

Investigating the Effect of Urbanization (Urban Life Quality) on the Type of Spending Leisure Time of the Youth in Isfahan city

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Abstract

Human beings' need to recreation and leisure time have been present since the ancient. It has been for years that people have allocated some time for relieving anxieties and escaping from the stresses of everyday life. Therefore, regarding the increasing population growth, the development of cities, and also the ever-growing citizens to spending leisure time and escaping from stresses due to urban life, the necessity of the existence of appropriate conditions and facilities for spending leisure time is felt as much as possible. The objective of the present study is to investigate the effect of urbanization (urban life quality) on the type of spending leisure time. The theoretical framework of the research is based on the ideas of sociologists such as Timor and Symore, Coleman, Burgner, Bentham, Leo Lundahl, Campbell, Carpe, Crap, Baldwin, Philips, Florida, Rotter, Cooley, Parsons, Zimmel, Lynch, Pierre Bourdieu. The method employed in the present research was survey study. The data were collected using the instrument of questionnaire distributed in person. The data were analyzed using SPSS 21. The population of the study included 385 individuals of the youth of the City of Isfahan who were in the age group 15 to 29 years old. The results indicate that in demographic hypotheses, there is no correlation of gender, education and age of individuals with spending leisure time, and among the secondary hypotheses, there are strong correlations between individuals' satisfaction with the social environment and satisfaction with physical environment and psychological health; and between economic satisfaction and the type of spending leisure time; while there is a correlation between the degree of political participation and the type of spending leisure time, but there is no correlation between marital status and the type of spending leisure time.

Key words: life quality, urbanism, objective dimension, subjective dimension, leisure time.

Introduction

The concept of life quality has been considered by sociologist since the late of the 20th century, but its root in sociology can be traced in the middle of the 20th century. In sociology, the first important work about life quality was written by Ogburn (1946). It was written about the rural life in the US.

In 1960's, when sociology reacted against the domination of economic indices, the concept of life quality in became important in social researches, but up to that time, all indices of life quality were objective. In 1970's, objective indices were added for evaluating life quality.

Nowadays, different research centers start to evaluate life quality at the national and international levels. Paying attention to life quality in scientific societies and also among policy makers is increasing and this concept is being used in many sociological, health, and etc. domains. In fact, it can be said that life quality is an interdisciplinary concept in social sciences.

The concept of life quality changes during time and relevant to particular cultural, social, political and economic conditions of each society. In general, the concept of life quality is influenced by a set of factors which are the foundation of the dynamics of life in an urban society (Faraji Malaei et al. 2010).

Nowadays, in urban societies and the increasing tendency to urbanization, by advancing technologies and increasing the volume of working time of human beings, the issue of leisure time has been presented more emphatically because individuals, by enhancing their life quality, are to enjoy more and have more relaxation and comfort. On the other hand, the quality degree and quiddity of life quality of individuals can be effective on different domains of life such as leisure time. The present study is to investigate the effect of urbanization (life quality) on the type of spending leisure time of the youth in the City of Isfahan.

Statement of the problem and research importance

Life quality is defined as a concept for indicating the degree of individuals' satisfaction with life and in other words, a criterion for determining the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of individuals and groups with different dimensions of life. In fact, the effect of life quality on different issues are presented because not only living is important, but its quality also is necessary (Kramer, 2004: 104).

In fact, life quality is a concept applied for drawing development and welfare; therefore, it can be said that life quantity reflects life conditions and individuals' welfare among which the effect of life quality on the type of individuals' leisure time in cities, as the center of services and facilities, is considered because the issue of leisure time, regarding the upheavals and advancements of sciences and technologies, has been considered an important issue in recent ages. At last, it can be said that urban life quality is a complex, interdisciplinary, multidimensional and related to qualitative (subjective) and quantitative (subjective). According to Das, quality (subjective) of life shows the external conditions of life (Das, 2008: 298). And in immaterial dimension, life quality includes the personal experiences and receptions of individuals and their feedbacks in their real lives (Dajian and Peter, 2006: 15).

Usually individuals have a clear life quality of themselves and think that if there are appropriate

conditions, they will be prosperous. For example, the existence of a beautiful city, absence of poverty and unemployment, and etc. are images which people have from life quality. Since the City of Isfahan as the capital of the province, is the primary core of shaping the city, it has particular identity, historical, cultural and etc. values, which this scope as the densest and mostly used area of the city has encountered with different transformation during time. The reduction of the quality of urban life environment is created in this scope. The existence of heterogeneous elements of cities, pollution, traffic, population density, weakness in quality and quantity of leisure types and etc. are the most important problems in the center of Isfahan City which in the present study, regarding the issue of life quality, variables such as marital status, satisfaction with physical environments, satisfaction with social environments, political participation, feeling wellbeing, job quality and the income of individuals in the City of Isfahan are pointed out and their effects on the type of spending leisure time are investigated. In addition, it should be added that in the present study, leisure time is considered into two modes: one is active leisure time including assigning hours for entertainment, planning for leisure time, going to parks and shopping malls, pilgrimage sites, cinema, theater, doing exercises, and etc. and the other one, inactive leisure time including the use of the Internet such as chatting, reading internet news, watching TV programs, satellite programs, listening to radio, reposing and thinking, and etc.

Regarding the status of life quality in cities and regions, and regarding that in Iran, there has not been an evaluation criterion for evaluating life quality yet, paying attention to the investigation of different dimensions of urban life quality can be paths for accessing the comprehensive system of life quality. Since that in Iran, rapid growth of urban life and urbanization has covered all dimensions of human life, and on the other hand, more than half of Iran's population is the youth; therefore, identifying the factors affecting the type of spending the youth's leisure time has a particular importance.

It can be said that there is no doubt that because the center of the city (which in the present study, it is the center of Isfahan) is one of the most attracting and diverse public spaces, organizing its physics and performance should be applied in social researches and those of urban planning in order that barriers and problems on the path of improving life quality be identified and its constructive effects on other issues such as leisure time. It is because that human beings everyday life in modern urban societies is a combination of working and leisure time. In fact, by changing the form of modern urban life, it can be said that urbanization and the issue of urban life quality have significant effects on the type of spending leisure time. The importance of paying attention to the issue of leisure time is so important that in the theories of a lot of scholars it has been mentioned. In this regard, in the section of literature review, these theories are discussed in more detail.

Literature review

What in this section indicates is that since the early 1960's, the concept of life quality has been common. In some advanced societies, this word has been accompanied and sometimes equivalent to words such as universal wellbeing, social welfare, social security, life quality and as such (Haji Yusef, 2002: 1).

Life quality is a concept which applied for drawing development and welfare; therefore, it can be said that life quantity reflects life conditions and individuals' welfare. During 30 years ago, life quality, as a main objective of developing societies, has been effective on policy makings of a lot of countries (Majedi and Lohsae Zadeh, 2006: 100).

For example, the research project of investigating life quality of people in Tehran based on the questionnaire of WHOQOL-BREF, focusing on health was conducted by Nejat et al. (2007). The findings of the present study indicated that the mean scores of domains (physical health, mental health, social relationships and environment), in general, the participants of the study of WTO was significantly higher than the mean scores of the participants in Tehran.

Ebrahimi et al. (2011), in a study, investigated leisure time and social factors affecting it. The present study was conducted with the objective of investigating social factors affecting leisure time of 15-64 year old individuals in Joybar City. In this study, using a survey technique conducted on 510 participants of the population selected employing multistage stratified sampling, the required data were collected. The results of the study indicated that independent variables of the research (age, education, respondent, and etc.) have significant correlation with leisure time.

In another research conducted by Sayyadi Far, titled as "plans of leisure time and production of culture", it has been mentioned that leisure time has a close correlation with cultural values, attitudes and beliefs. Usually, individuals in their leisure time, do their own favorable activities through which they shape their personality and represent it. Along with changes in the style and level of life, and methods of living, individuals' behaviors will change in the selection of leisure time; therefore, it can be concluded that the quiddity of spending leisure time, to a large extent, introduces the culture and political knowledge of individuals in a society (Sayyadi Far, 2006: 8).

Research objectives

General objective: investigating the effect of urbanization (urban life quality) on the type of spending leisure time of the youth

Partial objectives:

- ✓ Investigating ideas and attitudes about cities and urban life quality and its effects on the type of leisure time.
- ✓ Investigating objective and subjective dimensions of life quality.
- ✓ Investigating the correlation between marital status and the type of spending leisure time
- ✓ Investigating the correlation between individuals' satisfaction with physical environment, social environment, economic

satisfaction and the type of spending leisure time

- ✓ Investigating the correlation between the degree of political participation and the type of spending leisure time
- ✓ Investigating the correlation of feeling wellbeing and the type of spending leisure time.

Therefore, the ultimate objective of the present study is to investigate life quality and its consequent application is that people be able to have a life with high quality. In general, they have a purposive and enjoying life (Parker, 2005: 238).

Research questions

How is the effect of urbanization (the issue of life quality) on the type of spending leisure time?

How do demographic variables (gender, education, age) and different dimensions of life quality affect the issue of the type of spending life quality?

Research variable

Life quality (independent variable) and demographic variables (gender, education and age as independent variables).

Independent variable: marital status, satisfaction with the physical environment (physical) - satisfaction with the social environment (social, environmental quality) - political participation - the feeling of well-being (mental health) - economic satisfaction (quality of employment, income, etc.)

Dependent variable: the type of spending leisure time

Research hypotheses

Main hypothesis: there is a correlation between life quality and the type of spending leisure time.

Secondary hypotheses:

1. There is a correlation between marital status and the type of spending leisure time.
2. There is a correlation between individuals' satisfaction with physical environment and the type of spending leisure time.

3. There is a correlation between individuals' satisfaction with social environment and the type of spending leisure time.
4. There is a correlation between political participation and the type of spending leisure time.
5. There is a correlation between feeling wellbeing (psychological health) and the type of spending leisure time.
6. There is a correlation between individuals' economic satisfaction (employment, income and etc.) and the type of spending leisure time.

Demographic hypotheses

1. There is a correlation between individuals' gender and the type of spending leisure time.
2. There is a correlation between individuals' education and the type of spending leisure time.
3. There is a correlation between individuals' age and the type of spending leisure time.

Methodology

The population of the study (N) included 1700000 individuals, which in the present study, using Cochran's formula, 385 participants were selected using quota sampling method.

Data analysis method

After collecting the completed questionnaires, the data of collected questionnaires were coded and then, to analyze them, SPSS 21 was used. Descriptive statistics such as absolute frequency, frequency percentage, valid frequency percentage, percentile, measures of central tendency, and measures of dispersion were employed.

Calculating the mean as the most measure of central tendency and calculating range, variance and standard deviation as the most important measures of dispersion were conducted in line with research objectives. At the level of inferential statistics and confirming research hypotheses, multiple linear regression or multivariate regression, Pearson

correlation coefficients, Eta coefficient and Eta square were used.

Descriptive results of the research

Participants' age status

The lowest age range was 15 years old and the highest one was 29 years old. In addition, the most respondents were 29 years old (10.1 percent) and the least respondents were 19 years old (4 percent). The mean age of respondents was 23 years old.

Participants' gender status

The most respondents (randomly) in the study were women (215 individuals, about 56%) and the least of them were men (170 individuals, 44 percent).

Participants' education status

The level of education of most of respondents were associate diploma and BA with 44%, while those

illiterate or holding the degree of primary school were the least number of participants. In addition, 5 percent of the respondents held university degree. Only 15 percent of the participants held a degree lower than diploma.

Participants' marital status

Most of the participants (63.6 percent) were single and 34.4 percent of them were married.

Social, physical, economic, political, psychological statuses, and the type of spending leisure time of the youth (15-29) in Isfahan:

In the following table, descriptive measures of the scores of Social, physical, economic, political, psychological statuses, and the type of spending leisure time of the youth (15-29) in Isfahan are presented:

Index	Social dimension	Physical	Economic	Political	Psychological	the type of spending leisure time
Number	385	385	385	385	385	385
Mean	2.82	3.10	2.17	2.19	3.22	2.94
Mode	2.80	3	2.20	2.20	3.18	3
sd	0.64	0.72	0.70	0.70	0.68	0.57
Variance	0.41	0.52	0.49	0.49	0.47	0.33
Skew	0.04	0.06	0.45	0.39	-0.02	-0.09
Strain	0.16	0.09	0.05	-0.23	0.90	0.60
Range	4	4	3.40	3.40	5.27	3.67

What can be inferred from the above table is that the psychological state of the youth (15-29 years old) in Isfahan City is higher than other dimensions, and also economic state is at the lowest level than other indices and states. This indicates that the youth's dissatisfaction is with their economic states.

Social state of the youth of Isfahan:

It should be noted that the score 3 and higher indicate an appropriate state. Here they obtained score is 2.83, it shows that the degree of the youth's satisfaction with their social states is lower than the moderate level and is relatively at the moderate level.

Physical state of the youth of Isfahan:

It should be noted that the score 3 and higher indicate an appropriate state. Here they obtained score is 3.10, it shows that the degree of the youth's satisfaction with their physical states is at the moderate level and they have relative satisfaction with the physical states of their surroundings.

Economic state of the youth of Isfahan:

It should be noted that the score 3 and higher indicate an appropriate state. Here they obtained score is 2.17, it shows that the degree of the youth's satisfaction with their economic states is much lower than the moderate level and they are dissatisfied with their economic states.

Political state of the youth of Isfahan:

It should be noted that the score 3 and higher indicate an appropriate state. Here they obtained score is 2.17, it shows that the degree of the youth's satisfaction with their political states is much lower than the moderate level and they are dissatisfied with their economic states. In addition, it shows that participation and activities of these youth in political affairs is poorer.

Psychological state of the youth of Isfahan:

It should be noted that the score 3 and higher indicate an appropriate state. Here they obtained score is 3.10, it shows that the degree of the youth's satisfaction with their psychological states is at the moderate level and they have acceptable satisfaction with their psychological health.

Main hypothesis

The correlation between the dimensions of life quality and the state of the type of spending leisure time of the youth in Isfahan:

It should be noted that the score 3 and higher indicate an appropriate state. Here they obtained score is 2.83, it shows that the degree of the youth's satisfaction with the type and the quiddity of spending their leisure time is lower than the moderate level and is relatively at the moderate level.

Secondary hypotheses and demographic ones**The first hypothesis:**

Gender	Mean	No.	sd
Woman	2.97	215	0.56
Man	2.90	170	0.56
Total	2.94	385	0.57

It seems that there is a correlation between individuals' gender and the type of spending leisure time

df	F	Sig.
1	1.33	0.249

Variables	Eta	Eta Squared
Spending leisure time* gender	0.059	0.003

As observed, there is no correlation between individuals' gender and the type of spending leisure time.

The second hypothesis:

It seems that there is a correlation between individuals' education and the type of spending leisure time.

Education	Mean	No.	sd
Illiterate or having the degree of primary school	2.42	5	0.75

The degree of guidance school	2.91	53	0.59
Diploma	2.94	135	0.57
Associate diploma and higher	2.97	168	0.58
MA and higher	3	24	0.45
Total	2.94	385	0.57

According to the above table, it can be said that the higher the educational level, the higher the very little values of the mean scores of the satisfaction with leisure time. These values are not significant and they have not much effect.

df	F	Sig.
4	1.32	0.259

Variables	Eta	Eta Squared
Spending leisure time* gender	0.117	0.014

As observed, there is no correlation between individuals' education and the type of spending leisure time.

The third hypothesis:

It seems that there is a correlation between individuals' marital status and the type of spending leisure time.

Marital status	Mean	No.	sd
Single	2.92	245	0.59
Married	2.97	140	0.55
Total	2.94	285	0.57

According to the above table, it can be said that married individuals enjoy their leisure time just 0.05 more than single ones.

df	F	Sig.
1	0.46	0.498

Variables	Eta	Eta Squared
Spending leisure time * marital status	0.035	0.001

As observed, there is no correlation between marital status and the type of spending leisure time.

The fourth hypothesis:

It seems that there is a correlation between individuals' age and the type of spending leisure time.

spending leisure * age time	Pearson correlation coefficient	-0.06
	Sig.	0.243
	No.	385

As observed, there is no correlation between age and the type of spending leisure time.

The fifth hypothesis:

spending leisure time Social environment *	Pearson correlation coefficient	242**
	Sig.	0.000
	No.	385

As observed, there is a strong correlation between individuals' satisfaction with social environment and the type of spending leisure time.

The sixth hypothesis:

It seems that there is a correlation between individuals' satisfaction with physical environment and the type of spending leisure time.

spending leisure time Social environment *	Pearson correlation coefficient	232**
	Sig.	0.000
	No.	385

As observed, there is a strong correlation between individuals' satisfaction with physical environment and the type of spending leisure time.

The seventh hypothesis:

It seems that there is a correlation between individuals' political participation and the type of spending leisure time.

spending leisure time political participation*	Pearson correlation coefficient	140**
	Sig.	0.006
	No.	385

As observed, there is a correlation between individuals' political participation and the type of spending leisure time.

The eighth hypothesis:

It seems that there is a correlation between individuals’ psychological health and the type of spending leisure time.

spending leisure time psychological health*	Pearson correlation coefficient	319**
	Sig.	0.000
	No.	385

As observed, there is a very strong correlation between individuals’ psychological health (feeling wellbeing) and the type of spending leisure time.

The ninth hypothesis:

It seems that there is a correlation between individuals’ economic satisfaction and the type of spending leisure time.

spending leisure time economic satisfaction *	Pearson correlation coefficient	239**
	Sig.	0.000
	No.	385

As observed, there is a very strong correlation between individuals’ satisfaction with economic status and the type of spending leisure time.

The main hypothesis:

There is a correlation between urban life quality and the type of spending leisure time.

Method	The sum of squares	df	The mean of squares	F	Sig.
Regression	17.32	5	3.46	11.75	0.000

Urban life quality includes social, physical, economic, political and psychological health dimensions. Regarding that the value of significance level is less than 0.05, H_0 is rejected. It means that there is a linear correlation between the variable of spending leisure time and variables of social, physical, economic, political and psychological health dimensions.

Conclusion

Regarding the obtained results, it can be said that evaluating urban life quality only by using one of the two objective and subjective indices cannot draw a clear and real image for urban planners and sociologies and ignoring each these two groups can create great deviations in human and urban planners.

An individual with economic and social states and with low level of feeling wellbeing, naturally is drawn towards inactive and preferably less costly ways such as reposing, thinking and studying, watching TV, and etc. and in contrast, an individual with more favorable and better conditions, tend to spend their leisure time in travelling, buying, doing more costly exercises, and etc. it should be noted that among the youth with

different conditions, the selection of the type of leisure time depends on many factors and the selection of a kind of leisure does not always indicate the favorable or unfavorable state of individuals.

General suggestions

To determine short-term and long-term programs to improve the life quality of the residents in Isfahan

To develop recreational and culture facilities in order for further use among the youth

To do comprehensive studies on human and material resources in the City of Isfahan

Resources

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