

Investigating the Sociological Factors in young Women's Individualism and Loneliness (Case Study: Shiraz City)

Mahboubeh Asgari¹
Esmail Jahanbakhsh^{2*}
Asgar Mohamadi³

Received 5 July 2022, Accepted 5 September 2022

Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to investigate women's individualism and its sociological factors. The theoretical framework of the research has been formulated using a sociological and social psychology approach with emphasis on Durkheim, Malinowski, Bourdieu, Giddens, Mannheim, Lerner, Little, Riesman, Sarukhani and Gazi Moradi theories. This was a cross-sectional descriptive study. The present study was performed on 564 single women aged 15-29 years in Shiraz who were selected by proportional and purposeful stratified sampling method. Data collection tools included standard and researcher-made questionnaires. Data analysis was performed using SPSS software version 25 in both descriptive and analytical levels.

The results show that respondents' individualism is about 69%. Also there is a negative and inverse relationship between variables of religiosity, life satisfaction, lifestyle and individualism in Shiraz, while the variables of modernity expansion, family structural changes, capital Social, media use, expansion of avatars culture, and feminist attitudes are positively correlated with the degree of individualism of Shirazi women. The only direct path of the socio-economic base to individualism has not been confirmed. Life satisfaction had the highest effect on individualism with a coefficient of (-0.71). The spread of modernity through the lifestyle and structural changes of the family affect women's individualism.

Keywords: individualism, religiosity, social capital, mass media, life satisfaction.

1. Department of Sociology, Dehaghan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Dehaghan, Iran. mahboubeh1282@gmail.com

2. Department of Sociology, Dehaghan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Dehaghan, Iran. (*Corresponding Author*) esjahan@yahoo.com

3. Department of Sociology, Dehaghan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Dehaghan, Iran. asghar.mo.de@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Individualism is one of the social injuries, and psychologists and sociologists believe that various cultural and social factors are effective in this regard. Individualism has spread in recent years so that some studies have stated that 7 out of every 100 young women and teenagers suffer from this complication (Kharatha, 2013: 3).

In this condition, people avoid communicating with people and the outside environment, gradually lose their mental and emotional interests, deprive themselves of having intimate and close friends, refuse to participate in group activities, spend their time alone, and isolate themselves from society. According to sociologists, individualism attracts young people to areas of social injuries as a factor. The phenomenon of individualism leads to celibacy among women and can lead to dangerous psychological and social harm. Hiding a person's natural needs can be psychologically damaging and cause problems in social relationships. Individualism can lead to the isolation of people from society during a psycho-social process and make them suffer from various mental illnesses. Based on experiences, in a traditional society, a single female may repeatedly be the target of slander, criticism, and slander from relatives and friends, suffer frustration and social-psychological isolation, and may feel a lack of financial independence, a sense of futility and being a burden in the family. Consequently, these families are not as present and active in society and tend to stay isolated. In an individualistic family, the family's power to help and support is lost, its unity falls apart, and the social capital is reduced to zero.

According to the data from Iran Statistics Center, Shiraz is the fifth largest and most populated city in Iran. Based on the results of the 2016 census, Shiraz's population is 1,869,001, of which 926,557 are females, meaning that more than 49.5% of the population of Shiraz are females (Statistics Center of Iran, 2016: 15). In addition, the available statistics indicate that the number of females, who are separated from their families is increasing daily. According to unpublished statistics, this number increased from about 8,000 in 2014 to about 14,000 in 2016. In addition, absolute celibacy and divorce to live alone among

the Shiraz's females are also increasing. Therefore, this statistic shows the importance of investigating individualism in this metropolis.

The marriage rate in Fars province was 35522 in 2016, which has decreased by 14.6% compared to previous years. The marriage age of boys and girls in Shiraz has reached 29.5 and 29 years, respectively, indicating the average age of marriage in Shiraz is higher than the national average (Statements of the Deputy Youth of the Fars Sports and Youth Directorate in Shirazeh Analytical and News Base on July 25, 2018). According to the announcement of the Director General of Fars Province Registration (2017), the average marriage age of males in Rostam, Sarvestan, and Shiraz cities is higher than in other cities, and Rostam, Shiraz, and Mamsani cities have the highest average marriage age of females. The available statistics in Shiraz indicate that the number of women separated from their families is increasing daily. According to unpublished statistics from Fars Province Women's Commission, this number increased from about 8,000 in 2014 to about 14,000 in 2016. In addition, absolute celibacy and divorce to live alone among the Shiraz's females are also increasing. According to the statistics attributed to Shiraz Bar Association, most of the married women with children applying for divorce are neither ready to live in the paternal family center before marriage nor accept the support of their children and desire to separate from the first and second families (Zandbaf, 2015: 36).

Therefore, there is an urgent need for scientific research regarding the present issue to find accurate information about the statistics of this phenomenon for conducting a detailed investigation of the causes and factors. The results of this research can effectively control and curb such a sensitive social issue and provide the necessary information to experts, officials, and trustees.

2.Review of Literature

Vosughi and Shafati (2016) examined the semantic evolution of the concept of individualism in the thought of Georg Simmel for isolated, unique, and modern individualism and found that social and individual separation processes in modern societies increasingly lead to the expansion of social

circles in which a person can move and evolve. Compared with limited social relations in primitive and pre-modern societies, such conditions expand the sphere of life and develop the individual's personality. In such a situation, a person gains freedom and the possibility of more choices as a member of different groups with different roles.

Afshani et al. (2014) investigated the relationship between globalization and individualism among 15-29-year-old youth in Yazd and showed a positive and significant relationship between gender and horizontal individualism, while there was no significant relationship between gender and vertical individualism. There was no relationship between the level of education and individualism. In addition, globalization and its dimensions were positively affected by vertical individualism, and horizontal individualism showed a positive and significant relationship only with the dimension of cultural globalization. Hosseinzadeh et al. (2013) evaluated some effective factors for individualistic actions and concluded that the dominant type of individualism in Ahvaz society is vertical individualism. There was a significant relationship between individualism and gender and variables such as previous experiences, socio-economic base, and education.

Ghaderi et al. (2013) studied selfish individualism among different students in Shiraz University classes. The relationship between religiosity and selfish individualism was positive, and this hypothesis was confirmed. However, there was no significant relationship between the three variables of social capital, family institutionalized cultural capital, class and selfish individualism, and these three hypotheses were rejected. In addition, the relationship between the upper, middle, and lower classes were investigated in two public and private spheres with selfish individualism. In the public sphere, upper- and lower-class people have selfish individualism to some extent, and middle-class people have little selfish individualism. In the private sphere, all three classes had a moderate amount of selfish individualism.

Shahriari (2013) explored the role of the diversity of communication tools in the individualism of the network with an emphasis on the social ability approach. According to this study, technology will only be used with technical features that help people better meet their needs based on the balanced

approach of social ability, although the main reason for updating technology and its coordination in everyday life is social needs.

Mahmoudi (2012) assessed the effective factors of individualistic reactions and stated that the main variables, including the sense of distributive justice, generalized trust, social commitment, religiosity, trust in the cooperation of others, and previous experiences, have an inverse and significant relationship. Moayadfar and Sabouri Khosroshahi (2010) examined the individualism degree among children and concluded that the individualism level among children is moderate. There was no significant relationship between gender, age group, educational levels, and children's individualism.

Descalo (2014) investigated individualism and ethics in capitalism after communism and indicated that today there is an interest in the possibility of moral capitalism where the capitalist can combine his interests with public interests. Real capitalism can be placed on the same scale as savage and moral capitalism. The influence of this individualism is deeply felt in the former communist countries that are still creating and strengthening their new political and economic system, forming different and often contradictory forms of capitalism. Picavet (2015) researched methodological individualism in sociology and believed that is a family of methodological strategies that show human agents, their actions and interaction as key components of social explanation. As far as social phenomena are the results of individual actions, methodological individualism draws on the practice of sociology, which focuses on individual motivations of various kinds. This method often represents decision-theoretic methods in other disciplines with possible benefits for interdisciplinary collaboration. Methodological individualism raises difficulties concerning different levels of social explanation or understanding.

Arpacia et al. (2017) evaluated the relationship between individual differences in individualism, extroversion, and self-presentation. According to this study, individualism versus collectivism as an aspect of culture and extroversion as an aspect of personality may help to explain people's current attitudes, intentions and behaviors in social networks. Therefore, this study assessed the individual differences and relationships between individualism

and collectivism, extroversion, and self-presentation attitudes, intentions, and self-attitudes. This study revealed that individualism has a significant positive correlation with extraversion, which has a significant correlation with personal attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. In addition, the correlation between individualism and attitude towards self-presentation was significant.

Access to mass media is a prerequisite for participation in modern society, and mass media directly affect individual attitudes and behaviors (Zarean Dolatabadi, 2012: 183). There is a deep gap between individualism and the use of mass media. Today's generation has a big difference from their parents in the amount of watching TV, watching satellite, listening to music, and using the Internet. Examining these cases reveals the amount of distance caused by the mass media in families and children. Today's generation lives in a world with modern technology and communication devices (Shekarbeigi and Rahimi, 2010: 38).

Sarukhani's theories can be referred to regarding the effect of family structural changes and their individualization on individualism. According to Sarukhani's theories, the transition from the extended to a nucleic family in modern society and the decline of the nucleic family followed by the emergence of various forms of family relationships in late modernity are two general forms of individualization of the family. Individualism implies the decline of traditional family patterns and evasion from the community and family so that people can choose from different lifestyles and follow their desires. The increase in single life statistics, reluctance to marry, separation from family life, spread of divorce, reducing married people's fertility, increasing the marriage age, departure of sexual relations from the rules of society, and the decline of family functions are the main indicators of individualism. Individualism refers to the cultural conditions that make women inseparable from the family and prefer themselves and their conditions over the family and its conditions (Labibi, 2015: 22).

The influence of the socio-economic base on forming and diversity of thoughts has been emphasized by many experts, including Veblen, Mannheim, and Marx. According to Mannheim, ideas in society are subject to the social origin, time and place conditions, and social, cultural, class, and group

structures. As inequality in opportunities significantly affected the behavior of different strata of society, these inequalities also affect people's social attitudes. People with different socio-economic backgrounds are expected to have different levels of individualism (Zarean Dolatabadi, 2013: 177).

Regarding the effect of social capital on the level of individualism of the people of a society, Coleman believes that ideology can create social capital by forcing individuals to act for the benefit of something or someone other than themselves. Alvani considers social capital as a set of norms in social systems, which increase the level of cooperation and spirit of collectivism among the members of that society (Zarean Dolatabadi, 2012: 183). Social capital is formed by information flows such as training related to jobs, exchange of ideas, exchange of information, the spirit of collectivism against individualism and altruism, and any disturbance in these relationships cause the erosion of social capital (Shekarbeigi and Rahimi, 2010:35).

Life satisfaction is obtained by fulfilling needs, expectations, wishes, and plans. An activist may refuse to cooperate by arguing that how much the society that expects me to cooperate has provided me with the conditions of a good life and benefited me (Zarean Dolatabadi, 2012: 183).

Giddens's theory is about the effect of avatarism on individualism, according to which avatarism or the expansion of second life greatly expands human beings from living in small and large communities to living in remote corners. Giddens believes that one of the achievements of postmodernity is the expansion of avatarism and consequently the expansion of individualism. The culture and lifestyle in this second life are so different from the traditional life and separate the individual from society and lead to a form of individual life based on escaping from society (Ritzer, 2012: 566).

As an effective current in the transformation of social structures, modernity has affected the institution of the family as one of the most fundamental social institutions in the contemporary era. The family and its values experience are changed and affected by modernity, but this does not mean the family will disappear. Therefore, modernity has led to individualism through changes in the family structure and its individualization (Emami et al., 2018: 229). The most important attempt to present a coherent theory of

changing values is related to Ronald Inglehart, who proposed a theory about value change in the last three decades based on which industrialization changes traditional values to secular-rational values (Inglehart, 2007: 20).

Hari Alper enumerates the functions of religion from Durkheim's point of view as religion provides discipline for social forces through self-control and piety, provides cohesion through its ceremonies and connections, and gives life by transferring social values to the next generations. In addition to the individual functions of religion, Malinovsky also acknowledges its social functions and believes that religion maintains social cohesion and control over individual behavior. According to the proposed theoretical considerations, the degree of religiosity was another effective factor in individualism.

According to Simmel, women's emotional ties have decreased as a characteristic of urbanization in transitioning from traditionalism to modernity. Rationality has replaced emotional issues, and the values that prevail for women are mostly objective and material. The values considered as mental culture also include freedom, individualism, and change in lifestyles, which causes polyphony and conflict among the family members of modern society (Barani, 2013: 35).

According to Ghazimoradi (2014) other factors that were the foundation of self-control in the traditional society of Iran - the society before the constitutional era - moderated this society. With the collapse of the traditional society in Iran, those factors that moderate self-control weakened and collapsed, but the underlying factors of self-control intensified so that self-control became a dominant characteristic among Iranians in this process. The mentioned characteristic still exists among Iranians, and many have mentioned it as one of the essential obstacles in the process of realizing modernization in Iran and establishing the right of Iranians to determine their destiny, which will continue to bring undesirable effects. Self-centered people are incapable of creating friendly relationships, distrustful of others, have little common action, and are not optimistic about the future (Foladian and Rezaei, 2018: 22).

The feminist movement eliminated or downplay the importance of the family to grant more freedoms to women and increase individualism among them. Customizing a life culture without moral and legal obligations, as well as

life without marriage, freedom of sexual relations, which distorts women's need for marriage, a support program for single-parent families and breaking numerous taboos regarding illegitimate children, and creating kindergartens and boarding houses to free women from their roles are among the movements of the last decades in the western world (Rad and Bilan, 2016: 362).

According to the theoretical foundations and framework of the study, the following hypotheses are considered:

1. There is a relationship between the religiosity and the individualism of females in Shiraz.
2. There is a relationship between the expansion of modernity and individualism of Shiraz's females.
3. There is a relationship between the self-centeredness and individualism of females in Shiraz.
4. There is a relationship between the structural changes of the family and its individualization and individualism of Shiraz's females.
5. There is a relationship between life satisfaction and desire for the individualism of females in Shiraz.
6. There is a relationship between the lifestyle and individualism of females in Shiraz.
7. There is a relationship between the social capital and individualism of females in Shiraz.
8. There is a relationship between the amount of use of media and the individualism of females in Shiraz.
9. There is a relationship between the spread of the avatarism culture (life in virtual space) and the individualism of females in Shiraz.
10. There is a relationship between the feminist attitudes and the individualism of females in Shiraz.
11. There is a relationship between the socio-economic base and the individualism of females in Shiraz.

3. Methodology

This cross-sectional correlational study was conducted on single females without a spouse due to the death of a spouse and divorce aged 15 to 29 in Shiraz (66,380 people). The sample size was estimated as much as 564 people using Cochran's two-step formula, who were selected by a simple random sampling method in Shiraz metropolis and divided into five districts of north,

south, center, west, and east. Then, five districts of 3, 7, 8, 9, and 10 were randomly selected, and the list of localities in these areas was obtained. In the next step, two neighborhoods (a whole ten neighborhoods) were randomly selected in each district. A simple random sampling method was used to access the sample population and complete the questionnaire. Females were interviewed in public places, markets, streets, and squares of randomly selected neighborhoods (10 neighborhoods). The inclusion criteria were being single without a spouse (due to the death of their spouse and divorce), willingness to participate in the study, being young in Shiraz and living in the five selected districts. The incomplete completion of questionnaires was considered an exclusion criterion. The following steps were taken to access the statistical sample and interview:

1. Division of Shiraz metropolis into five districts of north, south, center, west, and east
2. Random selection of 3, 7, 8, 9, and 10 areas of the municipality
3. Identifying the neighborhoods of each of the five districts
4. Selection of two neighborhoods in each region (10 neighborhoods in total)
5. Refer to public places, markets, streets, and squares in selected neighborhoods
6. Interview with single females without spouse due to death of spouse and divorce. People's willingness to participate in the study, age 15 to 29 and living in the five studied areas in Shiraz were the criteria for entering the interview.

The data were collected using a questionnaire. Five interviewers received training, participated in a briefing session, and were provided with instructions and guidelines on completing the questionnaire. The interviewers randomly approached the respondents, received the answers by face-to-face interview method, and completed the questionnaire. Two types of content and construct validity were used to measure the validity of the questionnaire, and Cronbach's alpha test was used to calculate the reliability. The initial questionnaire was completed and pre-tested among 47 females of Shiraz, the shortcomings were solved, and finally, the final questionnaire was compiled. Data analysis was done using SPSS Software Version 25 at two descriptive and analytical levels. Descriptive statistics, including the calculation of central

tendency and dispersion indicators, were obtained for the studied quantitative variables. The K-S test was used to check the compliance of the distribution of the studied variables with the theoretical normal distribution, and the correlation test was used to evaluate the relationship between the studied variables. T-test and one-way variance analysis were used to analyze data and compare individualism between different groups of women. The significance level was 0.05, and the confidence level was 95%. Structural equations model and Amos software were used to investigate the relationship and influence of independent variables on the dependent.

In this study, the variable of individualism was investigated in three dimensions of independence, priority of individual activities, and priority of one's interests over others. The independence dimension of the individualism variable was measured with the following 19 items and in 6 subcategories of family independence, independent life, intellectual, work, financial, and emotional independence.

4. Findings

The average age of the participants was 23 years old, and the minimum and maximum ages were 15 and 29 years, respectively. About 53% of the respondents had a spouse, and 47% were single.

Table 1. Tendency to the individualism of the females participating in the study

Variable	frequency	minimum	maximum	mean	standard deviation	individualism percentage scores	
Dimensions	to be independent	516	52	77	65.25	8.69	68.69
	Advancement of individual activities of people	552	11	20	15.63	1.77	78.15
	Putting personal interests before others	540	5	20	12.20	3.78	61
individualism	492	76	113	93.07	8.34	68.94	

About 4% of the respondents were illiterate and with primary education, 17% with middle school education, 30% with high school and diploma education, 28% with associate education, and 21% with bachelor's degree and above. About 81% of the respondents declared their ethnicity as Fars, 13% as Turks, 4% as Lor, and 2% as other ethnic groups. Then, 20% of the

respondents were selected and interviewed from each district, and the questionnaire was completed.

The tendency of females participating in the study was measured using a 27-question form. Questionnaire questions were graded with 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 on a 5-point Likert scale. A total of 9 items (1-2-5-14-17-18-19-22-26) in this variable are designed negatively, which were re-coded during indexing. Therefore, the range of changes in the individualism status of the respondents was between 27 and 135 points. The individualism of females participating in the study indicated that the mean individualism of females was 93.07 with a standard deviation of 8.34. The percentage of individualism of the respondents was about 69%, and the dimensions of individualism showed that the tendency of the respondents to individualism in the dimension of advancement of individual activities of people (78.15%) was more than the other two dimensions. The tendency of the respondents toward individualism was 68.69% in the dimension of independence and 61% in putting one's over others.

Table 2. The relationship between independent variables and women's individualism

independent variable	Correlation	sig
Religion	-0.326	0.000
The expansion of modernity	0.356	0.000
self-centeredness	0.369	0.013
Structural changes in the family	0.451	0.010
Life satisfaction	-0.712	0.000
life style	-0.452	0.000
Social capital	-0.103	0.028
Use of media	0.382	0.012
Spreading the culture of avatarism	0.39	0.012
Feminist attitudes	0.385	0.000

The correlation coefficient between the independent variables and females' individualism shows a significant negative and inverse relationship between the variables of religiosity, life satisfaction, lifestyle, and individualism of females in Shiraz. However, the relationship between the variables of the expansion of modernity, structural changes of the family, social capital, media use, expansion of avatarism culture and feminist attitudes is positive with the level of individualism. The level of individualism also increases with enhancing each of these variables.

Table 3. Comparison of the difference between the socio-economic base and dimensions of females' individualism

	Socio-economic status	frequency	mean	standard deviation	sig
individualism	down	42	5236.93	8.68	0.432
	medium	228	92.27	7.54	
	Top	230	92.90	8.70	

The analysis of the variance test showed no significant difference between the mean individualism of women and their economic and social base ($p=0.432$). Therefore, females with different economic and social bases have the same degree of individualism, and there was not much difference between them in this regard.

A one-step approach was used to draw the final model. Most of the indicators of the latent variables in the measurement part of the model are relatively well loaded. The direct and indirect paths of the model were confirmed. The only direct path of the socio-economic base to individualism was not confirmed. Life satisfaction had the highest effect on females' individualism with a coefficient (-0.71). Therefore, the four variables of life satisfaction, religiosity, social capital, and lifestyle had a negative effect on individualism. The effect of feminist attitude variables, expansion of avatarism culture (life in virtual space), media use, self-centeredness, family structural changes, and the expansion of modernity was positive on the individualism of Shiraz females. The variable of modernity expansion through lifestyle and family structural changes affected females' individualism. The model indicators show the goodness of fit of the proposed theoretical structure with the observed data and the structural validity of the measuring instrument. Most of the comparative indicators show values higher than 0.90, which means the ability of the model to distance itself from an independent model and approach a saturated model based on the criteria. The GFI = 0.9, TLI = 0.94, and IFI = 0.9, close to one, indicates a good fit of the model, and RMSEA = 0.07 presents the poor performance of the residuals in the model.

Table 4. The result of Amos

P	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	IFI	NFI	TLI	CMIN/DF
0.000	0.9	0.04	0.92	0.9	0.92	0.942	2.9

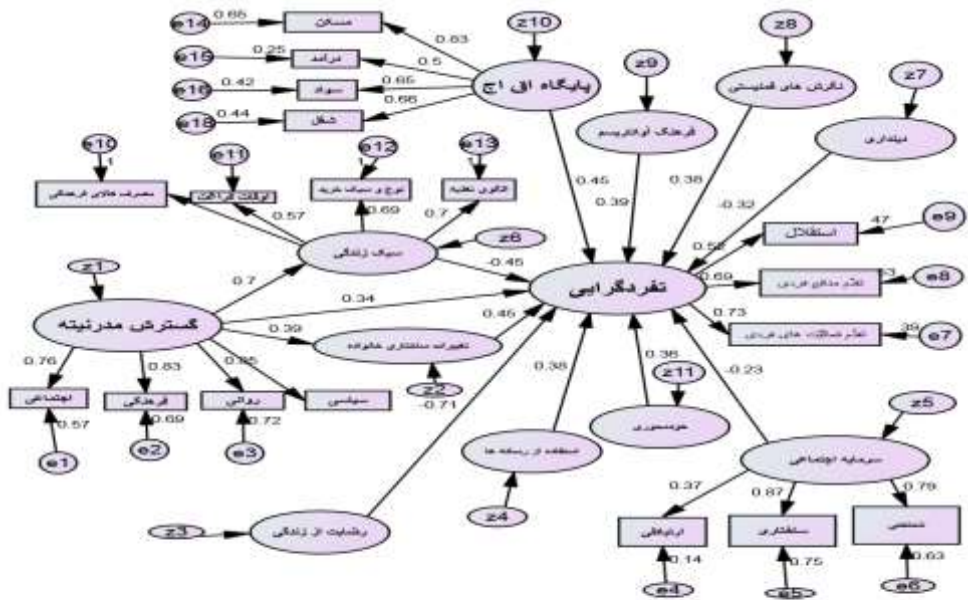


Figure 1. the model or research

5. Conclusion

In this study, the individualism variable was investigated in three dimensions of independence, prioritizing individual activities of individuals, and prioritizing one's interests over others. The individualism of females participating in the study reveals that the individualism rate of the respondents was about 69%. The individualism dimensions showed that the tendency of the respondents to individualism in the dimension of advancement of individual activities of people (78.15%) was more than the other two dimensions. The tendency of the respondents toward individualism was 68.69% in the dimension of independence and 61% in putting one's over others. Behravan and Alizadeh (2007) concluded that overall individualism on a 5-point Likert scale equals 3.4. In other words, the individualism rate in this statistical population is about 68%, and the average individualism is high.

The first research hypothesis investigated the relationship between the religiosity and tendency to the individualism of Shiraz’s females. The

correlation coefficient of the level of religiosity of Shiraz females and their tendency to individualism showed a significant and inverse relationship between the two variables. Shekarbeigi and Rahimi (2013) found that individualism has a significant relationship with religious beliefs, and as the level of religious beliefs increases people's tendency towards individualism will decrease and vice versa. Moayadfar and Darbandi (2005) emphasized the effect of religiosity on collectivism. Mahmoudi (2012), Zarean (2012), Ghaderi et al. (2013), Barani (2013), and Bagheri (2015) showed the relationship between individualism and religiosity.

In the second hypothesis, the relationship between the expansion of modernity and the individualism of Shiraz's females was investigated. The Pearson's correlation coefficient showed a significant relationship between modernity and the individualism of Shiraz's females, increasing with the expansion of modernity. According to Giddens, as people take control of their destiny in modernity, the role of predictable trends in people's lives decreases. With the influx of ever-increasing information, new facts have formed that doubt the accuracy of previous judgments. Such a transformation makes a person face uncertainty about the truth, resulting in psychological insecurity. The formation of independent and autonomous individuality and the possibility of active selection and critical self-knowledge give modernity and modern humans a dynamic character.

The relationship between the self-centeredness of Shiraz's females and their individualism was examined in the third hypothesis. The correlation coefficient of the self-centeredness of Shiraz's females and their tendency to individualism revealed a significant and positive relationship between the two variables. Enhancing the self-centeredness of Shiraz's females increases their individualism, which confirms the third hypothesis. Self-righteous people are incapable of creating friendly relationships and are distrustful of others, and there is little common action between them, and they are not optimistic about the future (Foladian and Rezaei, 2018: 22). Barani (2013) confirmed the inverse relationship between the two variables of self-centeredness and individualism of students. In Arpacia, Baloğlub & Kesicic (2017), the

correlation between individualism and attitude toward self-centeredness was significant.

In the fourth hypothesis, the relationship between the structural changes of the family and its individualization and the individualism of Shiraz's females was discussed. The correlation coefficient of the structural changes of the family and its individualization and the individualism of Shiraz's females revealed a significant and direct relationship between the two variables. The individualism of Shiraz's females increases by raising the changes in the family and its individualization. Therefore, our fourth hypothesis is confirmed based on the relationship between family structural changes and the individualism of Shiraz's females. These results are consistent with those of Emami et al. (2017). Individualism implies the decline of traditional family patterns and evasion from the community and family so that people can choose from different lifestyles and follow their desires. The increase in the statistics of single life, reluctance to marry, separation from family life, spread of divorce, decrease in the fertility of married people, increase of the marriage age, departure of sexual relations from the rules of society, and the decline of family functions are the main indicators of individualism. Individualism refers to the cultural conditions that make women inseparable from the family and prefer themselves and their conditions over the family and its conditions (Labibi, 2013: 22).

The relationship between the life satisfaction of Shiraz's females and their tendency to individualism was investigated in the fifth hypothesis. The correlation coefficient of the life satisfaction of Shiraz's females and their tendency to individualism shows a significant and inverse relationship between the two variables, and the increase in their life satisfaction decreases their desire for individualism. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis is confirmed based on the relationship between the life satisfaction of Shiraz's females and their desire for individualism. Regarding life satisfaction, the activist may refuse to cooperate by arguing the quality provided by the society that expects to cooperate (Little, 1994, quoted by Zarean Dolatabadi, 2012: 183). Bagheri (2015) also found a significant and inverse relationship between the two variables.

The sixth hypothesis was related to the relationship between the lifestyle and individualism of Shiraz's females. The results indicated a significant and inverse relationship between the two variables. The negativity of the coefficient indicates that the individualism level decreases as social capital increases. Therefore, the sixth hypothesis regarding the relationship between lifestyle and individualism of Shiraz's females is confirmed. This finding is consistent with that of Zarean's research (2012), during which the inverse relationship between the two variables was confirmed.

The relationship between the social capital of Shiraz's females and their tendency to individualism was discussed in the form of the seventh hypothesis. The research results showed a significant and inverse relationship between the two variables, meaning that Shiraz's females individualism tendency decreases as their social capital increases. Barani (2013) also confirmed the inverse relationship between the two variables of social capital and individualism, but in the research of Ghaderi et al. (2013), there was no significant relationship between the two variables of social capital and individualism, and this hypothesis was rejected.

The eighth hypothesis evaluated the relationship between Shiraz's females' media use and their tendency to individualism, which was confirmed. The spread of mass media has separated families and children from each other and created a distance. Today's generation lives in a world with modern technology and means of communication (Shekarbeigi and Rahimi, 2010: 38). These results are in line with those of Ashayeri et al. (2018), during which the relationship between the two variables was confirmed.

The ninth hypothesis discussed the relationship between the spread of avatarism culture (life in virtual space) and the individualism of Shiraz's females. The results showed a positive and direct relationship between the two variables so that the level of the individuality of the respondents increases with the spread of the avatarism culture (life in virtual space). Giddens believes that avatarism expansion is one of the achievements of postmodernism, leading to the expansion of individualism. In this second life, the culture and lifestyle are so different from the traditional lifestyle, which separates the person from the community and leads to an individual life form based on escaping from the

community (Ritzer, 2012: 566). This finding is aligned with that of Salimi et al. (2009), Rashidi et al. (2012), and Birami and Movahedi (2013).

The relationship between the feminist attitudes of Shiraz's females and their tendency to individualism was discussed in the tenth hypothesis. The correlation coefficient between the two variables revealed a significant and positive relationship between the two variables. Feminist attitudes of Shiraz's females positively affect their desire for individualism, confirming the tenth hypothesis. The feminist movement chose to eliminate or downplayed the family's importance in granting more freedoms and increasing individualism. Customizing and creating a life culture without moral and legal obligations, as well as life without marriage, freedom of sexual relations, which distorts females' need for marriage, support programs for single-parent families and breaking numerous taboos regarding illegitimate children, and creating kindergartens and boarding houses to free women from their roles are among the movements of the last decades in the western world (Rad and Bilan, 2016: 362).

The relationship between the socio-economic base of Shiraz's females and their tendency to individualism was investigated in the 11th hypothesis. The analysis of the variance test showed no significant difference between the mean individualism of females and their economic and social base ($p=0.432$). Females with different economic and social bases have individualism to the same extent, and there was not much difference between them in this regard. The effect of the socio-economic base on the formation and diversity of thoughts has been emphasized by many experts, including Veblen, Mannheim, and Marx. According to Mannheim, inequality significantly affects the behavior of different society strata and people's social attitudes similarity. People with different socio-economic bases are expected to have different levels of individualism (Zarean Dolatabadi, 2012: 177). In Ghaderi et al. (2013), the relationship between the two variables of class and selfish individualism was insignificant, and all three classes had a moderate amount of selfish individualism. This finding is inconsistent with that of Hosseinzadeh et al. (2013) because there was a significant relationship between individualism and socio-economic base.

The theoretical model of the research indicated that most of the direct and indirect paths of the model were confirmed, and the only direct path of the socio-economic base to individualism was not approved. Life satisfaction had the highest effect on females' individualism (-0.71), and the four variables of life satisfaction, religiosity, social capital, and lifestyle have a negative effect on individualism. The influence of the variables of feminist attitudes, the expansion of avatarism culture (life in virtual space), the amount of media use, self-centeredness, structural changes in the family, and the expansion of modernity was positive on the individualism of Shiraz's females. The expansion of modernity through lifestyle and family structural changes affected the individualism of females.

- According to the results, there was an inverse relationship between religiosity and women's individualism. Encouraging females to comply with moral and religious issues and presenting cultural and social programs through radio and media with religious aspects can increase the level of religiosity of women and provide grounds for reducing their individualism. Therefore, the design and implementation of practical educational programs by the media are recommended in this regard.
- The relationship between Shiraz's females' use of media and their tendency to individualism has been investigated and confirmed in the eighth hypothesis. Cultivation and attention of the media to the role of women in supporting this group and reducing their individualism seems necessary. Moreover, other members of society should be reminded about the role of women in the family by related institutions.
- According to the findings, there was individualism among Shiraz's females, and its prevalence was about 69%. Therefore, it is necessary to take the necessary measures to reduce individualism by expanding the spirit of collectivism and promoting it among different strata of society, especially women, through appropriate mechanisms. Therefore, it is necessary to respect the values, interests, attitudes, and wishes of females. Presenting suitable models and explaining the absurdity and futility of foreign individualistic models can be effective in this field.
- According to the respondents, the results indicate that the structural changes in the family were 61.11%. The Pearson's correlation coefficient showed a significant relationship between structural changes in the respondents' family and their individualism. Long-term planning

to solve structural problems and adopt policies in structural changes of families changing the power structure in the family, positive attitude towards marriage rules, preventing late marriage age, preventing tension and changing the status of women, expanding kinship relationships, positive attitude towards reproductive behavior, and raising children in families are essential.

- Efforts should be made to reduce differences in economic and social issues to reduce individualism in females. Economic strengthening by providing special facilities to these females to solve their daily concerns in life by related organizations is another suggestion of the research.
- The results showed a significant and inverse relationship between the two variables of Shiraz's females' social capital and individualism. Therefore, providing social and cultural platforms to increase social capital among people by developing related programs to spread the culture of positive social interaction can effectively reduce the isolation of females in this city.

This paper was extracted from a PhD thesis in sociology of social issues of Iran approved by the Faculty of Humanities of the Islamic Azad University of Dehaghan Branch. We would like to thank the ladies who helped in this research.

References

- Afshani A, Khorrampour Y, Javaherchian, N (2013). Investigating the relationship between globalization and individualism among 15-29 year olds in Yazd. *Social Sciences*. 26 (8): 149-172.
- Arpaci, I & et al(2017). The relationship among individual differences in individualism-collectivism, extraversion, and self-presentation. *JOURNAL OF MEDICAL INTERNET RESEARCH*.
- Ashairi T, Zulfiqari A, Namian F, Hosseinzadeh A (2017). Sociological explanation of the national identity of Iranians. *Scientific-Research Quarterly of Intercultural Studies* 13 (37): 37-67.
- Barani (2012). "*Investigation of factors affecting the phenomenon of individualism among students, a case study of students of Kashan University and Kashan University of Medical Sciences*". Dissertation for master's degree. Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences, University of Kashan.
- Bagheri, Yadgar (2014). *Examining the social factors related to the level of individualism among the youth of Khalkhal city*. Khalkhal Branch Islamic Azad University.

- Behravan, H. and Alizadeh, A. (2007). Investigating individualism and factors influencing it among students of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. *Journal of Social Sciences, Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad*, 2, 1-26.
- Birami M, Mohadi Y, Mohadi M (2013). The relationship between perceived social support and the feeling of social-emotional loneliness with Internet addiction in the student community. *Two scientific-research quarterly journals of social cognition*. 3(2): 109-122.
- Dascălu,DL (2014). Individualism and mass communication in the context of globalization. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 163, 1-6.
- Dascălu,DL (2014). Individualism and Morality in the Post-communist Capitalism. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 149, 280-285.
- Durkheim, A. (2008). *About the social division of labor*, translated by Baqer Parham, Tehran: Publishing Center.
- Emami P; Far Hashemian, A. and Hekhritian, M. (2017). Explaining the relationship between modernity and family orientation in the city of Isfahan. *Sociology of social institutions*, 5 (11). 251-227.
- Fouladiyan M, Rezaei Bahrabad H (2017). Sociological analysis of self-control of Iranians (based on experimental study data in Tehran). *Quarterly Journal of Culture-Communication Studies*. 19 (44): 1-26. doi: 10.22083/jccs.2018.109170.2308
- Giddens, A (2005). *World Visions*, translated by Mohammad Reza Jalaipour, Tehran: New Design.
- Hosseinzadeh AH, Mahmoudi Z and Membini A (2012). Investigating some effective factors of individualistic interactions in scientific-research journal. *Contemporary sociological researches*. 2 (3): 37-52.
- Inglehart, R. (1994). *Cultural transformation in advanced industrial society*. Translation: Maryam, Veter. Tehran: Kavir Publications.
- Iran Statistics Center (2015). *The results of the general population and housing census*.
- Javadi Yeganemar, Hashemi Z (2007). A new look at the controversy of individualism and collectivism in sociology, *Social Science Journal*, No. 3.
- Kivisto, P. (2015). *Basic ideas in sociology*. Translator: Manouchehr Sabourikashani. Edition 19. Tehran: Ney Publishing.
- Labibi, M. M. (2014). *Family in the 21st century*. Tehran: First edition. Science publication.
- Mohseni Tabrizi, A., Sedaghati Fard, M. (2010). A research on social indifference in Iran (research case: Tehrani citizens). *Applied Sociology*. 22(3): 1-22.
- Moidfar, S.; and Sabouri Khosrowshahi, h. (2010). Examining the degree of individualism of children in the family. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 4, 110-93.
- Moaidfar, S. and Darbandi A. (2005). Investigating the collective behavior and attitude of citizens. *Iranian Journal of Sociology*, No. 3: 34-58.
- Malek, H (2014). "Investigating the effect of the university environment on students' attitudes regarding individualism and collectivism" *Social Sciences Research School*.

- Mahdavi GH, Ghasemi M (2009). The effect of social structures of legalism, reassurance, level of education, individualism, gender, field of study and work history on financial disclosure. *Journal of Accounting Advances (Social Sciences and Humanities, Shiraz: 1(1): 191-215.*
- Picavet ,E (2015). *Methodological Individualism in Sociology*. in International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences 302, 303 .
- Qadri; Alizad and Alquna (2013). "*The level of selfish individualism among different classes of Shiraz University students*". Master's thesis. Allameh Tabatabai University - Faculty of Social Sciences.
- Qazi Moradi, H (1999). *About self-control of Iranians: a research in the social psychology of Iranian people*, Tehran: Armaghan
- Rezaei, A. (2013). *The influence of the mental life of Ardabil city in the formation of individualistic spirit of Ardabil citizens*. Master thesis of Islamic Azad University, Khalkhal branch.
- Ritzer, J. (2016). *Sociological theories in the contemporary era*. Translation: Mohsen, Thalasi. Tehran: Scientific Publications.
- Sarukhani, B (2010). *Research Methods in Social Sciences, Volume II: Insights and Techniques*. Tehran, Research Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies.
- Salimi A, Jokar B, Nikpour R (2009). Internet communication in life: Investigating the role of perceived social support and loneliness in using the Internet. *Psychological Studies 5(3): 81-102*. doi: 10.22051/psy.2009.1607
- Shahriari, Z (2012). *The role of variety of communication tools in network individualism with emphasis on social ability approach*. Master's thesis. Alzahra University Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences.
- Triandis C.H. Bontempo, R. Villareal, M. J. Asai, M. & Lucca, N. (1988). Individualism and collectivism: Cross-cultural perspectives on self-ingroup relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54, 323-338*.
- Triandis, H. (1999). *Culture and social behavior*, translation, Nusrat Feni, Tehran, Rasansh Publishing House.
- Trust and intercession (2015). "The semantic evolution of the concept of individualism in Georg Simmel's thought; Three forms of individualism: isolation, incomparable and modern". *Society of media culture. 5(19): 11-30*.
- Vathouqi M, Hossein M (2008). A reflection on dimensions and indicators. *Journal of social sciences*. No. 34: 117-142.
- Weber, M. (2004). *The city through time*, translated by Shiva Gaviani. Tehran, a joint stock company.
- Zarean Dolatabadi, A. (2011). *Investigating the amount and factors affecting individualism among the students of Islamic Azad University of Yazd*. Dissertation to receive a Master's Degree in Sociology, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Yazd University.