

## **The Impact of the Cultural Capital on the Gender-Based Attitude Among the Students of Arak Azad University**

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**Abstract:** The objective of the present study is to assess the impact of the cultural capital on the gender-based attitude among the students of the Faculty of Humanities, Islamic Azad University of Arak in 2015. The cultural capital is referred to the concentration and accumulation of various types of tangible cultural goods and also the strength and ability to take these goods and also the potential and capability of the individual in understanding and applying these devices. For the theoretical frame work Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and Sandra Bem's gender schema theory and Michel's gender stereotypes theory were used. The research was a survey and the statistical population to the research involved the students of the Faculty of Humanities in Islamic Azad University of Arak. The research sample involved 363 people selected and the data was collected through a simple random sampling method and using questionnaires. For data analysis, Spearman and Mann-Whitney tests were applied. The research results indicate that the gender attitude is different among female students from that among male students.

**Key words:** Cultural capital, gender attitudes, students, Arak

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of culture as a basic component in the social life of people has an important role in the stability and continuity of the lifestyle and dynamism of any society and is considered as the major and fundamental issues in sociology. Studying the culture as the main element in formation and continuation of the social life has long been considered by the scholars and psychologists. Presently new generations of our society are experiencing new ways of attitudes to education, reading, family, marriage, religion and political inclinations and in fact our new generations are producing values in these fields. This cultural change or change of generations would lead to formation of methods of cultural cohesion. This cultural cohesion is kept through the combinatorial relationships of cultural practices. Combinatorial relationships are similar to a hand, each part of which is independent and has an independent identity from the palm and yet they have a kind of integrative relationship with each other.

The cultural capital is a set of relationships, information and privileges that the individual may use to maintain or obtain a social position. In other words, the cultural capital is constantly in the realm of features of a

class, group, clan or tribe (Amiri, 2007). The term cultural capital in comparison with the economic capital and the opinions, rules and analyses relating to capitalism was spread in the early 1970s. This concept was invented for studying the economic obstacles to explain the disparities existing in the educational achievements of students of different social classes which is not adequate of course (Katbi, 2006). Although, the cultural capital is a new concept, this concept has achieved a special place for the social science researchers. One of the renowned theorists in this field is Pierre Bourdieu; he studied the cultural capital in its different dimensions deeply. In Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital the ownership of cultural capital would permit the individual to control the actions in the field of cultural production. Nevertheless, the cultural capital cannot transfer it to others and must use it in the process of production. Bourdieu believes that humans in any society have different economic, social and cultural capitals and an individual's social capitals would determine her/his status in society, guide her/his thoughts and behaviors and form the spaces where they live or work. According to Bourdieu, the cultural capitals of an individual have the highest influence in comparison to other capitals of hers/him in determining the social status of the individual in the society and directing her/his thoughts and behaviors (Bourdieu, 1985).

One of the variables strongly under the influence of culture and cultural capital is the gender-based attitude. The gender attitudes and roles can originate from life and nature, cultural, social and functional factors. In the meantime, the stereotypes and stereotypical thoughts are also significant in production, reproduction and expectations of gender roles because human beings are always involved somehow in the stereotypical thinking that is expressed descriptively or prescriptively about how people are typically and should take what roles (Hansen *et al.*, 2014).

Based on the theory of gender role socialization, women and men would perceive the gender role socialization differently. The behavior of parents with children is affected by the templates which are interpreted as gender stereotypes. Even achieving identity is primarily a bilateral process between parents and their babies (Jenkins, 2015). Families, consciously or unconsciously, do not train boys and girls alike and play different roles based on their children's sex. This behavioral style of parents and caregivers with children is derived from the templates that are interpreted as the gender stereotypes. According to the gender beliefs, men have features such as aggression, objectivity and independence while women are weak, passive and dependent on men.

Despite the extensive changes of social and cultural institutions, the family has still a high power in socializing children. The fundamental traits of gender are firstly formed in the family and then they are reinforced and expanded by the socialization factors such as the educational system, the media and the peer groups. Due to the gender role socialization daughters and sons are socialized with gender norms, yet there are different views on the role of the family in the construction and reproduction of gender roles.

Several factors have always been mentioned as barriers to the full participation of women in the development process, some of which are cultural, social, economic, legal and personality obstacles. Although, each of these factors is important, scholars pay a special attention to the cultural factors, especially the common beliefs about the appropriate tasks and roles of men and women in the society. Some stereotypical views about women's abilities like that a woman is a female person whose role must be a wife, a mother and a home maker and acceptance of these by men who are deliberately the institutional policy makers and final decision makers and even by women will worsen the problem. In general, none of the former experimental studies (assessing the libraries

and websites in the State and Islamic Azad Universities) has specifically dealt with the relationship between the cultural capital and gender-based attitude. Here a few studies are mentioned briefly that dealt with assessing the gender-based attitudes. Dr. Mohseni's research on studying the knowledge, attitudes and socio-cultural behaviors in Iran shows that 46.3% of men and 35.6% of women were against women's work. Gharchepoour showed that the biological factors and the dual role of women in home and workplace would not cause the effective participation of them at the management level but the cultural and social factors would prevent from the effective participation of women at this level. Total review of the studies and research show that there is a special type of cultural beliefs and opinions on the roles and tasks of women and men (gender-based attitudes) that can act as a barrier to the full participation of women in the development process (Abedi *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, the present study is to find the answer to the question that whether the cultural capital impacts the gender-based attitude of the students in the Islamic Azad University of Arak or not?

**Literature review:** Ebrahimi and Behnoue (2009) in a study assessed "the cultural capital and the youth body management, a case study of the youth in Babolsar". Results of the research indicate a significant relationship between the cultural capital and the youth (girls and boys) body management. In addition to that, the findings show that the socio-economic status is correlated with their body management. In general, according to the findings of this research it can be stated that the more the amount of the cultural capital of the individual, the more the body management will increase too (Ebrahimi and Behnoue, 2009).

Results of a study by Ardeshiri entitled "A Comparison of the Position (Power) of Women in Family Based on the Level of Cultural Capital" show that the level of women's cultural capital will influence their position (power) in family.

Amani conducted a study entitled "A Study of the Impacts of the Cultural and Economic Capitals on the Submissive-to-husband Women in Ghazvin". Results of that study indicate that the variable of cultural capital, educational patterns (arbitrary) and employment before marriage with the value equaling  $r = (0.146)$  were influential on explaining the changes of the dependent variable.

Amrollahi in a research entitled "A Study of the Relationship Between the Social Capital and the Women's

Attitudes and Behaviors in the Field of Gender Inequalities in Hamadan". Results of the research indicate that the inequalities between men and women leave the greatest impact on the attitudes and behaviors of women. In terms of effectiveness, after inequalities of men and women (0.611), socialization with 0.560, social capital with 0.487, gender awareness with 0.395 and in the end in equalities in family with 0.157 would impact the women's attitudes and behaviors in the field of gender inequalities.

Esmayeeli conducted a study entitled "A Study of the Relationship Between the Cultural Capital and the Women's Lifestyle", the result of that study show that each of the dimensions of the cultural capital (subjective, objective and institutional) is associated with the lifestyle of the married women in Shiraz City. The cultural capital has also a significant relationship with the women's lifestyle.

Rod and Lennon in a research studied "the relationship between the attitudes towards gender roles, body satisfaction, self-esteem and appearance management in women". The findings of that research show that) the attitude towards gender roles and body satisfaction has a positive relationship with self-esteem; body satisfaction is highly correlated with self-esteem rather than the traditional attitudes towards the gender roles) the women who enjoy a high self-esteem are less involved in the process of appearance management in comparison with the women who have lower self-esteem both women with the traditional attitude towards the gender roles and women with non-traditional attitudes towards the gender roles pay attention to the appearance management.

Grogan and Wainwright in their studies showed that in Western societies the body dissatisfaction and undesirable mental imageries of the body can be seen even from the very childhood. Their findings showed that these two groups of young girls were unhappy with their bodies. In fact, those who felt that they were slim were pleased while those who felt obesity were dissatisfied. These two groups of individuals had the same ideal features in their mind that are in harmony with the slim adults and for that aim avoided fattening foods and were eager to reduce weight. Grogan and Wainwright believe that there are similar study between the expressed dissatisfaction of kids and teenagers with their body and that of adult women. In other words, the social pressure to be perfect is accepted from the early childhood by people.

**The theoretical framework:** In the theoretical framework of the present study Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital

and theory of Sandra Bem's gender attitudes and gender stereotypes and Michel's gender stereotypes theory have been used.

From the perspective of Bourdieu (2005) three types of capital play roles in the society that are determinants of the social power and social inequality. The economic capital which describes the financial resources. The social capital that is about who you know is in fact a social capital relating to the social ties that people are able to mobilize them in favor of their interests. The cultural capital that has different dimensions including the objective knowledge on arts and cultures, cultural tastes and preferences, cultural skills such as playing musical instruments and ability to recognize good and bad having the possibility to change from one topic to another. He proved that the specific occupational groups and classes have distinctive tastes in music, art, food and etc. It supports his opinion that the cultural capital is formed from the social status and social class of people. In other words, the cultural tastes of people are influenced by their class. The decisive issue in Bourdieu's opinion is his claim in this case that the cultural capital causes difference and helps in perpetuating the social inequalities. Bourdieu argues that the groups of elites determine what the acceptable or valuable cultural capital is and what worthless. Bourdieu believed that the cultural capital such as money would facilitate the access to top positions and dignified jobs and more earning. From the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu the cultural capital has three main dimensions that are.

**The visualized cultural capital:** This type of capital is mainly transferred from parents to children through socialization. Bourdieu defines this type of capital as "these table tendencies of mind and body" which are shaped along with the birth of individual and cannot transfer them to others like a gift such as language skills; this type of ability in Bourdieu's thoughts refers to "the cultural tastes, styles and methods" (Bourdieu, 1985).

**The objectified cultural capital:** This type of capital can be found not in the mind or body but in the cultural goods that are used by the social groups such as books, paintings, cassettes, photos, dictionaries, equipment for machines, especially writings.

**The institutionalized cultural capital:** This type of cultural capital has the highest relationship with a process occurring in the educational system such as having a degree from a prestigious university and a valid driver's

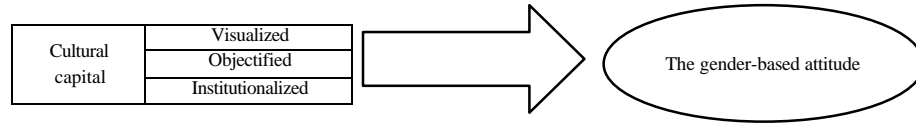


Fig. 1: The conceptual model of research

license; this type of capital can raise the social or economic position of individuals and groups (Bourdieu, 1985).

Sandra Bem’s gender schema theory is based on the assumption that kids learn about sex during childhood. One of the initial assumptions of the gender schema theory is that the knowledge on gender is multi-dimensional. Certain aspects or elements of knowledge relating to gender involve behaviors, roles, jobs and traits. Being a woman is associated with special behaviors (flower arrangement), certain roles (house making), particular occupations (primary school teachers) and specific features. Our knowledge is organized in a way that just having a label or a title of gender would lead to connection with the gender-related elements. Over time, as the children learn more information about each of these components, they also began to organize their knowledge in more complex ways (Najarian, 2006). Bem believes that these children have the general preparation to organize the information about themselves on the basis of social definitions of the appropriate behaviors for each gender. When kids learn to realize themselves as a daughter or a son it is time for them to learn about the roles that go along with these labels. As children grow up, they learn the stereotypical ideas associating with being a man or a woman (gender stereotypes) in their culture in details.

Next theory used is the gender-based role teaching and the role taking. The term gender-based role teaching refers to achieving those behaviors and traits that the culture of a certain society regards as proper for men and women there. The gender-based role teaching and the gender identity are two different concepts. A lady may have accepted herself as a woman but she neither follows the feminine prosocial behaviors nor avoids all the behaviors that are known as masculine behaviors.

The gender identity and the gender-based stereotypes: the gender identity is a reflection of the specialties, functions and feelings of masculinity or femininity within the individual that take shape from birth in the process of observing, learning, socialization, communication and interaction with others and as a result of them, the individuals would know to consider themselves as men or women and the others accept them as such. In other words, it is a part of the individual’s

behaviors and attitudes towards his/her gender that is shaped under the influence of the cultural and social conditions. Although, the human identity is influenced by various factors such as race, nationality, occupation and age, in many communities the most important and the most central and the most decisive factor is the social identity of masculinity and femininity. Although, the words gender and the psychosexual identity are replaced by each other in the contemporary psychology gender is determined based on the biological factors and the anatomical and physiological differences which are determined genetically at birth. The gender identity is a concept that an individual realizes oneself as a woman or a man as such it is reflected in sentences “I am a boy or a girl”. Kids learn the point to apply the gender schemas to them, to organize their self-concepts around the concepts of masculinity or femininity and measure their values within the framework of answering this question that whether they are masculine or feminine enough.

Assessing the studies at the international level done for UNESCO and Michelle in his book entitled “Fighting Against Gender Discrimination” represents the samples of the common stereotype across the world about men and women for Michel the gender stereotypes can be placed in four general categories various roles within the family the mother has a serving role to the family and is dependent on the spouse and the father has the role of breadwinner and support; personality: boys and men are creator, decisive and practical (active), girls are however, dependent and observers (passive); social and political roles: women, even though busy at social levels are active only at small and local levels but men are responsible and/or political leaders; professional roles occupations are divided into two women’s and men’s sections. Women are either receptionist or nurse and men are employer or physician (Fig. 1).

**Research variables**

**Cultural capital:** Cultural capital is a set of relationships, information and rates that an individual uses to maintain or obtain a social position. In other words, cultural capital is permanently in the realm of facilities to a class, group, clan or tribe. According to Bourdieu (1992) the concept of the cultural capital has three main dimensions (visualized, objectified and institutionalized).

**The visualized or mental dimension:** That involves the psychological trends of an individual towards using cultural goods such as experimental and behavioral skills and acquired knowledge; the variable cited above has been measured with 6 items in the questionnaire.

**The objectified dimension:** One of the most obvious and concrete forms of cultural capital is consuming different cultural goods among the various strata of society that itself can be a function of various personal and social variables. The objectified cultural capital in the materialistic items of media such as writing, painting, tools and the like and in general in its nature is transferrable. This capital (like books, paintings, musical instruments, etc.) is materialistically transferrable by its owner (of course, it can be transferred only in terms of legal ownership). The above variable has been measured in the questionnaire with 6 items.

**Institutionalized dimension:** This manner is a kind of institutional formalization to an individual's cultural capital that involves the educational and scientific cultural degrees and diplomas of the individual, the educational degrees, professional and efficient qualifications are some forms of the institutional capital. The educational degree is the document of the cultural expertise that represents a guaranteed contractual value to its possessor. The variable above is measured with 5 items in the questionnaire.

**Gender stereotypes:** Gender stereotypes represent the steady and formatted images of the particular behaviors relating to men and women without being assessed or examined. The above variable is measured with 5 items in the questionnaire.

**Research hypotheses:** There is a relationship between the visualized cultural capital and the gender-based attitude. There is a relationship between the objectified cultural capital and the gender-based attitude. There is a relationship between the institutionalized cultural capital and the gender-based attitude.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research methodology with regard to the existing objectives and hypothesis is a practical research; for data collection the field work method was applied and in terms of performance it is a survey (cross-sectional). The statistical population of the study ahead involves the students in the Faculty of Humanity, Islamic Azad University of Arak (Amir Kabir) in the semester 2013-2014

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha coefficient to the research variables

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha values (%)
<b>Cultural capital</b>		
Visualized	6	70
Objectified	6	65
Institutionalized	5	77
Gender attitude	25	91

which totally consists of 6742. The sample of the study consisted of 363 taken from the students of humanity faculty of Islamic Azad University-Arak branch. Using construct validity, accuracy of the questionnaire experts. Additionally, the reliability of the instrument was determined by Cronbach's alpha coefficient technique (Table 1). All data analysis were carried out using the SPSS soft ware package.

### Descriptive findings of the research:

- The results show that: the age range in the population studied is from 23-43. The highest frequency is related to the age 29 that involves 25.5% of the respondents and the least number is 33 years old that included 3 of the respondents that equals 8% of the respondents
- According to results of the research it can be said that 231 (61.04%) respondents were females and 129 people (34.0%) were males
- The highest frequency of the respondents' education is related to the bachelor's degree that is 54.5% and the least frequency is related to PhD and the associate degrees with 1.1% frequency
- The highest frequency of the father's education is related to bachelor's degree that includes 32.2% and the least frequency is related to master's degrees with 1.1%
- The highest frequency is related to the mother's educational level that is 30% and the least frequency is related to the bachelor's degree with 7.2%
- According to the results of the study, it can be stated that 23.7% were fluent in English and 55.3 were fairly fluent and 16.8 were not fluent

**Analysis of the research hypothesis:** According to Kolmogorov-Smirnov test stating the non-normality of the research data in order to analyze the research hypotheses, the nonparametric statistical tests were used (Spearman correlation coefficient), the results of the correlation coefficient of the research hypotheses have been represented in Table 2.

**Hypothesis 1:** It seems that there is a relationship between the visualized cultural capital and the gender-based attitude.

Table 2: Correlation coefficient of the first hypothesis

Variables	Error level	Significance level	Spearman correlation coefficient	Test results
Visualized cultural capital and the gender attitude	0.05	0.000	0.321	H <sub>1</sub>

Table 3: Correlation coefficient of the second hypothesis

Variables	Error level	Significance level	Spearman correlation coefficient	Test results
Objectified cultural capital and the gender attitude	0.05	0.003	0.159	H <sub>1</sub>

According to the SPSS output and with regard to the fact that the significance level equals (0.000) and this value is less than the error level (0.05), the hypothesis is significant. It means that there is a significant relationship between the visualized cultural capital and the gender-based attitude of the students and since the Spearman's correlation coefficient equals 0.321 with 99% of confidence it can be said that there is a positive and significant relationship between the visualized cultural capital and the gender-based attitude. Therefore the hypothesis above stating the relationship between the visualized cultural capital and the gender attitude is supported.

**Hypothesis 2:** It seems that there is a relationship between the objectified cultural capital and the gender-based attitude.

According to the SPSS output and with regard to the fact that the significance level equals (0.003) and this value is less than the error level (0.05), the hypothesis is significant. It means that there is a significant relationship between the objectified cultural capital and the gender-based attitude of the students and since the Spearman's correlation coefficient equals 0.159 with 99% of confidence it can be said that there is a positive and significant relationship between the objectified cultural capital and the gender-based attitude. Therefore, the hypothesis above stating the relationship between the objectified cultural capital and the gender attitude is supported.

**Hypothesis 3:** It seems that there is a relationship between the institutionalized cultural capital and the gender-based attitude (Table 3). According to the SPSS output and with regard to the fact that the significance level equals (0.000) and this value is less than the error level (0.05), the hypothesis is significant. It means that there is a significant relationship between the institutionalized cultural capital and the gender-based attitude of the students and since the Spearman's correlation coefficient equals 0.616 with 99% of confidence it can be said that

Table 4: Correlation coefficient of the third hypothesis

Variables	Error level	Significance level	Spearman correlation coefficient	Test results
institutionalized cultural capital and the gender attitude	0.05	0.000	0.616	H <sub>1</sub>

there is a positive and significant relationship between the institutionalized cultural capital and the gender-based attitude. Therefore, the hypothesis above stating the relationship between the institutionalized cultural capital and the gender attitude is supported (Table 4).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the researcher is to assess the impact of the cultural capital on the gender-based attitude of the students of Arak Azad University; the following results were obtained from the investigation and with regard to the theoretical framework and the assumptions adopted. For the theoretical framework of this research Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and Sandra Bem's theory of gender attitudes and gender stereotypes and Michel's gender stereotypes were used. According to the statistical analysis, the following results were inferred from assumptions.

The first hypothesis of the research deals with studying the relationship between the visualized cultural capital and the gender-based attitude. In order to bring up the first hypothesis of Bourdieu's theory was applied and based on the SPSS output and with regard to the fact that the significance level equals (0.000) and this value is less than the error level (0.05), the hypothesis is meaningful. It means that there has been a significant relationship between the visualized cultural capital and the students gender attitudes. Therefore, the above hypothesis of the researcher stating a relationship between the visualized cultural capital and the gender attitude is affirmed. Result of this hypothesis is also in line with Bourdieu's theory and it can be said that the above theory is supported in terms of space and time and subject matter too. The second hypothesis also with the significance level (0.003) shows that the hypothesis is significant. It means that there has been a significant relationship between the objectified cultural capital and the gender-based attitude of the students. The above hypothesis supports Bourdieu's theory in this research on the significance of the relationship between the objectified cultural capital and the gender attitude. The research results affirm the consistence of Bourdieu's theory with the third hypothesis that deals with the relationship between the institutionalized cultural capital and the gender attitude

and the above hypothesis is proved with 99% of confidence. Therefore, the hypothesis is significant; it means that there is a significant relationship between the institutionalized cultural capital and the gender-based attitude of the students. Also, the sub-hypotheses of the research that are related to the variables were confirmed by extracting Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, Sandra Bem's theory of gender attitudes and gender stereotypes and Michel's gender stereotypes based on the effect of (gender, age and education of the respondents, educated parents and having a work of art).

In brief, it can be said that the cultural capital and its dimensions, including the institutionalized, objectified and visualized are influential on the gender-based attitude. Those who have a very low cultural capital are more inclined to gender discrimination oriented attitude. Those who have a low cultural capital have discriminatory and egalitarian gender attitudes equally. The people with a modest cultural capital have a more egalitarian gender attitude. Those who have a high cultural capital have an egalitarian gender attitude. Those who have a very high cultural capital have an egalitarian gender attitude.

Having compared this study with the former research, the researcher achieved the following results: the above research is directly consistent with the studies of researchers: Amrollahi in a research entitled a study of the women's attitude towards the gender stereotypes and the factors influencing it and Esmayeeli in a research examining the relationship between the cultural capital and the lifestyle of women, Hoseini examining the women's attitude towards the gender stereotypes and the factors influencing it and Di Maggio in a study entitled the cultural capital, Amani in a research entitled a study of the impacts of the cultural and economic capitals on submissiveness of women to their husbands, they achieved similar results; it is indirectly in line with the studies by Ramezani entitled the cultural capital of the family with the social identity of theyouth, Niyazi in a study relating to the cultural capital and the social identity, Rafatjaj in a study entitled the internet and the social identity in the city of Sanandaj, Sharepour and Gholamreza Khoshifar entitled the relationship between the cultural capital and the youth identity, achieved similar results.

## CONCLUSION

Results of the research showed a significant relationship between the different dimensions of cultural capital and the gender-based attitude. It means that the individuals that have a little cultural capital have a more discrimination-oriented gender attitude. People who have a modest cultural capital enjoy an almost egalitarian gender attitude and those with a high cultural capital have an egalitarian gender attitude.

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