

Sociological Study of Generation Solidarity in Families in Zanjan City

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Abstract: Generation gap mostly seems related to modern time; from one hand, social changes occurring in modern time are of higher speed, intensity and spread; From the other hand, despite previous times that children used to marry as soon as reaching puberty age, children have the youth period ahead, forming values and attitudes which can contradict their parents' values because of the properties like social activities, separation from the family for education and etc. Besides, affected by industrialization and necessities of new societies, formation of central family and farness from other relatives has caused generation gap. This paper aims to study the solidarity status among parents and children in Zanjan city. This paper is a correlational survey. Statistical population of this study included all married people at the age of 15-54 years old in Zanjan. According to Lin table [1], proper sample volume for a population including 500000 people with 50percent parametric hypothesis, 99percent confidence level and 4percent error was determined as 500 people. Sampling method was multi-step cluster sampling. Comparing mean tests, the results showed that there were significant differences between old and new generation from intergenerational solidarity view.

Key words: Intergenerational solidarity • Communicative solidarity • Emotional solidarity • Functional solidarity • Structural solidarity • Normative solidarity

INTRODUCTION

Intergenerational solidarity is an undeniable fact for every society which is needed to transform cultural patterns, knowledge resources and values to next generations to integrate them and make the society survive. Otherwise, the society will suffer from generation gap, the lack of identity and other anomalies. Generation gap is a problem which is significant at the moment for more speed, intensity and spread of social changes in comparison with the past from one hand; and the lack of marriage at early ages, having more activities in the society, separation from the family for education and other factors, from the other hand. Besides, impressed by industrialization and new necessities in the society, formation of a central family and separation from relatives has caused a generation gap in new era [2, 3]. According to Bengetson [3], gap or solidarity refers to parent- child distance or the lack of it. In the industrial countries, for low birth rate and high expectation level, the youth population allocates a rather low percentage to itself, forming a social group which has problems and doubts about future. In the developing countries like Iran

which has a young population, experiencing deep changes like revolution and war, intergenerational solidarity or gap with their effective factors necessitates wide studies.

Affected by the impressive factors in families and population increase and its consequences, Iran has faced generation gap [4]. According to Teimori [5], generation gap is wide between children and parents in Iran because of their different sociability contexts. Intergenerational solidarity is a phenomenon that if it is not studied truly and its problems aren't recognized and removed, will endanger the cultural life of the society, disrupt historical legacy and cultural treasures' transfer and threaten social survival. The studies of intergenerational relations from sociological and gerontology aspects have increased in USA and Western Europe as well. This can be for increasing families' demands because of changing age structure and pressures from public expenses related to taking care of old people. Family studies and intergenerational relations have been increased as a result of family decline in the society along with industrialization, appearance of generation gap and contradictions among family members [6].

Iran is a country in transition and the value is greatly altered and multiple dimensions of this change in values, especially between the two step and a new generation or between parents and children is becoming more evident. However, the scope of this value changes, among different groups and different cities. Since, as a city of Zanzan, Iran is known It is the adherence to traditional values among individuals, Hence, what was important to realize that this issue was two generations old and new in this traditional city, how to have a cohesive community values And sociological roots or what factors affect the coherence and consistency in this aspect which is worth more?

According to the mentioned points, determining intergenerational solidarity between parents and children in Zanzan city, this paper tried to investigate the following goals:

- Studying the status of child-parent communicative solidarity
- Determining the status of child-parent's emotional solidarity
- Determining the status of child-parent's compromised solidarity
- Determining the status of child-parent's functional compromise
- Determining the status of child-parent's normative solidarity
- Determining the status of child-parent's structural solidarity

Research Literature

Domestic literature: So far, the studies have focused on generation gap while intergenerational solidarity which is very close to this issue has been mostly neglected. Because of the closeness of these two issues, generation gap's literature is discussed here:

In a survey titled "investigating the values of fathers and sons and generation gap ", Teimoori [5] studied generation gap from 6 aspects including scientific, economic, social, political, artistic and religious aspects. He concluded that: 1. Fathers' value priorities are religious, social, economic, scientific, political and artistic ones, 2. Sons' priorities are economic, scientific, religious, social, political and artistic ones, 3. There is a positive correlation between the social class of the family and tendency to economic, artistic and political values of teenagers, 4. There is a negative correlation between social class of the family and teenagers' tendency to religious and social values, 5. There is a negative correlation between relations with peers, family size,

watching TV, traveling abroad, residence area, school type, fathers' education, vocational prestige and teenagers value system as well as the differences of fathers and sons 'values, 6. Fathers and sons have the most value differences in social, religious and artistic values and the least value differences in economic, scientific and political values, 7. Raising social class leads to the differences in economic and political values and decreasing differences in the scientific values of two generations, 8. In general, generation gap is a common phenomenon differing in the amount according to different sociability conditions of the fathers and sons and their age difference. In a study titled "generation gap in Iran", Azadarmaki [4] concluded that Iranian society, affected by family factors and young population's increase has faced generation gap; moreover, the youth are different with the olds from the ways of spending free time, making friend, interests, needs and concern to family life. However, these differences don't confront them since the family has been able to join 3 generations together through the values like respecting the olds, considering parents' rights and affiliation toward family members. Financial dependence of the children and supportive emotional needs of parents to children has largely prevented changing generation differences in intergenerational conflicts. In a survey on child-parent value conflicts from students' views in Amol town, Iran, Koldi and Jamshidi [7] concluded that there is a significant relation among the individuality of children, parents' training styles (dictatorship, strictness and being easy going), identity crisis of the children, newness of value massages from fathers, transparency in fathers' values and parent-child value conflicts.

Foreign Literature: In a study titled" intergenerational solidarity and the structure of child-parent relationship in American families ", Silverstein and Bengston [3] investigated psychological-social, structural-transactional dimensions of child-parent relationships and developed it using latent class analysis according to 3 main intergenerational solidarity aspects, affinity, opportunity and function. They represented 5 similar types of child-parent relationships including tight-knit, sociable, intimate but distant, obligatory and detached relationships. These relations were distinguished by demographical and social qualities. The relations with divorced parents also showed less significant solidarity. According to those results, relations in American families are structurally various, but they have the potential of meeting members' needs.

Table 1: The table of intergenerational solidarity

Experimental indicators	Definition	Variable
Intergenerational interaction frequency like face to face, by-phone, by-post, e-mail Different common activities like fun and etc	Frequency and interaction patterns in different activities of family members	Communicative solidarity
The amount of kindness, warmness, nearness, understanding, trust, respect and etc for family members The amount of positive feelings by family members	Type and amount of positive feelings to family member and the amount of transacting theses feelings	Emotional solidarity
Compromise over values, attitudes and believes and feeling similarity in them with family members	The amount of compromise over values, attitudes and believes of family member	Compromised solidarity
Frequency of intergenerational transactions and financial, physical and emotional helps The amount of transacting resources	The amount of help and resource transaction	Functional agreement
The amount of family importance and intergenerational roles The amount of child duties and obligations' strength	The power of commitment to performing family roles and responsibilities	Normative solidarity
1. Nearness of family members 2. Family number 3. Family member's health	Opportunity structure for intergenerational relations, reflected in the number, type and geographical nearness of family members	Structural solidarity

Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott [8] studied the hypotheses of generational effects, life period and group memories. According to their conclusion, different generations remember different events and changes which form in the youth and early adolescence periods. The reasons of mentioning events and different changes differ based on the generations, proving that generational effects are the results of intersection of national and individual history and memories related to important social and political changes based on different ages. Then, the youth and early adolescence period create generational, influential and political memories in people.

In a study titled "intergenerational value discrepancies in immigrant and host-national families and their impact on psychological adaptation" in Sweden, Lackland Sam and Erkivirta [9] concluded that immigrant teenagers don't have differences with the hosts in psychological consistency and values. Value differences had insignificant correlation with psychological consistency.

Research Theories: Social scholars have stated different attitudes toward intergenerational solidarity. The most important theories in this way are the theories of Inglehard, Parsons and Bengston.

In Inglehard's theory, [10] modernizations' central concept states that by increasing education level and changing gender roles, industrialization has created a set of social and cultural consequences. Industrialization also affects other elements in the society. According to this theory, industrialization has different consequences in the cultural field.

An American sociologist, Parsons believed that the more distinct the social structures and functions, the more value system is exposed to the changes. With more variety in modern system, it can't cover all the structures and functions. So, it needs a value system to cover them; but, some groups may resist against generalizing these values to the whole structure [11]. In this theory, "groups" refer to different people inside the social system which follow either internalized norms / values or structurally changed or new values. This causes the social system to be involved in temporary disturbances and fairly slow value changes; but, by generalizing values, the whole system retrieves its previous coherence. According to this theory, generation gap which is considered mostly in the form of generation difference shows dynamism and new coherence in the society. Parsons recognizes value gap as the byproduct of societies' historical evolution and like Dorkhim believes that a time period of abnormality in which values or norms are not clear or have lost their reasonability can impose pressures to the youth. He also adds that a contradiction of American value system occurs when it stresses individual achievements while it creates structural abnormalities in the society or low level value believes become obsolete. In the mean time, due to increasing complexity in the society, expertise and cooperation increase and limit individual achievements. Necessary time for training and education also becomes longer [12].

According to Bengetson, generation gap mostly seems related to modern time; from one hand, social changes occurring in modern time are of higher speed, intensity and spread; From the other hand, despite previous times that children used to marry as soon as

reaching puberty age, children have the youth period ahead, forming values and attitudes which can contradict their parents' values because of the properties like social activities, separation from the family for education and etc. Besides, affected by industrialization and necessities of new societies, formation of central family and farness from other relatives has caused generation gap [2, 3].

According to Bengetson, gap or solidarity refers to child-parent distance or lack of it. For intergenerational studies, he has some theories according which research questions of this paper were formed as follows:

- How is child-parent intergenerational solidarity status?
- How is child-parent communicative solidarity status?
- How is child-parent emotional solidarity status?
- How is child-parent compromised solidarity status?
- How is child-parent functional solidarity status?
- How is child-parent normative solidarity status?
- How is child-parent structural solidarity status?

Research Methodology: This paper is a survey of correlational type with applied goals. To gather data, 2 researcher-made questionnaires with 5-item Likert scale were used.

Identifying Research Variables

Intergenerational Solidarity or Gap: This concept refers to positive intergenerational child-parent relations and lack of them creates intergenerational gap. To measure this variable, Bengetson theory was used whose results are shown in Table 1.

Contact Frequency: This refers to the number of child-parent contacts which is measured by the indicators like physical, by-post, by-phone relations and etc.

Intergenerational Assistance Flow: This refers to the assistance of parents to the children or lack of it or vise versa.

Resource Transaction Amount: This refers to the amount of transacting different financial, physical, emotional and other sources.

Imaginable Agreement: This refers to the amount of positive child-parent feelings including kindness, warmth, understanding, trust and respect.

Data Gathering Tool: To gather data, 2 researcher-made questionnaires, one for the parents with 51 items and another for children with 43 items were designed and used.

Validity and Consistency: 2 researcher-made questionnaires were measured by the experts and college professors and their face validity was confirmed. To test their consistency, a pre-test and Cronbach α were used whose values were achieved over 0.7 for intergenerational solidarity variables, confirming their consistency.

Statistical Population, Sample Volume, Sampling

Method: Statistical population of this study included all married people in Zanjan city between 15-54 years old, having at least one alive parent. This age distance included two generations: 15-29 year-old young generation and 30-54 year-old middle-aged generation. Sociability process of the first generation dates back to after-Islamic Revolution years while sociability process of the second generation returns to over 30 years ago around Islamic Revolution and Iran-Iraq war [13].

According to Lin table [1], proper sample volume for a 500000 person population, parametric hypothesis of 50 percent, confidence level of 99percent and 4percent error is 500 people.

Zanjan city was selected as the sample town which is more exposed to development and modernism processes. Sampling method was multi-step cluster sampling.

Research units in this paper included child-parent pairs such as male parent-male child, male parent-female child, female parent-male child and female parent-female child.

Data Analysis: After gathering data, they were encoded and SPSS software (version 18) was used at descriptive level for classifying and summarizing data by simple or multi-frequency tables.

As seen in Table 2, 62.8 percent of the respondents are female and 37.2 percent are male.

Table 3 shows that 66.0 percent of the respondents are female and 34.0percent are male.

Question 1: How is child-parent intergenerational solidarity status?

As seen in Table 4, 9.2 percent of the respondents have little intergenerational solidarity, 57.6 percent have average intergenerational solidarity and 33.2percent have much intergenerational solidarity.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of respondents according to parent gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative
Female	157	62.8	62.8	62.8
Male	93	32.7	32.7	100
Total	250	100	100	

Table 3: Frequency distribution of respondents according to child gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Female	165	66	66	66
Male	85	34	34	100
Total	250	100	100	

Table 4: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to intergenerational solidarity of children

Solidarity amount	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Little	23	9.2	9.2	9.2
Average	144	57.6	57.6	66.8
Much	83	33.2	33.2	100
Total	250	100	100	

Table 5: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to intergenerational solidarity of parents

Solidarity amount	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Little	103	41.2	41.2	41.2
Average	143	57.2	57.2	98.4
Much	4	1.6	1.6	100
Total	250	100	100	

As seen in Table 5, 41.2 percent of the respondents have little intergenerational solidarity, 57.2 percent have average intergenerational solidarity and 1.6 percent of them have much intergenerational solidarity.

Question 2: How is child-parent emotional solidarity status?

As seen in Table 6, 41.6 percent of the respondents have little emotional solidarity, 57.6 percent have average emotional solidarity and 8 percent have much emotional solidarity.

As seen in Table 7, 15.2 percent of the respondents have little emotional solidarity, 42.8 percent have average emotional solidarity and 42.0 percent have much emotional solidarity.

Question 3: How is child-parent structural solidarity status?

As seen in Table 8, 7.2 percent of the respondents have little structural solidarity, 40.8 percent have average structural solidarity and 52.0 percent have much structural solidarity.

As seen in Table 9, 7.2 percent of the respondents have little structural solidarity, 40.8 percent have average structural solidarity and 52.0 percent have much structural solidarity.

Question 4: How is child-parent normative solidarity status?

As seen in Table 10, 50.8 percent of the respondents have little structural solidarity, 48.4 percent have average structural solidarity and 8 percent have much structural solidarity.

As seen in Table 11, 14 percent of the respondents have little structural solidarity, 45.6 percent have average structural solidarity and 40.4 percent have much structural solidarity.

Question 5: How is child-parent functional solidarity status?

As seen in Table 12, 35.2 percent of the respondents have little functional solidarity, 61.6 percent have average functional solidarity and 2.8 percent have much functional solidarity.

As seen in Table 13, 1.6 percent of the respondents have little functional solidarity, 16.4 percent have average functional solidarity and 82.0 percent have much functional solidarity.

Question 6: How child-parent compromised solidarity status?

As seen in Table 14, 83.6 percent of the respondents have little compromised solidarity, 15.6 percent have average compromised solidarity and 8 percent have much compromised solidarity.

Table 6: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to emotional solidarity of parents

Solidarity amount	Frequency	Percentage	Reliability percentage	Cumulative percentage
Little	104	41.6	41.6	41.6
Average	144	57.6	57.6	99.2
Much	2	8	8	100
Total	250	100	100	

Table 7: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to emotional solidarity of children

Solidarity amount	Frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Little	38	15.2	15.2	15.2
Average	107	42.8	42.8	58
Much	105	42	42	100
Total	250	100	100	

Table 8: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to structural solidarity of children

Solidarity amount	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Little	18	7.2	7.2	7.2
Average	102	40.8	40.8	48
Much	130	52	52	100
Total	250	52	100	

Table 9: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to structural solidarity of parents

Solidarity amount	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Little	43	17.2	17.2	17.2
Average	197	78.2	78.8	96
Much	10	0.4	0.4	100
Total	250	100	100	

Table 10: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to normative solidarity of parents

Solidarity amount	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Little	127	50.8	50.8	50.8
Average	121	48.4	48.4	99.2
Much	2	8	8	100
Total	250	100	100	

Table 11: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to normative solidarity of children

Solidarity amount	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Little	35	14.0	14.0	14.0
Average	114	45.4	45.4	59.6
Much	101	40.4	40.4	100
Total	250	100	100	

Table 12: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to functional solidarity of children

Solidarity amount	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Little	88	41.6	41.6	41.6
Average	154	57.6	57.6	99.2
Much	7	8	8	100
Total	249	100	100	
Missing value	1	4		
Total	250	100		

Table 13: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to functional solidarity of parents

Solidarity amount	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Little	4	1.6	1.6	1.6
Average	41	16.4	16.4	18.0
Much	205	82.0	82.0	100
Total	250	100	100	

Table 14: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to compromised solidarity of parent

Solidarity amount	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Little	209	83.6	83.6	83.6
Average	39	15.6	15.6	99.2
Much	2	8	8	100
Total	250	100	100	

Table 15: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to compromised solidarity of children

Solidarity amount	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Little	47	18.8	19.6	19.6
Average	116	46.4	48.3	67.9
Much	77	30.8	32.1	100
Total	240	96.0	100	
Missing value	10	4		
Total	250	100		

Table 16: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to communicative solidarity of children with parent

Relation with children	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Yes	248	99.2	99.2	99.2
No	2	8	8	100
Total	250	100	100	

Table 17: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to communicative solidarity of parents with children

Relation with parents	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Yes	247	98.8	98.8	98.8
No	0		0	100
Total	247	98.8	1	
Missing value	3	1.2	1.2	
Total	245	100	100	

Table 18: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to communicative solidarity (children with parents)

The ways of communication with parents	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Face to face	143	57.2	57.2	57.2
By-phone	15	6.0	6.0	63.2
By-post	4	1.6	1.6	64.8
Total	250	100	100	100

Table 19: Frequency distribution of the respondents according to communicative solidarity (parents with parents)

The ways of communication with parents	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Face to face	144	57.6	57.6	57.6
By-phone	13	5.2	5.2	62.8
By-post	5	2.0	2.0	100
Total	250	100	100	100

As seen in Table 15, 18.8 percent of the respondents have little compromised solidarity, 46.4 percent have average compromised solidarity and 30.8 percent have much compromised solidarity.

Question 7: How child-parent communicative solidarity status?

As seen in Table 16, 99.2 percent of the respondents have expressed that they have relations with their parents.

As seen in Table 17, 98.8 percent of the respondents have relations with their parents.

As seen in Table 18, 57.2 percent of the respondents have stated that they have face to face communications with their parents; but 6.0 percent have by-phone communications with their parents.

As seen in Table 19, 57.2 percent of the respondents have stated that they have face to face communications with their parents; but 6.0 percent have by-phone communications with their parents.

CONCLUSION

In descriptive analysis, frequencies showed that there were differences in intergenerational solidarity of 2 age groups of children and parents which seems quite natural because, generational experiences of each group were different from the other one's. The time period in which each group's character has been evolved was also different. Evolutionary period of 16-24 year-old group was along with social and cultural revolutions at national and international levels while evolutionary period of 45-54 year-old group accompanied with Islamic Revolution, war and religious and conventional excitements. Testing variables also revealed that there were differences between 2 groups and decline in prevalent values of each group in the other group's attitude. This result agreed with the findings of Kashi and Goudarzi [14]. In the research of Asadi, before-marriage relations of boys and girls, power distributor in the family and women's working outdoor are the causes of generation gap between the youth and adolescence (45-55 year old) generations. These conclusions agreed with the results of this study. In this way, in parents' group, 83.6percent of the respondents had little compromised solidarity, 15.6 percent had average compromised solidarity and 8 percent had much compromised solidarity while in children's group, 18.8 percent of the respondents had little compromised solidarity, 46.4 percent had average compromised solidarity and 30.8 percent much compromised solidarity. Mean comparison tests showed significant differences between intergenerational solidarity of old and new generation. Because, Iran is a country passing from tradition to modernity; especially some rather rich youth who follow new values and cultural changes for escaping life boredom or reaching social prestige contradicting the other group sticking to the traditional and national values. This leads to the gaps in the values and attitudes of the people in the society and families. The famous British sociologist, Giddnes [15] stated that cultural traditions and symbols are valuable because they include generation experiences and continue them. In brief, as a passing country from tradition to modernity, Iran is loyal to traditions and is exposed to the modern phenomena as well. the former is more respected for 45-60 years old group while the latter is more important for 30-45 years old people.

Suggestions from this Study:

- The organizations like universities and broad cast corporation can hold educational classes, training courses, scientific lectures and advertising programs to increase recognition of 2 generations toward the other group and make them closer.
- It is suggested that scientific and experimental findings of the studies in this field should be used to identify effective factors and barriers in intergenerational solidarity of old and new generation and plan for decreasing them.

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