A Correlation and Regression Analysis of Some Social and Cultural Factors Affecting the Compatibility of Ahwaz City's Younger People with Their Parents with an Emphasis on Generation Gap

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Abstract: *This research aims to examine the effect of some social and cultural factors (identity, self-esteem, religious commitments and normative pressure) on generation gap and younger people's compatibility with their parents. In terms of research methodology, this is a cross-sectional study and regarding data collection method, it has drawn upon a questionnaire. The statistical population includes the youth of Ahwaz city, out of which 400 were selected as the sample size. In regard to sampling, stratified multistage random sampling has been used. Inferential statistics showed that there was a significant relationship between the research dependent variable (generation gap and younger people's compatibility with their parents) and some independent variables (the extent of normative pressure on parents, social identity, inclination toward religious commitments) while no significant relationship was found between the research dependent variable and independent variable (self-esteem). The results of stepwise regression analysis also indicated that normative pressure and parents' identity had been the most effective factors on generation gap and younger people's compatibility with their parents, respectively.*

Introduction

While in traditional societies people had few alternatives for their programs, in contemporary societies through finding "self" and with the emergence of the consumer society in life, power to choose has increased and although choosing is not possible at all levels, it has been made possible in regard to material goods, especially at its lowest level. The changing face of big cities in Iran and people's especially the youth increasing attention to consumer goods support this claim. Moreover, the increased importance of globalization especially in its cultural dimensions and increasing usage of media and means of communication along with the rising importance of physical appearance and status symbols in Iran's consumer society have allowed consumer culture to overcome social classification and penetrate into all social classes. These changes and developments in the Iranian society especially in regard to the youth's life reveal the growing importance of lifestyle further. Normative pressure and parents' inclination toward it are an area of interest which can be investigated. Younger people form a large part of Iran's population, therefore, they cannot be disregarded in micro and macro social programs and their problems need to be addressed so that solutions are found. Sociological research provides us with an instrument to see social world from a variety of viewpoints. So, putting all prejudices

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aside is helpful. One, who lacks a complete awareness of cultural values, cannot have clear policies. An action which is not based on a proper understanding of people's lifestyles which affect others', is unlikely to succeed (Giddens, 2007).

Social changes do not have the same variation in different times and places; the social changes which have occurred 100 years age in the society, are much slower than the ones occurring today. One of the effects produced by these changes on the society is the emergence of generation gap in most dimensions of life, two generations differing in ideology, behavior, etiquette, wearing styles, etc. (Fadaie, 2003). Generation gap is, in a broad sense, defined as difference between the youth and their previous generation in terms of attitude or behavior, leading to lack of mutual understanding. Difference in attitudes will separate the two generations from each other and appears in the society as strangeness, alienation and a relation lacking mutual understanding between parents and children. Younger generation take the initiative in welcoming cultural changes and form a large part of society, who show talents for cultural gap and no interest in recreating traditional lifestyles (Zakaie, 2007). The difference between two generations is the difference in values, norms and attitudes which results in the separation of the two generations and the conflict between the younger and the older. In such a situation, teenagers and the youth often try to distance themselves from their parents (Sharafi, 2006).

Due to the individuation process, to decide what to do in their life has become more important for people than in the past (Gibbins and Bo Reimer, 2002).Ahwaz city – the case study – whose new age has begun almost 100 years ago, it has been basically formed upon migration and large numbers of people have flown from other cities and villages of Khuzestan province and other Iranian provinces into this city, the new life of the city being the result of these migrations. This city, due to being oil-rich and the presence of different industries, is open to immigration, having attracted various groups of different social classes. In general, open to immigration cities' texture is influenced by the culture of different regions. On the one hand, Ahwaz is among the border towns which are covered by Persian Gulf States' media network even without using satellite receivers. On the other hand, this city, as the center for different ethnic groups such as Arabs, Lors, etc. has created a diverse ethnic mosaic which needs to be socially and culturally examined. In this respect, generation gap, especially in terms of incompatibility between parents and children in Ahwaz city, needs to be studied as a social issue.

Since this study attempts to examine the compatibility and incompatibility between the younger people and their parents in terms of generation gap, the results of this research, therefore, can resolve many paradoxes in the population under study. The data obtained from Iranian police force and the researcher's experiences, observations and qualitative and in-depth interviews with the target population have revealed that there has been found an increasing incompatibly between the two generations, leading to a kind of disorganization and an anomic situation which highlights this issue in the population under study. The dimensions which have been examined in this research have not been previously studied in Ahwaz city and it can be claimed that this is a unique research. As little research has been conducted on this issue in Ahwaz city, it is of high importance to examine it in this city.

In this respect, the main objectives of the research are as follows:
1.   Examination of normative pressure on parents;
2.   Examination of compatibility and incompatibility between the youth and their parents;
3.   Examination of the relationship between normative pressure and compatibility

4. Examination of the relationship between social and cultural factors (self-esteem, social identity, religious commitments, etc.) and compatibility between younger generation and older generation (their parents).

Theoretical Framework

In the experts' view, the phenomenon of generation gap has not been a matter of importance in the past and till the emergence of modern industrial society and especially before the twentieth century, there has not been any visible sign of this gap and conflict as it is clearly and constantly seen today between the younger and the older. The factors including, one the one hand, little difference in conditions, social classes and ranks of different age groups, accepting the authority of the older, respecting "age", the older having priority and taking the initiative; the principle of asymmetry in regard to the relationships between different age groups in age-centered institutions; on the other hand, and on the other hand, the participation and incorporation of the youth into the life and society of the older, the natural transmission of culture and models from one generation to the next in ongoing interactions among different age groups and the continuity of the same patterns of thinking and behavior from one generation to the next all prevented from the emergence of gaps and conflicts between generations in closed and traditional societies and resulted in slow changes.

There is no doubt that gap and generally generational differences are one of the temporary manifestations and repercussions of the societies turning from traditional into modern forms. It is widely, in this respect, believed that the modern culture of the society has stood against the dominant culture of the older or there is a considerable distance between these two. The societies going through transitions from being traditional to modern ones or the societies facing rapid social developments and political-social oppositions, are more likely to deal with the phenomenon of generation gap, this general rule seeming more applicable to Iran which is a prime example of a society going through traditional manifestations into modern forms, and in this transition having being dealt with diverse political, economic, social and cultural events and issues.

One of the oldest approaches among theoretical approaches toward generation gap and generational conflict is the strategy of historical generation. This approach which has been proposed with a variety of names including "imprint hypothesis" (Jaeger, 1985), experiential theory (Huntington, 1974), "entelechy approach" (Mannheim, 1952) and "historical generational model"(Braungart, 1984, was first formulated by Mannheim (1936, 1952). It was subsequently refined and developed by several authors and researchers like Richard Richard and Margaret Braungart (1984, 1986, 1989) (Dassbach, 1955). In Mannheim's view, generation is the place and medium of transferring and continuing new intellectual and cultural orientations which are rooted in a special social historical context where a certain generation has grown up. These orientations in the form of objectives, intentions and new solutions for the society's serious problems emerge and evolve as a "generational style" (Rempel, 1965). Mannheim, in the essay "The Problem of Generations", describes how people of a generation fall, in fact, under one specific ideology and aspiration and through these lens, they interpret the world different from their counterparts of previous generations, so that it is these unique but common experiences and perceptions of a generation that pave the way for changes (Marshall, 1994).

Mannheim believes that values are not manufactured products but "… emerge and are produced when new generations gradually appear in life events which are evolutionary and also the growing social fact presents new and incalculable issues to intellectual currents (Rempel, 1965).

Separation and the conflict of generations has also been the focus of research as a social issue in the sociology of conflict. From this perspective, the point of departure in the analysis of generational conflicts is the social structure which is of high importance and by focusing on the conflict of material interests of different generational groups which coexist in the society, the issues of generations and ideological and cultural gaps between them are considered to stem from the underlying conflict and be in parallel with generational social interests. A more precise explanation of the dimensions and mechanisms of generational gap in terms of structural conflict can be analyzed based on contemporary French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's opinions, who has dealt with this issue.

Bourdieu, as a sociologist who is influenced by the macro perspective of Marxism and conflict approach, does not regard intergenerational challenges like other social conflicts independent of social stratification class and system or as he himself calls them; systems of domination and inequality but analyzes generational relations and conflicts in terms of inequality and social conflict at socioeconomic and intellectual-cultural levels. Instead of explaining generational gaps based on mental criteria and the effect of major historical events and currents, Bourdieu, upon the mentality and awareness-identity of a generation which is standing on Mannheimian approach, explains, with an objective approach, generational conflicts according to the strategic position of the era in each generation, discussing the resources and the generations fighting for these resources. The resources which are in fact the product of the historical conditions of each generation, having access to which and using them, as Turner has also noted, entail a kind of identity and generational solidarity which is organized by a generation against competing generations (Turner, 1998). Because of this, Bourdieu's sociology is characterized by the fact that a generation is regarded as a social construct and the result of the conflict over economic and cultural resources within a certain field (Turner, 1998).

Traub and Dodder argue that the main reason for the emergence of generational gap is the existence of the age-graded society. In such a society, the youth and adults do not seem to interact with each other but the youth interact with other younger people and adults interact with other adults. Traub and Dodder, for explaining their view, also draw upon two other concepts one of which is established norms and another one is emergent norms. Established norms are structured and historical standards of behavior of a society, which have always been the means for realizing objectives, and emergent norms are the norms which are less structured than established norms and mostly lack a historical background, although they are prospective, they are, instead, dependent on the present and topical actions (Moid Far, 2011). Those believing in the existence of generational gap in Iran think that the factors such as modernity, rapid demographic, social and economic changes, the effect of the elite and Islamic Revolution along with inappropriate response of the political system to these developments account for this phenomenon in Iran. Aghajari regard the rise of the generational gap as the product of the conflict between local social system and civic culture and rationality imported from the West (Aghajari, 2003). And Ghaderi argues that generational gap is based on the criterion of a modernity which broke up our epistemological paradigm and brought us new conditions; that is, the modernity paradigm has rocked the traditional intellectual, social, religious and economic foundations (traditional paradigm) (Ghaderi, 2003). Tajik also notes "the gap between traditional (older) and modern (younger) discourse can be one of the reasons for generational gap and conflict: generational gap in traditional societies where cultural cohesion and unity and the youth obeying the older is higher (which usually prevents from the emergence of gaps in the generations' attitudes) is smaller. In contrast, in the societies which have undergone widespread social and cultural changes, the gap is larger. Those who are pessimistic about this

viewpoint, based on revolutionary values, look at generational gap as leading to identity crisis and the gap between younger generation and their religious and national history and culture, and those who are optimistic about this view consider this gap a necessary and basic development for the future society of Iran (Tajik, 2002).

Studied the student protests in 1960s in the West, Margaret Mead claimed that the cause of abnormal and even counter-culture behaviors of the youth is the generational gap between those born before and after the world war. They live in a world which it totally different from the world in the past, so that the pre-war conditions will not reoccur since they have grown up in a world where there were no atomic bombs, television, satellite, international media, computer, spaceships, and other modern devices and as a result they cannot understand the experiences of the new generation. Therefore, a large generational gap has grown between the pre-World War 2 generation and post-World War 2 in Western countries and other countries, the like of which has never been and will never happen again (Saraie and Savadian, 2011).

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) consider human as a reasoning creature which usually acts cohesively and effectively. In Fishbein and Ajzen's view, what is seen between attitude and behavior is the intention of acting. In their view, if one really intends to act in certain way in a certain situation or against a certain matter, his/her behavior will reveal it unless it is not possible instrumentally or physically. One will never acts with eyes closed. One's intention of acting is certainly affected by his/her attitude. It is also influenced by his/her friends' pressure and the degree of valuation on these pressures. These factors contribute to a model which is technically called "subjective norms". The reason these factors are subjective is that an individual builds his/her behavior upon his/her perception of these. Thus, if one agrees with water refinement, but he/she is not encouraged by his friends, the possibility of his/her attitude turning into a behavior will decrease. For example, if my friends participate in preparation classes for university entrance exam, but my parents believe that I'm not good for such classes; their pressure will influence my intention. According to this theory, in order for an attitude to turn into a behavior, it needs to be built on realizable expectations and rest on other people's encouragement (Look et al., 2004).
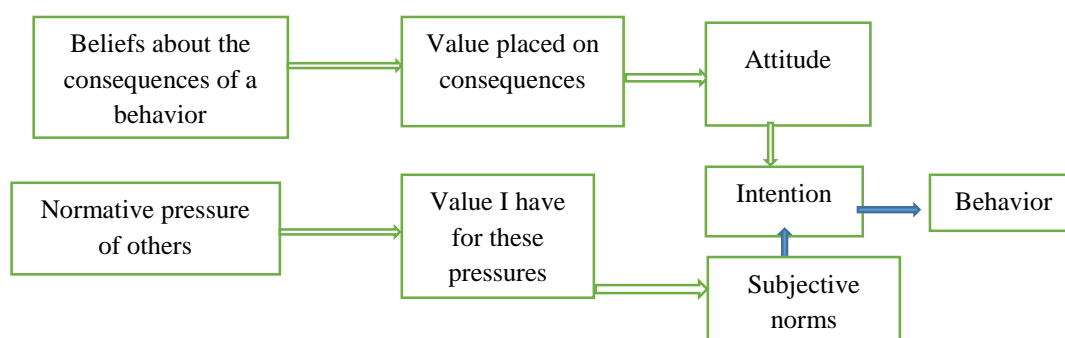

Figure (1): Relationship between attitude and behavior, reasoned action theory (Look et al., 2004:120)

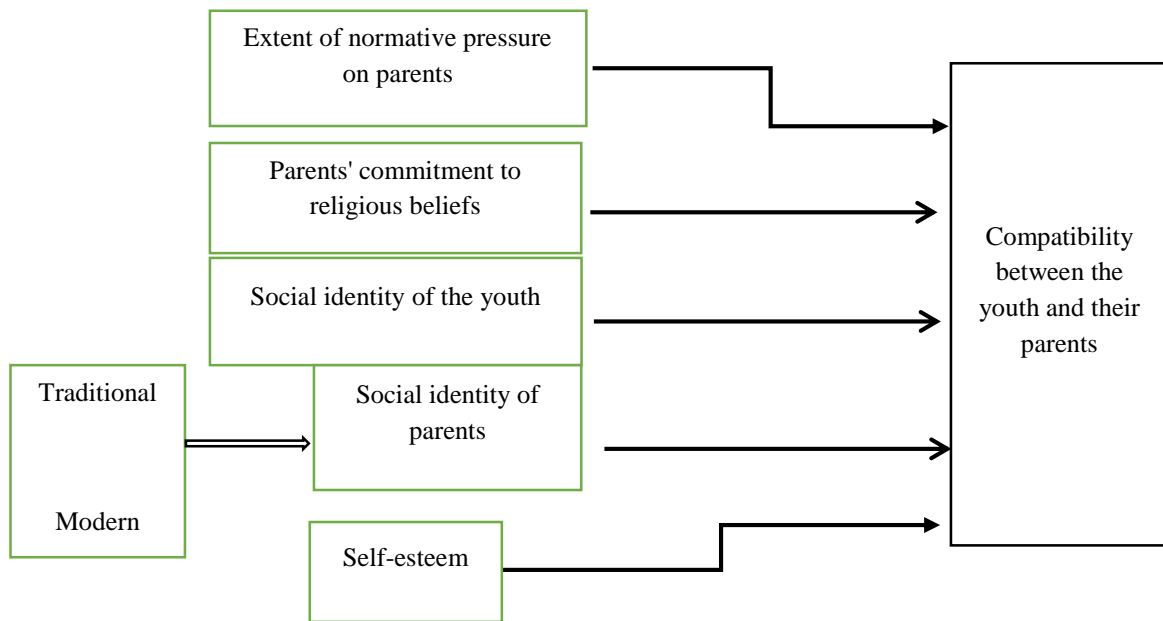## Theoretical research model and hypothesis

Figure (2): Research model

According to what was mentioned above and the research model, the research hypotheses are as follows:

1. There is a significant relationship between the extent of normative pressure on parents and parents' compatibility with their younger children.
2. There is a significant relationship between the extent of parents' commitment to religious beliefs and the extent of compatibility with their children.
3. There is a significant relationship between the youth's social identity and the extent of compatibility with their parents.
4. There is a significant relationship between the parents' social identity and the extent of compatibility with their children.
5. There is a significant relationship between the youth's self-esteem and the extent of compatibility with their parents.

Research Method

This is a descriptive-analytical research in which cross-sectional methods has been used. Data collection tools have included a questionnaire for the survey part of the research, and note-taking and using the Internet for the library part. The statistical population of this study has consisted of the young people residing in Ahwaz city. In this research, using Lean's sample size estimation table, a sample size of 384 people were selected for the statistical population of this research at an error level of 5% and confidence level of 95%. In order to increase the reliability of the research results, the sample size was increased to a size of 400. The sampling method for getting access to the samples under study has been multistage stratified random sampling. Ahwaz city falls into 8 regions in which according to the population of each region and the districts of these regions, the number of the sample population was determined for each region. At first, the ratio of the youth in each region to the all youth in the city was determined and the sample size was calculated for each region. In the next stage, the ratio of the youth in each

district to the youth in that district was determined and the sample size was calculated for each district. In each stage, even or odd streets were randomly chosen and in each street, some houses were randomly selected based on house number.

Table (1): The regions of Ahwaz and the number of the questionnaires for each region

Number of regions	Population in 2010 (authorized bounds of the provincial government)	Percentage of population	Number of questionnaires
Region1	104887	9.4	38
Region 2	74212	6.8	27
Region 3	147467	13.4	54
Region 4	164594	15.2	61
Region 5	154689	14.2	56
Region 6	193479	17.6	71
Region 7	148240	13.5	54
Region 8	108925	9.9	39
Total	1096494	100	400

Source: Ahwaz Municipality (2010). Statistics of Ahwaz city: Department of Planning and Development

In this research, the data have been analyzed based on two descriptive and inferential statistics methods. At first, given the objectives of the research and in order to gain an understanding of the statistical population, the data obtained from the sample have been analyzed and descriptive statistics methods have been drawn upon. Then, in order to test the research hypotheses, inferential tests have been used in accordance with the index of the variables. In this respect, SPSS has been used.

Validity and Reliability of Research
In order to determine the validity of the questionnaire, the following measures have been taken: Referring to the related and similar studies and using their sample questionnaire, conducting interviews with a number of the people involved and experts, using the opinions of social sciences experts and other experts, consultation with the professors of universities, developing the preliminary questionnaire, carrying out the pre-test in which 40 preliminary questionnaires were administered to a number of the sample population where the validity of some questions were determined during conducting and completion of the test and some modifications were done to them. In order to determine the validity of each index, construct validity method with the help of factor analysis was used and the reliability of each variable was also measured using Cronbach's alpha.

Table (2): The results of factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the main variables

Dependent variable of the research	KMO	Bartlett	Sig	Explained variance	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Extent of normative pressure on parents	0.78	1.98	0.000	45.67	0.79
Extent of compatibility between parents and children	0.89	3.01	0.000	84.18	0.86

Research Findings

Table (3): Frequency distribution of the respondents based on the degree of the variables

Variable	Low (%)	Average (%)	High (%)
Extent of compatibility between parents and children	56.5%	9.4%	32.8%
Extent of the youth's commitment to religious beliefs	25.6%	57.9%	12.2%
Extent of parents' commitment to religious beliefs	22.2%	19.8%	58%
Extent of normative pressure on parents	24.9%	15.8%	58.1%
Extent of self-esteem	28%	27%	45%
Total number of respondents	400		

Testing hypotheses and determining the relations between variables:

- H1: There seems to be a relationship between normative pressure of friends on parents and the extent of their compatibility with their children.

The results obtained from carrying out Pearson's test show a significant relationship between normative pressure of friends on parents and the extent of compatibility between parents and children. In this respect, correlation coefficient is equal to -0.86, showing a high correlation, and significance is at a level of 0.000. Since this coefficient is negative, it can be concluded that there is an inverse relationship between normative pressure of friends on parents and the extent of compatibility between parents and children; the higher normative of friends on parents, the lower the extent of compatibility between parents and children.

Table (4): The results of Pearson's correlation test between normative pressure of friends on parents and the extent of their compatibility with their children

Independent variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient (R)	Significance level (Sig)	Number of respondents
Normative pressure of friends	-0.86	0.000	400

- H2: There is a relationship between the extent of parents' commitment to religious beliefs and the extent of their compatibility with their children.

The results obtained from this test show a significant relationship. In this respect, correlation coefficient is equal to -0.71, showing a high correlation, and significance is at a level of 0.000. Since this coefficient between the extent of compatibility and the extent of parents' commitment to religious beliefs is negative, it can be concluded that there is an inverse relationship between these two variables; the higher the extent of parents' commitment to religious beliefs, the lower the extent of parents' compatibility with children.

Table (5): The results of Pearson's correlation test between parents' commitment to religious beliefs and the extent of compatibility between parents and children

Independent variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient (R)	Significance level (Sig)	Number of respondents
Parents' commitment to religious beliefs	-0.71	0.000	400

- H3: There seems to be a relationship between the youth's social identity and the extent of compatibility between the youth and their parents.

The results obtained from this test show a significant relationship. In this regard, correlation coefficient is equal to -0.367 and significance is at a level of 0.000. Since this coefficient between the youth's social identity and the extent of compatibility is negative, it can be concluded that there is an inverse relationship between these two variables; the more modern the youth's social identity, the lower their compatibility with their parents.

Table (6): The results of Pearson's correlation test between the youth's social identity and the extent of compatibility between the youth and their parents

Independent variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient (R)	Significance level (Sig)	Number of respondents
The youth's social identity	-0.367	0.000	400

- H4: There seems to be a relationship between the youth's commitment to religious beliefs and the extent of compatibility between parents and their children.

The results obtained from this test show a significant relationship. In this regard, correlation coefficient is equal to 0.31 and significance is at a level of 0.000. Since this coefficient between the youth's commitment to religious beliefs and the extent of compatibility is positive, it can be concluded that there is a direct relationship between these two variables; the higher the youth's commitment to religious beliefs, the higher their compatibility with their parents.

Table (7): The results of Pearson's correlation test between the youth's commitment to religious beliefs and the extent of compatibility between parents and their children

Independent variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient (R)	Significance level (Sig)	Number of respondents
The youth's commitment to religious beliefs	0.31	0.000	400

- H5: There seems to be a relationship between the youth's self-esteem and the extent of their compatibility with their parents.

Since significance level is higher than the accepted level, the results obtained from carrying out Pearson's test between these two variables do not show a significant relationship. In this regard, Pearson's correlation coefficient is equal to 0.011 and significance is at a level of 0.824.

Table (7): The results of Pearson's correlation test between the youth's commitment to religious beliefs and the extent of compatibility between parents and their children

Independent variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient (R)	Significance level (Sig)	Number of respondents
The youth's self-esteem	0.011	0.824	400

Multivariable Regression Analysis

The obtained results indicate that out of 7 independent variables of this research, normative pressure, parent's identity, the youth's identity and the youth's religion have been put into the equation in order of their effectiveness. Stepwise regression results have been shown in the table below:

Table (8): The results of multivariable regression analysis in regard to the factors affecting the extent of compatibility between the youth and their parents

Row	Predictive variables	$R^{2.adj}$	β	T	Sig.T	F	Sig.F
Step 1	Normative pressure of others	0.723	0.85	8.10	0.000	1.09	0.000
Step 2	Parents' identity	0.780	0.66	12.23	0.000	706.7	0.000
Step 3	The youth's identity	0.824	0.40	12.56	0.000	709.5	0.000
Step 4	The youth's religion	0.851	0.36	1.79	0.000	568.4	0.000

- First step: According to the above table, the first predictive variable put into regression equation is the extent of the society's pressure on parents, which accounted for 72.3% of the variance of the youth's compatibility with their parents.
- Second step: In this step, the variable parents' identity was put into regression equation and around 57% of the dependent variable was explained.
- Third step: In this step, the variable the youth's identity was put into regression equation where around 44% of the variance of the compatibility between the youth and their parents was explained.
- Fourth step: In this step, the variable the youth's religion was put into regression equation, where 27% of the variance was explained.

Conclusion

One of the factors which had an influence on the extent of the youth's compatibility with their parents in the population under study was the normative pressure of friends on parents. In regard to normative pressure, the findings indicated that the higher normative pressure of friends on parents is, the lower compatibility between parents and children is. This conclusion can prove the opinions of Fishbein, Allport, Newman and Meid. The fact there is an inverse relationship between normative pressure of friends on parents and the extent of compatibility between parents and the youth reveals the effect of social conditions on the kind of interactions especially in families. This effect has been emphasized in symbolic mutual action theory. The normative pressure of friends is an unofficial supervisory conduct which has a deep and lasting effect on people although it may not be tangibly possible to be measured. Social and cultural teachings have been to a large extent institutionalized in the light of this unofficial supervisory conduct and continue to live. Normative pressure is a kind of reaction to social behaviors especially new behaviors and beliefs. These reactions form a part of unofficial supervision and control which help traditional and more lasting values and norms of the society to persist. It is evident that this mechanism does not match the mood and demand of those who, based on diversity seeking, attempt to accept and use new behavioral and clothing patterns. If compatibility between parents and children could be regarded as a type of socialization and social conformity, normative pressure of friends somehow reduces this conformity due to different ideals of the youth and friends who put pressure on parents and the pressure applied by friends on parents is usually more toward opposing children's viewpoint.

Another factor which affected the extent of the youth's compatibility with their parents in this population was the youth's social identity and parents' social identity. Finding that there was an inverse relationship between the youth's social identity and the extent of compatibility between parents and the youth suggests a manifestation of generational gap between parents, especially between traditional ones and modern children in terms of culture and social behaviors. On the one hand, the existence of two different directions in the relationship between traditional identity of parents and modern identity of the youth, and on the other hand, the extent of compatibility between parents and the youth show an incompatibility between modern values and traditional values of the society along with the disinterest of parents who have a traditional social identity in modern values. In such a situation, the youth's inclination toward modern values somehow paves the way for their attitudinal and behavioral incompatibilities with their parents. Given that parents, due to having enjoyed traditional teachings of their previous generations, cannot tolerate new wearing and behavioral values, the youth having more traditional beliefs are more compatible with their parents. This conclusion shows the strong impact of the family in the process of socialization and institutionalization of value-oriented and normative teachings in children's behavior patterns. Confirming that there is a direct relationship between parent's social identity and the extent of their compatibility with their children indicates a common approach modern parents and modern younger people take to modern value-oriented phenomena. The parents who are modern can be closer to their children in terms of attitudinal and behavioral features.

In regard to the youth's commitment to religious beliefs and parents' commitment to religious beliefs and based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that there is a high correlation between this variable and the extent of students' compatibility with their parents. According to the results of Pearson's coefficient which show a direct relationship between the youth's commitment to religious beliefs and the extent of compatibility, and an inverse relationship between parents' commitment to religious beliefs and the extent of compatibility, it can be inferred that there is a higher degree of commitment to religious beliefs in parents than in the next generation (their children), this emerging in regard to the incompatibility between the two generations. Confirming that there is a direct relationship between the youth's commitment to religious beliefs and the extent of compatibility between parents and students manifests religious people's disinterest in modern values. In other words, it is possible to conclude that what make this relationship direct and significant is the common approach parents and the youth take to modern values. The religiosity of the youth builds a closer relationship with their parents in terms of attitudinal and behavioral features. Given that parents, due to having enjoyed the traditional teachings of their previous generations as well as being more loyal to religious beliefs, cannot bear new wearing and behavioral values, the youth who have a high degree of religious beliefs are also more compatible with their parents. This conclusion reveals the marked effect of the family in the process of socialization and institutionalization of value-oriented and normative teachings in children's behavior patterns.

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