





## Original Article

# The role of intergenerational family in family functions and cultural values in Aligudarz, Iran in 2022

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## Abstract

**Background:** Based on diversified intergenerational living in urban Iran, this study was conducted to determine the role of intergenerational family in family functions and cultural values in Aligudarz.

**Methods:** This study was analytical cross-sectional based on questionnaire. The population were included over 18 years of age in Aligudarz, 376 people were selected as a sample using Cochran sampling by simple random sampling method. Library and survey methods were used to collect data. One-way analysis of variance and Pearson correlation tests were used to test the hypotheses.

**Results:** Elderly people have better family functions than others ( $P=0.011$ ) and adhere more to cultural values. Elderly people have more management in family crises with  $f$  value of 3.140 ( $p=0.019$ ). The correlation coefficient between family cohesion and family functions is 0.152 with a direct correlation ( $P=0.003$ ). As the level of family cohesion increases, family functions also increase. There is a direct correlation between kinship relations and family functions ( $P=0.777$ ,  $-0.015$ ). There is no relationship between the level of kinship and family functioning.

**Conclusion:** It is possible to improve the current status given the level of adherence to cultural values, crisis management, and family cohesion, Kinship relationships among different generations, and the relationship between the variables of adherence to cultural values, crisis management and cohesion, and family functions.

**Keywords:** Family Characteristics; Family Structure; Social Cohesion; Social Values.

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## Introduction

Intergenerational programming lowers issues of social isolation and loneliness by allowing different generations to come together, learn from one another and form new friendships. The relationships formed between generations also improves communities by combating negative stereotypes and ageism. Family is known as the first social unit. Recognizing the significance and effects of its functions has attracted the attention of various experts.

Several definitions of family have been presented. Its significance has been emphasized in various personal, social, etc. fields. Different functions have also been proposed for it. It will be very simplistic to introduce only one or two functions for it. A society in the transition stage is more prepared to create social gaps, including generational differences. Based on Iran's social and historical literature, Iran's society

faces social, political, economic, and cultural issues in its historical transition (1).

The current approaches to generational relations have diverse dimensions. The social, political, economic, cultural, epistemological, etc. gaps in society can be depicted as the gap between tradition and modernity, government and people, rich and the poor, dominant discourse and the requirements of the time, and the young generation and the previous generation's demands (2). The family has different functions. These functions have forced scientists and sociologists to present different classifications. In summary, we can refer to reproduction, protection and socialization, adjustment of sexual relations, affection, and companionship (3).

A generation refers to a group of people who started or ended a stage of life together, whether they are relatives or not. In this regard, an effort is made to explain the behavior of the generation members based on the conditions of their time. For this reason, we talk about the lost generation, the post-war generation, and others like them (4).

Demographic phenomena such as migration, succession, population movements from the village to the city, or international migrations have resulted in accepting new patterns and lifestyles. They have also given a new form to people's behavior. Accelerated social transformations have disrupted the process of transferring culture from one generation to another or the process of socialization. They have also created a difference in experience and culture between the two generations (5).

The intergenerational-effect literature addresses the question how an intervention that changes parental income or education causally affects their children's outcome. The sibling-correlation approach estimates the share of total inequality that is attributed to factors shared by siblings (6).

Intergenerational transmission refers to the transfer of individual abilities, traits, behaviors, and outcomes from parents to their children. Economists have largely focused on the intergenerational transmission of educational attainment, earnings and income, wealth, fertility decisions, and welfare receipt.

Given the importance intergenerational effect on family functions, the present study was conducted for the intergenerational studying of family functions in Aligudarz. the main aim of this study was to compare three generations regarding the power structure in the family and their family functions.

## **Methods**

### *Method of study*

This study was analytical cross-sectional based on questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha was used to collect data from the questionnaire and to measure the reliability and validity of the items, in addition to formal consensus and referring to experts' opinions.

### *Study population*

sample of study was all people over 18 years old living in Aligudarz city. The number of people living in Aligudarz was 90799 ( $N = 90799$ ) and in order to determine the sample size, the Cochran formula for the unlimited population was used. Based on the sampling table of Cochran, the number of 376 people was determined as the sample size. Method of sample selection was random sampling method. The inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study included the following: being over 18 years old and a resident of Aligudarz city. Written and oral informed consent was obtained from all selected study samples.

### *Data collection*

Library and survey methods were used to data collection. To select samples from different areas of the city, 10 blocks from areas 1 and 2 and 14 blocks from area 3

were selected (due to the larger population). Then 6 samples were selected from each block using systematic random sampling method.

### Statistical analysis

SPSS software was used for data analysis, and in addition to descriptive statistics, one-way analysis of variance and Pearson's correlation test were used.

## Results

The study aim was evaluating the intergenerational effect on family functions. Table 1 presents the demographic information of the respondents. Most respondents (63.3%) were male and 35.4% of the respondents were female.

Most respondents (27.4%) were in the age group of 46 to 55 years, and the lowest of them (12.8%) were in the age group of 18 to 25 years. Most respondents (34.8%) had a bachelor's degree and the lowest of them (0.5%) had a Ph.D degree. Most people (60.6%) were employed and the lowest of them (0.4%) were unemployed. Most people (45.5%) were ordinary employees, and the lowest of them (1.6%) were brokers and vendors.

Table 2 shows the relationship between generation and family functions and other variables. *The relationship between generation and family functions*

A one-way analysis of variance test was used to investigate the differences between different generations regarding family functions. The calculations show that the f-value is 3.012 with a significant level of 0.011 (at an error level smaller than 0.05 and a confidence level of 95). Thus, there is a difference between different generations and family functions. Based on the results, older people have more family functions.

### *The relationship between generation and the level of adherence to cultural values*

A one-way analysis of variance test was used to examine the differences among

Table 1. Frequency and relative distributions of respondents' demographic characteristics

Variable	Group	No.	%
Gender	Male	238	63.3
	Female	133	35.4
	Unanswered	5	1.3
Age group	18 to 25 years old	48	12.8
	26 to 35 years old	59	15.7
	36 to 45 years old	86	22.9
	46 to 55 years old	103	27.4
	56 to 86 years old	71	18.9
	Unanswered	9	2.4
Education	Under diploma	65	17.3
	Diploma	74	19.7
	Associate Degree	42	11.2
	bachelor	131	34.8
	Master's degree	59	15.7
	Ph.D.	2	0.5
	Unanswered	3	0.8
Employment status	employed	228	60.6
	unemployed	15	4.0
	housewife	41	10.9
	student	32	8.5
	Retired	40	10.6
	disabled	13	3.5
	other	3	0.8
	Unanswered	4	1.1
Employment type	High-rank employee	23	6.1
	Moderate-rank employee	28	7.4
	Ordinary employee	171	45.5
	independent worker	20	5.3
	Farmer	20	5.3
	Skilled laborer	19	5.1
	Daily laborer	25	6.6
	Broker and vendor	6	1.6
	Unanswered	64	17.0

different generations regarding adherence to cultural values. The calculations show that the f-value is 3.269 with a significant level of 0.039 (at an error level of less than 0.05 and a confidence level of 0.95). Therefore, there is a difference between different generations and the level of adherence to cultural values. Based on the results, older people have higher adherence to cultural values ( $p < 0.05$ ).

*The relationship between generation and the level of family crisis management*

A one-way analysis of variance test was used to investigate the differences between different generations regarding the level of family crisis management. The calculations show that the f-value is 3.140 with a significant level of 0.019 (at an error level of less than 0.05 and a confidence level of 0.95). Thus, the generations are different regarding family crisis management. Based on the results, older people have more family crisis management ( $p < 0.05$ ).

*The relationship between generation and the family cohesion level*

One-way analysis of variance test was used to investigate the differences between different generations regarding family crisis management level. The calculations show that the f-value is 3.140 with a significant level of 0.019 (at an error level of less than 0.05 and a confidence level of 0.95). Thus, the generations are different regarding family crisis management. According to the results of averages, people who are old have more management in family crises ( $p < 0.05$ ).

*The relationship between generation and the family cohesion level*

A one-way analysis of variance test was used to investigate the differences between different generations regarding family cohesion. The calculations show that the f-value is 2.169 with a significant level of 0.042 (at an error level of less than 0.05 and a confidence level of 0.95). Thus, the generations are different regarding family cohesion. Based on the results, older people have a higher family cohesion level ( $p < 0.05$ ).

*The relationship between generation and degree of Kinship relationships*

A one-way analysis of variance test was used to investigate the differences between different generations regarding the degree of Kinship relationships. The calculations show that the f-value is 3.039 with a

significant level of 0.049 (at an error level of less than 0.05 and a confidence level of 0.95). Thus, the generations are different regarding the degree of Kinship relationships. Based on the results, younger people have more Kinship relationships ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 3 shows the analysis of variables and social functions.

*The relationship between adherence to cultural values and family functions*

The results of the Pearson correlation test show that the correlation coefficient between adherence to cultural values and family functions is 0.106. This correlation is direct (positive) with a significant level of 0.039 (with an error level of less than 0.5 and a confidence level of 0.95). Hence, there is a relationship between the level of adherence to cultural values and family functions. As the level of adherence to cultural values increases, the level of family functions also increases. In other words, with increasing the level of adherence to cultural values, the level of family emotional, problem-solving, and conflict-resolving functions also increase ( $p < 0.05$ ).

*The relationship between the level of family crisis management and family functions*

Pearson correlation test shows that the correlation coefficient between family crisis management and family functions is 0.323. This correlation is direct (positive) with a significant level of 0.000 (at an error level of less than 0.01 and a confidence level of 0.99). Therefore, there is a relationship between the level of family crisis management and family functions. As family crisis management increases, the level of family functions also increases ( $p < 0.05$ ).

*The relationship between the level of family cohesion and family functions*

Pearson correlation test shows that the correlation coefficient between the level of family cohesion and family functions is 0.152. This correlation is direct (positive)

Table 2. The relationship between generation and other social variables

Relations	Generation	N	Mean	f-value	Sig
family functions	Young	119	53.9076	3.012	0.011
	Middle-aged	136	54.2059		
	Old	112	54.2054		
	Total	367	53.6142		
cultural values	Generation	N	Mean	3.269	0.039
	Young	119	29.5462		
	Middle-aged	136	29.5588		
	Old	112	38.8036		
family crisis management level	Generation	N	Mean	3.140	0.019
	Young	119	27.7647		
	Middle-aged	136	28.5000		
	Old	112	30.1536		
family cohesion level	Generation	N	Mean	2.169	0.042
	Young	119	16.8571		
	Middle-aged	136	17.3456		
	Old	112	18.5210		
level of Kinship relationships	Generation	N	Mean	3.039	0.049
	Young	119	24.2773		
	Middle-aged	136	21.9485		
	Old	112	22.6250		
	Generation	N	Mean		
	Young	119	24.2773		
	Middle-aged	136	21.9485		
	Old	112	22.6250		
	Generation	N	Mean		
	Young	119	24.2773		
	Middle-aged	136	21.9485		
	Old	112	22.6250		

with a significant level of 0.003 (at an error level of less than 0.01 and a confidence level of 0.99). Therefore, there is a relationship between the level of family cohesion and family functions. With increasing the level of family cohesion, the level of family functions also increases ( $p < 0.05$ ).

#### *The relationship between the degree of Kinship relationships and family functions*

Pearson correlation test shows that the correlation coefficient between the level of Kinship relationships and family functions is -0.015. This correlation is a direct correlation with a significant level of 0.777 (at an error level of more than 0.05). Therefore, there is no relationship between

the level of Kinship relationships and family functions ( $p < 0.05$ ).

#### **Discussion**

This study was conducted with the aim of identifying and explaining the study of generation effect on family functions in Aliguderz city. The results indicate a difference between different generations and family functions. Based on the results, older people have more family functions.

There is a difference between the generations and the level of adherence to cultural values. Based on the results, older people have higher adherence to cultural values. The study by Gharib et al., showed that the third type is called the medium



Table 3. The relationship between variables and social functions by Pearson correlation test

<b>The relationship between the level of adherence to cultural values and family functions</b>				
The level of adherence to cultural values	Level of family functions			
	N	(Pearson)	Sig	Interpretation
	376	0.106 (0.101-0.11)	0.039	sig
<b>The relationship between the level of family crisis management and family functions</b>				
The level of family crisis management	Level of family functions			
	N	(Pearson)	Sig	Interpretation
	0.376	0.323 (0.303-0.345)	0.000	sig
<b>The relationship between the level of family cohesion and family functions</b>				
The level of family cohesion	Level of family functions			
	N	(Pearson)	Sig	Interpretation
	376	0.152 (0.112-0.178)	0.003	sig
<b>The relationship between the degree of Kinship relationships and family functions</b>				
The degree of Kinship relationships	Level of family functions			
	N	(Pearson)	Sig	Interpretation
	376	-0.015 (-0.007- -0.028)	0.777	No sig

power type, in which the husband and wife have power in different areas or make decisions jointly (6). Also, Dweck & Leggett, investigated the changes in people's views during three decades using the data of the National Opinion Research Center in his work entitled. The results revealed that today's youth are less interested in reading newspapers, going to church, and belonging to a particular religion or belief. Young people, compared to adults, are generally more pessimistic toward society and people (7).

In a doctoral dissertation, Qudsi, found that there are some value similarities, especially in the values related to social and national levels such as order, security, cooperation, and development among the three generations. However, he found a significant difference between the third (young) and the second (middle-aged) generations regarding a significant number of values and orientations such as values related to belief and religious adherence, competition, foresight, tolerance, positive orientation towards others, as well as

individualistic value orientation and a set of instrumental values (ways to reach value goals) (8). According to Mirsamiei & Ebrahimighavam, a specific type of capital or resources is considered by each field. For example, cultural capital or knowledge and competence in the academic field are considered more valuable than economics and are considered key factors in gaining superiority. Participants in a social field, like actors in a game, are placed in different positions. However, according to Bourdieu, the actions in a field are not solely the mechanical reflection of established positions but are the product of various contrasting plans (9).

There is a difference between different generations regarding the level of family crisis management. Based on the results, older people have more family crisis management. There is a difference between different generations regarding the level of family cohesion. Based on the results, older people have more family cohesion. There is a difference between different generations regarding the degree of Kinship

relationships. Based on the results, young people have more Kinship relationships. Family acts as a safety valve for the person so he can feel peace of mind and escape from the pressure and tensions of the outside world, and feel safe. The family creates a warm, loving, and stable environment for the person where adults can be themselves and even behave like children. Also, children's socialization gives parents a sense of strength and responsibility (10). According to Shelski's theory, the level of women's presence in society and their work outside the home vary from one generation to another. It indicates that the levels of family crisis management have been different among different generations (11).

There is a relationship between adherence to cultural values and family functions. With increasing the level of adherence to cultural values, the level of family functions increases. In other words, with increasing the level of adherence to cultural values, the level of family emotional, problem-solving, and conflict-resolving functions also increase. There is a relationship between the level of family crisis management and family functions. With increasing family crisis management, family functions also increase. There is a relationship between the level of family cohesion and family functions. With increasing family cohesion, family functions also increase. There is no relationship between the level of Kinship relationships and family functions. The study by Riahi et al., showed that regarding the religiosity variable, there is no difference between the younger and the older generations in the basic foundations of religion. The results indicate a high level of religiosity in both age groups in this dimension. Regarding social values, the difference between generations indicates the young generation's tendency toward transmaterial values such as freedom of speech. However, older people have a higher tendency toward material values such as life and financial security. However, both age groups' tendency toward

different values, such as giving importance to security among the young age group or obeying the law among the older people indicates that the values of the two groups based on Inglehart's triple classification of values (transmaterial, material, and eclectic) are more eclectic rather than material or transmaterial. Based on the statistical tests, the mean religiosity score of the young generation is lower than that of the older ones. However, the young generation shows a greater tendency toward transmaterial values (12). Based on the mentioned types of capital, the actors are also distributed in different fields in three dimensions. In the first dimension, they are distributed based on the total capital they have. In the second dimension, they are distributed based on their capital structure (Their share of different types of capital separately). In the third dimension, they are distributed based on the estimation of the total capital and their capital structure over time. However, different types of capital can be turned into each other and exchanged. For example, a person who has cultural capital can turn it into social or economic capital like studying to get credit instead of studying to get a job. In other words, the mental structure of each person and his or her status in different fields depends on his or her benefit from all kinds of capital (13).

It can be stated that the family functions, the level of adherence to cultural values, the level of family crisis management, the level of family cohesion, and the level of Kinship relationships are different among different generations. There is a relationship between the level of adherence to cultural values, the level of family crisis management, the level of family cohesion, and the variable of family functions. With increasing these variables, the level of family functions (including the family's emotional, problem-solving, and conflict-resolving functions) also increases. The emergence of a social generation depends on social change and its speed. When changes are slow and rare, a separate and new generation does not

appear. However, a new generation appears when many fast events occur somewhere. An age group is differentiated based on historical and social awareness (14). The results of the present study are in line with the Qudsi, study entitled " Sociological study of the relationship between social support and depression" (8). They are also in line with the Mehrabizade Honarmand et al., study entitled " A Comparative Study on the Mental Health of the Parents of Trainable Mentally Retarded and Healthy 7 to 19 Year - Old Children" (15). They are also consistent with the Fatahinia, study entitled " Comparison of personality traits, perfectionism and alexia in patients with irritable bowel syndrome referring to Ahvaz clinics and healthy people with mental health control" (16), and Hashemi Nazari et al., study entitled " A survey of mental health among fire department employees by GHQ-28 questionnaire in 2005, Tehran-Iran" (17).

### ***Recommendations***

The results revealed that the older generation has a higher adherence to cultural values than other generations. Young and middle-aged people's adherence to cultural values can be increased by holding programs and classes.

It is recommended to take measures to facilitate social actions and remove all political, cultural, social, and economic barriers in any kind of productive and positive social activism, which is free from any kind of hopelessness, self-alienation, and social indifference, which weaken adherence to values. According to the results, people with higher family cohesion have higher family crisis management. It is recommended to hold classes on the ritual of living together and the ways of following the rules of life to increase family cohesion. Based on the results, young people have more Kinship relationships by creating a culture in the field of increasing family visits and reducing luxury lifestyles at parties.

### ***Conclusion***

The present study revealed that the variables of family functions, the horizontality of the power structure in the family, the level of religious interests, the level of adherence to cultural values, the level of media consumption, the level of social trust, the level of family crisis management, and the level of family cohesion, the level of social justice, and the level of Kinship relationships are different among different generations. There is an association between the variables of the level of horizontality of the power structure in the family, the level of adherence to cultural values, the level of family crisis management, the level of family cohesion, and family functions. With increasing these variables, family functions (including the family's emotional, problem-solving problems, and conflict-resolving functions) also increase. Social life is an unavoidable necessity for humans. Experts believe that the family is the most crucial institution that paves the way for socialization. Therefore, it is necessary to know it from different perspectives. Family, as a complex organization with different theoretical and operational functions, is the most crucial factor in increasing the productivity rate. Therefore, the first step in this regard is modifying and recognizing the behavioral concepts in the family and taking practical steps to improve the quality of the family's function to increase productivity. The effective factors in the success and prosperity of the family have high value and significance. This success depends on acquiring family skills. The lack of necessary skills to live together is one factor that causes family failure. To have a successful family, like other things in life, we need to acquire some skills. Given the significance of family in human life, religious leaders have expressed valuable content. Hadiths are a reliable source for finding the necessary information about family and marital life skills.



### Authors' contribution

Mohsen Esmaeili and Omid Ali Ahmadi developed the study concept and design. Ali Roshanaei acquired the data. Mohammad Hossein Asadi Davoodabad and Mohsen Esmaeili analyzed and interpreted the data, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. All authors contributed to the intellectual content, manuscript editing and read and approved the final manuscript.

### Informed consent

Questionnaires were filled with the participants' satisfaction and written consent was obtained from the participants in this study.

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### Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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