



Determining the Role of Socio-cultural Factors in Women's Inclination toward Beauty (Case Study: Tehran)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine the role of socio-cultural factors in women's inclination toward beauty. This study was conducted as a descriptive survey. The population consisted of all women and girls between 15 and 64 years living in the north (districts 1 and 2) and south (districts 19 and 20) of Tehran in 2016. According to Cochran formula, 384 subjects were selected as the sample by multi-stage cluster sampling method. The data were collected by using a researcher-built questionnaire based on the theories of "Albert Bandura," "Erving Goffman" and "Bourdieu" as well as the inclination model to beauty of Pidgan and Russell; its formal validity was approved by a number of respondents and its content validity was confirmed by the supervisor professor and a number of experts in the field of social sciences. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient as 0.86 and was confirmed. In order to analyze the data, descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and frequencies, analytical and univariate t-tests, MANOVA and Friedman test were conducted. The results of data analysis showed that social and cultural factors play an important role in the inclination of women toward beauty at a significant level ($P < 0.01$). Also, socio-cultural dimensions such as socio-economic status, social acceptance, cultural capital, how to use social media, and group level are significantly related to women's inclination toward beauty ($P < 0.01$). The results of ranking the cultural-social dimensions showed that social acceptance, socio-economic status, media consumption, social groups and cultural capital respectively have the highest to the lowest ranks in the inclination of women toward beauty. There was no significant difference between the respondents in terms of demographic factors with the exception of differences in opinion between the south and north of Tehran.

Keywords: Inclination to Beauty, Women, Cultural Factors, Social Factors, Tehran

JEL Classification: D91

1. INTRODUCTION

Two fundamental features of "perception" and "willing practice" exist in every living creature. In humans, these two properties are more developed, more complex and deeper: One is the system of perception and the other device is the system of will. In the field of perceptions, knowledge and cognition are involved that are defined as "insight," and in will, motivation and willingness are involved that are defined as "inclinations." These two essential factors, namely "insight" and "inclination" contribute to "action" or behavior (Cohen, 1994). The inclination to beauty is a natural essence that tends to exist in all humans; so that he is attracted to what is beautiful. There is no force in the world of nature that can bar this from her/him; because desire is innate and internal inclination is a developmental issue that is much different with conventional issues (Abbaszadeh et al., 2012).

Inclination or preference, tendency to distinction and difference are related to the sense of superiority between people, which defines the type of emotional, cognitive and behavioral preferences for behavioral preparation to satisfy desires. Inclination to beauty is a completely natural sense and is common to all human beings at all times, and has always been an important issue based on the different perceptions of it. This sense is stronger among women in most societies and cultures. Psychologically, women have an altruist character that makes them to preen themselves (Giddens, 2008). In fact, women are more interested in showing their beauty to others more than the "beauty" itself. Thus, when they participate in communities and public meetings, they devote more effort to their beauty and elegance. Iran is a society that the beauty fever has grown among women in the last decade; evidence can be seen as in their orientation to different types of unconventional makeup and fashion models and undergoing cosmetic surgery

2. BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

procedures (Abbaszadeh et al., 2012). Now our society is facing women and girls that don't want to be seen without makeup under any circumstances despite having a beautiful face (Safiri and Ghobadi, 2014). This issue is a health threat to them, causing social challenges such as abnormality, tension in families, promiscuity, immorality, etc., beside numerous identity problems among the country's active force. Its major outcome can be seen in the changed lifestyles among young people (Mohammedi, 2012). Accordingly, it seems that inclination to beauty among women from different angles and dimensions and identifying the different factors affecting the particular social and cultural dimensions makes it possible to achieve effective solutions for this challenge.

"Beauty" not for everyone, but for most people is of utmost importance. In human society, women are more likely to wear make-up and show off their sex. "Beauty" for women implies many factors such as social status, utility reproduction, income, intelligence, and the likely help from the opposite sex. Because people consider some positive characteristics for attractive people while do not imagine them for a non-attractive case. This can be discussed in terms of both anthropological and substantive differences between men and women in behavioral sciences. This means that the differences indicate a natural difference between men and women and on the other hand are related to the issue of norms and behavioral studies. Research shows that women's motivation for "beauty" falls into two general categories of personal motivation (motivation of the ego) and transpersonal motivation (motivation referring to the superego). Personal motives are classified at the level of micro analysis, transpersonal motives depending on the situation where people are, are classified in both middle and macro levels of analysis. At the mid-level, family and family circumstances, and at the macro level, the social conditions are the sources of orientation to "beauty" which are different in any situation (Johnson, 2011).

Giddens (2008), the contemporary English sociologist believes that women are judged especially on the basis of physical features, and being ashamed of their bodies has a direct relation to social expectations. Compared to men, he believes women are more prone to eating disorders that are the result of several main reasons: First, our social norms about women are more focused on physical attractiveness. Second, what is defined as a socially desirable body image is the image of a slim women and not muscular. Third, although today women are more active in public and social life than before, but they are at the same time judged based on their advances and achievements (Giddens, 2008).

Thus, the present study explores and prioritizes the effective factors on women's inclination to beauty among the women in Tehran and tries to explain the relationship between socio-economic status, social acceptance, demographic characteristics, media consumption, social groups and cultural capital. On the other hand, we can say that perception of beauty is a social structure and individual idea that is related to satisfaction with oneself in any society, in any period of time, associated with cultural ideals and primary patterns. These issues can be studied among women from different aspects.

Humans are perfectionist beings that are oriented to any kind of perfection and dislike any deficiency and defect. S/he loves "beauty" as an example of perfection, is willing toward it and eludes the ugly; thus, any human being naturally and essentially looks for "beauty" and has the desire to present and display it. Studying the beauty norms in recent years shows that some ideals are determined for women that are practically impossible to be achieved and these ideals and unrealistic goals put women in a position of inferiority that will make them constantly be alert and monitor their body changes with all powers they have (Hansen, 2002).

In the eyes of Plato, "beauty" is the harmony between the components and the whole (Hansen, 2002). "Durant" believes "beauty" is born out of desire and states that one of the prominent signs that "beauty" is born of desire is that the desirable object loses its "beauty" after it was achieved. In other words, as "beauty" is relative, every eye defines it in specific terms. In fact, "beauty" is different in the eyes of people, depending on their thought and vision. One might call a certain phenomenon, event or object beautiful while another calls the same phenomenon, event or object not beautiful, but ugly indeed (Durant, 1995). Thus it can be said, beauty in the eye of viewer is "affected by culture" and is an attribute related and belonging to the satisfaction and preferences, as the concepts that value judgments can be attributed to them. The term "aesthetics" or appreciation of "beauty" in the proper sense, was mentioned the first time in the 19th century and proposed a new sense, beyond the mere attachment to the "beauty;" today's interpretation of "aestheticism" believes in the importance, creating and understanding "beauty" and the value of "aesthetics."

Black and Sharma (2001) in a study entitled "men are real, while women do make-up" analyzes beauty therapies and procedures between Polish men and women. Based on observations made, the researchers found that beauty therapy has the role of an informal adviser and in fact it performs both emotional and practical activities on the body. This point was found that the women referring to the beauty salons are seeking social activities. Not only the therapists, but the customers themselves are completely aware of this important matter that their action procedures must be in accordance with the types of women who are constantly dealing with them (Johnson, 2011). Jones (2013) in his study titled as "the study of beauty among women in towns and cities" investigated the mental images of beauty among women in Germany's towns and cities. The results show that those women who are not able to meet such standards due to barriers such as social class, economic class, etc., are faced to identity crisis, lack of competence and lack of confidence (Jones, 2013).

"Gimlin" (2013) in a study entitled "the causes and factors effective on cosmetic surgery among women", examined "beauty" as a product and addressed the experience of women on the issue of "beauty" to merely look at it from the perspective of women. "Balali and Afshar" (2014) in a study as "beauty and money: Make-up and surgery" aimed at answering the question of whether

there is a significant correlation between economy (money) and beauty? The results showed a strong ideological link between money and beauty in the contemporary society. Although women's preferences and agency are also effective in this relation, but this agency is greatly influenced and manipulated by the pre-existing structure and continuous capitalism. In import of beauty culture to Iran, the press, businesses, and women themselves are involved (Balali and Afshar, 2014).

"Kabiri and Ghorban" (2013) in a study titled "the sociological analysis of young girls' tendency to use cosmetics" in Payam-Noor University of Urumia tried to answer the question of which social and cultural factors cause the increasing drive to use cosmetology among girl students? The empirical findings indicated that the variables of economic capital, cultural capital, socioeconomic status and the use of the media, have a significant and positive relationship with young girls' tendency to use cosmetics. Among the variables, cultural capital has the strongest relationship with the dependent variable (Kabiri and Ghorban, 2013).

"Movahed et al." (2011) in a study entitled as "study of the relationship between the media, body image and self-esteem and tendency to make-up" reported that a number of the subjects were wearing makeup and tend to use it. And a large proportion of them were not satisfied with their body image. The relationship between self-esteem and body image dissatisfaction was negative and its relationship was only significant in the dimension of tendency to make up, and finally, all media types with variables of body image, self-esteem and make-up did not have a similar relationship (Movahed et al., 2011).

"Webster" (2015) in his study "beauty, symbol of respect" examines the vision and conception of beauty among young French women. The results suggest that facial attractiveness makes predictable differences in the development of general and specific communication and the impact and appeal of face and social acceptance in combination with other factors of respect are related to women's inclination to beauty (Wilber, 2012).

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.1. Main Research Question

To what extent the socio-cultural factors influence the women's inclination toward beauty in Tehran?

3.2. Secondary Questions

1. To what extent the socio-economic status is effective on women's inclination to beauty in Tehran?
2. To what extent the social acceptance is effective on women's inclination to beauty in Tehran?
3. To what extent cultural capital is effective on women's inclination to beauty in Tehran?
4. To what extent the media consumption is effective on women's inclination to beauty in Tehran?
5. To what extent the community groups involved are effective on women's inclination to beauty in Tehran?
6. What are the rankings of the role of each socio-cultural factor on women's inclination to beauty in Tehran?

4. METHODOLOGY

The design of this study is a descriptive survey. The main population of this study includes all women and girls between 15 and 64 years living in the north (districts 1 and 2) and the south (districts 19 and 20) of Tehran in 2014. According to Iranian statistics office, the population of studied area was a total of 833414 persons based on housing census in 2011. In this study, multi-stage cluster sampling was used. In the first phase, blocks in each region were identified. In the second stage, units in each residential block were identified and finally in the third stage, researchers directly referred to each unit and randomly selected the sample among women aged 15-64 years were. To determine the number of sample, Cochran's formula was used and the statistical population of 384 people was determined. In both southern and northern districts 192 questionnaires were distributed. In this study, data collection for approving or rejecting the hypothesis of the study was done using field method (i.e., questionnaire). The questionnaire is developed using strategic management surveys collection written by Nanchian et al.; it has three parts, of association letter, general questions and specialized questions.

- A. Association letter: In this letter, besides the research title, the objectives of data collection and friendly request of cooperation are described at the end of questionnaire; and participations are appreciated.
- B. General questions: In this section of the questionnaire 9 demographic questions about general characteristics such as marital status, education level, occupation, monthly income, attention to beauty trends, the importance of appearance and make-up for them, satisfaction with the physical condition, and inclination to beauty, and the time and cost spent for beauty are investigated among women in Tehran, and answers have been used to analyze the data.
- C. Specialized questions: In this section of the questionnaire, 47 questions on the special questions raised are designed based on Likert scale. At the end, there are supplementary questions about recommendations of respondents.

A researcher-built questionnaire tailored to identify and prioritize the socio-cultural factors that influence women's inclination for beauty assessed the ideas of women and girls between 15 and 64-year-old living in Tehran city. The scale comprised of three sections based on Likert scale. For calculating reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was used and the internal consistency of the instrument was found 0.86 based on alpha coefficient. Kolmogorov-Smirnov, independent t-test, ANOVA and Friedman test was run in inferential statistical tests. For the analysis and application of these tests, SPSS v.19 was used. Statistical tests used in this study are as follows.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Descriptive Findings

In this section, respondents' demographic characteristics and parameters of the research are descriptively analyzed and the frequency and percentage criteria were calculated and determined for individual variables.

5.2. The Main Research Question

To what extent the socio-cultural factors are effective on women's inclination to beauty in Tehran?

5.3. 1st Sub-question

To what extent the socio-economic status is effective on women's inclination to beauty in Tehran?

5.4. 2nd Sub-question

To what extent the social acceptance is effective on women's inclination to beauty in Tehran?

5.5. 3rd Sub-question

To what extent cultural capital is effective on women's inclination to beauty in Tehran?

5.6. 4th Sub-Question

To what extent the media consumption is effective on women's inclination to beauty in Tehran?

5.7. 5th Sub-question

To what extent the community groups are effective on women's inclination to beauty in Tehran?

5.8. 6th Sub-question

What are the rankings of the role of each socio-cultural factor on women's inclination to beauty in Tehran?

Table 1: The frequency distribution of respondents based on marital status

Sex	Frequency (%)
Single	2.11 (54.95)
Married	1.3 (26.82)
Total	384 (100)

Table 2: The frequency distribution of respondents based on level of education

Level of education	Frequency (%)
Under diploma	74 (19.27)
Diploma	91 (23.70)
Associated degree	43 (11.20)
Bachelor's	119 (30.99)
Master's	55 (1.32)
PhD	2 (0.52)
Total	384 (100.0)

Table 3: Summarizes the results of the independent t-test of sociocultural factors impact on inclination to beauty in the north and south of Tehran

Variables	Tehran districts	n	Mean±SD	T	Df	Significant
Socio-economic status	North	192	199±42	46.52	382	0.001
	South	192	150±36			
Social acceptance	North	192	172±41	57.81	382	0.04
	South	192	161±37			
Cultural capitals	North	192	186±52	39.67	382	0.045
	South	192	148±67			
Effective media consumption	North	192	172±49	49.48	382	0.039
	South	192	153±58			
Social groups	North	192	183±61	53.28	382	0.026
	South	192	164±44			

SD: Standard deviation

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The information in Table 1 shows that 54.95% of respondents were single and 26.82% of them were married. This might be indicative of life of single women in Tehran.

The information in Table 2 shows that more than 57.3% of respondents have academic education that is indicative of high level of education among women in capital.

The information in Table 3 shows that socio-cultural factors and the significance level observed in independent t-test in both north and south of Tehran has been significant for all research questions at the level of $P < 0.05$. The results of this study indicate a significant level of social factors (socio-economic status, social acceptance) and cultural factors (cultural capital, social media consumption, community groups) in the tendency for women's aesthetic inclination.

The information in Table 4 shows that while socio-economic status is influenced by various factors, such as social class, lifestyle, public evaluation, women's social assessment criteria and indicators, promotion of social prestige, economic status, parents occupational status and place of residence of the respondents of this research is very important in inclination to beauty trends. This is consistent with the results of Kabiri and Ghorban, (2013) about a positive and significant relationship between the socio-economic statuses with a focus on young girls tendency to use cosmetics. Therefore, it can be said the role of socio-economic factors in women's inclination to beauty in Tehran is more than average.

The information in Table 5 shows that social acceptance is an important factor of behavioral analysis and evaluation. We can say that confidence, conformity with social demands (conformity), and gaining access to various social opportunities (marriage, employment, etc.) compatibility with social norms, attitudes in favor of women's rights movements (feminism), adaptation to stereotypes influenced by the social environment (fashion), mental disorders (depression, anxiety, deformation fear, etc.) and feeling capable to achieve success respondents view are the important factors in inclination to aesthetics. Therefore, it can be said the role of social acceptance in women's inclination to beauty in Tehran is more than average.

The information in Table 6 shows that hegemony and perfectionism, change and diversity, appearance and body dissatisfaction, gender stereotypes (the need for gentleness and beauty for women), the ideal mental image, alienation, consumerism, lack of attention to religious beliefs, patterns of family life (education, nutrition, affection, etc.) and the lack of skills necessary for success in life were the important factors in women's inclination to beauty in this study; this finding confirms the results reported by Kabiri and Ghorban (2013) about a positive and significant relationship between media consumption with a focus on young girls' use of cosmetics. Therefore, the role of media consumption in women's inclination to beauty in Tehran is more than average.

The information in Table 7 shows the results of this study suggest that advertising "beauty" in satellite channels, modeling of stars (film actors, sports heroes, fashion models, etc.) Internet advertising, content of social networks, magazines propaganda,

Table 4: The mean score of socio-economic status on women's inclination to beauty

Variable	n	Mean±SD	T	Df	Significant
Socio-economic status	384	3.172±0.58	56.439	382	0.000

SD: Standard deviation

Table 5: The mean score of social acceptance on women's inclination to beauty

Variable	n	Mean±SD	t	Df	Significant
Social acceptance	384	3.075±0.78	86.63	382	0.000

SD: Standard deviation

Table 6: The mean score of cultural capital is effective on women's inclination to beauty

Variable	n	Mean±SD	t	Df	Significant
Cultural capital	384	4.243±0.59	40.881	382	0.000

SD: Standard deviation

Table 7: The mean score of media consumption on women's inclination to beauty

Variable	n	Mean±SD	T	Df	Significant
Social acceptance	384	3.436±0.87	36.40	382	0.000

SD: Standard deviation

Table 8: The mean score of community groups on women's inclination to beauty

Variable	n	Mean±SD	T	Df	Significant
Community groups	384	3.688±0.76	31.881	382	0.000

SD: Standard deviation

Table 9: The summary of Freidman test on prioritization of socio-cultural factors in women's inclination to beauty

Variables	n	Variables ranking	Mean scores' ranking	Df	χ^2	Significant
Social acceptance	384	1	3.10	5	265.75	0.000
Socio-economic status	384	2	2.85			
Effective media consumption	384	3	2.16			
Social communities	384	4	1.89			
Cultural capitals	384	5	1.77			

brochures, newspapers, journals, films and television series were the important factors in the view of respondents on inclination to beauty. It can be said there is a significant relationship between media consumption and inclination to beauty among women living in the north and south of Tehran; this finding is consistent with the results of "Balali and Afshar" (2014) on the role of media in import and consumption of beauty culture to Iran and also study by Kabiri and Ghorban (2013) on the meaningful and positive relationship between media use and the inclination to beauty. Therefore, it can be said the role of social groups in women's inclination to beauty in Tehran is more than average.

The information in Table 8 shows that humiliating behavior (by family, partner, relatives, colleagues, friends, etc.) envy and rivalry (family, partner, relatives, colleagues, friends, etc.) show-off and attract the opposite sex, being confirmed (spouse, friend, etc.) social communities temptation and persuasion (family, relatives, colleagues, friends, etc.) feeling accepted in peer group, pressure and political flow, job positions (type, level, level of responsibility, etc.) common public spaces for women (parties, festivals, restaurants, etc.) acceptance among social groups (family, relatives, colleagues, friends, etc.) were the important factors in the view of respondents on inclination to beauty. It can be said there is a significant relationship between social communities and inclination to beauty among women living in the north and south of Tehran.

The information in Table 9 shows that in respondents' perspective, socio-economic status, media consumption, social groups and cultural capital have the most to least effective role on the women's inclination to beauty in Tehran, respectively.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Considering the effect of prevalence of consumerism culture on inclination to beauty among respondents, it is recommended to develop and administer a set of effective programs such as correct consumption through formal education such as schools for children, as well as through informal mediums for the adults such as mass media.
2. With regard to the impact of ignoring the religious beliefs on the extreme tendency to beauty, it is recommended to social authorities to pay attention to the development and spread of culture and religious teachings and beliefs with proper planning and targeted use of all capacities and capabilities, in order to fulfill a religion-oriented society based on Islamic lifestyle.
3. Due to the high negative impact of "living with family" on the extreme inclination toward beauty among women, it is recommended to Social Affairs administrators to implement policies to strengthen families and promote family life.

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