Gender and Time Use Patterns among Iranian Older Adults

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Abstract

Despite the great volume of research on the time use and leisure time of older adults, much less attention has been given to time use patterns of Iranian older adults, mainly from a gender perspective. Considering gender differences in time use patterns among older adults provides insight into continuity of socially constructed role and its implications for well-being. This study focuses on the importance of gender in formation the different aspects of time use among Iranian older adults. In particular, we examine gender differences in the allocation of time use among older Iranians with controlling other socio-demographic correlates.

Time use data helps us to explain gender gaps in leisure time, employment and health related behaviours. The secondary data analysis of Iranian Time-use Survey (2009) was used. The data collected in cities by questionnaire based on stratified sampling. The sample size was 3516 of Iranian elderly (60 years and older) who lived in urban areas. Multiple classification analysis (MCA) is used to data analysis.

The findings showed significantly gender differences in time use patterns. Time use patterns of men are different from those of women. While men spent more time in labour market for paid work, women allocated their time to unpaid work and social volunteering work. In term of leisure time results showed men spend more time to active leisure than women.

The gender gap in time allocation may be dependent upon the socio-demographic variables. Controlling for socio-economic and demographic variables (such as age, education, living arrangement, marital status, employment situation, and so on), we found significant gender differences in time use patterns (paid work, unpaid work, leisure time, Personal care activities).

Therefore, gender play a crucial role in shaping time allocation. This is the outcome of gender role attitudes, gender inequality and cultural beliefs. Gender sensitive intervention is an important point for the achievement of development goals.

Keywords: Time use patterns, Leisure time, Health related behaviour, Paid work, Social participation, Older adults.

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Introduction

Time is a fundamentally gendered resource. How women and men allocate their time expresses information on what activities are valued and how time constraints are linked with power relations, cultural beliefs, and individual behaviours (Sayer, 2015). Considering gender differences in time use patterns among older adults provides insight into continuity of socially constructed role and its implications for well-being.

This study focuses on the importance of gender in formation the different aspects of time use among Iranian older adults. In particular, we examine gender differences in the allocation of time use among older Iranians with controlling other socio-demographic correlates.

Time use data helps us to explain gender gaps in leisure time, employment and health related behaviours. Research based on time-use data shows that women do the vast majority of household tasks and child care, regardless of their educational level or employment status (Bird and Fremont,1991; Shelton 1989; Shelton and Coverman 1988).

Data and Methods

The secondary data analysis of Iranian Time-use Survey (2009) was used. The data collected in cities by questionnaire based on stratified sampling. The sample size was 3516 of Iranian elderly (60 years and older) who lived in urban areas.

In this study, time use patterns categorized into six main categories: Paid work (Paid employment Self-employment); unpaid work; social volunteering activities; Leisure time activates (Passive leisure time, Active leisure time); Personal care activities (Sleep and rest, Eating and drinking, Self-care behaviors).

Multiple classification analysis (MCA) is used to data analysis.

Results

The findings of present study showed the highest average of time allocation in time use patterns, related to personal care activities for both of gender; particularly in terms of rest and sleep (figure1.) the lowest average in time allocation is for paid work.

Figure 1. Time use patterns (in minute) of Iranian older adults, 2009
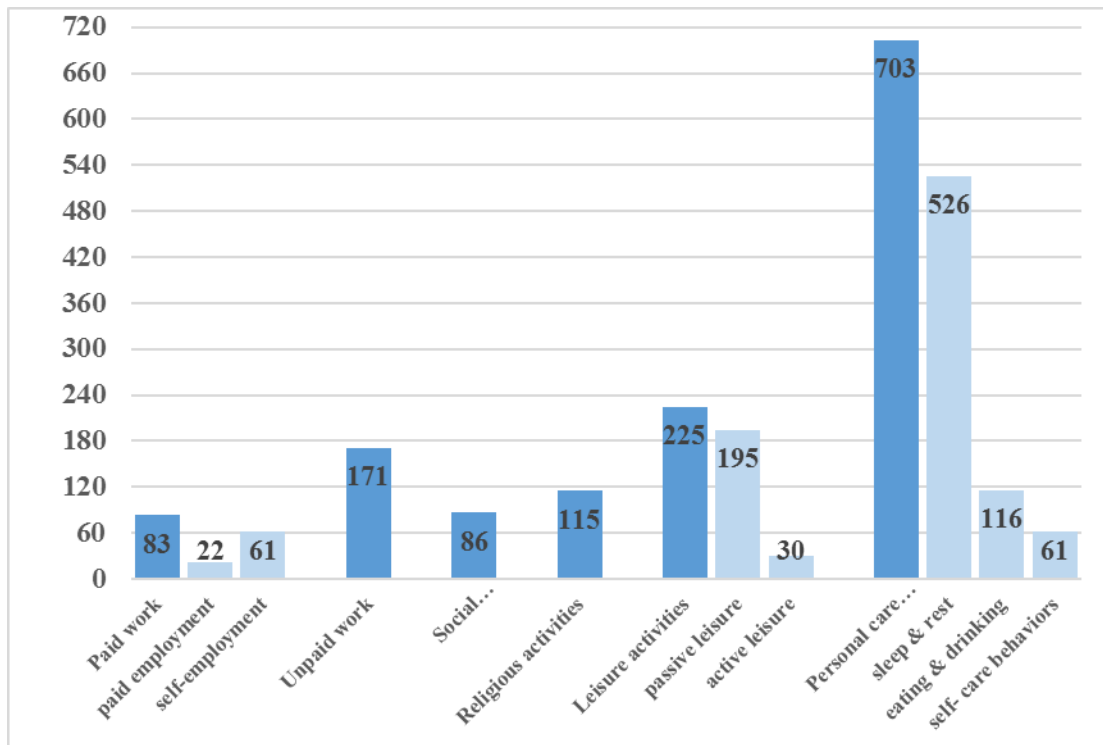
The Bivariate analysis revealed significant gender differences in time use patterns. Men spent more time in labour market for paid work than women. While women allocated their time to unpaid and social volunteering work. In term of leisure time results showed men spend more time to active leisure than women (Table. 1).

Table 1. Time- use allocation (minute) of Iranian male and female older adults

Time use patterns	Gender		t-test	Sig
	male	female		
Paid works	139.3	19.5	21.54	0.001
Paid employment	33.8	8.0	8.55	0.001
Self-employment	105.6	11.5	19.24	0.001
Unpaid works	96.9	254.0	-32.80	0.001
Social volunteering activities	82.9	90.3	-2.28	0.022
Religious activities	110.6	119.2	-2.56	0.006
Leisure time activates	244.4	203	7.99	0.001
Passive leisure time	201.3	187.4	2.58	0.004
Active leisure time	43.2	15.6	13.77	0.001
Personal care activities	704.9	700.6	0.8	0.424
Sleep and rest	520.2	532.2	-2.44	0.015
Eating and drinking	117.0	114.7	1.27	0.206
Self-care behaviors	67.7	53.7	6.51	0.001

The gender gap in time allocation may be dependent upon the socio-demographic variables. MCA showed that controlling for socio-economic and demographic variables (such as age, education, living arrangement, marital status, employment situation, and so on), gender were the most important independent variables that shaped time use patterns of Iranian older adults. This remained differences is significant for paid work, unpaid work, leisure time, and Personal care activities (Table. 2).

Table 2. MCA results of gender and time use patterns controlling with socio-demographic variables

	Time use Patterns											
	Paid work		Unpaid work		Social volunteering activities		Religious activities		Leisure time activates		Personal care activities	
	Unadjusted	Adjusted for Factors	Unadjusted	Adjusted for Factors	Unadjusted	Adjusted for Factors	Unadjusted	Adjusted for Factors	Unadjusted	Adjusted for Factors	Unadjusted	Adjusted for Factors
Male	139.3	104.5	96.9	119.8	82.9	86.6	110.6	117.0	244.4	249.2	704.9	717.6
Female	19.5	61.1	254	228.3	90.3	86.2	119.2	112.1	203.0	197.7	700.6	686.3
Eta/Beta	0.328	0.078	0.493	0.340	0.039	0.002	0.047	0.027	0.132	0.164	0.013	0.098
Sig.	0.001	0.010	0.001	0.001	0.042	ns	0.010	ns	0.001	0.001	ns	0.001

Adjusted for age, education, living arrangement, marital status, employment situation, SES.

Conclusion

The present study showed gender is one of the main determinant variable of time use patterns that supported by literature (Gauthier and Furstenberg, 2002) and resource participation theory (Sayer et al, 2015); but although some articles show due to retirement the gender inequality in unpaid work such as homework reduced in later life (Piekkola; 2004), our study is not support this result.

The findings of Bird and Fremont (1991) research largely support the relationship between health and time use patterns. When they control for time spent in gender-typed roles, men report poorer health than women. Men spend more time than women in paid work with higher wages, and higher wages are associated with better health. Women spend more time in housework, which is associated with poorer health. Moreover in our study women's time allocation to active leisure time, which is related to health, is lower rather than men. The findings of Azevedo etal, (2005) showed socioeconomic level was positively associated with leisure-time physical activity in both gender.

Gender differences on time spent particularly in paid and unpaid activities in later life reveal that the results is the outcome of gender role attitude, power relation and cultural beliefs across lifecycle. Gender sensitive intervention is an important point for the achievement of development goals.

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