A Survey Factors of Social Alienation among Students of Islamic Azad University of Shoushtar 2012

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ABSTRACT

Human life in society is a function of several factors and its quality among various styles is thinking worthy. Definitely student life in Iran has said it has its own style. Separation from family and join them together with the stresses of student life style is one of their alienation. This study aimed to investigate the effect of social self-alienation among students of Islamic Azad University branch of Shoushtar with the survey method done in 2012. The results were analyzed using SPSS. The results of the present study also shows a significant relationship between the variables of social distance with social institutions, the media, socio - economic, parental age, gender and level of self-discipline and social alienation.

KEYWORDS: social alienation, social distance, social institutions, family, university, policy.

INTRODUCTION

Although the word alienation is an indicator and intendant word in the history of social thought, so, scientists have different views in its history and antiquity. Some scientists such as Adrono, Etzioni, Laks, and Mills believe that alienation belongs merely to industrialized and supra- industrialized societies. Etzioni believes that industrialized society is a stereotype of an alienated society. Laks believes that alienation is a modern and newfangled disease, which was unknown by the early of 19th century. Mills states that alienation is the most important phenomenon and the main theme of the modern society. Some other scientists including Fryvtr, Meszaros, Marcus, Papnhym, and Kaufman do not consider it as an innovation and new word, but consider it as a historical and ancient phenomenon. According to these scientists, the origins of alienation go back to the first periods of the poetic history [1]

Self-alienation is so vast that it seems it has been a component of nature of human morality at the beginning of the creation. An unusual phenomenon is lustered usual when it is publicized, thus anomaly is emerged. Self-alienation has been one of the problems of all eras of history. Human cannot escape from his nature, and if create a social organization that is not in accord with necessities of his nature, it will prevent him to play his role as an independent and wisdom creature. Its results are not anything, but mental and physical disasters. Some issues such as insecurity in moral basics, disintegration of emotional ties, isolation, increase in male-use of drugs, alcoholism, social deviations, feeling inefficacy, increase in committing suicides, and enhancement of suffering from mental diseases are humanity issues typically related to self-alienation and the effects of its creation [2]. Thus, paying attention to self-alienation and its dimensions as one of the social phenomena, which there exist in most cultures as a social problem is an important and inevitable issue.

Significance of the research

1. The young and college students form a large stratum of society, which are exposed of mental and social damages due to the characteristics and features of this era. Sensitivity, pride, megalomania, and grandiloquence in youth hood periods are more than other periods. These characteristics have created appropriate fields for self-alienations of the young and college students. If the social and environmental situations create problems and difficulties for the young, the probability of tendency towards alienations will increase among the young. The situation for tendency towards self-alienating, alienation from other, and alienation from the values and norms of society among the young would be increased, if the organizations of a society were not able to apply appropriately their functions for fulfilling essential needs of the young. Since Iranian society is a young one,
fulfilling educational, cultural, environmental, economic, and social needs are important. Any disorderliness in this process will lead to self-alienation in this stratum. Meanwhile, there exist some problems of joblessness, marriage, education, etc. for the young leading to hurting the young if they are not controlled. Thus, an extend study should be performed to identify problems and barriers of the young stratum.

2. one of the results of global evolutions is the evolution in human thoughts towards self and environment. This evolution among the open-minded and educated stratum is more than the commonality. Some of these people direct this evolution towards a positive direction, which lead their thoughts towards ascendency. Some others direct the evolution towards negative points causing destruction of the spiritual structures of these individuals. Hereon, a social issue resulted from the negative consequences of the evolution is emerged, by which some people willingly or unwillingly will be effected. Passing tradition towards modern world and modernism, collapsing the prevailing structures of society, and substituting new structures have resulted in escalation and variation of self-alienation and lack of self-fertility among the young. Thus, the young will suffer from hopelessness, anomaly, nihilism, and quandary, which are resulted from the negative consequences of the evolution.

Regarding to the above, a study about identifying the roots of self-alienation and the influential factors should be performed among college students. Thus, the importance of this study is that the hurtful dimensions of self-alienation can be reduced and removed by reviewing and surveying self-alienation. The importance of such researches is emerged through studying the above phenomenon. Some degrees of self-alienation are originated from the necessity of creating a humanity society. However, human being creates some unnecessary factors of self-alienation. Thus, a more appropriate situation of human environment can be provided for people if these factors are identified and surveyed.

Theoretical basics

Defining alienation through perspective of Hegel

In Hegelian idealism, alienation means to objectify everlasting thought in sensual world by imaging infinite soul in finite world and human awareness represents this issue. Not only has it represented awareness of an individual or all people in the same time, but also has represented awareness of all people all over the time.

Thus, according to Marx, Hegel wishes to solve the problem of alienation in a philosophical way. This means that alienation, according to Hegel is a state of awareness and removing it is another state of awareness should be substituted by the previous state. This is the same absolute knowledge that accords thought to self [3].

Auguste Conte

According to Conte, the issue of alienation is noted to society and social structure. Conte states that alienation forms consist of agitation, disorderliness, stagnancy, and dormancy. It can be proved that Conte knows the causes of alienation in lack of evolution in human cognition as well as lack of awareness and wisdom towards the world facts [4].

Karl Marx

Marx took the concept of alienation from Hegel and Foerback and used it in a more extend meaning. According to his definitions, alienation is a state that person, regarding to the situation- religious, economic, and political situations- has no control over self. This state continues to the time that he is behaved as an object and in fact, he sacrifices being for having. In Marx’s system, alienation is a state that person’s behavior becomes an alienated power, and in spite of being at his control, it overrules the person [5].

The concept of Marx’s alienation has four major aspects:
A- Human has been alienated from nature.
B- Human has been alienated from self (his activities).
C- human has been alienated from “typical existence” of self (from his existence as a human kind).
D- Human has been alienated from human (from other humans) [6].

Georg Simmel

Simmel deals with contrast approach through functional view in defining alienation. According to him, the historical beginning of alienation is when humanity powers are placed in the most intuitive situation. Thus, creativity and significance is eliminated in such situations [7].

Simmel believes that living in metropolises that encourage him towards alienation and impose competition, distribution of duties, monotony of relationships, specialization, individualism, acceptance of objective soul, and rejection of subjective soul on person are the major factors of quandary of the modern humans [8].

Max Weber

Weber as Marx has found the generative forces of alienation in the West societies. However, unlike Marx, Weber insists on political and social forces rather than economic situations and conditions of the society. According to Weber, modern society of the West is composed of co-acting of the forces such as democracy and bureaucracy and capitalism. All these cases form the force of “rationalization” and are considered as it components. These are interrelated factors helping to development of each other. Democracy and bureaucracy, although are counter-posed to each other, the dialectic relationships among them help to their development and
stability. Weber strongly believes that bureaucracy develops the way of rationality in life and is a process that finally creates some concerns about the future and alienation of human [9].

**Claude Fischer**

Claude Fischer as one of the sociologists of urban sociology states the theory of alienation due to urban sociology. He is the main theorist of the theory of “sub-culture” in urban sociology.

According to Fischer, self-alienation is feeling of separation from society that human is its member. This state does not merely belong to the citizens; it also there exists among villagers. He has studied three kinds of self-alienation including:

1. Powerlessness
2. Normlessness
3. Social isolation.

**Robert C. Merton**

Robert C. Merton was one of the sociologists of functional-structural school who tried to identify the ways in that anomalous, deviated, and alienated behavior is typically created from social structure.

Merton consider all forms of behavioral disorders such as deviation, anomaly, and alienation neither as a mental damage issue nor as an individual issue, but considers it as a social issue raised from the structure of society. According to Merton, as an anomalous and deviated behavior is arisen from the structure of society, social comparative and adaptive behavior will be raised from such a structure [10].

Merton like Durkheim deals with the analysis of disintegration and lack of relationship between individual and social structure by helping from the concept of anomy.

**Herbert Marcuse**

Herbert Marcuse goes back to the opinion of Hegel in defining alienation, especially in the book “One Dimensional Man”. According to him, in such situation, human beings know their salvation in more purchases and consumptions, which result in more working and finally create a state of self-alienation in society leading to one-dimensioned man. High production and consumption has made human goods-dependent. This is a characteristic of technologic and modern capitalist society, especially mass media, which has turned human into goods. According to Marcuse, optional/free selection among various kinds of goods and services, etc. supports self-alienation. Self-alienation is a general concept to refer to intellectual and physical separation of people from each other and real separation from activity and society [10].

**Jurgen Habermas**

According to Habermas, alienation of modern human is resulted from scientific and technical rationality system in todays’ industrialized societies. He also states that, in todays’ industrialized societies, people are deprived of political and economic power and are increasingly alienated from their interests. Habermas also refers to mental pain in reducing general wisdom to technical wisdom. According to him, reducing general wisdom to technical wisdom is a kind of deprivation from feeling, which is the same disease, raised from suppression in a field of mental life [4].

**Pierre Bourdieu**

Bourdieu considers the current process in universities both as functional and un-functional processes. He mentions the mechanisms of alienation by universities as following:

1. Regardless to the preferences and styles of actors, university has turned towards equalization and leads to eliminating original differences among the actors through uniformed banality. Thus, college students are not self-conscious choosers and identifiers to be able to act based on reasons, but they act due to the reason of the action.
2. Universities give priority to social and cultural reproduction, through which deal with suppression and contrasting to the movements and the changes derived of modern and different subjective structures of the students. Specialized trainings on the one hand are presented for training free impudent persons in the form of young wolves.
3. Universities that should choose the most expert forces due to individual talents and capabilities in meritocracy have turned into a system that leads to governmental aristocracy by establishing latent connection between educational talents and class and hereditary characteristics [5].

**Research hypothesis:**

- As the social distance between individuals and social institutions increases (the family, academia and politics) the level of alienation is also increased.
- There is a significant relationship between use of the local media and social alienation.
- As the use of foreign media increase, social alienation is increased.
- There is a significant relationship between socio-economic base of parents (income, occupational status and income) of individuals and their social alienation.
- There is a significant relationship between age and social alienation.
- There is a significant relationship between gender and social alienation.
- There is a significant relationship between educational field and social alienation.

**Population and Sample Population**

Populations: all the students of Islamic Azad University, Shoushtar Branch.

According to Cochran formula, 384 represent the population - were selected as samples. Sampling method is "cluster sampling". For cluster sampling in the campus, the contribution of each school in terms of having distinct groups of 380, questionnaires were completed by the respondents. Analysis of data was done using statistical software SPSS and AMOS and for testing hypotheses, statistical tests appropriate for each hypothesis was used. To ensure sufficient funds for counseling and enjoying the views of teachers and test, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine reliability.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The present study is based on data collected and analyzed is a quantitative research, and of the kind of dealing with and entering to the problem is a field study. A questionnaire was used to collect the data required. Prior to the survey, the initial questionnaire was first tested using the results obtained, and the final questionnaire defects were formulated and solved.

**Analytical findings**

The results indicate that the validity of this point is the right tool for the evaluation of research methodology and criteria used for the independent and dependent variables. The statistics indicate that do the models described in the sample are applied to the sample population and the patterns and processes found in the sample of the population or not? In this section, to test variables and hypotheses, bivariate analysis of research is done and by using inferential statistical techniques such as correlation Pearson coefficient and analysis of variance we are to examine the relationship between independent and dependent variables and hypotheses of the study. To test the hypothesis which their variables are measured at the nominal or ordinal level, T-test for comparison of two means and F-test for comparison of more than two means have been used.

**The first hypothesis**
- As the social distance between individuals and social institutions increases (family) the level of alienation is also increased.

Table 1: output statistical analysis of the correlation between person’s social distance with social institutions (the family).Level of alienation(family)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Statistical sample</th>
<th>estimation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r=.163</td>
<td>N=372</td>
<td>sig=.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The significance level is less than 5% (sig=0.002) and positive Pearson correlation coefficients (r=0.163) shows that there is a relationship between social distance and social institutions (the family) and alienation. It means that as the social distance between individuals and social institutions increases (family) the level of alienation is also increased. In other words, the social gap or generation gap among students of Islamic Azad University Branch shoushtar has a positive impact on the level of their social alienation.

**The second hypothesis**
- As the social distance between individuals and social institutions increases (university) the level of alienation is also increased.

Table 2: output statistical analysis of the correlation between person’s social distance with social institutions (university) Level of alienation (university)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Statistical sample</th>
<th>estimation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r=.140</td>
<td>N=372</td>
<td>sig=.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With a significance level of less than 5 percent (sig=0.007) and positive Pearson correlation coefficient (r=0.140) we can conclude that there is a significant relationship between social distance and social institutions (University) and alienation. As the social distance between individuals and social institutions increases (university) the level of alienation is also increased. In other words, the social gap among students of Islamic Azad University, Branch of Shoushtar has a positive effect on the level of their social alienation.

**The third hypothesis**
- As the social distance between individuals and social institutions increases (policy the level of alienation is also increased.

Table 3: output statistical analysis of the correlation between person’s social distance with social institutions (policy) Level of alienation (policy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Statistical sample</th>
<th>estimation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R=.228</td>
<td>N=372</td>
<td>sig=0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With a significance level of less than 5 percent (sig=0.000) and positive Pearson correlation coefficient \((r=0.190)\) we can conclude that there is a significant and reversion relationship between age and social alienation. As the age increases, the rate of social alienation decreases. In other word, the age of students of Islamic Azad university of Shoushtar has a negative impact on social alienation. This result seems logical regarding to the moral and behavioral growth.
The eighth hypothesis
There is a significant relationship between gender and social alienation.

Table 8: Test differences in mean levels of social alienation in shooshtar according to gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance level</th>
<th>T value</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>18.91</td>
<td>97.45</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.79</td>
<td>90.31</td>
<td>241</td>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 shows the mean difference of social alienation according to the samples gender. According to the statistics in this table, the mean score of the hypotheses is different in men and women, so that the mean level of perceived social alienation for men and women is (97/45) and (90/31) respectively, and regarding to the significant level99% at confidence interval (sig = 0/000) significant difference has been observed between them. Therefore, regarding to the value of (T = 4/64) and the significance level, the hypothesis can be accepted. In other words, sex and social alienation at Islamic Azad University are related. Well as the 30 questions posed to social alienation, minimum 30 and maximum 150 of lowest score to highest can be expected for social alienation. So the scores 90, is the average score for the level of social alienation. The higher values of 90 represents for the results of the above table will be higher social alienation. social alienation rate for men (97/45) is higher than average, while the women (90/31) is about average.

The ninth hypothesis
There is a significant relationship between educational field and social alienation.

In this study, groups of academic disciplines in the social sciences, agricultural sciences, accounting, engineering and Persian literature are segregated and because the level of measurement is nominal and also the dependent variable is the distance measured. To test the hypothesis, we used analysis of variance F test.

Table 9: the result of variance analysis between educational field and social alienation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes sources</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Squares mean</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>6210.771</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1552.693</td>
<td>7.854</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>72550.871</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>197.686</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78761.642</td>
<td>371</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To interpret the results of variance analysis test or non-significant difference between the groups of variables, we must act on the basis of F-test of significance. When the F-test significance level was less than 05/0, then assumption of differences between group means is confirmed and the assumption of the same statistical is rejected. This means that at least one of the groups in the mean scores is different from others. In the table above, the value of the Fisher test (f=7/854) at the level of 1% error and sig level of 99% shows that there is a significant difference between mean scores of students of Islamic Azad University of shooshtar with social alienation among different disciplines of study.

CONCLUSION

One of the most important factors in reducing the readiness of people to accept responsibility for socio-economic conditions is their disabilities to control of their own destiny. This problem is seen as alienation. The concept impact on attitudes and their behavior effectively. This situation reduces the ability to control and predict future conditions and relations of rational decision making for achieving growth and excellence and make them passive people. Sense of alienation is being far from the moral values and virtues, and lost the right decisions in life. Melvin Seeman knows social alienation as a sense that everyone in relation to the situation and others, and various forms of protests are defined in five kinds such as feeling powerless, feeling anomaly, feel social isolation, feelings of meaninglessness and a feeling of self-estrangement [11]. Marx defines the essence of alienation as separation of the product or products of human and eventually dominate their creators. He believes that discontinuities represent in the fact that my life devices belong to the other and my desires be non-available wealth of others and more important is that non-human power prevail over everything and everyone [12]. Georg Simmel examines alienation with the people living in the metropolis, individualism, conquering objective spirit over subjective spirit, social isolation, and finally social disenchantment and indicate that in modern society, it is raising special character for each person that contains characteristics and experiences that every human person is distinct from other members of society [13]. Critical school current in the world, coupled with the lack of rationality introduced and mastered and overcome the inherent irrationality. From this respect, culture industry, media… appeared as mass culture and as a non-spontaneous and packed opinion are provided for assembly. The culture in this approach is cause of reducing technical reason of alienation, repression. Dimensions of alienation such as and powerlessness, meaninglessness, anomie, isolation, cultural and self-estrangement are as the social phenomena that in most cultures are known as a social problem, and the problem. Although the first introduction was carried out by Hegel and Marx, but this concept has been defined in different ways which reflects different views of scholars who have studied this concept. In this study, in addition to investigating the theoretical frameworks and perspectives, empirical research into the concept of the Islamic Azad University of shooshtar is examined.
This study also shows a significant relationship between social distance and social institutions (the family) and social alienation at significance level (sig=0.002) and positive Pearson correlation coefficients (r=0.163). The relationship between social distance and social institutions (the University) were observed between the level of social alienation and positive Pearson correlation coefficient (r=0.140) indicating that this hypothesis is confirmed. The person in the relationship between social institutions of society (politics) and social alienation with a significance level of less than 5 percent (sig=0.00) and positive Pearson correlation coefficient (r=0.228) It can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between the individual and social institutions of society (politics) and alienation. As well there is a relationship between the use of local media with positive Pearson correlation coefficient (r=0.228) and social alienation and estrangement between the foreign media and social significance level of less than 5 percent (sig=0.000) with positive Pearson correlation coefficient (r=0.343).

In the survey of relationship between social – economic base and social alienation which parental assessment of the socio - economic base is by order and social alienation variable is at the distance measure, we use F-test or analysis of variance. And because F-test significance level is less than 0.05, respectively, then the hypothesis of group means difference is confirmed and the hypothesis of statistically assimilation is rejected. So the Fisher test at 5% error and 95% confidence interval of the mean difference is significant and shows that social alienation among students of Islamic Azad University of Shooshtar differ at social and economic classes.

In the survey of variables between age and social alienation of students there is a relationship, but regarding to the obtained numbers, the significance level of less than 5 percent (sig=0.000) and negative Pearson correlation coefficients (r=0.190) we can conclude that a significant and inverse relationship exists between age and level of social alienation. As age goes higher, the level of social alienation will be less. The result of this test is consistent with the theory of Savtsol who believes much lower age, greater alienation will be.

To test differences in mean levels of social alienation in terms of gender, the average score of men and women is different in the hypotheses, so that the mean level of perceived social alienation for men and women, respectively (97/45) and (90/31) and the significance level at 99% confidence interval (sig = 0.00) observed no significant difference between them. But the relationship between the degree of accountability and social alienation based on the F-test which is less than 0.05, assumption between group means differences is confirmed and the assumption of statistical assimilation is rejected. This means that at least one of the groups in the mean scores is different from others. The Fisher exact test (f=7.845) at error level of 1% and 99% confidence is significant and shows that the difference between mean scores social alienation of students of Islamic Azad University of Shooshtar differ at academic disciplines. As the research results show all the hypotheses and research has been proven and levels of social alienation is higher than the average.

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