



Who participates in what activities? patterns of community participation among eastern Iranian people

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Original Article

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Abstract

Community participation, as one of the basic components of sustainable development in a community. This study aimed to determine patterns of community participation, identify factors associated with their social and civic engagement, and examine the relation between the factors and community engagement patterns. Patterns of citizen participation were determined in social and civic engagements. Data were gathered via a valid and reliable questionnaire. A total of 286 fulfilled questionnaires were analyzed. The results showed that women significantly visited their neighbors more than men, while men went to restaurant/cafe more than women. Among high-level participating people, there were significant associations between the respondents' participation in social group activities and sex, age group, marital status, and level of education as well as between the group with mix activity and level of education. In general, people more participated in social than civic activities. To promoting community participation, attention to more engagement of individuals in group activities (social and civic) would be effective.

Keywords: Civic, Community, Social, Sustainable Development

Introduction

Changing in people's life style, various interrelationships among community members, multi-dimensional environment, and new individuals' need to live effectively indicate important role of people in their community activities. Community participation, as one of the basic components of sustainable development in a community [1,2] as well as one of the essential human rights [3], is defined as a process whereby specific groups with shared needs living in a defined geographic area actively pursue identification of needs, making decisions and establishing mechanisms to meet

these needs [4]. Participation is considered as a sophisticated concept which involves people in physical, emotional, social, and environmental features of their community [5]. Eyssen et al. also defined participation as "performing roles in the domains of social functioning, family, home, financial, work, and education" [6]. Health, as World Health Organization (WHO) indicated, is "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" [7]. It is also believed

that participation is associated with social and mental health of individuals [8-10]. World Bank, for instance, classifies participation as direct, representational (selecting representatives from membership-based groups and associations), political (through elected representatives), and information-based (data aggregated and reported directly or through intermediaries to local and national decision makers) [11]. In Ekman and Amna's opinion, social involvement and civic engagement are two main components of community participation [12].

Besides, participation may be considered as social and civic [13]. Social participation is defined as "the accomplishment level and satisfaction with participation in social roles" [14] which involve social activities outside the home. It provides opportunities to meet other people in productive or recreational activities. Social participation, indeed, contains diverse activities from working for organizations to interpersonal activities. There are two types of social participation including informal and formal [15]. The former one refers to personal involvement in the community in which, the individual is more concerned with his or her own development and wellbeing. Formal social participation refers to activities wherein, an individual is of service to groups in the community via their involvement in political and voluntary organizations [15]. The determinants of formal and informal participation vary from personal and social resources to interpersonal and societal norms and values [16-18]. Many researches indicate that education level [19,20], employment condition [13,17,21], marital status [20, 22], and sex and age [13,23] could be some influencing factors affecting individuals' social engagement.

Civic participation, as American Psychological Association defines, is "Individual and collective actions which designed to identify and address issues of public concern" [24]. It, indeed, is a type of activity that encourages people to engage civil society [25]. There are several dimensions in civic engagement including time, money, and skill requirement

as well as volume of activity and capacity to convey information to community leaders and community organizations [26]. Civic participation is a key indicator of both individual/community development and community well-being [27]. It seems individuals who

do not participate in civic activities noticeably differ from those who do. Some results indicate that young and male people are more inactive in local civic activities [28]. It is also expected that age, level of education, and income could be related to civic participation [29]. Meanwhile, association between religiosity and both social and civic participation have been found in several studies [29-31].

In Iran, there has been relatively little concern with assessment of citizen participation as well as recognition of their patterns of engagement in different social and civic activities. It is believed that citizen participation would be measured thorough individuals' engagement in social and civic activities [32]. Besides, it seems recognizing patterns of participation among Iranian community members could help policy makers and executers of community-based participatory programs to design and implement relevant programs. The present study was conducted to test the following hypotheses:

- Community engagement between men and women is different.
- The level of education and willingness is related to community participation.
- People less participate in civic than social activities.

We first measured participation in social and civic activities among Gonabad inhabitants. Then, their patterns of participation in various social and civic activities were recognized. Testing the hypotheses, we finally evaluated associations between these patterns and some personal and social factors.

Method

This was an analytic cross-sectional study conducted in Gonabad, a city located in the eastern Iran, in 2008-2009. The study

population included all Gonabad inhabitants who were at least 18 (which included roughly 40000 people). Using simple random sampling, we selected 400 participants (200 participants for each sex) as a representative sample from the bellow equation:

$$n = \frac{[(Z_{1-\alpha/2} + Z_{1-\beta})^2 P(1-P)]}{d^2}$$

$Z_{1-\alpha/2} = 1.96, Z_{1-\beta} = 0.84, p = 0.5, d = 0.05$

The required data were gathered using a self-reporting questionnaire. The questionnaire was a derivation of Baum et al. questionnaire [33] which initially translated into Persian and assessed locally for validity and reliability. Using the first part of the questionnaire, the respondents' personal and social characteristics including sex, age, marital status, job, level of education, and income were collected. We also gathered data concerning the respondents' engagement in social and civic activities. Like Baum et al. study [33], these activities were divided into 6 different groups including informal social contacts (visiting parents, siblings, other family members, neighbors, and friends), social contact in public spaces (going to restaurant, cinema, mosque, wedding ceremonies, funeral ceremonies), social group activities (membership in an exercise group, going to gym or exercise classes, participating in hubby group activities, joining to a music group), individual civic activities (visiting local authorities, following council meetings, writing paper to local authorities, individual helping others), collective civic activities (visiting local council/governor, participating in protest meeting, membership in supportive groups, membership in private groups), and participation in other community group activities (membership in school-related groups, ethnic groups, volunteer groups, and attending mosque board).

According to the community characteristics as well as type and nature of the activities, all the respondents were asked about the number of activities they accomplished in the last month (visiting family members, friends, neighbors, going to restaurant and religious places, attending ceremonies and hubby

activities), the last three months (going to cinema/theater, membership in an exercise group, attending exercise classes, join a music group, supportive group, visiting local authorities, and following council meetings), and the last year (membership in mosque board, political group, private group, school-related group, ethnic group, writing a paper to local and national authorities, attending protest meetings). We considered the level of participation in social and civic activities as low (2 activities or less) and high (more than 2 activities) during the given period.

The questionnaire was validated via face and content validity. For reliability, we implemented a pilot study on 30 persons and calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.68 and 0.70 for social and civic participation domain, respectively. The questionnaires were given to the respondents personally. To fulfill the questionnaires, there were three remainders (one remainder in each day after giving the questionnaire). After these three days, the completed questionnaires were collected.

Using SPSS-18, we analyzed the data by Chi-square test and Fischer's Exact test for nominal data and Gama test for ordinal data (level of education and income). In this study, the level of significance for social and civic activities was considered at 0.0083 (from Bonferroni correction of 0.05/6).

The researchers first informed all the respondents about the study goals and after getting their verbal consent, the questionnaire was rendered to them. The participants had rights to quit the research at every level of the study.

Results

We analyzed data of 286 the fulfilled questionnaires. The response rate was 71.5% for the total participants (men=80% and women=63%). Mean age of the respondents was 37.37 years (SD= 13.10). Table 1 shows frequency distribution of demographic factors among the respondents.

Patterns of participation among the respondents in social and civic activities are listed in Table 2 and 3, respectively.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Number	Percentage
Sex		
Male	160	55.9
Female	126	44.1
Age		
<26	140	49.3
26-55	114	40.1
>55	30	10.6
Missing	2	
Marital status		
Married	211	74.8
Single	71	25.2
Missing	4	
Level of education		
Low	48	17.2
Moderate	116	41.6
High	115	41.2
Missing	7	
Job		
Governmental	72	28.3
Free market	97	38.2
Housewife	58	22.8
Else	27	10.7
Missing	2	
Annual income		
>5000 \$	105	46.7
5001-10000 \$	107	47.6
<10000 \$	13	5.7
Missing	61	

Pattern of participation in social activities:

Informal social contacts:

In this group of activities, visit with the siblings (89%) and the neighbors (61%) were the most and the least frequent activities of the respondents, respectively. In this study, the most of respondents had regular contact with family, friends, and neighbors. There were no significant associations between the independent factors and visit with the respondents' parents, siblings, and other family members. Women significantly visited their neighbors more than men. There were also significant associations between visit with neighbors and age group as well as job of the respondents. The married respondents had fewer tendencies to visit their friends than the singles.

Social activities in public spaces:

The participants reported going to religious places (93%) and going to cinema (9%) as

the most and the least frequent activities, respectively. Except the relation between sex and going to restaurant, there were no significant associations between the respondents' demographic factors and all types of activities in this group.

Social group activities:

The most and the least frequent activities in this group were related to hobby group activity (43%) and attending music group (8%), respectively. According to the results, there were significant associations between demographic factors of age group, marital status, and level of education and participating in exercise classes. Besides, membership in an exercise group had significant relations to sex, age group, marital status, level of education, and job. There were also significant associations between participation in a music group and sex and age groups.

Table 2 Patterns of participation in social activities based on the respondents' demographic factors

Variable	Informal social contacts N (%)			Social activities in public spaces N (%)			Social group activities N (%)		
	N	%	p-value	N	%	p-value	N	%	p-value
Sex									
Male	75	(83%)		121	(77%)		146	(93%)	
Female	60	(79%)		102	(82%)		118	(94%)	
p-value	0.470		0.066	0.400		0.353	0.001		0.006
Age									
<26	56	(78%)		117	(84%)		75	(54%)	
26-55	71	(85%)		99	(90%)		43	(38%)	
> 55	7	(78%)		26	(93%)		9	(30%)	
p-value	0.541		0.678	0.726		0.018	0.012		0.001
Marital status									
Married	124	(84%)		173	(82%)		83	(40%)	
Single	11	(65%)		38	(93%)		41	(60%)	
p-value	0.089		0.586	0.890		0.008	0.009		0.001
Level of education									
Low	24	(89%)		41	(87%)		17	(35%)	
Moderate	58	(81%)		87	(88%)		46	(40%)	
High	50	(79%)		86	(92%)		59	(52%)	
p-value	0.354		0.365	0.279		0.034	0.027		<0.001
Job									
Governmental	48	(91%)		60	(90%)		30	(42%)	
Free market	49	(85%)		71	(87%)		51	(54%)	
Housewife	30	(73%)		50	(93%)		17	(29%)	
Else	42	(57%)		18	(86%)		11	(41%)	
p-value	0.044		0.699	0.159		0.532	0.031		0.002
Annual income									
>5000 \$	51	(81%)		82	(87%)		46	(44%)	
5001-10000 \$	60	(85%)		90	(92%)		48	(45%)	
<10000 \$	6	(86%)		10	(91%)		9	(69%)	
p-value	0.563		0.322	0.022		0.637	0.359		0.069

* p<0.0083 (from Bonferroni correction of 0.05/6)

Table 3 Patterns of participation in civic activities based on the respondents' demographic factors

Variable name	individual civic activities N(%)			collective civic activities N(%)			mixed activities N(%)					
	Individual help	Personal visit with local authorities	Attend council meeting	writing to local authorities/ signed petition	Membership in private group	Membership in political/ cultural group	Group visit with authorities	Attend protest meeting	Volunteer group	School-related group	Ethnic group	Attend mosque board
Sex		*										
Male	96 (71%)	49 (31%)	94 (59%)	34 (22%)	109 (69%)	74 (47%)	34 (22%)	26 (17%)	47 (30%)	49 (32%)	33 (21%)	49 (31%)
Female	79 (71%)	16 (13%)	79 (63%)	25 (20%)	99 (80%)	59 (47%)	24 (20%)	14 (11%)	30 (24%)	48 (38%)	21 (17%)	21 (21%)
P-value	0.921	<0.001	0.498	0.734	0.033	0.959	0.641	0.191	0.269	0.256	0.403	0.065
Age										*		
<26	75 (64%)	25 (18%)	88 (63%)	28 (20%)	101 (72%)	66 (48%)	28 (20%)	18 (13%)	36 (21%)	33 (24%)	26 (19%)	41 (29%)
26-55	83 (78%)	30 (27%)	67 (59%)	26 (23%)	82 (74%)	57 (50%)	25 (23%)	19 (17%)	38 (34%)	54 (48%)	23 (20%)	21 (26%)
> 55	15 (68%)	10 (33%)	17 (57%)	5 (17%)	23 (79%)	9 (31%)	5 (17%)	3 (10%)	3 (11%)	9 (30%)	5 (17%)	6 (21%)
P-value	0.065	0.097	0.722	0.727	0.721	0.172	0.784	0.585	0.041	<0.001	0.909	0.599
Marital status										*		
Married	138 (75%)	47 (23%)	133 (63%)	42 (20%)	156 (75%)	93 (45%)	44 (21%)	27 (13%)	53 (26%)	81 (39%)	38 (18%)	52 (25%)
Single	36 (61%)	18 (26%)	40 (56%)	16 (23%)	50 (70%)	38 (54%)	14 (20%)	12 (17%)	23 (33%)	15 (21%)	15 (21%)	22 (31%)
P-value	0.045	0.580	0.316	0.635	0.449	0.156	0.809	0.411	0.249	0.007	0.561	0.283
Level of education			*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low	29 (64%)	9 (19%)	20 (42%)	7 (15%)	34 (71%)	16 (33%)	5 (11%)	6 (13%)	6 (13%)	11 (23%)	6 (13%)	10 (21%)
Moderate	73 (75%)	22 (19%)	63 (54%)	23 (20%)	86 (75%)	48 (42%)	19 (17%)	13 (11%)	28 (24%)	35 (31%)	27 (24%)	26 (23%)
High	68 (70%)	31 (27%)	83 (72%)	29 (25%)	82 (73%)	65 (58%)	33 (30%)	20 (18%)	42 (38%)	48 (42%)	20 (18%)	35 (31%)
P-value	0.769	0.139	<0.001	0.106	0.983	0.001	0.002	0.230	<0.001	0.011	0.920	0.116
Job						*			*			
Governmental	55 (88%)	14 (19%)	51 (71%)	15 (21%)	55 (79%)	46 (64%)	18 (25%)	9 (13%)	30 (43%)	39 (55%)	12 (17%)	18 (25%)
Free market	55 (71%)	27 (29%)	53 (57%)	24 (25%)	65 (67%)	42 (44%)	23 (25%)	19 (20%)	24 (25%)	27 (29%)	27 (28%)	29 (31%)
Housewife	35 (64%)	7 (12%)	33 (57%)	9 (16%)	51 (88%)	18 (31%)	7 (13%)	4 (7%)	7 (12%)	16 (28%)	8 (14%)	12 (21%)
Else	13 (62%)	6 (22%)	15 (56%)	4 (16%)	19 (73%)	7 (30%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)	5 (20%)	9 (33%)	5 (19%)	6 (23%)
P-value	0.009	0.105	0.163	0.479	0.028	<0.001	0.146	0.094	0.001	0.009	0.141	0.569
Annual income			*									
>5000 \$	59 (66%)	21 (20%)	52 (50%)	23 (22%)	78 (76%)	46 (45%)	19 (19%)	16 (15%)	23 (23%)	28 (28%)	21 (20%)	24 (23%)
5001-10000 \$	71 (81%)	29 (27%)	76 (71%)	21 (20%)	79 (75%)	56 (49%)	25 (24%)	15 (14%)	37 (35%)	46 (44%)	21 (20%)	30 (29%)
<7200 \$	9 (75%)	7 (54%)	8 (62%)	6 (46%)	8 (62%)	7 (54%)	6 (46%)	4 (31%)	6 (46%)	5 (39%)	3 (23%)	2 (15%)
p-value	0.051	0.039	0.004	0.547	0.509	0.430	0.092	0.633	0.058	0.048	0.962	0.462

* p<0.0083 (from Bonferroni correction of 0.05/6)

Pattern of participation in civic activities:

Individual civic activities:

The most and the least frequent activities in this group were related to individual help (71%) and writing a letter to authorities (21%), respectively. In this group of activities, there were significant associations between personal visit with local authorities and sex as well as between following council meeting and the respondents' level of education and annual income.

Collective civic activities:

The most and the least frequent activities were related to membership in private groups (74%) and participating in a protest group (14%), respectively. There were no significant associations between all activities placed in this group and factors of sex, age group, marital status, and annual income during the last year. Considering the respondents' level of education, there were a direct relation between

this independent factor and membership in political/cultural groups and group visit with local authorities. There was also a significant association between job and membership in political/cultural groups.

Participation in other community group activities (mixed social and civic activities):

The most and the least frequent participatory activities in this group were related to membership in a school-related group (35%) and membership in an ethnic group (19%), respectively. Being membership in school-related groups was significantly associated with age group and marital status which was logic. Besides, there were significant associations between membership in a volunteer group and level of education as well as job of the respondents.

Table 4 shows the level of participation of the respondents in each activity group.

Table 4 Respondents' level of participation and number of reported activities in social and civic activity groups

Activity group	Level of engagement N(%)		The reported activities N(%)	
	Low (2 activities or lower)	High (more than 2 activities)	No activity	All activities
Informal social activities (5 activities)	57 (20%)	229 (80%)	6 (2%)	52 (18%)
Public space activities (4 activities)	184 (64%)	102 (36%)	9 (3%)	18 (6%)
Social group activities (5 activities)	228 (80%)	58 (20%)	130 (46%)	4 (1%)
Individual civic activities (4 activities)	231 (81%)	55 (19%)	36 (13%)	21 (7%)
Collective civic activities (4 activities)	231 (81%)	55 (19%)	48 (17%)	13 (5%)
Mixed activities (4 activities)	253 (89%)	33 (11%)	111 (39%)	9 (3%)

As observed in Table 4, the respondents' level of engagement decreased from informal social to mixed activity group. It means 80% of the respondents engaged at least in three activities in informal social activity group, while this was only 11% in mixed activity group. According to the results, it also seems the respondents had more tendencies to do personal than collective activities in the community. It means, in social and civic activities, if there is a group activity, the respondents will have lower preference to participate.

Table 5 shows social and civic activities of those respondents who had high levels of

participation in relation to demographic factors.

There were significant associations between the respondents' participation in social group activities and sex, age group, marital status, and level of education as well as in mix activity group and level of education.

Discussion

This research was conducted to measure the levels of Gonabad inhabitants' engagement in social and civic activities, recognize patterns and types of their participation, and evaluate association between participation

Table 5 Associations between participants with high levels of participation and their demographic factors

Variable	High levels of participation in social and civic group activities N(%)					
	Informal social contacts	Activities in public spaces	Social group activities	Individual civic activities	Collective civic activities	Mix activities
Sex			*			
Male	71 (68%)	63 (41%)	41 (27%)	33 (25%)	29 (19%)	22 (15%)
Female	68 (94%)	36 (29%)	16 (13%)	18 (16%)	25 (21%)	11 (9%)
p-value	0.069	0.049	0.004	0.077	0.770	0.162
Age			*			
<26	59 (89%)	57 (41%)	40 (29%)	21 (18%)	26 (19%)	12 (9%)
26-55	72 (89%)	35 (32%)	12 (12%)	25 (24%)	24 (22%)	20 (19%)
>55	7 (100%)	7 (24%)	5 (17%)	5 (23%)	4 (14%)	1 (4%)
p-value	0.650	0.117	0.004	0.548	0.583	0.024
Marital status			*			
Married	125 (91%)	65 (32%)	31 (16%)	37 (20%)	38 (19%)	24 (12%)
Single	13 (81%)	32 (46%)	25 (36%)	14 (25%)	15 (22%)	9 (13%)
p-value	0.247	0.028	<0.001	0.496	0.597	0.820
Level of education			*			*
Low	21 (81%)	12 (26%)	4 (9%)	7 (16%)	6 (13%)	2 (4%)
Moderate	62 (91%)	35 (32%)	17 (15%)	15 (16%)	17 (15%)	10 (9%)
High	54 (92%)	47 (42%)	33 (30%)	27 (28%)	30 (28%)	20 (18%)
p-value	0.282	0.029	<0.001	0.035	0.010	0.005
Job						
Governmental	46 (92%)	25 (35%)	15 (21%)	16 (24%)	19 (27%)	14 (21%)
Free market	44 (85%)	36 (39%)	19 (21%)	19 (26%)	20 (22%)	14 (15%)
Housewife	38 (97%)	15 (26%)	3 (5%)	6 (11%)	7 (13%)	1 (2%)
Else	6 (86%)	10 (40%)	5 (19%)	3 (15%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)
p-value	0.203	0.377	0.061	0.153	0.032	0.010
Annual income						
>5000 \$	50 (85%)	38 (37%)	16 (16%)	15 (17%)	20 (20%)	8 (8%)
5001-10000 \$	61 (94%)	40 (39%)	23 (22%)	22 (25%)	24 (23%)	20 (20%)
<10000 \$	6 (86%)	4 (31%)	4 (33%)	6 (50%)	4 (31%)	2 (15%)
p-value	0.210	0.984	0.145	0.036	0.457	0.025

*p<0.0083 (from Bonferroni correction of 0.05/6)

characteristics and socio-demographic factors of the respondents. This research has highlighted some interesting patterns of participation and makes an elementary step towards understanding the dynamics of participation in an Iranian community by describing who participate in what activities.

Pattern of participation in social activities:

Informal social contacts:

Our results showed that most of the respondents had regular contact with family, friends, and neighbors which were similar to the European Union results [34]. According to the European Union report, Gonabad Community would be "family-oriented". In the present study, women as well as older people had significantly more tendency to visit their neighbors. These findings would be logic, because both housewives and older people usually have more free time for social contacts. Our results were comparable with the results of various researches [13, 23,

33]. Besides, Maier and Klumb [35] stated "time spent with friends affords a survival advantage among older adults"; so, this would be one reason that older people prefer to spend more time with others. However, Gautam et al. [36] reported more informal social contacts among men than women in Nepali people. Another finding of our study indicated that the married respondents had significantly less tendency to visit their friends than the singles which was similar to the results obtained by Gesthuizen [20] and Kalmijn [22].

In our research, men went to restaurant/café more than women significantly. Contrary to our findings, Baum et al. [33] reported that women significantly went to restaurant/café more than men in Australia. It seems cultural differences may be one of the causes of this dissimilarity. Besides, Mahoney and Stattin [37] reported no significant difference between sex and engagement in leisure activities.

Social group activities:

Our findings indicated that men, young people, and high educated people more participated in exercise activities which were similar to some research results [33, 36, 38]. In our research, single persons also participated in exercise activities more than married individuals. Mahdavi and Rahmani Khalili [38] inversely reported social participation occurred more in married than single individuals. Besides, men as well as high educated people had more participation in music/acting group in our study which would be logic. In Iran, men frequently have more chance than women to engage in leisure activities, especially in small towns which usually have traditional cultures. Acharya et al. [39] also concluded that for young women, opportunities to engage in civil society are limited. Our results were not comparable with the Baum et al. results [33], may be due to the cultural discrepancy between Iranian and Australian community.

*Pattern of participation in civic activities:**Individual civic activities:*

Men reported personal visit with local authorities significantly more than women which was comparable with Mahdavi and Rahmani Khalili findings [38]. Besides, high educated people as well as individuals with moderate income more followed council meeting. Our findings were not similar to Baum et al. results [33].

Collective civic activities:

There was a direct relation between the respondents' level of education and membership in political/cultural groups and group visit with local authorities which were similar to Baum et al. results [33]. There was also a significant association between job and membership in political/cultural groups.

Participation in other community group activities (mix of social and civic):

Being membership in school-related groups was significantly associated with age group and marital status which was predictable. Besides, there were significant associations between membership in a volunteer group and level of education as well as job of the respondents. Our findings were comparable with Baum et

al. results [33]. We did not find significant relation between sex and engagement in voluntary activities which was comparable with the results of other study [39].

With respect to the respondents' level of participation, our findings explored the respondents have more tendencies to do personal than collective in both social and civic activities. Besides, participation in social activities was more than the civic activities. There were significant relations between social group activities of the individuals and their sex, age group, marital status, and level of education. There was also a significant association between the respondents' mix activities and their level of education. Our findings were comparable with some research findings [33,40].

In general, whatever the respondents' level of education was higher; they participated more in social and civic activities which was similar to some research results [32], but not with Maier and Klumb findings [35]. Comparable with Baum et al. results [33], participation of the respondents in our study was more in social than civic activities. The least levels of participation among the respondents were belonged to collective activity types, both in social and civic participation. Except informal social activities, individuals who had over 55 years old less likely participated in social and civic activities than other participants; these findings were comparable with Mahdavi and Rahmani Khalili [38] and Burr et al. [40] results. In the present study, 53% of the respondents belonged to at least one community group. According to the 2003 Statistics Canada survey, 60% of the participants reported membership in at least one community group [27]. Our results indicated that men participated more than women in most social and nearly all civic activities which were comparable with Mahdavi and Rahmani Khalili research results [38], but not similar to Baum et al. findings [33].

Patterns of participation among community members would be different between

various societies or may be even unique for each community. It seems recognizing these patterns would be vital for community-based participatory activists. So, our findings would help policymakers and managers recognize potential barriers to relevant participation of community members and enhance participation culture in community.

There were various strengths in our study such as using registry system of health centers to select our participants, using a valid and reliable questionnaire, and using Bonferroni correction method to legitimate significance level. Data gathering method would be one potential weakness of our research. Besides, this was a cross-sectional study; so, our results could not assess casual relationships between patterns of participation and the independent factors. To test the significant associations, we suggest longitudinal as well as experimental studies.

Conclusion

Meanwhile, men, juvenile people, single individuals, and people with high level of education had more preference to participate Social group activities. Besides, the latter group participated more in mix activity group. Generally speaking, people more participated in social than civic activities. Besides, it seems political issues were at the least interesting level of our research respondents. It seems sex, age, and level of education would be potential factors associated with people engagement in most of social and civic activities.

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Contribution

Study design: AA, AD

Data collection and analysis: AA, AD

Manuscript preparation: AA, AD

Conflict of Interest

"The authors declare that they have no competing interests."

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