

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Investigating the Effect of Gender Aspect on Virtual Education from the Perspective of University Professors and Students

## دراسة مستوى تأثير العامل الجنسي في التعليم المجازي من خلال رؤية الأساتذة والطلاب المهتمين بين الإعتبار البرنامج الدراسي السري (تحت عنوان العامل الثقافي - الاجتماعي)

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**Background:** According to the situation of education in Iran it is clear that over the years, there has been no successful attempt to identify related challenges and problems to development and implementation of virtual training. In this regard, the effect of this type of training influenced by the role of hidden curriculum of education in the country. Based on this, current study has investigated the effect of gender factor as a social and cultural factor on developing virtual education in Iran.

**Methods:** This study was a qualitative research method and used from grounded theory methodology. In the present research 30 teachers, AM and BM students who experienced virtual training in different Iran universities participated, 15 men and 15 women. The study was targeted sampling and sampling method was available.

**Results:** Interactive issues resulting from the present study predicate that in virtual training there isn't a relationship that cause to marriage, parents' worry about their children and especially girls would be decrease and at last married women and their husbands tend to virtual training. The process issues relate that virtual training can enter a large number of women into the training stage.

**Conclusions:** Family and marriage cause to develop virtual training in Iran and subcultures and adherence to traditions and ethnicities about the education of women should not be an obstacle to the development of virtual education in Iran. But perhaps this factor will cause to develop virtual education.

**Keywords:** Gender, Hidden curricular, Social-cultural factor, Virtual education.

**التصميم والهدف:** من خلال دراهه الوضع العالي في التعليم والتنمية نستنتج أن لم يكن هناك مستوى مطلوب من معرفة العواتير والمسائل المرتبطة في مجال إجراء التعليم المجازي، وهذا الأمر يسبب في بطي في حركة التعليم والتنمية في إيران في العصر الحالي. من جهة أخرى لاحظ أثر تجربة التعليم المجازي و خاصة في مجال تعليم وتنمية النساء في العقد الأخير. وهذا نتطلع إلى مستوى تأثير البرامج الدارسة السرية في مجال التعليم والتنمية في البلاد. عمل هذه الدراسة على تبيين مستوى تأثير العامل الجنسي كونه عامل ثقافي - اجتماعي في مجال تطوير التعليم المجازي في إيران من خلال رؤية الأساتذة والطلاب.

**الأسلوب:** اعتمدت هذه الدراسة الأسلوب التحقيقي الكيفي المنبعث من نظرية المعطيات. إنترك في هذه الدراسة ثلاثين من الأساتذة و طلاب الإجازة و طلاب الماجستير من جامعات إيران من الذين كان لديهم تجربة في التعليم المجازي (١٥ ذكور، ١٥ إناث). تم اختيار المشتركين بشكل مدروس، وتم تجميع المعطيات عن طريق أسلوب المقابلة و تم تحليل المعطيات عبر استخدام أسلوب التفسير المفتوح، التفسير المحوري و التفسير المنتخب.

**النتائج:** أشارت نتائج هذه الدراسة في المجالات التاملية إلى الأمور التالية: عدم وجود إرتباطات تسبب تعارف يؤدي إلى الزواج في التعليم المجازي. دور حماية الوالدين و قلقهم تجاه أبنائهم و خصوصاً الإناث مندم، الذي يؤدي إلى التوجه نحو التعليم المجازي. ميل أكثر النساء المتزوجات و أزواجهن نحو التعليم المجازي. و أيضاً أشارت النتائج في المجالات الإجرائية إلى أن التعليم المجازي كان سبباً لدخول قسم كبير من النساء إلى مجال التعليم.

**الإستنتاج:** إن عامل العائلة و الزواج هو السبب في نحو التعليم المجازي في إيران. و الثقافات المتجزئة و إنباع التقاليد، التوصيات لم تكن ما نعة في تعليم النساء، و في نحو التعليم المجازي في إيران. بل يمكننا القول أنه عامل نشر و توسعة التعليم المجازي في بعض المجالات.

**كلمات المفتاح:** الجنس، برنامج التعليم السري - العامل الثقافي - الاجتماعي - التعليم المجازي.

بررسی تاثیر عامل جنسیت در آموزش مجازی از دیدگاه اساتید و دانشجویان، با نگاهی به برنامه درسی پنهان (بعنوان عامل فرهنگی - اجتماعی)

**زمینه و هدف:** با مطالعه وضعیت موجود در آموزش و پرورش کشورمان می توان دریافت که در طول سالیان گذشته، تلاش موفقیت آمیزی برای شناسایی چالش ها و مسائل مربوط به توسعه و اجرای آموزش مجازی و مقابله با آنها به عمل نیامده است. در این میان اثر این نوع آموزش ها، بی تاثیر از نقش برنامه های درسی پنهان در آموزش و پرورش کشور نیست. بر این اساس مقاله حاضر به بررسی تاثیر عامل جنسیت بعنوان عامل فرهنگی - اجتماعی بر توسعه آموزش مجازی ایران از دیدگاه اساتید و دانشجویان پرداخته است.

**روش:** پژوهش حاضر از نوع پژوهش های کیفی بوده و از روش نظریه برخاسته از داده ها، استفاده شد. شرکت کنندگان در این مطالعه ۳۰ تن از اساتید و دانشجویان کارشناسی و کارشناسی ارشد دانشگاه های ایران بودند که تجربه آموزش های مجازی را داشته و مخاطبان این نوع از آموزش بودند. تعداد ۱۵ تن از آنها مرد و ۱۵ تن دیگر زن بودند. شیوه نمونه گیری این پژوهش هدفمند و از روش نمونه گیری در دسترس استفاده شد.

**یافته ها:** مقولات تعاملی حاصله از این پژوهش، عدم ارتباطهای لازم جهت آشنایی های منجر به ازدواج در آموزش مجازی، نقش حمایتی والدین و نگرانی های آنها در مورد فرزندان شان بخصوص دختران که سبب گرایش آنها به آموزش مجازی است و گرایش بیشتر زنان متاهل و همسران آنها نسبت به آموزش مجازی، را نشان داد. مقولات فرایندی بازگو نمود که آموزش مجازی سبب ورود قشر وسیعی از زنان به صحنه آموزش شده است.

**نتیجه گیری:** عامل خانواده و تاهل سبب رشد آموزش مجازی در ایران بوده و خرده فرهنگها و تبعیت از سنتها و قومیتها در مورد آموزش زنان نباید مانعی در راه رشد آموزش مجازی ایران تلقی گردد، بلکه شاید بتوان گفت این عامل در مواردی عامل گسترش و توسعه آموزش مجازی خواهد بود.

**واژه های کلیدی:** جنسیت، برنامه درسی پنهان، عامل فرهنگی - اجتماعی، آموزش مجازی.

اساتذہ اور طلباء کی نگاہ میں الیکٹرانیک تعلیم میں جینڈر فیکٹر کے اثرات کا جائزہ۔

**بیک گراؤنڈ:** ایران میں تعلیمی صورتحال کا جائزہ لینے سے یہ بات بخوبی سمجھی جاسکتی ہے کہ ہمارے ملک میں الیکٹرانیک تعلیم کو فروغ دینے اور اس راہ میں درپیش چیلنجز کا مقابلہ کرنے کا کبھی بھی بغور جائزہ نہیں لیا گیا۔ اس کے علاوہ الیکٹرانیک تعلیم نے ملک میں نصاب کی تیاری پر بھی اپنے اثرات چھوڑے ہیں۔ اس تحقیق میں یہ دیکھیں گے کہ جینڈر فیکٹر نے ایک سماجی اور ثقافتی فیکٹر کی حیثیت سے الیکٹرانیک تعلیم پر کیسے اثرات چھوڑے ہیں۔ ان اثرات کا اساتذہ اور طلباء کی نظر سے جائزہ لیں گے۔

**روش:** یہ تحقیق ایک عمدہ تحقیق ہے اور اس میں ڈیٹا سے حاصل شدہ نظریات کو سے استفادہ کیا گیا ہے۔ اس میں تیس اساتذہ اور مختلف یونیورسٹیوں کے ڈگری اور ماسٹرس کے طلباء کی شرکت کی تھی۔ ان لوگوں کو ویرچول لرنینگ کا تجربہ تھا اور یہ اس ٹریننگ کے مخاطب تھے۔ شرکت کرنے والوں میں پندرہ مرد تھے اور پندرہ خواتین تھیں۔ اس تحقیق کے ڈیٹا کا تجزیہ کرنے کے لئے غیر رائج روش یعنی تفصیلی انٹرویوز سے استفادہ کیا گیا۔

**نتیجے:** اس تحقیق سے حاصل شدہ نتیجوں کے پیش نظر کہا جاسکتا ہے کہ الیکٹرانیک تعلیم کی وجہ سے خواتین کی ایک بڑی تعداد تعلیم حاصل کرنے پر مائل ہوئی ہے، اور گھرانوں نے بھی اس میں خواتین کی مدد کی ہے ان کا شادہ شدہ ہونا اور روایتی آداب کا حامل ہونا ان کی الیکٹرانیک تعلیم حاصل کرنے میں رکاوٹ نہیں بنا بلکہ بعض اوقات یہی سبب بنا ہے کہ خواتین الیکٹرانیک ذریعے سے تعلیم حاصل کریں۔

**سفارشات:** اس امر کے پیش نظر کہ خاندان کا حامل اور شادی شدہ ہونا اس بات کا باعث بنائے کہ خواتین الیکٹرانیک ذریعے سے تعلیم حاصل کریں لہذا اس کو رکاوٹ نہیں سمجھنا چاہیے بلکہ یہ ایک مثبت عامل ہے۔

**کلیدی الفاظ:** جینڈر فیکٹر، ثقافتی اور سماجی عامل، الیکٹرانیک ذریعہ تعلیم۔

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## INTRODUCTION

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The disappearance of boundaries between national governments and the international community, national cultures and subcultures component, between the school and the local community, home and school, education and work, between the world of work and learning institutions, between formal and informal education, between pre-set curriculum and choices of individuals, between students and teachers, between parents and children, between man and machine and even between different disciplines has led to significant challenges in education. In order to deal with them and adapt to these changes, planners and educators must take immediate steps to reorganize and arduous training in all aspects. It is obvious that the neglect of this factor means disclaimer in benefit of globalization and custodian. Study the current situation in Iran education show that over the years, there has been no successful attempt to identify related challenges and if has been done it is general (1). It has to be reminded that the modern world is facing globalization. Globalization phenomenon is a cultural primarily which follows inside itself a kind of dialectic development and process and cultural exchange and excellence. Globalization discusses culture besides world acculturation. This phenomenon causes variety and cultural pluralism so world faces the emergence of common and native cultures and forming a transnational society. Transnational society has the high volume of communications, thoughts and new cultures' values which participate in it without considering ideologies and geographical and locational borders or as Tomilson in territories especially in culture one will lead to removing regions. Education role in globalization is especial one so that Rhoads 2003 believes that cultural and civilizational components cause education movement to globalization, doing internationally and cause joining educational institutions' prospects to global prospects (2).

Cheung Chen global theory (1998), he believes that achieve universal knowledge by learning new technologies in education (e-learning) puts in four areas: Technical-economic, human- social, political, cultural and educational. Social and human knowledge areas suggest that exchange and social participation among subcultures and achieve the elimination of discrimination of race, religion, and gender, national is the way to achieve global knowledge (1).

A crowd of education demanders, especially higher education that tend to lifelong training and basic research and societies facing with the digital revolution and the emergence of information technologies and communication and new educational technologies, have put seriously a new mission on educational institutions and face them with a very complicated situation. For answering extraordinarily complex situations and ruling problems in the education field and important issue of globalization and development, educational institutions use modern education, such as virtual one and other educational methods besides the traditional ones. Virtual education is such new educational methods which have been formed by \_\_\_\_\_

post-modern space changes and login information and communication technologies in the field of education. It should be noted that of the necessary infrastructure for the implementation and development of virtual education focus on the human, cultural, social and value infrastructure. In this regard, it should be expressed that mental changes in staffs and teachers of virtual training for role reconstruction and new attitudes are necessary and inevitable (3). In 1993, Sixth Asia-Pacific region conference of ministers of education consisting of 33 states, including Iran, was held in Malaysia and emphasis on reform in education as a recommendation (3). As important parts of this recommendation was education for all and education for women and girls (1).

Culture and forming new values and beliefs about women, education and creation of equality concepts of opportunities and educational opportunities policies can be a turning point that highlights women as activated society's forces and their role in the process of development and doesn't limit women's role just to be a mother or housewife. This attitude that is equal social and cultural opportunities and also equal educational opportunities can be sometimes integrated with important values such as social justice.

### Women education from gender aspect

During history, especially in years 1920 and 1930, curriculum differences for boys and girls have been always discussed seriously. Some challenges in the field of educating women and discussing questions in the field of women presence and success in higher levels of education even in industrial development countries, have caused forming trends and researches in the field of education and gender. Performed classical studies about educational inequalities refer to lack of social contributions, especially from men in this field. Although many of these researches have been done about gender, but finally they have gone to educational inequalities and the concept of gender has been defined as educational inequalities. And this belief that educational inequalities related to gender is more about women social life and more than each factor depends on that society's education (4). Women failure in the field of education, their lack of availability of academic education and higher education levels and results derived from education, even higher ones confirm this point that each society's culture and social factors have a unique role in these cases.

We should not ignore the role and impact of hidden curricula. Curriculum is some pressures which can be found implicitly against the explicit curriculum in each educational institute and should be recognized by students, react to them to be able to stay in that institute (5). Giddens (1991) believed that some of discussing the contents in theoretical approaches can be related to each other through the concept of cultural reproduction. Cultural reproduction refers to the ways that schools with other social institutions transfer economic and social inequalities from one generation to the other one. This concept attracts our attention to the thing that school through the hidden curriculum affects values' learning, attitudes and habits. Schools' strength different kinds of kids' cultural attitudes and values which they have acquired in the primary years of their life (5).

The effect of hidden curriculum can be even seen in women's \_\_\_\_\_

tendency to lessons, especially higher education in a way that they have less tendency toward subjects such as advanced mathematics, technological units and computer. This deep gender distance is also in educational majors too in a way that many majors can be divided into women or men's majors that these gender differences may be considered as the result of hidden curriculum in lower levels of education. This attitude will be more clear when hidden curriculum in schools have been caused that women are considered passive and slow in education and even this subject has been considered that much obvious in schools that sometimes teachers bias and their attention to boy students and persuading them compared to girls have also been discussed. These problems have causes moving to prepare schools for single-sex schools and projects in this field in developed countries (6).

Electronic education (virtual education), which is considered as a new method in education, applies to all teaching and learning methods that are supported through technology (7) and involves a vast area of definitions that all of them agree to increase the availability of resources, flexibility in learning and skills. Some scholars sometimes define virtual education related to internet like Harvard Black that considers electronic education as the factor of attention to learning via internet and Elio Masie also considers virtual education based on network technology that lead to education and learning through designing, administrating and expanding education and Cisco systems' authorities also consider virtual education leading to internet learnings that can include teaching the subject in several shapes, education management and a set of network of students and number of developers and experts and take electronic education as a faster learning factor with less costs that can cause everybody's availability to education and public participation in the learning process. Cornelia Weggen considers electronic education dynamic that contains updated content. This teaching culture produces and keeps its special education rules and gender factor in this education is a function of culture of virtual learning based on this. Although technology defends transferring disciplines and existing sensitivities about gender learning in electronic education, however, some mediators are needed to analyze communications between technology and gender.

Due to this it should be mentioned that Iran is a country with a long historical and cultural history in terms of cultural aspects. Nationality and cultural history have been always a strong supporter in the path of all Iranians' education. Our country faces with globalization affairs, global thinking and internal, external development in all fields in the development path (8). One the most important development fields, is developing women learning and their entrance to higher education. Having a young population that half of them are women, Iran wants to take advantage of educations that response country's needs in development fields. It should be noted that there are a lot of problems in the path of providing educational facilities for this population, especially women for their entrance to different kinds of addictions. Virtual education is a new one that either can be

considered opportunity or limitation through using various technologies in education. It should be reminded that many cultural factors play role in the path of using and developing virtual education such as gender factor. According to this problem that gender performance refers to social context eventually (Nigopen and Striktos), the importance of researching about gender and hidden curriculum and virtual education looks necessary.

According to what was said, including essential development and implementation in virtual education, that aims to educate all people anywhere and any place, are cultural and social infrastructure without any gender bias; because we cannot out women from this important cycle. Also, due to the lack of researches that show gender to achieve educational goals, current studies in addition to considering the hidden curriculum as a factor that actuate gender gaps to achieve virtual education seeks the effect of the gender factor on this category.

## METHODS

This study was a qualitative research method and used from grounded theory methodology. Grounded theory (on the field) is one of the known methods of qualitative research. The grounded Theory, method from the perspective of qualitative research experts is an inductive approach for theorizing and theory developing. So that, established theory is derived from the systematic collected data (9).

In the present research 30 teachers, AM and BM students who experienced virtual training in different Iran, universities participated, 15 men and 15 women. The study was targeted sampling and sampling method was available. In order to collect the required data from non-structured interviews (in- depth interviews) were used. The interview question setting was done according to empirical research and achieving to gender differences in development of virtual education and the role of women in this matter. In order to determine the validity, questions were applied by experts to investigate some factors, such as lack of bias or lack of directional themed. Four main questions of this study were: 1- In your opinion, what is the role of families in the development of virtual education? 2- How to evaluate social and cultural conditions on gender in Iranian society to access and use virtual learning? 4- How could our modern education open the way for the development and implementation of virtual education for women? Data from the interviews were coded and then the next interview done. After completing twenty interviews, due to the saturation data and the lack of new mining code sampling was not necessary, but to ensure the resultant interviews continued for thirty. At the beginning of data collection, meanwhile making confidence in the participants, description of goals and full and informed consent to participate in the study, doing interviews at the place and time they desire, making permission to record their voice, maintaining mutual respect and confidentiality and their statements were made. Each interview, according to the response longed rate of participants from 20 to 30 minutes.

Simultaneous to collecting data using the underlying \_\_\_\_\_

systematic approach (10), data analysis was also performed. So that after each interview. Recorded interviews were written as text on paper. Then, according to participants answer about specifying the research question were coded and summarized. Through coding in three steps, including open coding, axial coding and selective coding. That, after several accurate readout of interviews by the researcher, using open coding system were analyzed for making classes. The data obtained from open coding in axial coding phase were classified based on the relationship between primary classes and formed the middle classes. In the process of selective coding for each of the research questions the middle classes were gathered around a main class (the final) and eventually led to the formulation of a Grounded Theory. Theory of the field at this stage, the process of transforming the raw data to certain classes was achieved based on the interpretation and accurate understanding. This process uses inductive logic that by scrutinizing continuous research and comparison of data, classes and general contents were derived from raw data.

Noori and Mehr Mohammadi (9), to ensure reliability, trust and verification of data in qualitative research (grounded theory), have offered solutions that were considered in this study. Thus, for the credit of data participants review were used.

## RESULTS

Coding is a process during that researcher separates, conceptualizes, mergers and integer data. A fundamental unit in this process is a concept. In open coding that is the first level of coding data are conceptualized line by line or paragraph by paragraph. In next step that is centric coding, concepts will be placed besides each other and form centric subject based on similarities or synonymy and finally in selection coding (core one) step the most important part of research is mined and based on this subject grounded theory is proposed. Coding requires a lot of accuracy because it has had a main share in a final grounded model of these subjects and picture conditions and consequences (11). In current research open coding step (in two levels), centric coding and selection coding are performed in analyzing data and finally grounded theory is proposed. Open coding stage: Concepts (Open coding first level)

Neutral nature of virtual education in Iran about gender factor (most of interviewees emphasize on this)

- Most of students' inadequate information about gender and hidden curriculum
- The curriculum doesn't have gender looking in university courses in terms of professors
- Students don't feel gender differences in attitudes, relationships and curriculum
- Pregnancy, childbirth and taking care of children and managing home are factors for tendency in virtual education
- Some special cultures and ethnicities consider mixed classes and educational trip as limitation for women and prefer virtual education
- Sometimes traditional thought of women's fathers and husbands don't like communication based on technologies like chatting or so on.

- Women student and other people who are accepted in big cities' universities security and commuting create some problems that make them like virtual education.

- Many high school students prefer to participate in attending education because of staying away from the opposite sex in secondary and primary school courses and they don't like to participate in virtual education.

Concepts (open coding of second level)

- Gender factor isn't effective in developing virtual education and most of Iranian people don't look at education in terms of gender.

- Parents and families' traditional thoughts in some special cultures and ethnicities can cause gender looking at virtual education in some cases.

- Married women students in Iran consider virtual education more appropriate because of managing home, taking care of spouse and children.

- Many single men and women students prefer attending education because of communications and social interactions which sometimes lead to marriage.

Centric coding

- In an appropriate field of cultural, social and scientific general looking at educations such as virtual education there isn't gender looking.

- Following traditions and subcultures and special ethnicities in tendency for virtual education in Iran sometimes impose gender role to the educational system.

Core coding: family, ethnicity and cultural fields in Iran are effective factors on perceptions about gender and curriculum (Table 1).

In this mode researcher dominates the smallest details of the study and tries to extract theory from data and show it to other people in the best way. This is an obvious image that not only answers researcher's questions, but also can produce new researches for future researchers. (9). Grounded notion is formed around three main points of interactive categories, the categories of process, outcome categories and make research digestible for others due to data. (Figure 1) Categories include pillow cases in this research:

It should be noted that abbreviations are used instead of the main words in analyzing data;

P: Professor S: student M: master degree B: bachelor B<sup>1</sup>: Shahid Beheshti University T: Tehran University A: Amirkabir University KH: University of Khwaja Nasiruddin MA: University of Mehr Alborz

Interactive categories:

a) Lack of necessary communications for dating leads to marriage in virtual education

Virtual education and communication based on technologies don't provide necessary interactions in order to students have relationship for marriage. And marriage is an important factor in single people's tendency to attending educations. In this case most of interviewees agreed and below the interviews can be invoked:

Professor number 11 has mentioned that in some ages there is a socialization and we have to find better ways. Students get social interactions through face to face education while there isn't such this thing in the computer world. Many \_\_\_\_\_

Table 1. Levels of Open, Axial and Core Coding			
Open coding		coding	Core coding
First level of open coding	Second level of open coding		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neutral nature of virtual education in Iran about gender factor (most of interviewees emphasize on this)</li> <li>- Most of students' inadequate information about gender and hidden curriculum</li> <li>- Curriculum doesn't have gender looking in university courses in terms of professors</li> <li>- Students don't feel gender differences in attitudes, relationships and curriculum</li> <li>- Pregnancy, child birth and tacking care of children and managing home are factors for tendency to virtual education</li> <li>- Some special cultures and ethnicities consider mixed classes and educational trip as limitation for women and prefer virtual education</li> <li>- Sometimes traditional thought of women's fathers and husbands don't like communication based on technologies like chatting or so on.</li> <li>- Women student and other people who are accepted in big cities' universities security and commuting create some problems that make them like virtual education.</li> <li>- Many high schools students prefer to participate in attending education because of staying away from the opposite sex in secondary and primary school courses and they don't like to participate in virtual education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender is not an important factor affecting the development of virtual education and the majority of Iranian society have no gender look about education in general</li> <li>- Traditional ideas of parents and families can leads to gender look to virtual education in some cultures and specific ethnicity.</li> <li>- Married women students in Iran know better virtual education for home management and maintenance of the wife and children</li> <li>- Most of the single students (male and female) prefer physical education to virtual education because of communication and social interaction which in some cases leads to marriage</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In appropriate cultural, social, scientific context, overview to all learning, including virtual education devoid of gender role in Iran.</li> <li>2. Adherence to traditions and sub-cultures and specific ethnicity in desire for virtual education in Iran sometimes imposes gender roles in the educational system.</li> </ol>	<p>Cultural, ethnic and family are effective factors in Iran on perceptions about gender and curriculum and education</p>

students in Iran want to get married and according to this virtual education wouldn't be appropriate and it isn't related to gender and gender interaction isn't effective in developing virtual education. Master student number 2 believes that many people who are graduating from high school recently prefer to be in attending classes mixed with their peers because they aren't together in primary and secondary school. So gender factor is cancelled. Bachelor student number 4 says that in my idea one of the most weaknesses of electronic education is the gap between male and female members. Bachelor student T number 6 argues that virtual education with all advantages causes some problems either, for example where can a girl and a boy have a simple verbal relationship? Master student B1 number 4: gender is discussed because of parents' bias that doesn't like their children go away from people who have this problem. Virtual education has not perceived yet at the moment to be able to judge about family's idea about gender. Bachelor student KH number 1: in my idea gender factor can develop a virtual education because some families are strict and very traditional and because classes aren't held, they prefer this education. Bachelor students in KH number 11: my family disagreed with me to go other cities' universities and I entered virtual education exactly vice versa with bachelor students of T number 12: I think gender is not involved. I'm from the \_\_\_\_\_

country and trip cost is a lot. I travel for bug fixes classes and don't have any problem of my family.

b) Married women and their spouses tend to virtual education more Professor KH number 6: in some families that women have small kids or a woman who is pregnant enter virtual university. Master student of T university number 1: virtual education might be better for women because they can do multitask simultaneously better. Participating in class and doing hose works and so on, recording classes' information in appropriate time, listening to them help women to manage their tasks in an appropriate time. Lack of identification or being unknown may be satisfying for women more. A master student of a number 13: women students' commuting security and people who are accepted in big cities' universities have created some problems so families like virtual education. Bachelor student of KH number 8: women have more mental and physical safety in the virtual education environment. Professor KH number 4: when women in Iran to attend more in class, many families in other towns or even in Tehran are worried because of safety. For a mother who has three months child and commuting is difficult for her even in Tehran and with virtual education can take care of her child and life or people who work in far places such as south this education can be suitable. Professor B1 number 8: girls \_\_\_\_\_

experience social safety and can perceive social limitations well because of dorm, education place. Student can learn better behind her computer and this factor may lead the family and society in virtual education more.

Process categories:

Virtual education causes the entrance of vast amount of women to education scene.

Virtual education causes safety and appropriate mental feeling related to managing home, loyalty to spouse and family, having the feeling of being a good and responsible parent for training children. In process categories, interviewing male and married students mentions this aspect of virtual education so that master student of T number 1 argues that virtual education may be better for women because they can do multitasks better. Participating in class and doing house works and so on, recording classes' information in appropriate time, listening to them help women to manage their tasks in an appropriate time.

Outcome categories:

a) Promoting the culture of virtual education by sensitive families

Professor B1 number 11: families who are sensitive to their girls, sometimes they are sensitive to increasing their daughter's knowledge or vice versa they are sensitive to their daughter's mixed classes. If their sensitivity is to second one, virtual education is good. Sometimes families have a problem with girls' education in four areas such as Khuzestan.

Master student a number 13: in some parts of Iran such as villages and towns, people don't like their daughters to go university and if they get to know virtual education may support it.

b) Looking at virtual education as an opportunity for combining being a mother or father, continuing education, being effective and efficient in society, many students agreed about this.

Bachelor student A number 2: women students who have children like virtual education and this kind of education gives them this opportunity to be either mother or student. Master student of T number 15: with virtual education, women can manage many tasks simultaneously, such as taking care of children, managing home and education.

Grounded theory:

The factor of family and marriage causes improving virtual education in Iran and subcultures and following traditions and ethnicities shouldn't be as a barrier in the path of Iran's virtual education but this factor can be considered as a reason for expanding virtual education.

## DISCUSSION

Regarding the research finding, it be cited that according to Asia-Pacific region, Ministers of Education Conference (1993), Education for all and education for women and girls was one of the goals that were followed in this study. Also, according to Cheung, Chen global knowledge (1998), to get to the international community by the new educational technologies and formation of global Knowledge that is about the current human requirements, differences of gender, ethnic and cultural should be abandoned and respect to these differences. Hereof, the role of hidden curriculum should not be ignored and their effects reach these goals should be guided. In this case, it is possible to achieve a noble goal as the international community, global \_\_\_\_\_

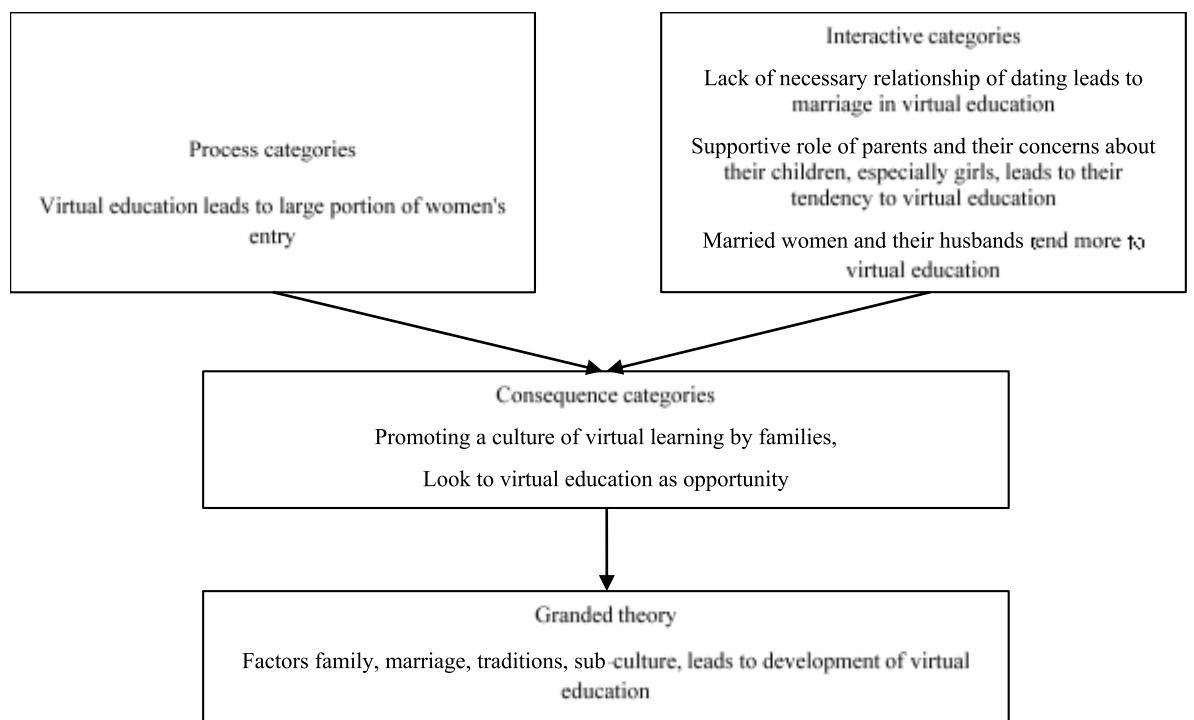


Figure 1. Interactive categories, Process categories, Consequence categories in Grounded theory

knowledge and education for all in anywhere and any place, achieved. The present study also in the event of this purpose, put its emphasis upon this that the role of women and avoiding gender discrimination are from those strategies that should be considered to achieve these purposes. Given the role of women is from necessary human infrastructure to fulfill the purposes and development of virtual education. These findings are aligned with Majidi's statements (3) based on this result that, mental changes of all stakeholders in virtual education are essential in the reconstruction of roles and relationships and create new attitudes about gender and culture affairs. These findings are also consistent with Jacobs' study (4). He is examined gender and education in three levels: enter to higher education level, school experience and processes after training. Jacobs believes that environmental context and women follow up in education have the main role education of women.

Expanding virtual education in Iran and investing in this kind of education can provide some opportunities for women to identify the woman's role and it can inform society about the important role of women in society and family. Virtual education can be considered as an opportunity when women and men without being treated according to their gender with equal educational opportunities and based on justice can play their role in society through education and developing virtual education as an excellent goal is a way for educational justice and equal opportunities which can be received through suitable policies by all people. Paradoxical \_\_\_\_\_

looking at virtual education in terms of gender can be because of social, cultural differences and society's different people so that some of the interviewees in this study consider this aspect as a neutral factor in Iran while the other ones investigate the role of gender in family, especially in providing families' mental safety and girl students and following subcultures and traditions and ethnics while it seems a gender factor is formed related to cultural context, attitudes and beliefs. There aren't curriculum, education, education methods and lack of families' tendency to women's education in any interviews. This lack of tendency is related to students' mental and physical safety because women are exposed to these dangers more than men.

According to the results and findings of the study, it is suggested, policy makers should develop strategic policies based on providing virtual training grounds for housewives to the democratization of education and cultural excellence. Traditions and subcultures and ethnic issues that sometimes appear fanatical are regarded as an opportunity for learning and not restricted. Culture in the case of virtual education as an opportunity for family management, employment and women's education through the media considered as a cultural- national priority.

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