

Research Paper

Analysis of Gender Differences in Time Use Among Iranian Older Adults

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ABSTRACT

Objectives Time use patterns affect humans' health and quality of life. Different social contexts such as gender roles impact on time use patterns in each society. The purpose of this article is to examine gender differences in time use patterns of Iranian older adults.

Methods & Materials The method of this study is the secondary analysis of the Iranian time use national survey data. A multistage stratified random sampling method was used to recruit the study samples. The study data were collected by completing the study questionnaires of 4285 Iranian elderly 60 years and older who were living in urban areas.

Results In this study, 52% of the subjects were male and 48% female. The Mean±SD age of males respondents was 69.2±7.8 years and for females, it was 68.7±7.5 years. About 24.5% of elderly women were living alone compared with 6.6% of men. Also, 5.5% of the elderly men and 6.8% of elderly women were disabled and need caregivers. In addition, the findings showed that elderly men allocated more time to paid works (2 hours per day for men in comparison to 6 minutes per day for women). In contrast, elderly women allocated more time to unpaid works such as caregiving and services to family (4.7 hours per day for women in comparison to 1.7 hours per day for men). Also, elderly men participated more in active leisure than women ($P<0.05$). Although the sleep time for the elderly women was more than that in elderly men, the time for eating, as well as self-care for men was more than women. According to the multivariate analysis, the gender differences in time use allocation were due to socioeconomic gender differences.

Conclusion Gender differences in time use allocation are due to socio-cultural and economic factors. Thus, we suggest that appropriate social welfare policies be designed to reduce gender differences in time use patterns by taking into account these important factors.

Extended Abstract**1. Objectives****T**

he time use pattern affects the health and quality of life of the elderly [1, 2]. These patterns are influenced by community context and socio-demographic factors such as gender. In this regard, this study aimed to

examine the gender differences in time use among Iranian elderly people.

2. Methods & Materials

In this study, we conducted a secondary analysis of the 2014 national time use survey data. The samples were 4285 older people aged ≥ 60 years living in urban areas of Iran. They were selected using a multistage stratified random

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sampling method. The study data were collected by filling questionnaires and holding interviews based on time allocation technique. In analyzing data, three concepts of “primary activity”, “participation rate”, and “average time” were considered. Primary activity refers to the major activity that is performed at a specific time. For example, if the subject was watching TV while eating, one of these activities is considered a primary activity. The participation rate is the percentage of people involved in the activity, and the average time is the time calculated for people who do and those who do not perform an activity. The obtained data were analyzed by multiple regression analysis in SPSS V. 20.

3. Results

In this study, 52% of the subjects were male and 48% were female. The mean±SD age of men was 69.2±7.8 years and for women, it was 68.7±7.5 years. About 6.6% of men and 24.5% of women were living alone. Moreover, 5.5% of men and 6.8% of women had disabilities and needed health care. As seen in Figure 1, elderly men devoted more time to paid works (2 h per day vs. 6 min per day in women), while elderly women mostly performed unpaid works such as providing care and services to family members (4.7 h per day vs. 1.7 h per day in men). Furthermore, elderly men performed leisure activities significantly more than elderly

women ($P<0.05$). The sleep time of elderly women was more than that of men, while the time spent on eating and drinking as well as the time for personal care activities in elderly men was more than that in elderly women.

According to Figure 2, the participation rate of elderly men and women in paid works, unpaid works, religious activities, and community volunteering was noticeably different. About 27% of elderly men participated in paid works, while for elderly women, the participation rate was 5%. On the other hand, 93% of elderly women participated in unpaid works (e.g. providing care and services to family members) and for men, it was 69%. Moreover, 72% of elderly women participated in voluntary activities in the community, compared to 63% of older men. Furthermore, the participation rate of elderly men and women in religious activities were 87% and 84%, respectively. Therefore, economic activities are more common in elderly men while social activities are more common in elderly women.

We used multiple regression analysis to examine the relationship of gender with time use patterns by controlling socio-demographic variables. Results showed that gender differences in using time are mostly due to differences in the socio-economic status of men and women and traditional patterns of gender roles.

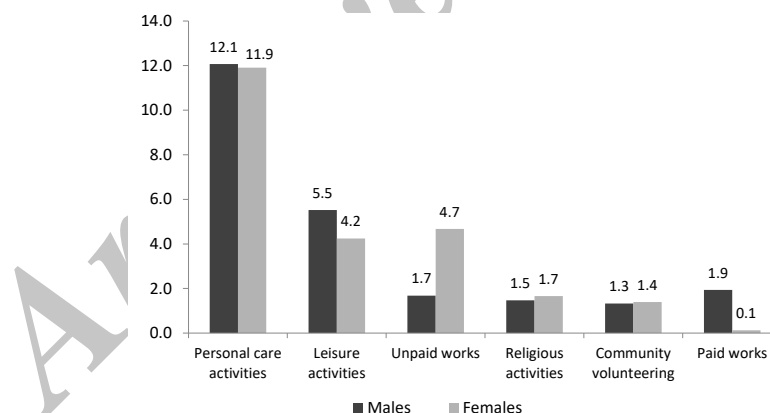


Figure 1. Time use patterns of the study subjects based on gender

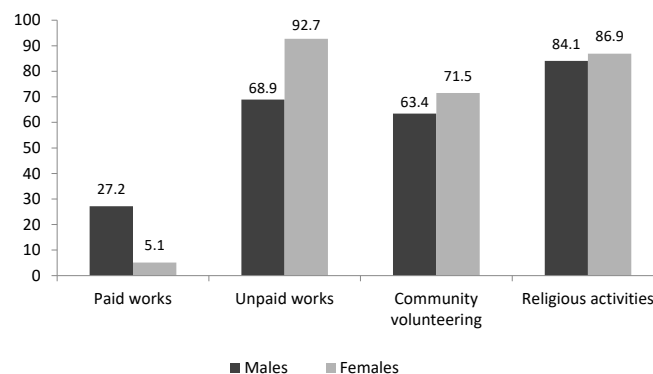


Figure 2. The participation rate of the study subjects in different activities

4. Conclusion

Time is one of the human resources that is affected by gender. In other words, gender influences time use patterns and time allocation in different ways. Gender differences in patterns of time use are mainly due to gender inequalities in economic and social opportunities, culture and social norms, gender-based division of labor, and the roles of women at home. Hence, welfare policies and programs need to be designed and implemented with the aim of reducing gender differences in old age. Considering the limitations of this study, it is suggested that in future studies, the role of the elderly's time use patterns in their health and well-being be considered, too. Also, considering that this study focused on urban areas, it is recommended that further studies be conducted on time use patterns of elderly women and men in rural areas.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with ethical guidelines

This study has been approved by Iranian Research Center on Aging and the Research Ethics Committee of University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences (code: IR.USWR.REC.1395.350).

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Authors' contributions

Conceptualization and methodology: Nasibeh Zanjari and Rasoul Sadeghi; Formal analysis: Rasoul Sadeghi; Investigation, resources, and draft preparation: Nasibeh Zanjari; Editing: Ahmad Delbari; Supervision, and project administration: Nasibeh Zanjari; and Funding acquisition: Nasibeh Zanjari and Ahmad Delbari.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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