Examining the hierarchical model of leisure constraints among women in Tehran regarding sports participation

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the constraints that prohibit Iranian women who live in Tehran to participate in sport activities during their leisure time. The three-dimensional leisure constraints based on the Jackson, Crawford and Godbey’s (1993) Leisure Constraints Model, was used as the theoretical frame work for the study. The sample consisted of 1263 women who lived in Tehran city. The instrument of this research was a questionnaire which was designed to measure three types of constraints to sport participation: 1) structural, 2) interpersonal and 3) intrapersonal. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire was approved. The results suggested that the subjects were constrained most by structural factors and this result is very different from what the original model claimed about the intrapersonal factors as being at the first place in the hierarchical model.

Keywords: Leisure constraint model, sport participation constraints, sport activity, leisure

Introduction

The growing body of research on women’s leisure indicates women’s position in society, their lack of access to valued resources, and societal expectations of women’s lives, roles, and responsibilities reduce their freedom and constrain their options (Green et al., 1990; Shaw et al., 1992; Wimbush et al., 1988).

Different studies showed that participation and/or non-participation of women in leisure-time related activities, especially recreational sports, is varied due to various constraints in different countries with various culture, religion, and climate conditions (Stodolska, Yi-Kook, 2005; Walker et al., 2005; Junui, 2000).

In Iran, unlike many other countries, few research activities have been conducted with a recreational sports approach on the identification of factors effective on participation of individuals, especially women, in leisure time-related activities. Social, political and cultural context makes a special situation In Iran, which is very different from western countries. It means that Iranian women should observe religious,
The present study has been performed with a hierarchical model of leisure constraints approach to study and analyze the constraint factors that limit the participation of women in sport activities based on various individual characteristics. The main problem of this study was based on identifying the constraints inhibiting women from participating in recreational sports as an important part of leisure time activities among women who live in Tehran.

The questions posed in this research were as follows:
1. Is the predicted hierarchical ordering of constraint factors supported, using a sample of Iranian women?
2. Do women with various individual characteristics experience constraints differently?

Most studies on women’s leisure have not used a constraint framework. In the present study, the researchers used the hierarchical model of leisure constraint framework, which is widely accepted and adopted by researchers.

The Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints

In 1991, Jackson, Crawford, and Godbey offered a hierarchical model of constraint. They believed that most research activities have concentrated on structural constraints, which may have the least importance in shaping leisure behavior, and less focus has been made on both intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints which have a high level of importance (Jackson, 2005). Jackson et al., (2005) offered a model that put constraints in a hierarchy of decision-making stages and how an individual experiences these constraints in a hierarchy (Alexandris, 2007).

In this model, preference of an individual's leisure time is formed at the intrapersonal constraint level; the definition of intrapersonal constraints, as given by Crawford and Godbey (1987), suggests that intrapersonal constraints fit with the definition of the psychological mediators. When intrapersonal constraints lose their effects due to the existence of a series of human desires and privileges; at any rate, these intrapersonal constraints are absent. At the next stage, an individual may face the interpersonal constraints level. This issue may happen at the time when one individual needs a companion for participation in one activity. When individuals can control this type of constraint, then the structural constraints may influence his/her decision for participating in leisure activity. Structural constraints include factors like time limitation, problems with facilities, and costs of participating, social and geographical isolation, lack of skills or abilities, and individual commitments. In the same direction, participation and activity emerge, when structural constraints are absent (Crawford et al., 2005).

At any rate, participation strictly hinges on constraints. In other words, absence of constraints is not defined as participation (although this issue may seem accurate for some individuals), rather participation will or will not occur as a result of a negotiation of these constraints. Such negotiation may change the form of participation but will not bar it. The “negotiation thesis,” as it is known, was based on the idea that despite experiencing constraints, people do find ways to participate in and enjoy leisure, even if such participation and enjoyment may differ from what they would have been in the absence of constraints (Jackson, 2005). This proposition explains that constraints will not always result in lack of participation; rather constraints may cause adaptation of participation.

Various investigations in the field of studying constraints according to the hierarchical model of leisure constraints, apply the order and significance of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints based on the aforementioned model (Crawford, Godbey, 1987; Jackson et al., 1993; Scott, 1991).

The results of some experiments indicate that the order of three-category constraints, in different countries strictly hinges on various cultures (Chick, Dung, 2004; Arab Moqaddam, Henderson, 2007; Aminuddin et al., 2007; Masmanidis et al., 2009).

In Iran, the few research activities made on the identification of leisure constraints concentrates on the importance of structural constraints, which include income level, time, and existence of facilities, physical
condition, and awareness (Ehsani et al., 1996; Ehsani, 2003; Arab Moqaddam, Henderson, 2006).

The results of research activities show that individuals, despite facing constraints, take part in their
favorite activities, but the strategies of such participation undergo some changes in the strategies; for
instance in the type of activity and/or the frequency of participation in that activity (Scott, 1991; Jackson,

Constraints and Variables of Individual Characteristics

Many of the constraints on women’s leisure, as revealed through the feminist literature, can be
conceptualized as structural constraints, including: Women’s lack of financial resources, and financial
independence, lack of transportation (Deem, 1986; Arab- Moghadam et al., 2007). Lack of leisure
opportunities and programs (Messner, Sabo, 1990; Robinson, Godbey, 1999; Theberge, 2000; Perline,
Stoldt, 2007), Time stress and lack of time For women who work and do household responsibilities
together (Green et al., 1990; Crawford, Hotsun, 1993), In some studies, women declared that though they
encounter time limitation, it is not very important to hinder them from participating in sport activities
(Stavropoulou, 2008). Anyway, the type of duties and responsibilities of women in households, as
housewives, mothers and/or spouses, will affect the type and rate of their activities directly because of
shortage of time (Arab Moghaddam, Henderson, 2007; Fredrick, Fest, 1999; Herridge et al., 2003;
Herington et al., 1997; Bella, 1986; Hunter, Whitson, 1992). Even married women, when compared with
single women, face more limitations to participate in sports and other leisure-related activities (Alexandris,
Carol, 2007). The constraint factors on women holding high academic degree will cause fewer limitations
to participate in leisure sports activities and spend more time in sports as compared with other women
(Ehsani et al., 1996; Alexandris, Carol 1997; Graton, Tyce, 1991).

Intrapersonal constraints were examined in different investigations. Most of them showed that
women’s ethic of caring family and relatives (Bialeschki, Michener, 1994; Henderson, Ainsworth, 2001;
Herridge, Shaw and Mannel, 2003; Arab- Moghadam, Henderson and Sheikholeslami; 2007, the self-
esteeem, embarrassment, social attitude, and fear of violence are very important factors that constraint
women’s participation in leisure activities, especially sports (Lafrance et al., 2000; Wiley et al., 2000; Carr,
2000).

Few studies have focused on factors that could be considered interpersonal constraints on women’s
leisure. This scarcity may be explained by the tendency of women toward having a greater number of
social relationships than men. Thus, they less likely lack leisure partners (Henderson, Ainsworth, 2000).
In addition, social disapproval of activities considered by friends, family members, or others and the social
control of women’s lives by husbands discourages them or makes it difficult for women to participate in
desired leisure activities (Green, Hebron, 1988; Glaser et al., 2006).

Gender is regarded as one of the individual characteristics, which causes considerable effect on the way
and rate of participation of individuals in sports activities. Studies show that women face noticeable
limitations, as compared with men, for participating in sports and leisure activities (Caldwell et al., 2002;
Deberg, 2000; King, 2000; Green et al., 1990; Shaw, Dorantay, 1992; Aitchison, 2001; Ehsani et al.,
1996; Wimbush, Tablot, 1998). But they participate in leisure time activities including sports more than
men (Fourie et al., 2011).

Age, as one of the most important factors affecting participation in leisure activities, is not a rationale
to quit or cease participating in sports (Aghai et al., 2006, Bult et al., 2011). Australian Social Trend
(2007) showed that 37% of women, who participated in sport activities more than twice a week, belonged
to women over 55 years old. In addition, other studies have shown that old people select sports activities
in accordance with their physical and gender conditions. Generally, increase of age will not cause
hindrance of the participation of individuals in sports activities; rather the shape and type of activity is
changed (Matheson, 1991; Kolter et al., 1995).
Materials and Methods

This study is a survey, in which pertinent questionnaires were distributed to a statistically viable sample society. The participants were selected using a cluster multistage sampling on women above 18 in Tehran, as the country’s largest city.

Identification of constraints among Tehran’s women against participating in sports activities and other similar activities is the major objective of the current research. Other objectives were determining the probable relationship participation in the sport activities on the one hand, and age, level of education, marital status, employment, and the number of children, on the other hand.

Sample and data collection

Questionnaires were distributed to 1500 women in Tehran. They were asked to explain the degree of their participation in sports activities, and also any constraints affecting their participation. The research participants were randomly selected from 22 districts of the Tehran municipality. In this regard, Tehran was divided into five north, south, east, west, and central districts. In each district, 2-3 regions were randomly selected. Each region included a number of sectors. Considering the population of that region, 2-5 sectors were randomly selected and 5 to 10 houses, with even-numbered addresses, were selected from each street. Then, questionnaires were given to the inhabitants of the houses. The women were asked to fill out the questionnaires within one hour. Finally, the filled out questionnaires were returned to the individuals in charge of distributing the questionnaires.

Of a total of 1,500 distributed questionnaires, 1,263- amounting over 84 % of the total number of distributed questionnaires--were gathered and the remaining questionnaires were excluded from the research process because of not responding all questions and/or giving incomplete answers to questions. Of the total number of women who answered all the questions, 34 % had academic degrees, while the remaining had either high school diploma or not. In this research, approximately 57 % of the participants were between 18-30 years old, 24 % between 31- 45 years old, and 18 % were above 46 years old. It should be mentioned that 53 % of women were single. Of the total number of women that answered the questions, 61 % were housewives, and 39 % were employed. Moreover, 26 % of women had no children, 57 % had 1 to 4 children, and 17 % of them had more than five children.

Instrument

A questionnaire was prepared by the researchers as the main instrument of the study. The steps listed below were used in the formulation of the present questionnaire. Considering the literature review of the study, the questions were prepared according to the three types of classifications, i.e., intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints.

The following steps were taken in development of the questionnaire:

1- Common factors and information were determined according to the questionnaires used by researchers, both inside and outside the country.
2- To improve the validity of the questionnaire’s items and also the accordance of its items with the native norms, the instrument was given to 20 female athletes. These female athletes were asked to add other items to the list, regarded as effective constraints affecting the participation of Tehran women in sports activities.

To evaluate the validity of the questions, ten experts (panel of expert) in the sports management were asked to offer their viewpoints on the questions and the order of the items in the questionnaire. Finally, a questionnaire was provided with 44 items according to the following tables on a five-point Likert scale, in three sections as personal information, degree of participation, and constraints, drawn up in triple constraints of the model that is, intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural constraints. Content and face validity were confirmed by 10(panel of expert).
Moreover, item validity was approved by Exploratory Factor Analysis (Interpersonal Questionnaire: KMO=0.916, KB=2/612, df=66, p=0.001; Intrapersonal Questionnaire: KMO=0/956, KB=3/815, df=190, p=0.001; structural Scale: KMO=0/916, KB=1/461, df=105, p=0.001) and confirmatory factor analysis (Interpersonal Questionnaire: AGFI=0.967, df=53, p=0.001; Intrapersonal Questionnaire: AGFI=0.987, df=74, p=0.001; structural Scale: AGFI=0.910, df=169, p=0.001) was significant. The devised questionnaire was randomly piloted among seventy Tehran women above 18 years old. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using alpha Cronbach, the obtained Cronbach’s alpha for all items of the questionnaire was 93%.

Results

The order of the three-category constraints of the hierarchical model was assessed by drawing up a list of 44 items and distributing the questionnaire among research society members. Based on the previous studies carried out in this regard, it was shown that the order of three-category constraints of the hierarchical model of leisure constraints has changed among Iranian women, the results of which are in favor of structural constraints. In this study, the results show that the order of constraints is changed to structural, intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences of Average</th>
<th>X1 = 25.1</th>
<th>X2 = 20</th>
<th>X3 = 78.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.5 = Average of intrapersonal factors</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>* 5.1</td>
<td>* -53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00 = average of interpersonal factors</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-58.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 = average of structural average</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The order of the three-category constraints model was studied based on intrapersonal variables, the results of which showed that the order obtained in each of the intrapersonal variables (age, education, number of children, employment, and marriage) is similar. For all these variables, structural constraints stood at the first rank, and intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints stood at the second and third ranks respectively.

The degree of participation of the participants in sports activities was studied and it was showed that, despite facing various constraint factors, they participated in sports activities in different ways. The results of this research indicate that 64 % of women in the society participate in sports activities in a way that the presence of constraints has left direct effect on the selection of the type and timing of the activity as well as the frequency of such activities. The results of the current study show that women with academic degrees participate in sports activities more than women who either have or do not have high school diplomas (70% versus 59%). In other words, women with academic degrees spend more time in sports activities, as compared with women. With high school diploma or no educational degree at all. Similarly, a total of 14% of the women never participate in sports activities, including women with and without high school diploma. Moreover, married women participate more in sports and leisure time-related activities as compared with single women (66% versus 62%). In other words, married women spend more time in sport activities. Generally speaking, women above 45 years old (70%) spend more time in sports activities than women of 18-30 and 31-45 age groups.
Table 2: Reliability test results of three-Category Constraints Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>General Average in Case of Elision</th>
<th>Variance in Case of Elision</th>
<th>corrected General Correlation</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intrapersonal Constraints</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disfiguration</td>
<td>121.10</td>
<td>1155.063</td>
<td>0.463</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being ashamed</td>
<td>121.71</td>
<td>1168.756</td>
<td>0.445</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities agreeable to family</td>
<td>121.22</td>
<td>1164.166</td>
<td>0.418</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities agreeable to friends</td>
<td>121.57</td>
<td>1169.563</td>
<td>0.403</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious beliefs</td>
<td>121.18</td>
<td>1153.340</td>
<td>0.502</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of self-confidence</td>
<td>121.23</td>
<td>1150.700</td>
<td>0.539</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity</td>
<td>120.80</td>
<td>1151.486</td>
<td>0.526</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of lack of ability and expertise</td>
<td>121.47</td>
<td>1161.444</td>
<td>0.493</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of interest</td>
<td>121.20</td>
<td>1166.167</td>
<td>0.395</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impatience and boringness</td>
<td>120.80</td>
<td>1185.405</td>
<td>0.231</td>
<td>0.927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal Constraints</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of companionship</td>
<td>121.08</td>
<td>1172.161</td>
<td>0.369</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision making of others</td>
<td>121.76</td>
<td>1171.630</td>
<td>0.445</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of expertise of friends</td>
<td>121.62</td>
<td>1167.540</td>
<td>0.447</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of companionship of family</td>
<td>121.30</td>
<td>1167.470</td>
<td>0.415</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disallowance of family</td>
<td>121.45</td>
<td>1152.386</td>
<td>0.535</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation in accompanying with others</td>
<td>121.81</td>
<td>1169.187</td>
<td>0.456</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexistence of righteous persons in environment</td>
<td>121.03</td>
<td>1149.337</td>
<td>0.543</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mocking others</td>
<td>121.70</td>
<td>1161.268</td>
<td>0.470</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of inattention to opposite sex</td>
<td>121.92</td>
<td>1165.277</td>
<td>0.466</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural constraints</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expensiveness of treatment cost</td>
<td>120.78</td>
<td>1152.729</td>
<td>0.521</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low income</td>
<td>120.59</td>
<td>1152.477</td>
<td>0.524</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surcharge of tuition fee of classes</td>
<td>120.09</td>
<td>1162.842</td>
<td>0.470</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Reliability test results of three-Category Constraints Variables (continue)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>General Average in case of Elision</th>
<th>Variance in Case of Elision</th>
<th>corrected General Correlation</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not having permanent job</td>
<td>121.16</td>
<td>1154.023</td>
<td>0.492</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expensiveness of appliances</td>
<td>120.49</td>
<td>1158.795</td>
<td>0.503</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-charge of transport fare Program</td>
<td>120.84</td>
<td>1154.553</td>
<td>0.528</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scheduling</td>
<td>120.41</td>
<td>1173.671</td>
<td>0.366</td>
<td>0.926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time shortage</td>
<td>120.31</td>
<td>1182.799</td>
<td>0.262</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational duties</td>
<td>121.06</td>
<td>1167.360</td>
<td>0.382</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House-related duties</td>
<td>120.94</td>
<td>1170.072</td>
<td>0.371</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>121.28</td>
<td>1147.566</td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>0.926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>120.39</td>
<td>1151.968</td>
<td>0.497</td>
<td>0.924</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>121.77</td>
<td>1154.264</td>
<td>0.501</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's clubs</td>
<td>120.65</td>
<td>1148.709</td>
<td>0.560</td>
<td>0.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of publicity</td>
<td>120.82</td>
<td>1154.903</td>
<td>0.491</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowdedness</td>
<td>120.43</td>
<td>1165.265</td>
<td>0.430</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faraway distance places</td>
<td>120.30</td>
<td>1164.388</td>
<td>0.428</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment and tools</td>
<td>120.22</td>
<td>1162.165</td>
<td>0.438</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unawareness of programs</td>
<td>120.69</td>
<td>1158.927</td>
<td>0.482</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of vehicle</td>
<td>120.87</td>
<td>1158.893</td>
<td>0.451</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational substandard</td>
<td>120.43</td>
<td>1157.028</td>
<td>0.515</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexperienced trainees</td>
<td>120.22</td>
<td>1153.103</td>
<td>0.544</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inattention of officials</td>
<td>120.23</td>
<td>1154.840</td>
<td>0.518</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unawareness of advantages</td>
<td>120.29</td>
<td>1163.665</td>
<td>0.319</td>
<td>0.926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-observing environmental health</td>
<td>120.76</td>
<td>1167.895</td>
<td>0.467</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expensiveness of treatment cost</td>
<td>120.78</td>
<td>1152.729</td>
<td>0.521</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surcharge of tuition fee of classes</td>
<td>120.09</td>
<td>1162.842</td>
<td>0.470</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: reliability test results of questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kronbakh alpha</th>
<th>No. of Factors</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.926</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>34.840</td>
<td>1213.813</td>
<td>123.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of $X^2$ test did not show any significant differences between the frequencies of the number of children and employment variables.

Discussion and Conclusion

The data obtained in the current research provide a suitable context for studying the way Iranian women deal with constraints in the specific social, religious, and political situation in Iran. Furthermore, the order of the three-category constraints of the hierarchical model was studied among Iranian women. The order of these constraint factors was also studied in relation with individual characteristics such as
age, education, number of children, employment, and marital status. The concentration of this research was on the rate of participation of Iranian women, despite facing constraints, considering their individual characteristics.

The results showed that the structural constraints are the most significant constraint group, women face when participating in sports and leisure-related activities. Shortage of sports facilities and equipment, as well as economic and financial problems and attitude of family and society towards attendance of women in sports arena is considered as the most important factors in this regard. This is consistent with the results reported by Arab Moghadam et al. (2007), in which they emphasized on traditional views and the social significance of leisure, economic, and social factors, and the family’s expectations as the most constraining items to the Iranian women's leisure.

The above findings show that the order of the three-category constraints of the hierarchical model is not fixed throughout the world, and its order strictly hinges on various conditions existing in different countries. In Iran, due to the existence of specific economic and cultural conditions, some limitations make women’s participation in sport activities in their leisure time difficult. According to the World Factbook (2011), the family income is not in a good economic position for Iranians. In addition, the inflation rate in Iran was 11.8% in 2010, as reported by the World Factbook (2011), while the rate in some western countries was significantly lower; for instance 1.6% in Canada and 1.4% in the United States. So, it is obvious that economic pressure on Iranians is considerable. Most of the requirements of families are very expensive. So, it is difficult for people to spend their money on expensive leisure and in recreational sport centers. Therefore, the cost of leisure and sport centers acts as an important constraint to participation in sport activities. It is evident that the limited income and financial factors will associate with other factors like transportation and preparing the necessary equipments for some sports.

The Order of constraints in the above-mentioned model has been approved in various countries, especially in western countries such as different parts of North America (Godbey, Crawford and Jackson, 1993). As mentioned above, in these countries, people do not face economic problems as compared with Iran. Considering the economic, social, and cultural conditions, it is natural that the first constraints of individuals in such countries are intrapersonal constraints. Eventually, the structural constraints are taken into consideration. As Abraham Maslow stated in 1943, human hierarchical needs in various countries differ according to the particular specifications of that country. In countries that do not suffer from economic problems, naturally, human initial needs are minor and in some cases, the initial needs are not taken into serious consideration. But in countries that suffer from severe economic problems, the initial needs of people are highlighted more than their other requirements.

Social and cultural factors are other important aspects of Iranian women life affecting the order of constraints level in the model. The social and cultural attitude towards women sports in general is positive, but religious beliefs and legislation put some limitation for women participating in outdoor recreational sports. They should wear Hijab. Also, some people look at some sports as manly sports, so they do not want women to participate in such sports.

Thus, it is logical that the hierarchical model of constraint strictly hinges on the existing condition of each country. In Iran, due to specific economic, cultural, political, and religious conditions of this country, people’s requirements differ from those of other countries, and consequently, the significance of the three-category constraints varies in the view of Iranian women.

The results of the research are in agreement with those obtained by Aminuddin et al. (2007), Ehsani (1996), and Dung and Chick (2004). In the study carried out by Ehsani (2003), it was shown that the structural factor is regarded as the most important constraint factor in the participation of Iranians in sports activities. Chick and Dung (2004) reported that the order of the three-category constraints strictly hinges on the existing cultural condition of each country. Moreover, they showed that the order of constraints in the hierarchical model changed in Chinese society. Similarly, the results of the present research indicate that the specific conditions in Iran have changed the order of the three-category constraint model. As mentioned above, it can be the result of the differences in the cultural, economical, and some other factors including specific social attitude and also religious beliefs, all of which lies in the cultural context of Iran, which is different from that of the western countries where the order of the constraints in the model was determined.

The obtained order of constraints in this research is fixed due to individual characteristics such as education, age, employment, number of children, and marital status. Generally, structural constraints are regarded as the most important constraints, which stood at the first rank, while intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints stood at the second and third ranks, respectively. Apparently, the order obtained
in this regard was not affected by any of the individual characteristics. It should be mentioned that the
significance of the structural constraint is fixed in all the groups studied. Despite facing constraints,
women still participate in sports activities, which are also highlighted in this research. In other words,
although women face constraints, they still take part in sports activities. Existence of constraint factors
does not create barriers to participating in activities and they still participate in sports activities. Generally
speaking, existence of constraints did not bring about hurdles to the participation of women in sports
activities; but the constraint factors have severely affected the rate and type of participation. As Scott and
Jackson stated in 1991, individuals participating in sports activities have to use specific strategies aimed
at weakening the barring effect of constraints. Moreover, these individuals use various strategies with the
aim of overcoming constraints as well as preparing suitable contexts for participating in their favorite
activities.

Although Iranian women face various constraint factors, the results of research show that almost 70%
of women in Tehran participate in sports activities. In other words, Iranian women only face limitations to
the rate and way of participation. Moreover, this research was carried out to address the nature of
constraints, not only emphasizing on participation. As Jackson (2005) declared, the history of women’s
leisure studies focused mainly on the participation of women in leisure, and the impact of constraints on
leisure activity conditions were rarely examined. This research showed that the particular situation in each
country may affect the way constraints affect the preference and frequency of recreational sport activities.
The results of the study show that the dominant circumstances in each country can determine the
significance of the constraints. So, it seems necessary to study the hierarchical model of leisure
constraints under different conditions to see how different cultures, religions, economics, and politics
affect the model.

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