



How Iranian Americans perceive each other?

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Introduction

Iranian Americans in the United States constitute one of the most educated and affluent communities in this country. According to the U.S. census 2000 the size of this community is about 340000, of whom over 57% of the 25 year old and older members have obtained a bachelor or a higher degree and 27% have a graduate degree. Moreover, the Iranian-Americans average income is about 50% over the national average and they have a disproportionately large fraction of households owning homes.

Besides the census statistics, the strong presence of the Iranian-American community in the private sector and entrepreneurial activities highlights the potential strength of this community.

On the other hand, there is little known about the Iranian-American community beyond the limited census statistics. For example we don't know what are the common characteristics that brings the Iranian-American community together, what defines their identity, their habits, and their social networks, what sources of information they use and trust, and how do they identify themselves with regard to their national heritage. Answering these questions is critical for understanding the common causes and points of divergence in this community and is a pre-requisite for realizing the potential of this community in pursuing common causes, having a say in the U.S. civic and political life, and for overcoming the challenges that this community faces at the time when individuals of middle-eastern descent are increasingly subject to legal and social challenges in the United States.

In 2005, the Iranian Studies Group at MIT undertook a comprehensive survey of Iranian-American community characteristics to better understand what it means to be Iranian-American. The survey included over 40 questions and 3880 individuals filled it online. The initial phase of the reporting of the results focused on the basic characteristics and statistics regarding this survey. In this paper we report some of the early results from partial regression analysis on some of the interesting themes in the survey.

While online surveys typically tap into a selective sample of the population and therefore their aggregate statistics (e.g. average age, education, etc) do not necessarily represent the characteristics of the community as a whole, conducting regression analysis on survey results often yields more reliable insights. For example, 60 percent of the respondents to an online survey may have a bachelors degree and 30 percent to earn over 100000 \$/year, even though the underlying population on which the survey is conducted has only 30 percent bachelor holders and 20% of that population earns over 100000 \$/year. However, if we conduct a regression to find the determinants of income in this population it is very likely that we get the same determinants of the income (e.g. education, age, and so on), because many of the same variables influence the income regardless of which social group one belongs to.

Therefore the regression analysis that aims at finding out the correlations and determinants of different characteristics of Iranian-Americans is a suitable way to explore the rich data provided in the above-mentioned survey.

In the following discussion we first report the variables used in the analysis, their statistics, and their correlation table. Afterwards, we focus on a few interesting questions regarding the characteristics of the Iranian American community.

Survey Characteristics

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The survey was conducted over the internet between January and March 2005. It was conducted in English. 3880 Iranian American individuals participated in the survey. In this report we analyze a subset of the questions asked in the survey and only report the statistics for that subset. Table 1 reports the number of response, mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum for the main variables used in this paper. Appendix 1 reports the questions and coding that defines variable definitions.

Variable	N	Mean	Stdev	Minimum	Maximum
Location (east_coast =1, west_coast=2)	3836	1.28	0.72	0	2
Gender (Female =0, Male =1)	3880	0.38	0.49	0	1
Age	3880	2.76	1.08	1	5
Religion					
Residency status	3880	2.02	1.56	1	7
Income	3141	143682	136930	20000	600000
Education	3688	2.85	1.08	0	5
Period moved to US	3880	4.55	1.69	1	7
Marital status	3880	3.21	2.45	1	7
Spouse Nationality	2813	3.01	1.35	2	6
Introduce_as_Iranian_American	3880	0.12	0.32	0	1
Introduce_as_as_Persian_American	3880	0.05	0.21	0	1
Introduce_as_Persian___yes_1__No	3880	0.23	0.42	0	1
Introduce_as_Iranian___yes_1__No	3880	0.39	0.49	0	1
Introduce_as_American___yes_1__N	3880	0.01	0.12	0	1
Introduce_as__depend_on_situatio	3880	0.09	0.29	0	1
Visiting_Iran	3880	2.91	1.72	1	6

Analysis of Results

In the following section we explore the variables that correlate with questions of interest through regression analysis. For each question we discuss the main variables that showed significant relationships with the question of interest. Complete regression tables are reported in Appendix 2.

The following questions determine how Iranian-Americans introduce themselves and what factors determine those.

What factors determine that one introduce himself as an Iranian-American?

- 1- Age: Younger people are more likely to introduce themselves as Iranian- American
- 2- Interaction with Iranians: Those who have more interaction with other Iranians are more likely to introduce themselves as Iranian-Americans
- 3- Residency_Status: Students are more likely to introduce themselves as Iranian-American.
- 4- Visiting_Iran: Those who visit Iran more often are more likely to introduce themselves as Iranian-American.

What factors determine that one introduce himself as a Persian-American?

- 1- Religion: Athiest are more likely to introduce themselves as Persian-American



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- 2- Visiting Iran: Those who visit Iran more often are more likely to introduce themselves as Persian-American

What factors determine that one introduce himself as a Persian?

- 1- Age: Older people are more likely to introduce themselves as Persian
- 2- East/West : West coast residents are more likely to introduce themselves as Persians
- 3- Ethnicity: Those of Persian ethnicity are less likely to introduce themselves as Persians
- 4- Interaction with Iranians: Those who have more interaction with other Iran are more likely to introduce themselves Persian
- 5- Visiting Iran: Those who visit Iran more often are more likely to introduce themselves as Persian.

What factors determine that one introduce himself as an Iranian?

- 1- Age: Younger people are more likely to introduce themselves Iranian
- 2- Religion: Athiests are less likely to introduce themselves as Iranian while Christians are more likely to do so
- 3- East/ West: Iranians living in east coast are more likely to introduce themselves as Iranian
- 4- Interaction with Iranians: Those who have more interaction with other Iranians are more likely to introduce themselves as Iranian
- 5- Period moved to U.S: Those who have lived in U.S for a longer time are more likely to introduce themselves as Iranian
- 6- Residency Status: Students are less likely to introduce themselves as Iranian

What factors determine that one introduce himself as an American?

- 1- Education: Less educated people are more likely to introduce themselves as Iranian
- 2- Interaction with Iranians: Those who have less interaction with other Iranians are more likely to Introduce themselves as American
- 3- Period moved to U.S: Those who have moved to U.S more recently are more likely to introduce themselves as American

What factors determine that one introduce himself depending on the situation?

- 1- Ethnicity: Azaris are less likely to introduce themselves depending on the situation
- 2- Gender: Females are more likely to introduce themselves depending on the situation
- 3- Interaction with Iranians: Those who have less interaction with other Iranians are more likely to introduce themselves depending on the situation
- 4- Religion: Muslim are more likely to introduce themselves depending on the situation
- 5- Period moved to U.S: Those who have moved to U.S. more recently are more likely to introduce themselves depending on the situation

The following questions detemin how Iranian-Americans perceive the Iranian community in terms of different factors such as being supportive, economic contribution, civic participation, etc.

What factors determine perception of Iranian-American community of each other in terms of being supportive?



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- 1- Education: More educated people are less likely to perceive the Iranian-American community as being supportive for each other
- 2- Gender: Females are more likely to perceive the Iranian-American community as being supportive for each other
- 3- Interaction with Iranians: Those who interact more with Iranians are less likely to perceive the Iranian-American community as being supportive for each other
- 4- Religion: Jewish and Christian Iranians are more likely to perceive the Iranian-American community as being supportive for each other
- 5- Resident Status: U.S citizens are more likely to perceive the Iranian-American community as being supportive for each other

What factors determine perception of Iranian-American community of each other in terms of preserving cultural values?

- 1- Religion: Muslim Iranians are more likely to perceive the Iranian-American community as being preservative for cultural values
- 2- Education: More educated people are less likely to perceive the Iranian-American community as being preservative for cultural values
- 3- Gender: Females are more likely to perceive the Iranian-American community as being preservative for cultural values
- 4- Interact with Iranians: People who interact more often with other Iranians are less likely to perceive the Iranian-American community as being preservative for cultural values
- 5- Period moved to U.S: People who have moved to U.S more recently are less likely to perceive the Iranian-American community as being preservative for cultural values

What factors determine perception of Iranian-American community of each other in terms of Social etiquette?

- 1- Education: More educated people are less likely to perceive the Iranian-Americans community as socially high etiquetted people
- 2- Age: Older Iranians are less likely to perceive the Iranian-Americans community as socially high etiquetted people
- 3- Income: People with more income are more likely to perceive the Iranian-American community as socially high etiquetted people
- 4- Interaction with Iranians: Those who interact more often with other Iranians are less likely to perceive the Iranian-American community as socially high etiquetted people
- 5- Religion: Muslim and Christian Iranians are more likely to perceive the Iranian-American community as socially high etiquetted people while Athiest are less likely to think so
- 6- Residency Status: U.S Citizens are more likely to perceive the Iranian-American community as socially high etiquetted people

What factors determine perception of Iranian-American community of each other in terms of Economic contributions to the U.S.?

- 1- Religion: Muslim and agnostic Iranians have a higher regard for the Economic contribution of the Iranian-American community

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- 2- Education: Higher educated Iranians have a higher regard for the Economic contribution of the Iranian-American community
- 3- Ethnicity: Those Iranians who introduce themselves as Persians have a higher regard for the Economic contribution of the Iranian-American community
- 4- Income: Richer Iranians have a higher regard for the Economic contribution of the Iranian-American community
- 5- Interaction with Iran: Those who have more interaction with Iran have a lower regard for the Economic contribution of the Iranian-American community

What factors determine perception of Iranian-American community of each other in terms of respect for other communities and cultures?

- 1- Age: Older Iranians perceive the Iranian-Americans as more respectful of other cultures
- 2- Religion: Muslim Iranians perceive the Iranian-Americans as more respectful of other cultures while Jewish and Atheist Iranians are more likely to think otherwise
- 3- Education: More educated Iranians perceive the Iranian-Americans as less respectful of other cultures
- 4- Ethnicity: Azaristans perceive the Iranian-Americans as less respectful of other cultures

What factors determine perception of Iranian-American community of each other in terms of Business ethics?

- 1- Age: Older Iranians have a higher regard for the Business ethics of the Iranian-American community
- 2- Location: West coast Iranians have a lower regard for the Business ethics of the Iranian-American community
- 3- Education: More educated Iranians have a lower regard for the Business ethics of the Iranian-American community
- 4- Interaction with other Iranians: Those who have more interaction with Other Iranians have a lower regard for the Business ethics of the Iranian-American community
- 5- Religion: Jewish Iranians have a lower regard for the Business ethics of the Iranian-American community while Muslims are more likely to think otherwise

What factors determine perception of Iranian-American community of each other in terms of Civic participation?

- 1- Religion: Agnostic and atheist Iranians have a lower regard for the Civic participation of the Iranian-American community
- 2- Education: More educated Iranians have a lower regard for the Civic participation of the Iranian-American community
- 3- Interaction with Iran: Those who have more interaction with Iran have a lower regard for the Civic participation of the Iranian-American community

What factors determine perception of Iranian-American community of each other in terms of Team work?

- 1- Religion: Ethical Iranians have a lower regard for the Iranian-American community in terms of team work while Zoroastrian are tend to think otherwise



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- 2- Education: More educated Iranians have a lower regard for the Iranian-American community in terms of team work
- 3- Interaction with Iran: Iranians who have more interaction with Iran have a lower regard for the Iranian-American community in terms of team work

What factors determine perception of Iranian-American community of each other in terms of Support for common community goals?

- 1- Religion: Athiest and spritual Iranians tend to have a lower regard for the Iranian-American community in terms of support for common community goals
- 2- Education: more educated Iranians have a lower regard for the Iranian-American community in terms of support for common community goals
- 3- Interaction with Iran: Those who have more interaction with Iran tend to have a lower regard for the Iranian-American community in terms of support for common community goals
- 4- Residency status: U.S citizens tend to have a higher regard for the Iranian-American community in terms of support for common community goals

Conclusions

In this paper we discussed some of the characteristics of the Iranian Americans in relation to how Iranian-Americans introduce themselves and how they perceive their community in terms of different factors. Different groups in the community focus on different characteristics. For example those who have more interaction with other Iranians are more likely to introduce themselves as Iranian and are more likely to perceive the Iranian community as not being good team players. Overall, Age, Interaction with other Iranians, Period Moved to U.S, and how often they visit Iran, seem to be the determining factors in most of the questions regarding to how Iranian-Americans introduce themselves. Moreover, Religion, Education, Residency status and Interaction with other Iranians seem to be the determining factors in most of the questions related to how Iranian-Americans perceive their community.

Appendix 1- Variable definitions for a subset of survey questions:

Variable Name	Variable Definition
east_coast_1__west_coast_2	east coast is 1, and west coast is 2, otherwise it's 0
Gender_Male_0__Female_1_	Gender(Male=0, Female=1)
Age	Age1=18-24, 2=25-34, 3=35-49, 4=50-64, 5=65 and above
Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muslim • Christian • Jewish • Zorasthrian • Bahai • Spritual • Agnostic • Athiest • Other
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persian • Azari • Kordish • Gilaki • Other(Lor, Turkeman, Arab, etc.)

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residency_status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. citizen of Iranian ancestry • U.S. citizen born in the U.S. • Permanent resident • Student • Skilled Worker • Refugee or Asylee
Income	Average household income
Education	Education(some high school=1,high diplome=2, bachelor=3, master's=4, M.D.=5, PhD=6))
when_moved_to_US	In which period did you move to the U.S.1=I was born and raised here2=1940-19593=1960-19694=1970-19795=1980-19896=1990-19997=2000-Present
marital_status	<p>What is your present marital status?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married • Living with partner • Divorced • Separated • Widowed • Single
Spouse_Nationality	<p>Your current or former spouse/partner is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not apply • Iranian • American of Iranian Ancestry • American • Other Nationalities
Introduce_as_Iranian_American_ye	<p>When asked, you introduce yourself as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iranian-American(yes=1, No=0) • American(yes=1, No=0) • Persian (yes=1, No=0) • Iranian (yes=1, No=0) • American(yes=1, No=0) • Depend on situation (yes=1, No=0)
Interaction_with_IraniansOn_average	<p>On average, how often do you interact with others of Iranian Ancestry (outside of your core family)?1=daily 2=weekly3=monthly4=rarely5=never</p>
Iranian_events_attendance	<p>How often do you attend Iranian events such as Nowrooz, 13 bedar, Yalda night, Mehregan etc.?1=Always2=Often3=Some times4=Rarely 5=Never</p>
Visiting_Iran	<p>How often have you gone back to Iran in the past two decades?1=Never2=Once3=Between 2 to 3 times4=4-5 times 5=More than 5 times6=Does not apply</p>

Appendix 2- Regression tables

Logistic Regression results for determinants of how iranians introduce themselves. Parameter estimates represent the vector of α in the regression equation:

$$\text{Probability(Answer to Question=Yes)} = \frac{\text{EXP}(\alpha \cdot \mathbf{X} + \beta)}{1 + \text{EXP}(\alpha \cdot \mathbf{X} + \beta)}$$



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where \mathbf{X} is the vector of independent variables (the rows in the table next page) and intercept. Parameter estimates that are significantly different from zero at 0.0001, 0.01, and 0.05 levels are color coded (Darkest for 0.0001 and so on). The following tables report the detailed regression results.



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How do Iranians introduce themselves	Introduce Iranian-American	Introduce Persian-American	Introduce Persian	Introduce Iranian	Introduce American	Introduce Depends
Intercept	11.769	13.457	1.308	13.582	19.162	13.636
Age	-0.239**	-0.252	0.299**	-0.166**	-0.192	0.059
Gender (Female=1)	0.132	0.221	-0.106	-0.21*	0.66	0.296*
east_1/west	0.142	0.153	-0.266*	0.15**	0.081	0.054
Income	2.5 E-7	4.7 E-7	-4.3E-7	2.5 E-7	-1.3 E-6	3.8 E-8
Agnostic	-0.594*	1.363	0.116	0.074	0.67	-0.092
Athiest	0.068	2.166**	0.283	-0.503*	1.122	0.252
Bahai	0.024	0.649	-0.235	0.168	1.055	0.593
Christian	0.024	0.851	0.138	0.651*	1.109	0.513
Jewish	0.954*	0.705	-0.295	0.678*	-0.081	0.055
Muslim	-0.023	1.268	0.054	-0.43*	1.187	0.502
Spritual	0.053	0.867	0.203**	-0.213	0.704	-0.073
Zorasthrian	0.6	-0.098	-0.094**	0.23	0.409	-0.017
Religion/Other	0.12	1.202	0.351	0.04	0.385	-0.229
Education	-0.017	0.043	0.054	-0.014	-0.345**	-0.022
Ethnicity/Azari	0.263	0.161	0.105	-0.027	0.23	-0.488*
Ethnicity/Gilak	0.03	-0.663	0.572**	-0.174	-0.106	-0.341
Ethnicity/Kurdish	-0.493	0.63	0.369	-0.03	1.213	-0.142
Ethnicity/other	0.228	-0.199	0.431	-0.133	-0.297	-0.262
Ethnicity/Persian	0.195	-0.327	-0.428	0.221	0.508	-0.31
Intraction with Iran	0.162**	-0.055	0.171	0.251**	-0.329*	-0.153**
Period Moved to U#S	0.13*	0.15	-0.002	-0.187**	0.319*	0.127*
Residency_Refugee	0.169	9.174	-0.846	0.136	-1.584	-0.054
Residency_Status/Per	0.343	-0.731	-0.496	-0.404	0.904	-0.191
Residency_Status/Ski	0.975	9.196	-0.215	-0.302	9.207	-0.575
Residency_Student	2.272**	-0.062	0.103	-0.792**	9.558	0.075
Residency_U.S citiz	-0.819	-1.518	0.115	0.199	-1.316	-0.995
Residency_U.S citiz	-0.612	-1.429	-0.301	-0.019	-0.197	-0.66
Married	-0.911	-0.532	0.277	-0.531	-9.601	0.494
Seperated	-0.698	10.162	-0.462	-0.534	0.887	0.844
Divorced	-0.784	-0.104	0.101*	-0.311	-9.087	0.352
Single	-0.56	-0.595	-0.127	-0.267	-9.646	0.658
Widowed	0.029	-1.392	-0.731**	0.282	-11.572	0.953
with Partner	-0.698	-0.738	0.541**	-0.592	0.789	0.053
spouse/American	-9.533	-10.059	-1.008**	-11.849	-5.557	-11.951
spouse/American-Iran	-9.723	-11.015	-0.85	-11.481	-5.59	-12.004
spouse/Iranian	-9.58	-9.995	-0.931	-11.936	-5.33	-11.612
spouse/N/A	-9.695	-10.347	-0.846	-11.942	-5.154	-11.886
spouse/other nationa	-9.03	-9.167	-1.065**	-11.982	-6.11	-12.032
Visiting Iran	0.128**	0.126*	0.109**	-0.009	0.153	0.067

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<i>Perception of Iranians of their community in U.S</i>	Support	Cultural Value	Social Etiquette	Economics	respect other cultures	Business	Civic Participation	Team work	community
Intercept	0.977	3.209**	1.732	0.98	1.177	1.21	3.573**	1.382	1.477
east_1/west	0.047	0.019	-0.052	-0.009	-0.033	-0.061	-0.007	0.001	0.007
Female	0.1*	0.125**	0.028	-0.063	-0.07	-0.004	0.001	0.039	0.073
Age	-0.001	-0.015	-0.06	-0.033	0.1**	0.089**	0.012	0.059	0.056
Education	-0.054**	-0.035*	-0.06**	0.058**	-0.083***	-0.078***	-0.081***	-0.099***	-0.08***
Muslim	0.135	0.173*	0.251**	0.216**	0.279**	0.207*	0.02	0.08	0.01
Christian	0.311	0.107	0.322*	0.111	0.024	0.112	0.149	0.086	0.01
Jewish	0.576***	0.189	-0.215	-0.123	-0.315*	-0.364**	-0.233	0.238	0.131
Zorasthrian	0.107	0.061	0.069	-0.007	0.102	0.27	0.15	0.436**	0.232
Bahai	0.108	0.199	0.015	0.052	-0.091	0.032	0.008	0.244	0.154
Spritual	-0.036	-0.001	-0.005	0.148	0.039	0.069	-0.129	-0.141	-0.215*
Agnostic	0.071	-0.025	0.106	0.289**	-0.023	-0.021	-0.24*	-0.157	-0.159
Athiest	-0.13	-0.175	-0.242*	-0.026	-0.257*	-0.163	-0.374**	-0.257*	-0.309**
Religion/Other	0.031	0.148	0.138	0.151	0.242	0.129	-0.04	0.004	-0.137
Ethnicity/Persian	0.11	0.008	0.117	0.143	0.079	0.087	0.101	0.021	0.076
Ethnicity/Azari	-0.044	-0.104	-0.031	0.059	-0.149	-0.036	-0.058	-0.164*	-0.126
Ethnicity/Kurdish	-0.09	-0.13	-0.057	0.065	-0.086	-0.161	-0.055	-0.21	-0.18
Ethnicity/Gilak	0.015	-0.068	0.053	-0.048	-0.101	-0.062	0.03	0.179	0.082
Ethnicity/other	0.047	-0.032	-0.011	0.101	0.063	0.003	0.147	0.029	0.138
Residency_UScitizen/Iranian	0.078	0.214	0.124	0.167	-0.063	-0.058	-0.113	0.03	0.135
Residency_UScitizen/American	0.437*	0.32*	0.371*	0.07	-0.053	0.209	0.158	0.353*	0.419*
Residency_Status/Permanent resid	0.07	0.21	0.163	0.095	-4.7E-4	0.127	0.008	0.097	0.282
Residency_Student	0.182	0.177	0.06	-0.104	-0.049	0.016	0.035	0.02	0.226
Residency_Status/Skilled worker	-0.148	0.023	-0.08	0.121	-0.174	0.095	0.12	-0.066	0.125
Residency_Refugee	-0.054	0.022	0.116	-0.118	-0.206	-0.134	-0.159	-0.214	0.123
Income	8.6E-8	3.05E-7	5.7E-7**	7.4E-7***	3.3 E-7	2.9E-7	-6.3E-8	-1.8E-7	-5.8E-8
Married	0.184	0.043	-0.045	-0.183	0.114	-0.002	0.047	-0.048	-0.197
Single	0.14	0.007	-0.192	-0.306	-0.154	-0.11	-0.029	-0.05	-0.239
with Partner	0.053	-0.038	-0.129	-0.315	-0.156	-0.151	-0.176	0.136	-0.162
Divorced	0.096	0.084	-0.062	-0.096	0.196	-0.161	0.077	-0.23	-0.309
Seperated	-0.251	-0.347	-0.467	-0.345	-0.225	-0.348	-0.062	-0.461	-0.469
Widowed	0.347	0.03	-0.182	-0.56	0.17	-0.142	0.301	0.099	0.026
Intraction with Iranians	-0.129***	-0.1***	-0.1***	-0.097***	-0.042	-0.089***	-0.074**	-0.061**	-0.086**
Visiting Iran	0	-0.025	-0.009	-0.01	-0.001	0.003	-0.014	0	-0.005
Period Moved to US	0.006	-0.042*	-0.019	-0.01	0.007	0.002	0.02	0.006	-0.008
spouse/Iranian	1.717	0.293	1.887	2.613*	1.966	1.87	-0.544	1.329	1.468
spouse/American-Iranian	1.497	0.238	1.811	2.66*	1.823	1.814	-0.772	1.088	1.305
spouse/American	1.763	0.234	1.962	2.651*	1.912	1.986	-0.52	1.416	1.587
spouse/other nationalities	1.601	0.136	1.892	2.65*	1.852	1.777	-0.713	1.294	1.412
spouse/N/A	1.741	0.245	2.005	2.764**	2.021	1.869	-0.564	1.352	1.504