

Study of Social and Cultural Factors on Youth Attitudes Towards Material Values in Iran

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Abstract: The present study investigates youth attitudes towards material values and the impact of social and cultural factors on it in Iran. The present study examines 400 participants of both genders. Multi-level cluster sampling in three districts of Tehran were applied for data gathering. Data processing was done in various levels of 2 and multivariable analysis and analysis of the route. Dimensions of materialistic values inferred (the dependant variables) as spouse, job, friend selection and judgment about the others. Cultural and social factors (independent variables) considered with the behavior, discourse and opinions of others such as family, friends, relatives and internal/external multimedia programs and norm-related pressure in society; social and economical status of family was investigated fully. All independent variables had direct and positive relationship with dependant variable. Regression analysis indicated that variance of dependant variables with this rate was anticipated by independent variables.

Key words: Youth attitudes, social factors, cultural factors, material values, Tehran, Iran

INTRODUCTION

Today, studying youth problems as a social phenomenon is of high importance; especially in developing countries like Iran, where youth people form high percent of population. Recognition of various aspects of such phenomenon: i.e. behavior, belief, ideas and attitudes can play a determining role in different social, cultural and economical aspects. Moreover, correct and rational planning in different fields can put the youth on a sound and constructive footing.

However, normally people desire for material entities and their attempt to access to the materials in life and enjoyment in a correct form do not have negative burden, but is rated as living necessity of each healthy person. A healthy person should satisfy his/her psychic and material requirements.

The desire for material is recognized as an issue when its colorful aspects unsettle the balance between materialistic satisfaction and psychic fulfillment; which is seen necessary for having a healthy life. This way, people seek all psychic values like love, friendship, dignity and etc in material values. All man's ambitions and aspirations are summarized in collecting more money.

External and material criteria like owning houses and cars are considered to be the principal criteria about people for being good. In a way that the one who does not have access to these facilities is considered to be unworthy of reputation and respect. Considering emotional and romantic relations like marriage

engagement, not only financial benefits are in priority and importance; but all relations are seen as economical and commercial ones.

Such fanatic sentiments among people (here youth) can put social and personal health in danger. As Marcuse (1980) said, today human real status and position has been desecrated and considered as insult and material values; a humanity has lost its real concept and this is the great disaster of our time.

However, extremist attitudes towards material can be seen in all layers and classes of society. According to Iranian recent research, titled as: modeling and imitation from behaviors and beliefs and attitudes of older people, in relation with money, research findings indicated that especially parents are among the most important factors for social acceptance.

Youth who coincided their social and individual life with spiritual and psychic norms; observe their coevals with perceptible attitudes to materials consider values and norms as an important matter to avoid from problems in their social and individual relations. And in this way, they gain reputation and respect (Rafipour, 1999).

Young people are the most vulnerable in society, so that their security and balance in their individual lives exposed easily to danger. Undoubtedly, having healthy and active generation from youth ensures a clear success future for society as a whole.

Material values: In this research, it refers to seeking material values in psychic value such as love, friendship

status and reputation. If we attempt to access wealth and money as much as possible and from any possible way; if we judge the another with external and material living criteria and believe that material criteria bring about reputation and their absence would be the reason for disrespectability, so, we are called as having material values. Considering material benefits in any human relationship like love and friendship; or spouse and friend selection, are in priorities and emotional relations, affection, moral and humanities doings, the role of God in life are overshadowed by the materialistic values.

Attitude: Attitude has been derived from Latin word *aptuas* with means collation and gives a mental readiness for a special act (Rafipour, 1993). Attitude is a kind of readiness, attitude for an action or reaction against special motive.

Research literature: Studying, the relation between social and material values and attitude towards TV and media advertisements.

In the one study in Canadian Cultural Materialism (1995), 157 college students of behaviors centre were the participants. The data was gathered through measuring information collecting technique through questionnaire. The result indicated that that people who had more positive emotions towards TV advertisements, counted on commercials as a guide for their life styles.

They showed more materialistic disposition compared to open-minded people who had negative feelings about TV advertisements. Advertisements consider material values in category of social values and causes cultural improvement in society (Canadian Cultural Materialism, 1995).

In this research, he expressed that people's positions in their economical life and their security constructed their attitudes towards immaterialist values (Engelhart, 1990). By the way, high-class people in society gave more importance to psychic values. On the other hand, people of lower-level of the society showed less attention to material values. Engelhart (1990) claimed those societies which passed the industrialization era, turned to immaterialist values. It seems that other societies would further go in this procedure.

He studied the relation of people views and their social-cultural behaviors in Iran, through measurement and questionnaire (Mohseni, 2000). The results of research indicated that all age grouping assigned high importance (>75%) to wealth and material assets. Educated people and owners assigned values to money more than other groupings (Mohseni, 2000).

In a book titled, development and contrast, he studied the change of values for Iranian people in 1995

(Rafipour, 1998). The results demonstrated that from 1986 on, one value change has occurred in field of belief and religious hindrance in society. Contrary to the decrease in religion and traditional religious belief, attitude for materials increased remarkably. A defined contrast between material values and traditional values seemed to have emerged in Iran's society, today. The research studied the effect of media on social values in Iran. It studied some films and serials of 1985, 1986, 1991, 1992. Results of research indicated that Iranian people during post-revolution and war era moved through a process of value change towards decreasing inequality, consumptionism and luxury. However, from 1989 and during war some changes in values were occurred as the increase of attitude to luxury and consumption (Rafipour, 1998).

For a better understanding of the research variables, some theories have been explored:

Relations of values (psychic/ material) and social-economical situation of political science department in Michigan University during 1971, 1974 and 1977 was the subject of a study about transformation of values in Europe (Engelhart, 1990). This study was conducted through field measurement as its research methodology. This research could demonstrate its anticipation on values transformation in developed countries for psychic and material values.

He could get a general theory of values transformation according to development of societies. Engelhart (1990) claimed that value discipline in each country depends on rate of development in that country in comparison with other countries of the world. So that developed and industrialized countries have a new value discipline the same as psychic values. He believed that psychic values were a fixed form of economical and life security presentation during years of people personality formation.

From this assumption, it was concluded that psychic persons in higher economical levels come together (Engelhart, 1990).

This change (the attitude towards material values) can be observed in other societies like Iran. Parsons (1937) believes that action is something part of attempting toward conformity with norms. Parsons (ibid) paid the most attention to cultural and social phenomenon resulting of pressures. He believed that individual selection by norms, values, thoughts and situations and similar criteria was restricted (Ritzer, 1995).

Industry of culture and role of media in modeling people attitudes (according to critics) (Marcuse, 1980). Industry of culture generated the same things that was called mass culture; defined as defined as an artificial and self motive things and etc.

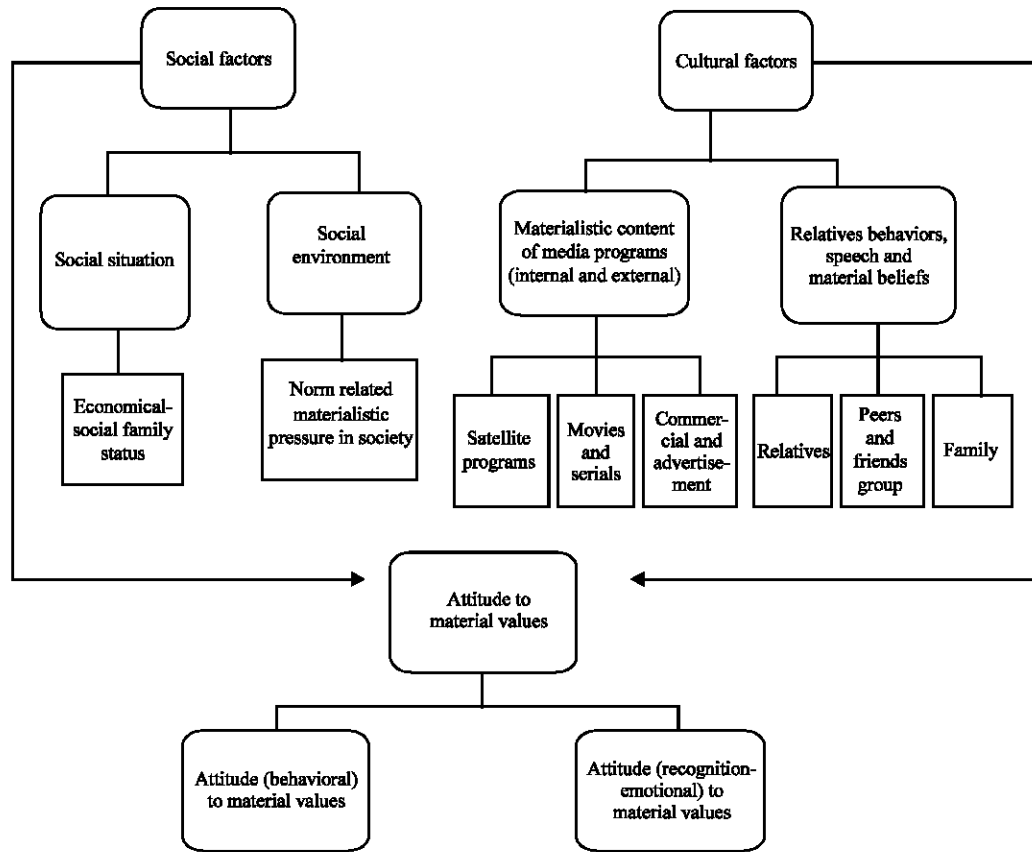


Fig. 1: Analytical model study of relations between independent and dependent variables

Profitable advertisements were external universal face, which human position was lost in it. Bad was defined in good and good turned into bad (Marcuse, 1980). Among the impacts of different factors on people, the role of reference group was considered as very important. We normally investigate our values, wishes, acts and etc. In such investigations, we referred to criterion of one group, which may be its member or not. This group may be family or friends (Robertson, 1991).

According to social learning, our behaviors are manifestations of objective learning learning was the same as taking example and following learning (Seif, 1990).

Research hypothesis:

- There is a positive relationship between youth socialization and their attitude toward material values:
 - There is a direct relationship between youth assessment from material belief, behaviors of their family and their attitude toward material values
 - There is a direct relationship between youth's assessment from material belief, behaviors of their peers, friends and youth attitude to material values

- There is a direct relationship between youth's assessment from material beliefs, behaviors of their relative and youth's attitude to material values
- There is a direct relationship between youth's assessment of materialistic values content of media programs and attitude to material values
- There is a direct relationship between youth assessment from materialistic values content, media programs (internal) and attitude to material values
- There is a direct relationship between foreign media program with materialistic values contents and youth attitude to material values
- There is a direct relationship between family economical and social status and youth attitude to material values (Fig. 1)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was done in measuring method, so that we intent to describe the following issues:

Table 1: Dimensions and indices of attitude (emotional-recognition dimension) to Material values

Concept	Dimensions	Indices
Materialistic values	Friend choosing	One of the necessary criterions for friend choosing is high well being of economical conditions. We should notice to marked and precious shirts.
	Spouse choosing	Paying attention to fiscal and economical situation is considered necessary. Considering fiscal benefit is necessary for spouse choosing. Style of marriage is also necessary.
	Job selection	High income is considered as an important factor. The job should have high benefits. When there is a high job there is no need for environment and labour factors. Motivation and interest for doing work is not important.
	Judge about the others	Being wealthy is a reliable criterion for respecting to people. Economical well fare is a reputable factor for people acceptance by other persons who are in good economical situation.

Table 2: Dimensions and attitude indices (behavioral-practical dimension) toward material values

Concept	Dimensions	Indices
Materialistic values	Friend selection	I make a relationship with a friend from a wealthy family. I pay attention to fiscal benefit, external appearance especially marked clothing and also their style of spending leisure (costly) is important to me.
	Spouse selection	Having fiscal well-fare are from necessary criterions for me in my spouse selection.
	Job selection	Most important factor in job selection is high income. Economical profit is important to me more than other things. I do not pay attention to the other factors like work environment, motivation and interest.
	Judge about the others	I pay attention to fiscal and economical situation in judging about people (more wealth, more reputation). I model behavior and speech of wealthy people and I try to act like them. I accept people easily.

Table 3: Status measurement social-economical

Levels	No. range
Low	4.0-10
Middle	10.1-16
High	16.1-22

Social factors { Society norm-related pressure
Family economical and social status

Background variables { Age
Gender
Marital status

Unit of analysis: Was a unit from which data are collected. Most of the time, person was considered as analytical unit in measuring research; so the analytical unit were young people with the age ranging from 22-30 Tehran, Iran.

Instrumentation: For data collection, questionnaire was used. Research questionnaires included 2 main sections: section one related to information collection about dependant (materialistic values) variable. As we mentioned before, attitude had three dimensions of behavioral, emotional and recognition, which measured materialistic values in every dimensions.

In this research, materialistic value was measured in following aspects (Table 1 and 2):

Materialistic values { In friend choosing
In spouse choosing
In job selection
Style of judgment about the others

Section 2 (of the questionnaire) was allocated to gathering the information about independent and background variables. We measured them according to likert spectrum. Independent variables in this research were as follows:

Cultural factors { Family attitude
Friends and peers attitude
Relatives attitude
Media program attitude (internal-foreign)

Attitude had three dimensions: as a emotional, b recognition and c behavioral. In this respect, some indices were designed to measure the concept of attitude to materials.

They valued by likert buoy spectrum. In this spectrum:

- I fully agree (5 number)
- I agree (4 number)
- I have no idea (3 number)
- I disagree (2 number)
- I disagree as a whole (1 number)

Number of each respondent was calculated with respect to the scale above. The highest number was assigned to full agreement and the lowest one showed full disagreement.

Respondent were classified according to their attitude to materials (emotional-recognition dimension) placed in classes of 1, 2, 3 with the numbers of 15-75.

Also, their classification was in the range of 13-65 in 3 classes of low, middle and high. Up to here, we measured attitude toward materials with respect to 3 dimension of attitude (separately) and we blended indices of recognition, emotional and behavioral as attitude (total) to materials to reach the following results:

Number range was 28-140, which was divided into low, middle and high classes (Table 3):

Table 4: α -coefficient of dependant and independent variables

Coefficient of α (%)	Variables
81	Internal medias
77	External medias
85	Internal and external medias
76	Norm related materialistic pressure in society
82	Attitude (dimension cognition-emotional) to material
87	Attitude (dimension behavior) to material
76	Family
75	Peers and friend group
69	Relatives

Dependant variable: The attitude to materials as was measured in behavioral and recognition-emotional dimensions.

Independent variables: The attitude to family, peers, friends, relatives and media such as internal and external, norm pressure in society and status of social and economical in family.

Background variables: Age, gender and marital status of respondent. Statistical sample in this research, included 400 young people of both gender (half/half) with the age ranging form 22-30 in Tehran. Kokran formula was used and we randomly selected 3 districts of Tehran city randomly (district 2, 10, 18). The amount of sample was defined with respect to youth population method.

Sampling method: We used cluster multilevel sampling. Three districts were selected randomly and then smaller regions of each district were sampled and we referred to them in work.

Regarding the amounts of alphas in relation with each one of research variables, we could say that there was internal correlation between indices of variables, which presented research with the necessary stability (Table 4).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, research hypothesis were revisited as: The results indicated that the amount of α^2 was in acceptable level that meant, relationship between independent variable and dependant variable was meaningful (Table 5).

The amount of gamma coefficient showed that there was a moderate upward relation between independent variables (families) and dependant variables (materialistic values) (Table 6).

Results showed that amount of α^2 was in a desirable level that meant relationship between independent variables and dependant variable was meaningful and amount of gamma correlation coefficient indicated this fact, too. There was a moderate relation between independent variable (peers and friends group) and dependant variable (materialistic values).

Table 5: Relation between material attitude in youth person and his/her assessment from family material attitude

Variables	Families			Total
	Low	Middle	High	
Materialistic values				
Low				
Absolute	71.0	43.0	82.0	196.0
(%)	86.6	41.0	38.5	49.0
Total (%)	17.8	10.8	20.5	49.0
Middle				
Absolute	8.0	39.0	76.0	123.0
(%)	9.8	37.1	35.7	30.8
Total (%)	2.0	9.8	19.0	30.8
High				
Absolute	3.0	23.0	55.0	81.0
(%)	3.7	21.9	25.8	20.3
Total (%)	0.8	5.8	13.8	20.3
Total				
Absolute	82.0	105.0	213.0	400.0
(%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (%)	20.5	26.3	53.3	100.0

Sig = 0.000; df = 4; $\gamma = 0.44$; $\alpha^2 = 59.21$

Table 6: Study the relation between materials attitude in youth person and his/her assessment from peers and friends group material attitude

Variables	Peers and friends group			Total
	Low	middle	high	
Materialistic values				
Low				
Absolute	81.0	39.0	76.0	196.0
(%)	85.3	33.1	40.6	49.0
Total (%)	20.3	9.8	19.0	49.0
Middle				
Absolute	10.0	48.0	65.0	123.0
(%)	10.5	40.7	34.8	30.8
Total (%)	2.5	12.0	16.3	30.8
High				
Absolute	4.0	31.0	25.0	81.0
(%)	4.2	26.3	24.6	20.3
Total (%)	1.0	3.7	11.5	20.3
Total				
Absolute	95.0	118.0	187.0	400.0
(%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (%)	23.8	29.5	46.8	100.0

Sig = 0.000; $\gamma = 0.39$; df = 4; $\alpha^2 = 67.61$

The results represented that the amount of α^2 was in acceptable level that means relationship between independent variable and dependant variable was meaningful. The amount of gamma correlation coefficient showed that there was a moderate relationship toward high between independent variable (relatives) and dependant variable (materialistic values) (Table 7).

The result indicated that the amount of α^2 was in acceptable level at 20th means there was a relation between independent variable and 10 dependant variable (materialistic values) (Table 8).

The result showed that amount of α^2 was in acceptable level, which indicated a meaningful relationship existed between dependant variable and independent variable. Also, the amount of gamma correlation coefficient represented that there was a

Table 7: Study the relationship between attitude (total) to materials in youth person and his/her assessment from relative material attitudes

Variables	Relatives			Total
	Low	middle	high	
Materialistic values				
Low				
Absolute	85.0	43.0	67.0	196.0
(%)	75.9	43.9	35.8	49.0
Total (%)	21.3	10.8	17.0	49.0
Middle				
Absolute	16.0	36.0	71.0	123.0
(%)	14.3	36.7	37.4	30.8
Total (%)	4.0	9.0	17.8	30.8
High				
Absolute	11.0	19.0	51.0	81.0
(%)	9.8	19.4	26.8	20.3
Total (%)	2.8	4.8	12.8	20.3
Total				
Absolute	112.0	98.0	190.0	400.0
(%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (%)	28.0	24.5	47.5	100.0

Sig = 0.000; $\gamma = 0.43$; $df = 4$; $\chi^2 = 47.67$

Table 8: Relationship between attitude (total) to materials in youth person and his/her assessment from materialistic content from internal media

Variables	Materialistic values in internal media programs			Total
	Low	Middle	High	
Materialistic values				
Low				
Absolute	80.0	37.0	79.0	196.0
(%)	86.0	36.3	38.5	49.0
Total (%)	20.0	9.3	19.8	49.0
Middle				
Absolute	10.0	35.0	78.0	123.0
(%)	10.8	34.3	38.0	30.8
Total (%)	2.5	8.8	19.5	30.8
High				
Absolute	3.0	30.0	48.0	81.0
(%)	3.2	29.4	23.4	20.3
Total (%)	0.8	7.5	11.0	20.3
Total				
Absolute	93.0	102.0	205.0	400.0
(%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (%)	23.3	25.5	51.3	100.0

Sig = 0.000; $\gamma = 0.41$; $df = 4$; $\chi^2 = 68.58$

moderate relationship between independent variable (foreign media program) and dependant variable (materialistic values) (Table 9).

Results demonstrated that the amount of χ^2 was in acceptable level that means relationship between independent variable and dependant variable was meaningful and amount of gamma correlation coefficient showed a moderate relationship between independent variable (foreign media programs) and dependant variable (materialistic values) (Table 10).

The results showed that the amount of χ^2 was in acceptable level, which indicated the relationship between dependant variable and independent variable was meaningful.

Table 9: Relationship between attitude (total) to materials in youth person and his/her assessment from materialistic content of foreign media

Variables	Materialistic values in external media programs			Total
	Low	Middle	High	
Materialistic values				
Low				
Absolute	71.0	42.0	83.0	196.0
(%)	83.5	37.8	40.7	49.0
Total (%)	17.8	10.5	20.8	49.0
Middle				
Absolute	8.0	39.0	76.0	123.0
(%)	9.4	35.1	37.3	30.8
Total (%)	2.0	9.8	19.0	30.8
High				
Absolute	6.0	30.0	45.0	81.0
(%)	7.1	27.0	22.1	20.3
Total (%)	1.5	7.5	11.3	20.3
Total				
Absolute	85.0	111.0	204.0	400.0
(%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (%)	21.3	27.8	51.0	100.0

Sig = 0.000; $\gamma = 0.33$; $df = 4$; $\chi^2 = 52.62$

Table 10: Relationship between attitude (total) to materials in a youth person and his/her assessment of normal materialistic pressure in society

Variables	Norm related materialistic in society			Total
	Low	Middle	High	
Materialistic values				
Low				
Absolute	99.0	39.0	58.0	196.0
(%)	8.8	45.3	34.1	49.0
Total (%)	24.8	9.8	14.5	49.0
Middle				
Absolute	33.0	30.0	60.0	123.0
(%)	22.9	34.9	35.8	30.8
Total (%)	8.3	7.5	15.0	30.8
High				
Absolute	12.0	17.0	52.0	81.0
(%)	8.3	19.8	30.6	20.3
Total (%)	3.0	3.4	13.0	20.3
Total				
Absolute	144.0	86.0	170.0	400.0
(%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (%)	36.0	21.5	42.5	100.0

Sig = 0.000; $\gamma = 0.45$; $df = 4$; $\chi^2 = 42.96$

Moreover, the amount of gamma correlation coefficient indicated the relationship between an independent variable (social and economical SES of family and dependant (materialist) was weak (Table 11).

Regression analysis: In regression analysis, for studying impressions of independent variables on dependant variable, all independent variables entered into regression program. From seven entered variables, 5 variables had direct relationship with material attitude of youth (Fig. 2). Regarding the results (Fig. 2), personal assessment variable was mostly related to youth attitude to materials from normal-related materialistic pressure in society with β -coefficient ($\beta = 0.17$).

Table 11: Relationship between attitude (total) to materials in youth people and family social-economical status

Variables	Family social-economical status			Total
	Low	Middle	High	
Materialistic values				
Low				
Absolute	56.0	100.0	40.0	196.0
(%)	50.0	56.2	36.4	49.0
Total (%)	14.0	25.0	10.0	49.0
Middle				
Absolute	45.0	34.0	44.0	123.0
(%)	40.2	19.1	40.0	30.8
Total (%)	11.3	8.5	11.0	30.8
High				
Absolute	11.0	44.0	26.0	81.0
(%)	9.8	24.7	23.6	20.3
Total (%)	2.8	11.0	6.5	20.3
Total				
Absolute	112.0	178.0	110.0	400.0
(%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (%)	28.0	44.5	27.5	100.0

Sig = 0.007; $\gamma = 0.17$; $df = 4$; $\chi^2 = 28$

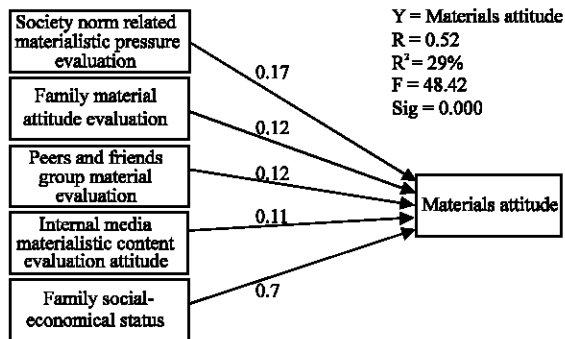


Fig. 2: Reggression model for coefficient rate between independent and dependent variables

In continuing, the personal assessment variable from family materialistic rate with beta coefficient of ($\beta = 0.12$) was the second effective variable on youth attitude to materials. The third variable related to material attitude of youth. Group of friends and peers were presented β -coefficient of 0.12.

Friend group was related to the increase of youth attitude to materials was 12%. Internal media program in the 4rth variable was in relation with materialistic values. Content of internal media programs rated as 12% with material attitude was related to youth. The last variable related to material attitude was the variable of social-economical SES of family, with β -coefficient of 0.07.

The results show that with the increase on positive changing unit and ascending in social-economical SES of family, materialistic values of child rated of 0.07 toward positive direction changes.

Amount of correlation of multivariable regression ($k = 0.52$) was the indicator of relative high of total

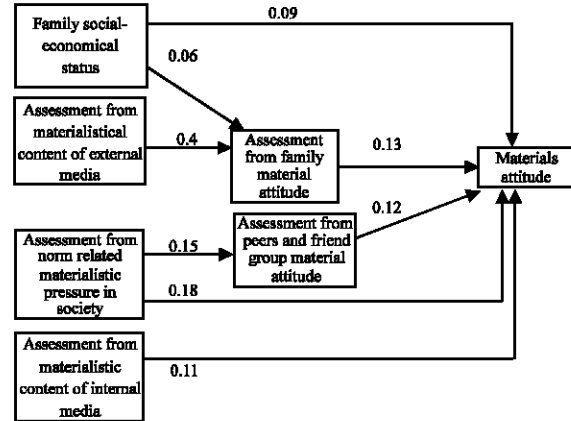


Fig. 3: Model of path analysis, direct and indirect effects of each independent and dependant variable

independent variable with dependant variable, which was explained by selected independent variables. The study and the interpretations of dependant variables (attitude to materials or materialistic values) by using path analysis showed a causal relationship among a set of variables. As a whole, this model aimed to study direct and indirect effects of each independent variable which was designed in research hypothesizes and were studied through path analysis.

Diagram represented 5 variables and their effects on materialistic behavior directly. These 5 variables were as follows:

- Society normal materialistic pressure evaluation (with coefficient 18%)
- Family material attitude evaluation (with coefficient 13%)
- Friends and peers material attitudes evaluation
- Internal media programs materialistic content evaluation (with coefficient 11%).
- Family social-economical SES evaluation (with coefficient 0.09)

As a whole, it worth mentioning that all these variables had increasing effect to youth material attitudes. The amount of R^2 (or determination coefficient) calculated for this equation was 31%.

Path analysis model: Variables with indirect effect as well as their direct effects, were:

- Variable of assessment in norm related materialistic pressure in society with agent of evaluation variable of material attitude between friend group with the rate of 15% above attitude toward materials

- Variable of social-economical SES of family related to material attitude in family with on material attitude rated as 0.06 (Fig. 3)
- Indirect variable code by agency of attitude toward materials
- Content of materialistic is external, which has increasing effective on attitude to materials

CONCLUSION

Variables of social-economical SES were from main and independent of research. The hypothesis related to this variable was not confirmed by Engelhart (1990) because our results showed that people of society high class in Iran had more attitudes to material values. The hypothesis related to norm-related materialistic pressure in the society confirmed the Parsons (1937).

People in Iranian society, learn necessities during socialization process through its factors such as family, Medias and etc and person's act was considered to be bound to these values.

The next hypothesis were related to the role of media and their programs in forming youth attitude toward material values and also demonstrated that this hypothesis was in relation with cultural ideology of Frankfurt. The result indicated that commercial advertisements, dummy consumption patters etc, all and all actuate people to have more materials.

Media programs in Iran plays an important role in forming youth attitude toward material values and the role of increasing foreign programs should be counted on in this regard.

The hypothesis related to family and friend relation was demonstrated. Family and friends were important factors and reference group in forming behavioral, speech... act in youth. These people were considered as very important for youth and also young people pay attention to their judgment about themselves, learn from them, imitate their acts and behaviors and follow their beliefs. The role of friends was considered as important in Iran current society, because these groups played and important role in actuating youth into material values.

Finally, research results showed that youth materialistic values in Iran was in average percent and also a kind of increase to this attitude in young Iranians was observed. On the other hand, before they act based on their material values, they form a materialistic mentality. It means that they declared less acts of materialistic values. It worth mentioning that age, gender and marital status of family had no impact on youth attitude towards materialistic values.

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