



## The Impact of Rural-Urban Integration on Health-Oriented and Media-Oriented Lifestyles (Case Study: Somarin City ,Ardabil Province)<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

**Background and Objective :** In recent decades, planners have adopted various strategies, including the transformation of villages into cities, with the aim of reducing regional inequalities and urban-rural disparities. These transformations have not only caused structural-functional changes but have also influenced the lifestyle of residents in these areas. The present research aims to investigate the impact of rural-urban integration on lifestyle changes among the residents of Somarin city in Ardabil.

**Methodology:** This study is applied in nature and quantitative in method. The statistical population includes all residents of Samarin rural-city, and the statistical sample consists of 252 households, estimated using the Cochran method and selected through systematic random sampling.

**Results and Findings:** The results indicate that changes have occurred in health-oriented (49%) and media-oriented (54%) lifestyle indicators; however, these changes have not been particularly pronounced or fundamental in the studied environment. In other words, rural-urban integration and administrative-managerial transformations have led to quantitative changes in lifestyle, and lifestyle transformations have been more influenced by social interactions and cultural-media factors among residents than by decisions made by governmental institutions. Analysis of the findings reveals that rural-urban transformation in Samarin has resulted in unbalanced changes: while media consumption (74.6%) has grown significantly, access to health services (29.9%) has shown limited improvement. This gap highlights the need to revise classical lifestyle theories for transitioning societies and to adopt an integrated approach in planning.

**Keywords:** Rural-city, health-oriented lifestyle, media-oriented lifestyle, Somarin city.

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## **EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

### **Introduction**

In recent decades, the policy of "converting villages into cities" has been implemented in Iran as a strategy to reduce regional inequalities. This administrative transformation, while causing fundamental changes in the structure and functions of settlements, is expected to also affect the lifestyle of residents. The present study was conducted with the main objective of "assessing the impact of rural-urban role transition on the health-oriented and media-oriented lifestyle of residents" through a case study of Somarin City in Ardabil province (which was upgraded in 2017). The key question is whether this administrative role change has led to qualitative and fundamental transformations in lifestyle indicators or not.

### **Methodology**

This study is applied in purpose and survey-based in data collection method. The statistical population consisted of all 733 households in Somarin City. Using Cochran's formula, a sample size of 252 households was estimated and selected through systematic random sampling. The research instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire, the reliability of which was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.875. The health-oriented lifestyle index (with 6 components) and the media-oriented lifestyle index (with 4 components) were operationalized. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the inferential Binomial (Proportion) Test.

### **Results and Findings**

The results indicate asymmetrical and predominantly quantitative changes in residents' lifestyles after the upgrade:

- Health-oriented domain: The average reported change was 42.3%. The greatest improvements were observed in the indicators of "number of general practitioners" (54.8%) and "urban environmental health" (52.8%), while the least change occurred in the "number of specialist physicians" (29.9%). Changes in this domain were assessed as limited and non-uniform.
- Media-oriented domain: The average change was more significant at 54.4%, but the pattern was not uniform. Consumption-oriented indicators such as "use for leisure" (74.6%) and "increasing information" (73.3%) showed high growth, while economic indicators such as "online shopping" (35.2%) and "product marketing" (34.6%) experienced minimal change.

Overall, the findings suggest that rural-urban role transition by itself does not guarantee a qualitative and comprehensive transformation in lifestyle. The changes that have occurred are primarily in areas either influenced by broader cultural and media trends or requiring simpler governmental investments. In contrast, areas requiring complex institutional development and shifts in economic attitudes have undergone the least transformation. This developmental gap reveals that classical lifestyle theories are insufficient for explaining conditions in transitional rural-urban societies, and informal factors (socio-cultural) can sometimes have a stronger impact than formal ones (governmental decisions). The practical conclusion of the research is the necessity of adopting an integrated approach in planning, one that simultaneously emphasizes the qualitative improvement of basic services, economic-digital empowerment of residents, and the strengthening of local social capital.

## Conclusion

This study, by examining the impact of rural-urban integration on the lifestyle of residents of Samarín city, has reached significant findings that contain important theoretical and practical implications. The findings show that the administrative transformation from rural to urban has had different effects on different dimensions of lifestyle. In the health-oriented dimension, although improvements have been observed in indicators such as the number of general practitioners and environmental health, these changes have been mainly superficial and quantitative and have not created a noticeable qualitative change in access to specialized health services. This indicates that the mere creation of formal institutions, without improving the quality of services, cannot lead to fundamental changes in the health-oriented lifestyle.

In summary, it can be said that although the change in the administrative role of Samrín has paved the way for changes in lifestyle, these changes still do not have the necessary comprehensiveness and depth. To achieve a sustainable urban lifestyle, planning must pay attention to cultural and quality of life components in addition to physical and structural dimensions. This research suggests that in future studies, the effect of mediating variables such as social capital and local culture on the process of lifestyle change in rural and urban areas should be given more attention.

## Declarations

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