

## **Sociological Factors Influencing Tendency to Cultural Deviations (Case Study: Youth in Darrehshahr, Iran)**

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### ***Abstract***

Youth deviance has always been a major concern and an irritant issue and the focal attention among various societies and it has also been the focus of attention by a large number of authorities. This sociological study deals with the cultural tendency of the youth to deviance by a sociological procedure. Using a clustering method, in this survey, the data were obtained from a sample including 376 people of the 16221 population of the young boys and girls of Darrehshahr, Iran. The results revealed that there is relationship between social control, religious belief loyalty, relative deprivation feeling, social anomie, companionship with deviant friends and tendency to cultural deviance. And 72 percent of the changes have discussed the tendency to cultural deviance. Moreover, the results of the study showed that tendency to cultural deviance among Darrehshahr youth is intermediate.

***Keywords:*** Sociological, Darrehshahr, Youth, Cultural deviance.

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## 1. Introduction

Since long time ago, the problem of youth's deviance has always been a major concern and an irritant issue in many societies and it has been a center of attention by many members of society as well as the sociological professionals. Cultural deviance is a set of behaviors that are considered disagreeable and sometimes as a crime, based on ethical criteria and Islamic traditional normative systems and the dominant formal norms (Sarajzadeh, 2004, p.14). Because of having special characteristics, the youth are more vulnerable to deviation from the social norms than other strata of society. The youth are more susceptible to change and to be changed due to being idealist, evolutionist and modernist. So, in this way, they may involve in deviance from common low and approved norms of society. The problem of the youth's deviance is of paramount importance as an agent for their being away from actualizing their talents and capabilities and not participating at development process of the country (Rajabzadeh and Kosari, 2004, p.33). Deviance is not good or bad in nature and based on the conditions can be useful or harmful socially. Deviance is certain and partly constructive product of social life; or in other words, in Durkheim's view, deviance is useful for social improvement and reform (Sedigh Sarvestani, 2006, p.28). Youth is one of the most sensitive periods of every human being and the youth involves in social issues lose, in most cases, irreparable opportunities in respect of education and employment. Their joining to outcast and deviant group rings will in turn lead to destruct youth in society in their future (Moiidfar and Moghimi, 2012, p. 2). In recent years, some concerns have been stated about youth's low loyalty to traditional and religious norms and values and increase of social deviances in the city and especially among the youth and teenagers (Sarajzadeh, 2004, p. 54). In the current situation, the youth of Iran are exposed to different cultural patterns and values and sometimes in contrary to the formal and traditional culture of the country by accessing to mass media (satellite and Internet, etc). It seems that the number of the youth who use these modern phenomena and are subject to being influenced by them is increasing (Sarajadeh and Baboli, 2009, p. 46). Statistics and evidence of deviance increase among the youth shows the development and formation of non-acceptable behaviors, inconsistency with formal and generally accepted norms, followed by being endangered of social security that needs studying youth's deviance essentially (Shams *et al.*, 2013, p.103).

Iran is a developing and in transient society. In such a society, because of collapse in traditional system and structures such as rural and nomadic communities and development of urbanization and mass media, social and population movements, most

people, especially the youth, are exposed to different local, national and international and sometimes opposed patterns. And by detachment from traditional foundation or not being of the new structures and or not recognizing the appropriate patterns, they involve in conflict, confusion and uncertainty and find themselves as opposed to the traditional and modern values (Abdollahi, 1996, p. 159). In such circumstances, anomie or social disorganization brings about a ground for emergence of deviance. Like other cities in the country, Darrehshahr city confronts with multiple challenges and problems of the transition period. And occasionally this period has left undesirable and numerous effects; the problems that are results of the conflict of traditional and modern lives along with the needs caused by the modern and new life. The imbalance between the traditional life and the present and future needs cause disorder and social hurts such as suicide, addiction, divorce, and deviance among the youth of Darrehshahr. So, this research titled "Studying sociological agents influencing on tendency to cultural deviance of the youth of Darredhahr has been compiled.

## **2. Background of the Study**

In a survey by Zolfalifam *et al.*, (2011) titled "Study of the relationship between social link and social deviance among native and non-native students", it is concluded that the native students have less social deviance and norms-breaking than non-native students because of the stronger social association and thus more social supervision and control. Also, girl and boy students having stronger social association with society and social environment commit less social deviance than those having a weak or intermediate social association with society and social environment. The individual's insouciance towards society and social deviance among boy students occur more than girl students.

In a research by Sarajzadah and Pooyafar (2009) titled "Religion and social order: studying the relation between religion with sense of anomie and deviance within a sample of students" using the survey method, the effectiveness of religion and sense of anomie variables on deviance has been confirmed.

In the research titled "violation of formal and traditional culture norms and its resistance implications" conducted among male and female students of Shaheed Beheshti University, Sarajadeh and Babaiie (2009) found that tendency of more than half of the students towards violating some formal and traditional culture norms is at intermediate and high level. And also, a considerable part of the people violating the norms shows a kind of resistance and protest by this way.

In a research (Moaveni, 2006) conducted by using qualitative method (interview and collaborative observation) during two years, some youth of Iran born mainly during the Revolution period were interviewed and observed. The research questions were mainly political and controlling governmental features in Iran and the youth's attitudes toward American government and culture. The researcher concludes that the society of Iran is confused culturally. In his opinion, the youth use the life style contrary to formal norms (loud music, participating at party, showing hair, using lipstick and etc.) as conscious act to impose power in streets and public places.

Tittle (1980) in a study named "Prohibition and social deviance" found that there is a reversed relation between amount of religion and people's deviance.

Burkett and Warren (1987) in their research titled "Religion, peers dependence and Marijuana use" concluded that religion has only an indirect influence, and this influence is achieved through selecting peers and selecting peers can in turn reduce crime.

### **3. Theoretical Principles**

It seems that the current social of Ilam is unique in respect of evolution and historical development, and its problems can be better explained by the combined theories (Ghasemi and Rostami, 2012, P. 132). So, in this research, Durkheim' Merton, Sutherland' and Hershey's theories are used.

Durkheim's anomie theory: about the variable of anomaly feeling, Emile Durkheim is the most important author attending to this variable. Anomaly feeling means that "people become confused and "not knowing" prevails in society, and the norms lose their formality, acceptance and legitimacy. As a result, the human becomes released and like suspended particles has no direction and may be drawn towards goodness or badness ", (Tanhaei, 2004, PP. 142-143). Durkheim said that the traditional standards and norms become unstable in modern societies without new alternative norms and standards. When there are not clear standards for directing behaviors in a specific area of social life, anomie appears. According to Durkheim, in such circumstances, people feel anxious and wandering, so anomie is one of the social factors affecting on desire to deviance (Giddens, 2009, p. 300). In Durkheim's view, religion banishes people from concerns and disturbances of the mundane unholy social life and enters it into a more balanced world (Giddens, 2007, p. 779).

Merton's anomie theory: Merton modifies slightly the concept of anomie to mean stress and tension that enter into people's behavior when the accepted norms are in contrast to social fact. And it is assumed that self-discipline and hard work are some

means for succeeding; likewise it is assumed that hard-working people can succeed regardless of what their starting point in life has been. Actually, this assumption is not true and valid, because most of the deprived and disadvantaged groups have been given only very limited opportunities for progress or given no opportunity at all; however, the unsuccessful people are blamed because of inability and incompetence in material promotion and advancement. In such a situation, the person suffers from a great stress in attempting to progress at all costs and by any means, legitimate or illegitimate. Then, according to Merten, deviance is a product of economical inequalities and lack of equal opportunities. Emphasizing on opposition between the increasing wishes and demands and the stable inequalities, Merten considers the sense of relative deprivation as an important element in deviant behavior (Giddens, 2009: p.301-303).

From Edwin Sutherland's perspective, motives behavior is learned like other social behaviors via companionship and association with others (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004: p. 100). A part of such learning is usually a product of society accepting of the person in the deviant subculture and via his companionship and association with others carrying the deviant norms (Salimi and Davari, 2012, p. 399). In this view, deviance is mainly learned in the early groups and especially in the peer groups; Also deviances are learned just like the rule compliance and equally seeking similar values and needs (Giddens, 2009, p. 304).

Travis Hirshi: In his opinion, what makes conformity is imposing social control on people that prevents deviance. So, lack or weakness of social control is the cause of deviance (Sarvstani, 2006, p. 47). He believes that deviance occurs when the relation between the individual and society is weak. He also believes that four major elements strengthen the relation between the individual and society:

Dependence: the main basis of norms internalization is dependence to others. By the sense of responding to the expectations of others, the people become limited and self-controlled. Commitment: a person committed to the conventional tasks in life does not commit deviance and endanger himself in order to maintain the position earned by hard working. Involvement: during life, people have limited time and energy; involvement in the affairs of everyday life needs a lot of times and this limits behavior. Unemployed people have more time for breaking norms, but availability of sport facilities and etc reduces deviance (Bokharaii, 2014, p. 93-94). Belief (religion): the less the belief in ethical values and cultural norms, the more likelihood of people's deviance. A person does not know himself influenced by the common beliefs in the

society, doesn't imagine any ethical duty to conform the official rules (Sotoudeh, 2005, p. 138).

#### 4. Research Hypotheses

- There is a relation between social control and youth's tendency to cultural deviance.
- There is a relation between religious belief loyalty and youth's tendency to cultural deviance.
- There is a relation between relative frustration feeling and youth's tendency to cultural deviance.
- There is a relation between social anomie and youth's tendency to cultural deviance.
- There is a relation between companionship with deviant friends and youth's tendency to cultural deviance.

#### 5. Research Method

Research Method in the present study is survey and the applied technique is questionnaire; that in this research, cluster sampling method has been used. Statistical population includes the young boys and girls aged 18-29 of Darrehshahr that their number totals 16221 according to census of November 2011. In this research, Cochran formula was used to determine sample size. Based on this, a statistical sample of 376 people of the young girls and boys was determined. The research questionnaire was designed based on Likert scale, and the questions related to cultural deviance variables were adopted from Sarrajzadeh and Babaii's research, 2004. It is should be mentioned that the questionnaire validity has been done by using the available researches and feedback from the professionals (formal validity). By using Cronbach Alpha coefficient, reliability of the studied variables is as follows.

**Table 1. Obtained Cronbach's alpha coefficients for independent and dependent variables of the research**

variable	number of items	Cronbach Alpha coefficient
Cultural deviance	12	0.894
Social control	5	0.714
religious belief loyalty	7	0.795
relative frustration feeling	6	0.749
Social anomie	8	0.711
companionship with deviant friends	5	0.676

## 6. Research Findings

-Tendency to cultural deviance is high among 27.1 percent of respondents, 66.5 percent, average, and among 6.4 percent, low.

-57.7 percent of the subjects are men and 42.3 percent women.

- 46.0 percent of the subjects are single and 54.0 percent married.

-8.0 percent of the subjects are aged between 21-23, 29.5 percent between 24-26, 42.8 percent between 27-29.

-5.1 percent of the respondents have a degree of diploma, 24.6 percent Associate diploma, 55.3 percent bachelor and 13.0 percent Master and upper.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between social control and youth's tendency to cultural deviance.

**Table 2. Correlation of social control and tendency to cultural deviance**

independent variable	Spearman coefficient	significance level
social control	0.645-	0.000

According to table (2), because the significance level (0.000) is lower than 0.01 with confidence of 99 percent, the relationship between social control and youth's tendency to cultural deviance is significant, so the first hypothesis is confirmed, and have a reverse correlation according to Spearman correlation coefficient of 0.645-. In other words, it can be argued that by increase of social control, tendency to cultural deviance decreases considerably. In other words, the people having a higher social control have a lower tendency to cultural deviance than those having a lower social control. The reverse is correct, too.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relation between religious belief loyalty and youth's tendency to cultural deviance.

**Table 3. Correlation between religious belief loyalty and tendency to cultural deviance**

independent variable	Spearman coefficient	significance level
religious belief loyalty	-0.513	0.000

According to table (3), because the significance level (0.000) is lower than 0.01 with confidence of 99 percent, the relation between religious belief loyalty and youth's tendency to cultural deviance is significant, so the second hypothesis is confirmed, and have reversed correlation according to Spearman correlation coefficient of -0.513. In other words, it can be argued that by increase of the respondents' religious belief loyalty, tendency to cultural deviance decreases considerably. In other words, the

people having a higher religious belief loyalty have a lower tendency to cultural deviance than those having a lower religious belief loyalty. The reverse is correct, too.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relation between relative frustration feeling and youth's tendency to cultural deviance.

**Table 4. Correlation between relative frustration feeling and tendency to cultural deviance**

independent variable	Spearman coefficient	significance level
relative frustration feeling	0.634	0.000

According to table (4), because the significance level (0.000) is lower than 0.01 with confidence of 99 percent, the relation between relative frustration feeling and youth's tendency to cultural deviance is significant, so the third hypothesis is confirmed, and the value 0.634 of Spearman correlation coefficient shows the direct correlation between them. In other words, it can be argued that by increase of relative frustration feeling, tendency to cultural deviance increase considerably. The reverse is correct, too.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant relation between social anomie and youth's tendency to cultural deviance.

**Table 5. Correlation between social anomie and tendency to cultural deviance**

independent variable	Spearman coefficient	significance level
social anomie	0.423	0.000

According to table (7), because the significance level (0.000) is lower than 0.01 with confidence of 99 percent, the relation between social anomie and youth's tendency to cultural deviance is significant, so the fourth hypothesis is confirmed, and the value 0.423 of Spearman correlation coefficient shows the direct correlation between them. In other words, it can be argued that by increase of social anomie feeling, tendency to cultural deviance increases considerably. The reverse is correct, too.

Hypothesis 5: There is a significant relation between companionship with deviant friends and youth's tendency to cultural deviance.

**Table 6. Correlation between companionship with deviant friends and tendency to cultural deviance**

independent variable	Spearman coefficient	significance level
companionship with deviant friends	0.475	0.000

According to table (6), because the significance level (0.000) is lower than 0.01 with confidence of 99 percent, the relation between companionship with deviant friends and youth's tendency to cultural deviance is significant, so the fifth hypothesis is confirmed, and the value 0.475 of Spearman correlation coefficient shows the direct correlation between them. In other words, it can be argued that by increase of companionship with deviant friends, tendency to cultural deviance increases considerably. The reverse is correct, too.

**Table 7. Result of discussing cultural deviance coefficient based on regression**

pattern	Multiple correlation coefficient	Multiple determination coefficient	Modified determination coefficient	Remained error deviation
1	0.850	0.722	0.718	4.364

According to table (7), the summary of regression model of multiple correlation coefficient rate between dependent variable and independent variables is 0.850, and the rate of determination coefficient is 0.722 indicating the 72 percent approximate effect of discussing dependent variable based on independent variables.

**Table 8. Variance analysis for significance test of regression form**

form	Squares sum	Freedom degree	Squares mean	F	Significance level
regression	18313.517	5	3662.703	192.329	0.000
	7046.259	371	19.044		
total	25359.777	376			

According to table (8), **F** is the proportion of average regression variance to average remained variance equaling to 192.329 and has the significance level of ( $p=0.000$ ).

**Table 9. Affecting coefficients of independent variables in the regression form**

variable	B	standard deviation	beta	T value	significance level
Constant value	26.842	2.057		13.050	0.000
social control	-0.551	0.057	-0.385	-9.661	0.000
religious belief	-0.204	0.084	-0.090	-2.426	0.016
frustration	0.785	0.092	0.329	8.554	0.000
Social anomie	0.816	0.107	0.249	7.602	0.000
friends	0.413	0.114	0.128	3.617	0.000

According to table (9), it is specified that how much entered variables have been effective in dependent variable changes. First, the significance level should be

specified. In this table, it is shown that variables of "social control ( $p=0.02$ ), religious belief loyalty ( $p=0.016$ ), relative frustration feeling ( $p=.000$ ), social anomie ( $p=.000$ ) and companionship with deviant friends ( $p=.000$ ) have high significance relation. The standardized beta value shows that the independent variables including almost 38.5 percent social control, 9.0 percent religious belief loyalty, 33 percent relative frustration feeling, 25 percent social anomie and 13 percent companionship with deviant friends have affected on tendency to cultural deviance changes.

## 7. Discussion and conclusion

Since long time ago, the problem of youth's deviance has always been a major concern and an irritant issue in various societies, and it has been a center of attention by many members of society as well as the sociological professionals. According to the research findings, tendency to cultural deviance among the youth of Darrehshahr is 66.5. This finding is explicable based on Durkheim theory. In his view, a part of deviances is normal in every society, and hence should not be considered as a social disease. Also, he believes that the low figures of deviance in a society indicate a suppressing and static structure. Deviance figures are relatively a normal phenomenon in any society. Though the cultural deviance can have destructive consequences for society and its people, according to the figures of this research, cultural deviance in this statistical society is almost intermediate. Cultural deviance is not a social illness; it is a natural phenomenon and is also a normal phenomenon. Another hypothesis of the research that was confirmed is the relation between social control and tendency to cultural deviance. This finding is consistent with the findings of Zolfalifam *et al.*, (2014). Also, the findings of this hypothesis conforms Travis Hirshi 's view; he believes that deviance occurs when the individual's commitment to community and society has become weak or destroyed generally. Another research hypothesis that was confirmed is the relation between religious beliefs loyalty and cultural deviance. This finding is consistent with findings of Sarajzadeh and Pouyafa (2009). In Durkheim and Hirshi 's perspective, this hypothesis is explicable. In Durkheim's view, "religion banishes people from concerns and disturbances of the mundane unholy social life and enters it into a more balanced world". Also, in Hirshi 's opinion, the less the people's belief in ethical values and cultural norms, the more the likelihood of their deviance.

Another hypothesis of this research is the relation between the sense of relative deprivation and tendency to cultural deviance that has been confirmed. The result of this finding is consistent with the finding of Sarajzadah and Pooyafar (2009). A part of Merten's theory expresses the relation between the amount of wishes and their

realization. Based on this theory, people compare themselves with others, and if they feel there are not equal opportunities and or very limited opportunities for progression are given to them, there are economical inequalities too, they feel deprivation and it in turn causes tendency to cultural deviance.

One of the hypotheses of the research is the relation between social anomie and youth's tendency to cultural deviance that has been confirmed. Since in the social anomie conditions, the members of society are wandering and undecided and because they have not guidelines to achieve their goals and wishes and often feel anxiety and inattention; naturally, cultural deviance increases in society. Of course, anomie is the feature of a transient society, so it is a temporary issue and leads the society to a relatively established norm. Therefore, anomie represents the society acceleration towards a new order and puberty in one of its imagination phases though anomie is in a transition period, make the society embarrassed and wandering, but can be useful for society and the people living in it (Ghasemi, 2003). The other hypothesis of research related to the relationship between companionship with deviant friends and the youth's tendency to cultural deviance has also been confirmed. In an unhealthy environment, the person learns deviance from friends so unhealthy environment provides the potential ground of social hurts and the unhealthy friends group put it in practice. This hypothesis is explicable based on "Sutherland differential link theory", because based on this theory, people have more tendency to deviance when they have more relationship with others having deviant theories. And generally, tendency to cultural deviance among the youth of Darreshahr is intermediate that is normal.

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