

**Sociological Study of Factors Influencing Youth Lifestyle
(Case Study: 15-29 Years Old Youth in Khalkhal City)**

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Abstract

The present study aims to study the sociological factors affecting the lifestyle of the youth. This research is a survey research in terms of control of the research conditions, and because it's done at a given time is a cross-sectional study. The statistical population of the study consisted of all young boys between 15 to 29 in Khalkhal who were 7149 persons according to the population and Housing Census in 2011. In this study, due to the characteristics of the population and its high population, 364 individuals were selected as sample size based on Cochran formula and multi-stage cluster sampling method for doing the research and data collection. Data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between independent variables of religious beliefs, social identity, mass media, socioeconomic base and underlying variables of marital status with dependent variable. Also, the results of multivariate regression showed that independent variables included in the equation explained 45 percent of the changes in the dependent variable.

Keywords: Lifestyle, Religious beliefs, Social identity, Mass media, Socioeconomic base.

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1. Introduction

The concept of lifestyle is one of the important social concepts that have mentioned since the 1920s and have entered the sociological literature since 1970s. Lifestyle sociology is a lifestyle of a person or group that includes patterns of social relationships, consumption, leisure, coverage, and also attitudes and values. Lifestyle is a way that a person chooses throughout the life and is one of the most important factors in the health of human body and soul and is influenced by culture, race, religion, geographic, economic and social factors, and beliefs. According to Bourdieu's view, lifestyle is a set of attitudes, values, behaviors, and tastes of individuals (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 32). Lifestyle as different method of life (Giddens, 1999) is the way of using the facilities, namely, the way of spending money, literacy and time available to individuals and groups in material consumption (objects), social (leisure), and cultural (value preferences) matters in everyday life.

So what is common in thinkers' definition of social lifestyle is that lifestyle is the choice of patterns and ways of life. However, this choice is influenced by various factors such as cultural, physical, social and economic conditions. In the sociology literature, there are two forms for the concept of lifestyle: in the first form, which dates back to the 1920s, lifestyle has been the indicator of wealth and social status of individuals, and is often used as an indicator for determining the social class. But in the second and new form, lifestyle is not a way of determining social class, but a new social form which only makes sense in the context of the cultural changes of modernity and the growth of consumerism culture (Abazari and Chavoshian, 2002).

But what is important in this research is the study of the lifestyle of young people and the factors affecting it. Since our society is subjected to many changes in terms of social, cultural, economic and political conditions, youth as a large part of our society are affected by these social changes. Therefore, it is important to examine their lifestyle and the changes that lead to changes in their lifestyle. So the question that should be addressed in this study is what factors affect the lifestyle of young people? Will these factors and changes in the current society affect the lifestyle of young people?

Regarding the presented issues, the general objective of the research is the sociological study of the factors affecting the youth lifestyle.

In addition to the main goal, the secondary objectives are:

- 1- The study of the effect of religious beliefs of youth on their lifestyle
- 2- The study of the effect of social identity of youth on their lifestyle
- 3- The study of the effect of using mass media by youth on their lifestyle
- 4- The study of difference in the youth lifestyle based on their socioeconomic status
- 5- The study of difference in the youth lifestyle based on their marital status

2. Literature Review

Pier Bourdieu, Melvin Tumin, Georg Simmel and Anthony Giddens are among the theorists whom we used their theories as the theoretical framework for this research.

One of the sociologists who improved the richness of the concept of lifestyle is Pierre Bourdieu. In Bourdieu's theory, the lifestyle which includes classifying and categorizing actions in areas such as the division of the hours of the day, the type of recreation and sport, the modes of socialization and furniture and home. On the one hand, lifestyles are the modes of consumptions of those social actors who have different rankings in their social legitimacy. These consumption patterns reflect the hierarchical social system, but as Bourdieu shows in the book of "Differentiation According to Dialectical Logic", consumption is not simply a way of showing differentiation, but it is also a way to create distinctions. Therefore, the lifestyle is a systematic product of manner that is perceived through the bilateral relationship between the modes of manners, and becomes a sign system that is evaluated in a social way. As Bourdieu also pointed out in the aforementioned passage, consumption is considered as a system of signs and symbols, which has functions such as social differentiation (Shalchi, 2007, pp. 100-101).

In "Differentiation" (1984), Bourdieu analyzed the ways by which, peer groups differentiate themselves from the other groups' consumption patterns.

In the lifestyle field, Bourdieu was not interested in this case that different groups consume in different ways. Instead, he sought to ascertain that the high

and low groups of the middle classes are engaged in an endless but mild struggle to establish their identity, value, and social status by choosing specific ways of life. In the formation of lifestyle, he also stated that the objective conditions of a person's life and position in a social structure lead to the production of a particular personality. Personality produces two types of systems, a system for the classification of acts and a system for perceptions and cognizance (virtues). The final result of these two systems is the lifestyle (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 28). In short, Bourdieu based his work on an entirely different definition of the class, which is the lifestyle, in which cultural factors, along with economic factors, determine lifestyle and have no precedence over the other.

Tumin (1994) referred the term "lifestyle" to characteristics that are the differentiation cause of social base groups. The pressures applied to a person to choose a suitable lifestyle are sometimes so subtle that the beneficiaries do not understand at all how their choices are guided by the considerations of their social bases (Tumin, 1994, p. 110). How to spend leisure time, exercising, having parties, and giving presents are also influenced by the person's class base. For example, as a result of sociologists' researches, it is appearing that high-class members of the American community spend their holidays in Europe and on the Mediterranean coast, while members of the middle class are satisfied with group trips by bus, and the lower classes go to visit their relatives.

Simmel is another theorist who understood the increasing importance of consumption in the new social life. At the beginning of the 20th century, he considered money and exchanged the most important experiences of modernity. He considered metropolitan areas as places of economics, and stated that non-personal relationships in the city were created by the need for non-personal relationships in the marketplace. In his view, when the city was established, there were many implications for social life and he considered consumption as one of the factors that played a major role in this regard. In the city, the individual is freed from all the constraints of the traditional society, which are applied to each individual in the form of group correlations. This is a promising state of individuality. Human beings can be freed from their

traditional collectivities and find an individual identity. In this way, he/she may be in conflict with the general lifestyle, but this person is in a region where the pressure of structures is tangible. The complex labor division spoils the individual identity. As a result, a particular method of consumption becomes a way to express itself. The individual in the city is subjected to the various pressures creating an unpleasant feeling in him and causes him to be isolated and to take distance from others. According to Simmel, one can only tolerate the pressures of modern life by pursuing dignity and fashion symbols. Fashion is a way to prove one's self and maintain the individual authority. In fact, from this point of view, the entire history of society is summed up between being absorbing into a social group and the need for individuality and differentiating from members of such a group. Consumption creates a freedom area between the consumer and his modernity tensions. Fashion in one aspect expresses the person's desire to get away from others and express individual identity, but the other aspect is the group and class solidarity, thereby it strengthens the feeling of being with others (Fazel, 2003, pp. 24-25).

According to Giddens, the media play an important role in promoting different lifestyles. Of course, according to Giddens, the media in the new world, while empowering species and options, offer narrow narrative interpretations of roles with specific lifestyles. In today's societies, "everyone" must choose their lifestyle, although the possibility of choosing is more for some groups, for example, "wealth" is one of the factors that increases the chances of choosing (Giddens, 1999, p. 120). Giddens's impression of lifestyle is an attempt to understand the systematic set of behaviors or patterns of action that individuals choose, and their actions in everyday life are driven by them. The important point is that such choices exist at every level, and no culture takes away the individuals choices completely (Fazeli, 2003, p. 65).

In the context of the literature review, a research has been conducted on the patterns of consumption in television programs and their roles on lifestyle by Azimi (2006). The purpose of this research was to investigate the extent and type of television effects on the material and cultural lifestyle. In order to investigate the effect of media, mass communication and sociological theories have been used. The theoretical framework of the research was integrated, and

Giddens' and Grebner's theories have been used. This was a survey research and a questionnaire was used among women aged 20 to 50 years in twenty-two regions of Tehran in 2006. A probability multi-stage sampling method was used. The results of the research showed that there is a significant relationship between the use of TV media and lifestyle. In addition, in terms of audience typography using media, it has been shown that the social and individual characteristics of the audience have influenced the pattern of media consumption (Azimi, 2006). According to the final analysis, the inverse relationship between religiosity and lifestyle of young people showed the importance of religiosity in the studied society (Rabbani and others, 2008).

Given the literature and previous researches, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

1- There is a relationship between the religious beliefs of young people and their lifestyles.

2- There is a relationship between the social identity of young people and their lifestyles.

3. There is a relationship between the extent of using the mass media by young people and their lifestyles.

4. Youth lifestyles differ according to their social and economic status.

5. The lifestyle of young people varies according to their marital status.

3. Method

This study is a survey research in terms of control of the research conditions, and also is cross-sectional because it has been conducted at a given time point. As it is done on a representative population to provide the generalizability of the data, it is a long-term research.

The statistical population of the study consisted of all young boys aged 15-9 years old in Khalkhal whose number was 7149 according to the population and Housing Census in 2011. In this research, based on the characteristics of the statistical population and its high number, 364 individuals were selected as the sample size for data collection and research. The above number was determined by the Cochran formula as follows:

$$n = \frac{N \cdot t^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{N(d)^2 + t^2 \cdot p \cdot q} = \frac{7149(1/96)^2 \cdot (0/5)(0/5)}{7149(0.05)^2 + (1/96)^2 \cdot (0/5)(0/5)} = 364$$

7149 = N = number of the studied population

n = population

p = 0.5= existence of the characteristic in sample size

q = 0.5 n= absence of the characteristic in sample size

$d^2 = (0.05)^2$ degree of confidence

$t = t^2$ Student (1.96)² coefficient of confidence

The most appropriate sampling method for this research was multi-stage cluster sampling. Based on multi-stage cluster sampling, Khalkhal was divided into 5 geographic regions of north, south, east, west and center, and in the next stage, neighborhoods were identified as clusters, in the next stage blocks were identified as clusters, and then several households were selected within each block. Then, we selected samples by simple random sampling. In this research, a questionnaire technique was used to collect data. In this research, we used face validity to measure independent and dependent variables, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to calculate the internal coordination of the measuring instrument. In this way, a preliminary study was carried out after the preparation of indicators and preliminary design of the questionnaire. This preliminary study was conducted on a sample of 30 youths aged 15-29 years old in Khalkhal. After extracting the scores for each questionnaire and entering them into the SPSS software, Cronbach's alpha for the variables was obtained as follows.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha coefficient

index	alpha
Religious beliefs	86%
Social identity	71%
Mass media	82%
Lifestyle	87%

4. Findings

4.1. Inferential Findings

4.1.1. The First Hypothesis

There is a relationship between the religious beliefs of young people and their lifestyles.

Table 2. Pearson correlation test between youth religious beliefs and their lifestyles

variable 1	variable 2	Pearson correlation coefficient value	significance level
religious beliefs	lifestyle	0.714	0.001

According to the above table, the significance level of the test is 0.001 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and with 95% confidence, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between the two studied variables. Regarding the positive sign of the correlation coefficient (0.714), there is a direct relationship between the two variables; that is, with increasing religious beliefs, the lifestyle of individuals is also improved.

4.1.2. The Second Hypothesis

There is a relationship between the social identity of youth and the lifestyle.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Test between the youth social identity and their lifestyle

variable 1	variable 2	Pearson correlation coefficient value	significance level
social identity	lifestyle	0.636	0.000

According to the above table, the level of significance of the test is 0.000. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and with 95% confidence, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between the two variables. Regarding the positive sign of the correlation coefficient (0.636), there is a direct relationship between the two variables; that is, with increasing social identity, the lifestyle of individuals is also improved.

4.1.3. The Third Hypothesis

There is a relationship between the youth using of mass media and their lifestyle.

Table 4. Pearson correlation test between the rate of youth using mass media and their lifestyle

variable 1	variable 2	Pearson correlation coefficient value	The significance level
using mass media	lifestyle	0.762	0.000

According to the above table, the level of significance of the test is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and with 95% confidence, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between the two variables. Regarding the positive sign of the correlation coefficient (0.762), there is a direct relationship between the two variables.

4.1.4. The Fourth hypothesis

There is a relationship between the social and economic base of young people and their lifestyle.

First, to obtain one-way analysis of variance from the relationship between socioeconomic base and lifestyle, socio-economic variables were divided into low, medium and high levels. Then, one-way analysis of variance was used to test the hypothesis.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics table and analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Social economic base	numbers	average	standard deviation	F	Sig
low	69	2.90	1.80	9.645	0.001
medium	132	3.22	1.46		
high	163	3.75	0.82		

The statistics in the table above show that the average lifestyle variable for respondents with low socioeconomic status is 2.90. Also, the F value has been 645.9. The significance level of the test is also less than 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the opposite hypothesis is accepted. So, there is a significant difference between the mean of lifestyle of different economic-social groups. In other words, at least, the mean of lifestyle variable in one of the groups is significantly different with the rest. So we used the Tukey test to judge. The Tukey Test performs a paired comparison.

Table 6. Tukey Test

Groups under investigation		difference averages	significance level
Low socio-economic base	Average socio-economic base	-0.84	0.000
High socio-economic base		-1.31	0.000
Average socio-economic base	Low socio-economic base	0.84	0.000
High socio-economic base		-0.52	0.000
High socio-economic base	Low socio-economic base	1.31	0.000
Average socio-economic base		0.52	0.000

In the table above, we first compared the mean of the lifestyle variable of the first group (low socioeconomic base) with the second group (average socioeconomic base). As indicated in the table, the average lifestyle of the first group is -0.84 which is less than the average of the second group. Considering the significant level (sig = 0.000), there is a significant difference between the mean of these two groups.

In the fourth line, the average difference between the lifestyle of the second group (medium socioeconomic base) and the third group (high socioeconomic base) has been compared. As indicated in the table, the average lifestyle of the second group is -0.52 which is less than the average of the third group. Considering the significant level (sig = 0,000), it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the mean of these two groups.

4.1.5. The Fifth Hypothesis

According to the table above, the size of T is -4.482 with a significant level of 0.000 which is less than 0.05, so the null hypothesis is rejected, i.e., the variance of the two groups is not equal. Because the average of the second group, i.e., married is more than the average of the first group, it can be said that the lifestyle of young married people is better and higher than single young people.

Table 7. T-Test difference between respondents' marital status and their lifestyle

variable	abundance	average	standard deviation	variance	significance level	T	significance level
single	13	1.00	0.000	18.312	0.000	-	0.000
married	151	3.43	1.32			4.482	

4.2. Studying the Effect of Independent Variables on Dependent Variable with the Help of Regression

Regression equation was used to determine the relationship between independent variables (religious beliefs, social identity, social media and socioeconomic status) and dependent variable (lifestyle). The value of the determination coefficient showed how much of the variations in the dependent variable are explained with the help of independent variables. With the aid of beta coefficients, we can write the regression equation. Also, the standardized beta condition is effective in determining the relative contribution of each variable to the dependent variable variations. Also, the greater beta coefficient of each independent variable means that it has a more relative share in the variation of the dependent variable.

Table 8. Model summary

Coefficient of determination of R Square	Correlation Coefficient R
0.448	0.669

According to Table 8, the correlation coefficient of the regression model is 0.69. The value of the coefficient of determination is 0.448; that is, 0.48.8 of the variation of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables.

Table 9. Analysis of variance (Anova)

significance level	amount of F statistics
0.000	21.911

According to the above table, the level of significance of the test is 0.000 less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and with 95% confidence, it can be said that the fitted model is a suitable model and the relation is linear regression.

Table 10. Regression coefficient

	Beta coefficient	Standardized beta coefficient	significance level
constant	5.566	-	0.000
religious beliefs	0.617	0.512	0.000
social Identity	0.656	0.586	0.008
Social and economic base	0.286	0.231	0.004
mass media	0.521	0.416	0.001

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The main finding of this study was that in the correlation between the variable of social identity and lifestyle in this research, there was a meaningful and direct relationship.

By using Simmel's theory, this theory can be analyzed; Simmel is a theorist who understood the increasing importance of consumption

In the city, the individual is freed from all the constraints of the traditional society, which are applied to each individual in the form of group correlations. This is a promising state of individuality.

Human beings can be freed from their traditional collectivities and find an individual identity. In this way, he/she may be in conflict with the general lifestyle, but this person is in a region where the pressure of structures is tangible. The complex labor division spoils the individual identity. As a result, a particular method of consumption becomes a way to express itself. The individual in the city is subjected to the various pressures creating an unpleasant feeling in him and causes him to be isolated and take distance from others; since individualism has become the main source of the process of social differentiation and can create multiple identities.

According to Simmel, one can only tolerate the pressures of modern life by pursuing dignity and fashion symbols. Fashion is a way to prove one's self and maintain individual authority. In fact, from this point of view, the entire history of society is summed up between being absorbed into a social group and the need for individuality and differentiating from members of such a group. Consumption creates a freedom area between the consumer and his modernity tensions. Fashion in one aspect expresses the person's desire to get away from others and express individual identity, but the other aspect is the group and class solidarity, thereby it strengthens the feeling of being with others (Fazel, 2003, pp. 24-25).

Other findings of this research showed a significant relationship between the socioeconomic status of youth and their lifestyles. According to the results, the mean of life style variable for respondents with low socioeconomic status was 2.90, for respondents with moderate socioeconomic status, was 3.23 and for respondents with a high socioeconomic base was 75.3. Also, the F value has

been 645.9. The significance level of the test is also less than 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Melvin's theory confirmed the results of this hypothesis; Marx has talked about the impact of the class system and the consequences of this system on all aspects of social life. For him, class and place of work not only determine the behaviors, feelings, thoughts, attitudes and social relations of individuals, but also determine the set of material conditions of life and the social identity of human beings. Therefore, he considered the class as an independent variable explaining the behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, and lifestyles (Rafatjah, 2001, p. 142).

Melvin (1994) also refers the term lifestyle to attributes that are the differentiating source of social base groups and groups whose holders have a certain share of dignity and social prestige. The pressures applied to a person to choose a suitable lifestyle are sometimes so subtle that the beneficiaries do not understand at all how their choices are guided by the considerations of their social bases (Tumin, 1994, p. 110). Lifestyle, including how to spend leisure time, exercising, having parties, and giving presents, is also influenced by the person's class base.

For example, as a result of sociologists' researches, it is appeared that high-class members of the American community spend their holidays in Europe and on the Mediterranean coast, while members of the middle class are satisfied with group trips by bus, and the lower classes go to visit their relatives. Visiting different places with friends and peers is also related to the class status of the people.

One of the other results in this study was a meaningful relationship between the mass media and the youth lifestyle. This hypothesis is consistent with Giddens's theory.

Of course, according to Giddens, the media in the new world offer narrow narrative interpretations of roles with specific lifestyles. In today's societies, "everyone" must choose their lifestyle, although the possibility of choosing is more for some groups, for example, "wealth" is one of the factors that increase the chances of choosing (Giddens, 1999, p. 120).

The fifth hypothesis also showed the relationship between the marital status of young people and their lifestyle. According to the findings of this hypothesis, the size of T is -4.482 with a significant level of 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, i.e., the variance of the two groups is unequal.

Based on the findings of this research and based on the theoretical framework, the following strategies can be proposed to strengthen the lifestyle of young people in Khalkhal:

1- According to the research results, by increasing the social identity of young people, their lifestyles also improves. Therefore, understanding the social identity among young people requires a special necessity. In the context of strengthening social identity, some strategies are presented:

1- Enhancing the promotion of identity among young people through programs such as attending conferences, encouraging essay writing in the field of Iranian identity and national culture.

2- According to the research findings, there is a relationship between the amount of mass media use and lifestyle, so it is suggested that organizations such as radio and television, by highlighting the concept of correct lifestyle and ways to promote it, help the youth to find the right lifestyle.

3- Lifestyle of individuals is an important part of the culture of societies in the modern world, and it is of great importance; therefore, it is necessary to attract the attention of the youth to study this part of the culture.

4- The key for developing healthy communities with healthy people is to expand the lifestyle correctly.

The deep understanding of the interpersonal relationships among individuals in their social context provides an important basis for developing effective approaches towards health promotion.

Major national policies have fundamental effects on people's lifestyles and their relationships for sustainable development. Promoting healthy lifestyle is a continuation of a continuous movement towards individual and social empowerment in the field of health promotion and preservation.

Therefore, policy makers and relevant organs and authorities, including universities, Ministry of Health, Sports and Youth Organization, and the Ministry of Welfare can use the results of this research to improve lifestyle.

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