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Studying Factors Affecting Social Tolerance with a Meta Combination Approach

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Introduction

Peaceful coexistence is one of the key factors for the stability and survival of human societies. Violence and non-violence are dependent on collective attitudes and practical encounters with the "other." The factors that create "otherness" and the cultural mechanisms for dealing with the "other" are fundamental issues for humans in social life, directly impacting their quality of life. The type of actions in dealing with the "other" falls within a range of choices, from violence and exclusion to tolerance and acceptance. Identifying the factors that influence social tolerance can be a step toward recognizing and removing barriers to tolerance and promoting human development. Accordingly, the primary aim of this article is to identify the factors that influence social tolerance. Some studies have been conducted on social tolerance in Iran; however, the abundance of studies and their contradictory findings, along with partial investigations, have failed to provide a comprehensive picture of the research conducted in this area. Therefore, examining the issue from different angles and through meta-analytical research methods is significant and necessary.

One of the precise methods for studying research outcomes is the meta-synthesis method, which allows researchers to systematically use the findings extracted from studies related to the research topic. The main issue in this study is to explore how much attention researchers have given to the factors affecting the level of social tolerance, given its importance for social cohesion and the impact of intolerance on social division and its consequences. Highlighting the general trends in research can guide future studies in this conceptual field. Therefore, in this study, to understand the current status and level of tolerance components in Iranian society, we utilize the meta-synthesis method to review articles and studies on the measurement and study of tolerance levels. We seek to answer questions such as: Based on the findings of the reviewed studies, what are the dimensions of social tolerance in Iran? What are the key factors affecting social tolerance in Iran? To this end, after identifying the factors influencing social tolerance, we have categorized them based on conceptual similarities and finally provided a summary of all the findings from the synthesis of the articles.

Methodology

This research was conducted using the qualitative meta-synthesis method to systematically review the findings of previous studies in this conceptual field. Data were collected from credible databases containing articles published between 1390 and 1400 (Iranian calendar), comprising 19 articles. The data analysis was carried out through open coding. In the findings of this research, 46 codes were identified, which were categorized and synthesized based on conceptual similarity. These extracted codes were classified into 46 components and 12 overarching concepts. Ultimately, a comprehensive framework for various forms of social tolerance was developed, which can serve as a valuable guide for future researchers in this conceptual area

Findings

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The findings indicate that no systematic study of this kind has been conducted previously, and each prior research has only focused on specific aspects or a few dimensions of social tolerance. Regarding social tolerance, the study identified religious tolerance, political tolerance, tolerance towards criminals, moral tolerance, and tolerance towards the "other" (including tolerance towards different ethnic groups, nations, and genders). Regarding the factors influencing social tolerance, the study highlighted general trust, social capital, religious and faith-related factors, cultural capital, personality traits, economic factors, and demographic variables. Based on the research stages, a conceptual framework was developed, incorporating the dimensions and components to provide a clearer understanding of the findings.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, younger individuals often lack a full understanding of differences, as children are less aware of subtle distinctions. Additionally, certain social and economic concepts have not yet formed in their minds, meaning tolerance is not a significant criterion for them. However, as individuals grow older and develop a social identity through internalizing values during socialization, they begin to understand these differences. As a result, their perspective on social tolerance shifts according to the values and beliefs they have developed. Regarding gender, some emotional, personality, and psychological differences between men and women affect how each perceives tolerance. These gender-related traits influence the concept of tolerance for each, impacting their level of social tolerance in practice. Although expecting greater tolerance based solely on gender roles, particularly for women, might not be entirely accurate, the greater psychological and emotional capacity of women for tolerance often leads to this expectation. In social, economic, and cultural capital, societies with more outstanding capital in these dimensions tend to experience a higher sense of general security, leading to fewer conflicts with other communities and a greater willingness to engage with other groups and nations. As a result, tolerance is more easily practiced. These forms of capital provide societies with tools and strategies to facilitate tolerance. Regarding religion, shared beliefs and the presence of ethical teachings and religious guidelines influence the tolerance process. Communities with shared religious beliefs have a unifying factor that strengthens their cohesion. Moreover, religious teachings often emphasize peace, friendship, tolerance, coexistence, and helping others, which positively affect the promotion of tolerance within society.

Keywords: Tolerance, Forbearance, Meta-synthesis, Social Tolerance.