directors of public thoughts to an especial toward. They also think various ways such as using radio, television, press, declaration, rumors, letter writing and movies are effective in public thoughts (Dadgaran, 2001). There are many definitions for audience; the audience is a person who selects a media voluntary. But in public relations thinking, the audience is a group of people, which the communicator wants to communicate to them. The concept of audience, in the first days of expanding of the mass communication researches, the word audience was applied to the real receivers of message. These receivers were the purpose of the advertisement and impressment of the media or ordinary people who bought the entertaining shows and the news of the media. The above definition about the audience gradually replaces with a receiver's attitude which was active and resistant against the media effects and they were looking for their favorites and needs according to their own especial social and cultural fields. Based on this matter in a community such as Iran, a media saturation phenomenon is happening because of increasing availability of multimedia and satellite shows (Freedman, 2008). For instance we can name more than one hundred Persian television and radio channels which are continuously broadcasting the series, movies or music in Persian or with Persian caption, or more than 4000 television channels and thousands of radio channels which are not in Persian are available by the satellite receivers, or the existence of hundreds of the Internet websites, these mentioned matters are phenomena which could not come in the television viewer or radio listener's minds. Therefore the aim of the current study is investigation of persuasion components effects on the audience.

### 1.1 The Concept of Persuasion

The persuasion is a process in which we try to change the attitudes of the other people. In a simpler meaning it is

an effort for changing the attitudes. If this effort is accompanied with the logic reasoning and creating the recognition in the audiences, then it is called the “persuasion”, and if it is accompanied with prompting emotions and excitements then it is called “encouragement” and finally if it is accompanied with force then it is called “obligation”. Among these three mentioned words, the “persuasion” according to its meaning is suggested as the best equivalent, because the concepts of “acceptance with reasoning” and “achieving to the belief” are covered into it (Joe et. al, 2014). Persuasion has introduced as an effort for changing of the attitudes, beliefs and behavior of human. Regard to how people change their attitudes, in one past century different theories are stated. But each of them has its own problems and shortages. Expansion of using the persuasion and its methods in the contemporary life is very much then many people called the new world as persuasion life, and they believe that media waves which contain persuasion messages are very much so that influence the people in every places and times. Contemporary human encounters to a big challenge which is called media persuasion, this cause the persuasion studies and their effects in people life in the contemporary world be important (Pooka et al, 2004).

### *1.2 Persuasion Model*

Eliasi (2009) divided the persuasion methods and principles into six persuasion models, which are the following:

- 1) Hovland’s Persuasion Model (HPM)
- 2) Elaboration likelihood Models (ELM)
- 3) Cognition dissonances Models (CDM)
- 4) Heuristic – Systematic Models (HSM)
- 5) Mode model of Attitude – Behavior Processes (MMABP)
- 6) Depth of Processing Model (DPM)

In continue we apply to introduction of some of these models:

1) Hovland’s Persuasion Model (HPM): Hovland’s Persuasion Model is the oldest model of persuasion model and changing of attitude. Hovland with Janis and Kelly in 1949 performed a laboratory collection about changing of attitude, they used of the outcomes in formulation of their own theories regard to persuasion. The outcomes of these experiments in 1953 published in a work which titled as communications and persuasion. According to Hovland’s Persuasion Model, Persuasion is performed during the six basic stages, which are as following:

- Exposure to message, if the audience does not see or hear the message, will never affect by it. So, the first and basic condition in persuasion is that the audience sees and hears it.
- Attention to Message, the second condition of effect on the audience is that he/she should pay attention to it.
- Comprehension of Message, for effectiveness of the message the audience should understand its conclusion at least.
- Acceptance of message conclusion, for performing of attitude change, the audience should accept the conclusion.
- Retention of new attitude, if the audience forgets the new attitude, then the message cannot affect the person in future.
- Translation of attitude to behavior, if the message can affect the behavior, then the new attitude can direct the behavior in the situation (Zimbardo and Leippe, 1991).
- The founders of 1 Hovland’s Persuasion Model (HPM) believe that if they consider the related parameters to each fourfold elements of persuasion they can convince all or most of the people. Some of them believe that by mental inculcation we can increase the resistance against persuasion messages of the competitor.
- The purpose of resistance is that the audience encounters to lighter form of message to be secured against the next attacks.

2) Elaboration likelihood Model (ELM): Elaboration likelihood Model (ELM) (possibility of analyzing), that Patty and Cassio formulated that; mostly apply to analyzing of the process and the message by the addresses. This model considers to the effects of the internal and external variables based on valued or unvalued arbitrate of audiences (the probability of impossibility) (Chaiken and Troop, 1999). In the early form of this model assumed that the persuasion performed in two central and non-central ways. When the audiences have enough ability and

motivation for analyzing of hidden matter in messages (for example the educated people of the society) then by the central method we can confute the audiences more than this. But when the audiences cannot analysis the messages, it is better that we use the non-central method (for example emphasis on validity and contact of the communicator).

3) The effect of media on persuasion on the people: The media is one of the effective organizations in any communities. The mass media is one of the most powerful organizations in the new age. For instance, many of people in developed countries in the world say that television is the most trustful information resource. Television because of being visual, immediately and comfortable is more trustworthy than the other communicative instruments. Television is more attractive that radio since it is visual. Because voice and picture with each other give more complete information to viewer. Television needs less imagination because it has picture. In the other words radio and newspaper are abstract and need imagination but television is concrete display every things. Television is more effective on public thoughts.

### *1.3 The Effect of Media on Persuading People*

The media institution is one of the effective institutions in every society. Public media are of the strongest organizations in new world. For instance, the majority of people in advanced countries say everywhere in the world that they believe in television more than any other information resources. Television, due to its being visionary, constancy, and comfort wins the validity from other competitors. Television, for presenting pictures has more attraction than radio, as pictures and sound give more perfect information to viewers. Television requires less imagination because of having pictures. In other words, if radio and newspaper are abstract Medias and need imagination, television is a concrete media displaying everything in front of the viewer's eyes. Television due to controlling and dominating the public thoughts is an effective and strong media. As it penetrates to the private field of people's lives and presenting color, picture, and utterance, bewitches the viewer. (Lal, 2003). Television is a mass communication tool; which, through short radio waves, has facilitated transferring voice and picture simultaneously, and along with improvers and repetitions, makes possible transferring voice and sound to distant points. These media phenomenon of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, having different fields of informing, entertaining, cultural, educational, and advertising like radio, newspaper, and cinema, based on Mac Loan's quote is a device for visual and auditory use and is applicable of humanity's eye and ear, leading to improving the informing of neurotic system and presenting masses of different world news to the viewer, not having been available to him ever before (Motamed Nejad, 2006).

### *1.4 Persuasion Variables*

Researchers such as Mc Guire (1985), Wood and Eagly (1981), in the framework of Haw land's model have accomplished vast researches concerning the main elements and variables of persuasion. They have identified four main variables of persuasion in their analyses. These four variables are as following:

- 1) The source of message
- 2) Message
- 3) Channel of transferring the message and
- 4) The addresser (the auditor).

In the following lines the related factors to each of these four variables will be discussed.

### *1.5 Message in Persuasion*

Message includes any kind of idea or thought transferrable linguistically in one form of the oral or non- oral communication (Petty Et al, 2003) and includes the advocated position, reasoning, and evidence. The variables which are beyond the subject and message reasoning can be effective on persuasion. This learns message source as a messenger how to say what and where to be effective (Hakim Ara, 2005). As Fish Bain and Ajen (1981) have proposed, in the framework of persuasive communication, every message is consistent of the three following components:

- A. The advocated position: like supporting tax increase or an advice like donating blood.
- B. The reasoning: includes the reasons for accepting the sided subject which might be behavioral, emotional, or cognitive.
- C. Evidences: the visionary evidence is proposed for clarifying the reasoning. If they are recognized valid, reasoning will be accepted as well, and the possibility of audiences' positioning in favor of the proposed opinions increases (Hakim Ara, 2005).

### 1.6 Choosing the Target Audience

The first level of analyzing audience is to identify the target group and to define its particular features. Choosing the target group is a vital decision, and the features of the target group should be stated carefully and in details. On the basis of that, the analyzing process of the target audience should have the purpose of understanding the fact that what group of the target audience shows the most cognitive reaction and suitable behavior (Hamidy Zade Et al, 2013).

Table 1. Dimensions of the target audience

Dimension of the target audience	Definitions	Related questions
Homogeneous: penetration efforts targeted at more than one person. It must seek to identify the most homogenous group possible.	The main question at the time of thinking about the manner of determining the target audience should include the evaluation of the target audience for important and vital dimensions. The more similar the cognitions, beliefs, and predicting behaviors are, the easier the affecting of the psychological operations on the target audience will be.	Do they have similar objectives? Are there any obvious details dividing the target audience in to multiple groups? Do they process messages differently? For example: a member of the group might have a different purpose of the whole group. In this case, a psychological operation loses its effect. Do they consider themselves belonging to a single group?
Experiencing the same conditions: in addition to the same values and beliefs, the audience placed in a common layer is also ideal.	This means experiencing the common pressures and facing common challenges. This similarity guarantees that their respond to the persuasive efforts be equal to the possible extent. In some cases, conditions experienced by the target group create a kind of vulnerability, making them more potential against persuasive messages.	Do the whole members of the group have equal access to the prerequisites of life? Are they facing similar external challenges and supports?
Capability of achieving the goal: one of the other main observations is related to the degree in which the target audience could respond to the possible persuasive message for achieving the desired behavior.	This regard is related to the long –term rather than the short- term issues, which might prevent from forming action towards the message. Note that this state of motivation is different from the ability to process the message.	Do the whole members of the group have equal psychological abilities to achieve the desired psychological objective? Are their behaviors, due to the conditions or the action of members of other groups limited?

## 2. Research Method

The method of the present research is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The combination approach was first called Multi- dimensional. This approach has also been called mixed approach. Generally, the multi-dimensional aspect of research method and closeness and relevancy of quantitative and qualitative information have been called mixed method. On the basis of the Delphi method; in present study, in order to gathering information, library and field methods are used. The required information for the present survey has been gathered from a questionnaire whose validity was examined. This information through applying suitable statistical tests regarding the research assume was analyzed in the software Statistical Package for the Social Science Version 19.

## 3. Research Hypotheses

The first hypothesis: It seems that the validity criterion has a significant effect on satisfaction of the audience of television serials from the experts' point of view.

Table 2. The results of T-test (1)

N	Median	Standard deviation	T	Significance level
20	3.94	0.3682	-636.467	0.008

In single sampling test, the median of the criterion of validity in satisfaction of the audience of television serials was calculated (M=3.94) and the test results show the significance of the theory meaning that the validity criterion in satisfaction of the audience of television serials is important from the experts' perspective.

The second hypothesis: it seems that the verbal skills have a significant effect on satisfaction of audience of television serials from the experts' perspective.

Table 3. The results of T-test (2)

N	Median	Standard deviation	T	Significance level
20	4.23	0.3682	-636.467	0.000

In single sampling test, the median of the criterion of verbal skills in satisfaction of the audience of television serials was calculated (M=4.23) and the test results show the significance of the theory, Meaning that the verbal skills criterion in satisfaction of the audience of television serials is important from the experts' perspective.

The third hypothesis: it seems that the Howland's satisfaction model in satisfaction of the audience of television serials has a significant effect from the experts' perspective.

Table 4. The results of T-test (3)

N	Median	Standard deviation	T	Significant level
20	4.18	0.3682	-636.467	0.000

In single sampling test, the median of the Howland's satisfaction model in satisfaction of the audience of television serials was calculated (M=4.18) and the test results show the significance of the theory, Meaning that the Howland's satisfaction model in satisfaction of the audience of television serials is important from the experts' perspective.

The fourth hypothesis: it seems that the emotion and excitement criterion has a significant effect on satisfaction of the audience of television serials from experts' perspective.

Table 5. The results of T-test (4)

N	Median	Standard deviation	T	Significance level
20	4.29	0.3682	-636.467	0.035

In single sampling test, the median of the emotion and excitement criteria in satisfaction of the audience of television serials was calculated (M=4.29) and the test results show the significance of the theory, Meaning that the emotion and excitement criteria in satisfaction of the audience of television serials is important from the experts' perspective.

The fifth hypothesis: it seems that the target audience criterion in satisfaction of the audience of the television serials has a significant effect from experts' perspective.

Table 6. The results of T-test (5)

N	Median	Standard deviation	T	Significance level
20	3.958	0.3682	-636.467	0.001

In single sampling test, the median of the target audience criteria in satisfaction of the audience of television serials was calculated ( $M=3.958$ ) and the test results show the significance of the theory, Meaning that the target audience criteria in satisfaction of the audience of television serials is important from the experts' perspective.

### 3.1 Freedman's Test

Here, in order to analyze variance of variables, the Freedman's test is used. The Freedman's test is a non-parametric test, equal to the variance analyzes with repetitive measurements that is used to comparing the median of sores among Knowledge variables (groups). This test is practical when we want to analyze the opinions of a group at several fields and based on the opinions of the people of the group determine the priority of each of the cases based on the significant ranking.

Table 7. The results of ranking

Rank	Criterion	Median
1	Emotion and excitement	4.29
2	Verbal skills	4.23
3	Howland's satisfaction model	4.18
4	Target audience	3.958
2	value	3.94

Regarding the output of the above table, it could be concluded that in satisfaction of audiences of television serials the attraction criterion was emphasized more than all the others from the experts' perspective. And the validity criterion is on the last ranking.

Table 8. The results of Freedman test

Test	Sig.	df	Chi-Square	N
Freedman	0.000	19	291.147	20

Regarding the test result and its significance, it could be concluded with 95% of certainty that the difference among median and variable variances is significant.

## 4. Discussion

By regarding the emotion and excitement criterion, messages relied on emotion and excitement have more effect on audiences who are less educated or at least have no familiarity with the subject of the drama and people who have high self- confidence are attracted only with fear and severe excitement, but people with low or medium self- confidence would be motivated with small emotional shocks. In regard to verbal skills criteria, messages motivating strong emotions, especially fear, increase the satisfaction possibility, and those who speak fast often seem more persuasion than those who speak slow, and when the actors in television serials speak strictly, the hidden message in their talks is better accepted. Also, regarding the Howland's rejection model it should be stated that through vaccination or psychological insemination, it is possible to increase people's resistance towards the opponent's persuasion messages. By regarding the ELM model, it should be said that persuasion, when the audiences cannot analyze the content of messages, is done better by peripheral method. Also in television serials, the message is presented by actors as experts and technicians, and more racial, linguistic, and cultural resemblance, and benefits sharing and sensitivity of producers of television serials leads to trust of the audience.

## 5. Conclusion

As we mentioned earlier, most of the activities which are done by public media such as television is to persuade certain audiences to accept certain orientations. Reaching the goal needs much theoretical and practical knowledge. For persuading particular audiences in a certain field, logical, mature and emotional reasoning should be provided. By regarding the extent of audiences of television series, the present research has analyzed the persuading criterion among these audiences. The results show that after the attraction criterion, emotion and excitement criteria, verbal skills, Howland's persuasion model and validity have had the most mean effect in

persuasion of audiences; target audience and validity have had the least mean effect on persuasion of audiences. By regarding the output of the concerned table, we concluded that in persuasion of television series, experts emphasize on emotion and excitement criteria; the validity criterion is at the lowest rank. Also, by regarding the criteria test and their significance, it could be said with 95% of certainty that the difference between mean and variance in variables is significant. In other words, there is a significant difference among audience persuasion variables in television serials from the expert's perspective.

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