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# **Analysis of Isfahan municipality's action in planning the leisure time of citizenries with an emphasis on recreational activities**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research was to analyze municipality's actions and steps towards planning leisure time of the citizenries, with an emphasis on recreational activities. 384 people from 1.269.810 (citizenries over 15 years of age, municipality managers and authorities and physical education authorities of city of Isfahan) were selected as samples by using Cochran formula. The data is collected by using a deformed shape of Michalopoulos *et al.* (1998) Questionnaire in consideration form. The results show that the viewpoints about municipality activities, executing the plans, instruction quality and accessibility to recreational areas are above average and the viewpoints about the municipality services are lower than average. The satisfaction with physical education authorities and citizenries about the municipality activities is about average, but the satisfaction with municipality authorities is above average. It indicates that the municipality managers and authorities are satisfied with their own actions. The satisfaction of municipality activities was not adequate in different fields. Municipality should use trainers with sufficient skills for higher satisfaction, improve the quality of relevant equipment, and should develop and expand sportive areas and places. Also, it should inform the citizenries about the activities through adequate propaganda in order to provide higher motivation for participation of people in recreational activities in their leisure time.

**Key Words:** Leisure Time, Recreational Activities, Planning, Municipality.

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## INTRODUCTION

Displacement, moving and mobility are among the characteristics of most creatures including human beings. In every stage of life and according to the type and rate of physical activities, human beings have different requirements that should be responded. As community-oriented creatures, human beings mainly gather in residential places such as villages and cities, to live. By promoting dwelling levels, the type and rate of physical activities are changed and the need for physical activities has become less for providing living facilities. Hence the citizenries should do exercises on a programmable basis to respond the stimulating requirements, to benefit from the relevant advantages. On the other hand, regarding the increasing rate of civil dwelling, cities have been selected as the human beings' environments, so the spaces should be provided in the city for the citizenries to become inclined in doing physical exercises (1).

In his leisure time theory, Rojek Says, "Leisure time is a subject considered more than before. We live in the time of challenges and uncertainties, in which the related matters to the nature and aims of leisure have had increasing importance (2)."

There are various investigations regarding the activities of municipalities for the citizenry: In 2011, Pourmousavi expressed the rate of information by the responding people from the municipalities' programs and leisure places to be in low levels (3). Ahmadi (2007) defines the rate of identifying and knowing cultural-entertainment organization of the municipalities to be less than average and the rate of satisfaction of the people having minimal recognition of this organization is also less than average (4). Due to evaluation of the municipality services for leisure times of Greek citizens, Yfantidou *et al.* (2011) concluded that the municipality had

considered executing and sticking to the presented programs (58%), criticisms and complaints (77%), prioritizing the benefits of members as compared to the personal interests of the personnel, etc. (5). Cureton (2010) did a research with the aim of deeper understanding of people access to their leisure times, via the activities of the personnel of recreational section of the municipality and found that the citizens with low income could also have access to leisure time activities, by reducing the costs (6).

Saeedi did a research in 2011 for the need of Tehran citizens to the public exercises with regards to age, sex, region, space, and time. The results show that the factors for not dealing with exercises include primarily the shortage of time and the second one is loneliness and having no friends to accompany for the exercises. He also indicated that the leisure time of most of the citizens to be between 1-3 hours (7). Ansari did a project in 2008, regarding the comparison of the hindrances for participation of the youth and the elderly people of the city of Shahreza in physical exercises and recreational activities, and found that the obstacles facing the youth include lack of facilities, social and economic factors, and the obstacles confronting the elderly people include social factors, facilities and lack of physical readiness (8). Casper *et al.* (2013) expressed the limiting factors of sporting partnership and leisure time activities among the North Americans of Latin origin to be lack of accompaniment by friends, lack of knowledge, lack of access, lack of adequate time, lack of facilities, and lack of safety (9).

Kok *et al.* (2010) did a research for analyzing the relationship between physical activities and exercising images among the citizens of a city in Malaysia. The results in this research indicate that the exercising images are significantly related to the physical activity levels (10). Asgari (2010)

did a research about analyzing the views and inclinations of the youth of the city of Esfahan in relation to exercise activities. He concluded that the reason for not participation of the people in exercising activities are respectively as follows delaying the daily activities, lack of access to gymnasiums, laziness and not having the feeling for doing the exercises (11). Rahnamaei and Aghaei (2009) did a research about the role of municipalities in developing exercise area for spending the leisure times by the citizens residing in regional municipality 6 in Tehran, and concluded that the most important matter in using sports areas in that region is inaccessibility to exercising areas near or adjacent to the residing place (12). "National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics" (2007) concluded in a research that the most prevalent reasons in the country for not participating in physical exercises are occupations and studies, family reasons, fear from injuries, illness, high costs, lack of interests, and age (13).

Some of the sociologists believe that social divisions in communities do not determine the slate of leisure times. Similar to inequalities in education, occupation, etc., inequalities are the same for leisure time, too. People who live in well-established areas have enough facilities for different recreational activities, but is it the same for all the regions to have equal living conditions and accessibility to recreational instruments? Since the citizens, especially the youth make the future of a society and should have appropriate leisure time, it is necessary to consider whether the citizens are satisfied with the facilities that the municipality has provided for them or not, is the rates of satisfaction of citizens, municipality authorities and physical education authorizes similar to each other

In this research, the author is looking for the answers to the following questions, "Are the managers, municipality authorities,

physical education authorities and citizens satisfied with the activities done for leisure times with an emphasis on exercise activities?", "Are the services that the municipality has provided for exercise and recreation activities suitable for the citizens?", "Is accessibility to exercise and recreational areas appropriate?", "Are there any discrepancies between municipality managers and authorities, physical education authorities and the citizens about the activities done for the leisure times with the emphasis on recreational activities?"

Since the citizens and especially the young people are the most important people in a community, they need leisure times and hence they require an appropriate planning for spending their time. Planning for the leisure time of the citizens is one of the duties of cultural and recreational organizations, especially the cultural/recreational organization of the municipalities. This organization respond to a part of leisure requirements of the citizens by providing exercise, recreational, cultural facilities and training services. Hence, we are going to deal with analyzing the municipality activities in that regard.

If the government wants to provide physical and mental health for the citizens, it should consider sports a lot, too. It should notice the effective factors on developing sporting activities in all dimensions and reduce the holding elements in that regard. Hence we hope that the urban authorities and the sports/physical education authorities do their efforts in providing proper areas for recreational activities in leisure times. Thus, this researcher wants to deal with analyzing the municipality activities about the leisure times with an emphasis on the recreational activities in the city of Esfahan and respond to the question, "Are the citizens, managers, and authorities of the municipality and physical education organization satisfied from the municipality activities regarding the citizens leisure times with emphasis on

recreational activities?" and "Has the municipality done the required actions in that regard?"

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The surveying-descriptive research is considered among the post-occurring research for its methodology, regarding time as a sectional research. As research materials, documentation, field studies and questionnaires are used for this research.

**Subjects.** The statistical population of the present research includes all the citizenries over 15 years of age in Esfahan (1,269,758 people), municipality managers and authorities (41 people), physical education organization authorities (11 people) and 384 people were selected among them by using Cochran's formula. But, due to possibility of reductions, an extra 20% was considered, and finally 441 questionnaires were received. Since the number of municipality and physical education organization managers and authorities was few, no sampling was done on them and all of them had their viewpoints. The city of Esfahan has 14 districts of which 5 districts are selected randomly from 4 corners of Esfahan and the center of the city. Each region was again randomly chosen with 3 parks out of all the parks in each district that had exercising instruments. The questionnaires were distributed in the parks and then collected.

**Instruments.** Research tools include 2 questionnaires of which the first one was made by the researcher, consisting of personal questions, duration of the exercise and leisure times, motivations and the obstacles for doing the exercises, place of the leisure time, etc. that was only for the citizenries, and the 2nd questionnaire that was 3 groups of participants was the deformed form of Maria Michalopoulous *et al.* (1998) (14), having 5 different components such as : a) municipality actions, b) executing the programs, c)

municipality services, d) access to recreational spaces, and e) instruction quality. In this 20-item questionnaire a 7-choice scale of Likert was used that included: Not important, not quite important, relatively not important, medium, relatively important, important, and very important. Some items are related to the municipality actions (6 questions), and these are 7 questions regarding execution of the programs by the municipality physical education org., and these are 3 questions about the municipality services for recreation activities, 1 question regarding accessibility to recreational areas and these are also 3 questions about the quality of instruction in gyms and sporting areas. The reliability of the questions was approved by 10 professors with Ph.D in management and planning for physical education. The consistency of the questionnaires is obtained by Cronbach's alpha method to be 0.94.

**Statistical Analysis.** Descriptive statistics indexes are used for data analysis for obtaining the frequency, percentage, central inclination indexes and dispersion indexes and also for drawing tables, graphs, brief statements and classification of the data. Inference statistics methods are used for describing, interpretation, relations and the difference between the collected data that include Kruskal-Varis test, variance analysis, Toki's follow-up, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and also the t-test. All the statistical operations were done by SPSS software.

### **RESULTS**

49.4% of the participants were female and 50.6% were male. 62.8% were single and 37.2% were married. Most of the participants for the research were students (45.4%) and 9% are also unemployed. Most of the participants in the research had participated in exercise activities for the last 3 month, more than 3 days a week (32.9%) and 17.9% of them had no physical exercise

whatsoever. The average of leisure time of the citizens is 5.29 hours in a day and most of the participants have leisure time activities in the afternoons (41.7%) and in parks and natural environments provided by the municipality (42%). Most of the participants use very little (32%) and 25.9% do not use the municipality facilities whatsoever. The most important leisure time activity of the participants is physical exercise and then watching TV. 82.1% of them do physical exercises during the week and 61% of them do recreational activities and 21% do professional sporting activities. Average time of participation in exercise activities during a week is 3.54 for the participants and walking is the prior exercise for the participants of the research. The first motivation for the participants for exercise activities is gaining happiness and pleasure (21.8%) and the most important factor for not doing physical exercises in the participants is shortage of time (31.1%). The average rates of satisfaction of the citizenries from municipality activities are equal in all regions and the equality of the average rates is not rejected. Satisfaction of the citizens is a little higher in regional area 6 and regions 10 and 13 satisfaction of the citizenries is a little lower than other regions.

The level of significance between 3 groups regarding expression of municipality actions for the leisure time of the citizenries, executing the programs by municipality physical education organization, municipality services about recreational activities, accessibility to the provided recreation areas by the municipality, quality of instruction in gyms and sports areas of the

municipality and comparison of the viewpoints of the 3 groups of the participants for satisfaction from municipality actions of the city of Esfahan shows the significance to be 0.000, that means the average of activities is not similar for the 3 groups. Through Toki's follow-up test, we conclude that the average rates for the physical education org. authorities and the citizenries are similar in all cases, but the average rate regarding municipality managers is different to the other two groups. It has caused rejecting the hypothesis of zero in the average rate between the 3 groups.

According to the data in table 1, the rate of satisfaction of managers and authorities of the municipality for the relevant actions for the leisure time of the citizenries by emphasizing on recreational activities is 5.7, for the physical education organization authority is 4.1, and for the citizenries are 3.8. This rate for executing the programs by the physical education organization of the municipality is 5.62, for the authorities of the physical education org. is 3.59 and for the citizenries, it is 3.55. Regarding the municipality services (5.72), the rate is 3.42 for the authorities of physical education org. and it is 3.68 for the citizenries. Regarding the quality of instruction in gyms and sports areas of the municipality (5.68), the rate for the authorities is 3.48 and 3.74 for the citizenries. Also according to the data in table 2, the satisfaction rate for the municipality actions for managers and authorities shows 5.7 and for the physical education authorities and the citizenries it shows the value of 3.7.

Table1. The satisfaction of the participants

Participants	No.	Municipality actions	Executing programs	Municipality services	Quality of instruction
Citizenries	441	3.80	3.55	3.68	3.74
Municipality Managers and Authorities	41	5.72	5.62	5.72	5.68
Managers and Authorities of Physical Education	11	4.12	3.59	3.42	3.48
Total	493	4.54	3.72	3.84	3.90

This table analyzes the rate of satisfaction of 3 participating groups for the municipality activities, execution of the programs, municipality services and the quality of instructions. Table 2 analyzes the

satisfaction rate of the 3 participating groups for the municipality activities, considering the evaluating measures to be between the ranges 1-7.

Table2. Satisfaction of the participants from the municipality activities

Participants	No.	Lowest value	Highest value	Average	Standard Deviation
Citizenries	441	1	7	3.71	1.42
Municipality Managers and Authorities	41	3.40	6.55	5.70	0.71
Managers and Authorities of Physical Education	11	1.58	6.40	3.79	1.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>1.48</b>

Having access to recreation areas is important (54%) from the viewpoint of managers of the municipality, average from the viewpoint of physical education authorities (28%) and very important from the viewpoint of citizenries (17%)

According to the data in table 3 and since the average of "4" was considered, we conclude from t-test that the hypothesis for zero is not rejected for the cases like the activities of municipality for the leisure time

of the citizenries, execution of programs, quality of instruction in gyms and sports places of the municipality and accessibility to recreation and exercising spaces by the municipality. It means that the test is not significant and the average is over "4". But the hypothesis of zero is rejected for municipality services. It means that the test is significant and the average rate is lower than "4".

Table3. Analysis of variables via t-test and average rates

	t	Degree of freedom	Significant level	Average different rate	Lower threshold	Upper threshold
<b>Total</b>	-1.794	491	0.073	-0.12012	-0.2517	-0.0114
<b>Municipality activities</b>	-0.272	492	0.785	-0.01988	-0.1633	0.1235
<b>Executing Programs</b>	-4.183	492	0.000	-0.27586	-0.4054	-0.1463
<b>Municipality Services</b>	-1.920	492	0.055	-0.15213	-0.3078	0.0036
<b>Quality of instruction</b>	-1.219	492	0.223	0.09533	-0.2490	0.0583
<b>Access of sporty activities spaces</b>	0.893	492	0.372	0.083	-0.10	0.27

The table considers municipality activities, programs execution, services of the municipality quality of instructions and accessibility to the sporting areas relative to the average grade that was considered to be 4.

## DISCUSSION

Municipality actions for the leisure times were considered in this research by stressing on recreational activities. The conclusions for analyzing the data are as follows:

Hence the municipality actions were not adequate from the viewpoint of the

citizenries. The results of this research are compatible with the results of the researches by Hosseini *et al.* (2006), Department of Recreational Sports (2011), Yfantidou *et al.* and Casper *et al.* (2013), (5, 9, 15, 16) but not compatible with the results obtained by census office in "National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics" (2007) (13). This research shows that one of the factors is not dealing with physical exercises is lack of facilities. The reason for incompatibility of this research with the similar research from municipalities of different countries includes improper planning and more facilities.

The satisfaction rate of municipality authorities in executing programs is 5.62 of the physical education authorities is 3.59 and of the citizenries is 3.55 that could be due to lack of knowledge by the citizenries or lack of adequate advertisements by the municipality. There are different researches that are done in this regard:

Pourmousavi (2011) showed in his research that the rate of knowledge by the responding people from the leisure time plans and places of the municipality is in low levels (3). Yfantidou *et al.* (2011) concluded that municipality has considered stability on the programs for 58%, criticisms and complaints for 71% and 81% for the priority of the benefits of the members for their personal benefits in developing recreational activities and the rate that the municipality considers more important is about the programs (5). Kok *et al.* (2010) found that sports images are considerably related to the physical activity levels (10).

It can be concluded from the research that most people have no adequate information about the places and programs of leisure times of the municipality. Hence, if the municipality does provide enough propaganda in this regard for the people to be informed, more people could participated in the programs of leisure times and recreations. Since the evaluating criteria are within the range of 1 to 7, the rate of

satisfaction of the municipality managers about the services for recreational/sports program is 5.72, and this rate is 3.42 for the authorities of the physical education and 3.68 for the citizenries. Thus, the activities are not enough as far as the citizenries are concerned.

We conclude in this research that the services of municipality for recreation of the citizenries are not adequate for them. There are lots of researches in this regard and we can only point to Yfantidou research who concluded by his research that municipality has taken notice of maintaining the equipment and the customers' information by the personnel (48%), as well as the freshness and health of the community (77%). The rate of satisfaction in the mentioned research is more than the present research that indicates satisfaction of more responding people about the activities of the municipality (5).

We conclude in this research that accessibility to physical exercise areas is quite important for the citizens.

The results of this research is compatible with the researches done by Asgari (2010), Rahnamaie and Aghaei (2009), Atarzadeh Hosseini and Sohrabi (2007) (11, 12, 17) but not compatible with the researches done by Saeedi (2011) and "National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics" (2007), (7, 13).

In most of the researches, lack of facilities or inaccessibility to the facilities and recreation spaces is one of the preventing factors for leisure time activities and the reasons for incompatibility of these researches with the present research are higher rate of actions by the municipalities in various countries, appropriate planning and having more relevant facilities by them.

We conclude that the quality of training and instructions was not appropriate in gyms, according to the citizens. The results of this research are compatible with the

research by Rahnamaei and Aghaei's research (2009) (12).

### CONCLUSION

We could conclude from this research that the other factors for not dealing with physical exercises are lack of skills and adequate knowledge of the trainers, shortage of gyms and municipality's recreation centers and low quality of the relevant equipment. Municipality should use highly skilled trainers and improve the quality of the equipment and develop and expand the gyms and sports fields and areas for the citizenries to get higher motivation in participating in physical exercise activities.

Hence we conclude that the rates of satisfaction of the city's managers and authorities of the physical education and the citizenries were similar with respect to the municipality actions (almost average). But the satisfaction rate of the municipality managers and authorities was more than the other two groups that indicates self-satisfaction of the municipality managers and authorities.

Normal data was approved by the tests. Since the average is considered to be "4", we could conclude from t-test that for the average rates of actions by the municipality for the citizenries leisure times by stressing on recreational activities, the average rate of

programs by the municipality physical education organization, the average rate of the quality of instruction in gyms and sports spaces, the hypothesis of zero is not rejected regarding accessibility to the constructed areas and spaces by the municipality and the test is not significant and the average is over "4". But the hypothesis of zero is rejected about the municipality services regarding recreational activities, that means that the test is significant and the average rate is lower than "4". Thus the average rate of municipality actions is lower than the total average only in one case, regarding the views of the 3 participating groups and the rate is higher than the total average in the rest of the cases.

Therefore, referring to the results of the present research and other fulfilled researches, it can be stated that the municipality should increase its activities related to the leisure times for the citizenries and develop the spaces for creating motivations in the citizenries and it also should prepare more announcements and advertisements.

Also, the criticisms and complaints of the participants in sporting and exercise activities should be noted in order to provide more participation of the citizenries in recreational activities.

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## مقاله اصیل

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## تازه‌های علوم کاربردی ورزش

دوره اول، شماره چهارم

صص ۵۳-۶۲، زمستان ۱۳۹۲

# بررسی اقدامات شهرداری اصفهان در برنامه‌ریزی اوقات فراغت شهروندان با تأکید بر فعالیت‌های ورزشی تفریحی

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## چکیده

هدف تحقیق حاضر بررسی اقدامات شهرداری در برنامه‌ریزی اوقات فراغت شهروندان با تأکید بر فعالیت‌های ورزشی تفریحی بود. تحقیق حاضر توصیفی-پیمایش می‌باشد و اطلاعات با استفاده از شکل تغییر یافته پرسشنامه میچالوپولوس و همکاران (۱۹۹۸) و یک پرسشنامه محقق ساخته جمع‌آوری شده است. جامعه آماری تحقیق حاضر شامل شهروندان بالای ۱۵ سال شهر اصفهان (۱۲۶۹۷۵۸ نفر)، مدیران شهرداری (۴۱ نفر) و مسؤلان تربیت بدنی (۱۱ نفر) بود. با استفاده از فرمول کوکران ۳۸۴ نفر از شهروندان به عنوان نمونه انتخاب شدند. با توجه به این که تعداد مدیران و مسؤلان شهرداری و تربیت بدنی کم بود از همه آن‌ها نظرسنجی شد. نتایج نشان می‌دهد که میانگین نظرات سه گروه در زمینه اقدامات شهرداری، اجرای برنامه‌ها، کیفیت آموزش و دسترسی به فضاهای ورزشی و تفریحی بالاتر از میانگین و در زمینه خدمات شهرداری پایین‌تر از میانگین می‌باشد. میزان رضایت مسؤلان تربیت بدنی و شهروندان از اقدامات شهرداری در حد متوسط اما میزان رضایت مسؤلان شهرداری در حد بالایی است که این امر نشان می‌دهد، مدیران و مسؤلان شهرداری از کار خودشان راضی هستند. میزان رضایت شهروندان از اقدامات شهرداری در زمینه‌های مختلف کافی نبوده است. شهرداری باید برای رضایت بیشتر از مربیانی با مهارت کافی استفاده کند، کیفیت وسایل و تجهیزات را بهبود و سالن‌ها و اماکن ورزشی را توسعه دهد. همچنین با تبلیغات لازم موجب آگاهی شهروندان از اقدامات شود تا انگیزه بیشتری برای شرکت افراد در فعالیت‌های ورزشی تفریحی در اوقات فراغت ایجاد کند.

**واژگان کلیدی:** اوقات فراغت، ورزش‌های تفریحی، برنامه‌ریزی، شهرداری.

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