

Prioritizing and Developing Guidelines for Participation in Sports for All Activities among Tehran Citizens

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Abstract

The purpose of the present research was to investigate barriers of physical activity and participation in sport for all activities among Tehran citizenry and presenting their removal solutions. This survey was Descriptive–analytical and its statistical population was all male and female participating in sport for all activities in Tehran city (6600 female and 2400 male organized people) and finally, 370 people (156 male and 214 female) participated in the research and completed barriers questionnaires. Barriers questionnaire was a five-point likert-type scale that consist of 61 items and its face and content validity verified by the experts and its reliability was calculated in a pilot study using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha=0.936$). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with a Varimax rotation was used to identifying factors and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to confirming factors and presenting model. In EFA, of the 61 barriers, 53 items having appropriate factor loading were stand in six factors namely organizational and managerial, environmental, psychological, interpersonal, Lack of social support and time limitations. CFA results showed that “interpersonal” and “time limitations” factors had most effect in explanation of the barriers of sport participation (respectively with 0.88 and 0.85 factor loadings). Paying attention to barriers identified in this research and tries to develop removal solutions can cause to mass participation of the Tehran citizenry in physical activity and sport for all programs. In addition, in this research base on identified barrier factors, some strategies were presented in order to remove barriers and development of sport for all in Tehran city.

Keywords: Physical Activity, Sport For All, Barriers, Sport Participation

Introduction

Today, the sport is as an instrument for the promotion of welfare and also a way to develop and maintain physical and mental health in the society. The most important consequences of sport in terms of physical, mental, and social health include the health of body, mind breeding, creating a ground for independent personality, vitality and joy, and development of social skills (Zahedi, 2011).

Nowadays, the motivation of most people for participating in sports activities is not to achieve high levels of sport and to achieve one of the Olympic principles- faster, higher, and stronger. The competition plays a minimal role in their willingness to exercise. However, health, fitness, happiness, social relationships, and avoiding disease are the most important motivations to participate in sport (Mozaffari, 2005). Recreational sports has become as a standard method for promoting individual health and quality of life ; so, the policy of "Sport for All" or "public sport" was adopted to lower the threshold for sports participation and provide a fragmented sports landscape . The sport for all policy is the creation of opportunities and environments that are ideal for sports and will be realized through the cooperation of all involved agencies- public and private. This means that every person- regardless of gender, age, ability, social - economic conditions, and race- will be able to participate in sports and physical activities to achieve health and vitality and improve community relations. All of these organizations refer to the national responsibility of ensuring that everyone has an equal right to participate in sport and physical activities. Government and non-governmental organizations play an important role in achieving to participation in sport and physical activities .

The sport for all is effective, cheap, and funny for all the people. As a part of the daily life's program, it may play a vital role in promoting physical, psychological, and social health. Despite increased public awareness about the effects and consequences of inactivity, however, the evidence show that only a small percentage of people are willing to use sport for alls programs. The studies have shown that in the best conditions in Iran, the number of participants in sport for all is not more than 10 percent of the population (Project Overview Comprehensive Development Plan of Physical Education and Sport, 2002).

The success of most developed countries in public exercise is provided by proper management of the sport organizations (Goodarzi et al, 2004). The results suggest that the development of sport for alls in the long-term programs should be a priority for the governments. Otherwise, we should wait for the alarming statistics of disease, absence from work because of sickness caused by lack of exercise, increased mortality, and reduced level of public health .

So far, several plans have been provided to encourage people to exercise. However, none have tried to identify the facts; and based on the evidence, most of the implemented programs have been associated with limited success. The studies have shown that in the best conditions in Iran, the number of participants in sport for all is not more than 10 percent of the population (Project Overview Comprehensive Development Plan of Physical Education and Sport, 2002). So, the main questions of this study are: what are the barriers to Tehran citizens' participation in sport for all? What solutions can be offered for eliminating these barriers? Therefore, this study aims to examine the barriers to Tehran citizens' participation in sport for all and provide solutions to eliminate these barriers and develop sport for alls in the city.

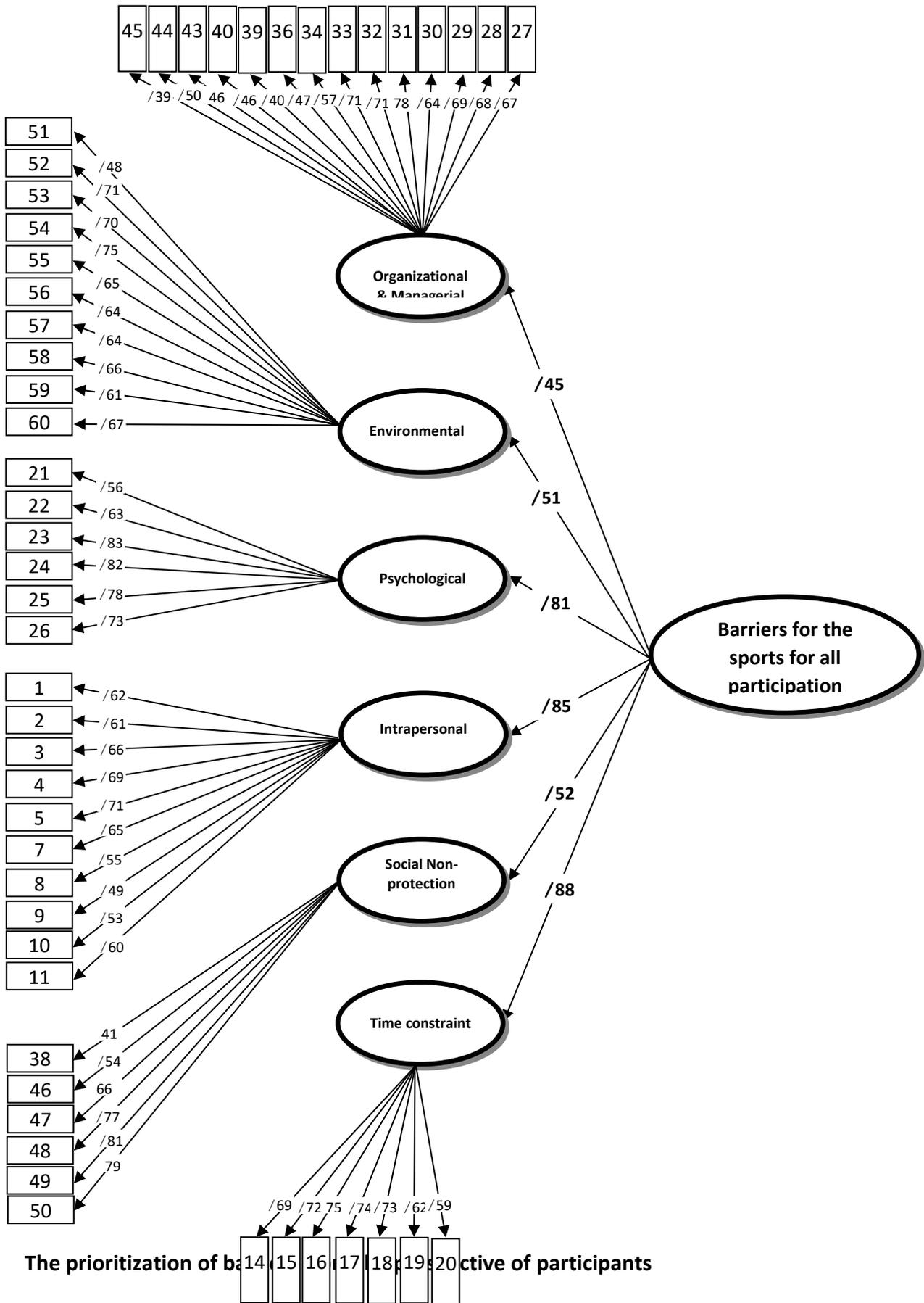
Research Methodology

This study was a descriptive - analytical field research. The population consists of all the men and women participating in sport for alls programs in the Tehran. According to the latest statistics by the National Sports Committee of Tehran, a total of about 9000 cases (6600 females and 2400 males) participate in organized sport for alls programs in Tehran. According to the cultural and social attachment assessment guidelines of Tehran Municipality (2008), all of the 22 districts in Tehran are divided into five different geographic zonings: north (1, 2, 3 and 5 regions), East (4, 8, 13, 14 and 15 regions), West (9, 10, 21 and 22 regions), center (6, 7,

11 and 12 regions), and south (16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 regions). Two regions from each zone and several men and women's sport for alls stations from each region were selected randomly. The questionnaires were randomly distributed among the participants and collected. According to the Morgan sampling table, the sample size was estimated 370 subjects. The researcher made questionnaire was designed by using the information of previous researches. This questionnaire tried to obtain a complete list of barriers and inhibiting factors. After examining the validity of the questionnaire and getting the opinions of experts, it was distributed among the samples. The statistical methods used in this study included descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics was used for calculating the frequencies, charting, data classification, calculating the central parameters, and dispersion of variables. The statistical software SPSS version 19 was used for data analysis. After examining the distribution of the variables by using the Kolmogorov- Smirnov test, some non-parametric Friedman tests were used to prioritize the identified factors.

Findings

Based on findings, from a total of 370 participants, 156 subjects were male (42.2%) and 214 subjects (57.8%) were female (Table 4-1). The age average of female and male participants was 13.49 ± 35.39 and 14.69 ± 37.26 years, respectively. The percent of participants had a high school diploma or less, diploma, BA, and MA or higher was 41.4, 15.7, 29.7, and 12.7, respectively. The 40.3 percent of participants were single and 59.5% of them were married.



In this section, the priority and importance of the barriers from the perspective of the participants are presented. It is noteworthy that due to the non-normal distribution of factors, Friedman rank test was used to prioritize and identify the significance of factors.

Table (1). Friedman test results for the prioritization of barriers from the perspective of participants

Factor	M \pm SD	Mean	Number	X ²	Df	Sig
Organizational	3.407 \pm 0.762	4.32				
Environmental	3.383 \pm 0.868	4.34				
Time	3.012 \pm 0.980	3.52				
Intrapersonal	2.975 \pm 0.931	3.45	370	336.094	5	* 0.001
Social	2.899 \pm 0.886	3.11				
Psychological	2.487 \pm 1.006	2.26				

The Friedman test (Table 1) indicated that according to the perspective of participants, organizational and management factors are the first priority and the psychological factor is the last priority.

The opinions of respondents about the preferred type of exercise indicated that about 66.8% of participants prefer group sports activities with friends and about 8.9% of them prefer the group sports activities with family. Of this number, 23% prefer individual participation in sports activities. Also, the green recreational spaces and nature had the highest priority for having the favorite exercise environments. In terms of activity time in holidays and non-holidays, reviewing the opinion of respondents indicated that activity time in holidays and non-holidays is 10.5% and 34.1%, respectively; most of the participants preferred to do sports activities in evening and night .

About 44.6% of participants agreed with holding sports conferences and festivals in regions. Also, 35.4% of participants were interested in organizing and participating in conferences and festivals of sport. About 17.3 percent of them had participated in previous conferences .

Discussion and conclusions

Barriers to physical activity include the issues and constraints that prevent the individuals from acting in exercise and sports or limit their commitment to the previous activities. Asihel (2005) believes that the time limitation is a barrier that may be followed by lack of enough funds, lack of facilities, as well as family concerns (Asihel, 2005).

In this study, being busy in work and not having enough time had high priority from the perspective of the participants. Most studies in this field have stressed the high importance of this barrier. Therefore, the findings of Asihel (2005), Green and colleagues (2006), Daskapan, Tozoon, and Aker (2006), Lerner, Barnes & D Rooyesteh (2009), Lowell, El-Ansary and Parker (2010), Gomez - Lopez, Gallegos and Akstrma (2010), and El Gilani et al (2011) about the impact of time limitation in different groups on their participation in sports are consistent with our findings. Also, family problems and concerns were introduced as the significant barrier to physical activity. Since most participants in this study were married (59.5%), it can be said that after leaving busy working environments, they involved in family problems and had limited time to do sports activities. Therefore, the top priority of these items seems logical.

In this study, the work time interference with specific time of sport facilities and low hours dedicated to extra-curricular programs in sports spaces were among the major barriers to physical activity participation. This finding is consistent with the research result of Gyurcsik et al (2007). In addition, this study showed that the time consuming feature of sport and high levels of physical activity during occupational tasks explain the relatively large amount of time limitation in the society. Due to lack of time in this class, it seems natural that physical activity and sport to be considered as a time-consuming activity. Although, participants in this study did not confirm this issue and assigned low priority to it.

In another part of the findings of this study, also, the most important barriers from the perspective of participants were organizational and managerial factors. The psychological factor was introduced as the least important barrier to participate in these activities. It seems to indicate the high level of their self-assessment in evaluating the mental and physical abilities and capabilities.

The participants opinions about how, where, and when of physical activity showed most of them prefer to do group sports activities with friends. Safania study (2001) also showed many of the people would like to participate with a friend in sports activities (Safania, 2001). As mentioned, the participation of friends facilitates the participation of people in these activities and being with friends increases the pleasure and fun of physical activities. In terms of preferred types of sport spaces, the recreational green spaces and the nature had a high priority. Most women participating in the study of Atqia (1387) tended to perform sports activities in indoors; this depends on the culture of the community.

In terms of activity time in holidays and non-holidays, reviewing the opinion of respondents indicated that they preferred to do activity in the holidays and in the evenings and nights of non-holidays. However, Atqia (2008) introduced the morning as the best time to do exercise; probably, this was because of his focus on women's sport. In the study of Zakani and Shujahuddin (2011), the evening and night hours was recognized as the suitable time for physical activity; this is consistent with the results of this study. Most participants in this study agreed with holding conferences and festivals of sport. Also, most of them stated their willingness to participate in these sports conferences and festivals. In their study, Khaki, Tondnevis, and Mozafari(2005) considered the holding of sports conferences, festivals, and competitions as one of the ways they can involve more people in these activities.

Investigating the opinions of participants about the performance of youth and sports organizations showed that most of them evaluated it performance as middle and lower-middle (weak and very weak). In the study of Goudarzi and Asadi (2000), and Shujahuddin and Zakani (2011), the sports and recreational facilities and programs were assessed weak and very weak. Also, this study showed that participants were satisfied from the performance of Sports and Youth office moderately to moderately low (weak and very weak). In the study of Rahmani, Poorranjbar and Bakhshinia (2006), Azizi, Farahani, and Khabiri (2011), the satisfaction of participants from the performance of physical education department were reported moderate and weak.

Generally, it can be said the items were introduced as barriers to physical activity in the community are connected together as a chain. In planning for removing these barriers, the nature and extent of their importance from the perspective of participants should be considered. These barriers which range from obstacles arising from the external environment such as managerial, organizational, environmental, and lack of social support factors to internal environment such as limited time, psychological, and interpersonal factors need careful and good planning; so that, the people will actively participated in sports activities.

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