

**LEISURE ACTIVITIES AMONG THE ZOROASTRIANS
ELDERLY IN KERMAN, IRAN**

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ABSTRACT

The problem of this study was that how the Zoroastrians' elderly in Kerman, Iran spend their outdoor leisure time, and what was contribution of leisure activities to religious continuity among them. Based on this problem, the main goal of this study was to explore the leisure activities among the Zoroastrians' elderly in Kerman, Iran. For this aim, outdoor leisure activities' patterns, outdoor leisure preferences, and the factors which affect their outdoor leisure activities were examined. In addition, this study explored the perceived leisure constraint among the Zoroastrians' elderly in order to identify the factors which constraint their leisure preferences and real participation. The study also attempted to explore the contribution of leisure activities to religious continuity among the Zoroastrians' community in Iran. Using anthropological methods such as participant observation, in-depth interview, and anthropological photography, data were collected during the fieldwork among the Zoroastrians' elderly from September 2010 to September 2012. As an ethnographer, the researcher took part in their everyday leisure activities in order to gain deep understanding of their leisure through the meaning which they ascribed to their experiences. The purposive sampling technique were adopted to select the informants of the study. Depending on the informants' scope of the experiences and understating, the process of sampling continued till no new data turned up during data collection process (data saturation). Finding of the study revealed that the most leisure activities among the Zoroastrians were speculative and cultural activities, social activities, and physical activities. Regarding the leisure companions, informants spent their leisure time with family members, friends, respectively, only a few percent of them alone. This distribution depends on the gender of the informants where female elders preferred to spend their leisure time mainly with family, while male elders have shown more tendency to spend their leisure time with friends. The effect of the economic status on the type and quality

of use of leisure time and access to leisure facilities is supported in this study. Based on the finding of the study, leisure constraints of the informants were classified into three categories: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. During the past two decades, Zoroastrians have come up with some strategies to solve the problem of identity which has been occurred due to low birth rate and immigration to overseas among the Zoroastrians. Most of these strategies involved the simplification of religious rituals and festivals so that most of these rituals could be performed in the form of leisure. This simplification process is then called holy leisure. The purpose of this process is to attract more Zoroastrians especially ordinary people to this religion. Sanctification and desanctification are dichotomies which have played a fundamental role in the generation and regeneration of Zoroastrians' identity residing in Iran and continuation of their religion.

ABSTRAK

Permasalahan kajian ini adalah berkaitan masa senggang warga emas Zoroastrian di Kerman, Iran dan melihat bagaimana aktiviti luar senggang ini menyumbang kepada kesinambungan amalan keugamaan di kalangan mereka. Matlamat utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji aktiviti masa lapang di kalangan golongan tua berbangsa Zoroastrians di Kerman, Iran. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji, corak dan pilihan aktiviti riadah luar, serta faktor-faktor yang memberi kesan terhadap aktiviti riadah luar, pilihan golongan tua berbangsa Zoroastrians. Selain, kajian ini ingin mengenal pasti kekangan yang menghalang golongan tua berbangsa Zoroastrians membuat pilihan dan menyertai aktiviti masa lapang. Kajian ini turut meneroka sumbangan aktiviti rekreasi untuk kesinambungan agama di kalangan masyarakat golongan tua berbangsa Zoroastrians di Iran. Dengan menggunakan kaedah antropologi seperti pemerhatian peserta, temubual mendalam, dan temubual mendalam terhadap golongan tua berbangsa Zoroastrians. Pengumpulan data telah dilaksanakan semasa kerja lapangan dari September 2010 hingga September 2012. Sebagai ahli etnografi, penyelidik telah mengambil bahagian di dalam setiap aktiviti riadah harian untuk mendapatkan pemahaman mendalam dan merasai pengalaman responden melakukan aktiviti lapang mereka. Teknik persampelan telah digunakan untuk memilih peserta kajian. Ini bergantung kepada skop pengalaman dan pemahaman peserta. Proses pensampelan ini berterusan sehingga tiada data baru hadir semasa proses pengumpulan data (ketepuan data). Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa aktiviti masa lapang yang paling digemari oleh golongan tua berbangsa Zoroastrians ialah aktiviti spekulasi dan kebudayaan, aktiviti sosial, dan aktiviti fizikal. Isu berkenaan teman bagi melaksanakan aktiviti lapang, kebanyakan responden menghabiskan masa lapang mereka dengan ahli keluarga dan rakan-rakan rapat. Hanya beberapa peratus daripada mereka melaksanakan aktiviti

masa lapang berseorangan. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan golongan tua wanita lebih suka untuk menghabiskan masa lapang mereka dengan keluarga, manakala golongan tua lelaki menunjukkan lebih kecenderungan untuk menghabiskan masa lapang mereka dengan rakan-rakan. Kajian juga mendapati bahawa status ekonomi turut memberi kesan kepada jenis dan kualiti penggunaan masa lapang serta akses kepada kemudahan riadah. Selain itu hasil kajian mendapati kekangan masa lapang golongan tua berbangsa Zoroastrians telah diklasifikasikan kepada tiga kategori: intrapersonal, interpersonal, dan struktur. Dalam tempoh dua dekad yang lalu, masyarakat Zoroastrian telah mengatur beberapa strategi untuk menyelesaikan masalah identiti yang telah berlaku disebabkan oleh kadar kelahiran yang rendah dan imigresen ke luar negara di kalangan Zoroaster. Kebanyakan strategi ini melibatkan upacara perayaan dan agama supaya ia lebih memudahkan dan kebanyakan ritual ini boleh dilakukan dalam bentuk rekreasi. Proses ini kemudiannya dipanggil sebagai aktiviti lapang suci. Tujuan proses ini adalah untuk menarik lebih ramai golongan berbangsa Zoroastrian terutamanya yang biasa dengan agama ini. Pengudusan dan desanctifikasi adalah dikotomi yang telah memainkan peranan penting di dalam penghasilan dan penjanaan semula identiti Zoroastrian yang tinggal di Iran dan kesinambungan agama mereka.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

At present, almost 10 percent of Iran's population are 60 years old (Statistical Center of Iran: 2013) and it is predicted that up to 2025, almost one of each seven Iranian will belong to this age group. Therefore, the number of the elderly in Iran is increasing at accelerating rate and it is poised to be one of the most remarkable and an important phenomenon which is named in some cases aging crisis or aging boom (Geiger & Miko, 1995).

Population aging is a process of demographic transition by which the number of the elderly is became a proportionately bigger part of the total population due to decrease in child mortality and reduced fertility (Dunstan & Thomson, 2006). These changes are due to progress in public health and medical care, improvement in medical technology, availability of social security, changes in family structure and economic conditions in general (Chowdhry, 1992; Conner, 1992; Kart & Kinney, 2001). Decreases in fertility rate is led to reduce the share of children in a society, and life expectancy can increase the number of the years which individuals can alive (Heenan, 1993). Of the last two decades, the aged population in Iran has grown due to increased life expectancy and reduced total fertility rate as well (Mirzaei, 2007).

Aging population is producing new needs and specific interest in the role of leisure in the life of the elderly (Carp, 1990; Cutler & Hendricks, 2011; Neulinger, 1981a, 1981b). Leisure is understood as a free time which an individual utilizes without any constraint according to his own will (Chowdhry, 1992; Godbey, 1978). Elderly generally have more free time than any other age group because of less work (Dolati & Jamali, 2004; Zarei & Ghorbani, 2007; Rahimi et al., 2009). Although old people spend more time alone than other age group, the image of the senior sitting alone in her/his

house doing nothing is a negative stereotype (McGuire, Boyd, Tedrick, & Tedrick, 2009). Undoubtedly, participation in leisure activities can provide many benefits for older adults. The relationship between leisure activity and well-being is widely promoted to improve health among the elderly (Clark, Ebran, Graham, & Thornton, 2003; Hogan, 2005; Mannell, 1999; McGuire et al., 2009; Godbey, 1999; Hezarjaribi & Erfaei, 2011; Ardakanian, 2009). The advantages of leisure activity include personal growth and fulfillment (Chowdhry, 1992; Varesi, Beykmohamadi, & Ghanbariyan, 2010), mitigation of anxiety (Kaufman, 1988; Lawton, 1994), decreased risk for dementia, reduced risk for cardiovascular diseases (Folsom et al., 1997; Schlicht, 2002; Wenger, 1996; Saberiyan, Haji Aghajani, Ghorbani, 2002), decreased mortality (Glass, de Leon, Marottoli, & Berkman, 1999), enhanced psychological well-being and contentment (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993; Lawton, 1994), living longer, personality development (Avni, Kipper, & Fox, 1987), improved physical and mental health (Asztalos et al., 2009; Fontaine, 2000), and coping with stress (Shaw, Caldwell, & Kleiber, 1996). Moreover, researches have demonstrated positive and strong relationship between leisure participation and life satisfaction (Kelly & Steinkamp, 1997; Leitner & Leitner, 1996; Kelly & Godbey, 1992; Maddah et al., 2008).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Although many researches have been conducted on leisure, a little portion of them however, have concentrated on the leisure needs and activities of the elderly (Tinsley, Tinsley, & Croskeys, 2002). Research about leisure activities of the elderly has become one of the most important topics in recent decades. There have been many reasons why leisure researchers have concerned on study of the leisure activities and services of the elderly. First and foremost, aging population of the world is increasing at the accelerating rate. Second, older adults have much more free time than other age groups.

The final reason is the result of the earlier research which has demonstrated the effect of leisure satisfaction on quality of life and life satisfaction among the elderly (Leitner & Leitner, 2004).

In addition, most of the researches in older adults' leisure preferences and participation have been done in North America, Europe and Australia, and to existing knowledge, a little has been done in different societies such as Asian and Middle East countries. Indeed, there are many differences between western and Middle East countries which have different traditions, perceptions, and social environment. Moreover, "Leisure theories and models which are created in North America may not be applicable in Asian countries" (Chick & Dong, 2003, p. 339).

Albeit culture (in general sense) seems to be an important factor to shape the leisure preferences, leisure participation, leisure constraints, and leisure experiences (Floyd & Gramann, 1993; Stodolska & Yi-Kook, 2005; Walker, Deng, & Dieser, 2005; Henderson, 1998), research which have been conducted already in even western countries and English literature have suffered from lack of cultural analyses excepting in a few cases (Juniu, 2000a; Khan, 1997; Russell & Stage, 1996; Tirone & Shaw, 1997). In other words, leisure experiences and behaviors have been investigated in psychological point of view (Coalter, 1999) which concentrates on individual's perceptions or experiences rather than "social structure" and "cultural background" (Samdahl, 2005; Shaw & Henderson, 2005). "Cultural background" has not been directly investigated as a main factor to formation of leisure activities and constraint. As Dong and Chick (2005, p. 1) stated "While human beings are enabled by cultures, human beings are also constrained by them. Therefore, based on these two features, what is available or acceptable in some cultures may be unavailable or unacceptable in others". The term culture has been defined in deferent ways. Almost all of these definitions agree that culture is a system of beliefs and values which is share between

members of a society and is learned from last generations. These systems of beliefs and values prescribe and proscribe what members of the society should and should not to do (Bates & Plog, 1990).

Among the Middle East Countries, Iran is culturally quite different and has unique culture. Majority of Iranian sociologist and anthropologist agree that, Iran's society- because of countless reasons- is one of the most complicated societies in the world (Fazeli, 2006; Jahanbegloo, 2004). Iran's society is not a homogeneous society, and has combined by the several minority groups which are differentiated in terms of language, religion, and so on (Fakouhi, 2006). One of the most important religious minority groups are Zoroastrians. In fact, the Zoroastrianism was the official religion of Iran's society which was replaced by Islam, 1300 years ago. Although majority of Iranians are Muslim (more than 99 percent of the total population of Iran), some Zoroastrian (0.9 percent of the total population) also are living in Iran which is officially called as a religious minority group (Statistical Center of Iran: 2013).

As far as this study were able to reveal, only a few fieldwork studies have been conducted on the community of Iran's Zoroastrians. These works include Fischer's unpublished PhD dissertation (1973), Boyce's fieldwork conducted between 1963 and 1964 (Boyce, 2001), and Kesternberg Amighi's fieldwork conducted in 1972 and 1973 (Kesternberg Amighi, 1990). One reason behind the lack of fieldwork on Zoroastrians has been the problems encountered by foreign scholars when conducting research on Zoroastrians. This was especially the case after the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran when the majority of defined research projects being conducted or about to be conducted became suspended.

For a long time, most investigations conducted on Zoroastrianism have been mainly concerned with their historical and religious origins (Boyce 1996, 1989, 1982; Boyce & Grenet 1991; Clark 1998); their beliefs and teachings (Kreyenbroek 1997; Zaehner

1976); their sacred books (Hintze 2007a; Hultgard 2000; Humbach 1991; Skjarvo 2004, 2005); their history under the *Achaemenian* and *Sasanian* Empires (Hultgard 1998; Lincoln 2007; Shaked 1990, 1994a, 1997; Shayegan 2003; Williams 1996); their history under Islamic era (Choksy 2006b; Fischer & Abedi 1990; Kestenberg Amighi 1990; Russell 2004; Shaked 1994b, 1995; Yarshater 1998); gender studies in Zoroastrianism (Brosius 1996; Choksy 2002; De Jong 2003; Rose 1998); and their rituals (Choksy 1989, 2007; De Jong 1999, 2002; Skjarvo 2007; Stausberg 2004; Williams 1994; Williams & Boyd 1993). These studies have rarely considered Zoroastrians as people who continue to exist and have neglected their normal life in the social context. In other words, in most of the studies, Zoroastrians have been abstracted from their social context, with a failure to investigate the social aspect of religiosity. One of the aspect of this religious minority group is their leisure activities. Reviewing the literature revealed that, there is no research about their leisure activities and the role of these activities in their lives. Therefore, the problem of this study is how Zoroastrians' elderly in Iran do their leisure time? And what is the contribution of these leisure activities to religious continuity among them?

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions facilitated a systematic approach to completing the purposes of this study.

- 1- What are the outdoor leisure activities and preferences among the Zoroastrians' Elderly in the city of Kerman?
- 2- What leisure constraints do Zoroastrians' elderly in the city of Kerman report and perceive?

- 3- How the Zoroastrians as a religious minority group in Iran has survived over time by accomplishing their religious celebrations, feasts, rituals, and customs as leisure activities?
- 4- What are the implications of the research regarding the leisure activities among the Zoroastrians' elderly?

1.4. Research Aim

The aim of this research is to explore the leisure activities among the Zoroastrians' elderly in Kerman, Iran. More specifically this study attempts to identify the outdoor leisure activities and leisure constraints among the Zoroastrians' elderly in the city of Kerman, Iran, and explore the contribution of these leisure activities to religious continuity among the Zoroastrians' community in Iran.

1.5. Research Objectives

The research which is carried out aim to fulfill the following objectives. The main objective of the study was to explore the leisure behavior of the Zoroastrians' elderly in Iran.

- 1- To identify the outdoor leisure activities and preferences of the Zoroastrians' elderly in Iran
- 2- To explore the leisure constraints which limit the leisure participation of the Zoroastrians' elderly in leisure activities
- 3- To explore the contribution of the leisure activities to religious continuity of the Zoroastrians' community.
- 4- Suggestions to improve the leisure activities of the Zoroastrians' elderly in Iran

1.6. Significance of the Study

The importance and necessity of the research is related to the crisis of aging in Iran. Improved medical health service and economic conditions in general has increased the life expectancy. Changes in life expectancy have increased the number of aged population (60 years old) in Iran to around 9 million which makes up 10 percent of Iran population. Iran is changing to aged country, because, if an aging population of a country reaches to 7 percent, it will be an aged country. So in Iran, aging phenomenon must be considered as a most important challenge in the present and future (Mirzaei, 2007).

Another significance of this research is related to the concept of culture. It is no doubt that, Cultural values and traditions play an important role in the lives of older adults. Culture is not neutral on aging as a phenomenon, it conditions the attitudes and behavior of older persons, and the perception and practices of the society around them. Cultural values help societies' attitudes toward participation in and withdrawal from leisure activities (United Nations Population Fund, 2009). In his anthropological definition of culture, Taylor (1871) stated: "Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (p. 1). Religion as an aspect of culture has positive and direct relationship with aging. Although a little research has been investigated the relationship between religion (e.g., Christianity and Jewish) and leisure, no research has been conducted about leisure activities among the Zoroastrians. This research considers the concept of culture and how / to what extant culture encourages or limit the leisure activities. Almost, all of the research about leisure activities, whether has been excluded the elderly or included them, neglected the important of the culture as a main factor to forming the leisure activities. Culture can be acted as an accelerator and prescribe to leisure activity, or can be regarded as proscribe or reducer in leisure activity (Dong &

Chick, 2005). Therefore it is essential to understand the role of culture in leisure activities, especially in leisure perception, leisure preferences, and leisure constraints.

Since, leisure constraints to some extent is led to nonparticipation, research about it is very important. Recognizing and identifying the leisure constraints may lead to leisure education and help elderly to reduce those constraints (Iso-Ahola & Mannell, 1985), and are improved the delivery of leisure services for the elderly by the planners, policy makers and so on. Research such as this, may generate information about leisure constraints, perception of leisure, and leisure participation to better identify leisure behavior and activities (Jackson, 1991) proposed that research about leisure constraints can fulfill three main functions:

First, it enhances understanding of a phenomenon-the complex ways in which leisure is constrained- that was largely overlooked except for sporadic studies until about 10 years ago. Second, insights derived from leisure constraints research have potential to shed new light no aspects of leisure-such as participation, motivation, and satisfaction-that were previously thought to have been fairly well understood. Third, the concept of constraints can serve as a device to assist in perceiving new connections among apparently discrete facets of leisure and, therefore, as a vehicle to facilitate communication among researchers with diverse topical interests and methodological orientations (p. 273).

1.7. Scope of the Research

- 1- The study is limited to the elderly who are 60 years old and over regardless of their gender.
- 2- The study also is limited to outdoor leisure activities among the elderly.

Therefore, indoor leisure activities are exclude from this study.

- 3- The study is limited just to the Zoroastrian's elderly who are living in the city of Kerman.

1.8. Research Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research method for the data collection and analysis in order to establish harmony among the theoretical framework of the study, informants and the design of the study, on the one hand and to compensate for the lack of previous studies conducted on leisure constraints in Iran. Data were collected using in-depth interview. In addition, the field notes during the participant observations were also used for further analysis. Purposive sampling technique was used to selecting the informants. This study has also adopted the snowball technique of sampling for choosing the rest of the informants. Depending on the informants' scope of the experiences and understating, the process of sampling continued till no new data turned up during data collection process (data saturation). The data were collected from 84 in-depth interviews and long term participant observations. The in-depth interviews were carried out simultaneously with participant observation. All in-depth interviews have been carried out by the researcher over a two-year period from September 2010 till September 2012. Data management and analysis was comprised of three phases. In the first phase, the researcher performed the open coding which included the key words and root concepts indicated in the data. After applying open coding on the each transcription, the primary codes and categories applied in this phase, were compared with each other. In the third stage or selective coding, the central code of the study was identified, the one that the other codes all related to.

1.9. Organization of the Thesis

Seven chapters will comprise this thesis beginning with Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the dissertation followed by Chapter 2, provide a review of the relevant and related literature to the research. Chapter 3 explains the research methodology used for the research and the study area. Chapter 4 explains the historical background of the Zoroastrians, while Chapter 5 describes the findings of the research and Chapter 6 presents a discussion of research findings. Finally Chapter 7 contains the conclusion, and provides some recommendations. Appendix A contain the in-depth interview protocol, and appendix b contain participant observation plan followed by the appendix c which contains the list of informants of the study.

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CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the relevant literature of the study will be discussed. Therefore, this chapter is divided in four sections: a) perception of leisure b) leisure constraints c) leisure and life satisfaction and d) theoretical framework. In the first part of this chapter, the meaning of leisure will be discussed. The perceptions of leisure include leisure as time, leisure as activity, leisure as a state of mind, leisure as a holistic concept, leisure as a spiritual expression, and leisure as a social instrument. After that, the leisure constraints literature will be discussed. After that, leisure and its' relationship with life satisfaction will be discussed. In the final section, theoretical framework of the research will be explained.

2.2. Perception of Leisure

Question about what is leisure, is not new and has been discussed by researchers for a long time. Philosophers, social scientists, and other researchers from other disciplines have asked and debated about it. The question, what is leisure, is deceptively simple question which has a variety of conflicting answers because scholars of different orientations have attached all manner of philosophical, sociological, anthropological, and psychological qualifications to the word (Shivers & Delisle, 1997). Indeed, as Kraus (1998) stated, "Many of the prominent writers use different definitions at different time, depending on the point which is being made at the time. This can be seen in several of the all-embracing descriptions of leisure" (p. 55). For instance, some scholar defined leisure as different things to different people; different things in different cultures (Edginton, DeGraaf, Dieser, & Edginton, 2006; Torkildsen, 2005).

The term leisure has been defined by different perspectives. “These different perspectives reflect historical differences in the organization of societies as well as differences in concepts of impingements upon both freedom and pleasure” (Godbey, Graefe, & James, 1992, p. 2). A variety of definitions of leisure have been presented by the researchers who studied the leisure (Godbey, 1999; Kelly, 1996; Kelly & Godbey, 1992; Kraus, 1998).

Using the efforts of previous researches, leisure can be defined in many ways: Leisure as time, leisure as an activity, as a state of mind, as a holistic perspective, as a spiritual expression, and as a social instrument (Edginton et al., 2006; Godbey, 1999; Kelly & Godbey, 1992; Searle & Brayley, 2000).

2.2.1. Leisure as Time

One of the main ways and most common approaches of viewing leisure over the past century were to understand it as time although “there are many variations within this broad framework” (Torkildsen, 2005, p. 51). Some make a broad distinction, perceived leisure as the portion of time, free from work and obligations or free from work-related responsibilities (Edginton et al., 2006; Kraus, 1998; Torkildsen, 2005), which one can spend as he/she pleases (Godbey, 1978). Torkildsen believed that view leisure as time is the most common conceptualization and stated:

Leisure is a portion of time which remains when time for work and the basic requirements for existence have been satisfied. Leisure is discretionary time or obligatory time...time falls into three classes: time for existence, sleeping, eating (meeting biological requirements); time for subsistence (working at one's job); and leisure (time remaining after the basic necessities of life and work requirements have been satisfied (Torkildsen, 2005, p. 54).

In this sense, leisure is associated with free time and this association is so vigorous which researchers use them synonymously (Edginton et al., 2006). Most define leisure as freedom free from demands of work or duty; free or unoccupied time; free or unrestricted time, and so on. As Shivers & Delisle (1997) identified, “Free time can be produced or accumulated in several ways: (1) through economic ownership; (2) through technological advance; (3) by procrastination or failure obligations; (4) by restriction of activity or enforced idleness; (5) through retirement; and (6) by completion of required activity” (p. 84).

Definition and perception of leisure as time is traced back to the Aristotle’s work (De Grazia, 1994). Available time was one of the meanings which he ascribed to the term leisure. The idea had a negative implication by Veblen in 1899. Veblen (2007, p. 33) defined leisure as “unproductive consumption of time”, which was the prerogative of wealthy people. Scholars, who advocated this approach, believe that, time can be divided into three parts: existence, subsistence, and discretionary time. The concept of viewing leisure as time is the result of industrial revolution which divided human’s lives into two part; work time and free time (Juniu, 2000b). Some researchers hold that leisure time can be considered from two perspectives, residual time (Cordes, 2003) and discretionary time (Brightbill, 1964; Russell, 2005). The first approach considers leisure as a time left over from other obligations which take place as unplanned and unchosen leisure time and generate unstructured opportunity for leisure. The second approach considers leisure as a time free from work and subsistence activities. According to this approach, individual have choice and freedom to do their leisure time.

Viewing leisure in this light, have been criticized by some researchers. They have argued that there is no distinguished line between free time and time which is allocated to life substituted and in fact is traced back to individual’s definition of necessary work. As Torkildsen (2005) says, “What is necessary for some will be discretionary for others

and many necessary activities such as eating and sleeping may be seen as discretionary activities” (p. 53). Others reason that, viewing leisure as free time when individual is free from work and is not working primarily for money, will be perceived only in occupation framework and cannot explain activities such as domestic work’s women which do without money. Nevertheless, in contrast to other authors, Torkildsen (2005) pointed out that:

Leisure is free time and that is all. Whether it is used for personal indulgence, expressing creation, or indolence, is immaterial. Leisure remains incontrovertibly an element of discretionary time, not limited in any objective way except in terms of how it will be used or allowed to pass (p. 53).

All in all, as Shivers & Delisle (1997) express, “the concept of leisure as time free from obligations is the most effective and meaningful definition yet proposed” (p. 93).

2.2.2. Leisure as Activity

Another classical approach of leisure regarded it as a cluster of activities undertaken during free time (Torkildsen, 2005), and proposes that leisure time activities and other activities such as work or subsistence activities are not interrelated, but can differ from other activities, although each of them are a unique set of functions (Edginton et al., 2006). This perspective of leisure traces back to the ancient word of “scholē, meant serious activity without the pressure of necessity” (Godbey, 1978, p. 44). Dumazedier (1967) also understood leisure as activity and identified three functions of leisure activities: relaxation, entertainment, and personal development. He expressed that:

Leisure is activity-apart from the obligations of work, family, and society-to which the individual turns at will, for either relaxation, diversity, or broad his knowledge

and his spontaneous social participation, the free exercise of his activity capacity (p. 16-17).

According to this perspective, leisure time is defined by set of activities. In this case, the use of an individual's leisure can be viewed in four levels: Active, creative, passive, and emotional participation. Nash in his leisure pyramid's theory proposed a scale of values which are can be applied to an individual's leisure activities. These values are hierarchically; those activities which are at the top of the pyramid, have positive, and those activities which are at inferior of the pyramid have negative values (Edginton et al., 2006).

Some researchers agree that this view of leisure can be problematic and generate a bizarre paradox, because, some activities serves dual aims (Raymore, 2002). As Kelly (1996) stated, "...almost no one actually defines leisure as specified activities in theory. There are no lists of activities that are said to encompass leisure" (p. 19). In other words, as Shivers & Delisle (1997) states, "when leisure is defined in this way, it cannot be separated from any of the myriad activities in which humans engage" (p. 97). Furthermore, activities which some individuals regard as leisure might be regarded as work by others (Pavelka, 2002). So, it seems the line between work and leisure to be subjective rather than objective and clear. Yet, some researchers tend to use this view and definition of leisure as one of the foundations of current discussion of leisure definitions. Leisure activities as Kelly (1996) suggested can be considered from two perspectives; forms and meaning of leisure activities. In case of forms of leisure activities, Edginton, Hudson, Dieser, & Edginton (2004) for instance, proposed that the areas of programming can be categorized in following forms: sports, outdoor recreation, literary activities, wellness, arts, self-improvement, games, hobbies, travel, volunteer services, and social recreation, even though DeGraaf, Jordan, & DeGraaf (1999, p. 121) noted that "the possible categories are limitless and the means of classification often

arbitrary”. Considering leisure activities in terms of their meaning is the second view, which appears to be a part of a conscious effort to align the leisure goods and services chosen with the status or image the consumer wishes to project (Edginton et al., 2006).

2.2.3. Leisure as a State of Mind

Researchers who advocate this approach proposed that leisure experience is a function of individual’s state of mind. That is, “leisure is a subjective attitude, an experience that is based on an individual’s own perspective, feelings, values, and past life experiences” (Edginton et al., 2006, p. 40), “is a state of being” (Bammell, 1996) and “a mental condition that is located in the consciousness of the individual” (Kelly, 1996, p. 44). Indeed, this approach tends to know what happens in the mind of the person when he or she is engaged in an experience. According to this approach, leisure is dependent on the attitudes of individuals to leisure. For example, a person or one family might be satisfied with their leisure activities and participation because of positive attitude, while, others might not be satisfied with their leisure engagement because their mental mind-set are essentially negative.

This approach of leisure views it as a lifestyle which is holistic, that is, individual’s views of leisure is not limited just to several activities such as family and religious activities, work, and free time; rather, all these engagements can be viewed as a segment of the whole in which one seeks to achieve personal fulfilment, self-enrichment and, “self-actualization” (Maslow, 1970). Considering leisure as a state of being, is not new, as De Grazia (1994) noted:

In Aristotle’s short definition, leisure is a condition or a state, the stat of being free from the necessity to labour. Leisure is free from the necessity of being occupied-leisure is a state of being in which activity is performed for its own sake or as its own end (p. 14-15).

In recent decades, some researchers considered the term leisure as perceived freedom (Iso-Ahola, 1979, 1990, 1994; Neulinger, 1981a, 1981b; Samdahl, 1991). For example, Kelly (1972) believed that perceived freedom and working-relation are two critical components of leisure. Similarly Neulinger (1981a) mentioned that leisure is a state of mind, it is a way of being, of being at peace with oneself and what one is doing leisure has one and only one essential criterion, and that is the condition of perceived freedom. Any activity carried out freely without constraint or compulsion, may be considered to be leisure. To leisure implies being engaged in an activity as a free agent, and of one's own choice. Neulinger (1981a) developed a leisure paradigm and determined two elements of leisure: perceived freedom and intrinsic motivation. The perceived freedom as Neulinger (1981a, p. 15) argued, refer to a state of mind in which an individual "feel that what he/she is doing is done by choice and because one want to do it". Intrinsic motivation takes place when individual is seen that the rewards to participation is resulted from involving in an activity. When an individual feel that intrinsic reward and perceived freedom resulted from engaging in an activity, he, she is regarded that activity as a leisure, otherwise, in the state of absent perceived freedom, an individual is told that that activity is not leisure. Neulinger (1981a) writes:

To leisure means to be engaged in an activity performed for its own sake, to do something which gives one pleasure and satisfaction, which involves one to the very core of one's being. To leisure means to be oneself, to express one's talents, one's capacities, one's potentials (p. xi).

Six psychological stages of leisure according to this approach are: Pure leisure, leisure-work, leisure-job, pure work, work-job, and pure job. Further, Iso-Ahola (1979) tested the theory of Kelly and Neulinger by conducting two empirical studies. His finding demonstrated that there was significant relationship between perception of leisure and perceived freedom, low work-relation, final goal- relation, and intrinsic

motivation which was totally conflicted with the findings of Neulinger (1981a) and Kelly (1972). Furthermore, the findings showed that, perceived freedom was the significant variable in contrast to other variables, which mean; this variable can determine the leisure perception's individuals and form the leisure engagement. Therefore, the finding showed that, the perception of leisure seems to be more subjective orientation than objective to be studied.

2.2.4. Leisure as a Holistic Concept

This view of leisure presented by authors such as Godbey (1978); Kelly & Godbey (1992); Kraus (1998); Torkildsen (2005); Neulinger (1981a). According to this view of leisure, all segments of the life seemed to have a potential for leisure. As Torkildsen (2005) expressed:

Holistic perspective sees leisure as a construct, with such elements as an antithesis to the work of the participant, a perception of the activity as voluntary or free, a pleasant expectation or recollection, a full range of possibilities from withdrawal in sleep or drink to highly creative tasks. The holistic concept of leisure is seen as a potentially synthesizing theoretical perspective in which elements of leisure are to be expressed in all aspects of human behaviour-in work, play, education, and other social spheres. There is much debate as to whether the unique character of leisure, particularly as influenced by social organization of work can be effectively analysed and operationalized because such a conceptual approach has not lent itself to either empirical testing or accurate prediction (p. 76).

Holistic view combines many characteristics of previous definitions of leisure with specific focus on ability of the individuals to form and control their own leisure. This approach, at present considered as a manner to descriptive the dynamic and multi-phasic nature of leisure (Lee & Shafer, 2002; Pavelka, 2002). From this approach, settings such

as school, church, and work may provide leisure opportunity for people “individual might find the opportunity for leisure in work, church, school or other setting that heretofore may have only focus on the potential for more specific, narrow outcomes” (Edginton et al., 2006, p. 43).

Plummer (2009, p. 15) stated that, “Shortcoming identified with each of the leisure’s perspectives has promoted the proposal of more holistic definitions”. “Multidimensional definition approach” of leisure, also attempt to combine different perspectives of leisure in an integrative model. This approach of leisure is based on works of Kelly (1980) and Godbey (1999). According to Kelly (1980, p. 82), leisure is defined as “the quality of activity defined by relative freedom and intrinsic satisfaction”. Multidimensional definition of leisure (Figure 2.1) combines time, activity, and experience. These three aspects of leisure have separately reflected in some definition of leisure. Based on the statement of Godbey (1999) “leisure is living in relative freedom from the external compulsive forces of one’s culture and physical environment so as to be able to act from internally compelling love in ways that are personally pleasing, intuitively worthwhile, and provide a basis for faith” (p. 12).

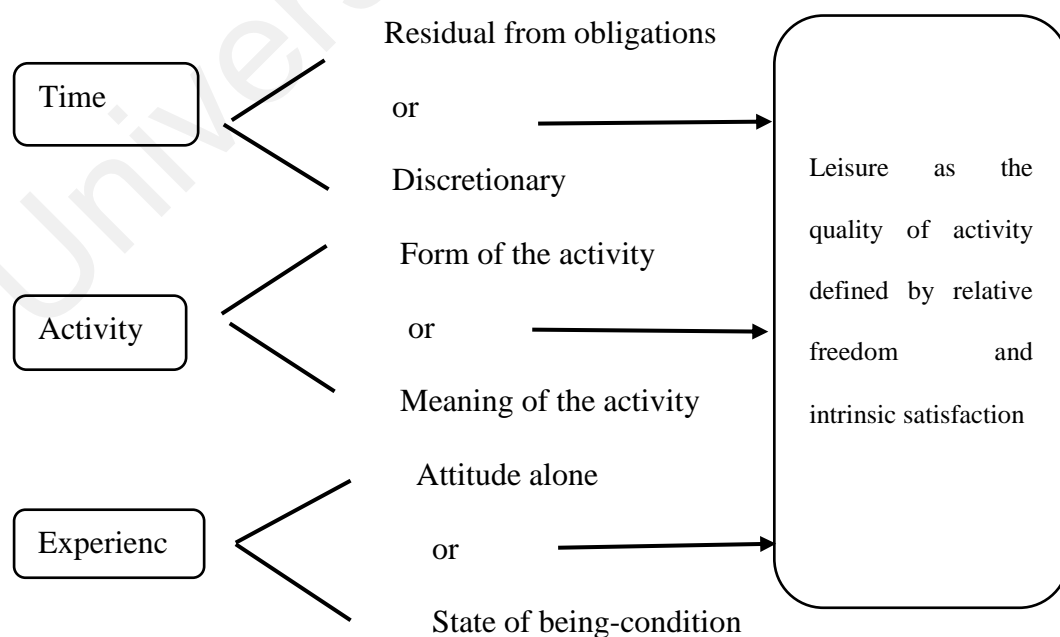


Figure 2.1: Multidimensional Definition of Leisure
Sources: Plummer (2009, p. 15).

2.2.5. Leisure as a Spiritual Expression

Leisure is considered not only as a state of mind, but also as a spiritual expression or religious values. As Pieper (2009) stated “Leisure is a mental and spiritual attitude-it is not simply the result of external factors, it is not the inevitable result of spare time, a holiday, a weekend or a vacation. It is the first place, an attitude of the mind, a condition of the soul” (p. 40).

Pieper (2009) jointed leisure to culture via worship, celebration, and festival: “culture depends for its very existence on leisure, and leisure, in its turn, is not possible unless it has durable and living link with the cults, with divine worship” (p. 41). Pieper believed that, leisure is a mental or spiritual attitude which is not resulted from external factors, spare time or idleness.

This view considers leisure in terms of its contribution to spiritual expression or religious values (Kraus, 1998). Heintzman & Andel (1995), debate that leisure has traditionally been considered as part of a God-ordained whole. They pointed out that, “the leisure experience is characterized by a mystical or spiritual feeling of being connected with oneself, with all else, and a sense of oneness with the universe. It facilitate spiritual experiences as "extreme states of consciousness" which may be similar to "peak" experiences of self-actualization or "flow" experiences” (p. 22-27).

2.2.6. Leisure as a Social Instrument

In this approach, leisure is considered as a social instrument and is viewed from diversity dimensions. As Kaplan (1975) says:

Leisure is seen as a means, an instrument, and a control. It refers to the uses of leisure for such purposes as social status, therapy, or social control. Leisure is then a medicine, a symbol, or a tool (p. 18-22).

The most aspect of this definition of leisure is dealt with the concept of social class. This view of leisure is largely rooted from the writing of Thorstein Veblen (2007) who showed how ruling classes, during particular eras, become identifiable mostly through their possession of leisure. In his major work-The theory of the Leisure Class-defined leisure as “conspicuous consumption or non-productive consumption of time” (Veblen, 2007, p. 28-35). Viewing leisure as a symbol of social class, historically has begun from agricultural civilization; although, the concept of social class have been changed over time as a result of increased social organization, complexity, and functional differentiation of agricultural societies (Edginton et al., 2006). However, definition of leisure as a symbol of social class is not associated with the upper class alone. This approach still uses by some scholars as well people as a way of claiming or demonstrating social status in society.

Another aspect of leisure as a social instrument, is regarded it as a way of improving individual or community life. Therapeutic recreation is often considered as a way to enhance health and wellness for individuals who are recovering from an illness or injury (Sylvester, 2002; Wise, 2002). In this approach, leisure is familiar to the mental hospital world, where “recreation” and “occupational therapy” more and more have become tools for rehabilitation.

Leisure has also has been viewed as an instrument to promote social order and harmony within a given economic, political, or social framework or ideology. This view of leisure is referred to Rojek’s works (Rojek, 2013, 1995, 2000). His leisure theory has been entitled “sociological imagination of leisure” (Bramham, 2002) and postmodern leisure (Rojek, 1995). He claimed that, psychological theories of leisure which focuses on freedom are illusory, while postmodern leisure is viewed leisure a mechanism for social control and order (Rojek, 2013, 1995).

2.3. Leisure Constraints

Research about leisure constraints has been developed continuously over the past two decades and has become one of the major sub-fields in leisure studies (Jackson, 1991; Jackson & Scott, 1999). Since one of the main aims of leisure research is to recognize individual's leisure behaviour in society, so it is important to understand the constraints which limit or prevent people to participate in leisure activities. Undoubtedly, research about leisure constraints can improve people's comprehension about leisure participation, leisure satisfaction and leisure preferences (Jackson, 1991).

The definition of leisure constraints have been developed over time. This term were originally conceptualized as a mechanism for better comprehending obstacles to leisure participation (Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1997). In the earlier research, leisure constraints was defined as any "factors that inhibit people's ability to participate in leisure activities, to spend more time doing so, to take advantage of leisure services or to achieve a desired level of satisfaction" (Jackson, 1988, p. 203) or "those barriers or blockage that inhibit continued use of a recreation service" (Backman & Crompton, 1990, p. 59). It is also defined as "a subset of reasons for not engaging in a leisure behaviour" (Jackson, 1988, p. 211) and interference between the preference for an activity and take part in it (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Jackson & Searle, 1985a). In 1991, Jackson updated his definition of leisure constraints to "factors that are assumed by researchers and perceived or experienced by individuals to limit the formation of leisure preferences and to inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment in leisure" (Jackson, 1991, p. 23). Henderson (1994) noted that "A constraints refers to any relative and/or relevant factors that mitigates between some possible activity and preference or participation in that experience" (p. 5).

Leisure constraints research have concentrated on issues such as, lack of time and money, lack of facilities and services, poor health and ability, and lack of interest (Jackson, 1993; Shaw, Bonen, & McCabe, 1991). Therefore, a leisure constraint is a term which is generally used for any factors that hinders people's quality, duration, and frequency of leisure participation (Ellis & Rademacher, 1986; Ellis & Witt, 1991). Nadirova & Jackson (2000) based on the previous research have summarized four domains of leisure constraints. They stated "these domains may include the desire but inability to participate in a new activity, ceasing participation in a former activity, the inability to participate as frequently as desired and negative impacts on the quality of the leisure experience (p. 398). On the whole, researcher has an inclination to define leisure constraints in a wider context and which include and analyses all the potential aspects of leisure constraints.

According to the leisure constraints' literature, the word "barriers" have been used by the early leisure researchers (Godbey, 1985; Jackson, 1991; Jackson & Searle, 1983; Jackson & Searle, 1985). Originally, "barriers" were conceptualized as insuperable hindrances to leisure participation which is only one of the sequences of leisure constraints pointed out in later research. Arnold & Shinew (2008) considered barriers "either in terms of preventing participation, reducing frequency, intensity or duration of participation, or reducing the quality of the experience or satisfaction gained from the activity" (p. 67). "Barriers" were more likely to concentrate on one specific constraint which interferes between preference and participation (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). Beside leisure researchers, researchers in public health studies have used the term barrier and have classified barriers as personal and environmental barriers (Clark, 1999; Sallis et al., 1989). Personal barriers consists poor health, lack of time for leisure activity, safety concerns, lack of skill and motivation and energy. Environment barriers

consists lack of place to sit and rest during a walk, lack of place to participate in leisure time activity, lack of quality for place such as pavement and immoderate weather.

Based on the progress in leisure research, researchers started to contest and redefine the leisure concepts. One of the concepts which have been redefined is “barriers” which was replaced by the term “constraints”. Researchers prefer to use the term “constraints” instead of “barriers”. Some researchers indicated that constraints do not necessarily lead to nonparticipation (Kay & Jackson, 1991). Crawford & Godbey (1987) noted that, the term barriers refers to “any factor which intervenes between the preference for an activity and participation in it” whereas, the term constraints refer to “reduce the levels of participation in a preferred activity” (Shaw et al., 1991, p. 287). Jackson (1988, 1991) also stated the word “constraints” has a wider meaning than “barrier”, which means; “barriers” contain just one specific hindrance such as interference between preference for leisure activity and participation in it, while “constraints” include people’s leisure preferences and leisure satisfaction. So, he believed that constraints’ term is better than barrier to elucidate non-participation in leisure activities, because barriers contain factors which negatively affect leisure participation (Jackson, 1988, 1991). Therefore, constraints are viewed to be a more apt term because it encompasses not only non-participation, but also the others sequences of constraints such as reduce the frequency or intensity of participation or decrease of quality of the experience or satisfaction.

2.3.1. History of Leisure Constraints

This area has been substantially changed during the past twenty years. Some researcher have summarized previous study in this area and proposed some directions for future study (Henderson, 1997; Jackson & Scott, 1999; Nadirova & Jackson, 2000; Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1997). Indeed, research about leisure constraints has started from the early 1960s when the first study conducted by the Outdoor Recreation

Research Review Commission (ORRRC) in the US four decades ago (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991). The aim of this study was to examine outdoor recreation activities especially demands and management. However, external factors which hinder people to participate in leisure activities, socioeconomic characteristics of participants, nonparticipation, and attitudes regarding outdoor recreation activities were also queried. The result of the research demonstrated that, although items such as facilities, time, skill, and health has negative effect on outdoor recreation participation, the concepts of “barrier” or “constraints” were not conceptualized in this research. This study revealed that leisure participation is determined by characteristics of the activity (Goodale & Witt, 1989). Jackson & Scott (1999) in their recent review on leisure constraints, viewed this decade as a pre-barrier period, since scholars made suppositions about the reason of nonparticipation in leisure activity (Jackson & Scott, 1999). They tried to find answer to the questions such as: why individuals do not take part in outdoor leisure activities? Do they have enough money and time to participate in leisure activities? And are the facilities of park fulfil their leisure needs? (Ferris, 1962; Mueller, Gurin, & Wood, 1962).

In the 1970s, leisure constraints studies were developed and the terms constraints and barriers were discussed by scholars. Leisure constraints research also extended from outdoor recreation to the leisure activity in general. Jackson and Scott (1999) viewed this period as the experimental stage. Leisure constraints research in this period changed from concentrating on specific barriers such as lack of services toward the more general leisure constraints such as constraints of nonparticipation (Jackson & Scott, 1999). Also, Researchers reinvestigated the role of social psychological factors and others in decision making of people to engage or not to engage in leisure activities (Mannell, Kleiber, & Walker, 1997).

Although research about the characteristics of leisure constraints have started from 1960s (Buchanan & Allen, 1985), it was not studied theoretically before 1980s (Crawford et al., 1991). In this period, researcher began to study the hindrances of specific activities, such as golf and hiking (Backman & Crompton, 1990; Scott, 1991) and special groups, such as elderly, female, and handicaps (Farbman & Ellis, 1987; Henderson & Bialeschki, 1991a, 1991b). Some researchers also, categorized specific sets of factors which hinder people to participate in leisure activities (Jackson, 1983, 1988; Romsa & Hoffman, 1980). Jackson and Scott, who have done the most recent review on leisure constraints research, noted that in this stage, Leisure constraints research changed from investigating specific barriers to researching leisure constraints in general. In other word, this change revealed that constraints to individuals were not only physical or external, but were also social or internal (Jackson & Scott, 1999). This shift can be viewed in some research which focused on external barriers (time, money, facilities, and situation) and internal barriers (Boothby, Tungatt, & Townsend, 1981; Crompton & Lamb, 1986; Francken & VanRaiij, 1981; McGuire, 1984; Romsa & Hoffman, 1980; Wade, 1985). Jackson & Scott (1999) believed that in this phase, two supposition was conducted the leisure constraints research. 1) Only, when one decide to participate in an activity and preference the activity upon other activities, structural constraints affect the one's decision to participation. 2) The increased the constraints, the increased the non-participation (Shaw et al., 1991). In addition to two major suppositions which stated above, Jackson and Scott noted another major feature of this phase which is the important role of life cycle on leisure behaviour (Buchanan & Allen, 1985). Although terms used to describe leisure constraints were varied, by the end of 1980s, leisure researcher agreed three types of constraints exist: 1) those external to the people (environmental constraints), 2) those internal to people (psychological and

intrapersonal), and 3) social-relational (social-psychological and interpersonal) (Goodale & Witt, 1989).

2.3.2. Models and Theories of Leisure Constraints

Leisure constraints are defined as factors that inhibit or limit engagement of people's ability to participate in leisure activities, to take advantage of leisure services or to achieve a desired level of satisfaction (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Crawford et al., 1991; Jackson, 1988). Although research about leisure constraints have begun from 1960s, but as a theory and model it occurred after 1980, when the early leisure constraints was challenged and specific conceptual of leisure constraints was developed (Jackson, 2005). With regard to kinds of leisure constrains, several study found that different types of leisure constraints exist (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Constraints Comprising Six Identifiable Dimensions

Sources: Hultsman (1995, p. 229).

Dimension	Constraints
Accessibility	Cost of transportation Lack of transportation No opportunity to participate near home
Social isolation	Lack of knowledge about where to participate Difficulty in finding others with whom to participate
Personal reasons	Lack of necessary skills Physically unable to participate Requires too much self-discipline Low energy level Lost interest in participating
Costs	Cost of equipment, materials, supplies Admission, rental fees, other charges for facilities or programs
Time commitments	Work commitments Family commitments Lack of time due to other leisure activities

Facilities	Overcrowded recreation facilities or areas Recreation facilities/areas poorly maintained
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Francken & VanRaij (1981) distinguished leisure constraints in two terms of “internal constraints” (e.g., interests and personal capability, abilities, and knowledge) and “external constraints” (e.g., lack of money and time, lack of facilities, and geographical distance) aspect. Boothby et al. (1981) differentiated “Personal constraints” such as interest and “Social constraints” such as time and cost of activity (Boothby et al., 1981). Iso-Ahola & Mannell (1985) classified leisure constraints into three main categories: social-personal constraints such as motivations, needs, abilities, and control; social –cultural constraints such as such as social norms and interactions, social roles, and obligations; and physical constraints such as facilities, time, money, and resources (Iso-Ahola & Mannell, 1985). They identified the social environment as the strongest constraints to leisure participation, which some people are more constrained by it than others. They also stated if people perceive themselves as having inadequate skill or abilities, their participation will be decreased or terminated. Jackson & Searle (1985) considered leisure behaviour as a process of decision-making and classified leisure constraints into two categories: internal and external constraints. Jackson (1988) noted “Constraints to leisure can be internal personal factors such as lack of skills or interest, or external factors such as lack of facilities or co-participants” (p. 215). Jackson & Searle (1985) suggested that constraints, such as lack of money and time, lack of information and facilities can prevent leisure participation sequentially rather than simultaneously. They presented that “the proposed model helps to define the linkages that exist in reality between the non-participation and the participatory aspects of an individual’s recreation behaviour, by examining them simultaneously in the context of the choices that he or she makes about recreation” (p. 704). Crawford &

Godbey (1987) debated that constraints can be comprehended merely within the wide context of the preferences-participation relationship and classified perceived leisure constraints into three types: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints. The Crawford & Godbey's model (1987) provide a general foundation for understanding leisure constraints in relation to preferences and participation. Although the focus of their study was the family, their concepts could also be applied to non-family settings.

Intrapersonal constraints “involved individual psychological status and attributes which interact with leisure preferences rather than intervening between preferences and participation” (Crawford & Godbey, 1987, p. 122) and refer to factor such as personality factors, stress, interest and attitudes toward leisure (Mannell et al., 1997), “stress, depression, anxiety, religiosity, kin and non-kin reference group attitudes, prior socialization into specific leisure activities, perceived self-skill and subjective evaluations of the appropriateness and availability of various leisure activities” (Crawford & Godbey, 1987, p. 122). Intrapersonal constraints (Figure 2.2) occur when individuals, as a result of ability, personality needs, prior socialization, and perceived reference group attitude, fail to develop leisure preferences. Intrapersonal constraints also, prepare people to define leisure objects (activities and services) as interesting or uninteresting, available or unavailable, appropriate or inappropriate, and so on (Scott, 1991).

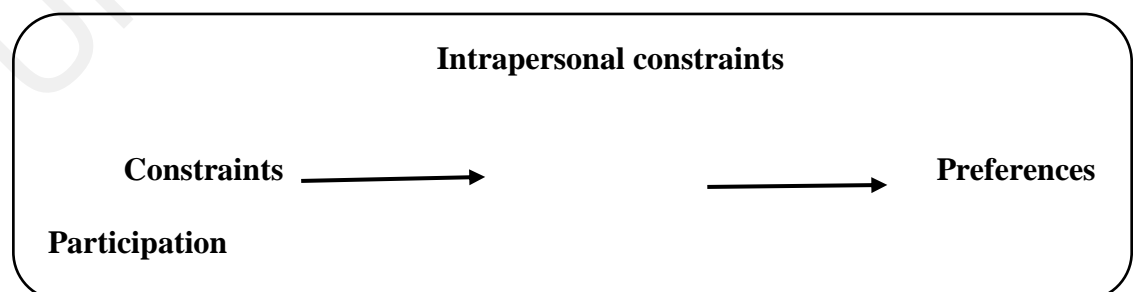


Figure 2.2: Intrapersonal Leisure Constraints.

Source: Crawford & Godbey (1987, p. 123).

Inter-personal constraints such as find a family members, friends, neighbours, and co-workers or colleagues with home they may participate in a specific leisure activity

are presented as “the result of interpersonal interaction or the relationship between individuals’ characteristics” (Crawford & Godbey, 1987, p. 123) that has been raised from the social interaction with others or the relationship between peoples’ characteristics which can influence both preferences and participation (Figure 2.3). For example, in a family context, interpersonal constraints may tack place when spouses differ in terms of their respective leisure preferences and, then, these differences may affect both spouses’ leisure preferences and leisure participation (Crawford & Godbey, 1987).

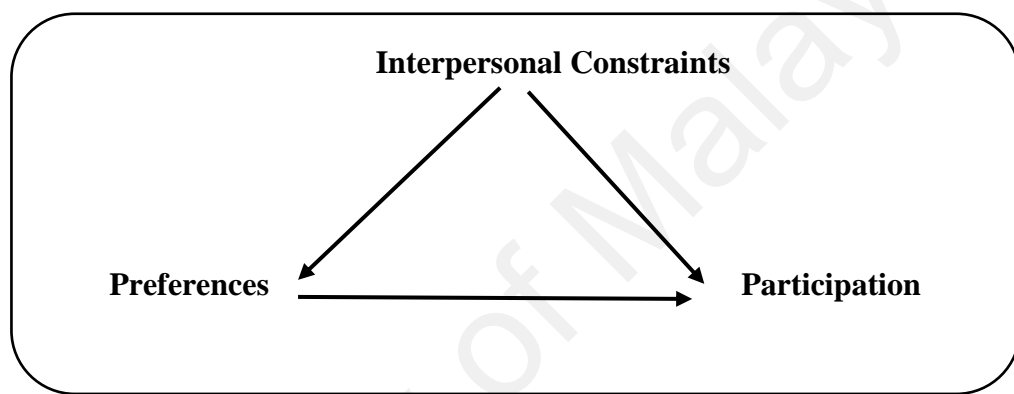


Figure 2.3: Interpersonal Leisure Constraints.

Source: Crawford & Godbey (1987, p. 124).

Structural constraints on leisure (e. g., lack of opportunities and facilities, transportation, season, climate, and cost of activities) results from external situations in the environment and essentially are defined as features of the environment which interference between leisure preference and participation (Figure 2.4).

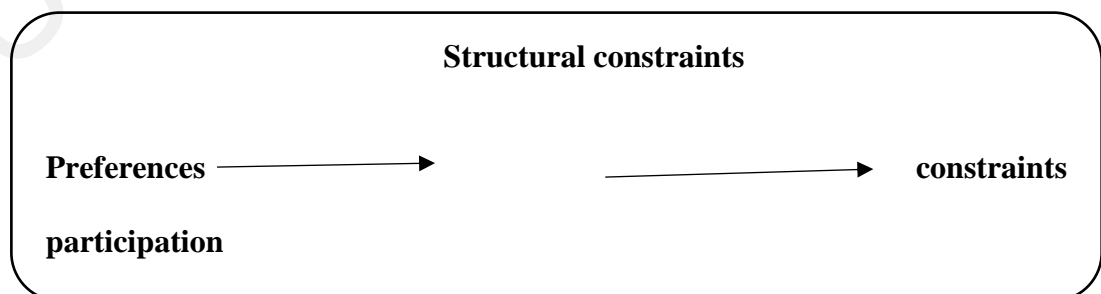


Figure 2.4: Structural Leisure Constraints.

Source: Crawford & Godbey (1987, p. 124).

Although this model provided a broad scope to thinking about the nature of leisure constraints, but it didn't indicate anything about the dynamic process of how individuals might negotiate a series of leisure constraints through leisure participation.

In an effort to distinguish between constraints which influence leisure preferences and those which influence leisure participation, Henderson, Stalnaker, & Taylor (1988, p. 70) identified two types of leisure constraints (Figure 2.5). They classified leisure constraints into the “antecedent” and “intervening” according to the participant’s preference. Antecedent constraints or “those barriers which occur related especially to the recreation opportunity such as circumstance, lack of time, est.” and antecedent constraints which involve “attitude associated with an a priori recreation situation such as personal capacities, personality, socialization factors, interest, est.” Similar to Crawford and Godbey’s model (1987), Henderson et al. identified some constraints which influence leisure activity preferences (antecedent), whereas, other constraints influence participation in leisure activity (intervening).

Intervening and antecedent constraints combine together to affect individual’s preferences and participation in leisure activities. The model indicated intervening constraints are considered more important than antecedent constraints and have direct effect on leisure participation in contrast with antecedent constraints which have indirect effect on leisure participation.

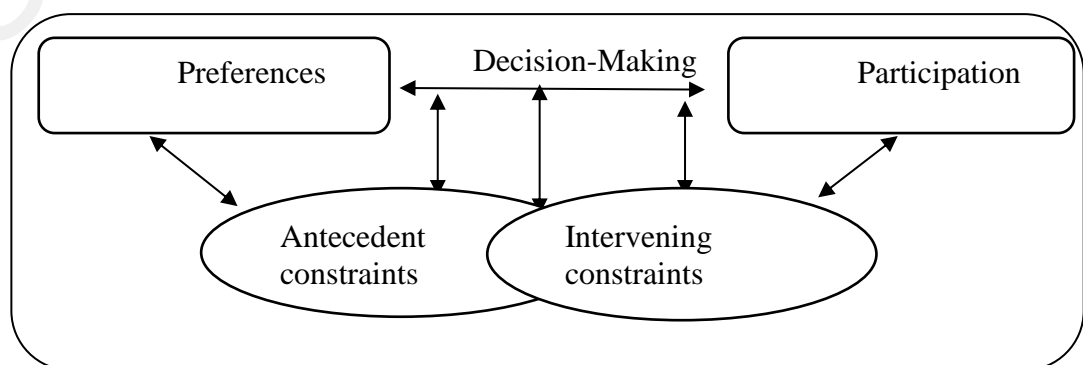


Figure 2.5: Modified Leisure Constraints Model.
Source: Henderson et al. (1988, p. 78).

Expanding Crawford and Godbey's model (1987), Crawford et al. (1991) developed the hierarchical model of leisure constraints (Figure 2.6). This extended model used the same categories of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints, but posited that leisure constraints are experienced hierarchically which began from the intrapersonal constraints to the interpersonal constraints. Each level must be vanquished in order to encounter with subsequent level of constraints. Therefore, only when one can experience and perceive subsequent level of constraints which the last levels of leisure constraints are absent or successfully negotiated by participants. If a person is not prevented by intrapersonal constraints, and still has a leisure preference, he or she may encounter with interpersonal constraints which hinder the person from participating in the leisure activities. Finally, if a person is not prevented by either intrapersonal or interpersonal constraints, the person may encounter with structural constraints. Individuals may don't participate in leisure activities, if structural constraints are sufficiently strong (Raymore et al., 1993). Therefore, interpersonal leisure constraints are conceptualized as the most powerful and Structural constraints are typically perceived as the least powerful (Raymore et al., 1993).

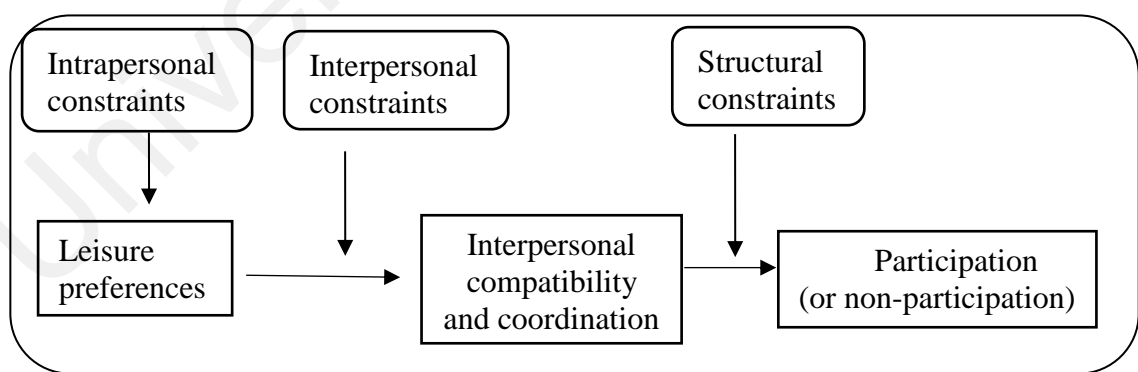


Figure 2.6: Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraint

Sources: Crawford et al., (1991, p. 316).

According to Crawford et al. (1987):

When intrapersonal constraints...are absent or their affects have been confronted through some combination of privilege and exercise of the

human will, next depending on the type of activity, the individual may encounter constraints at the interpersonal level; this could happen in all activities requiring at least one partner or co participant but would likely be less relevant in the case of solitary leisure activities. It is only when this type of constraint has been overcome that structural constraints being to be encountered. Participation will result from the absence of negotiation through structural constraints. If structural constraints are sufficiently strong, however, the outcome will be nonparticipation (p. 313).

Table 2.2: Dimension of Leisure Constraints

Francken & Van Raij (1981); Searle & Jackson (1985a)	Internal Constraints		External constraints	
	Interest and personal ability		lack of money and time	
Boothby et al (1981)	Personal Constraints		Social constraints	
	Physical ability and Interest		Social networks, time and cost of activity	
Crawford and Godbey (1987); Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, (1991)	Intrapersonal constraints	Interpersonal constraints	Structural constraints	
	Psychological situations which interact with leisure preference	result of interpersonal interaction or the relationship between individuals'	Features of the environment which interference between leisure preference and participation.	
Henderson, Stalnaker and Taylor (1988);	Antecedent Constraints		Intervening constraints	

Jackson, (1990); shave, Bonen, &McCabe, (1991)	Those constraints which negatively influence leisure preferences rather than leisure participation	Intervening factors between leisure preference and leisure participation
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2.4. Leisure and Life Satisfaction

A discussion of leisure and life satisfaction requires a working definition of terms. What is meant by life satisfaction? People often think of life satisfaction as a sense of well-being, happiness, or quality of life that is available to an individual (Shichman and Cooper, 2008). Happiness, moral, psychological well-being, and life adjustment are all indicators of the overall quality of our inner experience; "...happiness is often considered the extent to which one have positive attitudes and feeling about various aspects of his/her lives" (Russell, 1996, p. 38). To more precisely, define life satisfaction or well-being is a complex and difficult task, as there are no universally accepted definitions. In fact, the question of life satisfaction or well-being is often a subjective, philosophical one, rather than one that can be stated in objective terms. Surveys can objectively measure the economic well-being of individuals, their mental and physical health, and other factors, but subjective measures are required to evaluate quantitative and qualitative factors that contribute to life satisfaction, such as one's spiritual well-being (Edginton, DeGraaf, Dieser, & Edginton, 2006).

Seligman (2002) notes that the term happiness and well-being are interchangeable. He suggests that happiness and well-being are desired outcomes of what he defines as a positive psychology. Positive psychology refers to positive past, present, and future emotions. Satisfaction, contentment, and serenity are past-oriented emotions; optimism, hope, trust, faith, and confidence are future-oriented emotions. He further subdivides position emotions into two categories: pleasures and gratifications. Pleasure are those

that can be derived immediately through the bodily senses and ones that are higher in nature. Bodily pleasure are "...delicious tastes and smells, moving your body well, delightful sights and sounds. Higher pleasures are reflected in feelings that produce "...ecstasy rapture, thrill, bliss, gladness, mirth, glee, fun, ebullience, comfort, amusement, relaxation, and the like" (Seligman, 2002, p. 62). Gratification according to Seligman are not feelings but activities that one like doing.

The literature concerning life satisfaction and well-being, while diverse, is primarily concerned with how and why people experience their lives in positive ways, including both intellectual factors and emotional reactions (Diener, 1994). Most of the literature has focused on terms such as happiness, satisfaction, morale, life satisfaction, well-being, and quality of life. Seligman (2002, p. 51) stated that an indication that people are happy is when they are well-paid, married, young, healthy, well-educated, and religious. Myers (2002) reported happy people are less self-focused, less hostile and abusive, and less vulnerable to disease. They also are more loving, forgiving, trusting, energetic, decisive, creative, sociable, and helpful. Positive emotions are conducive to sociability, optimistic goal-striving, even health immune systems (Weisse, 1992). Diener (1994, p. 543) has suggested that definitions of happiness or well-being can be broken into three categories. These are as follows:

- A. *External/Normative Criteria.* The value framework of one's culture or society will influence one's perception of life satisfaction or well-being. Normative definitions outline what is desirable in the ideal state. For example, the Constitution of the United States defines many expectations related to life satisfaction, such as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.
- B. *Internal/Subjective Criteria.* One's personal assessment regarding what constitutes quality of life based upon one's own chosen criteria, and the degree to which these criteria are achieved, is a determinants of life satisfaction and

well-being. For example, some individuals may desire to pursue leisure activities that enhance their social status or sense of self-esteem. Others may desire to pursue leisure activities that promote family togetherness or physical well-being.

C. Internal/Emotional State. Simply put, the degree to which one experiences pleasant emotions during life's activities can be used as a measure of life satisfaction. This is determined by the individual him/herself. During certain life activities, the individual may feel happy, content, creative, uplifted, socially rewarded, or spiritually moved, and these emotions may contribute to life satisfaction.

Diener (1994) goes to suggest that all three of these measures should be combined for a total global assessment of life satisfaction. In other words, one's should not only consider the external factors that influence a person's life satisfaction or well-being but also the internal ones. These measures help in identifying what constitutes quality of life for an individual and provide measures for determining quality of life.

More specifically, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has focused on life satisfaction as related to involvement in specific life experiences, including those that can be defined as leisure. His paradigm is known as the concept of flow. Flow is the experience that:

...lifts the course of life to a different level. Alienation gives way to involvement, enjoyment replaces boredom, haplessness turns into a feeling of control, and psychic energy works to reinforce the sense of self, instead of being lost in the service of external goals. When experience is the intrinsically rewarding life is justified in the present, instead of being held hostage to a hypothetical future gain (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 69).

Flow can be viewed as that state of being between boredom and anxiety, when the challenge of the activity matches the skills of the participants. Flow is that experience where it all seems to come together, skills correspond to the level of play.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) presents several elements of enjoyment or flow directly related to satisfaction. The elements of enjoyment are as follows:

- A. *A Challenging Activity that requires skills.* Most optimal experiences occur within activity that is goal-directed, bounded by rules and requiring a certain level of skill. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) notes that skills and activity need not imply physical skill and activity alone. Reading requires skill and has a goal of completion, it could very well provide the stage for flow to occur.
- B. *The Merging of Action and Awareness.* When all of a person's skill are necessary to deal with the activity at the hand, the person becomes totally immersed in the activity. People who experience this merging of action and awareness speak of being one with everything, losing touch with the world, and a feeling of being relaxed and energetic at the same time.
- C. *Clear Goals and Feedback.* Optimal experiences result from clearly directed goals. The individual knows what to do, where to gain. In addition, constant feedback related to those goals. In playing cards as one hand is lost and another dealt, players know the score. In playing a musical instrument a composer hears the tones and melodies and knows how the music relates to the goal of composing a new song.
- D. *Concentration on the Task at Hand.* One aspect of the merging of action and awareness involves tremendous concentration on the task at hand. Those who experience flow often talk about such total immersion as to be able to forget the unpleasant tasks awaiting them. Omitting worries from conscious thought allows complete concentration on the activity. For example, you have

worrying about an uncompleted assignment, yet engage a friend in a game of tennis, during the tennis match you forget about the assignment as you concentrate on winning each point. You must concentrate to succeed in reaching your goals.

- E. *The Paradox of Control*. Flow experiences involve a sense of personal control over one's destiny with regard to the activity of choice. Enjoyment comes from the sense of being skilled enough to eliminate or minimize risk of failure or injury, one exercises control by matching one's skill with the appropriate level of challenge. Competition related to martial arts always hold the risk of physical injury, however, competition placed in classes with appropriate skill levels face little danger of injury.
- F. *The Loss of Self-Consciousness*. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) talks about losing awareness of self in the flow experience. Being totally immersed in an activity, when concentration levels are high and action and awareness have merged, a person temporarily forget about self as a being. This loss of self frequently accompanies a feeling of oneness with something else-the environment, the ball, and other participants.
- G. *The Transformation of Time*. The most commonly reported characteristic of flow or optimal experience is the change in perception of the passage of time. During the experiences, people speak of time standing still, yet after the experience is over, time seems to have sped by.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) suggests that all of these elements are present in a truly engrossing, enjoyable, and satisfying experience. Taken together, these factors help in identifying when quality of life experiences constitutes and provide measures for evaluating quality of life factors.

Hill (2002) has noted that the theory of flow has been initially applied within the area of leisure, however, it may be applied and more readily experienced in the context of work. Thus, the theory of flow speak to the proposition that individuals are, in fact, in a life satisfaction business and it may be important to look at individuals in a holistic sense applying theories derived from leisure to one's entire life experience. Bryce and Haworth (2002) confirmed this perspective, suggesting the flow experienced more in work than leisure.

Leisure participation can affect and be affected by life satisfaction or well-being variables. Leisure, in fact, can be an important component contribution to the daily well-being of an individual. For example, on a day to day basis, one engage in an mundane events and activities such as sleeping, eating, housework, and for some, a monotonous work environment. These activities do not necessarily increased one's pleasure, happiness, or well-being. As Zautra and Reich (1993) note, if one do not do them, one do not necessarily feel worse, one simply do not increase his/her pleasure. On the other hand, leisure activities-usually intrinsically motivated and often freely chosen-may provide more opportunities for pleasure, hence increased lie satisfaction.

Diener (2000) repots, individual living in wealthy nations tend to be more satisfied with their lifestyles, in wealthy nations, the correlation between income and personal happiness is surprisingly weak (Inglehart, 1991). Interestingly, the more people strive for extrinsic goals such as monetary gain, the less bust is their well-being (Myers, 2002). What dose produce happiness, life satisfaction, or well-being? The need to belong, close relationship, and friendship are all elements that contribute to greater happiness, life satisfaction, and well-being. Further, religiously active people also report higher levels of happiness (Inglehart, 1991).

A large number of identified variables contribute to life satisfaction or well-being. Some of them subjective variable include life satisfaction and its relationship to self-

esteem, satisfaction with self, standard of living, family life, work, mental and physical health, community, mood, place of residence, physical attractiveness, and leisure. Demographic variables often studies and linked to life satisfaction and well-being include income, age, gender, race-ethnicity, employment, education, marriage, and family. When discussing psychological dimensions and life satisfaction, variables often include social contact, personality, creativity, and involvement in activities. All of these variables can be studies within the leisure experience itself. For example, one could view the relationship between life satisfaction, income, and leisure pursuits. The study of activities, for example, suggests that participation in leisure events, including hobbies and organizations, increased social contact, which, in turn, increased life satisfaction (Edginton, DeGraaf, Dieser, & Edginton, 2006).

2.4.1. Leisure and Its Relationship to Life Satisfaction

A number of studies have focused on the topic of leisure and life satisfaction. Iso-Ahola (1990) reported that all of the studies he had reviewed showed a positive relationship between leisure and life satisfaction. Kelly and Godbey (1992) reported similar findings later. Leisure and life satisfaction consist of man elements. According to Kelly (1996), life satisfaction includes self-expression, companionship, integration, health, rest and relaxation, meeting new people, experiencing nature, and family relationships. Hull, Stewart, and Yi (1992) focused that satisfaction is dynamic and that it fluctuates along experience patterns. People experience peaks in satisfaction, peak in excitement, and peak in relaxation. Leitner and Leitner (1996) report "...that leisure behaviour is the most important or one of the most important determinants of life satisfaction and psychological well-being. Many studies support the assertion that

leisure participation and life satisfaction are positive related to psychological well-being and life satisfaction” (p. 26).

For example, Kim (2000) found that there is a direct relationship between leisure participation and life satisfaction and that participation in leisure activities explains a significant portion of the variance in life satisfaction measures.

Many studies conducted in the area of leisure and life satisfaction have focused primarily on the variable of age, with a special focus on older men and women. Studies also have explored the relationship between leisure activities and life satisfaction, and leisure and community well-being (Edginton, DeGraaf, Dieser, & Edginton, 2006).

2.4.2. Leisure and Life Satisfaction as Related to Age

The relationship of life satisfaction, leisure and age has been examined in a number of studies. Kelly and Steinkamp (1997) have suggested that in their later years men demonstrate a greater desire for companionship in their leisure than do women. The study also found that those kinds of leisure that provide satisfying interaction with other persons and those that require skill acquisition over a long period of time produced higher levels of life satisfaction than those that did not. When viewing leisure activities and their relationship to life satisfaction by age, the researchers found that 1) travel and cultural activities were most important to those forty five to forty four years old; 2) social, cultural, and travel activities were most important to those fifty five to sixty four years old; 3) social and travel activities were most important to those sixty five to seventy four years old; and 4) home based and family activity were most important to life satisfaction for those individuals seventy five and older (Edginton, DeGraaf, Dieser, & Edginton, 2006).

Kelly and Steinkamp (1997) also studied the relationship of social activity and leisure involvement to life satisfaction. They found a reduction in the level of leisure

activity with age, although they noted that social activities and leisure activities related to family show the last decline. Leisure activities related to primary relationship with family and friends are usually maintained throughout later life. The findings are consistent with those of Gordon, Gaitz, and Scott (2011), who suggest that participation in seven leisure categories, many related to social entertaining and activities, is consistent throughout the life span. Sneegas (1996) studying life satisfaction of middle aged and older adults and its relationship to perceived social competence, found that age was not related to social competence. She found, one's perception of social competence affects the degree of leisure participation and leisure satisfaction, thereby influencing life satisfaction.

Riddick (1995) has also studied the relationship of life satisfaction to age. She found, in a national sample of men and women age sixty five and over, that the strongest predictor of life satisfaction was involvement in leisure activities. For both males and females, she found that income and health problems impact participation in leisure activities and, hence, life satisfaction. As Bammell (1996) write ...social participation has long been considered an important factor in determining the happiness, moral, well-being, and life satisfaction of individuals' (p. 342). Cutler and Hendricks (2011) reported similar results whereby engagement in activity was the determinant of life satisfaction.

Riddick (1996) also has studied leisure satisfaction among ten age groups, ranging from eighteen to sixty five years old. She found that factors such as knowledge of leisure resources and leisure values, have significant influence on leisure satisfaction. Mobily. Lemke, Ostiguy, Woodard, Griffiee, and Pickens (1993) found successful adaptation to the aging process depended largely on maintaining or enhancing one's competence and retaining a sense of self determination. People with a large leisure repertoire were happiest. Kelly and Godbey (1992) agreed, indicating that a sense of

worth, even productivity, and sharing oneself with others led to the greatest level of life satisfaction.

2.5. Review of the Recently Ph. D. Theses in the Issue of Leisure

The table 2.3 reviews the research which has been done related to the issue. The objectives, scope, methodology and main findings have been summarized in the table.

Table 2.3: Review of the Recently Ph. D. Theses in the Issue of Leisure

Title of Thesis	Objectives and Scope	Methodology	Findings
A Grounded Theory of the Dynamic Nature of Constraints to Leisure and Successful Coping Process, (Dixon, 2008).	To generate a theoretical model that describes, explains, and predicts the dynamic nature of constraints to leisure experienced by adults previously constrained from swimming and the successful process of coping with constraints to leisure.	The study followed the grounded theory design in order to generate a theoretical model that describes, explains, and predicts the dynamic nature of constraints to leisure experienced by adults. Theoretical and convenience sampling techniques yielded a final sample size of 28, with 23 participants being female and five males. Data was gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Data collection and analysis was simultaneous, following systematic grounded theory procedures including open, axial, and selective coding.	Leisure can be constrained in three ways: 1) enjoyment can be decreased while participating in the activity, 2) there is no participation in the activity, or 3) the individual may still participate, but in a limited or modified manner. The process of coping with constraints to leisure involves three steps: 1) motivation to participate in activity is increased, 2) participation in the activity is made a priority, and 3) constraints to leisure are negotiated. Constraints to leisure were negotiated in the following ways: 1) logistically, 2) with social support, 3) cognitively, 4) by increasing feelings of security, and 5) economically.

Table 2.3, Continue

Title of Thesis	Objectives and Scope	Methodology	Findings
Constraints on leisure activity participation among Chinese immigrants in Canada. Xiong, 2006).	To examine the constraints associated with three types of leisure participation including constraints that caused people to reduce leisure participation, constraints that intervened in people's desire to take part in new	Questionnaires were completed by 133 Chinese immigrants from Toronto and Thunder bay, Ontario, Canada. The thesis applied the quantitative survey for the data collection. The approaches to collect information was a snowball sampling technique. Statistical analyses included analyses of regression, ANOVA, factor	-29 percent of respondents were quitters who had reduced at least one of their leisure participation and had not started participating in any new leisure activities, 20 percent replaced leisure activities they had quitted with new ones, another 20 percent were adders who had not quit any of their old leisure activities but had added at least one new leisure activity, and 30 percent were continuers who neither had stopped nor had started participating any leisure activities. Outdoor recreational

	leisure activities, and constraints that hindered people from starting leisure activities	analysis and correlation.	activities were the most often started activities. The two most important constraint dimensions were time constraint and access constraints.
The perceptions of leisure among undergraduate student of the university Putra Malaysia. (Chee, 2001).	This study has investigated the perception of leisure and role of leisure in undergraduate students' lives at University of Putra Malaysia. This study has examined students' awareness of and beliefs concerning the use of free time and leisure interest, as well as constraints on their leisure behavior.	This study used a self-administered questionnaire. Five classes were selected by a cluster random sampling, and 359 questionnaires were ultimately returned that usable for analysis. The statistical analysis used in this study included: frequency analysis, t-test, reliability analysis, analysis of variance and chi-square.	-Students perceive leisure most frequently as play/recreation /amusement, reducing stress/relaxation and spare time. -Students prefer to participate in leisure activities involving the outdoors, socializing, and reading. But if compare leisure interest between males and females, males are more interested in mechanical and artistic activities, cultural involvement, service-oriented, and physical leisure activities, while females are more interested in reading. -Factors such as the lack of time, money, convenient facilities, and transportation are most likely to inhibit students from participating in leisure activities, as is having other commitments. -Students are more constrained by structural factors than by interpersonal or intrapersonal factors. Females are more likely to be constrained by intrapersonal factors.

Table 2.3, Continue

Title of Thesis	Objectives and Scope	Methodology	Findings
Successful aging through leisure gardening: A study on constraints negotiation. (Oh, 2005).	To examined how various leisure influenced health status by developing and testing a successful aging through leisure model among a sample of older adults, aged 55 and older. This study examined the concept of successful aging. Individuals who maintain a	Potential predictors of successful aging were selected from the following categories: leisure constraints, intrinsic motivation, selective optimization with compensation (SOC), leisure-generated social support (SS), and participation in gardening. The research used structural equation modeling to test five models: direct effect, moderating effect,	Only physical health was reported the leisure engagement variables of interest and their relation while mental health was not fit using SEM. The constraints-reduction model provided a best fit model to the data. Experiencing higher levels of constraint participation less, however, constraints influenced use of negotiation resources and strategies. The grater the use of these negotiations resources, the higher the level of leisure participation in gardening, and in turn, perceived better

	successful level of participation in physical activity, are managing their lives well, at least with respect to leisure.	constraints-reduction, perceived-motivation-reduction, and perceived-social support model.	physical health..
From substitution to coping: Developing and testing a leisure constraints-based coping model. (Tseng, 2009).	To extend understanding of constraints negotiation by integrating an understanding of coping mechanisms into leisure constraints-negotiation models. The study integrated additional social indicators into the hypothesized model.	Data were derived from the 2005 Texas statewide angler survey. A stratified random sample of 2004 Texas resident fishing license holders was selected. Data analysis: logistic regression, bivariate analysis distributions,	The study confirmed that the three types of constraints continue to have relevance for active participants. The three types of constraining factors directly influence subsequent aspects of leisure engagement for recreationists already participating. The study confirmed that recreationists are more likely to cope with constraints by employing an array of problem-focused coping strategies, rather than to simply adjust cognitively. The findings illustrate that recreationists' coping responses vary in response to different types of constraints encountered. Motivation is an immediate antecedent of constraints as well as a potential trigger for encouraging more problem-focused coping strategies.

Table 2.3, Continued

Title of Thesis	Objectives and Scope	Methodology	Findings
A study of motivation, satisfaction, and constraints of collegiate Chinese arts athletes engaged in leisure activities in Taiwan.	To investigate the motivation, satisfaction and constraints of collegiate Chinese martial arts athletes engages in leisure activities in Taiwan.	A survey questionnaire aimed at the collegiate Chinese martial arts athletes in Taiwan was given. A random sampling method was adopted for this study with 648 valid questionnaire responses. The collected data was	-There were significant differences among the grade levels, genders, average household monthly incomes and places of residence and monthly leisure budget related to leisure satisfaction. There were significant differences among the different grade levels, places of residence and monthly leisure budgets related to leisure constraints. -The correlation were positive between the leisure motivation and

(Chiu, 2008).		analyzed using descriptive statistical, T-Test, One Way ANOVA Canonical Correlation Analysis, Person Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient And Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis.	the leisure satisfaction. However, the correlation were negative between the leisure satisfaction and the leisure constraints. There was significant correlation between the constraints and motivation.
The relationship of gender, race, and social class to leisure constraints. (Arnold, 2007).	To identify and examine the constraints to leisure participation among users of community /neighborhood parks in the Chicago metropolitan area. The multiple hierarchy stratification perspective serves as the theoretical framework for the study.	The on-site interview procedure yielded a total of 612 completed surveys. SPSS was used for data analysis. Appropriate descriptive and inferential statistic were used to describe and analyze the data. To further assess the scales, factor analyses were administrated.	Females, upper income earners, and Whites reported the most constraint on the leisure participation scale. Upper income White males were more likely to report feeling constrained than low income Black females. Females, low income earners, and Whites reported the most constraint. The multiple hierarchy perspective was not supported. The low income Black female was not significantly more constrained than the upper income White male. It can be inferred that leisure constraints are very complex in nature and further that the scales that have been developed to measure the construct may not be appropriate for all subgroups of society.

Review of the table 2.3 shows that among them, quantitative approach has been adopted as a research methodology by seven of them and just one of them adopted qualitative research. For eight of them, data has been collected using questionnaire and has been analysed by SPSS. Except one of them which used ground theory. One of them was about the elderly and the rest of them were about other age groups.

2.6. Theoretical Framework

The way leisure professionals, design, implement, and evaluate leisure services is influenced by individual perceptions of later life and how older adults adapt to the changes that aging brings. Leisure programmer who believes that older adults are better off if they disengage from society will provide different programs than one who believes that activity in later life is essential for aging well. Providers of leisure services

must understand a variety of theories of aging in order to provide meaningful services for older adults.

In this section, some of the theories of aging that attempt to explain behaviour in later life will be explored. Contrary to what might be assumed, the various theories of aging per se are often equally debatable. This is partly due to the limited applicability of theories that have been advanced in the past. Indeed, theories about the so-called truth of aging are often criticized for being biased in one way or another (Bengtson, Rice, & Johnston, 1999). Nevertheless, some of those theories that have withstood the test of close scrutiny as interpretations of aging that apply widely will be presented.

Recognizing that decline is not failure and that accommodation and adaptation are not signs of weakness is an important first step in treating older people more appropriately, effectively, and humanely. If leisure providers understand how older adults normally and effectively manage the challenges that confront them with age, they can provide leisure opportunities that contribute to aging well.

Theoretical models are systematic and disclose presuppositions and evidence, they are always subject to criticism, they have been developed when they try to explain to others what causes something to occur (Kelly, 1987a). In general, then, theories of aging are important for explaining how and why things happen the way they do. Theories of aging are used to guide both leisure and aging research and practice.

2.6.1. Sociological Theories of Aging

Whereas psychological theories of aging focus on individual adaptation in later life, sociological theories consider broader social factors in relation to aging. Three classical sociological theories on aging: activity theory, disengagement theory and continuity theory, will be explored first; and then, postmodern perspectives on aging that critique those theories and others will be addressed.

2.6.1.1. Activity Theory

Activity theory (Havigurst & Albrecht, 1953; Lemon, Bengtson, & Peterson, 1972; Longino & Kart, 1982) is a theory of successful aging, but it is often considered to be a general theory of aging as well. Activity theory postulates that older adults who are engaged in a variety of social activities have greater life satisfaction than those who do not (Lemon et al., 1972). It suggests that as people age, they replace lost roles (such as work roles), since remaining engaged in life and contributing to society is related to aging well (Chapman, 2005). Lemon et al., (1972) indicate that life satisfaction depends on having a number of role identities.

When people frequently engage in a wide variety of activities, they receive enough role support to reaffirm their various identities, leading to positive self-regard. Informal social activities are the most effective for life satisfaction, while engagement in solitary activities is the least effective (Lemon et al., 1972; Longino & Kart, 1982). Indeed, Havigurst and Albrecht's research (1953) revealed that people who were more active adjusted better to later life. Though a minority of older adults might be content with a passive later life, the researchers suggested that older adults are better off when actively engaged in life.

There is evidence in the leisure literature that active engagement in a variety of activities does lead to higher levels of life satisfaction e.g., (Kelly & Steinkamp, 1997; Nimrod & Adoni, 2006). Researchers have found a link between activity engagement and increased happiness, better functioning, and reduced mortality in later life (Menec, 2003). Leisure activity is a strong factor in explaining life satisfaction among recently retired adults (Nimrod, 2007). Recent retirees benefit from leisure engagement and experience improved well-being, supporting the claim that involvement in many activities leads to successful aging. Furthermore, the preference for activity also often

leads to civic engagement, thus maintaining social integration while serving the needs of the community as well.

Although activity theory provides an optimistic view of aging, it too has been criticized. Activity theory may be too simplistic to capture the realities of later life (Bowling, 2007; Utz, Carr, Nesse, & Wortman, 2002). Additionally, it does not consider the resources that older adults may or may not have available in order to remain actively engaged in later life. Since most of the evidence is correlational, tests of the theory often fail to acknowledge the possibility that people with better circumstances, including health, wealth, and happiness, are in a better position to be active. Its emphasis on social activities also contradicts research that suggests solitary activities are beneficial for older adults (Burnett-Wolle & Godbey 2005, 2007).

Activity theory may serve to justify recreation and leisure programs and interventions for older adults because it assumes that most of them want and need high levels of activity (Passuth & Bengtson, 1995). However, the evidence in its support is equivocal; despite all the positive associations found between activity and life satisfaction, some research has found no connection at all (Reitzes, Mutran, & Verrill, 1995). Activity theory also offers only a limited view of leisure in attributing health and well-being to activity participation, failing to examine the mental health effects of more passive, informal, and contemplative leisure activities. Finally, the theory is arguably more prescriptive than descriptive since, older people are more likely to give up activities than start new ones.

2.6.1.2. Disengagement Theory

Disengagement theory is the second classic sociological theory of aging, emerging roughly 50 years ago (Cumming & Henry, 1961) as a response to activity theory. It asserts that it is reasonable to predict mutual withdrawal between the individual and

society as death draws nearer. Described as the process in which relationships between society and the individual are disconnected (Cumming & Henry, 1961), the theory was introduced with the awareness that people often choose to withdraw from active role involvement as personal and social power and resources decline. At the same time, society recognizes this decline and turns to younger people for both. However, the theory has been largely discredited for two important reasons: It provides a rationale for the neglect of older people as if they want to be left alone; and it fails to distinguish those who disengage voluntarily from those who disengage unwillingly due to a lack of support and resources.

Nevertheless, the validity of some aspects of disengagement theory has been reconsidered (e.g., Achenbaum & Bengtson, 1994). In particular, the tenet of the theory that a reduction in the number or variety of interactions leads to an increased freedom from the control of norms governing everyday behaviour recognizes the value of selection among various goals based on priorities. Disengagement from less meaningful aspects of life may lead to greater investment in others and more satisfaction as a result.

2.6.1.3. Continuity Theory

Continuity theory emerged from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s as the most significant and compelling of the three classic sociological theories of aging (Bengtson, Putney, & Johnson, 2005; Chapman, 2005). The theory developed as a response to both activity and disengagement theories, which were no longer adequate for explaining how people adjust to the later life (Neugarten, Havighurst, & Tobin, 1968). In continuity theory, the focus shifts from the number of activities one participates in toward adjustment and adaptation to the later life (Bowling, 2007). The theory suggests that over time, older adults continue to adapt to new situations following the same patterns they developed earlier in life. Personality remains relatively consistent as one ages

(Atchley, 1999; Breyspraak, 1984). These aspects persist in later life, and people aim for continuity in roles as they age. Continuity theory does allow for change over time, but it occurs within a basic structure of familiarity and consistency (Atchley, 1989, 1999). Older adults continue to make decisions based on long-established needs (Neugarten et al., 1968), and as a result, changes can be integrated into one's life without upheaval (Atchley, 1989).

In continuity theory, people can be themselves instead of adopting a prescribed method of adjustment, such as disengaging or maintaining involvement in social activity (Matras, 1990). Someone who enjoys privacy and solitude in earlier life will likely continue this pattern in later life. Similarly, a person who is active and engages in many activities in early life will continue to do so in later life. However, Atchley (1989) suggests that one can have too much, too little, or just enough continuity. With too much continuity, people may feel as though they are in a rut, and there is not enough change for enrichment. When there is too little continuity, life may feel too unpredictable. When there is just enough continuity, or optimal continuity, the pace and degree of change matches one's personal preferences.

Leisure research often supports continuity theory, suggesting that older adults continue to pursue many of the same leisure activities in later life that they pursued earlier in life. A study exploring older men's leisure across the life span revealed that they tend to maintain their leisure interests from childhood through to later life and engage in similar activities (Genoe & Singleton, 2006). For example, one research participant engaged in playing music as a child and teenager, started a band as an older adult, and continued to play music to entertain other older adults living in long-term care long after retirement. Continuity is more difficult to maintain with advanced age, however Agahi et al. (2006) and Strain, Grabusic, Searle, & Dunn (2002) found that in some cases older adults maintained continuity in their leisure participation for over 34

years, but others had added and dropped activities due to changes in status and functional ability.

Continuity theory provides an alternative to disengagement and activity theories by suggesting that there is more than one way that people age. However, it has also been criticized for its failure to fully consider the context of aging and the impact of social structure on continuity. The theory fails to adequately acknowledge that the multitude of changes that occur in later life may make continuity difficult (Matras, 1990; Utz, Carr, Nesse, & Wortman, 2002). Despite criticism, Utz et al. (2002) argue that continuity theory may be more applicable to a wider range of older adults than activity or disengagement theories based on the findings that various types of older adults (i.e., married and widowed older adults) maintain their levels of social participation across the life span.

2.6.1.4. Postmodernism

More recently, gerontologists have considered aging from a postmodern perspective. Postmodernism challenges theories of aging, particularly for their emphasis on freedom, rationality, progress, and the power of science to improve the human condition. Postmodernists critique the process of building theory, reject the canons of science, and challenge the relevance of any theory (Bengtson et al., 1999, 2005). They aim to highlight that which is missing from the conversation on aging. Postmodern gerontologists argue that labels such as old that are ascribed to people in later life do not represent individuals, and no one actually embodies the abstraction (Katz, 1996).

Postmodern perspectives on aging result in positive images of aging that emphasize creativity, vitality, empowerment, and resourcefulness (Katz, 2005), creating “new avenues for self-care and self-definition in later life, thus empowering elders to innovate resourceful roles and ways of life” (Katz, 2001, p. 28). Leisure can play an important

role in self-definition in later life and provides new roles and ways of life after retirement. However, postmodern society also emphasizes youth and anti-aging consumer culture (Katz, 2001), further perpetuating myths and stereotypes of aging. When leisure service providers market their services as youthful, they also emphasize an anti-aging attitude that can have negative implications for older adults.

As with the other theories of aging discussed in this section, postmodernism has its critics. It is often attacked for its anti-theoretical stance and inability to replace or improve existing theory (Bengtson et al., 2005). The postmodern life course is characterized by a blurring of traditional boundaries that separate life stages, such as childhood, adolescence and middle age (Katz, 2005), but as with some other theories, the postmodern theory focus on positive aging and anti-aging effectively denies the realities of aging.

2.6.1.5. Ecological Systems Model

The ecological systems model integrates psychological and sociological theories of aging, combining some of the various perspectives in an ecological perspective, as has been done with a focus on children in the past (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), while also accommodating criticisms of postmodernism. By looking at multiple levels of influence, from individual differences, to family dynamics, to community health services, to the political climate, one can get a clearer picture of aging (Figure 2.7). Janke, Nimrod, & Kleiber (2008a) describes the model and offers a vision of how the ecological model may be applied to aging:

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory highlights the structures and systems in developing people's environments that shape their growth and experiences. These are portrayed as interrelated levels and include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The microsystem relates to the immediate

environment: for older adults this could include their family, the neighbourhood in which they reside, their workplace, and so on. Mesosystems include connections between two or more microsystems. It suggests that a change in one microsystem can affect one's behaviour or interactions in another microsystem. For example, retiring from work can affect conjugal relationships. The exosystem is an external environmental system that indirectly affects a person's development, such as community services or extended family. Finally, the macrosystem relates to the cultural context in which people develop, such as the customs and cultures that influence their environment, the political climate and events that occur, and the historical events (i.e., state of the economy, technology) that they are experiencing (p. 26).

Without attention to such diverse influences, other theories of aging are simple abstractions that may not be very useful in their explanatory power.

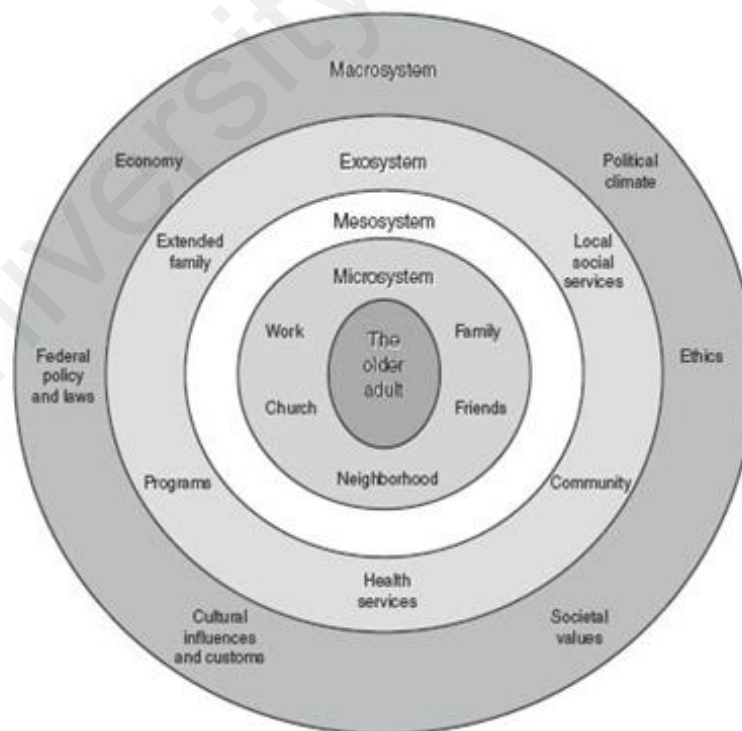


Figure 2.7: Ecological Systems Mode.

Source: Janke, Nimrod & Kleiber (2008b, p .24).

2.6.2. Contemporary Theories of Leisure

Based on the reviewing of the literature which has been mentioned earlier, the losses that accompany aging also lead to losses of leisure or at least to changes in leisure activity, particularly when there is secondary aging. For example, as strength and agility decline with age, strenuous activity may become more challenging. More complicated activities may also become increasingly difficult in cases of diminished cognitive capacity. Nevertheless, aging may actually afford more leisure, there may be more time available as work and family roles become less demanding. These changes may also coincide with the abandonment of less meaningful activities. Furthermore, aging typically warrants changes in activity priorities and the development of compensatory strategies to maintain more meaningful activities. Finally, choices for involvement in free time may well be responses to the specific tasks and challenges common to a given age.

Anticipating the review of specific theories of aging, several general points about the evidence on later-life leisure can be made. First, in support of popular assumptions and stereotypes, overall activity involvement appears to decrease with age (e.g. Agahi, Ahacic, & Parker, 2006; Cutler & Hendricks, 2011; Gordon, Gaitz, & Scott, 2011; Kelly, 1987a). There are exceptions, of course; after declining from adolescence to adulthood, television watching increases again in old age, and older men cook for enjoyment more than younger men do, but most activities show a downward trend.

Table 2.4: Contemporary Theories of Leisure

Theory Typology	Leisure Theories	Explanation
Sociological Theories (The study of leisure within its broader social context [e.g. family, community, age, life course, gender, cultures])	Veblen's Theory of the Leisure Class	Leisure is a symbol of social class
	Kelly's Sociological Theories of Leisure	Freedom and meaning are the two core elements of Leisure
	Serious and Casual Leisure	Serious Leisure: The systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist,

		or volunteer activity that is so interesting that people launch themselves on a career centered on acquiring special skills, knowledge, and experience. Causal leisure: Pleasurable activity that requires no special skills or knowledge.
	Postmodern Leisure	Skilled and pleasurable activity that can be a method of social control.
Feminist Theories (A set of beliefs and theoretical constructs regarding the nature of women's oppression and the constraints imposed by the socio-political status to which women have been regulated)		
	Kelly's sociological theory of leisure	Freedom and meaning are the two core elements of leisure (Social meaning has grater relevance to women's issues, such as relationship and family).
	Wearing's Feminist Theory of Leisure	Heterotopias: freedom or personal space for both men and women to be or become (e.g., challenge dominant gender norms, develop identities).
Anthropological Theories (The study of people and culture, which paints a holistic picture of the human condition)	The Theory of Anti-Structures	Leisure includes the rituals that set people outside their norms or the anti-structures parts of life

As Caldwell (2001) has noted, “the word theory usually makes people shudder. For many theories seem grand and esoteric and certainly not very practical...The truth is, however, that theories are very useful and practical” (p. 349). Theory is important because it attempts to explain phenomenon (e.g., leisure) and highlight its practical relevance. For example, if a leisure professional understands the conditions that develop leisure experience, they are in a better position to provide leisure delivery (Edginton, Hudson, Diser, & Edginton, 2004). This section of the chapter, will explain various contemporary theories of leisure that have developed within different academic frameworks (Table 2.3).

2.6.2.1. Sociological Theories of Leisure

Sociology attempt to understand human behavior by placing it within its broader social context (Henslin, 2001). To this end, Kelly (1999) underscored that leisure should be located within a sociological framework that explores leisure in relation to family,

community, age, life course, gender, culture, and so forth. Likewise, Rojek (2000) has rejected the psychological theories of leisure that associate leisure with freedom and has argued that leisure must be contextualized within culture and society. Rojek (2005a) posited:

Most [psychologically-oriented] leisure researchers would accept that the individual's definition of leisure choice (freedom) is pivotal in interpreting leisure...However, this is very different from maintaining that individual choice is freely selected...location and context...(are) indispensable elements in leisure theory because they correlate individual choice with situated dimensions that influence action (p. 14).

Likewise, Coalter (1999) has suggested that psychological theories of leisure study leisure without society and that sociological theories of leisure study leisure in society. As Burton and Jackson (1999) noted, the modern era in the study of leisure began with Veblen's (2007) sociological study of leisure. This section will begin by explaining Veblen's theory of leisure and the leisure class, followed by other sociological theories of leisure.

Veblen's Theory of Leisure and the Leisure Class: From historical perspective, leisure as a symbol of social status has existed since the beginning of agricultural civilizations. The evolution of the leisure classes emerged as a result of increased social organization, complexity, and functional differentiation of agricultural societies. Leisure as a symbol of social class was reflected in the writings of Thorsten Veblen (2007) *Theory of the Leisure Class*. Veblen coined the term conspicuous consumption in his classic work of economic and sociological literature. He noted that "...as wealth accumulates, the leisure class develops further in function and structure and there arises a differentiation within the class (Veblen, 2007, p. 76). He suggests that the evolution of conspicuous expenditures, whether of goods, services, or human life, runs the obvious

implication that in order to effectively (maintain)...the consumer's good fame, it must be...wasteful (Veblen, 2007, p. 96).

People use leisure as a way of claiming or demonstrating status in society by virtue of the products and services that people consume or purchase. The brand name of an athletic confers a certain social status on the owner of the shoe. Vacationing at Club Med provides a greater social status than camping at a state park (Edginton, DeGraaf, Dieser & Edginton, 2006).

Kelly's Sociological Theory of Leisure: Kelly's work on developing a sociological leisure theory began in the early 1970s (e.g. Kelly, 1972) and developed throughout the 1980s (Kelly, 1996). A core element of leisure for Kelly was the concept of meaning, which, he argued, could not be separated from context (Kelly, 1999). To this end, Kelly developed a theory of leisure that is based upon the core elements of freedom and meaning. Freedom was considered from a high or low continuum, and meaning was considered from an intrinsic and social continuum. That is, the development of meaningfulness is contextualized within social frameworks such as family, community, relationships, and so forth. Kelly (1996) divided these two elements to explain four types of sociological states of leisure:

1. Unconditional leisure: High intrinsic meaning and high freedom
2. Recuperative (Compensatory) leisure: High intrinsic meaning and low freedom
3. Relational leisure: High social meaning and high freedom
4. Role-determined leisure: High social meaning and low freedom

Dieser (2004) posited that Kelly's sociological theory of leisure has relevance to how people from different cultures experience leisure:

Kelly's model extends the meaning of leisure beyond intrinsic motivation-social meaning of leisure may be relevant to people from collectivistic cultures where

priority is given to group membership (e.g. family, ethnic group)...For example, a person from collectivistic culture (Asian-American) may experience relational leisure from participation in an ethnic-oriented parade (e.g., Chinese New Year celebration). In this example a person may attain a high degree of freedom and experience social meaning... Further, a parent from a collectivistic culture may experience role-determined leisure via watching a son or daughter participate in swimming lessons. In this experience, the parent may experience a low degree of freedom (the activity is an obligation) but find social meaning from following an important family role (p. 17).

Serious Leisure/Casual Leisure: Stebbins (2004) has also highlighted that serious leisure must be viewed within a sociological framework, which explores leisure in relation to family, gender, social class, and so forth. Stebbins (1992) has offered an alternative view to leisure, which seems to fit between how one understand leisure and how one understand work. He indicates that serious is the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience (Stebbins, 1992). This is commonly contrasted with casual leisure, which is leisure that is intrinsically rewarding and pleasurable, and requires no special training to enjoy it. According to Stebbins (1999), activities such as play, relaxation, passive and active entertainment, sociable conversation, and sensory pleasures are considered casual leisure. Serious leisure are defined by six distinctive qualities:

- 1- The need to persevere (often in the face of danger or fear);
- 2- Finding a career in the endeavor;
- 3- A significant personal effort based on special knowledge, training, or skill'

- 4- Durable benefits (self-actualization, self-enrichment, self-expression, renewal, social interaction, lasting physical products);
- 5- Strong identification with their chosen pursuits; and a unique ethos, or special social world, which arises when enthusiasts pursue their leisure experiences over the years (Stebbins, 1999).

As one might imagine, there are many examples of people engaged in serious leisure pursuits. They might include amateur photographers or astronomers, career volunteers, and members of community bands and community garden clubs.

Postmodern Leisure: Rojek's (1995, 2000) academic work in understanding leisure has developed a sociological theory of leisure that has been dubbed a sociological imagination of leisure (Bramham, 2002) and postmodern leisure (Rojek, 1995). Rojek believes that the psychological theories of leisure that essence of leisure is freedom (e.g., Neulinger's leisure paradigm) are illusory and, instead of developing freedom, leisure can actually be used as a mechanism for social control and order (Rojek, 1995). Drawing upon the proposition from Karl Marx that the dream of economic man was an illusion so that the wealthy could dominate the working class, Rojek (1995) argued that leisure as freedom an illusion so that prevailing (e.g., wealthy capitalist) can dominate people via leisure. The crux of his position is expressed in the following question:

Leisure is the reward of the many who toil in domestic labor and paid employment for the profit of the few. The pleasure which derived from free time activity is rule bound and conforms to a historically specific economy of political cultural regulation (Rojek, 2009, p. 9).

Rojek posited that leisure is skilled and pleasurable (Rojek, 2005b) and must be contextualized and related to social formations and norms (Rojek, 1995, 2000) that is there is no such thing or space as essentially leisure, rather, leisure is always embedded

in social and cultural norms. Because the postmodern era in contemporary societies is oriented toward flexibility, fragmentation, acceleration, diversity, challenging authority, irrationality, restlessness, and disengagement, postmodern leisure remains a site for transgression, societal, diversity, and challenging dominant social norms (Rojek, 1995). Hence, leisure becomes fast, accelerated and fragmented:

Fast leisure simply refers to an acceleration in the velocity and density of leisure relations with other leisure actors. For example...the phenomenal growth of computer games, over the last decade us built on the hunger of constant novelty. It is an industry requirement for games to be replaced rapidly so that the market continuously expands. Computerized games typically involve attention spans to be concentrated in short bursts rather than continuously developed. They encourage the development of fragmentary consciousness since they permit the individual to concentrate on one part of the game instead of the unfolding whole (Rojek, 2000, p. 23).

Rojek (2000) suggested that because leisure is related to social formations and norms, it can enhance social capital should be repositioned in relation to social norms oriented toward the care of the self and the care for the other.

Furthermore, under the framework of postmodern leisure, deviant leisure should be reexamined and certain aspect of deviant leisure should be valued (E.g. challenging authority through political dissent). Rojek (1999) suggests four types of deviant leisure categories, first, revolutionaries use leisure to attempt to transform societal norms. For example, meetings, processions, rallies, and radical discussion groups use leisure to strengthen revolutionary movement (e.g., Civic Rights movement in the United States). Second, political dissenters attempt to modify social conditions through criticism, propaganda, agitation, and dissent. For example, contemporary animal rights campaigners or environmental protesters use leisure to organize and implement change

to social conditions (e.g., protest against development in the arctic National Wildlife Refuge). Third, retreatist lifestyle disengage from dominant society through fantasy, dress, linguistic codes, and religious beliefs. For example, someone can use drugs as an unhealthy method to disengage or can volunteer through the Peace Corps or religious service as a healthy way to disengage from mainstream society. Fourth, criminal use leisure as a method to achieve goals (e.g., wealth). For example, the countless images of wealth in magazines, movies, and television contribute to a fantasy world in which people think about becoming wealthy through breaking the law (Edginton, DeGraaf, Dieser & Edginton, 2006).

2.6.2.2. Anthropological Theories of Leisure

According to Crapo (2001), anthropology is the scientific study of people and culture, which paints a holistic picture of the human condition, although there are 1) anthropological writings on play as a basis of culture (Huizinga, 2008), 2) a call for the need of an anthropological emphasis in understanding leisure (Chick, 1998; Hemingway, 1998; Kelly, 1998), and 3) some research in understanding leisure of people and cultures, to date there are few anthropological theories of leisure.

The Theory of Anti-Structure: the theory of anti-structure, proposed and developed by Victor Turner (2011), posited that there are formal rituals that govern people's behaviors both inside and outside of everyday life. The rituals that are outside daily life are "the norm or opposed to everyday structure. Leisure are the rituals that set people outside their norms or the anti-structures parts of life. For example, in everyday life, it is socially unacceptable to yell, "Let's kill them': however, at football games, it is common practice to yell such things.

To this end, Turner suggested that anti-structure events develop intense comradeship and smaller structured communities of equal individuals. For example, Gore and Gore

(2002) highlight how a group of strangers in a run-down neighborhood in North Philadelphia initially developed a community garden so that strangers could move outside the norm of being unaware and unfriendly to their neighbors. This small community garden mushroomed into a large village of the Arts, which has sculptures, murals, vegetable gardens, dance programs, a community newspaper, and a working tree farm. The Village"... gathers people that nobody wants... [And] somehow in all this dysfunctional scenario, one come together; one hold each other dear; one remake it. One transform place and people become transformed" (Gore and Gore, 2002, p. 291). As Deegan (1989) noted: "The ability to have something in common with strangers, to sign and yell and cry public, to root for one's team, and to publicly participate reaffirms one's strong that help us tolerate and give meaning to life" (p. 87). Leisure as anti-structure is the medium to develop comradeship, friendship, build communities, and find meaning in one's life.

2.6.3. Hybrid identity Theory

Globalization is an historical, dialectical process. Cultural globalization tends to produce one of three outcomes: differentiation, assimilation, or hybridization. There are multiple historical layers of hybridity, which span the longue duree (Pieterse, 2004). The study of the processes and outcomes of hybridization of cultures will be essential to allow for a deeper understanding of globalization (Ang, 2003). Cultural hybridization refers to "the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices" (Pieterse, 2004, p. 64). As García Canclini stated: "hybridization is 'sociocultural processes in which discrete structures or practices, previously existing in separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects, and practices'" (Canclini, 2005, p. xxv). A reflexive relationship between the local and global produces the hybrid. The identities are not assimilated or altered

independently, but instead elements of cultures are incorporated to create a new hybrid culture. The creation of a hybrid identity is a “twofold process involving the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism” (Robertson, 1992, p. 100). The local and the global interact to create a new identity that is distinct in each context. As the two interact, the local influences the global and the global influences the local. The local is universalized and the universal is localized. The result is a form of hybridity that “signifies the encounter, conflict, and/or blending of two ethnic or cultural categories which, while by no means pure and distinct in nature, tend to be understood and experienced as meaningful identity labels by members of these categories” (Lo, 2002, p. 199). Power and hierarchy influence the process of globalization, resulting in the uneven integration of human life and contributing to the emergence of Diasporas and migration (Pieterse, 2004).

Initially a term of derision, the meaning of hybridity is changing in the globalized world. Given a compressed world and a constrained state, identities for all individuals and collective selves are becoming more complex. With globalization and increasing modernization, being a hybrid is now a benefit. The ability to negotiate across barriers—language, cultural, spiritual, racial, and physical—is an asset. Although the hybrid contains elements of the local and the global, the intermixture makes it unique. Those who occupy hybrid spaces benefit from having an understanding of both local knowledge and global cosmopolitanism. Those who can easily cross barriers in a world of amorphous borders have an advantage (Smith & Leavy, 2008).

The hybrid concept has roots in the hard sciences (e.g., botany or biology), as well as in the social sciences. Young’s (1995) review of the genealogy of the term “hybrid” illustrates this. In the more literal interpretation, the hybrid is the product of “pure” or “distinct” categories. Notions of purity cannot be as easily linked to cultural identities, which consist of constructed and imagined elements. In this interpretation, cultures are

not sealed off from each other (Gilroy, 1993), which renders it nearly impossible to assert that there are “pure” cultures that could produce a hybrid. In the plant world, purity can be maintained with plastic bags and controlled pollination by a gardener (Smith & Leavy, 2008).

Although hybridity was initially an outcome of oppression, a way of negotiating stability for a fragile dual identity (DuBois, 1999), and the expansion of globalization brings hybridity to the privileged and the disadvantaged. Universalizing processes are acting simultaneously with localizing processes. A global culture is spreading, and as it comes in contact with various localities a hybrid identity develops. Hybridity is about creativity and cultural imagination (Lo, 2002). Those who occupy hybrid spaces benefit from having an understanding of both local knowledge and global cosmopolitanism.

Hybridity encompasses partial identities, multiple roles, and pluralistic selves. The individual or community with a hybrid identity mimics the squeezing of the world community with a simultaneous expansion of the world community. Exposure to global communication and culture plant the seeds for the formation of a hybrid culture. The hybrid identity might allow the globe to unite in its differences, to be a truly multicultural society that is able to recognize and reconcile diversity. This blending of multiple cultural categories is happening around the world, and hybrid identities are emerging. Hybridity is also a cross-category process and a subversion of hierarchy (Pieterse, 2004).

Globalization and localization are two contradictory processes operating simultaneously. As a global culture, economy, and society are spreading, local communities continue efforts to maintain their particular cultural, economic, and societal customs. Hybridity has become one way to re-create and revision a local community, while incorporating elements of outside groups, such as the global culture. The hybrid allows for the perpetuation of the local in the context of the global – using

the global selectively while continuing essential elements of the local (Smith & Leavy, 2008).

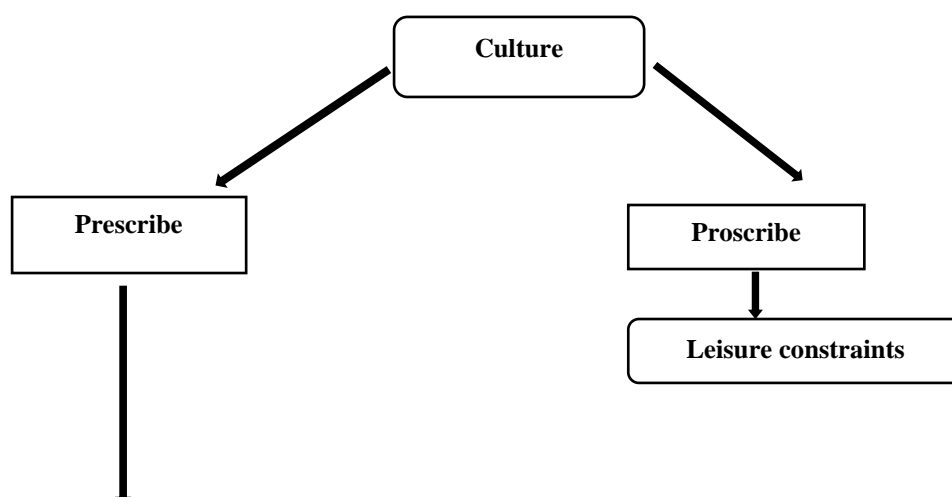
The sociological analysis of hybridity investigates the range of types of hybrid identities that are explored theoretically and empirically in the literature on identity. Multiple forms of hybridity are analyzed: identities that exist across borders, duality, gender (a false dichotomy), new identities, the diaspora (borderless), and the internal colony hybrid (formed within boundaries). A hybrid identity might form as a result of a false dichotomy, where an identity that seemingly only has the capacity to occupy two forms is actually shown to encompass another form. Physical borders of states assume discrete identities, people who experience double consciousness also experience a “two-ness” that is distinct from either single identity contributing to the duality, and, finally, the dichotomized sex and gender identities do not encompass the full range of sexed or gendered identities. Alternatively, it is possible for a hybrid identity to emerge as a category that defies borders. This type of hybrid exists simultaneously in multiple contexts. Hybrid identities that occupy the third space, or that emerge as a result of a diasporized population are two examples of hybrid identities that are borderless. Finally, hybrid identities form when multiple categories exist within borders and fuse to create a new form of identity. The hybrid identity that is born among internally colonized populations is a hybrid identity that is formed within boundaries (Smith & Leavy, 2008).

2.7. Conceptual Framework of the Research

Ragheb & Griffith (1982) focused on the contribution of leisure activity participation and leisure satisfaction to the life satisfaction of older adults (See also Keller, 1983). They emphasized the relationship of the quality of leisure participation (namely, leisure satisfaction) to life satisfaction. Ragheb & Griffith (1982) found that

the higher the frequency of participation in leisure activities, the higher the life satisfaction; the more leisure participation, the higher the leisure satisfaction; and the grater the leisure satisfaction; the grater the life satisfaction. Further, they found that leisure satisfaction contributed much more to the life satisfaction of person than frequency of leisure participation (Figure 2.8.).

Riddick & Daniel (1984), by identifying some of the factors contributing to the life satisfaction of older women, examined the efficacy of a model they developed that involved mutable variable for explaining life satisfaction. Their main finding was that “leisure activity participation emerged as the strong contributing factor to the life satisfaction of older women” (p. 146).



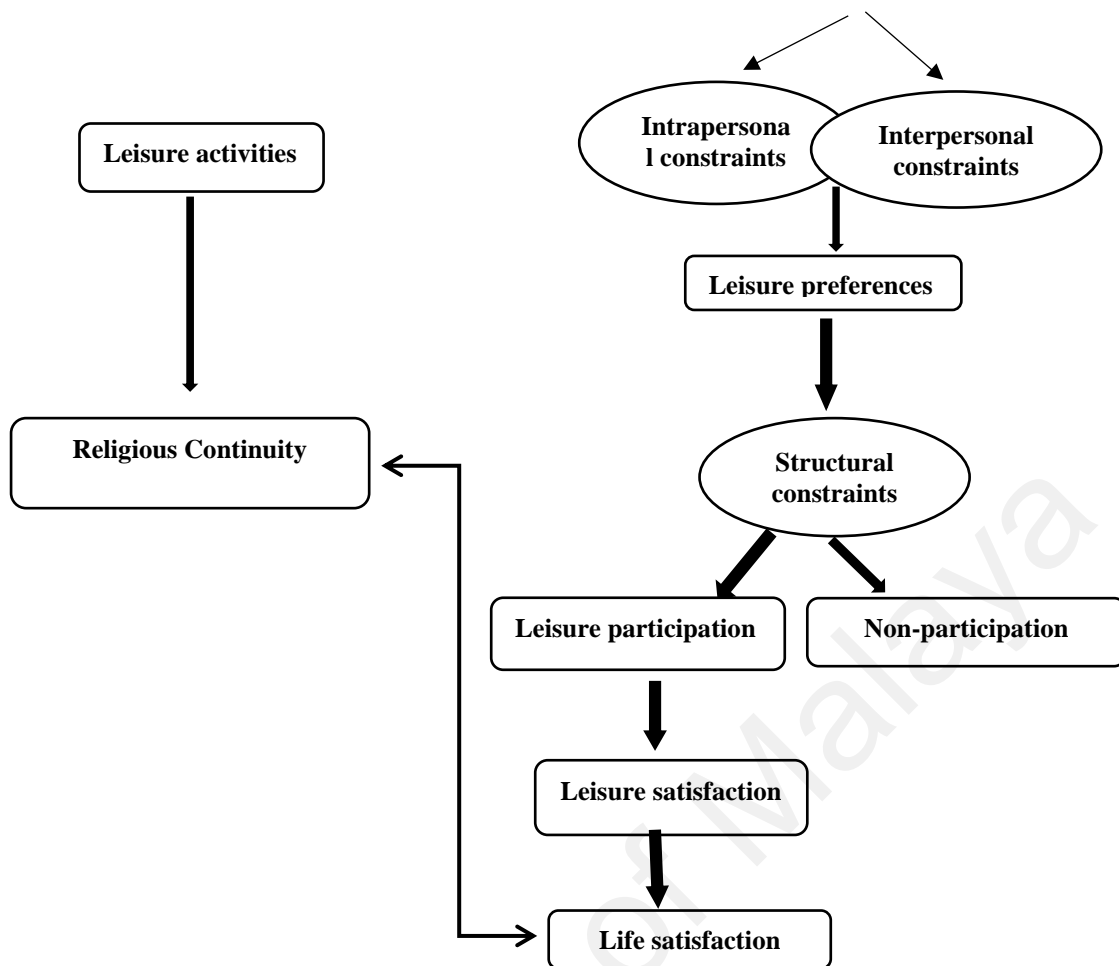


Figure 2.8: Conceptual Framework of the Research

2.8. Research Paradigm: Interpretivism

Data do not necessarily speak for themselves. Rather, findings can be viewed from multiple perspectives. The process by which a researcher construes meaning from research findings is referred to as interpretation. It involves helping the readers to make sense of the findings produced in a research study. A qualitative researcher may use theoretical orientations to provide interpretations of findings or may generate interpretations a priori. Interpreting qualitative findings begins with a researcher's own assumptions regarding the world, life, and people. In this manner, worldviews tend to influence how one comes to make meaning or sense of data acquired from a research study. Nobody lives in a philosophical or worldview vacuum; the paradigms that a

researcher comes to accept as true tend to color the results of his or her research findings (Peshkin, 2000).

The canvas of interpretivism is layered with ideas stemming from the German intellectual tradition of hermeneutics in sociology, the phenomenology of Schutz (2012) and critiques of scientism and positivism in the social sciences influenced by the writing of ordinary language philosophers critical of logical empiricism. Historically, at least, interpretivists argued for the uniqueness of human inquiry. They crafted various refutations of the naturalistic interaction of the social sciences. They held that the mental sciences or cultural sciences were different in kind than the natural sciences: the goal of the latter is scientific explanation, whereas the goal of the former is the grasping or understanding of the meaning of social phenomena.

Owing in part to unresolved tensions between their rationalist and romanticist roots, interpretivists wrestle with maintaining the opposition of subjectivity and objectivity, engagement and objectification (Denzin, 2008). They celebrate the permanence and priority of the real world of first-person, subjective experience, yet, in true Cartesian fashion, they seek to disengage from that experience and objectify it. They struggle with drawing a line between the object of investigation and investigator. The paradox of how to develop an objective interpretive science of subjective human experience thus arises. This grappling with a synthesis of phenomenological subjectivity and scientific objectivity is evident in Dilthey's (Bulhof, 2012) bid to find a basis for the scientific investigation of meaning, in Weber's (Gerth, 2009) struggles with the relationship between the interpretation of meaning and causal explanations and the separation of facts and values in social inquiry, and in Schutz (2012) analysis of the operation of *Verstehen*.

Contemporary theoretical descendant of these interpretivist founders have addressed this paradox in several ways. Hammersley (2013) is representative of interpretivists who pursue a synthesis between social realism and constructivism. LeCompte & Schensul (2013) and Krirk & Miller (2005) seek refuge in methods as error-elimination strategies. Smith (2006) calls this the “middle ground” of “methodology: it rejects certain negative characteristics of empiricist thinking but simultaneously holds that inquires must avoid the subjectivity and error of native inquiry through the judicious use of method.

A third response is to deny the opposition of subjectivity and objectivity and overcome it by fully accepting the hermeneutical character of existence. Rabinow and Marcus (2008) endorse this view, following a line of argument advanced by Heidegger, Gadamer, and Taylor. They claim that the activity of interpretation is not simply a methodological option open to the social scientist, but rather the very condition of human inquiry itself: “The interpretive turn is not simply a new methodology, but rather a challenge to the very idea that inquiry into the social world and the value of the understanding that results is to be determined by methodology” (Rabinow & Marcus, 2008, p. 20).

This third interpretivist position assumes that the defining characteristic of an ontological hermeneutics is that linguisticity and historicity are constitutive of being human (Wachterhauser, 2007). In other words, we do not simply live out our lives in time through language; rather. We are out history. The fact that language and history are both what makes the process of meaning construction hermeneutical.

Geertz’s (2008) interpretive anthropology in an interpretive theory of culture. It arises in direct opposition to the program of cultural analysis defined by a set of theoretical models known as structuralism or, more specifically, ethno-science or

cognitive anthropology. The structuralist program is firmly rooted in the logical empiricists' bid to find the real meaning of myth, ceremony, and other cultural artifacts. For the structuralist, the categories and structures of culture provide powerful explanatory devices accounting for the behaviors of members of a group or society. Structural-functional research frameworks are reductionist in that they claim to discover the one true interpretation lying behind or beneath the complexity of appearance. Geertz (2008) objects to this understanding of the goal of the anthropology, preferring to define the analysis of human action as an "interpretive science in search of meaning, not an experimental science in search of laws" (p. 5).

Culture for Geertz, is a more complicated, less bloodless, more ideational, and fundamentally, an irreducibly interactive, hermenutical phenomenon that begs for interpretation, not causal explanation. Pace the structuralist, Geertz (2008) argues: "as interworked systems of construable signs, culture is not a power, something to which social events, behavior, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly-that is thickly-described" (p. 14).

A distinguishing feature of Geertz's understanding of both the object of the anthropologist's gaze and the method of his or her gazing is that both are semiotic and hermeneutical phenomena. The language and other symbols in a culture do not simply refer to objects but are constitutive of them, hence, Geertz (2008) claims, "man is an animal suspended in webs or significance he himself has spun" (p. 5). The actions of members of a culture both construct and signify meaning. Following Ricoeur (2004), Geertz argues that the ways in which meanings are constituted in a culture must be read or interpreted by the ethnographer in much the same manner as one would read or interpret a complicated text.

2.9. Summary

The term leisure has been defined by different perspectives. These different perspectives reflect historical differences in the organization of societies as well as differences in concepts of impingements upon both freedom and pleasure. Leisure can be defined in many ways: Leisure as time, leisure as an activity, as a state of mind, as a holistic perspective, as a spiritual expression, and as a social instrument.

Research about leisure constraints has developed continuously over the past two decades and has become one of the major sub-fields in leisure studies. Leisure constraints are defined as factors that inhibit or limit engagement of people's ability to participate in leisure activities, to take advantage of leisure services or to achieve a desired level of satisfaction. Leisure constraints can be comprehended merely within the wide context of the preferences-participation relationship and classified perceived leisure constraints into three types: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints.

Leisure researchers draw upon social theories of aging to understand leisure in later life. As is evident in this section, theories of aging are highly debatable, but each can contribute something of value to discussions around leisure and aging well. All of these theories tell something about older adults' leisure-related decision in later life, and they may help the researcher to consider how the researcher can best support older adults in their leisure endeavours.

3.1. Introduction

In order to investigate the leisure behaviours, scholars emphasize on adopting qualitative methodology in addition to quantitative approach (Henderson, 1998). Adopting qualitative research method seems to be more fruitful on those topics, which are investigated for first time and are also more influential and effective for establishing a meaningful interaction between the researcher and the investigated topic. It is also more useful for analysing the textual data and forming a ground theory (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Interpretative perspective assumes that humans are aware, emotional, rational and responsive beings who interpret everything which has happened to them and their reactions to these events. The traditional quantitative approaches are not capable of explicating the complicated nature of the behaviour and perspective of older people (Allison, 1988). Qualitative method of research is an apt approach for investigating the ethnical minorities which have not been investigated. It is also an apt approach for determining the scope of behavioural patterns. Therefore this study adopted a qualitative research method (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and interpretative perspective (Creswell, 2007) for the analysis of the gathered data in order to establish harmony among the theoretical framework of the study, informants and the design of the study, on the one hand and to compensate for the lack of previous studies conducted on leisure constraints in Iran. Although the main approach of this study is qualitative, however quantitative approach has also been used for data analysis which has been collected through in-depth interviews. The data which were collected through in-depth interviews form 84 informants, based on the socio-economic status and leisure behavior of the informants were categorized in some tables. Although these quantitative data are not really statistic one, however can be used to highlight the percentage and frequency of the phenomena which has been experienced by the informants.

3.2. Data Collection

It is not an easy task to evaluate the complicated phenomena like Zoroastrian elders' leisure experiences, which happen in complicated socio-cultural context. Therefore, in order to obtain robust data, in-depth interview were conducted. In-depth interviews provide a chance for the informants through which robust information are gathered (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990).

Qualitative approaches usually adopt purposive sampling technique (Saldana, 2011). This technique contradicts the random sampling which is common in quantitative approaches (Rossman & Rallis, 2002). This study has adopted the purposive and snowball sampling which are common techniques in sampling of the events, people and processes (Patton, 2002). Due to the sensitive nature of the topic of investigation, the researcher believed that precise and reliable answers would not have been obtained if there were no face-to-face contact between the researcher and the informants.

Taking into consideration the research objectives, purposive and snowball sampling techniques were adopted to select the informants of this study who were 60 year old and above Zoroastrians elderly in Kerman. Snowball sampling technique guided the selection of the remaining informants. The criteria for selecting them were: 1) being 60 years of age and above, 2) having personal interest to take part in the study, 3) having ability to express the experiences. Depending on the informants' scope of the experiences and understating, the process of sampling continued till no new data turned up during data collection process (data saturation). In-depth interviews provided the informants with the chance to express their ideas, understandings and experiences completely.

The data were collected from 84 in-depth interview (Appendix C). In-depth interviews were carried out with 44 female and 40 male informants in the women's

organization of the Zoroastrians' association, in various commissions of Zoroastrian association and in the community center in Zoroastrian areas and parks where the elderly Zoroastrians used to spend their outdoor leisure. The researcher interviewed members of the hierarchy, including the laypersons, acolytes, and priests or *mubeds* (Figure 3.1).

At the beginning of the each in-depth interview, time was spent by the informant completing a demographic questionnaire (Appendix A). Socio-demographic information are based on the interactive approach of Kelly (1997). For Kelly, leisure roles are related to, but are not determined by, the economy, the family and the community. For Kelly, the economy, family and community are distinct dimensions of our lives, within which we perform a range of social roles that have a differing degree of obligation, fun and interest. (Best, 2010, p.42). Questions about the educational level, marital status, health status, place of residence, number of children, employing status, the amount of income of the informants are based on the interactive approach of Kelly.

About half of the second part of the interview's questions are based on the activity theory. Activity theory is based upon the assumption that in order to protect psychological well-being in old age, it is essential to sustain a high level of involvement in a range of outdoor and indoor activities (Havighurst, 2008). The below questions are based on this theory.

- What do you usually do in your daily life for leisure? What leisure do you currently enjoy? (What leisure activities do you usually do)?
- How often do you do them (every day, every week /every month)? Describe a typical weekday. What is a typical weekend like for you?
- Which days do you often go out for leisure activities? (Weekdays/weekends/both)
- How much time do you usually spend for them?

The rest of the second part of the interview's questions are based on the continuity theory. This approach suggests that if older people make use of strategies that are well-known to them, they will find it easier to adapt to changes associated with ageing and maintain their well-being and outward social behavior (Godbey, 1999; Mannell, Kleiber, & Walker, 1997). The below question are based on this theory:

- What leisure have you enjoyed in the past? Does your leisure activities differ from those did in your young adulthood? What leisure has your older adult enjoyed in the past?
- Have you increased/ decreased/ maintained leisure activities compared to your young adulthood?
- Do you think your leisure activities have changed from past to present? Why?

The final part of the interview's question are based on the leisure constraints theory. Leisure constraints questions are based on the leisure constraints model. Crawford et al.'s (1991) constraints model identifies three levels of Intrapersonal, Interpersonal and Structural. The below questions are based on this theory:

- At age 60 or over, have you ever encountered any factors/difficulties that affect your leisure participation? In other words, have you ever encountered any factors/difficulties that lead to 1) Inability to maintain or increase leisure activities at desired levels; 2) Ceasing leisure activities; 3) Nonparticipation in leisure activities; 4) Insufficient enjoyment of current leisure activities?
- If yes, what are those factors/difficulties?
- How did you manage these difficulties?
- Please give the reasons for nonparticipation.
- Did those factors exist in your young adulthood too?
- If yes, did they influence your leisure activities in the same way as they did at your age of 60 or over?

- If no, how different were the influences of those factors on your leisure activities in your young adulthood and at age 60 or over?

-What is your biggest constraint to having your leisure time?

The main purpose of the in-depth interviews was to gather common ideas and beliefs about the experiences of Zoroastrians' elderly from participating in outdoor leisure activities. In-depth interviews were also advantageous in that it provided the informants with the chance to guide and design the research in progress (Morgan & Krueger, 1993).

Since this study was an exploratory study, then the researcher avoided to use the pilot study. Interviews began by asking some broad and general questions about the daily life experiences of Zoroastrian elderly, and then questions that were more exploratory were asked in order to encourage the informants and to obtain more in-depth responses. Informants were asked whether they felt any constraints in their outdoor leisure activities. In addition, some questions which were related to the past and present experiences of informants' outdoor leisure activities were used in the in-depth interviews. Moreover, the demographic characteristics and social-economic status of the Zoroastrians' elderly were also investigated.

All the in-depth interviews have been carried by the researcher over a two-year period from September 2010 till September 2012. The length of each interview was between two till four hours. In order to consider the research ethics, all the informants were informed about the objectives and significance of the research. They were also asked for permission to use audio recorder to collect audio data during the interviews.

Among the 84 in-depth interviews, 77 of them were recorded and transcribed word for word, however, in seven cases, recording the data was not possible. In cases where the informants were not willing to have their voice recorded, researcher adopted note-taking data collection simultaneously. Along with audio recording, note-taking was

also used as the complementary data collection technique. These notes and transcripts were analyzed before the conducting the next interview in order to direct the next interview. The tape-recorded interviews generated 980 pages of data.

The informants were assured about the confidentiality of their responses, and no giving out of their information. Therefore, this study has adopted pseudonym in order to preserve the informants' real identity. They were also informed that they had the right to quit the research at any phase of research. In-depth interviews were performed in the places suggested by the informants themselves. In other words, the researcher has tried to provide the informants with the most comfortable and intimate environment for interview. In order to collect and organize the in-depth, the qualitative interview guide was used (Patton, 2002). This approach let the Zoroastrians' elderly to feel comfortable in participating in outdoor leisure activities and let the informants to be interviewed anywhere they felt like. All the in-depth interviews were conducted in Persian language. Transcription of the collected data and the elicitation of the main themes were also done by Persian language and then translated into English.

The transcribed interviews and participant observation notes were reviewed many times and then analyzed further for the elicitation of the themes. While the recorded items were transcribed, and the common and generalized patterns were examined precisely, it was found out that the framework of leisure constraints for identifying and interpreting the findings has been designed properly. The researcher read each transcribed text repeatedly in order to identify and elicit the leisure constraint themes and to find out whether the elicited themes would actually reflect the data gathered during the interviews or not (Figure 3.1).

The in-depth interviews were carried out simultaneously with participant observation. This participant observation as a technique for data collection began among the Zoroastrians in September 2010 and lasted until September 2012. During this

time, the researcher attended monthly, seasonal and annual religious rituals, festivals, ceremonies and feast of the Zoroastrian community in Kerman (Figure 3.1).

The tempting answer to the question: what should the researcher observed? Is, everything. Not only is this not feasible, it is probably completely impossible. What kinds of activities and events in which to participate and observe were also influenced by the specific research questions. Participant observation was an interactive process, so a list of the events and situations that the researcher observed were changed over time. What was observed in a particular setting were also shaped by the interests of the researcher. All observation was partial (Agar, 1996; Wolcott, 1999).

The researcher could not document everything that happened in a social setting regardless of time spent in the field. There was a selective focus based on the researcher topic, research questions, or what emerge as salient in the participants' daily activities. The focus of the researcher's observations narrowed as the study proceed and a few issues raised to surface as core ideas for continued observation and documentation. The researcher categorized what types of leisure activities observed (Appendix B).

The activities that researcher recorded in this research consist of mundane, frequently repeated events. That was one of the underlying assumptions in almost all social studies: there were patterns behaviours, embodying and exemplifying culturally significant knowledge and attitudes. Many behaviour patterns were daily events-eating, caring for the grandchildren, going to park and so on. Others were weekly (weekly market, weekend activities, going to fire temple), others were monthly (monthly gahanbar, celebrations and feast) still others were yearly such as Sadeh ceremony. On the other hand, the researcher experienced very unusual events (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011).

Along with participant observations and in-depth interviews, this study benefited from ethnographic photographic to visualize the leisure activities of the Zoroastrians'

elderly. Ethnographic photography is a practice without a well-articulated theory or method. From the beginning of the twentieth century when outdoor photography became relatively easy, most anthropological fieldworkers have produced images of the people they studied. Some ethnographers employ photographs in the field to induce responses in an interview. The primary function of photographs taken in the field is as an aide-de-memoire, similar to written field notes, to help reconstitute events in the mind of the ethnographer. Some images become illustrations for publications, slides for lectures, or, occasionally, the basis for an exhibition. Once the fieldwork is written up, the photographs are deposited either in a museum or in the author's personal archive along with written field notes and are usually forgotten (Morton & Edwards, 2009).

Visual anthropology is a subfield of social anthropology that is concerned, in part, with the study and production of ethnographic photography. More recently it has been used by historians of science and visual culture (Ruby, 1996). Even before the emergence of anthropology as an academic discipline in the 1880s, ethnologists used photography as a tool of research (Eddy, 2013). Visual anthropology, by focusing on its own efforts to make and understand film, is able to establish many principles and build theories about human visual representation in general. As Ruby (1996: 1345) stated “Visual anthropology logically proceeds from the belief that culture is manifested through visible symbols embedded in gestures, ceremonies, rituals, and artefact’s situated in constructed and natural environments”. The primary function of photographs taken in the field is as written field notes, to help reconstitute events in the mind of the ethnographer. Some ethnographers employ photographs in the field to induce responses in an interview.

Field work has been started since September 2010, and lasted until September 2012. During this time, the researcher participated several times in their religious feast, festivals, ceremonies, and leisure activities. The researcher tried to participate at least in

each religious and leisure activity for one time. Thus during September 2010 till September 2011, the researcher participated in religious ceremonies which has been occurred monthly. Zoroastrians have held various festivals on diverse historical, religious and natural occasions. These festivals can be classified into the following groups: weekly festivals (Every 8th, 15th, 23rd and 30th day of the month is called Ahura Mazdā feast and Seroz. These days are called Hormazd, Dae-Pa-Din, Dae-Pa-Meher, Dae-Pa-Ada. In these days Zoroastrians try to meet their friends and relatives and have merry-makings in their visits), monthly festivals (Frawardin, Ardwasht, Khordad, Tir, Amurdad, Shahrewar, Meher, Aban, Adur, Dae, Wahman, Spendarmad), seasonal festivals (six gāhāmbār), annual festivals (Nowrouz). During the second year of field work among them, the researcher tried to participate in their leisure activities which had been accomplished by them monthly. So, it can be said that, the researcher visited them every month and took part in their leisure and religious activities. Most of the information which has been used in the section 5.5, were collected through the participant observation of the researcher among the informants. Some quotation from field notes were cited in that section.

3.3. Data Analysis

Directing the research objectives and questions, and analyzing the data, provided an account for explaining the outdoor leisure activities, and leisure constraints which affected the outdoor leisure activities of the Zoroastrians' elderly and also the contribution of these leisure to religious continuity among them. Field notes during participant observations and in-depth interviews and transcription of the data, provided a primary sense of the elicited themes and patterns. This process of organizing data, made the theory making easier.

All the interviews were read line by line, reviewed frequently and finally coded. Data management and analysis was comprised of three phases. In the first phase, the researcher performed the open coding (Saldana, 2009) which included the key words and root concepts indicated in the data. These codes were written on the transcriptions. In this phase, the data were divided into the comprising components, and then they were compared in terms of similarities and differences and finally the main concepts in each paragraph were coded. Open coding process illustrated the depth and harmony of the internal patterns all over the interviews. Documenting the interviews, transcribing the data, and open coding were carried out until the emergence of new themes. Open coding system was adopted and carried out while the interviews were performed. Coding system provided the researcher with the chance to categorize the data with more codes which could have been corrected and included in the data later. Primary descriptive coding used the words and terms used by informants in order to find out their recurring instances among and between the transcriptions. For instance, there were some terms about women's household duties which were occurring repeatedly among and between the transcripts.

The second phase or axial coding (Saldana, 2009) included the analysis of the categories and themes and comparing them with each other, as well controlling them against the data. After applying open coding on the each transcription, the primary codes and categories applied in this phase, were compared with each other. Consequently, those codes, which were similar in terms of content, were mixed with each other and then they were categorized again in order to embrace all the identified concepts which were of the same category. This process were continued till the core concepts of the study were identified (Figure 3.1).

The second phase or axial coding (Saldana, 2009) included the analysis of the categories and themes and comparing them with each other, as well controlling them

against the data. For instance, family responsibilities and ethic of care were classified under one category. The findings were indicative of a consensus over the data. Researcher has also provided some citations and examples in the paper in order to support the emerging themes. Those researchers who examine the qualitative data, do not necessarily want to come up with a certain conclusion, rather they try to understand the attitudes, behaviours, and experiences of the people under investigation.

3.4. Validity and Reliability

Issues of reliability and validity which are of paramount important in quantitative research, are not equally important across the various qualitative methodologies. And, when such issues arise, their evaluation is generally quite different (Altheide & Johnson, 2011). This stems from the fact that qualitative research often relies primarily on the informants' own formulations and constructions of reality checked against those of other similarly situated informants or the observations of an informed observer. Multiple informants and multiple methods of data gathering or triangulation within a same study are themselves recursive checks against the validity of the researchers' interpretations. The depth associated with qualitative research, coupled with researchers' efforts to triangulate (Denzin, 2009) and cross-check their data, and gives this methodology strength in the area of validity.

Qualitative researcher prefer to use the term trustworthiness instead of validity and reliability (Williams & Morrow, 2009). In order to assure the credibility (Shenton, 2004), after each interview has been transcribed, a copy of the verbatim transcript with primary codes were sent back to the informants. The return process of the transcripts lasted one month. The purpose of this process was to avoid any mistake in making impressions, and to enhance the transparency of the research. Informants were requested to cross check their interviews against the transcribed interviews. All the informants

confirmed the proposed codes, except some trivial cases about which the researcher was notified to do corrections. Informants' confirmation is a standard measure taken for enhancing the internal validity. It was particularly very useful in this study, because the informants were given the chance to check if the crucial data that they had provided were not changed. In some cases, informants offered some valuable explanations, which were included in the interviews. In addition, the elicited themes were sent to informants for their further explanations and their suggestions were followed for the next steps of the research.

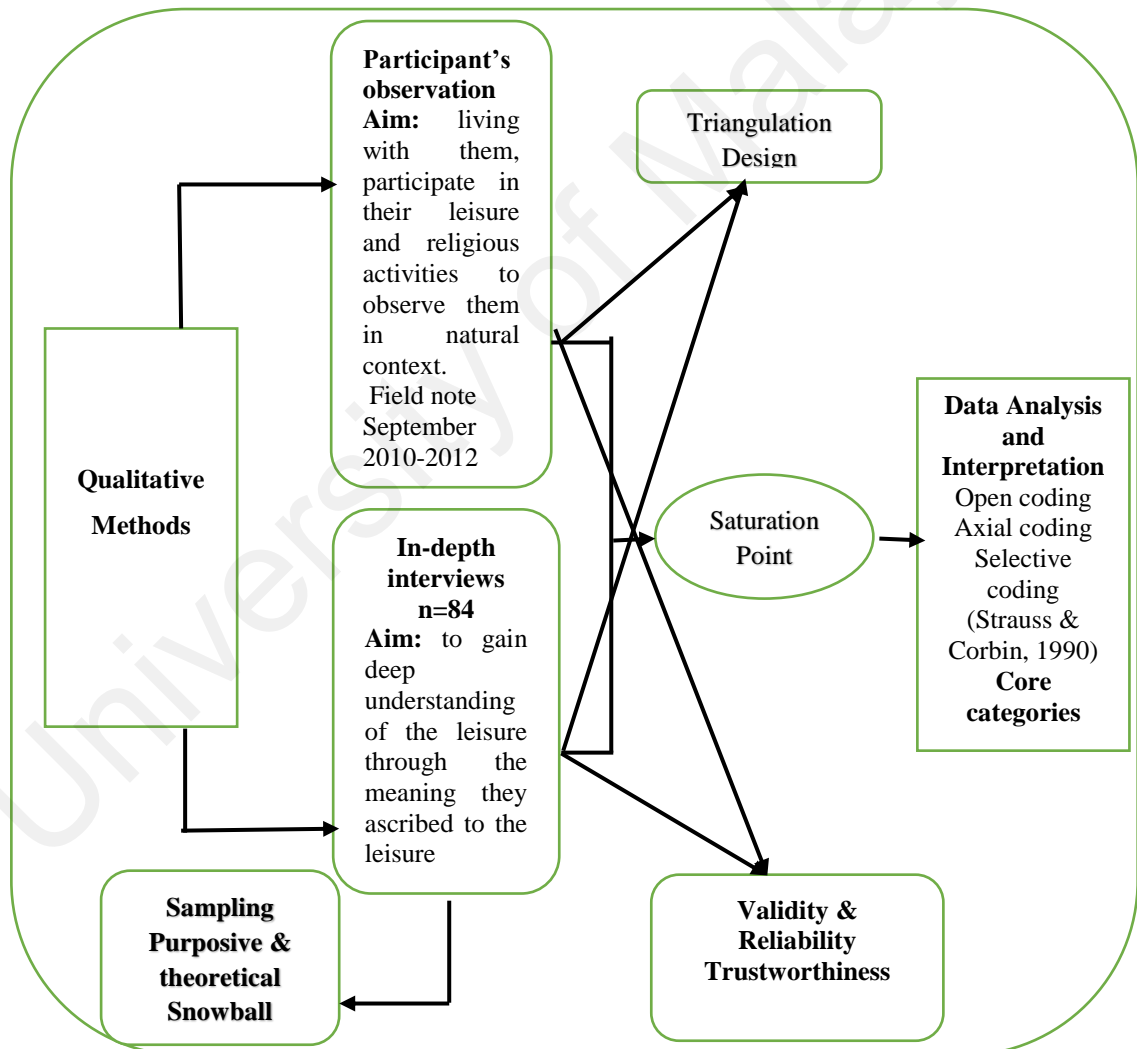


Figure 3.1: Research Methodology Flowchart

In addition, researcher benefited from the two years participant observation with informants, from September 2010 until September 2012. The data obtained from the study were reviewed and revised by three of the researchers' pioneer in conducting qualitative studies. One of them was PhD candidate, and the rest of them were specialist in qualitative research and worked as lectures in a university. They assured the reliability of the study under the condition of preserving the evidences throughout the research. The reliability of the study was also assured by the researcher's interest in the topic of the investigation, his long-term contact with the data and making effort to enquire for others' constructive ideas (Figure 3.1).

3.5. Study Area

Zoroastrians are one of the religious minorities in Iran and are sometimes called *Gabr* (Rose, 2010) (a derogatory term used by Muslims which means infidels), non-Muslims or Magus. According to the last census of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2013), their population was around 26,000, comprising about 0.3 percent of Iran's population. Although most of them reside in Tehran, the capital of Iran, some live in Kerman the history of which has been associated with Zoroastrianism (Boyce, 2001). In fact, after the Arab invasion of Iran, unlike other cities of Iran in which Zoroastrians were forced to either convert to Islam or leave Iran, Kerman's Zoroastrians were able to retain their traditions.

As Boyce (2001) wrote, after the invasion, the majority of Zoroastrians from Sistan- a province in the east of Iran- moved to the city of Kerman for safety. During the Afghan invasion of Iran at the end of *Safavid* year 1719 EC, most poor Zoroastrians who lived outside Kerman's castle due to segregation from the Muslims, were slaughtered, although some escaped and were allowed to enter the city. They organized a small community in Kerman city known by the Muslims as *Gabr Mahalleh* (Rose,

2010). From that time continuing to the present, Zoroastrians have resided in this area although some have moved to other areas within Kerman or abroad. Kerman's Gabr-Mahalla in its current locality became home to the surviving Zoroastrians of Kerman some two centuries ago (Soroushian, 1992). In time it became very self-sufficient with complete set of schools for boys and girls (Kerman's first high-schools), a kindergarten, Fire temple and other Zoroastrian religious centers, a sports facility, community halls, Medical clinic, a hostel all provided through private donation of the residents of the Gabr-Mahalla whose pride of ownership made it a model neighborhood in the city (English, 2003).

A unique feature of the Gabr-Mahalla was the fortress like walls of each home, and the crooked and narrow alleys snaking through much of the neighborhood, all designed to provide maximum protection to its inhabitant. The tall walls would have made it difficult for the ruffians and Moslem Zealots to scale and cause harm to the vulnerable Zoroastrians who had no protection under the Qajars. The narrow alleys served to make it difficult for the herds from rushing the houses (Soroushian, 1992). Each house was built with condensed living quarters, basements and secret places to store preserve, able food items for the times of duress and during the winter months. There were also secret passages between homes including joint roofs, through water canals to be used as a last resort if a house fell to the ruffians and the inhabitants had to run for their lives. Most houses had their own water well, and a courtyard with trees, mostly fruit trees, but often a Cypress (evergreen) tree (English, 2003). Since almost all Zoroastrians in the city of Kerman live in the Gabr-Mahalla, so this area has been chosen as a study area. This Zone has been highlighted in the map (Figure 3.2).

The Zoroastrians' language is *Dari* – also known as *Gabri* and Behdini (Farudi & Doustdar Toosarvandani, 2004; Farudi & Doustdar Toosarvandani, 2005) which is

Iran's experts were Zoroastrians, their per capita income was higher than that for the rest of

the Iranian population (Foltz 2011).

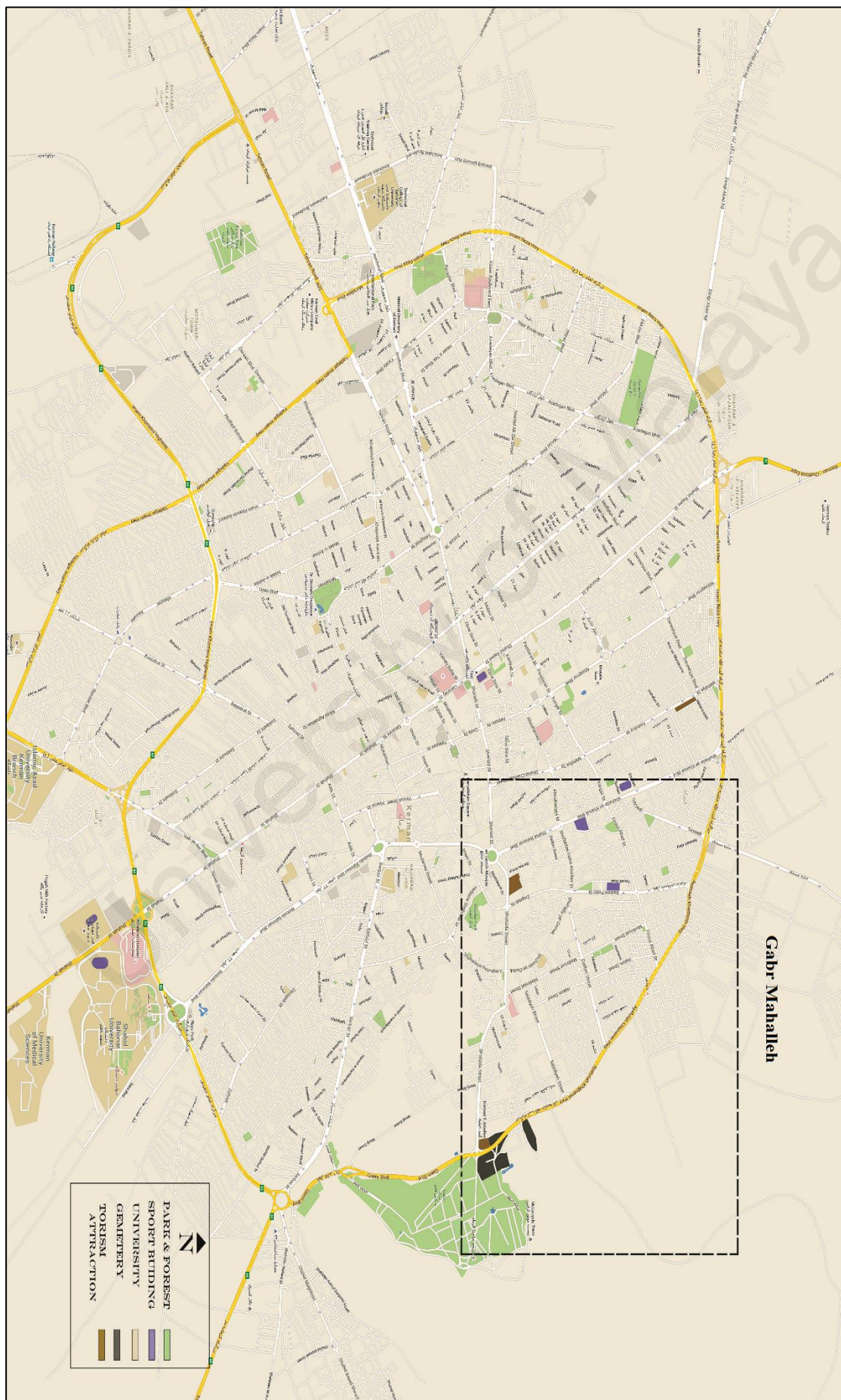


Figure 3.3: Study Area in Kerman
Source: Kerman Governor (2015).

Kerman is the capital city of

Kerman province, Iran (Figure 3.3). At the 2013 Statistical census, its population was 900,000. It is the largest and most developed city in Kerman Province and the most important city in the southeast of Iran. It is also one of the largest cities of Iran in terms of area. Kerman is famous for its long history and strong cultural heritage. It is located on a large, flat plain, 1063 km south of Tehran, the capital of Iran. (Kerman Governor, 2009). The area of the city is around 185 km².

3.6. Summary

In this chapter research methodology of the research has been explained. Qualitative research methods has been conducted as a research methods. In order to obtain robust data, in-depth interview, participant observations, and ethnographic photographic were conducted. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were adopted to select the informants of the study who were 60 year old and above. The criteria for selecting them were: 1) being 60 years of age and above, 2) having personal interest to take part in the study, 3) having ability to express the experiences. Depending on the informants' scope of the experiences and understating, the process of sampling continued till no new data turned up during data collection process (data saturation).

The data were collected from 84 in-depth interview. In-depth interviews were carried out with 44 female and 40 male informants in the women's organization of the Zoroastrians' association, in various commissions of Zoroastrian association and in the community centre in Zoroastrian areas and parks where the elderly Zoroastrians used to spend their outdoor leisure. The researcher interviewed members of the hierarchy, including the laypersons, acolytes, and priests or *mubeds*. All the in-depth interviews have been carried by the researcher over a two-year period from September 2010 till September 2012. All the interviews were read line by line, reviewed frequently and finally coded. Data management and analysis was comprised of three phases. In the first

phase, the researcher performed the open coding which included the key words and root concepts indicated in the data. The second phase or axial coding included the analysis of the categories and themes and comparing them with each other, as well controlling them against the data. The second phase or axial coding included the analysis of the categories and themes and comparing them with each other, as well controlling them against the data.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 4: ZOROASTRIANS: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter the historical background of the Zoroastrians will be explained. For this purpose, firstly the history of Zoroastrians including the early Zoroastrianism, the live of Zoroastrians under the dynasties in Iran such as Achamenids, Alexander, and Sassanian, and the history of their holy books will be explained. Then, weekly, monthly, seasonal, and annual's ceremonies, feasts, and festivals of the Zoroastrians will be explained.

4.2. Zoroastrianism: History

Zoroastrianism began and flourished on the Iranian Plain in the land that became Persia, one of the great civilizations of the ancient world. However the history of Zoroastrianism goes back much further than the Persian Empire. As Grenet (2015) stated:

The late Gherardo Gnoli, argued for Zarathustra's date being c. 620–c. 550 BCE as given by the Zoroastrian tradition and also reflected in Greek, Hebrew, Manichean, and Islamic sources (Grenet, 2015, p. 22).

Probably more than a thousand years passed between the time when Zarathustra lived and the time when any history of the land and its peoples began to be written down. Even then written history came not from the Persians, who left few written records of their own, but from the Greeks and other outside sources. Most of what is known today about the Persians and their time comes from Greek writings, from archaeological and language studies, and from the Avesta, the Zoroastrian holy book, which preserved oral history and legends (Nigosian, 1993).

4.2.1. Aryan Migration

Scholars believe that the people who settled the Iranian Plain migrated there between 2000 and 1500 BCE from what is now southern Russia. The migrants formed tribes. Mixing with the people who were already living in the areas they settled, and widely separated from other migrant groups, they developed distinct dialects, or variations of languages. The two largest tribes were the Medes in the land called Media to the north, and the Persians in the south, but there were also others. Each was made up of smaller subgroups. Many, including the group into which Zarathustra was born, apparently lived peacefully, farming and herding cattle and other livestock, the mainstay of their existence (Nigosian, 1993).

The migrants brought their rituals and beliefs with them from a still older time. The early Iranians practiced an ancient polytheistic religion about which little is known. However its rituals included animal sacrifice and the use of intoxicating drugs to appease angry gods. Some of these rituals also served as a way to prepare young men for battle by rousing them into a state of frenzy. These young men formed warrior societies that crossed and recrossed the plains on horseback, raiding and plundering, stealing cattle and laying waste to farmland. So although many tribes lived peacefully, the times were scarred by violence and cruelty (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015).

4.2.2. Early Zoroastrianism

The prophet Zarathustra came as a reformer to change the practices of the ancient Iranian religion. He preached against the excesses of ritual that led to drunken raiding and the senseless slaughter of cattle. His message was that people should focus their thoughts on one wise and good God, Ahura Mazda. Eventually Zoroastrianism took root in the kingdom of Bactria ruled by Kai Vishtaspa (Stausberg, 2015).

Vishtaspa was one of the rulers of the legendary Kayanian dynasty that ruled in Iran in prehistory. Little is known about him except that he adopted the new religion preached by Zarathustra and that he was willing to defend his belief by fighting for it. Vishtaspa's support enabled Zoroastrianism to grow. After Zarathustra's death the leadership of the new religion passed to Zarathustra's son-in-law, Jamaspa, an official of Vishtaspa's court. Gradually the religion moved outward from Vishtaspa's kingdom into other parts of Persia. For a thousand years after Zarathustra's lifetime Zoroastrianism continued to spread across the Iranian Plain (Lyer, 2009).

4.2.3. Cyrus the Great and Achaemenid Empire

In 575 BCE. A Persian royal child, Cyrus, was born (in what is modern-day Iran). Young Cyrus showed an early talent for leadership. In 559 he ascended to the Persian throne. A powerful Median kingdom had ruled the Persians for more than a century, but its influence was waning. The Median ruler challenged the young Persian king to battle in 549 and Cyrus defeated him. Cyrus took control of Media (Lyer, 2009). Eventually his armies conquered the lands from Babylonia to the south and up into central Asia to the north. His defeat of Babylon freed the Jews, in bondage there to the Babylonian king. Cyrus was widely revered by the Jewish people for his wisdom and generosity. Zoroastrianism is widely believed to have mingled with Judaism at this time, influencing the Jewish religion. This was the era of the great Hebrew prophet Isaiah, who preached of a saviour yet to be born into the world, an idea that previously had been Zoroastrian alone (Boyce, 2001). As Jong (2015) stated:

The dominant political system of pre-Islamic Iran was that of the monarchy. Iranian history before the Arab conquests in the 7th century CE is a history of four empires, of different geographical extent and of different duration: the Achaemenid (550–330 BCE), the Seleucid (323–129 BCE), the Parthian (247 BCE–224 CE), and the

Sasanian (224–651 CE). Three of these were “Iranian” empires, in the sense that their kings were drawn from Iranian families; the Seleucids were the only exception to this rule, for they were of Macedonian stock (Jong, 2015, p. 85).

4.2.4. The Achaemenids

The imperial line Cyrus began is called the Achaemenid Empire, after his ancestor Achaemenes. After Cyrus’s death in 529 BCE. a century of fighting and warfare under a succession of Achaemenid rulers expanded Persian rule still further, from the Mediterranean Sea and into Africa on the west and to the Indus River on the east (Boyce, 2001).

4.2.5. Darius and the Rule of Law

In 522 BCE. Darius I became emperor. Darius continued to emphasize military power and gained an international reputation for his rule of law. He also constructed roads and established a money system of gold coins. He built two palaces, both in ancient cities of southwest Iran. He built his winter palace at Susa and his summer palace at Persepolis, famous for its architecture and lavish beauty (Lyer, 2009). As Jong (2015) stated:

For the period of his reign, we also possess a huge amount of documentary texts in elamite and it has been difficult to square the explicit proclamations of the greatness of Ahuramazdā (and Ahuramazdā alone, with “the other gods” mentioned only as a group) in Darius’ inscriptions, with the evidence for the worship of a multitude of gods, of various ethnic backgrounds, in the elamite tablets (Jong, 2015, P. 89).

Originally all Zoroastrian worship had been held outdoors around open fire. As foreign influences entered the Iranian Plain, however, probably in the fifth century BCE

people had begun to construct buildings so that they could hold their rituals in private (Jong, 2015).

4.2.6. Persia under Alexander

After 200 years on the throne the Achaemenids were no longer as powerful as they had been. In Greece the king Alexander (356-323 BCE.) saw a chance to extend his empire by overcoming Persia. He attacked with a huge army and finally defeated the Persians under Darius III in 330 BCE. Alexander was ruthless in victory. He looted and burned the palace at Persepolis, stripping gold off the walls to finance his march across Persia (Lyer, 2009; Nigosian, 1993). Jong (2015) stated that:

Religion played no role in the conquests of Alexander, just as it had served no agenda in the conquests of the Achaemenids themselves. This fact creates some problems for the interpretation of the hostile image of Alexander that has been preserved in Zoroastrian writings (Jong, 2015, p. 93).

4.2.7. After Alexander: The Seleucids

After Alexander's death in 323 BCE his empire was divided. In 320 BCE Persia was handed over to Seleucus I. The Seleucids put up temples to their own Greek gods and tried to encourage Greek culture in Persia but their attempts were mostly unsuccessful. The Persians were fiercely proud and their hatred of the Greeks ran deep. In name the Greeks ruled Persia, but in practice people regathered in tribes, and many small kingdoms emerged. The Greek religion never replaced Zoroastrianism, which seemed, if anything, to grow stronger (Jong, 2015).

Preoccupied with wars in Egypt and other parts of the Middle Eastern world, the Seleucids gradually lost control of the vast Iranian land. By 250 BCE their influence

was failing. The Parthians, an Iranian tribe to the north near the Caspian Sea, declared themselves a separate state. They raised an army and defended themselves successfully against Seleucid attempts to subdue them (Lyer, 2009).

4.2.8. The Sassanians

As the Parthians declined another Persian empire was on the rise. This one was ruled by Ardashir, the grandson of the Persian noble Sassan. Ardashir also claimed to be descended from the Achaemenids. He defeated the last of the Parthian kings in 224 CE and 49 consolidated his power over what had been their territory. Once he had brought all the Iranian kings and sub-kings under his control, Ardashir took on Rome. Shapur I, Ardashir's son, continued his work, defeating the Roman emperor Valerian in 259 (Lyer, 2009). Jong (2015) stated that:

Religion played an important part in this campaign: Ardasir's coins were wholly new (and of staggering quality compared to late Parthian coinage) and presented the king as "the Mazda-worshipping lord" on the obverse, while representing his regnal fire (identified as such: "Fire of Ardasir") on the reverse (Jong, 2015, p. 96).

In matters of religion in general and Zoroastrianism in particular, the Sassanians thought the Parthians had been too liberal. To discourage the bubbling mix of religions on their soil, they made Zoroastrianism the official state religion. Then they set about standardizing it. Under the Parthians followers of different priestly traditions had developed varying forms of ritual and belief. The Sassanians decided that there should be only one. They created a national priesthood to examine the materials the Parthians had collected and to do away with any ritual forms they felt were not pure (Nigosian, 1993). Through this priestly editing a standardized form of Zoroastrianism appeared. Some variety and vigour were necessarily lost, and the religion became more concerned

with ritual than it had previously been, but now it was clear what was and was not Zoroastrian (Boyce, 2001).

4.2.9. Zoroastrianism in the Later Sassanian Period

As the official state religion Zoroastrianism occupied a special place in Sassanian Persia. However by now Zoroastrianism had to compete with other religions that had made their way into Persia. Although these faiths were officially banned, the rigid, state-sponsored form of Zoroastrianism caused some people to turn to other beliefs. A new prophet, a young man named Mani (216-276), caught the ear of one of the Sassanian rulers. Mani's religion, called Manichaeism, was a blend of Zoroastrian, Christian, Buddhist, and Gnostic beliefs (Gnosticism was an offshoot of early Christianity). When the next ruler came into power, though, Mani fell into disfavour. He was imprisoned and later put to death. Without its leader Manichaeism's influence faded. In the fifth century, another sect, with communistic overtones, arose under a religious leader named Mazdak, but this too was put down. Although Christianity continued to spread in the west, Zoroastrianism in its Sassanian form remained the religion of the Persian people and their kings (Hartz, 2009).

In 637 CE the Arabs attacked Persia and overwhelmed the Sassanian army. Sassanian kings remained on the throne until 651. The last of the Sassanian rulers, a young king named Yazdegerd III, had taken over an empire in turmoil in 632. Ten rulers had preceded him in the previous five years, as the Arab threat grew. Yazdegerd tried to fight but as Arab victories multiplied, his situation became increasingly hopeless. He turned for help to the governor of Merv, a city in southern Turkmenistan, but the governor betrayed him to the Arab forces. He was tracked down and murdered at

the age of 34 in 651. The 400-year reign of the Sassanians came to an end. Muslim rulers took over Persia (Lyer, 2009).

4.2.10. Zoroastrianism under Muslim Rule

Islam swept the country along with the Muslim rulers. Many people converted voluntarily, recognizing in Islam familiar concepts of Zoroastrianism such as heaven and hell, a final judgment, and prayer at regular intervals five times a day. However stories remain of Zoroastrians being forced to convert at sword point. Until the ninth century, however, Zoroastrianism was still the majority religion (Khanbaghi, 2006). Scholarly Zoroastrian priests continued to write commentaries on the Avesta in Pahlavi (the Middle Persian language spoken by the Sassanians) adding to Zoroastrian knowledge. However Islam was firmly established. Ruling powers used a combination of persuasion, economic pressure, and force to convert everybody to Islam. By the late ninth century the Zoroastrian faithful were finding life increasingly hard (Lyer, 2009).

In the 13th century Zoroastrians who remained faithful fled their homes to the cities of Yazd in central Iran and Kerman in southeast Iran, where they practiced their religion in secret. For a time the Muslims left them alone and they were able to live as craftspeople and farmers (Daryaei, 2015). However as Hartz (2009) stated:

In the 16th century another wave of forced conversion took place. Zoroastrians moved to Isfahan, another city in central Iran, where they worked as laborers. In the early 17th century there was an Afghani invasion, followed not long after by an invasion when the Qajar dynasty seized power. In these two periods of warfare more than 100,000 Zoroastrians were killed (Hartz, 2009, p. 52).

4.2.11. Zoroastrianism Fortunes in the Nineteenth Century

By the 19th century the plight of the Zoroastrians in Iran was dire indeed. Only about 12,000 were left. Although classified as an official minority, they were persecuted. Muslim rulers levied a heavy tax called *jizya* on all non-Muslims. This tax effectively impoverished the Zoroastrian community. Iranian law heaped indignities on the vanishing population (Foltz, 2011).

Zoroastrians were not allowed to travel and were forced to wear clothing made of undyed cloth. Laws banned them from touching food in the markets. They were forbidden to ride horses, and if they had the misfortune to be riding a donkey when a Muslim came by they had to get down and walk. Zoroastrian men were barred from wearing turbans, which made them instantly recognizable as *gabars* or “infidels”-nonbelievers and subject to harassment and humiliation. Zoroastrians had no legal standing: A Muslim who killed a Zoroastrian faced no penalty. Yet in spite of overwhelming hardship Zoroastrians persisted in their religion. Despite Iranian society’s efforts to wipe it out, Iranian Zoroastrianism continued (Lyer, 2009).

Meanwhile in India the Parsi community of Zoroastrians who had relocated in India, was flourishing. In 1882 the Parsis sent an influential Parsi named Manekji Hatara to Iran to lobby the Qajar rulers on behalf of the Iranian Zoroastrians. Hatara’s mission was at least partly successful. The repressive *jizya* was lifted and poverty eased. Soon after, education and better medical care became available. By the early 1900s Zoroastrians had begun to open businesses and improve their position in Iranian life. It took less than half a century for them to reverse hundreds of years of repression and become active in banking, education, engineering, and the professions (Foltz, 2011).

4.2.12. Modern Iran

Meanwhile, in Iran at large corruption and weak government led to continual unrest. A series of uprisings caused the old Qajar dynasty to collapse in 1925. World War I (1914-18) only added to the confusion as power swung back and forth (Khanbaghi, 2006).

In 1925 a new dynasty headed by Reza Shah Pahlavi took control. Reza Shah was a strong leader who consolidated political power and brought about reforms. In the long run,

“the uniform national nature of these civil codes ... brought greater physical safety, increased access to education, enhanced opportunities for employment, and provided freedom of expression of religious and cultural practices for Zoroastrians” (Choksy 2006a: 154).

His policies were largely continued by his son, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, who followed him on the Peacock Throne—the name of the Persian throne since the 18th century—in 1941 (Foltz, 2011).

Under the Pahlavi reign the fortunes of the Zoroastrians continued to improve. The shahs (rulers of Iran) moved to control Muslim religious influences and pointed to the small but durable band of Zoroastrians still surviving in Iran as the “true Persians.” With the new pride in Zoroastrianism people whose families had been Muslim for centuries returned to the Zoroastrianism of their ancestors (Stausberg, 2015).

Pahlavi rule, however, had its own problems. As troubles multiplied, the Shah’s policies became harsher and the people more restless. In 1979 many opponents of the Shah united under the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a Muslim religious leader. He and his followers declared Iran to be an Islamic republic and established a new government based on the teachings of Islam (Foltz, 2011).

With the return of a Muslim-ruled government many restrictions were placed on people’s personal freedoms. This was especially the case for many Zoroastrians who

had enjoyed improved status under the shah. The crackdown caused many of them to leave Iran. Citing the threat of religious persecution, they migrated to Britain, Australia, Canada, and the United States, among other countries. The Islamic Republic officially maintains Zoroastrianism as a “protected minority” in Iran and the persecution that the Zoroastrian community feared has not happened. Zoroastrians may not work for the government, for example, but they are respected in other areas of Iranian life. An unknown number of Iranian Muslims each year “revert” to Zoroastrianism. Although this is officially illegal there seem to have been no problems. Nevertheless, in a country overwhelmingly Muslim, educational and professional opportunities for Zoroastrians are somewhat limited and the threat of persecution remains (Boyce, 2001).

4.3. Zoroastrianism: Rituals

Zoroastrianism is the religion started in Iran by Prophet Zoroaster in approximately 6000 BC (Hollins, 2006). It is therefore, one of the earliest of the prophetic religions (Hinnells, 2011). At that time, the prophet Zarathustra, began preaching his message. Zarathustra, thought to be a priest of the existing Iranian religion of his time, was a highly original thinker and a bold reformer. His teachings may seem straightforward today, but in his time they were truly revolutionary (Boyce, 2001). For over a thousand years, from the founding of the Persian Empire in the sixth century BCE until the rise of Islam in the seventh century CE, Zoroastrianism was the official religion of the world’s largest empires of those eras. When Islam conquered Iran, the Zoroastrians were increasingly oppressed and forced to retreat into the secure obscurity of remote desert settlement, mainly near Yazd and Kerman, where a few thousand survive to the present day (Boyce, 2001). During the regime of the last Shah, many Zoroastrians flourished, but with the founding of the Islamic Republic in 1979, a number migrated to the west, mainly to California and British Colombia and some to Europe (Hinnells, 2011).

Zoroaster proclaimed the worship of Ahura Mazda (Nigosian, 1993), who is believed to have created a good world consisting of seven elements of creation, namely the sky, waters, earth, plants, cattle, humans, and fire (Hollins, 2009). Zarathustra rejected many of the beliefs and practices of the existing religion. In a time of many gods he preached about one great and supreme God, Ahura Mazda. In a time when most people believed that worship consisted mainly of elaborate rituals to satisfy angry deities, he preached a religion of personal ethics in which people's actions in life were more important than ritual and sacrifice. Zarathustra's preaching formed the basis of one of the most influential and long-lasting religions the world has ever known. His message is preserved in the Avesta, the Zoroastrian scripture (Boyce, 2001).

4.3.1. The Basic Principles of Zoroastrianism

Zarathustra revealed his vision of the good religion in a series of psalms, or *Gathas*. The Gathas are personal expressions of Zarathustra's belief in the supreme God Ahura Mazda and conversations with him (Schwartz, 2015). There are many other scriptures such as the Yasna, the liturgy of sacrifice; the *Visperad*, a minor liturgical text that contains praises to Zoroaster and other spiritual leaders, the *Videvdad*, (also called the *Videvdat*), which contains the Zoroastrian creation story as well as the framework of Zoroastrian law; the *Yashts* or hymns to angels and heroes; and the *Khurda* (or *Khorda*) *Avesta* ("Little Avesta") which is essentially the Zoroastrian's book of common prayer (Lyer, 2009). The bulk of the Zoroastrian beliefs and rituals are based on these and the Gathas. There are three basic principles of Zoroastrianism (Rose, 2011). They are:

One God-Zarathustra preached the existence of one supreme God, whose name, Ahura Mazda, means "Wise Lord." Ahura Mazda is the creator of the universe and all things in it, including humankind. Zarathustra taught that Ahura Mazda is all-good and

all-wise. He is the father of truth and goodness. He brings love and happiness and is to be loved and respected, never feared (Rose, 2011).

The T Win Spirits: Truth and the Lie-According to Zoroastrian belief Ahura Mazda first created consciousness and a knowledge of perfect good, which is the spirit of Truth, or Spenta Mainyu. He then created the material world (Lyer, 2009).

According to Zoroastrian cosmogony good and evil spirits have been in existence since the very beginning of created time, even before the creation of the spiritual and material worlds. Zarathustra called the Spirit of Evil “The Lie,” which later came to be called Angra Mainyu or Ahriman. The struggle between the Spirit of Truth and The Lie, which never agree, governs all human thought and activity (Nigosiaan, 1993).

Free Will-Ahura Mazda does not command every aspect of human life. At the time of creation he gave humanity the gift of free will. As Zoroastrians, men and women must think and reason for themselves. They have the freedom to choose good over evil. Free will and intellect give them the choice to do the will of Ahura Mazda—to live according to the Spirit of Truth (Lyer, 2009).

4.3.2. The Creed of Zoroastrianism

The goal of those who follow Zoroastrian Din-the Zoroastrian religion-is to live the truth according to the principles of Ahura Mazda (Nigosian, 1993). Religion, Zarathustra taught, was within the individual. Each person is called upon to live according to a simple creed:

- Good Thoughts-Humata
- Good Words-Hukhta
- Good Deeds-Huvarshta (Hollins, 2009).

Zoroastrianism is a happy and optimistic religion. Pessimism and despair are considered sins—they represent giving in to evil. Zoroastrians are taught to love life and

to enjoy life's pleasures. They are encouraged to work hard, to strive for excellence, to marry and raise families, and to be active members of the community. Enjoying festivals and social life is part of their philosophy (Rose, 2015), as is the duty to support one another in times of trouble. Zoroastrians believe that when they fight society's ills, such as sickness, poverty, and ignorance, they are working together with Ahura Mazda toward creating a perfect world. They do not practice self-denial and asceticism-that is, suffering for the sake of religious purity (Williams, 2015). In Zoroastrianism to withdraw from the world is considered sinful. Instead Zoroastrians live fully in the world, enjoying all the good things in their earthly life (Lyer, 2009).

4.3.3. The Amesha Spentas

In the battle between the Spirit of Truth and The Lie, Ahura Mazda is assisted by the Amesha Spentas, or Benevolent Spirits, which are aspects of his own power (Nigosian, 1993). The Amesha Spentas are sometimes represented as angelic beings, but in the spiritual sense they are sparks of the divine that every person may cultivate within himself or herself. Zoroastrians believe the highest ideal for humankind is to live these ideals (Rose, 2011).

Ahura Mazda is all-powerful, but he does not control human actions. When he gave people free will he made them responsible for their own lives and behaviour. To take away free will after once giving it would be wrong. Free will and intellect offer humans the choice to do the will of Ahura Mazda-to live according to the Spirit of Truth (Lyer, 2009).

4.3.4. The Fravashis

To help people choose the truth, each person is born with a *fravashi*, a guardian spirit that helps him or her tell well from evil, right from wrong (Nigosian, 1993).

People may recognize their own *fravashi* when it guides their conscience. It is more than conscience, however, because a conscience must be developed as a person grows. The *fravashi* is different because it is inborn. *Fravashis* are spiritual beings that existed before the physical world was created (Lyer, 2009). They are born into this world with each new life and remain with an individual until death (Nigosian, 1993). Then they leave to return to the company of other *fravashis*, remaining, however, a link between the living and the dead. They may be ritually called upon to communicate with the soul of the dead person. The *fravashi* is the spark of the divine essence of Ahura Mazda that is in all living things (Rose, 2011).

4.3.5. The Restoration of the World

Zoroastrians believe that the battle between Ahura Mazda, the perfect good, and Angra Mainyu, the evil spirit, will continue to rage unabated for several thousands of years hence. At the end of this period a savior, or *sashoyant*, will lead people successfully and definitively against the forces of evil and ignorance. There will be a mighty battle between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu (Nigosian, 1993). The world will be overcome and destroyed by fire. Molten metal will cover the earth like water. The righteous will wade through but the unrighteous will be consumed by it. Evil, sin, and death will be defeated. The world will be purified and perfected (Lyer, 2009).

In the renewal of the world all the dead will rise. The gates of hell will open and those souls too will rise, purified and redeemed. People will live together in harmony in the perfect world of Ahura Mazda for all eternity. This time it is called *frashogard*, or *frashokereti*, which means renewal (Nigosian, 1993).

All Zoroastrians have a duty to fight constantly against the weaknesses within the human heart and the worldly temptations that form The Lie. The forces of good, which Ahura Mazda leads, are engaged in a continual struggle with the forces of evil. In

choosing good Zoroastrians join with Ahura Mazda to help bring about a perfect world (Rose, 2011).

4.3.6. The Importance of Doing Good

Zarathustra urged his followers to care for and defend the poor. Since the very beginning of the religion service to others has been a principle of Zoroastrianism. Every Zoroastrian is expected to share happiness, which means sharing wealth, time, and talents freely and generously. For Zoroastrians it is not enough just to think good thoughts and speak good words-one must actively work to combat evil and ignorance. In everything they do they are asked to consider not only their own welfare, but the welfare of the community. This is the spirit of Armaity, which encourages people to reach out to others in goodness and charity (Lyer, 2009).

Zoroastrians are known for supporting each other in spiritual and practical ways. However they also contribute to worthy causes outside the Zoroastrian community. In India, where Zoroastrians have had a long presence, many schools, hospitals, and other worthwhile projects for use by people of whatever religion or background were founded with Zoroastrian time, energy, and financial assistance. In actively serving their communities Zoroastrians are following their Prophet and living their religion (Rose, 2011).

4.3.7. Zoroastrians' Worship

Zoroastrianism is not a congregational religion. It has rich and meaningful rituals (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015) which priests perform on a regular daily basis in their largest and most sacred places of worship, but laypeople are not expected to attend. Zoroastrians gather mainly for the New Year, or Nowruz, festival and the six major festivals, or *Gahanbars*, which occur throughout the year (Rose, 2015). On these

occasions they get together for prayers followed by a shared meal and cultural activities such as singing and dancing (Lyer, 2009).

4.3.8. The Sacred Fire

For Zoroastrians fire is the sacred symbol of Ahura Mazda. It captures the brilliance of the sun and the heavenly bodies, and it speaks of the power, might, and energy of the Spirit of Truth. In its purest form it represents the highest truth. Priests conduct all religious rituals and ceremonies in the presence of fire, which signifies the presence of Ahura Mazda (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). The most sacred fires of Zoroastrianism are consecrated fires, which contain fire from 16 different sources ritually combined in a long series of purification rites. One part of a consecrated fire is fire caused by lightning, since it comes directly from Ahura Mazda (Rose, 2011).

It is important to remember, however, that Zoroastrians do not worship fire. The sacred fire is not an object of worship in itself but a symbol and reminder of Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord and great God (Lyer, 2009).

4.3.9. The Sacred Places: Fire Temple

Inside the fire temple is an entrance hall with a source of water so that people may bathe the exposed parts of their bodies before prayer. Like fire, water is a sacred creation of Ahura Mazda, and people offer prayers before it as well. At the center of the building is the “fire room.” This room contains the *afargan*, a large urn that holds the fire. The fire is kept burning day and night. It is tended regularly by priests in a ceremony known as *boi*. The fire room has no decorations. There are no statues and no pictures on the wall-nothing to detract from the beauty and power of the fire (Nigosian, 1993).

In the rest of the fire temple are meeting rooms, lecture halls, and a library. These rooms, which have no sacred significance, may have portraits or plaques commemorating donors and paintings that represent the prophet Zarathustra. The entrances to the building are often decorated with flowers and beadwork, signifying that the building is a place of tranquillity, purity, and happiness (Williams, 2015).

Atash behram: In an *atash behram* only fully initiated priests may enter the fire room. Properly initiated and ritually pure Zoroastrian worshippers may, if they wish, observe the rites through iron bars or grillwork that separate them from the sacred fire (Nigosian, 1993).

Atash adaran: An *Atash adaran* also houses consecrated fire. It differs from an *atash behram* in the number of rituals performed in establishing the temple and the number and type of ceremonies a priest must perform before entering the fire room (Lyer, 2009).

Atash dadga: The fire in an *atash dadga* is similar to a household fire. Although still worthy of reverence, it is not specially consecrated. In India this grade of temple is known as an *agiary*. In North America it is called a *darbe mehr* or *dar-e meher*. No high rituals are held there and there may be no full-time priest (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). If the fire is kept burning at all times it may be fed by a layperson who has bathed and put on clean clothes. Special ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, and initiations are performed by priests who come for the occasion. These too are always performed in the presence of fire (Rose, 2011).

4.3.10. Zoroastrianism and Other Religion

Zoroastrianism has much in common with other world religions, several of which it influenced. Like religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam it is monotheistic—that is, its followers believe in one supreme God. They believe in life after death and in heaven and hell. Zoroastrianism also has a strong code of ethics that its believers are expected to follow in their daily lives. Like Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism it had a specific founder who came to reform older religious practices. However it differs from other religions in significant ways. Unlike Islam it is not fatalistic. The evil in the world is not the will of God but exists because of flaws in the material world and within the human heart. Zoroastrians control their destiny after death by their actions on earth, their choice of good and truth over ignorance and evil (Khanbaghi, 2006).

Like Christians and Jews, Zoroastrians believe that a saviour will come at the end of time to lead the faithful into a perfected world. However Zoroastrianism differs from Christianity, whose believers are saved by faith in Jesus Christ and by God's grace rather than by their good works. Also, Zoroastrians do not believe in original sin. People are born pure but may be influenced by the evil around them. For Zoroastrians it is a lifetime of following the teachings of Zarathustra that brings about salvation, not faith alone. Zoroastrianism also differs from Hinduism in that there is no belief in reincarnation and no transmigration of the soul. People live on this earth but once and have only one chance to find their way to eternal peace (Writer, 1994).

4.3.11. Importance of Zoroastrianism

Zoroastrianism holds a unique place in the history of religion. Its founder and prophet, Zarathustra, originated the concept of one great and supreme God. He proposed an explanation for the problem of evil in a world created by a good God through the notion of the twin mentalities, the Spirit of Truth and The Lie, which are present in the human heart, and through the imperfection in the material world. Zoroastrianism thus

answers the question with which all religions must struggle: “How can a good and loving God permit evil and suffering in the world?” Zoroastrians believe that evil and suffering are the work of the Lie, Angra Mainyu, and not of Ahura Mazda, who battles evil and sin and will eventually defeat it (Nigosian, 1993).

4.3.12. Afterlife and Final Judgment

Zarathustra also introduced the concept of an afterlife in which people would be welcomed into the glory of Ahura Mazda or dropped into the pit-representing hell-as a result of their actions on earth. In Angra Mainyu, Zoroastrianism gave the world the concept of Satan, the tempter and ruler of the underworld (Nigosian, 1993).

Zarathustra spoke of a saviour who would come to lead the righteous at the end of the world, and of a final judgment in which the existing world would be destroyed and a new, perfect world would come into being. He offered humankind free will with which to choose good over evil in order to perfect the world in a joint venture with Ahura Mazda. He changed the ancient Iranian polytheistic (the belief in more than one god) notion of religion as a way of attempting to calm angry gods to one of ethical actions on the part of humans. In the ancient Iranian society where women had lesser roles to play, he declared that they were religiously equal to men and also capable of salvation (Nigosian, 1993).

4.3.13. Influence of Zoroastrianism

Zoroastrianism is believed to have influenced other world religions with which it came into contact. Some see Cyrus, the great king of Persia who liberated the Jews in 537 BCE. from their captivity in the ancient city of Babylon (near present-day Baghdad, Iraq), as one who brought the Zoroastrian monotheistic view of God to the Hebrew people and through them to Christianity. Zoroastrian teachings such as heaven and hell

and final judgment also are viewed as having entered Islam when Muslim rulers took over Persia in the seventh century CE. (Khanbaghi, 2006).

Most of all Zoroastrianism has proved to be a durable and lasting faith. Its followers, although few in number, are the proud keepers of a heritage that goes back thousands of years (Nigosian, 1993).

4.4. Zoroastrianism: Ceremonies and Festivals

Zoroastrians do not gather weekly for regular worship services. Instead they recite the basic daily prayers five times daily, either alone, in informal groups, or as a family. They do, however, have holidays or festivals during which they join together for worship and celebration (Lyer, 2009).

There are seven great Zoroastrian festivals each year (Rose, 2015, p. 379). Ancient in origin, they are linked to the Iranian agricultural year and to the seven physical creations for which the Amesha Spentas are responsible. In the *atash behrams* priests recite the holy day's special liturgy (Nigosian, 1993). People participate in the *jashan*, or thanksgiving and memorial ceremony, and follow the special custom of the day, which may be merrymaking, putting on new clothes, or visiting the fire temple (Hollins, 2009).

The six Zoroastrian *gahambars* (festivals) are:

1. *Maidhyoizarem* (Midspring)
2. *Maidhyoishem* (Midsummer)
3. *Paitshahem* (Harvest)
4. *Ayathrem* (Bringing in Cattle)
5. *Maidhyairem* (Midwinter)
6. *Hamaspathmaedem Mukta*d (All Souls) (Rose, 2015, p. 380).

The seventh and highest festival is *Nowruz*, the New Year. The festival celebrates the creation of fire and the Beneficent Immortal Asha *Vahista*, or Highest Truth. It is thus the most sacred and joyous of all Zoroastrian holy days. It is held in the spring, just after the sixth *Gahanbar*, and so represents the renewal of life that spring symbolizes. It also represents the new order to come with *Frashogard*, world renewal. On *Nowruz* people exchange presents, put on new clothes, settle any outstanding arguments, and visit their fire temple to reaffirm their faith. Zoroastrians celebrate *Gahanbars* as part of their religious duty. They believe that such times of community joy and harmony provide a glimpse of the spiritual world (Boyce, 2005).

4.4.1. The Thanksgiving and Memorial Ceremony

Jashan is a ceremony for thanksgiving and memorializing. It is performed during the *Gahanbars* and *Nowruz* but it may be performed at any time that people want to express gratitude and happiness, as for a wedding, a *navjote* (Kreyenbroek & Munshi, 2001) a housewarming, or the dedication of a new fire temple. Individuals may also sponsor a *jashan* for a celebration or in memory of someone who has died (Rose, 2011).

One of the precious characteristics of Iranians' culture which has been preserved till now by Zoroastrians is to spend the life merrily and make wise use of personal and social belongings. By Investigating the ideology and philosophy of Zoroastrianism, it could be asserted that the most prominent and significant characteristic of Zoroastrian culture and religion is to be happy and to try for other's happiness. Zoroastrianism is the religion of happiness. According to Zarathustra's message, human being is born to be happy and God wants the spirits to be happy, therefore as God's messenger, Zarathustra too wants his followers to be happy and satisfied. For Zarathustra, man and woman should be constantly happy and satisfied. That is why his followers have chosen to live happily and reject any mournfulness or sadness. In addition, in Zarathustra's

ideology the best way to worship God is to make others happy and to serve people, because in the light of such sparks, human soul and body will be happy and strong getting more enthusiasm to work and try. This positive and constructive attitude towards life has resulted in the dynamicity and formation of diverse and cheerful festivals in Iranians' life history. The term "Jashn" is derived from the Avestan word "Yasna" and Pahlavi word "Yazshan" which means to worship and to give thanks to Ahura Mazdā. Therefore one of the ways to get closer to God, to worship God, and to pray is to hold feasts. Thus, our ancestors in ancient Iran used to pray and worship Ahura Mazdā at the opening of each ritual and then began to hold delightful and happy program on the occasion of each feast. Since far back in history, Zoroastrian Iranians have hold various festivals on diverse historical, religious and natural occasions. These festivals can be classified into the following groups: weekly festivals, monthly festivals, seasonal festivals (gahambar), annual festivals, religious festivals and feasts in shrines (Rose, 2015).

4.4.2. Weekly Festivals

In Zoroastrian calendar each day of the month is dedicated a name. the day names are: *Hormazd, Vohu Manah, Ardibehesht, Shehrevard, Aspandarmad, Khordad, Amرداد, Dae-Pa-Adar, Adar, Avan, Khorshed, Mohor, Tir, Gosh, Dae-Pa-Meher, Meher, Srosh, Rashne, Fravardin, Behram(Varharam), Ram, Govad, Dae-Pa-Din, Din, Ashishvagh, Ashtad, Asman, Zamyad, Mahraspand, and Anera* (Rose, 2015, p. 390).

Every 8th, 15th, 23rd and 30th day of the month is called *Ahura Mazdā* feast and *Seroz*. These days are called *Hormazd, Dae-Pa-Din, Dae-Pa-Meher, and Dae-Pa-Ada*.

In these days Zoroastrians try to meet their friends and relatives and have merry-makings in their visits (Boyce, 2005).

4.4.3. Monthly Festivals

Monthly festivals are another type of Iranian festivals. The wise ancestors of Iranians, have dedicated a name to each month of Iranian calendar: *Farvardin*, *Ardwahisht*, *Khordad*, *Tir*, *Amurdad*, *Shahrewar*, *Meher*, *Aban*, *Adur*, *Dae*, *Wahman*, and *Spendarmad*. As it was mentioned before each day of month was also given a name. The days on which day-name and month-name dedications intersect are festival days. These festivals are named by adding the suffix “*Gan*” to each day which happens to have the same name as that month (Rose, 2015, p. 390). For instance, the day Farvardin in the month of *Faravardin* was celebrated and this festival was known as *Farwardingan*. Thus, there are twelve monthly festivals: *Farwardingan*, *Ardwahishtgan*, *Khordadgan*, *Tirgan*, *Amurdadgan*, *Shahrewargan*, *Mehergan*, *Abangan*, *Adurgan*, *Daegan*, *Wahmangan*, *Spendarmadgan* (Lyer, 2009).

Frawardingan or Farwandin festival: nineteenth of Farwardin: The word *Farwardin* is derived from the word “*Faravarati*” and “*Fravashi*” which is specified to “*Faravahars*”. The month of *Farwardin* belongs to *Faravahars* and this *Frawardingan* is a festival to celebrate the *Faravahars*. “*Faravarati*” or “*Fravashi*” is the heavenly part of human’s soul which is guarding goodness (Nigosian, 1993). Anything bad that human does in this world does not affect that heavenly aspect of his soul and it is only his mortal body which suffers due to his sins. In *Farwardingan or Farwadag* festival, the ancestors went to cemeteries and paid their tribute to their departed ancestors holding a traditional ritual to the memory of the *Faravaras*’ of their departed predecessors. In this ritual, *Mubeds* came to the place of performing traditional rituals and began reading Avesta (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). They recited some liturgy from *Farwardin Yashts*. At the end of the ritual of reciting Avesta, they distributed Lork (*gāhāmbār nuts*) between audiences. Those who have giveaways like people’s needed

stuff and food, distribute it among participants to the memory of their departed ancestors (Niknam, 2011).

Ardwahištgan festival: the third of Ardwahišt: This festival is held in the third day of *Ardwahišt* for paying their tribute to the sacred status of fire, heat, and light in human life. In this ritual, Iranians used to go to fire temples and recite some *Atash Niyayesh* (fire litany) from Khordeh Avesta wishing for the more enlightenment of their spirit with the sparks of Ahura Mazdā. Participants are served by the foods provided for the festival (Rose, 2015).

Khordadgan festival: the sixth day of Khordad: Khordad preserves water and helps human resist against the sense of thirst. That is why in the traditional rituals, Khordad is praised while drinking water (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). In Zoroastrian Gathas *Amurdad* and Khordad are always mentioned together (Schwartz, 2015). In new Avesta, these two praised *Amesha Spentas* have duty to guard waters and plants and help people in hunger and thirst (Nigosian, 1993). One of the significant rituals of Khordad day in Khordadgan festival is to go to riversides, seas and streams to wash the body in the clean water and chant the reciting specific for this day along with holding public delightful feasts (Lyer, 2009).

Tirgan festival: the thirteenth day of Tir: Another feast which is indicative of the intersection of day-name with its month-name is Tirgan or “*Abrizan*”. This festival has sustained among Zoroastrians since far back. In ancient Iranians’ myths, Tir or *Tištrya* is an angel which aids raining. “*Tištrya* star was the rain angel. As soon Ahura Mazdā ended the creation of the world, he missioned the *Tištrya* star to make rain from clouds for watering the world, quenching the thirst of earth, refreshing the plants, blossoming the flowers, filling the rivers and stream and making all the Arian territories prosperous” (Yarshater, 1998, p. 44). In addition to the rituals on water and splashing

water on each other, *Tiragan* festival is accompanied by some rituals for wishing rainfall for the next year (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). Like other festivals which are related to water, this one is also called “*Abrizgan*” or “*Apashan*” (splashing water). In such a day, Zoroastrians go to riversides and streams and cherish the status of water by splashing water on each other. Another tradition of Tirgan festival is that girls and women tie a bracelet made of seven-colored silk thread on their wrist. The seven colours of this thread symbolize the colours of rainbow. These threads are called Tir-o-Bad and are tied on their wrists from *Tištrya* day up to the next ten days; *Vāta* day. After ten days they go to some high lands and untie the thread while singing some songs and let the thread go with the wind. By this tradition they commemorate *Āraše Kamāngir’s* (*Arash* the Archer) arrow which they believed was fired in such a day and was directed by *Vāta* to mark the borders between Iranians and non-Iranians (Niknam, 2011).

Amurdadgan festival: seventh day of Amurdad: In ancient Iranians’ calendar, The Amurdad day of month of Amurdad has been named *Amurdadgan* festival. Iranians used to celebrate this day to cherish the manner, deed and place of Amurdad. Amurdad (immortality) is the name of sixth Amesha Spentas whose name has always been mentioned together with *Khurdad*; which means that immortality will arrive after relief. Thus the Amesha Spentas protecting water and plants are important beside each other. Iranians have praised and celebrated this festival as far back as a millennium. There are many accounts in Avestan texts and old Iranian texts about *Amurdadgan* festival and its specific rituals (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). In a Pahlavi text known as “*Bondahesh*” it is written that: immortal Amurdad is the lord of endless types of plants. It grows the plants and breeds the animals as it is Amurdad which feeds and nurture the animals (Rose, 2011).

Shahrewargan festival: the fourth day of Shahrewar: In Avestan text, *Shahrewar* is written as “*Khshathra Vairya*”. The first word means “kingdom” and the second word means “desirable”. The term “desirable kingdom” is also referred to as divine kingdom. All Amesha Spentas have a role in both heavenly and earthly aspects and a certain place have been defined for them. In its heavenly role, *Shahrewar* represent the heavenly power and realm of Ahura Mazdā and in its earthly role, it is missioned to protect all metals. In past, *Shahrewargan* festival was considered as a house fire-feast. People used to light fire in the fireplaces of their houses and gave their thanks to God while praising God. People used to hold revelries, cooking and catering various foods. On the occasion of climate change they made fires on their house roofs by the dusk. Even today, Zoroastrians celebrate this occasion (Lyer, 2009).

Mehergan festival: the sixteenth day of Meher: The term Meher means love, friendship, and faith. In the culture and calendar of ancient Iranians, Mehergan festival was of high significance. The reason for it was that in the calendar of ancient Iranians there were only two main seasons; winter and summer and these two festivals enunciate the beginning of each season. In other words, Nowrūz was the beginning of the first season and Mehergan was the beginning of the second season. The first season was summer which began from Nowrūz festival and continued up to the next seven month. The second season was winter which began from Mehergan festival and continued till next five days. According to Ferdowsi, the reason for celebrating this day as Mehergan feast was to remember the day Iranians led by *Kāveh Āhangar* defeated the Arab *Zahhāk*. In such a day *Kāveh* could defeat and capture *Zahhak* after hard efforts and chose Fereydun as the leader. In the *Mehr* day of month of Meher, Zoroastrians go to their fire temples and distribute traditional foods to others to commemorate that day. They celebrate this feast merrily by praying, holding cultural programs like ritual and national preaches, reading liturgy and reciting (Lyer, 2009). Some families celebrate

this feast by giving out some cookies and grilled lamb meat to others. In their religious and ritual ceremonies, ancient Iranians used to set some tables on which they laid some foods and symbols. These symbols are common in most of the tables and are related to the seven steps of mysticism in Zoroastrianism. The table itself symbolized the *Sepandarmaz*. This burning firebox symbolized *Ardawisht*; big metal bowl with the symbol of water represented Shariwar and Khordad; Plants or green twigs symbolized Amurdad; and a dish of egg and milk represented *wahman*. Zoroastrians put other symbols in their Mehrgan festival table in addition to the above-mentioned items. these items are pomegranate and apple; flowers; sweets and soft drinks; dried thyme leaves; some silver berry and almond put on each corner of the table; some fragrant woods like frankincense to put on the fire; and a small amount of seven types of beans which are suggested to be cultivated in that season (Rose, 2015).

Abangan festival: the tenth day of Aban: Aban is the other name of “Anahita” the symbol of clean and streaming waters on the earth and the protector of purity and honesty in this world (Williams, 2015). In Iranian mythology, Anahita had a significant position. That is why predecessors had built some temples beside the streams and rivers in order to cherish the high status of water. Iranian Zoroastrians go to the riversides and streams in Abangan festival and pray for the abundance of waters and streams by reading a part of Avesta known as *Abzur* (Lyer, 2009).

Adurgan festival: ninth day of month of Adur: By the arrival of *Adur* day in month of *Adur* this day is celebrated. The word *Adur* is mentioned as “*ātar*” or “*ātarš*” in Avesta, “*atar*” in Pahlavi, and “*Azar*” in modern Persian, meaning “fire”. Fire is the symbol of protection of fire and spark of Ahura Mazdā. In Iranian culture, fire is one of the admirable natural phenomena because it runs the life heat in the body of all earthly beings and brightens the body and soul of the followers of Ahura Mazdā with its light and warmth which is a sign of Ahura Mazdā’s Spark. That is why the *qiblah* and

direction of praying Ahura Mazdā is Fire and those who believe in Ahura Mazdā preserve fire in fire temples. Adurgan festival is a special feast for protecting the special status of fire in Iranian culture. This feast is held every year to cherish the heavenly nature of fire. Zoroastrians' ancestors considered Adurgan as a happy day. They used to celebrate this day by making fires in the houses and on the roofs; saying prayers and setting ritual table with a variety of foods in fire temples adorned for this day. When fire was lit on the tray, they put some fragrant wood on it. Then everyone took a small amount of embers to their houses and tried to keep this fire on till the end of winter because they believed that fire would bring prosperity and blessing. One of the prayers of *Adur* day of each month specially month of *Adur* is the *Atash Niyayesh* (fire litany) which is a part of Khorde Avesta. Even today, Zoroastrians go to fire temple in Adurgan feast day to commemorate their wise predecessors -who were followers of light- by praying and sitting beside the heavenly light of fire while being served by traditional foods (Lyer, 2009).

Daegan festival: the Dae days of month of Dae: In Iranian calendar, three days of the month are named *Dae* which means “Creator”. Along with the *Horrmazd* day, four feast days in month of *Dae* are celebrated. *Khorram* (merry) day, is the first day of month of *Dae*. This day was gloriously celebrated in ancient Iran due to its intersection with God’s name. Even today, this day is of high significance for Zoroastrians. In Zoroastrian calendar, eighth, fifteenth and twenty third days of this month is named *Dae*. To distinguish them from each other, each day is added by the name of its succeeding day; *Dae-Pa-Adar*, *Dae-Pa-Meher*, and *Dae-Pa-Din*. All these four days are celebrated to remember God (Rose, 2011).

Vahmangan festival: the second day of month of Wahman: *Vahmangan* festival is celebrated in *Whaman* day of month of *Wahman*. The term “*Whaman*” is derived from the Avestan word “*Vohu Manah*” which means “good purpose”. *Vohu Manah* is one of

the Amesha Spentas and one of the divine sparks. It has been mentioned in Gathas that *aša* Zarathustra has received assistance from *Vohu Manah* to get the heavenly revelations (Schwartz, 2015). In its earthly role, *Vohu Manah* is missioned to protect the domestic useful animals. That is why Zoroastrians avoid slaughtering and consuming the meat of domestic animals in *Vahmangan* feast day (Lyer, 2009).

Spendarmadgan festival: the fifth day of Spendarmad: *Spendarmadgan* feast is the last monthly festival of Iranians, which is held at the end of each year. In his precious book, *al-āthār al-bāqiyah* (The Remaining Signs of Past Centuries), *Abū Rayhān* al-Bīrūnī writes that ancient Iranians used to celebrate this day to cherish the place of woman and earth. In such a day, women put on new clothes and received gifts from men. The household routines of that were done by men. The Persian word “Esfand” is derived from the Pahlavi word “Spendarmad” whose Avestan root is *spenta Armaiti*. *Spenta Armaiti* meant “holy cause and love” (Lyer, 2009). As they realized these qualities to be found more in women, they specified this day to women. Since fertility and modesty were both common qualities between earth and woman, they specified the Spendarmad day to cherish the place of woman and earth together. Since then “Spendarmad” has been the national title for earth which means holy and modest expander. Earth can be the symbol of love too, because with its modesty, and forgiveness, it gives love to all. It treats both ugly and beautiful the same and shelters them all in her loving lap like a mother. That is why in the culture of ancient Iranians, Spendarmad is the symbol of motherly affections and fertility. Zoroastrians who have accepted this day as women’s day, show their esteems to the place of mothers’ by celebrating this day merrily and offering their mothers and wives flowers and gifts (Boyce, 2005).

4.4.4. Seasonal/Fasli Festivals: Gahanbars

The term “*Gahanbars*” “or *gāhāmbār*” is comprised of two words; “*Gāh*” which means “time” and “*ānbar*” which means “gathering”. This festival is the most probably the first festival that ancient Iranians held because it originates from their early professions; farming and animal husbandry. Farmers celebrated any useful changes for earth, plants and climate caused by season change. People used to come together in an area exchanging ideas for the improvement of farming and animal husbandry methods (Rose, 2015). They also gave out a part of their products to those in need. Therefore, the “*gāhāmbār*” festival- a five-day festival- used to be held six times a year whenever an important occasion for farming and animal husbandry would arrive. These six occasions are: *Maidyozarem Gāhāmbār*; mid-spring' feast. From *Khur* day up to *Dae- pa-Meher* in Ardwhisht; *Maidyoshahem Gahambar*; mid-summer feast. From *Khor* day up to *Dae-Pa Meher* in Tir (*Tištrya*; *Paitishahem Gahambar*; feast of bringing in the harvest. From *Ashtad* day up to *Aneran* day in *Sharewar*; *Ayathrem Gahambar*; bringing home the herds. From *Ashtad* day up to *Aneran* day in Meher; *Maidyarem Gahambar*; mid-year/winter feast (Lyer, 2009). From Meher day up to *Varharam* in *Dae*; *Hamaspathmaidyem Gāhāmbār*; feast of all souls. The last five days of the year. Some researchers believe that these six feasts symbolizes the six phases of creation of the world in ancient Zoroastrian believes. These feasts changed through time and developed further. During Sassanid Empire some songs from Avesta known as “*Afarinegan*” were sung to celebrate these feasts. These songs were later added to Khorde Avesta. By singing “*Afarinegan*”, as the special reciting of this feast, Zoroastrian Mubeds of Sassanid gave a religious flavour to *gāhāmbār*. Since then, Mubeds participate in *gāhāmbār* feasts putting on white clothes. Depending on their economic situation, Zoroastrians set a table in their house or in a larger hall. Then they put bread, traditional foods and fruits on the table which are symbolic and are called “*Mayazd*”. The Mubed wearing white clothes sits by *gāhāmbār* table and reads some parts of

Avesta with others following him and repeating him. At the end of the rituals of gāhāmbār, the Mubedyar (assistant of Mubed) distributes the dried nuts known as “Lork” between participants (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). He also distributes the fruits which he had sliced in pieces during the rituals. In some gāhāmbārs some breads and green vegetables are also distributed between participants. They are also served with broth and bouillon. Before the dawn of first day of each Gahanbar, the Mubeds and people together hold the rituals of Gahanbar. Everyone tries to take part in the Gahanbar ritual and those who cannot afford to hold Gahanbar ritual, take part in the rituals held by others or held by the income of others’ devotions and enjoy the rituals (Rose, 2011).

4.4.5. Annual Festival: the Festival Held Once a Year

Nowrūz festival: Nowrūz is the beginning of the year, the day of Hormazd in Farwardin, equality of day and night in length, and beginning of the blossoming of nature which used to be celebrated up to 21 days in ancient Iran. The beginning of Nowrūz festival equates 21st of March in Christian calendar. Rose (2015) stated that:

According to the Zoroastrian believes, the arrival of spring coincides with the descending of the spirits and faravahar of their departed ancestors to stay with their earthly successors. That is why by the beginning of the Hamaspathmaidyem gahanbar feast, which is last five days of the year, Zoroastrians light fire and try to clean their houses and refresh themselves so that the Faravahar of the their departed successors can happily return home (Rose, 2015, p. 385).

Cleaning home is one of the Nowrūz rituals which is held by all those nations who celebrate Nowruz (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). This ritual is held in various countries, like Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. There are various traditions about setting the table of Nowrūz but, what is common to all these tradition -which is on the basis of

Iranian and Zoroastrian culture- is to put seven trays of *Ahura Mazdā's* heavenly blessings which represents Amesha Spentas (Nigosian, 1993). Thirteenth day of Farwardin is a holy day in Iranian and Zoroastrian culture because this day is the first day of the year which is known as *Tir (Tashtar)*. In Iranian calendar thirteenth day of each month is called *Tashtar*. According to ancient Iranian mythology it was in such a day that *Tashtar* the angle of rain defeated the *apōš* the demon of drought. That is why this day is celebrated as the commemoration of *Tashtar's* victory. In Tir day people go to the riversides and streams to accompany the angle of rain, to pray for having a year blessed with rain and prosperity (Rose, 2015).

Haduru festival: the day Khordad of month of Farwardin: The sixth day of Farwardin is named Khordad. It was on this day that Zarathustra, the messenger of Zoroastrianism was born and then right on the same day he was selected as messenger in his thirty. Motivated by such a blissful historical event, Zoroastrians celebrate this day and call it *Haduro*. This word is the short form “*Haftad –o- Do Ruydad*” (seventy two events). According to the traditional believes of Zoroastrian, seventy two auspicious and historic events have happened on this day. Two of these events are the birth and prophecy of Zarathustra. Some of the rituals of this day are going to temples, praying, meeting the needs of the fire guard in fireplace, and cooking traditional foods like broth and “*sirrog*” (Lyer, 2009).

Sadeh festival: the Meher day of month of Wahman: One of the public feasts of ancient Iranians and Zoroastrians which is held in the Meher day of *Wahman* (the evening of sixteenth of *Whaman*) is called Sadeh festival. This feast is considered as one of the national rituals of Iranians (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). According to the Ferdowsi's account about *Hushang* shah, Iranians discovered and used fire as an accidental consequence of a natural event. To celebrate the occasion of discovering fire, Iranians celebrate this day. This ritual has sustained up to now as Sadeh festival.

By controlling fire, Iranians realized that fire has some features like living creatures, for instance if it was not constantly given oxygen or firewood it would fade away. Wind and water also put out fire. Since then, they selected some protector for fire to protect fire from being extinguished. They supplied the fire with wood and stick, and made some houses with simple architecture to protect fire on in them. These houses have been preserved up to present. The fire protectors regularly put fragrant wood on fire to prevent it from being extinguished. Fire temples are still one of the holy places for Zoroastrians. Sadeh feast that is a commemoration of *Hushang* shah, is still celebrated gloriously in Iran and some other countries on tenth of *Wahman*. “Sadeh” in Avestan language means dawn and sunrise (Lyer, 2009). According to some historical accounts, Sadeh festival is assumed to be celebrating 100 days after the first day of winter, or alternatively, 50 days before Nowrūz. Sadeh festival or fire feast is one of the ancient ritual of ancient Iran. By the evening of Sadeh festival, people made fire on their house roofs, and mountains. This tradition is still maintained. People of different cultures with different languages sit around the fire and chant some reciting, and wish for the departure of chilliness and arrival of warmth. In some areas, people perform some group plays, play some games and sing songs. Sadeh festival owes its maintenance to the various ethnic groups in Iran which have constantly celebrated this festival. Kerman with its Zoroastrians have been the heart of performing the rituals of Sadeh festival during the past eighty years (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). Even today, Iranians’ especially Zoroastrians’ hearts are filled with the warmth and light of Sadeh. By the sunset of Meher day in *Wahman* people of each city and village, make bonfire and start reciting the *Atash Niyayesh* (fire litany) merrily (Rose, 2015, p. 390).

Shrine feasts: These types of feasts, which are held during five days, are usually performed in areas around Yazd city, which used to be the traditional settlement area of Zoroastrians. These areas which are far from city in the heart of nature are called

“Peer”. There are various accounts about the formations of Peers. According to one of the accounts, Peers are old places with thousands of years of history behind them and they used to be the temple for Anahita but after Iranians’ conversion to monotheistic, these places remained as temple (Lyeer, 2009). According to other accounts Peers are the places where many innocent civilians took refuge to at the end of the Sassanid Empire but were massacred by the invading outsiders. This place also is considered to be the place of meeting of Zoroastrians after the invasions of predators (Rose, 2015). The name and the place of these shrines are:

Peeri Hereesht: from Amurdad day up to *Khor* day in month of Farwardin. This shrine is located 14 km away from *Ardakan* city in Yazd province. It is located 80km to the north of Yazd (Niknam, 2011).

Seteh (Siti) peer: from *Ashtad* day in month of *Kordad*. *Seteh* Peer is the name of a shrine which is an ancient citadel near Maryam Abad, which is an area for the settlement of Zoroastrians in Yazd province. Prior to the development of urban areas this shrine used to be beside the sand dunes, but now it is located somewhere inside Yazd city (Rose, 2015).

Peeri Sabz/ Chak Chak: from *Ashtad* day up to *Anarem* day in month of Khordad. *Peeri sabz* shrine which is also called *Chak Chak* is located 65km to the northwest of Yazd on the foot of a limestone mountain known as *Chak Chak*. There are some reasons for the significance of this shrine. For instance, on the stone wall of the shrine which is in fact a part of the mountain some plants like, Venus-hair fern, *myrtaceae* and wild fig have grown. Water drips from the crack of a stone like raindrops and fall in a stone basin under it. The water gathered there is used to quench the thirst of the visitors, and worshipers and the trees of *Peeri sabz* (Niknam, 2011).

Peeri Narsetaneh: from *Aspandarmad* day up to *Adur* day in month of Tir. *Narsetanhe* shrine which is located 30 km to the north of Yazd, is located in a valley surrounded by high hills on three sides (Rose, 2015).

Peeri Pars Banoo: from Meher day up to *Varharam* day in month of Tir. This shrine is located in a village known as *Zarjoo* near county *Aghda* which is 120km to the northwest of Yazd (Niknam, 2011).

Peeri Naraki: from Meher day up to *Varharam* in month of Amurdad. This shrine is located in the north of Yazd province on the foot of a high mountain of black limestone (Boyce, 2005).

4.4.6. Religious Feasts

Sedreh pushi ritual: Sedreh pushi is a ritual performed among ancient Iranians in many areas. This ritual was held to celebrate the puberty of the adolescents by dressing them a special cloth and belt which was the symbol of bravery and national pride. These rituals sustained and later became a part of the religious feasts of Zoroastrians (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). Due to Zoroastrians tendency to religion and wisdom these rituals later turned to be the tradition of putting on the clothes of awareness and wisdom. Sedreh is a white loose shirt made of cotton which is worn under other clothes and “Koshti” is a white wool-made belt. Sedreh pushi is a ritual of adolescents’ joining to their ancestors, taking oath to develop righteousness and fighting against bad thinking by following the ideology of their prophet. Today this cloth is the symbol of Zoroastrianism and represents the ideology of Zoroastrianism known as good thinking, good speaking and good behaving (Rose, 2011).

Nowzudi rituals: This ritual is held when the religious education is over and the performance of religious rituals begins. *Nowzud* is comprised of two parts; “Now”

which means new and “*Zud*” which refers to a young Mubedyar who has learnt how to perform the religious rituals and read “Yazshan” and soon can perform those rituals. In *Nowzudi* rituals, the young Mubedyar put on a white cloth and early in the morning along with his master, goes to the “*yasna* reading” place of the fire temple (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). Some parts of Yasna are chanted and the young Mubedyar, along with other Mubeds, turn around the light three times. The participants applaud the young Mubedyar and meanwhile his master introduces him to the people (Rose, 2015).

Hirbad rituals: *Hirbad* is a title for someone who has successfully finished learning the philosophy, and religious educations of Zoroastrianism and now he is qualified to teach and spread Zarathustra’s ideas and religion (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). One of the precious manifestations of Zarathustra’s ideology is to esteem and to preserve nature. Zarathustra believes that polluting the air, fire, water and soil are inappropriate. He recommends human to avoid polluting the air, rather making it fragrant. He also recommends to avoid wasting water rather keeping it clean and feed the soil by trying to increase its greenness. Finally, he recommends not to pollute the fire rather to protect it and worship towards it so that the memory of the ancestors and the sparks of Ahura Mazda sustain in their spirit (Lyer, 2009).

Marriage registration bureau for Zoroastrians which has receives its permission from Islamic republic of Iran’s national organization of civil registration, is not entitled to register the marriage of a Zoroastrian with a non-Zoroastrian (Nigosian, 1993). Therefore in case a non-Zoroastrian man or woman want to get married, the Zoroastrian will have to apostate. Zoroastrians migrate to other countries mainly due to unemployment problems. One of the reasons for the migration of Zoroastrians is that their leaving the country is easy and they can simply benefit from the opportunities provided by the Zoroastrians staying in other countries. That is why Zoroastrians tend to leave the country. Unfortunately state organizations don’t care much about this

minority. Article 881 of law clarifies that non-believers can't inherit anything from Muslim's property and Zoroastrians are considered as non-believers, while in constitution, Zoroastrians are recognized as a minority following a divine religion. Zoroastrian youth try to esteem and preserve their national identity and believes of Iranians' ancestors by performing the ancient rituals, and having union and cooperation in performing these rituals (Rose, 2011).

Zoroastrians avoid eating meat in *Bahman*, Gosh, and Ram days of month. This is a traditional which was carried out for various reasons like preserving the domestic animals from extermination. In addition, since overeating meat damages body, the avoidance of its use was promoted as a religious belief. *Bahman* or *Vohu manah* was the symbol of good purpose. As it is mentioned in "*Barsad*" reciting of Avesta, the earthly symbols of Ahura like Gosh, and Ram help the domestic animals that is why these days have sustained as a symbol for expanding the tradition of thinking good. Based on an account narrated in Shah-Nameh, it was Jamshid who first taught his people to eat meat and since then he lost God's spark inside him. That is why the hymns of Avesta don't reminisce Jamshid. So, this tradition is adopted to avoid humans' addiction to eating meat and consequently exterminating domestic animals. Anyway, Zoroastrianism does not allow human to sacrifice animals for any reason like celebrating his believes, showing his power, or pleasing God (Lyer, 2009).

Ancient Iranians cherished cleanliness and avoided any pollution (Hinnells, 2011). For them the white color was the symbol of purity and cleanliness (Williams, 2015). In all rituals throughout their life, like birth, Sedreh pushi, Marriage, praying and departing to eternity, they wore white cloth so that they could quickly realize any case of contamination. "Hijab" is a non-Iranian term which has no place in Iranian culture. The clothing of ancient Iranians varied depending on the geographical characteristics of their environment (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). For instance those who settled in the

southern areas of Iran like Bahrain, Oman, etc., used to put on bright-colored clothes which was in compatibility with sun light and heat. On the contrary, those who lived in cold areas like Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, and Tajikistan wore the clothes which were capable of protecting them against the harsh cold of their environment. One of the common points to all these clothes was that they were not made of dark colours like black because it reduced the cheerfulness of their clothes. Another common point is that since the daily routines were carried out by both man and woman, the clothes were made in a way that they would not use their hands to control it. According to the remaining rock arts from ancient Iran, there was no cover for women's hair rather they had an ornament like crown which was put on the head and was indicative of women's position not as opposed to man and his eyes rather their high status as the queen of the house in common life. Even today, Zoroastrians wear their traditional clothing with bright colours, but no doubt, the dominant culture of Iran has affected their traditional clothing. In Zoroastrian ideology there is no explicit teaching for men and women to cover their hair. They have just been recommended to keep their soul and body clean. They are recommended to select whatever they want for their life with their free will by having a look at their status (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015).

In festivals, traditional rituals, and family gathering, Zoroastrian boys and girls have always been beside each other trying to contribute to the development of righteousness and construction of life based on their Prophet Zarathustra's message of righteousness on the one hand, and following human value on the other hand (Rose, 2015). Whenever Mubeds stand beside fire for performing a ritual, they feed the fire with fragrant woods like the way ancient Iranians fed water, air and soil. To avoid polluting the fire with their water mouth while reciting Avesta, Mubeds cover their mouth and nose with a white piece of cloth. The hymns of *aša* Zarathustra has both rhythm and harmony. Therefore, Avesta is recited in a rhythmic way. In addition, according to a tradition

coming from thousands of years before, playing some musical instruments like tambour, reed and *daf* while reciting Avesta is indicative of the valuable status of music in Iranian and Zoroastrian culture (Lyer, 2009).

Afarin Nameh, is a part of Khordeh Avesta which is recited when performing the rituals specialty *gāhāmbārs* (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). While reciting the first part; *Afarin Nameh*, the Mubed raises a twig of *Myrtaceae* with his right hand and in second part of ritual where he is reciting *Vispo khatarm* Mubed raises two twigs of *Myrtaceae*. Meanwhile the audience raise their index and middle fingers together towards sky symbolizing the twigs in order to accompany the Mubed in his reciting. Then at the end they kiss their fingers as the symbol of kissing their believes and put their fingers on their eyes (Boyce, 2005).

4.4.7. Remembrance and Celebration

During the *jashan* the priests sit on the floor on either side of a cloth that contains an *afargan*, or fire urn, a tray of sandalwood and incense for feeding the fire, and a tray of offerings of flowers, fruit, milk, bread, and frequently wine. They begin by lighting the fire and offering prayers to consecrate it. They then remember the departed souls of the faithful, starting with Zarathustra and Zoroastrian heroes. They first repeat prayers related to the person or event being celebrated or remembered. In the next part of the *jashan* the flowers on the tray before them are exchanged during the recitation of a prayer. The exchange of flowers symbolizes the journey of the *fravashis* from heaven to the earthly world and back. They repeat the *yatha ahu vairyo* and *Ashem vohu* prayers and the prayers of thanksgiving. The priest calls on the spiritual world to bless the worshippers, reciting a special prayer, the *Afringan*, for those who sponsored the *jashan*. The ceremony is then at an end (Nigosian, 1993).

The ceremony is an expression of happiness: gratitude for past blessings and joy in the good things in the present and future. The *jashan* may be a private affair or accompanied by a feast in which all members of the community participate (Lyer, 2009).

Zoroastrians celebrate other thanksgiving days as well. These include the dates of the Prophet's birth and death and days that recall the *yazatas*, such as the divinity of Rain and Fertility, the divinity of Water, and Mithra, the divinity of Sun and Justice (Nigosian, 1993). They also celebrate the five Gatha days at the end of the year by remembering the *fravashis* of those who have died and by giving thanks for those in the present world whom they love and care for (Hatz, 2009).

4.4.8. Navjote

The ceremony in which young people are initiated into Zoroastrianism is known as *navjote* (Kreyenbroek & Munshi, 2001). Among Iranian Zoroastrians the age for *navjote* or, as it is called there, *Sedreh-push*, has traditionally been 15. Parsi Zoroastrians perform it at an earlier age, usually seven or nine, but no later than 11 (Lyer, 2009).

Training in the way of faith, which begins in babyhood, is the responsibility of the parents. With the *navjote* young people take on the responsibility for their own lives by choosing well over evil. From that time on their parents are no longer responsible for their actions. The *navjote* is the same for both boys and girls (Kreyenbroek & Munshi, 2001).

At the *navjote* the initiate receives the symbols of the religion. These are the *sedreh* and the *kusti*. The *Sedreh* is a white muslin garment ceremonially made, which devout Zoroastrians wear as an undergarment. It symbolizes purity (Williams, 2015). The *kusti* is a cord that is wrapped around the body (Hollins, 2009). It is woven from lamb's

wool and symbolizes *Vohu Mana*, the Good Mind. Besides being a reminder that the wearer is bound to the Good Religion, the *kusti* plays an important part in Zoroastrian daily prayer and ritual (Hatz, 2009).

4.4.9. Cleansing the Body and Soul

The initiate comes to the *navjote* freshly bathed (Kreyenbroek & Munshi, 2001). Before the ceremony begins the young person recites special prayers, including the Kusti (Hollins, 2009) prayers that are part of daily worship. He or she is then asked to sip a consecrated liquid. Traditionally this has been *nirang*, bull's urine that has been ritually prepared, although pomegranate juice is often used today. The drink ritually cleanses the body and soul within. Then the initiate recites a series of prayers, including the *Ashem Vohu*, the "Principle of Righteousness," in a prescribed order. He or she then goes for a ritual bath, or *nahan*. These actions symbolize inner and outer purification (Hatz, 2009).

4.4.10. Accepting the Sudreh and Tying the Kusti

After the *nahan* the initiate returns to the room where the ceremony will be held, dressed entirely in white and wearing the white cap that Zoroastrians always wear during prayer. The officiating priest recites the *Patet*, or "repentance," prayer, which represents a turning away from sin. After that the initiate and the priest stand facing each other, holding the *Sedreh* together. Together they recite the *Din No Kalmo*, or "Declaration of Faith." Next the priest puts the *Sedreh* on the initiate. In taking the *Sedreh* the initiate symbolically accepts the responsibility of working for good and helping to bring about the final renovation of the world (Lyer, 2009).

The priest then stands behind the initiate and ties on the *kusti* according to prescribed ritual, while the two pray aloud together (Hollins, 2009). The *kusti* is circled

around the initiate's waist three times and knotted four times. The three circles around the waist represent Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds. As Hartz (2009) stated:

The exact symbolic meaning of the knots is not known, but one explanation is that the first represents one God, the second that Zoroastrianism is the word of God, the third that Zarathustra is the Prophet of God, and the fourth is a reminder that the wearer is bound to the religion forever. Zoroastrians are to wear the kustī at all times, tying and untying it and reciting the basic prayers and according to tradition on getting up, after using the bathroom, before daily prayers, after a bath, and before meals (Hartz, 2009, p. 114).

4.4.11. Weddings

Zoroastrians are expected to marry and produce children, the only way in which Zoroastrianism can grow and prosper. The participants all wear white, the color worn by Zoroastrians on religious occasions. Traditionally Zoroastrian weddings are held at home, although hotels and other meeting places may be used. The groom often enters in a procession of musicians and guests led by a priest (Nigosian, 1993). At least two priests lead the ceremony. The couple sits next to each other with witnesses, usually members of each family, behind them. Like all Zoroastrian ceremonies the wedding takes place in the presence of a fire (Hartz, 2009). As Hartz (2009) stated:

The ceremony begins with a blessing. The senior priest expresses the hope that the couple will have long lives, lasting love, health and strength, and be blessed with children and grandchildren. The priest then asks the witnesses if they agree to the union and, when the answer is yes, asks the couple if they have agreed "with a

righteous mind” to be married until the end of their lives. Each replies individually, “We have agreed.” The ceremony recalls the wedding of Pouruchista and Jamaspa, during which Zarathustra asked his daughter if she freely agreed to the marriage (Hurtz, 2009, p. 115).

Priests and witnesses may pass a long string around the couple, symbolically binding them together, and then offer prayers and blessings. The couple are showered with rice, symbolic of prosperity and joy (Lyer, 2009).

4.4.12. Funerals

In Zoroastrian tradition death represents the strongest form of ritual impurity or pollution (Williams, 2015). Therefore Zoroastrians have strict rituals associated with death and dying. These rituals begin even before death (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). If a person is known to be dying family members bring a fire into the room to drive away evil (Hollins, 2009). According to Zoroastrian belief the evil spirit of decay rushes into the body within three hours after death. Because of the extreme pollution of death no one may touch the dead except special “corpse bearers,” who are specially trained and who undergo special purification rituals after their work is done. Anyone else who touches the body must undergo ritual purification, or *nahan*. All of the rituals surrounding death stress that the living should avoid the pollution of death (Hinnells, 2011).

4.4.13. Departure of the Soul

The corpse bearers ritually wash the body and dress it in a clean *sudreh* and *kusti* (Hollins, 2009). The body is shrouded with only the face uncovered. They place the body on a stone slab and mark an area around the body into which the priests and family may not step. Fire fed with sandalwood and frankincense is kept burning beside the

body to keep evil spirits away. A priest then comes and prays in Avestan. The priest is joined by at least one other for the *geh saran* ceremony, in which they recite the first Gatha of Zarathustra (Schwartz, 2015). The *geh sarna* ceremony signals the departure of the soul from the body. After the ceremony the body is no longer connected to the soul and may be disposed of (Lyer, 2009).

4.4.14. Sagdid Ceremony

The members of the household say their goodbyes by looking on the body of the dead person, but without touching it. The corpse bearers then carry it out of the house on a metal bier (metal and stone do not absorb pollution, as wood does). Outside, the body is placed on a stone slab and a dog is brought to look on the face of the dead person, a ceremony known as *sagdid*. The dog both verifies death and drives away evil. Then the corpse bearers, followed by two priests and the mourners, carry the body to its final destination (Lyer, 2009).

4.4.15. Toward of Silence

In Zoroastrianism, since death is the ultimate victory of Ahriman over life (Nigosian, 1993), a dead body represents a state of extreme pollution (Hinnells, 2011). It should not be allowed, therefore, to pollute the sacred elements: fire, water, air, or earth. The traditional way of disposing of a corpse in India and Iran has been the *dakhma*, or tower of silence. This is a circular stone building open at the top, usually set on a barren hill. The inside is arranged in three circles. The outer circle is for men, the middle for women, and the inner circle for children (Rose, 2011).

Only corpse handlers may enter the building. They carry the body to the building, pause outside for mourners to say their last goodbyes, and then take the body inside and place it on a stone slab, where it is left to be devoured by vultures. The mourners

withdraw to pray and then return home, where they pray and ritually bathe to cleanse themselves of the pollution of death. Throughout the following year the family offers appropriate prayers for the dead (Lyer, 2009). Hurtz (2009) stated:

In recent times Zoroastrians have had to find other methods of disposing of their dead. Dakhmas are now in use mainly in parts of western India, where the custom was established before the 1800s. The most traditional Zoroastrians around the world may return their dead to their home country, where they can be placed in a dakhma. Newer Parsi communities in India now have burial grounds and Iranian Zoroastrians now use burial as well. Zoroastrians in other parts of the world may also use modern methods of cremation. Today's Zoroastrians reason that the prayers and rituals surrounding death are more important than the disposal of the body, so the least polluting method is considered appropriate (Hartz, 2009, p. 120).

4.4.16. Prayers for the Dead

At dawn on the third day after death the soul goes to meet the three judges, Mithra, Sraosha, and Rashnu. They judge the soul on its actions in life. It then passes on to the Chinvat Bridge, the Bridge of the Separator. There it meets its *daena*, the guide who will take it across. She represents the person's conscience in life. If that life has been righteous *daena* is beautiful beyond all imagining and is accompanied by a sweet-smelling breeze. If the life has been one of ignorance and evil the guide is an ugly hag with a foul *odor*. The two move across the bridge. For the righteous the bridge is wide and flat and leads into eternal joy. For the wicked it becomes narrower and narrower until it is a knife blade, and the wicked soul falls off into the pit of hell (Rose, 2011).

During this time priests and the family continue with special prayers for the dead. Mourners may continue to recite the *Patet*, a prayer of repentance, and other prayers in honor and remembrance of the dead person daily for a month or even longer. Their

prayers cannot, however, change the fate of the soul, which has been decided according to the dead person's behaviour in life (Lyer, 2009). As Hurtz (2009) stated:

Excessive mourning is considered a sin in Zoroastrianism. It does not benefit the dead and it harms the health of the living. Zoroastrianism teaches that the dead have moved on to eternal life and that in the final renovation of the world all the dead will rise. People remember the dead, but their duty as Zoroastrians is to live fully in this world and be happy and optimistic. Feast days always include rituals for the dead, but as an occasion for joy, not sorrow (Hartz, 2009, p. 121).

4.4.17. Rites Of Passage

Ritual, whether the high ritual of the atash behram, the navjote, (Kreyenbroek & Munshi, 2001) or the jashan gathering in a community hall, is an important part of Zoroastrianism. The rituals of Zoroastrianism carry the Zoroastrian believer from birth to death (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015), marking the important rites of passage and times of joy and sorrow, creating occasions for celebration and unity. In the ancient Zoroastrian rituals and prayers are all of the history of the faith and the poetry of the Gathas (Schwartz, 2015). The unbroken tradition of Zoroastrian ritual has helped to keep the religion strong and alive through more than 3,000 years (Hartz, 2009, p.114).

Like most religions, Zoroastrianism has many meaningful rituals. The origins of these, such as the Yasna, stretch back into prehistory. They probably come from Iranian religious custom in the time before Zarathustra. In Zoroastrianism priests perform the religion's highly prescribed rituals in consecrated temples at regular intervals throughout the day. These rituals are closed to all but confirmed members of the faith who are in a state of ritual purity (Williams, 2015). Those who qualify may attend, although there is no requirement to do so. The basic rituals consist of caring for the consecrated fire; performing the Yasna rituals; and purifying those who have come in

contact with pollution (Hinnells, 2011). The priests may also offer prayers and special rituals for individuals who request them (Kreyenbroek & Munshi, 2001).

Except for the Vendidad, which is read aloud by a priest, the priests memorize all the rituals. The language of the ritual is Avestan, which is believed to be especially pleasing to the ear of Ahura Mazda. Traditionally the basic ritual of the Yasna has been the haoma ritual, in which priests ritually extract juice from the haoma plant as an offering (Lyer, 2009).

4.4.18. Keeping the Sacred Fire

Zoroastrian tradition says that the great fires of their religion have been burning since prehistory. The first fire is said to have been brought from heaven on the back of the mythical ox Srishok to be the guide and protector of humankind for all time. Fire represents the spiritual rule of light over darkness and is the sacred symbol of Ahura Mazda (Nigosian, 1993).

Behram fi re is the most powerful of all temple fires. It protects against the powers of darkness and does battle with the Lie. In the atash behram the fire rests on a platform over which is a crown that represents its power. The Behram fire is made up of fires gathered from 16 different sources specified in the Avesta. One source must be fire ignited by lightning, which comes directly from Ahura Mazda; others are consecrated fires from other professions and places where fire is used, such as the bakers, the dyers, the goldsmiths, the potters. The rituals for purifying a fire are performed 1,128 times, a process that takes a year (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). The most sacred fires of Zoroastrianism reside in consecrated temples in Iran and India. They have been burning continuously for centuries. The first fire in India was consecrated by ritual implements that were carried overland from Iran. Later on the fires in India were consecrated in India itself (Lyer, 2009).

4.4.19. The Bio Ceremony

The ceremony that accompanies the regular tending of the fire five times a day is called boi-machi. The fire is usually fed with sandalwood, which has a sweet odor when burned; worshippers may purchase it at the temple and donate it as an offering. In an atash behram, the highest grade of fire temple, it is tended by white-gloved priests who have undergone the most rigorous purification (Rose, 2011).

The priest prays the appropriate prayers and then places over the fire six pieces of sandalwood (or other dry wood in the shape of a throne), frankincense, and herbs, which fumigate and give out a pleasant smell. Then the wood is placed in the fire urn, or afargan. In the highest fire temple the priest, carrying a metal ladle, then circles the fire, stopping eight times to repeat a prayer in Avestan (Hollins, 2009). The priest then strikes a bell nine times, symbolically calling the Holy Spirit to be present in the room. After the ceremony the priest uses the ladle to give ash from the fire to any worshippers who are present (Hatz, 2009, p. 102).

4.4.20. The Priesthood

The Zoroastrian priesthood has traditionally been hereditary in the male line, although now in Iran men may qualify through study (Nigosian, 1993). The duties of priests include reciting the liturgy in the temples and in the homes of members of the community, saying prayers for the dead, and conducting weddings, navjotes (Kreyenbroek & Munshi, 2001) (initiation ceremonies), and jashans (rituals of memorial and thanksgiving). Zoroastrian priests are known as Mubeds; in India they are called dasturs. There are several levels in the priestly hierarchy. The highest grade of priest is known as a Mobed e mubedan. Mobedyars are priests in training (Lyer, 2009).

4.4.21. Training and Ordination

In India priestly training usually begins immediately after navjote (Kreyenbroek & Munshi, 2001) when children are about seven years old. It requires memorizing the basic scriptures and liturgy, after which they have to undergo a ceremony that requires a series of purification rituals (Lyer, 2009). The basic liturgy, the Yasna, is always recited in Avestan, so memorization is by heart. The candidate spends a period of nine days in retreat and undergoes a second purification ritual. Then he is dressed in white, the color of purity, and ordained by a senior mubed (Williams, 2015). After the ritual he recites the Yasna. Over the following days he recites other liturgies, earning the right to be called ervad, a title for a Zoroastrian priest. The candidate may perform basic ceremonies, including the navjote and wedding ceremonies, although he may not celebrate high rituals, including the Yasna. Many young men stop at this level and go into other professions (Kreyenbroek & Munshi, 2001).

If he is to continue, the young priest then spends the next two to three years learning additional scriptures before undergoing further purification rituals and a higher initiation called the maratab. The young priest will then become a full mubed. When he has demonstrated a mastery of all the rituals he is qualified to perform any Zoroastrian ceremony. As a rule candidates for the priesthood learn the rituals by memorization and practice (Stausberg & Karanjia, 2015). They are not expected to learn Avestan and Pahlavi, although they may take lessons in the meaning of the rituals through translation. If they attend college later they may study the languages of Zoroastrianism at that time (Lyer, 2009). The examination for the priesthood in Iran is similar but candidates are tested more intensively on their knowledge and understanding of the religion, and there is only one grade of priest. The new mubed practices with others for a year, after which he is on his own (Hatz, 2009, p. 107).

4.5. Summary

Zoroastrianism is the oldest surviving religion having arisen in Iran. It has been the state religion of Iran prior to the Arab invasion. The Arab invasion resulted in the marginalization of Zoroastrianism, and enforced conversion of them to Islam. Throughout the centuries, Zoroastrians were marginalized, their numbers decreased and, through time, they became an impoverished community that continued to survive around the cities of Kerman and Yazd. Following centuries of paying jizya to Muslims, the economic situation of Zoroastrians deteriorated so badly. Following the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty, respecting Iran's Zoroastrian heritage became part of the state's nationalist ideology. During this period, the rise in the price of rural areas helped to improve the economic condition of impoverished Zoroastrians. During a few decades, Iran's Zoroastrians turned into the most valuable social community from having been the most economically disadvantaged Iranian community. The crucial outcome of this economic boost was their migration to urban areas especially Yazd, Kerman and the capital city, Tehran. In these cities, Zoroastrians could have access to higher education and had a more active part in the labor market. However, overall during this period and in the 20th century, Zoroastrians' situation had improved in terms of education, urbanism and income. According to the Holy Quran, Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians are introduced as the people of the book and deserve to be under the protection of an Islamic government; moreover, it was actually after the Islamic revolution in Iran that Zoroastrians were recognized by an Article of the Constitution. Although the right to have a member of parliament was preserved for them, they still did not have equal rights with Muslims.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the study will be analysed. The aim of the research was to explore the leisure activities of the Zoroastrians' elderly in Kerman, Iran. First of all, socio-economic background of the informants based on gender, age, education, and financial status, health condition, followed by marital status will be analysed. After that, the results which are related to outdoor leisure activities and their leisure constraints among them will be demonstrated. And finally, contribution of the leisure activities to religious continuity among them will be examined. All data have been collected using in-depth interview with the informants and analyzed in qualitative way. However, some of the quantitative data has also been used in this study which also has been extracted from in-depth interviewees.

5.2. Description of Socio-economic Background of the Informants

Informants of this study were recruited among the Zoroastrian's elderly who lived in Kerman's city in Iran. Informants were purposely selected by the researcher to provide a gender mixed group with the result that 52.4 percent (n=44) were female and 47.6 percent (n=40) male (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Frequency, percentage of the Informants by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	44	52.4
Male	40	47.6
Total	84	100.0

Table 5.2 shows different age groups among the informants in terms of gender factor. Informants' age ranged from 60 to 90. On this basis, they were classified into three age groups of 60 to 69, 70 to 79 and 80 to 90. In general, 40.5 percent of the informants belonged to the age group of 60 to 69, 47.5 percent of them belonged to the age group of 70 to 79 and only 12 percent of them belonged to the age group 80 to 90. From among this number, women comprised 19 percent and men comprised 21.5 percent of the age group 60 to 69 respectively. In the age group of 70 to 79, men and women comprised 22.5 percent and 25 percent respectively. In the age group of 80 to 90, both women and men equally comprised 6 percent of the total informants (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Age Group and Gender of the Informants

Age groups	Gender					
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
60-69	16	19	18	21.5	34	40.5
70-79	19	22.5	21	25	40	47.5
80 or above	5	6	5	6	10	12

Total	40	47.5	44	52.5	84	100
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Table 5.3, illustrates the educational levels of the informants. On this basis, the educational level of 16.6 percent of the informants was secondary school or below; 32 percent of them held high school diploma, and 51 percent of them had university degrees.

Table 5.3: The Educational Level of the Informants

Education level	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary School or Below	14	16.6
High School	27	32.2
University Degree	43	51.2
Total	84	100.0

Table 5.4 classifies the informants in terms of their health status. As it is illustrated, more than 35 percent of the informants stated that they did not suffer from any kind of chronic disease, while 54 percent of them informed that they suffered from one or more chronic and serious diseases.

Table 5.4: Health Condition of the Informants

Health condition	Frequency	Percentage
With chronic disease	54	64.2
Without Chronic disease	30	35.8
Total	84	100.0

Table 5.5 illustrates the type of the diseases that informants suffered from. According to the data presented in this table, the most common type of the disease among them was the rheumatics. More than 48 percent of the informants suffered from rheumatics, arthritis and back pain. Following these diseases, high blood pressure was

the most common type of disease from which 18.5 percent of the informants suffered. In addition, 11percent and 8 percent of them suffered from coronary disease and diabetes respectively.

Table 5.5: Diseases among the Informants by Frequency and Percentage

Disease	Frequency	Percentage
Rheumatic, Arthrosis, Black pain	32	48.1
High Blood Pressure	10	18.5
Eye problem	8	14.9
Heart Disease	6	11.1
Diabetes	4	7.4
Total	54	100.0

Table 5.6 illustrates the economic status of the informants. According to the obtained data, the economic status of the informants in this study has been classified into three categories: high class, middle class, and lower class. While more than 34 percent of the informants of this study belonged to lower class, 56 percent of them belonged to middle class. Almost 10 percent of them belonged to high class.

Table 5.6: Economic Status the Informants by Frequency and Percentage

Economic Status	Frequency	Percentage
Lower class	29	34.5
Middle class	47	56
High class	8	9.5
Total	84	100. 0

Table 5.7 illustrates the marital status of the informants. As it is observed, more than 58 percent of the elders including both women and men, were widow or widower. 39 percent of them were married and only 2 percent of them had not married.

Table 5.7: Marital Status of the Informants by Frequency and Percentage

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	33	39.3
Single	2	2.4
Widow/widower	49	58.3
Total	84	100.0

5.3. Leisure Activities

There is paucity of theoretical literature regarding the measurement and classification of leisure activities. First, even though, the concept of leisure activity is directly available, practically it is too difficult to standardize, measure and classify these activities. Second, leisure activities might vary in various geographical regions among various group ages with various geographical, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds (Torkildsen, 2005). Nevertheless, in this study, the leisure activities elicited from the informants interviews have been classified in several groups.

5.3.1. Ways to Spending Leisure Time

Various forms of spending leisure time among various social classes is indicative of individual tendency and cultural pattern of that class. That is why obtaining information on the forms of spending leisure time was one of the objectives of this study. The distribution of the informants in terms of the frequency of taking part in leisure activities have been illustrated in the following table (Table 5.8).

Table 5.8: Leisure Activities among the Informants by Frequency and Percentage

Leisure activity	Frequency	Percentage
Religious and civic activities	81	96.5
Visiting friends and relatives, attending at social groups and family gathering	73	87
Picnicking	55	65.5
Traveling	51	61
Chatting with other elderly at local centers	45	53.5
Going to parks and socializing with friends	44	52
Morning or afternoon exercise	39	46.4
Eating out	37	44
Hiking (Walking for pleasure)	36	43
Going to sport clubs	33	39
Going to movie	9	10.7

According to the data, the most fascinating leisure activities for informants were: participating in civic and religious activities, visiting friends and relatives, attending social groups and family gatherings, attending religious places, picnic, travelling, chatting with other elders in local clubs, going to religious clubs, shopping for fun, and going to movies (Figure 5.9). In the next pages, these ways of leisure activities will be explained.

Religious and civic activities: One of the aspects of human existence is inclination towards sanctity and metaphysics which attracts him/her towards religious activities. Based on this criterion, one can evaluate the behavioural aspect of religiosity or the religious rituals. Revolved around such an activity, a network of relations is formed in the society, which can be referred to as religious community.



Figure 5.1: Sedreh-Koshti Pushi Celebration, Kerman, 2012c

The findings in this area reveals that more than 80 percent of the informants have allocated a part of their leisure time to participate in religious rituals more than twice in month on average (Figure 5.1). Worshiping (prayer), reading the Avesta (the Zoroastrian holy book), going to the holy places (Zoroastrian fire temple, Pire-chak-chak or other holy places), and attending religious festivals (the annual Sadeh celebration and the monthly Gahanbar celebrations) were the religious activities reported by nearly all the informants.



Figure 5.2: Going to Sacred Places: Pir-e Sabz, 2012

Going to Zoroastrian's Association to do religious activities was one of the most common leisure activities which were reported by informants (Figure 5.2 & Figure 5.3).

An informant stated:

Every week on Tuesdays' afternoon, we have a session in the Zoroastrians' Association. We gathered and talk to each other. We regards this session as leisure time. Even we do something there; we regard that as leisure time. For instance, we may go there in the early morning and be there until afternoon. During that time we may cook something. We regard that activity as a leisure activity. If somebody had a problem, or need helped, we gathered and talk about his or her problem and try to solved his or her problem (female, widowed, 74).



Figure 5.3: Going to Sacred Places: Pir-e Sabz, 2012

Visiting friends and relatives, attending at social groups and family gathering:

Another part of the activities undertaken in leisure time are those groups of activities whose social aspect dominates its individual aspect and through these activities one established relationships with others. Tendency towards others and community, is an important aspect of human life, which in contrast to materialistic and economic needs, its aim is to establish relationship with others and to strengthen what is known as “social community”. Such an activity whose aim is to interact and to establish relationships with others is called “social activity”. In this relation, the family relationships and relationships with others can be classified into four categories of families, neighbours, friends, and acquaintances. In traditional parts, it is family and neighbour relations which are more common. In contrast, friend and colleague relationships are more common in modern parts. Some activities like the activities of Zoroastrians’ association, are among those activities during which, one is connected to a totally civil organization where people try to achieve a common goal. According to the findings of this study,

there is a positive relation between the rise of family's socio-economic status and the increase of relationships with friends and colleagues, while there is no change in the relation between family's socio-economic status and relationships with family. Neighbour relationships have also proved to reduce following the enhancement of family's socio-economic status. According to the findings of this study, more than 70 percent of the informants spent their leisure time for membership and activities in social groups.

Some of us elders come together, travel, have meetings, chat, hold festivity and go to park. If today we would announce that there was a meeting, and music band, we would have so many informants that we would lack enough space. I usually come here (Zoroastrians' association) to spend my extra time with others or to read (female, widow, 70).

Chatting with other elderly at local centers: Talking with other elders in local centers was one of the leisure alternatives of elders. Local center is defined as a venue, which is meant for the meetings and spending leisure time of the people of an area. This center could be established at a street, an alley, or in a park and might have a seasonal or fixed location where the elders investigated in this study gathered there to chat with each other (Figure 5.4). One of the informants expressed:

On the evenings, we go to the street, sit together and talk a little bit about the events of the same day and go back home, next day, the same story goes on again. This is the way I am but other might not be like me (male, married, 65).

Another informant stated:

I don't like to play backgammon, or card playing. I prefer to go out to chat with other people or co religious at local center. They sometimes have local center at

afternoon. We talk together. Every Wednesday afternoon, also I will go to Zoroastrians' Association. We will also very weekend which my daughters and my son-in low are free from their work, go to Kouhpayeh, but if the weather be ok. We take a brazier to cook Kabab and go there (female, widow, 76).



Figure 5.4: Chatting With Friends at Local Centre, 2012

Picnicking: Picnicking was another alternative for spending leisure time of the elders investigated in this study. They go to picnic either in park, garden, mountain, plains or anywhere with pleasant weather mainly along with their family members or occasionally with their friends. The “Sizdah be dar” picnic is the heritage of the Zoroastrians which still maintains its sanctity. Even though this leisure is performed in various forms and in various places, but it is a collective, friendly and family recreation which originated from an old Iranian myth and still has sustained ever since (Figure 5.5). One of the informants said:

Some evenings, I make a plan with some of my friends to picnic in a park. Each one of us brings something to eat. We find a silent corner in park and put our rug, sitting and chatting for hours. My friends are married and they usually come with

their children. We keep on talking and children keep on playing (female, single, 69).

Sometimes as the members of the association, we come together in a venue in the country. We set off in the morning and spend time there until evening, then we come back home. We are together couple of hours and we are happy (female, widow, 70).

Every Friday night, we come together to go to park for picnic. We stay there till late night and then come back home. All fellows are there. Usually we gather in the house of one of us as venue, and then there, we decide about where to go. Sometimes we set off on Friday morning. We pack and go to the country and stay there almost until dusk and then we return. It is too fun (male, married, 67).



Figure. 5. 5: Picnicking at Cemetery, Kouhpayeh Street, 2012

Outdoor physical exercises: Morning and evening exercises was another part of their leisure activities. These activities were performed either in an organized manner like morning exercise carried out in some fresh green places like parks or, it was done

individually mainly as walking on walkways or local parks near the houses (Figure 5.6).

One of the informants said:

Every other day I start walking from house towards a nearby park, I walk around the park and come back home through the same route. Doctor has recommended me to go walking. He has said that it is good for the heart vessels blockage (female, widowed, 70).



Figure 5.6: Outdoor Physical Exercises, 2012

When it becomes morning, I wake up. I leave home and go to the street. I walk up the walkway till park. We have morning exercise program. It is performed every morning. Morning exercise meeting point is inside the park. We exercise for half an hour and then go back home (male, married, 65).

Going to parks and socializing with friends: The activities classified in this category are the most inexpensive ways of spending leisure activities. These activities demand less time to carry out and usually are along with great deal of social interaction, which can strengthen the collective sense of belonging. Going to parks and recreational

centers can be classified in this category. The results of this study have illustrated that going to park and recreational centers was the most preferred types of activity (Figure 5.7). In the urban areas where the daily life atmosphere is relatively artificial and far from Nature, the significance of such leisure activities becomes obvious because such alternatives include interaction with natural environment which help maintain mental balance and tranquillity (Tyrvaainen et al., 2005).



Figure 5.7: Playing Backgammon in Park, 2012

The point, which is worth to mention in this regard, is the relative exclusion of women from participating in these activities and consequently taking benefit from these facilities probably due to lack of enough security or cultural believes. The results of this study reveals that in comparison to men, the number of the old women who go to parks along with their family members is twice more than men. This finding supports the above-mentioned claim. One of the informants said:

Recently it has become my habit. It was not like this before. I used to go to work and be busy doing my job. Now I take more time walking. I go to park and stay there till evening. I chat with friends. Near dusk I go back home, take rest and

then sleep. Sometimes I come over children's house or their kids come to us. This way we amuse ourselves to see what comes up next. I don't do a certain exercise. I don't like chess but if we could assume backgammon as a sport, then I like it (male, married, 66).

Another informant stated that:

Every day I walk to Local Park which is near to my house. Since this park is a local park and don't have facilities for playing, so children do not go there. We call that as elderly center. Every morning I go there, chat with other elderly which most of them are my co religious. Then I go back to my house for having lunch. After take a nap, I go there again. This is my routine activity (female, widowed, 68).

Going to restaurant and dining out: Going to restaurants and dining out is a leisure behaviour, which has been popular in Iran's big cities since the past few years (Fazeli, 2006). This behaviour, which somehow illustrates the difference between upper class and lower class of the society, is a leisure behaviour, which is dependent on individual's socio-economic status. One of the informants said:

Once a week, we make a plan with children to go to Haft-Bagh where there are some good restaurants. We order dinner and eat. It is a good place. It also has bicycle band and kids can ride bicycle too. It has lawn and it has good space. While kids are playing, we also go walking (female, widowed, 71).

Travelling: No doubt, travelling is one of the cultural leisure activities, which can be done, in family form in a certain period of year (Leitner & Leitner, 2004). In addition to leisure and relaxing aspects of touring and travelling, it also has significant cultural

functions, which helps the mental development and cultural interactions of the elders of various regions (Patterson, 2002). Since travelling demands making plan, spending money, and having access to transportation means, such a behaviour is controlled by the variables like free time, individual's access to transportation means, and the distance of destination (Figure 5.8).



Figure 5.8: Travel Out of Town, Kerman, 2012.

In this regard, the findings of this study illustrates that 61 percent of the elders have participated at least once in the camps and tours or they have travelled. From among these people, 44 percent have travelled once, 32 percent have travelled twice, and 33 percent have travelled more than twice. It can be primarily related to the economic and social status of elders either as house holder or those living with their children. As the socio-economic status of the family boosts, the ratio of the travelling in its mere sense, and ratio of journeys to farther distances, even abroad, increases. One of the informants said:

I like travelling so that any time there is a travel advertisement by association, I must be along with them in any way possible. I like travelling with my fellow believers, I have no fun, so it is enough that it is arranged by association because

it is not possible to have fun alone. One cannot go either with children because their wives might want something that I might not like. Of course I don't say anything ever, which is why I try not to go with them. I tell them that I regularly go to association. It is always better to go travelling through association in case they can financially afford it because we are the same age group and have similar ideas. It is more fun like this. It is more relaxing but when you go with your children, it is not that fun. Because they think differently, most of them think in a totally different way. Sometimes you might say something that might resent them or sometimes my son does not want to annoy me, and then he says something to his children and wife that might annoy them. It is better not to be with them (female, married, 67).

Going to sport clubs: As a socio-cultural phenomenon, sports have gained a prominent significance in social sciences, because one of the important aspects of sports is people's socialization and cultural assimilation. According to Herbert Mead's rules of Game theory (Ritzer, 2003), skills like observing the rules, how to play the role, cooperation with others, etc. are acquired in collective sports activities. Thus, exercising is a part of elders' leisure time, either as participant or onlooker. One of the informants said:

Whenever there is a match, we go to Khodadad Mehrabi stadium and watch the matches of Zoroastrian teams. Sometimes these matches are held between our teams (Kerman's Zoroastrians) and the teams of other provinces. Sometimes we go to stadium for exercising (female, married, 69).

Going to movie: Going to cinema was another leisure activities which informants intended. One of the informants said:

Every month we go to cinema at least twice. Whenever there is a good movie on screen I go to cinema either with my wife or with fellows (male, married, 65).

Sometimes we go to cinema. Sometimes I even do not care about which film is on screen and I just go have a change. Before, I mean 20 years ago, I used to go more but now I no longer have the enthusiasm of the past (Female, single, 69).

Walking for pleasure: Walking for pleasure is another leisure activity which was mentioned by some of the study informants. An informant expressed

I didn't stay at home. I everyday have a plan. I everyday go out, I start the walking from Emam Hossein SQ, then I go to the park which is near to the Emam Hossein SQ and walk around that, Every day from 5pm to 6pm. This is one of the every day's plans with my friends. Of course I did that with my Zoroastrian's friends. Even if none of them come, I will go alone. Sometimes I go to my friends' house and stay there 2-3 hours, for talking. Then I will come back home. I live alone, nobody live with me; none of my sons live with me (Female, widowed, 74).

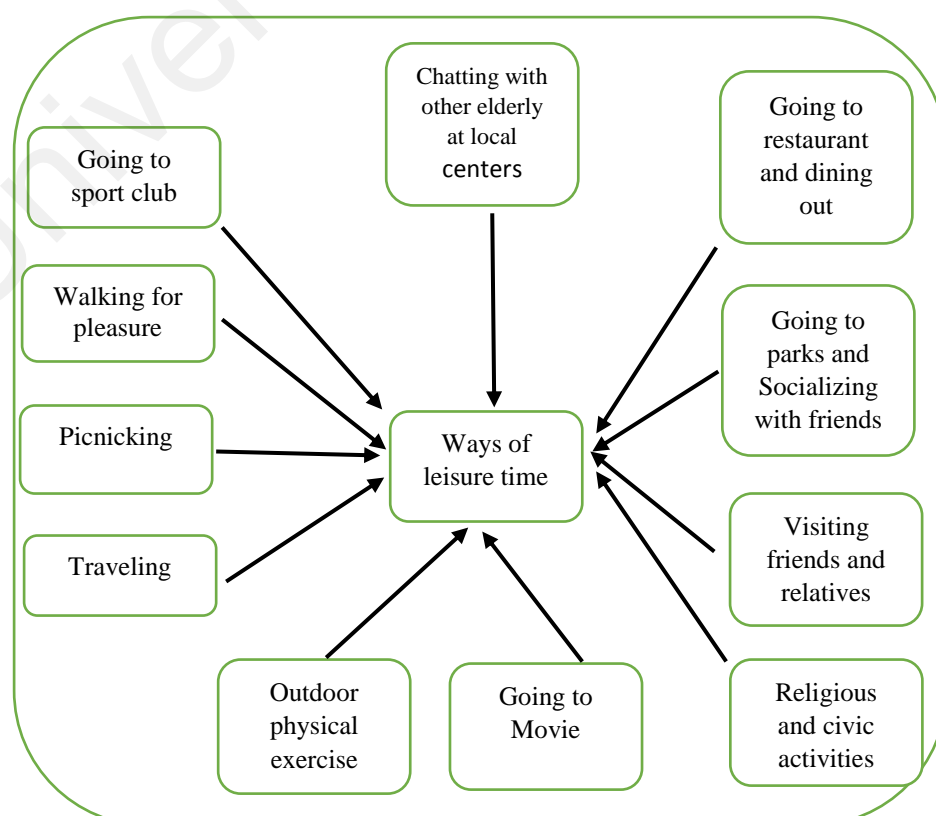


Figure 5.9. Leisure Activities among the Informants

5.3.2. Leisure Companions

Taking into consideration the significance of leisure companions, informants were asked: with whom do you mainly spend your leisure time? Based on the finding of the study, leisure companion of the informants has been categories in three types: with family member, with friends and alone (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9: Types of Leisure Companion

Type of leisure companion	Percentage
With family member	58
With friends	34
Alone	8

These findings are indicative of the unique position and share of family and friends in informants' ways of spending leisure time (Table 5.9). This distribution depends on the gender of the informants where 70 percent of female's informants preferred to spend their leisure time mainly with family, while 62 percent of the male's informants have shown more tendency to spend their leisure time with friends. An informant stated that:

Every weekend, my children and I, go to Prince Garden by our car (Baghe Shahzadeh). But this plan depends on my entire children coming with me, this means if one of them can't come, then we cancel that and we don't go anywhere.

If we want to go anywhere, all of my children should come together (male, married, 70).

Single and married informants also varied in terms of attitude towards leisure companion. For instance, 77 percent of the married's informants preferred to spend their leisure time with their family members, while 52 percent of the single/widow/widower's informant preferred to spend their leisure time with friends. People holding different degrees of socio-economic status also tended to have different attitudes towards their leisure companions. For instance, those holding high level of socio-economic status tended to travel or spend their outdoor leisure mostly with their friends while those with lower level of socio-economic status preferred to spend their time with family members and relatives. Here are some quotations of the informants:

If our family includes children and grandchildren are ready, then we can go out to eat dinner or elsewhere, otherwise no (female, widowed, 74).

My sisters and their children lived in Kerman before, and when I wanted sometimes to go out for leisure, I went to their homes. We usually gathered together (female, widowed, 72).

My friends had small children, told me that come with us to go to park and I went to park with them. We sat there for a few minutes and then we went back home. We sometimes had something to eat. When their children's play were finished, then we went back home (female, single, 68).

5.3.3. Leisure Activities and Gender Distinction

There are important variation between female and male informants in terms of the patterns of spending leisure time. Most of these variations originates from the viewpoint of the society towards man and woman. In general, in comparison to male informants,

female informants had usually less leisure time and their access to require space for spending leisure time was limited. Family commitments deter many women from participation in outdoor activities. An informant stated that:

I have to do some house chores at home. For example I have to prepare meal for my family. I often have to cook two meals per day for my family. After cooking lunch for my family, I have some leisure time and decided to go out such as park or hear (local center). Since my wife was broken her leg due to snatched purse, I have to spending much of time to do housework which previously my wife did (washing dishes, cleaning house, shopping and so on) and should be responsible for all the house chores (male, married, 68).

Table 5.10: leisure activities and gender distinction

Gender Leisure activities	Male Percentage	Female Percentage
Religious and civic activities	95	97.7
Visiting friends and relatives, attending at social groups and family gathering	82.5	90.9
Picnicking	70	61.4
Traveling	55	66
Chatting with other elderly at local centers	37.5	68.2
Going to parks and socializing with friends	40	63.6
Morning or afternoon exercise	62.5	31.8
Eating out	50	38.6
Hiking (Walking for pleasure)	15	68.2
Going to sport clubs	62.5	18.2
Going to movie	7.5	13.6
Total (Frequency)	40	44

In this study, both men and women's elderly tended to participate in different types of leisure activities, however, there are differences in the types of leisure activities in which men and women participate. For example, women often tended to participate in

social and mental activities, while men participated in physical, individual and creative activities (Table 5.10).

The most mentioned favourite activity for men were sport and physical exercises, while the women's favourite leisure activities include chatting with friends, relatives, neighbours and mental activities (Table 5.10). Women tended to combine socialization with physical exercises and it was very difficult for them to separate the two, most of the times. For example, women spent time for walking and talking with friends or doing other physical activities with friends as a significant part of leisure activities. Male of this study reported socialization with friends as a leisure activity. The men preferred active sports and stated that their participation in these sports was due to their excitement, while women who participated in sports stressed on their social functions (e.g., being with friends).

5.3.4. Leisure Activity and Marital Status

In addition to gender differences, single, and widow/widower informants in general had more leisure participation rather than the married informants (Table 5.11). An informant stated that:

I do the same things every day. I wake up late morning, clean up the apartment, then go out for shopping, and go back home to cooking. I use to cook soup and other thing with fresh vegetable and meat. Although there are some local parks near my house, I seldom go there...actually, I don't have enough time to go there...I'm busy with daily shopping...I have to do shopping...I don't have time for leisure (female, widowed, 68).

Pre-marriage conditions of individuals provides the individuals with certain conditions which distinct them from others. In this period, lack of responsibility or even no responsibility creates more chances for more leisure activities, while married people

allocate most of their time to social professional and family responsibilities and commitments. Married people have more limited leisure time in comparison to single people. They also try to select the collective leisure activities, which are performed with family not individually (Table 5.11). An informant mentioned that:

I don't have much time. I have to do the shopping, do laundry, tidy up my house, and cook (female, married, 68).

Table 5.11: leisure activities and marital status

Marital Status Leisure activity	Married Percentage	Single Percentage	Widow/ Widower Percentage
Religious and civic activities	97	100	98
Visiting friends and relatives, attending at social groups and family gathering	85	50	90
Picnicking	91	50	49
Traveling	85	50	45
Chatting with other elderly at local centers	18	100	76
Going to parks and socializing with friends	88	50	29
Morning or afternoon exercise	30	50	57
Eating out	33	50	51
Hiking (Walking for pleasure)	39	50	45
Going to sport clubs	24	50	49
Going to movie	6	50	12
Total (Frequency)	33	2	49

Taking into consideration the responses of both single and married informants in relation to leisure activities, it could be argued that except, social and religious activities over which both single and married informants had consensus, there was a difference between both groups in other cases. On this basis, socializing with relatives and friends in local venues were more common activities among married informants (Table 5.11).

Singles and widows preferred other activities. In sum, it can be argued that leisure activities with inactive nature were more preferred by married informants and those activities which demanded more physical involvement were more preferred by singles and widows (Table 5.11).

5.3.5. Leisure and Socio-economic Status

The kind of leisure activity that individuals prefer, and their expenditure on using recreational facilities, travelling, etc., depends on their economic status, and more precisely on their income. Families with high income rates, prefer to spend small proportion of their income for the life requirements like food and clothing, rather they prefer to spend it more for unnecessary uses like amusement and recreation. When it comes to choose between more incomes on the one hand and more leisure and amusement on the other hand, people with low income often prefer the earlier. That is why they reduce their leisure time to minimum.

Table 5.12: leisure activities and Socio-economic Status

Socio-economic Status Leisure Activity	Low Class Percentage	Middle Class Percentage	High Class Percentage
Religious and civic activities	96.5	97.8	87.5
Visiting friends and relatives, attending at social groups and family gathering	93	87.2	62.5
Picnicking	48.3	74.5	75
Traveling	31	74.5	87.5
Chatting with other elderly at local centers	86.2	4.4	12.5
Going to parks and socializing with friends	82.7	38.3	25
Morning or afternoon exercise	24	53.2	87.5
Eating out	6.9	59.6	87.5

Walking for pleasure)	13.8	57.4	62.5
Going to sport clubs	6.9	55.3	62.5
Going to movie	-	6.4	75
Total (Frequency)	29	47	8

This study showed the impact of informants' socio-economic status on spending their time. The elderly who had a low socio-economic level, spent most of their leisure times collectively such as attending the family, relatives, and friends, gatherings and meeting and chatting to them in the local centers, and participating in religious ceremonies (Table 5.12). While the socio-economic status of the informants increased, the method of spending their leisure time also further took an individual form, because due to access to financial and cultural facilities, it was possible for them to plan for their leisure time, provide more opportunities and facilities and leisure tools outside the home, use the equipment and outdoor leisure facilities available more and provide the things for themselves in leisure time that they had more interested in. Besides the hours that they spent their leisure time with family and collectively, this group also devoted some hours for their own individual plans and entertainments. Members of the upper classes tended to spend their outdoor leisure times to travel abroad or within the country, going to cinema, shopping for fun and going to morning and evening exercise (Table 5.12).

5.4. Leisure Constraints

Informants in this study have explained that they have faced at least one leisure constraint while having outdoor leisure. The leisure constraints reported by the informants of the study have been categorized in three groups:

Intrapersonal constraints: lack of interest, poor health conditions, prior socialization, family responsibilities and commitments, fear of embarrassment, too many male park visitors, and religiosity.

Interpersonal constraints: lack of leisure companion, death of spouse or close relatives and friends, lack of encouragement and support by family and friends.

Structural constraints: lack of time, financial problems, fear of familiarity leading to marriage, climatic conditions, insufficient management of parks in providing and maintenance of leisure facilities, obligation of being covered and considering hijab.

5.4.1. Intrapersonal Constraints

This topic arose in interviews with informants, and they generally revealed deeper problems and insecurities that led to an encompassing dissatisfaction with their leisure and lives. The people who wished for different personalities made it apparent throughout their interviews that they were struggling with many aspects of their lives; leisure was only one facet that mirrored their overall dissatisfaction. To focus on how these issues constraints leisure seemed almost to belittle the overall impact of the problems which these people were dealing. The following table shows the intrapersonal constraint which has been mentioned by the informants of this study (Table 5.13).

Table 5.13: Intrapersonal Constraints among the informants

Intrapersonal constraints	Percentage
Lack of interest	56
Poor health conditions	44
Prior socialization	37
Family responsibilities or commitments	34.5
Fear of embarrassment /shying to go out	31
Too many male park visitors	28.5
Religiosity	13

Lack of Interest: Personal attitude toward leisure include interest, discomfort, motivation on leisure was a constraint to leisure which has been experienced by the informants. 56 percent of the informants mentioned that they did not go out for spending their leisure time such as visiting local or urban parks or so on, because they were not interested in it (Table 5.13). An informant stated that:

I'm not interested to visit local or urban parks, why should I go to park when my house is the same as park? What do I want to see in a park? Or what are the benefits of visiting a park for me? Relaxing? I can capture it here (in my house), chatting with friends? They come to my house everyday....see, the park don't have any things for me, so I'm not interested to visiting parks...Anyway, we are recreating, we are happy that are together, that is why that we prefer outside space to inside space for leisure and recreation. We have as enough as indoor leisure and recreation, so why should we go to park? If we need park, then we go to each other's houses. Our houses are as big as park, although ours children's houses are not as big as ours home (female, single, 69).

The following statements has also illustrated this constraint:

After getting old, I think, I don't have many interests. Most of time, I stay at home and watch TV, or listen to the radio. These are my favourites. I'm not interested to go anywhere such as travel. I'm not interested to do exercise too, although I did it before when I was a young man or during adulthood. When I was young, I used to go out for travel, walking around, picnicking, and playing chess with friends and so on. But it seems that I have lost my interest after I become old. Now, I don't like to go out even for chatting with my friends at local center as a leisure activity. I have a few friends, because some of my best friends passed away. See, while some people who I had best memories whit them passed away, with whom I can

chat at the local center? Actually, I don't have the mood. Attending at local center don't have pleasure and fun for me. I'm not in good situation. Somebody must help me to out, otherwise I can't go alone (male, married, 65).

Poor Health conditions: In addition to lack of interest, physical health constraints were another constraints which mentioned by the 44 percent of the informants (Table 5.9). Since all of the informants in this study were elderly, poor or deteriorated health was notable cited constraints to their leisure, and they were aware of giving up activities that they used to enjoy. Poor health was classified as intrapersonal constraint because people spoke of health as if it were imposed upon them from the outside. Physical limitations kept people from doing some favoured leisure activities. 48.1 percent of the informants cited that rheumatic and arthrosis as a main health problem which hinder them to participate in outdoor leisure activities (Table 5.5). One of the informants stated that:

This is pleasure for me to go to Pir-e Chak-Chak (A Sacred places for Zoroastrians which is placed in Yazd Province in Iran), but as you may know, that place have too many stairs. I can't go up since my legs have problems, if my family and my friends help me, maybe I can go up a few stairs (female, married, 76).

Another informant said that:

I had an operation on my leg two years ago; my leg had Arthrosis. Since I had operate my leg, although its pin have decreased, but I can't walk anywhere without cane. Now it is two years that I can't walk more than few steps. So I can't go for shopping alone. Since I can't go anywhere lonely, then I should wait for my son, he should come and pick up me where I want to go. If he come and pick up me, then we go to a family house all together, But not for shopping. For going to park, he don't come and pick up me, actually, I don't go with them. I can't go

there, you know, park is not the same as our house. When I 'm at the park, I'm not comfortable, I can't sit on the chair or bench... because I have backache... Let me tell you, with this situation, I can't go anywhere for leisure or recreation, so they go for leisure without me (female, widow, 72).

Although 48.1 percent of the informants cited that they were suffering from poor health such as arthrosis and rheumatic, some of them like to go out for leisure involvement, since they feel that these activities can improve their health problems (Table 5.5). One of the informants stated that:

I sometimes walk slowly here... I feel that is good for my health...in my young adulthood, I was more fun, but now I can't do anything. I feel that I am old now, my vision is not as good as before and I can't see as good as before. I am not fresh and energetic as before, so, I prefer to go out for just walking even slowly. While I want walking, I should be careful of fall down, although I'm very familiar with this environment. See, I don't have leisure time habits as before because there are many inconveniences (female, married, 78).

Informants which suffer from health problems such as arthrosis and rheumatic cited that these health problem is led to problem like feeling of stiffness with hands or fatigue, feeling too tired and lack of energy. They reported being unable to walk far from their houses as the main leisure constraints to engage in outdoor leisure activities.

In this case, one of the informants said:

I can't go out far from my house, since my legs don't have much energy...they aren't good...I can't stay on my legs longer time...they feel tired... (Female, widowed, 74)

These symptoms was shared by others informants too. It is appeared that being unable to walk far was a reason for not visiting the outside places for outdoor leisure activities and not staying at them for a longer time. Beside the health

problem which restricted their leisure preferences, they hinder their participation in some outdoor leisure activities. An informant reported: with these health problems...I always have to just watch the people who actively engage at leisure activities (male, married, 75).

Apart from the above health problem, high blood pressure which has been cited by 18.5 percent of the informants, was another issue which preventing them from outdoor leisure activities (Table 5.5). An informant cited that:

I would like to travel to other country. I have travelled to Dubai and Kish, but not other countries. I'm afraid of my high blood pressure (female, widow, 74).

With these descriptions, it is obvious that arthrosis, rheumatic and high blood pressure, are the most important constraints in the health category that informants encounter with them while they want to participate in outdoor leisure activities. Along with Arthrosis and Rheumatic, poor vision was another constraint to their outdoor leisure activities which has mentioned by 14.9 percent of the informants (Table 5.5). An informant cited:

I would like to go outside for leisure and recreation, but as you see my eyes have problem. I can't go anywhere with these eyes...I can't read anything (female, widow, 74).

Prior Socialization: In addition to lack of interest and health problems, 37 percent of the informants of this study cited prior socialization as a constraint to their outdoor leisure activities (Table 5.13). They have affected in earlier life during childhood and adolescence by their parent's lifestyle, and they have affected them later in later life. These constraints remained stable over time, and preventing them to leisure participation across their life span.

Why we should go to parks? Our houses are as big as park. Houses which I sometimes couldn't see its end. Very big! With these big houses, why do we go to

a park? Our family gathered at these houses, no need to go to park, isn't it? Going to park offended us. We must cook our bread, and confections by ourselves. We must be cultivated all vegetarians by ourselves at the courtyard. I means at the garden which was located in front of our houses. Our lives were very closed and limited. Our lives were just inside our families and their ethnicity...we have grown in this manner, even ours indoor leisure was more than our outdoor leisure...this is traced back to the space which we have grown on that...So one of the reasons why Zoroastrians' elderly who are located in my generation don't participate in outdoor leisure is traced back to our characteristics, I mean, special conditions which we grown in them (female, single, 69).

Family responsibilities or commitments: About 34.5 percent of the informants identified this constraint which restricted their leisure participation (Table 5.13). These informants reported that they have to do some house chores at home. In this case female in particular but not restricted to them, mentioned this leisure constraint which was associated with their family roles and responsibilities. Although female's informants in this study were elderly and did not have small children how need to care by them, still they had to care their grandchildren and husband too. This probably affected the nature of family responsibilities that these people spoke about. Some of these examples related to the way that family demands impinge upon a grandparent's time:

I have to do some house chores at home. For example I have to prepare meal for my family. I often have to cook two meals per day for my family. After cooking lunch for my family, I have some leisure time and decided to go out such as park or hear (local center). Since my wife has broken her leg due to snatched purse, I have to spend much of time to do housework which previously my wife did (washing dishes, cleaning house, shopping and so on) and should be responsible for all the house chores (male, married, 68).

Fear of embarrassment (Shying to go out): Other than lack of interest, poor health conditions, and prior socialization, 31 percent of the informants also identified shying to go out as a constraint to their leisure (Table 5.13). They mentioned that it is because of this issue that, they do not like other people know how they spend their leisure time and use the leisure facilities. An informant mentioned that:

What people say about me, sometimes, hinder me to go out, I'm very obstinate. Although, I don't have any constraint, and I have done what I wanted to do, It is not important to me what people say about me, and how do they think about me. I'm old now, but when I was a young woman, it was not important to me what people think and talk about me, otherwise I couldn't live. But my friends no, they say that it is important to us what people say about us, how people think about us. It is not true just for my Zoroastrian's friends, almost most Iranian live like this, I mean, they live in the manner that it is seemed they live for others. But I'm not like this, otherwise I can't live. It is much better now, and the level of perception and think of the people have improved, before (I mean around the beginning of the revolution in Iran) people just looked for who are coming to my house, and when is he going...Let me alone, it is my business. It is not your business who is coming and where is he going? It is not important to me. Since if I wanted to signify that, so I should kill myself! Those who are belonged to my generation, constraint themselves. It is important for themselves what people say about them, the talk of the people is important for them, and this issue constraint them to participate in leisure activities (female, single, 69).

That is why these informants stated that they like to go out at the night, since at the night nobody seen them. An informant mentioned that:

I prefer to go outside at night, since at night everywhere is dark, nobody knows anybody (female, widowed, 74).

Too Many Male Park Visitors: This constraint was mentioned by female informant only. 28.5 percent of the female's informants stated that the parks were used frequently by male and they have to use another sitting area where many female's elderly frequently gathered (Table 5.13). An informant stated that:

I come here sometimes but not often...I only sit here (local park) which is near to my house...I know all people who come here...I can chat with them...I don't visit the big parks. There are too many elderly males there. When I'm with people whom I know them and they are the same as me, I feel more comfortable...I like them and chatting with them, we have been here for a long time (female, widow, 67).

This issue was observed by the researcher when he was at the parks to interview with the informants. The researcher observed more male than female at the parks; even it occurred at the time when the researcher observed them. Another informant stated:

Going to park is not interesting for me now. Going to park is just for male. Female don't go to park. I as a woman, shy to go to parks. Let me tell you something, in Kerman male more than female go to park or other open places for leisure time (female, widow, 69).

Religiosity: Only 13 percent of the informants mentioned their leisure preferences and participation is restricted by religious norms and rules (Table 5.13). Actually, there are some religious rules and norms in the Zoroastrianism which hinder them to do things. Although the Zoroastrianism has many celebrations every week, month and year, there are also some days during the weeks, months and year that oblige them to do and not to do some things. For example, every month, they have for days following; Vahman, Mah, goosh, and Ram, that they are prohibited to eat any meat (Boyce, 2005). According to this rule and norm, leisure activities of the Zoroastrians in general, and specifically, their picnicking can be constrained, since during the picnic, they want to

provide a good time for themselves outside their home by killing an animal such as sheep, goat or any birds; and make a kabob with their meat. An informant stated that:

Well, assuming that we're planning to go for a picnic one day, we have to consider that on the day of the battle or not? If so, we have canceled that day, and we plan to take another day (Male, married, 67).

5.4.2. Interpersonal Constraints

Examples of interpersonal constraints were equally apparent in this study, representing limitations in leisure activity that originated from their relationships with others. People spoke about the many ways that their social relationships (or lack of thereof) impinged upon the things they did in their leisure. These examples were classified as lack of a leisure partner or companion, death of spouse or friends, lack of support and appreciation from the family.

Table 5.14: Interpersonal Constraints among the informants

Interpersonal Constraints	percentage
Absence of leisure partner or lack of companion	78.5
Death of spouse and friends	43
Lack of support and appreciation from the family	9.5

Absence of leisure partner or lack of companion: About 78.5 percent of the informants were aware of how their leisure choices were restricted by lack of a leisure partner. These informants spoke about social isolation and the general absence of significant relationship in their lives (Table 5.14). In either case, the lack of an available partner impinged upon their leisure choices. One of the informants mentioned that:

If I want to go outside of home, somebody must come with me, whether one of my family or my friends, or somebody else, otherwise I can't go (female, married, 67).

Another informant mentioned:

Going to park alone?! Why and for what? No, going to park lonely don't have pleasure for me. When I'm alone, if I go to park, where should I sit? How do I stand up with this physical problem? No, I don't like to go anywhere lonely. If I have a boon companion, then perhaps I go, otherwise no. there is an urban park near to my house, which have almost all facilities, but, because of lack of companion, I can't go there (female, widowed, 82).

Similarly, another informant stated that:

Going to park lonely don't have pleasure for me. Sometimes, I quickly go to park lonely, turn around the park and then quickly go back home. For what should I go to park lonely? What do I do while I sit there lonely? I go there, walk around the park and go back quickly; I never sit there, since I'm alone. But if I go there with my friends, we may sit there, and talk about driver's issues. Of course, I go there with my friends just for walking, not for picnic. I didn't remember that I went to park for picnic (female, single, 68).

Yeah, I have gone before, Zoroastrians Association had a tour which almost the entire member took park in. yeah, if there is a tour we participate in, but if there is not a tour and we must go lonely, no, I can't go and I think other member of the Association can't go. I would like to go to travel out of Iran, but I can't go, for traveling one must have a boon companion, otherwise he or she can't go anywhere lonely. If I want to go travel, I must find one of them, this is my opinion. When I have an intimate friend, I'm comfortable, and then I don't afraid that what will be happened to me, if something will be happened to me, I'm sure that I'm not alone. Although somebody may find and show interest to accompanying me, I'm

afraid that I will be a burden on other people. I don't like being a burden on other people. I fear that go somewhere alone. With my friends I also fear to go somewhere, I fear that something will be happen to me and I will be burden on my friends. Let me say, I afraid that I will have heart attack (female, married, 66).

Family have important role for these informants to go out for leisure activity. In this case, these informants mentioned that if all members of the family are ready for outdoor leisure, then we go, otherwise, we do not go. An informant mentioned that:

Every weekend, my children and I, go to Prince Garden by our car (Baghe Shahzadeh). But this plan depends on my entire children coming with me, this means if one of them can't come, then we cancel that and we don't go anywhere. If we want to go anywhere, all of my children should come together (male, married, 70).

These symptoms was shared by other informants too:

If our family includes children and grandchildren are ready, then we can go out to eat dinner or elsewhere, otherwise no (female, widowed, 74).

Another informant mentioned:

My sisters and their children lived in Kerman before, and when I wanted sometimes to go out for leisure, I went to their homes. We usually gathered together. But now they migrated from here to Tehran. I'm alone now (female, widowed, 72).

And other informants stated that:

With this problem which I mentioned for you, if I have a boon companion who accompany me to go out, then I wish to go out for movie, or park. But when you don't have any companion, there is no pleasure in going out. How could I go out alone for leisure? Why should I go out alone for leisure? With whom do you want

to speak to? Thus, instead of going out lonely, you may decide stay at home (female, married, 65).

Before, I lived at Zarisf Street, the street where almost most of the Zoroastrians live there, our houses were near to gather. But now I'm isolated from other coreligionists. No Zoroastrians live near to me. I just see my Zoroastrian's friends at Zoroastrian's association every Wednesday afternoon. When my house was near to other coreligionists, I had communication with them more than present. I live far from them, you now, so I can't have communication with them the same as before (female, widowed, 79).

Previously when my friends had small children, told me that come with us to go to park and I went to park with them. We sat there for a few minutes and then we went back home. We sometimes had something to eat (such as tea or fruits), but we didn't go there for picnicking and eating dinner or lunch. When their children's play finished, then we went back home. Their children have grown and they become mature, so their parents do not go to park. Family and individuals go to park who have small children. I see that who go park? When I pass around parks, I see that families more often go to park who have small children (female, single, 68)

The above example emphasizes the importance of having a leisure partner. When a partner was not available, many people felt restricted and unable to do things that they otherwise have enjoyed. It was apparent that social relationships were significant in shaping these people's leisure. Family relationships impinged on some people's freedom to do activities, but the lack of relationships prevented others from doing activities that they would enjoy. The results made it clear that healthy leisure and healthy social relationships were closely intertwined.

Death of spouse and friends: Death of spouse and friends was another constraint to their leisure which has been mentioned by 43 percent of the informants (Table 5.14). Informants of this study are dependent to their family and closer kinship. Death of each of them can be led to deep shock for them, and constrained their leisure. An informant stated:

Until my husband was alive, we went to abroad travel. We went to Shiraz, Tehran, Mashhad and other places. We went by own car. Almost all weekend we went somewhere. But now no, after my husband was dead, I go out for leisure and recreation less than before (female, widowed, 72).

Lack of support and appreciation from the family: This constraint has been mentioned by 9.5 percent of the informants of this study (Table 5.14). Families may fear of injury of the elderly people and discourage them to do more leisure activities. They would like the elderly chatting with their friends rather than doing leisure activities especially physical activity. In this case, one of the informants stated that:

My children are very worried about me. They are afraid that if I go out alone, may I fall down and break my hands and feet. That is why, they say, go out with friends, or does not go away (female, married, 78)

5.4.3. Structural Constraints

From the study result, the most important leisure constraints among the Zoroastrian's elderly were those classified as community or structural constraints or those factors which intervened between preferences and actual participation in a leisure activity. The following table shows the structural constraint which the informants of the study has experienced.

Table 5.15: Structural Constraints among the informants

Structural Constraints	Percentage
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Lack of time	53
Lack of money	12
Requirement of modesty and Veil	16.7
Fear of familiarity	15
Weather condition	17.8
Poor park management	75

Lack of time: About 53 percent of the informants identified lack of time as a constraint to their leisure activities (Table 5.15). In fact, they stated they routinized their daily activities and do not want to interrupt that. An informant stated:

I do the same things every day. I wake up late morning, clean up the apartment, then go out for shopping, and go back home to cooking. I use to cook soup and other thing with fresh vegetable and meat. Although there are some local parks near my house, I seldom go there...actually, I don't have enough time to go there...I'm busy with daily shopping...I have to do shopping...I don't have time for leisure (female, widowed, 68).

This informant excluded all leisure activities form her daily live and stated routinized her daily schedule and do not like to interrupt that. A similar answer was given by other informants:

I can't go out for leisure more often...I don't have that much time to come (male, married, 67).

I don't have much time. I have to do the shopping, do laundry, tidy up my house, and cook (female, married, 68).

Although the elderly were retired from work, other business such as taking care of house chores kept some of them busy and inhibited their park visitation.

Money: This constraints was frequently mentioned as an important factor shaping leisure activity by 12 percent of the informants (Table 5.15). Informants with

presumably adequate income mentioned that the expense of certain activities kept them from participating in those things. An informant stated that:

Money has not been obstacle in spending my leisure time. I have done what I wanted to do. Although in recent years, there was an economic inflation which has influenced fulfilling my necessary needs. With the newest financial reform (eliminating of subsidize) which has increased the price of the petrol, electricity, and water, I think there will be some financial problems with the meeting of the necessary needs. I guess with the new conditions, leisure and recreational needs should be decreased, since with this pension we just can meet the necessary needs rather than the secondary needs such as leisure and recreation one. with the new price of petrol, we may can't like before every week go to the places which are far from hear and have to go to the places which is nearer to hear. We have to replace it with other options, for example we have to go to a park instead of going to Prince Garden (Male, Married, 78).

These informants were aware of the influence that money had on their leisure patterns, but they seemed to indicate that lack of money altered their leisure options rather than preventing leisure altogether. Many of the activities that were inaccessible because of money were hypothetical, and it was difficult to determine the actual impact that lack of money had on these people.

Requirement of modesty and Veil: About 16.7 percent of the informants in this study stated that their leisure is restricted by veil and modesty (Table 5.15). Several sub-themes within this topic has been identified. First, the Islamic faith of Iran imposed certain direct restrictions on leisure activities of the Zoroastrians. Second, certain regulations existed with respect to the dress of women in Iran that affected their leisure activities. Findings of this study showed that the Zoroastrians who live in Iran are imposed by Islam in certain direct restrictions on their leisure behavior. Leisure

activities of the Zoroastrians had to be “modest, they could not involve violence, foul language, or untidy. Moreover, the Zoroastrians who live in Iran were prohibited from frequenting establishment that served alcohol (Foltz, 2011). Leisure activities of the Zoroastrians who live in Iran were restricted by another issue, veil or special kind of dress requirements (at least a simple scarf and formal dress which is termed in Iran as Islamic Hijab and modesty) which affected the leisure behaviour of the Zoroastrians especially females. Although the Zoroastrian religion did not prescribe a specific type of dress, because of Islamic rules, females who live in Iran, merely required dressing “modesty” least in open spaces. Most Zoroastrians in this study perceived Hijab as a constraint. In fact, in Zoroastrians’ religion Hijab is not necessary, and they are free to choose it. One of the informants stated that:

I personally like to go somewhere where is comforted. Of course it should be free too. My intention from free and comfortable is that, we as Zoroastrians don't like wear scarf and the veil which Muslims' females wear. It don't have any sense and meaning for us. My children like to go to park without any veil and scarf but all times the disciplinary officer which are present at parks and walk around parks warning them that keep your veil. Then we prefer to go somewhere where is being free and comfort (male, married, 78).

Fear of familiarity: About 15.5 percent of the informants mentioned that their leisure constrained because of fear of familiarity (Table 5.15). Actually they scare that if they go out for leisure or recreation, their children (youth) fall in love with Muslim's girl or son and this relation is leaded to marriage between them. These informants stated that because of this issue, their outdoor leisure or recreations automatically are constrained to indoor leisure. They prefer stay at home rather than go out and then concern about that. This is evident in the following quote. One of the informants mentioned that:

Zoroastrians don't welcome to Muslims too much, they fear that this familiarity lead to marriage. You know, after marriage of one Zoroastrian's person with Muslim's person, everything should be changed. According to Muslim's rule, Zoroastrian's person who marriage with Muslim's person, should be converted his or her religion and change his or her religion to Muslim. This compulsion is too difficult; I mean this "must" is too difficult. I myself don't like something which is accompanied with must (female, married, 68).

As reflected on these examples of structural constraints, it seemed as if they affected the type of activity that people did but they did not preclude people from engaging in leisure altogether. Some of the health constraints pointedly kept people from doing activities they used to enjoy, but many of the other structural constraints kept people from doing "dream wish" activities in which they might never have actually engaged. These are not the Zoroastrians' rules; these are Islam rules which affect the all aspects of live of the whole people who live in Iran.

Weather condition: About 17.8 percent of the informants of the study identified the weather as a constraint to their outdoor leisure activities (Table 5.15). Since the country of Iran has four seasons, and each seasons has a particular weather, this was mentioned by several informants who wanted to spend their outdoor leisure activities, but cannot. Informants cited when it is raining, they did not participate in outdoor leisure activities such as visiting the park. Then, weather can be identified as a constraint to leisure which cease and in some cases stopped their participation from outdoor leisure temporality. Poor weather also include hot weather especially at summer, cold and stormy weather, raining and snowing at winter, raining and cloudy weather at fall. An informant mentioned,

I prefer to go outside in the afternoon, after evening. You know in Kerman, the weather is very hot and dry during the day and at night there is no sun which bothers you. Night have more pleasant for leisure (Female, widowed, 74).

Poor park management: This leisure constraint has been mentioned by 75 percent of the informants of the study (Table 5.15). They mentioned that issues such as unclean place (the park is not clean enough), unethical behaviour like drug use at the park, and the park was too crowded were restricted their leisure participation. An informant mentioned that:

People who come here are not as enough as hygienic. See, that person spit there...some of them throw trash or other rubbish here. Although there are too many signboards which alert, it still exists. In my opinion, parks are not good places. They are very dirty and crowded...it is not safe; there are some drug addicts there too” (Male, Married, 66).

And, another informant stated that:

“It (the park) is too crowded (female, widowed, 77).

In this case, lack of convenient facilities was also mentioned by these informants.

An informant stated:

As you know, Haftbagh have a place to ride bicycle. My grandchildren can go there for bicycling. There are some chairs to sit in Haftbagh as well, but other places don't have these facilities and my children and my grandchildren don't like to go there. Other places also don't have enough light to read something (male, married, 76).

Another informant mentioned that:

My children and grandchildren would like to go where that have plaything such as swing, firmament and other thing. Few places have these playthings (female, widowed, 74).

These symptoms stated by another informant:

Usually we prefer to go somewhere which has playground and facilities for children's play. My grandchildren like participate in social activities such as football or volleyball which are social and children like participate in these activities. So we go to the parks which have playthings and playground for children (Male, Married, 73).

5.5. Population Decline and New Identity Challenges among the Zoroastrianism

One of the immediate and observable outcomes of the improvement in Zoroastrians' level of success, urbanization and education has been the remarkable fall in their birth rate. According to one of the informants of this study who was heads of this community:

This rate is about one percent which is below the replacement rate (male, married.65).

For most Zoroastrian youth who are establishing their careers, there is little motivation to have many children. The average number of children in each Zoroastrian family is one, a number that guarantees only half of the population of each successive generation. If this trend continues, their population will be reduced to half in the next generation. One of the informants of this study who was the Zoroastrian's representative in parliament indicated that his stance was:

I recommend to young couples that they should have bigger families, he then continued while smiling, but my wife and I have just one child (Male, Married, 50).

Worries about the population decline are deepening as the traditional extended families disappear and new marriage traditions arise. One informant who was the Zoroastrian's Mubed, indicated that the age of marriage in Zoroastrian society was increasing and asserted that:

Girls delay their marriage up to 20 years of age and even after that they don't tend to have more than one child (male, married, 65).

This informant believed that late marriage was the most important factor in the reduction of the Zoroastrian population. He mentioned that:

In the early years of the Islamic republic, our population was about 50,000 but now our population has dropped to half of that number (Male, Married, 65).

Many factors have been mentioned as reasons for not being inclined towards marriage and having children. One of the informant indicated that the Zoroastrian community was worried about the expenses of marriage and having children. He also talked about the role of superstitions and rumors in preventing marriage:

We should prove this point that one of the challenges that the Zoroastrian community is facing is that our Zoroastrian women are jealous and take baseless rumors seriously; for instance, they say that this girl does not belong to our social class and is not suitable for our son. The first thing which is important for them is what his father's job is and how much money his father has? (Male, Married, 68).

The social strains on Zoroastrians, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, simplified migration conditions for Zoroastrian Iranians, in comparison to Muslim Iranians, have resulted in the reduction in the Zoroastrian population. Therefore, due to

the significant emigration of Zoroastrian youth and the low birth rate, the Zoroastrian community residing in Iran has faced a drop in population in recent years. This has had a remarkable effect, weakening their identity and endangering the existence of their community. With their younger generation migrating on a large scale, the outcome has been the reduction of their population in 1970 by half. The worry among Zoroastrians is seeing their culture being wiped out in the same manner. An informant stated that:

Our main duty is to preserve the culture. I hopes that every Zoroastrian would play their part. Western articles and media have also announced their worries about the ongoing existence of the Zoroastrian community (female, married, 68).

In an interview with another informant, he announced his regret for the population decline of the younger generation of Zoroastrians saying that:

I am really sad that they are leaving Iran; the second generation of Zoroastrians will have no images from Iran (male, married, 68).

In a similar statement, another informant highlighted the same problem and argued that:

We are the guardians of Zoroastrian ceremonies and traditions like Mehregan. If we leave Iran, who will preserve these ceremonies and traditions? (female, married, 71).

However, most informants with whom the researcher interviewed, were planning to migrate or were encouraging their children to leave. The loss of the Zoroastrian community in Iran was upsetting for them but was not strong enough to deter them from planning to migrate to the West for a better life. However, most claimed that they liked Iran and, if one day conditions changed in Iran, they would return. Two informants agreed with the fact that:

Despite the discrimination and prejudice from the Muslim majority, they had a much easier life in comparison to Muslims themselves and, in most cases, living in Iran was not unbearable. The formal policy of the Association of Zoroastrians was to discourage migration but they could not do much in this regard (Male, married 73; female, widow, 75).

Zoroastrian community have shown that the main concern of them is to preserve their faith at any cost. In this context, one informant said:

The most crucial challenge for us is to survive. We have to confess this complicated challenge in that our ancestors migrated to India, which was the only thing they could do to preserve their community which was on the verge of extinction. Even the inbound migrations inside Iran were carried out in order to preserve the sacred fire, for instance, the fire of Kerman fire temple was first brought from the west of Iran, that is, Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, our migrations are not done for the purpose of preserving our society or Zoroastrian faith. It is a blind migration which does not follow any purpose (Male, married, 78).

Worry about the migration of Zoroastrians was one of the prominent features of the election campaign of the three Zoroastrian candidates who sought to win the parliamentary election. One of the informants called this problem:

An important and serious issue which needs to be investigated. In case the purpose of migration was education and then coming back to the country, then it could be considered as a positive act, but if the purpose was a permanent stay, then it is not right. Not only youth but also their families leave Iran (Male, married, 63)

Another informant of this study who was the Zoroastrians' representative in parliament also said that:

In relation to this problem, they have formed a specialist commission comprised of youth to investigate the underlying reasons behind the migration of Zoroastrian youth (Male, married, 60).

However, another informant of the study claimed that:

We can't simply prevent the youth from leaving the country (male, married, 64).

He also mentioned problems such as unemployment, low wages and housing issues which had given rise to the low rate of marriage. However, he expressed his hope that a solution for this problem could be found with the help of the Zoroastrian assembly along with other organizations. Although the above-mentioned problems were not exclusive to Zoroastrians and were similar for all Iranians living in Iran, like other religious minorities, Zoroastrians were provided with more chances to immigrate as religious refugees to Western countries. In most cases, Zoroastrians took these chances and embarked on emigration. Seemingly, the Islamic Republic of Iran is not worried about the high rate of migration of religious minorities because there is no system planned to reduce this rate. The policies of organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees are to ease the migration process of Iranian religious minorities.

These problems have been led to identity challenge among them. This identity challenge is worry about this issue that their religion and in general specking their culture is wiped out. During the past two decades, Zoroastrian minority residing in Iran have come up with some strategies to solve this identity challenge. They have frequently modified their sacred elements in order to preserve their cultural identity. Reforms within the Zoroastrian religion have been an acceptable response but, during the past two decades, these changes have had an accelerating rate. At times, their religious rituals, ceremonies and fundamental beliefs have faded or even been ignored. On informant stated that:

Most of these reforms involved the simplification of religious rituals and festivals so that most of these rituals could be performed in the form of leisure (female, single, 69).

The researcher could employ the term holy leisure, meaning a process of simplification of religious rituals and festivals whose purpose is to attract more Zoroastrians especially ordinary people to these rituals (Figure 5.10; Figure 5.11; Figure 5.12). This simplification process has, at times, gone so far that it has even generated a new religious identity. Sometimes, the reverse process has been adopted in which the religious elements have been emphasized in order to generate a solid religious identity. Sanctification and desanctification are dichotomies which have played a fundamental role in the generation and regeneration of the identity of Zoroastrians residing in Iran.

5.5.1. Sanctification and Desanctification: A Way to pass through the New Identity Crisis

Through the efforts of the Zoroastrians to respond to their religious challenges, the followers of this religious minority have frequently modified the features that form their religious rituals and beliefs through processes involving their sanctification and desanctification. The purpose for these modifications has been to define the elements that construct their identity, on the one hand, distinguishing the “self” from “others” and, on the other hand, regenerating their identity. Sanctification refers to the process on the basis of which the believers of a faith tend to establish religious dependencies within the scope of their beliefs. During this process, at times, they even propose some non-religious elements in a sanctified manner in order to postulate a religious load for these elements.



Figure. 5. 10. Gahanbr Celebration, Kerman, 2012



Figure 5.11: Sadeh Celebration, Kerman, 2013.

The term desanctification refers to a process during which the believers of a faith try to moderate the sacredness of some religious elements through simplification of religious rituals, proposing new items which were hitherto prohibited. The purpose of desanctification was to cope with the new challenge of identity for the Zoroastrians which was a threat which could lead to their cultural fading away as a result of their population decline.

According to historical accounts, most of the sanctifying measures taken among Zoroastrians were during the Sasanian Empire. One of the informants who was the *mubed* of the Zoroastrians' Association stated that:

These included gathering and compiling the Avesta (the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism); building various fire temples; establishing a systematic religious structure; revising the calendar; and the avoidance of the use of images in religious rituals, (male, married, 62).



Figure 5.12: Arbab Keykhosroo Memorial, Kerman, 2012.

The idea of sanctification was the central motive behind these historical processes carried out by Zoroastrians. These processes were constantly observed and emphasized following the formation of a religious hierarchy and mutual interaction between kings and *mubeds*. The orientation of these processes was diverted following the rise of Islam in Iran leading to the formation of new sanctification centers. An informant stated that:

Among the various desanctifying measures taken by Zoroastrians with regard to post-Islamic revolution Muslims was the denial of Cyrus's tomb claiming that this tomb actually belonged to the mother of the prophet Solomon and not to Cyrus. This was an action taken to preserve Zoroastrian symbols and religious places: the result was the admission of this claim by Muslims who dedicated their sacrifices and bounties to this tomb. These actions were observed with other Zoroastrian religious places and were indicative of the formation of a sanctifying

attitude along with ingenious initiatives that were compatible with the new conditions (male, married, 62).

The results of such compatibility were greater harmonization and the replacement for Zoroastrians of some ethnic-national commonalities on the basis of their religious-national identity. Naturally, this process was not done constantly and, through the ages, Zoroastrian intellectuals have tried to respond to the ambiguities proposed by Muslims through writing many books and explaining Zoroastrians' religious rituals and traditions. One of the informants stated that:

That is why most of the books remaining from the 9th century are concerned with Zoroastrian religious practices such as religious rituals, purification, and daily religious rituals and rights (male, married, 62).

In order to explain Zoroastrians' understanding of what constitutes a holy place and the type of identity challenge created by it, it should be mentioned that the *Adrayn* or fire temple is one of the holy places where religious practices are performed, regardless of the historical process of revival, closure or changed function of the fire temples after Islam. It should be mentioned that the most sacred fire from Zoroastrians' point of view is *Vahram* fire. In Iran, the sacred fire of *Vahram* remaining from the Sasanian Empire is preserved in the fire temple in Yazd. To respect this fire place, the conduct of the followers of Zoroastrianism is controlled to a great extent. Even the religious *Mubeds* and priests pay serious attention to not polluting the fire with their saliva. In this case, one of the informants stated that:

Yet one of the interesting points about developments in recent years is that from the point of view of the Zoroastrian faith, Muslims are permitted to visit the Vahram fire. The right to visit the Vahram fire from behind a glass door is indicative of a two-sided process of desanctifying and sanctifying. This simultaneously illustrates the process of harmonization and the emphasis on

indices of religious identity. There is no prohibition on Muslims in terms of visiting the Zoroastrian fire temple in Kerman (male, married, 62).

One part of the desanctifying process can be seen in opening the Zoroastrian fire temples for visits by the public, an initiative which was not common previously. The public can continue to visit the fire temples freely without any religious constraints.

Earth is one of the other holy places for Zoroastrians and is represented by a symbol of six *Spentamaz* (one of the six *spenta*) which should not be polluted. Towers of silence are the phenomena created by this belief. According to the Zoroastrian faith, at the time of death, first the *dive of Nasu* (the demon, Nasu) penetrates the body and makes the person die. That is why death is a devilish phenomenon: the corpse is filthy and should not touch the earth. An informant stated that:

That is the reason why corpses are left on rocks: this allows the flesh to decompose over time and then the bones are taken and preserved in ustudan (the place for the bones). These rituals are no longer practiced in Iran due to cultural and environmental considerations. To preserve the purity of the earth, Zoroastrians used to create a protective layer between the corpse and the earth so that the corpse would not touch the earth. This protective layer was often made of cement or stone: that is why, before burial ceremonies are performed, the corpse is laid on stone to prevent it from touching the earth. It seems that these rituals have been desanctified in order to create more compatibility with current conditions (male, married, 62).

Another instance of the desanctifying process was the giving of permission for Muslims to attend Zoroastrian religious rituals. In this case, one of the informants stated that:

Zoroastrians promote the attendance of Muslims at Zoroastrian religious rituals and ancient national festivals and charge them entrance fees. Military bands

accompany the Sade festivals and women having their periods are not forced to stay in covered areas (male, mined, 62).

These can also be regarded as instances of desanctifying processes undertaken by Zoroastrians to create harmonization, simplification and regeneration of a new modern identity. To allow Muslims to take part in the *Sade* festivals and other ancient festivals is not only indicative of a desanctification process, but also is an attempt to introduce Zoroastrian rituals and ancient festivals to the *shi'a*-dominated Iranian society. It is also indicative of Zoroastrians' efforts to show their cultural-religious identity to others and overcome their new identity crisis.

In addition to some desanctifying efforts, some sanctifying processes have also been observable such as preserving the endowments in Kerman and Yazd and going back to them during the performance of festivals such as the six festivals of *Gahanbar* and other religious rituals. The *mubeds*' emphasis on observing order and discipline in performing the rituals is a symbol of the regeneration of this sanctification.

On the first day that the researcher went to the Association of Zoroastrians in Kerman to submit his letter of introduction, the conversation with the head of the association mainly revolved around the legal process of reviving the endowments of the association in the nearby cities and around Kerman. Some members of the association had been selected to be in charge of following the case (participant observation's field notes by the researcher, September 2010).

Their emphasis on reviving the Zoroastrians' endowments and releasing them from illegal confiscation by Muslims, and on holding the religious festivals and rituals were all indicative of the sanctification process among Zoroastrians. Using these endowments to conduct group excursions and camping trips for a few days, as organized by the women's organization within the Association of Zoroastrians, shows their attempts to preserve their heritage which had been forgotten during past decades.

5.5.2. Holy Leisure: The Outcome of the Dichotomy Processes of Sanctification and Desanctification

For Zoroastrians, holding religious festivals, fairs, and rituals is a way both to remember their past and to use it to regenerate their new identity. One of the informants who was the editor in chief of the Zoroastrians' newsletter mentioned that:

During the past years, the focus of attention for Zoroastrian festivals was informing [people] about the religious and philosophical significance of these festivals but recently, the head of the Association of Zoroastrians has included many activities especially recreational and leisure activities in these religious events (Male, married, 61).

He believed that the purpose of these modifications was to attract the younger generation and consequently to reduce the migration rate. To permit Muslim visitors and visitors from other religions to attend the Zoroastrian rituals is seen as a way to regenerate the Zoroastrian identity (Figure 5.13). The researcher attended almost all of the Zoroastrian religious festivals. In one case, the researcher observed that:

Organizers spent their time in two main activities: firstly, they spent their time decorating the environment with colored papers, flowers and images from the sacred and ancient monuments respected by Zoroastrians. These images usually suited the content of each ceremony. Secondly, they spent a significant amount of time preparing the youth for their performances which included reading sacred texts, reading Zoroaster's teachings, music, and group dance (participant observation's field notes by the researcher, Jul 2011).

These activities promoted the religious identity of Zoroastrians by educating youth and others about the Zoroastrian ethics and rituals. The Zoroastrian community, in the past three decades, has witnessed remarkable developments in their economic

prosperity. These developments have been accompanied by some cultural changes. An informant stated that:

For instance, our religious perception and practices have changed, our attendance to religious rituals has decreased (we perform religious rituals less and less day by day) and, increasingly, we have focused on the ethical-recreational aspects of the rituals (male, married, 73).

Simplification of Zoroastrian religious rituals and a lack of emphasis on legitimating the rituals were also observed which was characteristic of the Zoroastrian faith during the Sasanian Empire. In most cases, these changes have benefitted the validation of the Associations of Zoroastrian Mubed so that this was no longer such a burden for ordinary people.



Figure 5.13: Gahanbar Celebration, Zoroastrians Association, Kerman, 2011.

Zoroastrian custodians have committed themselves to improving the quality of life and religion of Zoroastrians.

The Zoroastrians were busy renovating buildings which had been newly released from being occupied by others or by the person who previously owned them. These buildings were, in fact, the places in which Zoroastrian religious festivals and

rituals, and outdoor recreation and leisure were held (participant observation's field notes by the researcher, Jun 2012).

According to bans applied by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Zoroastrians cannot build new fire temples. In this case, one of the informants of this study stated that:

In comparison to the past, members of the Zoroastrian community have fewer problems accessing the places where these rituals are held because transportation is provided to take them and to bring them home. New sports complexes have been built for us. Some of these complexes are multifunctional (male, married, 62).

In addition, the Association of Zoroastrians has requested that Zoroastrians go beyond this simple improvement of Zoroastrian society, maintaining their desirability and freshness within the borders of the *shi'a*-dominated society of Iran and continuing to survive. An informant stated that:

We no longer exhibit our art exhibitions in Zoroastrian environments; rather, we held them in public areas open for visits by the public where we show our arts and handicrafts. Some of our festivals such as those which feature Zoroastrian cuisine are accessible for visits by the public outside Zoroastrian environments. The library of the Association of Zoroastrians and the Zoroastrian fire temples are not only open for Zoroastrians but they are also open for access by the public. Entering the Association for Zoroastrians is free for almost everyone with apparently no prohibitions for anyone (male, married, 65).

These changes are all indicative of the simplification of Zoroastrian rituals and festivals. They have paved the way for the desanctifying process of some matters previously considered to be sacred, in order to reconstruct and revive the Zoroastrian identity. In fact, Iranian Zoroastrians have changed a lot during the past decades.

The Zoroastrians' *Sedreh-Koshti pushi* ritual (which involved the wearing of the holy belt and under-shirt used to characterize Zoroastrians' identity over the centuries as

required in order to participate in religious rituals) are now held in a very cheerful, public and recreational manner and the old strict traditions and rituals no longer exist.

An informant mentioned that:

Most of the festivals like Gahanbar have lost their religious formalities with mainly their recreational and leisure aspects remaining. For instance, the long hours of praying have been reduced to 30 or at most 40 minutes. Limitations on entering sacred places have been somewhat reduced: the sacred fire temples in Iran whose fires have been burning for 1500 years have also been open to visits by the public and tourists. The only Zoroastrian museum of anthropology located in Kerman which contains many Zoroastrian documents, texts, sacred books, traditional clothes and a symbolic image of a Zoroastrian fire temple attracts visitors from all over Iran (male, married, 62).

Websites belonging to Zoroastrians also promote the recreational and leisure programs and ask their fellow believers to cooperate with them. In one case, the *Amordad* website, one of the most famous Zoroastrian websites, sought a response to: What is your suggestion for holding recreational programs constantly? What was interesting was that most suggestions emphasized that the programs should be happy and cheerful with more focus on recreational aspects.

5.6. Summary

In this chapter, the results of the study has been be analyzed. Based on the socio-economic Background the informants, 52.4 percent of them were females and 47.6 percent of them were males. Based on their age groups, 40.5 percent of them were 60 to 69 years old, 47.5 percent of them were 70 to 79 years old, and 12 percent of them were

80 years old and above. The education level of 16.6 percent of them was secondary school or below; 32 percent of them held high school diploma, and 51 percent of them had university degrees. More than 35 percent of them stated that they did not suffer from any kind of chronic disease, while 54 percent of them suffered from one or more chronic and serious diseases. More than 48 percent of them suffered from rheumatics, arthritis and back pain. Following these diseases, high blood pressure was the most common type of disease among them. In addition, 11 percent suffered from coronary disease and 8 percent of them suffered from diabetes. More than 48 percent of the informants suffered from rheumatics, arthritis and back pain. Following these diseases, high blood pressure was the most common type of disease from which 18.5 percent of the informants suffered. In addition, 11 percent and 8 percent of them suffered from coronary disease and diabetes respectively. Based on the economic status of them, more than 34 percent of them belonged to lower class, 56 percent of them belonged to middle class and 10 percent of them belonged to high class. Based on their marital status of the informants, more than 58 percent of them were widow, 39 percent of them were married and only 2 percent of them had not married. The most leisure activities of the informants were participating in civic and religious activities, visiting friends and relatives, attending social groups and family gatherings, attending religious places, picnic, travelling, chatting with other elders in local clubs, going to religious clubs, shopping for fun, and going to movies. Leisure constraints which was reported by the informants have been categorized in three groups; *Intrapersonal constraints*: lack of interest (distress and indecisiveness, disappointment and boredom) health problems or physical constraints (atrophy, surgeries, disability, pain and illness, overweight, visual and hearing impairments); prior socialization, fear of being mocked by others, being shy and religious. *Interpersonal constraints*: family responsibilities and commitments (taking care of wife and grandchildren) lack of leisure companion, death of close

relatives or friends, lack of encouragement and support by family and friends, the leisure preferences of spouse, children and grandchildren. *Structural constraints*: lack of time, financial problems, fear of familiarity leading to marriage, climatic conditions, insufficient management of parks in providing and maintenance of leisure facilities, transportation problem, distance, obligation of being covered and considering hijab, lack of leisure spaces specific for women, lack of leisure facilities near home.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1. Introduction

The main objective of the research was to explore the leisure activities of the Zoroastrians' elderly in Kerman, Iran. Subsidiary objectives of the study were: a) to identify the outdoor leisure activities and preferences of the Zoroastrians' elderly in Iran

b) to explore the leisure constraints which limit the leisure participation of the Zoroastrians' elderly in leisure activities c) to explore the contribution of the leisure activities to religious continuity of the Zoroastrians' community d) Suggestions to improve the leisure aspects of the Zoroastrians' elderly in Iran. Therefore, this chapter is divided to the following sections: a) discussion of the leisure activities of the informants, b) discussion of the leisure constraints of the informants, and c) discussion of the contribution of the leisure activities of the Zoroastrians to their religious continuity.

6.2. Leisure Activities among the Informants

The increasing numbers of elderly people has made the leisure time to become a central and important subject for many gerontologists. Knowledge about how the elderly spend their leisure time and what choices are available for them in their leisure time is of particular importance for leisure planners and providers. As mentioned in the previous chapter, almost all the informants participated at least in one or more outdoor leisure activities. The common styles of outdoor leisure activities among the informants were: religious activities, social activities, meeting and socializing with friends and relatives, attending family gatherings, daily and nightly friendly and family picnics, chatting with other elderly people in local centers, going to the parks, exercises in the morning or evening times, eating out, travel, walking for pleasure, going to the sport clubs and doing or watching sport activities, shopping for pleasure and going to the movies. Religious and social activities and spending the leisure time with friends, relatives and family are perhaps the most popular ways of spending outdoor leisure activities among the informants. Kelly (1980) stated that the elderly are more likely to enjoy social and family activities, because these activities do not require rigorous physical effort. In fact, the Zoroastrian elderly preferred outdoor leisure time to the

indoor leisure time and tended to spend most of their leisure time in outdoor and urban spaces than indoor. The results of this study are in contrast with the findings of studies conducted on the patterns of leisure time in Iran such as Marvati & Hosseini (2000) which was carried out to examine the status of daily living activities and leisure time of the elderly people. The results of their study showed that 86.8 percent of the elderly people spent their leisure time for resting at home. The results of the current study is also inconsistent with Khoshbin's study (2007). The results of his study also showed that 85 percent of the Iranians' elderly spend their leisure time for watching TV. Iso-Ahola, Jackson, & Dunn (1994) also found in their studies that the elderly are less likely to participate in outdoor leisure activities. The reason for the difference between the results of these studies and current study results may be due to the methodology. The data of the studies mentioned above were collected through phone interviews with the sedentary elderly. However, the data of this study were collected through in-depth interviews with 84 elderly that attended in leisure activities in the Zoroastrian community, local centers and parks. The informants who were interviewed in Zoroastrians society, public places, parks and local centers seemed to be active people. Moreover, the contradictions between the current results and earlier findings may be due to differences between informants. Informants of this study were Zoroastrians' elderly who strongly adhere to their religious teachings, avoid laziness and consider a great importance for socializing with friends and relatives (Table 5.8), while the respondents of previous studies are deprived of such religious teachings or they do not adhere to such religious teachings.

To simplify the analysis, the informant's leisure activities were divided into three main categories. These three categories are: cultural-speculative, social, and physical activities. This classification is largely similar to the context of leisure activities

developed by Van Willigen & Chadha (1999). In the following, the most important leisure patterns of the informants are discussed.

6.2.1. Patterns of Leisure Activities

Based on the finding of the study which mentioned in previous chapter, leisure activities of the informants can be classified in three main categories: speculative-cultural activities, social activities, and physical activities. These categories will be examined in following pages

6.2.1.1. Speculative-Cultural Activities

Speculative-cultural activities include going to holy places, worship in religious places, attendance at celebrations, and religious ceremonies. In general, there is relatively limited empirical research on the religious attitudes and behaviours of the elderly. One reason for this limitation is that this aspect of the elderly lives is assumed to be ascertained and evident. In other words, it is assumed that compared to younger people, the elderly are more religious and the role of elders in religious activities is very strong and bold (Hess & Markson, 1980). On the other hand, most of high-quality research on the relationship between religion and aging has been carried out in U.S.A and most of these studies have used concepts and measures that reflect the Christian-Jewish cultural traditions (Bianchi, 1992; Kimble, McFadden, Ellor, & Seeber, 1995) and few studies relating to leisure, religion and aging have been carried out outside of North American society.

Worshiping (prayer), reading the Avesta (the Zoroastrian's holy book), going to the holy places (Zoroastrian's fire temple, Pire-chak-chak or other holy places), and attending religious festivals (the annual Sadeh celebration and the monthly Gahanbar celebrations) were the religious activities reported by nearly all the informants (Table

5.8). In a general classification, the religious behaviours can be divided into two categories: formal and informal practices. Informal religious behaviours are activities such as prayer (Nigosian, 1993) which performed individually at home. Since the Zoroastrians are very collectivist and perform almost all of their behaviours, including their religious practices as a collective action, therefore it seemed that informal religious practices were less important to them. The only informal religious behaviour of them is praying which performed individually at different times of the day at home. Because the study focused on outdoor leisure behaviours, this part of their leisure time behaviours is not in the scope of this study.

The second category of religious behaviour is membership and participation in religious organizations and organized religious behaviours. This part of the religious practices is performed outside the home. The informants attended at the Zoroastrian holy place (i.e. the Zoroastrian fire temple) several times per week on average and attended in Gahanbar monthly celebrations regularly once every month. Attendance at the other religious places (i.e. "Pire-chak-chak" and participation in the annual "Sadeh Celebration") are also the other organized religious behaviours that are repeated annually by informants and they attend in that place for worshipping (Table 5.8). Also, the membership and participation in different commissions of the Zoroastrians' Association were the behaviours mainly done by the elderly than the other age groups.

Regarding the participation and engagement of informants in religious organizations and organized religious behaviours, the aged females were more engaged in different commissions of the Zoroastrian's Association compared to the aged men. Also, male's elderly more than female's elderly participated in organized religious behaviours such as monthly and annual religious celebrations and reading the scriptures (Table 5.8). Findings of this research are consistence with the results of studies carried out in other cultures and communities. For example, Levin (1994) and Payne & Whittington (1976)

in their studies have shown that females are more involved in religious organizations compared to men.

The results of this study also showed that membership and engagement in religious organizations and organized religious behaviours are also associated with other factors. For example, the elderly who had a high economic status were more engaged in organized religious behaviours than the elderly who had lower levels of education and income (Table 5.12). Similar to the results of this study, Cutler & Hendricks (2011) also found that participation in religious organizations is positively associated with income and education levels.

Religion plays a profound role in the lives of the informants of this study (Table 5.9). Several other studies have also highlighted the key role of religion in the lives of elderly people. For example, Koenig (1995) in his study stated that more than 80 percent of elderly people in North Carolina have said that religion had had the most important influence on their lives. Levin et al (1994) also found that the importance of religion is high among the elderly. As Pooresmaeil (2005) has reported, worship is the most valuable activity that any person can do on his/her leisure times. The results of this study are similar to the findings of other studies that have been carried out in Iran and perhaps the reason is that the attention to spirituality is a part of Iranian culture. On the other hand, as it is evident from the experiences of the elderly, they frequently do the activities that they believe in them, wholeheartedly. Also, it seems that such activities are most welcome, because they do not impose costs to the elderly who have no income. For example, in a study in Iran by Asefzadeh, Ghoddusian, & Najafipoor (2008) to determine the status of the Muslim elderly in the city of Qazvin in terms of leisure times, it was shown that 44.2 percent of the elderly spent their leisure times in the mosques. Also the study of Maddah et al. (2008) showed that compared to the Swedish elderly, the Iranian elderly people participated more in religious activities and sessions;

while the Iranian elderly that were residents of Sweden tended to participate in training workshops and activities in associations and tourism. Gautam, Saito, & Kai (2007) also showed that elderly people in Nepal frequently participated in religious activities such as religious meetings so that 79 percent of older men and 82 percent of older females participating in the study spent their leisure times in religious practices, prayer and religious activities. In a public opinion survey, three-quarters of American elderly have suggested that religion is “very important” in their lives and their performance was also consistent with what they had said. 70 percent of them belonged to a religious community and 40 percent had said that they participated in organized religious ceremonies every week (Ehman et al. 1999). On the one hand, it is natural to expect that the interest in religion increases with age. On the other hand, the continuity theory of aging reminds that to the same extent that the people get older, they will tend to maintain the previous patterns of practices and beliefs. As Moody (2011) shows, when Americans get older, they tend to show the religious patterns similar to younger age groups.

6.2.1.2. Social Activities

Include visiting relatives and friends at local centers, attending family gatherings. Visiting relatives and friends and attending family gatherings and socializing with them are the other outdoor leisure time behaviours which have been reported by informants of this study (Table 5.8). Familial socializations comprises a large proportion of outdoor spending of leisure time for Zoroastrian elderly and this suggests that among the Iranians and also the Zoroastrians, the family still plays an important role in people's outdoor leisure time. In other words, most of the activities of the studied elderly people were collective. In this respect, findings of this study are consistent with the results of the study conducted by Ashrafol-ketabi, (2000). He also concluded in his study that in

Iran, the family plays an important role in spending the outdoor leisure time. The study by Maddah et al., (2008) in Iran also showed that visiting relatives and acquaintances is among the common activities of leisure time of the Iranian elderly people, while this activity is a little lower in the Swedish elderly. Also the study of Gautam et al. (2007) in Nepal showed that 22 percent of older men and 9 percent of older females participating in the study continued to go visiting friends and relatives every day on their leisure time. Some of the results of visiting relatives are increased life longevity, creation of vitality and freshness, solving the possible problems and troubles of family members. Social scientists argue that the social environment has a great influence on the personality of individuals and leads to the growth of social character and strengthening of moral and spiritual values and maintaining and strengthening the health (Pooresmail, 2005). New findings indicate that broad and strong social communications can reduce the risk of dementia in the elderly people. A study in Stockholm found that engaging in regular daily and weekly social and mental activities is inversely related to dementia (Maddah et al., 2008). Visiting relatives and family members is a practice which greatly emphasized by the Zoroastrian religion.

These results can be analyzed in such a way that religion is deeply rooted among Zoroastrians and they feel it necessary to act based on religious teachings. Thus, on the one hand, visiting relatives and friends are typically regarded as religious orientation and acting based on religious teachings and on the other hand, indicates stronger emotional relationships in the family. In this regard, the results of this study are also consistent with the findings of Livengood & Stodolska (2004). In their study, they found that visiting of family members (children and grandchildren) and friends is one of the most important options for spending the leisure times among the Muslims living in U.S.A and this is due to the strong emotional and familial ties among Muslims that are largely rooted in their religious teachings. In this study, it is also possible that the

Iranian traditional culture that grants a great value to families has played an important role in this context. Cultural values such as talking or meeting with neighbours or friends have played an important role in the formation of some activities. This is due to the fact that many informants have still retained most of their ethnic and familial origins and many of them have maintained their communications and interactions with their friends, acquaintances and relatives. At a time, when the Iranian society was more traditional, most of the leisure time of individuals was spent collectively within families and communication and talking with relatives or friends and neighbours were considered as the informal ways of spending the leisure time. Also, the social intentions had priority over individual intentions and these affairs are still ongoing and dominant. Although with the development of the society and the distribution of tasks, the family received an official aspect, but still the family, relatives and friends, among which face to face relationships are prominent, have retained their great importance in Iranian society.

Social relations are very different according to the functions they play in the lives of older people. Elderly people often rely on their social network members for receiving emotional and instrumental (e.g. financial or practical) support. However, based on the nature of a particular relationship, they may be willing to receive different types of support. People often expect both emotional support and instrumental support from their family members, but they expect emotional support only from friends. Social scientists studies have shown the importance of social participation in leisure activities during old age. For example, it has been proven that having relationships with others and maintaining supportive social relations play an important role in physical- mental health and a longer life for the elderly (Giles, Glonek, Luszcz, & Andrews, 2005).

During the past three decades, two influential models have been developed to describe the supporters of the elderly. The “Hierarchical Compensatory Model”

suggests that older people have a ranked priority for receiving the support of others (Cantor, 1979). Most of the elderly people first refer to their own family members to receive their support and if they were not available, they refer to the people that are not the family members. Counter (1979) stated later that people prefer to receive support from their spouse first, then from their children, other relatives, friends, and formal or professional organizations. Empirical studies generally support the model that the elderly probably prefer the support from their spouse, children, other relatives and friends and also receive the support from them.

On the contrary, the “Functional Specificity Model” argues that the supportive relations are best fit based on the needs and resources of partners (Litwak, 1985). For example, a married woman may refer to her best friend for emotional support or domestic tasks, if she feels that her husband is sick and unable to do these things. Studies consistently show that emotional support from friends is increasing in comparison with the support received from the family (Carr & Moorman, 2011).

6.2.1.3. Physical Activities

Another sub-category which was obtained from the study was physical activities which included walking, going to the parks and doing physical exercises in the morning and evening. About the sport exercises, it must be acknowledged that in general, the Zoroastrian elderly had not a good condition. The data of this study showed that the Zoroastrian elderly only used the local parks and in some cases, the urban parks as a place to walk and doing exercises in the morning and evening and spending their leisure times and they had no physical activity except walking in the park. Local and urban parks in Iran are places for retirees and elderly to get together and discuss their views on the issues of the day together. According to the experiences of the informants, it can be said that most of the informants’ physical activities included household chores,

shopping for the home and walking. Since studies have shown that physical activities while strengthening the physical forces, help to increase the level of community spirit and foster a sense of engagement in the individual (Pooresmail, 2005), so their role is becoming more prominent in the old age.

Moreover, the physical activity of males' elderly was more than the females' elderly (Table 5.8). The study of Gautam et al (2007) in Nepal showed also that 23.5 percent of elderly men and 9.5 percent elderly females participating in the study performed physical and sport activities in their daily leisure time. Also, the results of a study by Delavar (2000) in Iran showed that in general, the leisure activities for males are more than that for females. In another study in Iran by Maddah et al., (2008), it was also shown that 62.6 percent of Swedish elderly male engaged in physical activities but the Iranian elderly males that were residents of Sweden had little interest in this activity. While going to the park is a popular leisure activity among the Iranian elderly, this activity was negligible among the Swedish people. The results of study by Yin (2008b) also showed that the most common leisure activity was doing exercises in the morning.

Doing sport and physical exercises can help to maintain and improve the physical health of people. Studies show that if the elderly are encouraged to perform physical activities, the prevalence of depression among them are decreased. Also, a lot of studies have emphasized on their active effects in successful aging process, so that Menec (2003) demonstrated in their study that increased activity levels is associated with higher levels of happiness, better personal performance and the reduction of mortality. Also, in the study of Silverstein & Parker (2002), the elderly people who were more involved in leisure activities, reported significant improvement in their quality of life. Generally, little data is available about the physical leisure activities of Iranians living in Iran, and particularly the Iranian Zoroastrians. Similar to these findings, a Canadian study also suggested that the elderly aged 65 years and above have increased their

participation in physical leisure activities compared to the youth (Stone & Fletcher, 1986). Based on the research findings of Livengood & Stodolska (2004), walking, going to picnics, recreational and leisure travels were among the most important methods of outdoors leisure times for the Muslims living in U.S.A. Patterson (2002) also suggested that travel is the most important activity that the people want to participate in when they retire. In fact, the elderly go to travel frequently (Leitner & Leitner, 2004). Based on the finding of this study, the travel capacities of the elderly are: visiting new places, spending time with family, resting and relaxation, avoiding everyday life engagements, experience new things, spending time with friends, visiting museums and historic sites, visiting festivals and special events.

6.2.2. Leisure Activity and Socio-Economic Status

Social class is the resultant of two factors: economic capital (job, income, etc.) and social and cultural capital (education, familial status, etc.) (Bourdieu, 1984). Since the leisure arena is becoming more commercial day by day, social and cultural capitals are considered as the important factors in selection of and access to leisure activities and are also involved in the selection of the leisure activities types. In order to maintain its accreditation, it is necessary for the social and cultural capital to be continuously represented, so that the gaps are not lost (Haywood et al., 1990).

This study showed that the ways of spending outdoor leisure for the informants were largely dependent on their levels of socio-economic status (Table 5.12). The informants who had a low socio-economic level, spent most of their leisure times collectively and within the family, talking to friends, relatives and neighbours in the local centers, and participating in religious ceremonies (Table 5.12). The reason could be that, generally speaking, the people of lower classes consider talking and socializing with the friends in the Zoroastrian community, local centers and/or in local parks as an inexpensive means

of spending their outdoor leisure times. While the socio-economic status of the informants is increased, the method of spending their leisure time also further took an individual form, because due to access to financial and cultural facilities, it was possible for them to plan for their leisure time, provide more opportunities and facilities and leisure tools outside the home, use the equipment and outdoor leisure facilities available more and provide the things for themselves in leisure time that they had more interested in. Besides the time that they spent with family and collectively, this group also devoted a time for their own individual plans and entertainments. Members of the upper classes tended to spend their outdoor leisure times to travel abroad or within the country (Table 5.12). Similarly, the individuals of the middle class who were between the upper and lower classes of society had different ways for spending of leisure times. This means that in terms of frequency, their inland and abroad travels were less compared to the upper class, but it were more compared to the lower classes. Meanwhile, compared to the upper class individuals, the middle class people have a more accompaniment and socialization with other people in local centers, Zoroastrians association and parks, however, their participation in such cases is less than that of the lower classes. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Ashrafol-ketabi (2000). In his research, he concluded that the most important determining factor for Iranians in spending the outdoor leisure times were the economic, individual and family conditions and people of lower class were more engaged in collective leisure activities. The results of this study are also consistent with the findings of Shokouhi (1980, 1990). He also concluded in his research that the elderly of lower class in Iran were more active and dynamic. In other words, lower class had more mobility than higher class. Also the mobility and dynamicity of the educated elderly were less than the elderly people with insufficient education. But in other words, Burdge (1969) claimed that the upper class individuals were more likely to participate in leisure activities outside the home

compared to those in the lower classes. Compared to the lower classes, they had more opportunities to participate in leisure activities outside the house. Upper class individuals were more involved in these activities, because many of these outdoor leisure activities required income, time, transportation, facilities, and leisure skills that lower class people had no access to them. In addition, Kelly (1996) also stated that education is the most important determinant factor for leisure activities. He stated that the opportunities for socialization and leisure experiences depend on education. White (1975) also stated that both income and education are strongly associated with participation in leisure activities. Lower class individuals have less opportunities to participate in leisure activities, because before participation in leisure activities, they have to meet the basic and fundamental needs of housekeeping, health care, food and cooking (Markides, Liang, & Jackson, 1990). In general, while trying to find out who is likely to participate in what activity, more social scientists refer to the socio-economic variables. They assume that the initial individual characteristics such as income and employment determine secondary behaviours like leisure activities (Houston & Wilson, 2005). Education is positively associated with leisure and participation in a wide range of leisure activities (Lindstrom, Handson & Ostergren, 2001).

As already mentioned, spending leisure time with friends, relatives and neighbours is the most popular way of outdoor leisure time among the informants of this study (Table 5.9). In this regard, the elderly females were friendlier and had more accompaniments compared to the elderly men. Females were more inclined to spend their leisure time with others rather than being alone. Moreover, the attitudes of different social classes toward friends and friendship in spending leisure times were varied. This diversity is outstanding for spending leisure times, that is, the upper class have a functional approach toward friends and friendship that is defined in relation to their needs. Although this kind of attitude can also be seen in the lower social class, but

there is diversity between them in terms of their nature. Findings of this research revealed that upper class people considered friend as the person who helped them at the times they faced problems and difficulties while the underclass considered friend as the person who could be their partner in their happy times and could add his/her energy to this joy and vivacity. On this basis, it can be said that one of the hidden functions of females' organization of Zoroastrian association is leisure function, the leisure that as they say, in addition to spending it, all of them become aware of one another, help each other and exchange their experiences in various fields. The inexpensive nature of this method of spending leisure times along with collectivism of Iranian and Zoroastrian's culture, and moreover the informant of these organization which almost all of them are seniors, led this way of leisure time become the most important method in terms of frequency. Thus, middle class and underclass spent more times with their friends and they met their friends almost every day. But, unlike the upper class that their socializations were accompanied by night-time parties, the friendly associations of middle class and underclass were more in the form of talks and socializations at the local centers. The diversity in familial socialization in familial and periodic parties depended on the economic situation of the people (Table 5.12).

6.2.3. Leisure Activity and Gender

In terms of gender and participation in outdoor leisure activities, it must be said that females' elderly were less involved in outdoor leisure activities than the men's elderly and this was due to the high costs of spending the outdoor leisure time, lack of time, fear of violence, and lack of transportation (Table 5.11). In many cases, they also hold additional responsibilities of home and family. These findings are consistent with results of studies by Aitchison (2001, 2003); Henderson & Gibson (2013) and Azevedo et al. (2007). Based on the studies related to leisure of women, the women are generally

have less participation in outdoor leisure activities compared to men Athenstaedt et al. (2009); Aitchison (2005). Although Aqahi & Parker (2008) and Menec (2003) came with different results and found that the older women had more participation in leisure activities than the older men.

There are differences between males and females participation in leisure activities (Azevedo et al., 2007). Results of this study are similar to previous research. In this study, both men and females' elderly tended to participate in different types of leisure activities, however, the types of leisure activities in which males and females were participated were different. For example, females often tended to participate in social and mental activities, while most men participated in physical, individual and creative activities (Table 5.11).

In Western countries, the differences of engagement in leisure activities between males and females have been defined as the function of socialization patterns and the role expectations (Aqahi & Parker, 2008). If this interpretation is similarly used for the data obtained from this study, it may be suggested that the role of women is not to participate in leisure activities as much as men, but an activity may be imposed to the women and they may participate in tasks such as housekeeping. In Iran, housekeeping is far greater in size than the size of the housekeeping in Western countries (Bagheri, 2011). Children and especially grandchildren live with their grandmothers, most of the times (Badrimanesh & Sadeghi, 2014). If women follow the traditional tasks of housekeeping, there will be no time and opportunity for them to participate in leisure activities.

Findings of the study showed that both males and females' informants spent a considerable time for sport and physical activities (Table 5.11), closer investigation showed that the types of physical activities and the nature of leisure participation between males and females were different in this study. Females tended to combine

socialization with physical exercises and it was very difficult for them to separate the two, most of the times. For example, females spent more time for walking and talking with friends or doing other physical activities with friends as a significant part of leisure activities. In comparison with females, males seemed to be more concentrated on the sport itself and focused less on their relationships with the others. Males also spent more time than females to participate in organized physical activities. The most mentioned favourite activity for men were sport and physical exercises, while the females' favourite leisure activities include chatting with friends, relatives, neighbours and mental activities. Males' informants of this study reported socialization with friends as a leisure activity. The men preferred active sports and stated that their participation in these sports was due to their excitement, while females who participated in sports stressed on their social functions (e.g., being with friends). Compared to the men's elderly, females' elderly who participated in this study more conduct their leisure times to relations with the others. These findings are consistent with findings of the research conducted in North America (Henderson & Gibson, 2013). In contrast, men's elderly who participated in this study had a more engagement in physical activities and organized structural activities compared to females' elderly.

Previous studies showed that the women have generally expressed that they have less participation in physical leisure activities than men (DiPietro, 2001) and contribute more to informal and social leisure activities (Lee & King, 2003). Also, men in old age often participate in the outdoor leisure activities, while the women more participate in indoor leisure activities (Henderson & Gibson, 2013).

In terms of gender differences in leisure times, there are homogenous theories that mainly reflect the different socialization of males and females, differences in social constraints, more responsibilities of women in the household and child-care affairs, the

dominance of patriarchal culture and dominance of males on the females' leisure and imposed restrictions by men.

Mattingly & Bianchi (2003) showed that women have less leisure times than men, their leisure time is mixed with household chores, spend much more parts of their leisure time with their children compared to men and in most of the leisure time, they are concerned about household chores and the works outside the home (Mattingly, Bianchi, 2003). Consistent with this view, "Green" also showed that women have been overlooked in leisure studies and suggested that the most important criticism of the field of leisure studies is equating the males and females in this field (Mattingly, Bianchi, 2003). Also Bittman & Wajcman (2000) demonstrated that the leisure of women is less than that of men and women more mix their leisure with their other tasks.

Leisure time is an arena where people can manifest their values and interests without concern and stress, show their strength and resistance and play their role as the representatives of their social class. But in this context, some argue that gender can play a role as an infra-class factor and causes the differences and disparities between men and women and thereby causes the leisure times of women to become ambiguous, small and ruptured, spent indoors and mixed with maternal and household activities. Leisure times and gender meta-analysis results in Iran showed that: the length of leisure time and the method of its spending are influenced by gender and this is very tangible in the method chosen for spending the leisure time. Men have also more leisure times than women (Safiri & Modiri, 2000). Leisure preferences of men and women are different, so that in women, the leisure associated with the family is more prevalent in leisure times spending and the highest priority for them is being at home but in men the motor leisure especially sports have higher priorities and also they have more purposeful leisure. Women have less satisfaction about their leisure times compared with men (Safiri & Modiri, 2000).

Deem (1996a, 1996b), argue that women tend to keep their leisure time with their family and it is difficult for them to allocate some time for themselves separated from their family members and the activities of women in assisting the family members is not evident for the others. Researches also showed that women are primarily engaged in supplying the family's basic needs during their leisure times (Bianchi, 2000; Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000; Harrington, Dawson, & Bolla, 2013; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003). The feminists claim that women tend to spend a lot of time for children and therefore there is a great difference between them and those who are unmarried, unemployed and with no children (Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003).

Research shows that gender differences in leisure engagement are a common matter. For example, Leslie Raymore et al. (1993) stated that while men and women may have the same way of living, they may have different needs and preferences for leisure and also, they may have different forms of satisfaction with the same leisure activities. Henderson & Allen (1991) suggested that the leisure of women was more likely than that of men to show the "ethics of care" which is oriented toward leisure in relationships with the others.

6.2.4. Leisure Activity and Marital Status

In addition to gender differences, single and widow/widower informants had more leisure participation than the married elderly of both sexes (Table 5.11). Shokouhi (1990) in his survey among Iranian elderly people also stated that the married elderly had less mobility than the unmarried and divorced elderly. The results of this study are similar to the results of the study of Jhan & Chiao (2012) performed to evaluate the effect of widowhood on the Taiwanese elderly leisure activities. Their research data obtained from a longitudinal study of Taiwanese elderly people aged 50-66 found a significant positive correlation between leisure activities and the health of elderly

women. In their study, female widows were more likely to participate in religious and social leisure activities compared to married women and their physical functioning was not less than the married women. In other words, widowhood was not a negative life event for the elderly women in Taiwan. Results of the study of Utz et al. (2002a) also showed that how the levels of community participation changes as a result of widowhood in old age. Their results showed that the widowed individuals had more informal social participation compared to non-widowed ones. In contrast to the findings of this study, the results of the study of Satariano, Haight, & Tager (2002) showed that the elderly who live alone are less likely to participate in leisure activities compared to the elderly who live with their spouses (Table 5.11).

Although aging is usually marked with the loss of important of social relationships including spouse's death and the loss of spouse is one of the most stressful life events that can occur in adults' lives (Bisconti, Bergeman, & Boker, 2004) and most of the people who experience this issue are elderly women and previous studies have also shown that the loss of spouse is often associated with changes in the leisure behaviours of the elderly and this life event may limit the leisure participation due to the loss of the leisure companion (McGuire, 1985a), however, a number of leisure activities may be increased with the loss of spouse; particularly, the death of spouse often leads to increased social activities and relationships with friends and family members (Janke, Nimrod, & Kleiber, 2008a, 2008b). Their study also found a large variation in participation in leisure activities after the loss of spouse. In their study, the most popular leisure activities of widows were talking with friends and family members and meeting them. Many widows maintained or even increased the participation in religious activities and hiking.

6.2.5. Leisure Companions

One of the issues that can be examined for determining the elderly leisure time pattern is the fact that with whom every person has spent the outdoor leisure time. Informants in this study have mentioned groups like family, friends in familial relations, friends in singular relations and going out alone. The Zoroastrian elderly mainly preferred to go to outdoor spaces such as Zoroastrians Association, urban parks, forest parks and good weather villages around the city primarily with family members, secondarily with friends in singular relations and finally alone (Table 5.9).

However, the family is still the main origin of leisure time attitudes for its old members. Despite the growth of business leisure time and the competition of other factors affecting on the individual and his/her views about the leisure times, there are still many forms of leisure that family members enjoy them, altogether. In this study, the desire to spend leisure time with family was also prevalent among the informants (Table 5.9). The general opinion is that during old age, the people spend more time with their peers and over time, they spend less time with the family. For this reason, some researchers argue that acceptance of peer culture is supplementary for family members' authority and they suggest that socialization through peers strengthens the family activities and plays an intermediate role for the values of the old age world (Burton & Dilworth, 1991). The peer group provides opportunities to practice new behaviours and develop the social skills necessary to interact with friends that the leisure activities and time are the areas of its manifestation. Accepting the friends and peers and adapting to their norms and consequently spending more leisure time with them are more evident among the elderly. Also, the class-based differences exist in the perceived need to adapt to the norms of the peer group and accordingly, the elderly belonging to the middle class families feel a lower necessity for this kind of adaptation.

The results of this study confirm the data obtained by Liaghati (2008). He also concluded that more than 54 percent of the respondents had referred to the outdoor

leisure spaces with the family and the group of friends was ranked in the second place with 9 percent. Based on the result of this study, Iranian culture is strongly collectivist and most of Iranians prefer to visit outdoor leisure spaces along with their families and friends and share their joy and happiness with others. The results of this study also showed the direct impact of family and friends support in the field of elderly's usage of the leisure spaces such as parks (Table 5.9). This means that the older people who receive more support from family and friends more go to the parks.

6.3. Leisure Constraints among the Informants

Informants of this study have explained that they have faced at least one leisure constraint while having outdoor leisure. They have mentioned their facing with three or four types of leisure constraints. The leisure constraints reported by the informants of this study have been categorized in three groups:

- 1- *Intrapersonal constraints*: lack of interest (distress and indecisiveness, disappointment and boredom) health problems or physical constraints (atrophy, surgeries, disability, pain and illness, overweight, visual and hearing impairments); prior socialization, fear of being mocked by others, being shy and religious (Figure 6.1).
- 2- *Interpersonal constraints*: family responsibilities and commitments (taking care of wife and grandchildren) lack of leisure companion, death of close relatives or friends, lack of encouragement and support by family and friends, the leisure preferences of spouse, children and grandchildren (Figure 6.2).
- 3- *Structural constraints*: lack of time, financial problems, fear of familiarity leading to marriage, climatic conditions, insufficient management of parks in providing and maintenance of leisure facilities, transportation problem,

distance, obligation of being covered and considering hijab, lack of leisure spaces specific for women, lack of leisure facilities near home (Figure 6.3).

6.3.1. Intrapersonal Constraints

Intrapersonal constraints of the informants of this study were classified into these categories: lack of interest, poor health conditions, prior socialization, family responsibilities and commitments, fear of embarrassment, too many male park visitors, and religiosity.

Lack of interest and motivation: Lack of interest in outdoor leisure activities was one of the interpersonal constraints that prevented the formation of leisure preferences of the informants (Table 5.13). The main reasons for this lack of interest were prior socialization, health problems, and death of close friends or wife. In other words, these factors obstructed the formation of outdoor leisure preferences of informants. First, the prior socialization problem will be explicated. Until a few decades ago, almost all the Zoroastrians of Kerman used to live in a region that was called Gabr Mahalleh (Soroushian, 1992). Gabr Mahalleh is one of the oldest areas in Kerman city since long time back, it was known as the residence area for Zoroastrians, although following the expansion of Kerman, this region has joined Kerman. However, in the past this region was separated from the city. Gabr Mahalleh is mainly known for its big garden houses (Soroushian, 1992). Most of these big villa type houses are the place of birth, growth and the residence of the informants. The type of leisure activities that the informants have undertaken in that spatial and temporal context has turned to their specific style of life, and permanently affecting their present life styles. As children and teenagers, they used to perform group leisure activities with their fellow Zoroastrians in those big houses. This cultural background has played a significant role in their socializing. That

is why informants have no tendency to go to parks or open areas for their outdoor leisure. Prior socialization in such environments, which results in abandoning outdoor leisure, has directly obstructed the formation of elders Zoroastrians' outdoor leisure preferences. In other words, prior socialization results in lack of interest in outdoor leisure, which consequently functions as an interpersonal constraint, which stops the formation of leisure preferences. Prior socialization has been introduced as a leisure constraint in previous studies as well (Crawford & Godbey, 1987).

Another factor, which has played an important role in the lack of interest of informants in outdoor leisure, has been their health status, which rooted from their old age. Physical constraints such as atrophy, surgeries, disabilities, overweight, and visual and hearing impairments constrained the formation of leisure preferences. Some of the informants explained that they have no interest in outdoor leisure because their health situation is not suitable. Such constraints seems to be usual, because the age mean of the investigated population in this study is 70. In this case, the findings of the study support the findings of the study conducted by Williamson, Shaffer, & Schulz (1998). They had also concluded that severe physical problems constrained the performance of physical leisure activities. The findings of the study also supported the findings of the previously conducted studies which had suggested that difficulties like fatigue and physical constrains (Cohen-Mansfield et al., 2003) and fear of falling (Lees et al., 2005) prevents them from participating in the leisure activities. In this study, suffering from health problems had directly resulted in the formation of intrapersonal constraints. It was also in relation to lack of interest in an indirect way. Informants of the study suffered from chronic diseases like rheumatism and Arthritis. These diseases have created some sort of constraints for spending outdoor leisure. The findings of the study support the findings of the study conducted by Juarbe et al. (2002). They also had concluded that

some chronic diseases like Arthritis, lead to hinder performing of outdoor leisure activities.

The death of close friends and spouse was also another reasons of disinterest in attending outdoor leisure activates. Informants explained that they had no interest in outdoor leisure activities because their closest friends with whom they used to socialize in local gatherings has passed away; that is to say, those with whom they had the best memories of their life. The death of wife was also very effective in their disinterest. This cases indicated that Zoroastrian culture is highly collectivist contrary to western culture, which has proved to be individualistic where the individualistic characteristics are very prominent (Joshanloo & Ghaedi, 2009). Actually, in Iranian culture, especially in Zoroastrian's culture, the collectivist culture manifests itself openly. They are seriously dependent on group. This topic will be develop further in the section of interpersonal constrains.

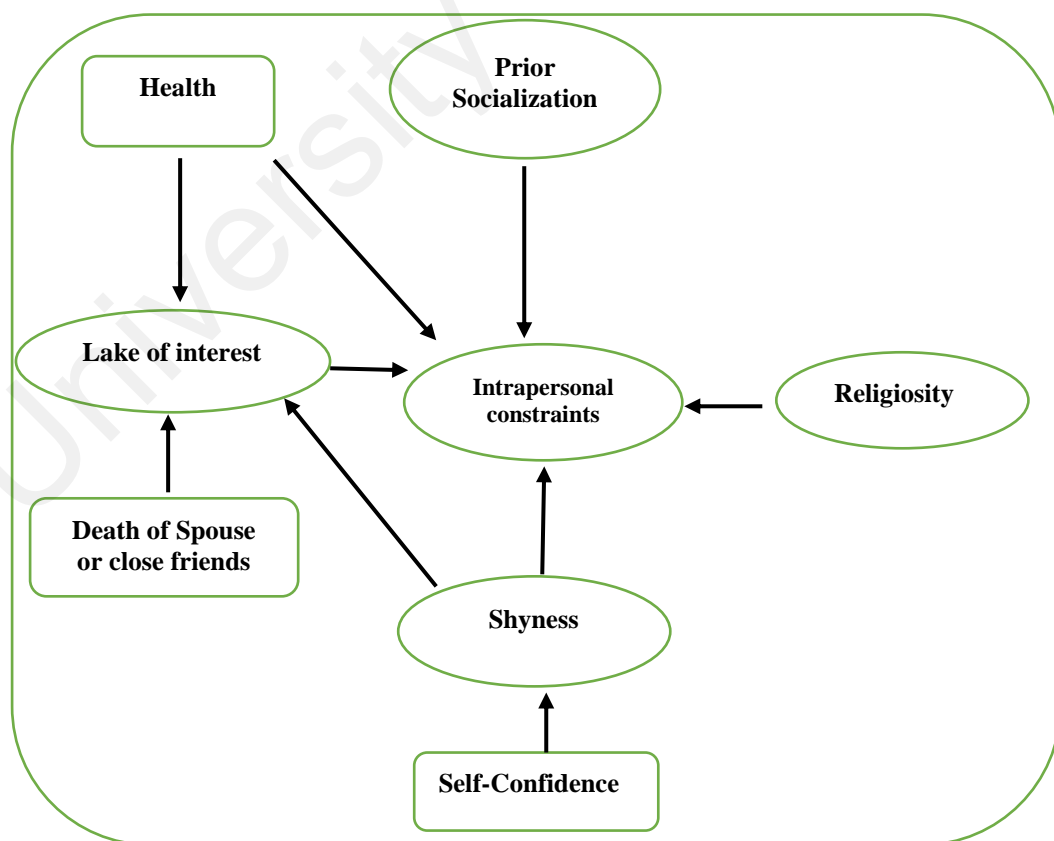


Figure 6.1: Intrapersonal Leisure Constraints among the Informants

To feel shy: The findings of the study illustrated that the formation of the preferences of outdoor leisure might be constrained in some other ways. The informants of the study have used the “shyness” as a general term for expressing a set of leisure constraints (Table 5.13). This issue can be investigated from several aspects. First, the worry about how others think about them, was a constraints to don not think about that leisure activity. For instance, their embarrassment about their body and the way it might look while performing some outdoor activities like swimming or walking as well as their worries about their level of skillfulness in performing those activities were the reasons which obstructed the formation of their outdoor leisure preferences. The findings of the study have supported the findings of the study conducted by James (2000).

Another aspect of embarrassing was done by the friends or other family members of the informants, arguing that the type of outdoor activity informants do, does not suit their age and is more apt to adults and youth. For instance the worry about the negative judgment of family members or peers about their outdoor activities such as exercising in open areas especially in parks, or watching others while exercising, made them avoid participating in outdoor activities. In fact, the findings of this study showed that the peers’ or family members’ attitude towards the appropriacy of an activity for elderly is a constraint factor in informants’ feeling embarrassed and consequently the formation of their outdoor leisure activity preferences. The avoidance of the informants of this study in sport activities is an evidence for this argument. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of the study carried out by Culp (1998) which revealed that beliefs of family members and peers about the gender-related roles has functioned as a constraint for those women who are interested in attending outdoor activities.

To be religious: Like any other religions, Zoroastrianism also applies bans on some activities, which result in the formation or not formation of certain behaviors. For

instance according to Zoroastrianism, there are four days in each month known as “Nabor” (Boyce, 2005), in which both slaughtering animals for any purpose and eating any kind of animal flesh is forbidden. This ban on slaughtering and consumption of any animal flesh has constrained the formation of Zoroastrians’ leisure preferences that have a serious tie with picnic and pleasure trip in nature. Therefore, in case they would decide to plan for their leisure and outdoor leisure activities, they should try to avoid making any plans for these days (Table 5.13).

6.3.2. Interpersonal Constraints

Lack of leisure companion: Lack of leisure companion in outdoor leisure was mentioned as one of the leisure constraints (Table 5.14). The leisure companion has been one of the factors that informants of this study have mentioned as the main reason for spending their leisure time. For most of the informants of the study, important was not the leisure activity itself rather being together and socializing with friends and family members. The informants of the study have repeatedly mentioned this point and this illustrates the significance of the social relationships in the outdoor leisure of informant. As already mentioned, the culture of each society orients its individuals into a direction that transfer to them its main elements. For instance, western and European cultures are mainly individualist. Contrary to them, Asian cultures like Japan, and Iran are collectivist (Joshani & Ghaedi, 2009). Collectivist cultures are inclined to impose their general patterns of collectivism on individuals and force them to think in a collectivist mode (Stodolska, 1998). While in the social lives of most of western countries, individualism is the trend. Socializing has a specific place in Iranian lifestyle especially in the rural and small urban communities (Joshani & Ghaedi, 2009). This

has its own positive and negative aspects. While the individualism can result in independency, freedom of choice and a kind of personal comfort, the collectivist behavior of Iranian society results in the increase of excitement, creating the sense of belonging, happiness and not feeling lonely.

While most of the group amusements in western society might focus on music or television rather than involvement in serious conversions, most of the amusements in Iran involve group chats. While in western countries it might frequently happen that, a couples go to park, cinema or eating on their own, Iranians, especially Zoroastrians, usually try to perform such activities in groups which, definitely not only leads to increasing enjoyment, group's performance also weakens the personal identity, because in such situation, most of the decisions are made by the group not by the individuals (Joshanloo & Ghaedi, 2009). The passion and the security of group identity makes the Iranians to behave in this way and taste the empathy (Henderson & Anisworth, 2000). In the study conducted by Searle & Jackson (1985b) the elderly informants had mentioned the lack of leisure companion as one of their reasons for leisure constraints while it was not the case for the young informants (Arnold & Shinew, 2008; Miyake & Rodgers, 2008). The fact that why leisure companion is too significance for Zoroastrian elders originates from some factors. One reason is related to their age. They are worried about the physical problems such as having heart attack or falling that might happen to them while having outdoor leisure, which might result in their death in case they go out alone. Moreover, this fact also illustrates the deep emotional dependency of the informants on others. Here, by the term "other", means the friends and family members. The absence of either of these two might result in the decrease in their real participation in outdoor leisure activities or even the total prevention in leisure participation. The extreme emotional dependency of the Zoroastrian elderly on their family manifested itself in another way. They like all the family members to be together in any kind of

outdoor leisure activity, picnic, and in case any of the members of the family could not attend, the whole program will not be performed. Finally, it should be argued that the issue of leisure companion is in indirect relationship with the physical and psychological security of the informants while participating in outdoor leisure activities. Although the informants did not mention it, the profound analyses of the findings of this study revealed that lack of physical and psychological security in outdoor spaces is in close relation with the lack of leisure companion. Going out alone, not only in late hours of the day which is near twilight, but also in mid-day hours also results in the psychological and physical anxiety. Therefore, the lack of leisure companion can lessen the level of participation in or fully stop it. The findings of this study regarding the effect of lack of leisure companion on decreasing leisure participation or leisure non-participation also support the findings of Searle & Jackson (1985a).

Family responsibilities and commitments: The importance of the strong family relationships and the family-based leisure was one of the factors, which had affected the leisure activities of the informant (Table 5.14). Not only the Zoroastrian's culture is inherently collective, the Zoroastrian's families become unified through these strong family ties. Among Zoroastrians, family is considered as the "core of society" and the path through which they pass their cultural values to their coming generations (Pourdavoud, 2005). The findings of this study suggest two points of views. According to the first view, it was widow or single women who attended the religious and social activities, the regular weekly meetings of women's organization, or various commissions of Zoroastrians' association. In other words, holding the sessions of various commissions of the Zoroastrians' Association and Women's Organization as well as doing the preparation for the Zoroastrian festivals like Gahanbars demanded the people who had no family responsibilities. Contrary to the first view, married couples and elders who still were living with their families intended to spend their outdoor

leisure activities with their family members. For instance, they inclined to travel, to go to picnic and attend the religious meetings with their family members. The previous studies have not made any remarks on the type of the activities that widows, singles, and married ones did. For instance, Cohen-Mansfield et al. (2003) realized that the unmarried and widows had less contribution in leisure activities. These findings, which have been mentioned generally in relation to all outdoor leisure activities regardless of their types, are not in line with the findings of this study. The findings of this study does not fully support the findings of Pettee et al. (2006) who had argued that in comparison to single people, married ones had more probability of attending leisure activities. As it was mentioned above, widows, and unmarried women preferred to spend their outdoor leisure with their co-religious by attending social and religious activities, picnic, or group travelling held by the association. On the contrary, the married or elderly who still were staying with their families preferred to spend their outdoor leisure activities like picnic, travelling or social and religious activities with their families. It seems that the collectivist attitude of the Zoroastrians and their serious dependency on families and Zoroastrians communities play a significant role.

Death of a close friend of wife: Death of wife and close friends was another constraints hindering the formation of leisure preferences of the Zoroastrians' elderly. In other words, lack of leisure companion was one of the constraints, which resulted in the formation of leisure preferences. Zoroastrians' overemphasis on collectivist culture also manifests itself here as well. As it was mentioned before, for informants attending at the leisure activity per se was not important; rather it was socializing with family and friends in outdoor leisure activities, which was of significance. Therefore, the absence of any of the family members or close friends with whom they had once shared joyful memories during outdoor leisure activities could have functioned as a constraint factor in the formation of their outdoor leisure preferences.

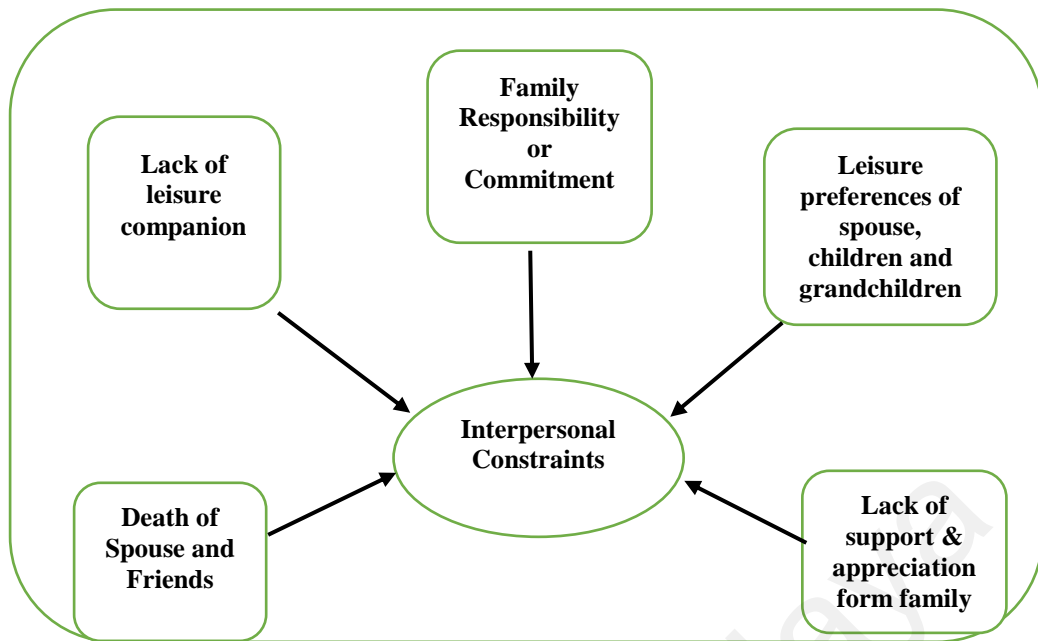


Figure 6.2: Interpersonal Leisure Constraints among the Informants

Lack of support and encouragement by friends and family: Another theme drawn from the findings of this study in relation to the experiences of the informants was the significant role that the lack of support and encouragement of friends and family members for the elders' participation in outdoor leisure activities. This also functioned as a constraint on the formation of certain outdoor leisure activities. This lack of support and discouragement had many reasons. One of the reasons was the worry of the family members of any incidence like falling, which would result in elders' serious injury like breaking their bone. That is why the children did not allow their old parents to go out alone for outdoor leisure activities, and preferred to accompany them ones a week on in the weekend. On the other hand, informants asserted that their families do not care about the elders' leisure and outdoor leisure activities and do not courage them for attending that sort of activities. Yin (2008a) also had found out that the family and friends' lack of support and encouragement functioned as one of the interpersonal constraints.

6.3.3. Structural Constraints

Lake of time: Informants mentioned the lack of time as one of the constraints for outdoor leisure activities (Table 5.15). Though the factor of lack of time might sound strange in case of the elders who are mostly retired, for women, this lack of time was essentially unique due to the expectation of gender roles. Women's leisure time was mainly restricted because of the social role given to wives and mothers namely "ethic of care". Housewives faced lack of time due to doing their daily household duties. Previous studies have also illustrated that in comparison to men, women face more leisure constraints due to their family responsibilities and commitments (Horna, 1989; Searle & Jackson, 1985a; Witt & Goodale, 1981). In addition to these studies, time was also perceived as the most objective constraint of the leisure time for women in the study conducted by Maureen Harrington et al. (2013). According to Shaw & Henderson (2005), time is the most important leisure constraint. While, lack of time might be considered as an intrapersonal constrain, it can be considered as structural constraint especially for women. Lack of time for women originates from their involvement in daily household routines. The findings of this study in this regard supports the findings of the studies conducted by Hochschild & Machung (1989) and Pittman, Teng, Kerpelman, & Solheim (1999). Moreover, women might priorities other's leisure preferences to their own due to their ethic of care. Other studies conducted by Daly (1996); Harrington & Dawson (1995) and Herridge, Shaw, & Mannell (2003) also supported the findings of this study.

Lack of time was the most common reason for people's not using the parks and leisure facilities. It is a constraint which has been mentioned in the previous studies (Arnold & Shinen, 2008; Godbey et al., 1992; Howard & Crompton, 1984; Scott & Jackson, 1996; Scott & Munson, 1994). The findings of this study also supported the findings of the study conducted by Yin (2008a). The findings of Yin (2008a) illustrated that elderly take part in the leisure activities when they have enough time.

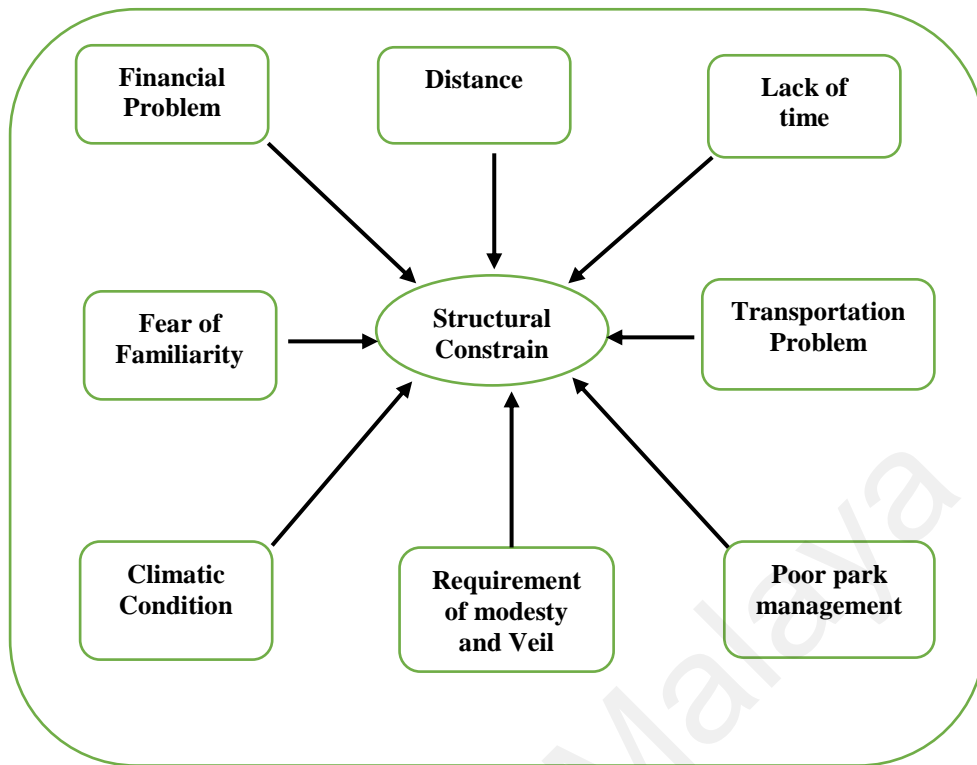


Figure 6.3: Structural Leisure Constraints among the Informants.

Constraints due to climatic changes: Another leisure constraints of the informants of this study was seasonal changes. Iran is a country, which experiences the four seasons due to its geographical position. Each one of these seasons, have their own special climatic conditions. For instance, at the beginning of spring, it starts getting warm day by day until it reaches to the warmest days in summer. Again, it starts getting cold by the beginning of the fall and it reaches to its coldest degree in winter. Seasonal changes can be considered as a constraint in the sense that extreme cold or warmth can constraint the participation of people in outdoor leisure activities. Informants of this study have claimed that practically it is impossible to go out in summer when it is extremely hot. They should wait for the sunset after which the temperature falls, and then they go for walking to the local parks or outdoor leisure environments. During fall and winter, the coldness of weather shows itself as a constraint for participation in outdoor leisure activities. Elders cannot attend at the outdoor leisure activities during winter due to the coldness of the weather and their physical conditions. In this case, the

findings of this study support the findings of the study conducted by Dunpal & Barry (1999). They had concluded that the bad climatic conditions are of the constraining factors in participating outdoor leisure activities.

Constrains originating from weak management: Informants of the study have mentioned the weak maintenance of outdoor leisure environment and the inefficacy of the look of the leisure managers at the issue of leisure as another leisure constraint. This constrains can be investigated from various point of views. The neglecting of taking care of outdoor leisure spaces like local parks originates from the lack of sense of responsibility of the residents of that area in taking care of the public leisure spaces and facilities, and the measures taken by the municipality specially the organization of parks and urban spaces. Informants said that the pavements are full of pits and pumps, rubbishes are seen all over the parks and playing facilities are mainly destroyed, that is why they have no intention to go to parks with their grandchildren. Lack of hygienic water resources and public bathrooms were among the factors that prevented the people from going to parks. This is indicative of the fact that authorities do not deal enough with these issues. In addition to it, the accessibility of these parks also affected the participation of the Zoroastrian informants. These problems included both heavy traffic of the roads leading to parks and elders' problem of going to park due to difficulties like ascending the stairs of parks. The findings of the study are in line with the findings of the study conducted by Alexandris, Barkoukis, Tsorbatzoudis and Grouios (2003) which had investigated the impact of absence or lack of leisure facilities and services in parks and access problems on elder's participation in outdoor leisure activities. The level of participation of the informants of the study in outdoor leisure activities depended both on the availability of parks and leisure facilities and their accessibility. There are plethora of evidence that access to the parks are correlated to high level of participation in leisure activity (Godbey, Caldwell, Floyd, & Payne, 2005; Kaczynski &

Henderson, 2007, 2008; Kaczynski, Potwarka, Smale, & Havitz, 2009). The findings of this study are also in line with the findings of the study conducted by Searle & Jackson (1985a) which have shown that both men and women had mentioned lack of leisure facilities and inaccessibility as a leisure constraints.

Income and leisure constraints: Another constraint for leisure activities was lack of money. One of the reasons for which informants were not able to have remarkable participation in outdoor activities in its modern sense, was their financial problems. In many cultures and countries, this constraint functions as one of the main factors hurdling participation in outdoor leisure activities. For instance Houston and Wilson (2005) were one of the scholars to explain the lack of economic resources as one of the constrains for women's participation in outdoor leisure activities. Houston and Wilson (2005) had realized that those women who had no personal income, had no desire to participate in outdoor leisure activities.

Informants mentioned the financial problems and insufficient income as one of the constraints for participating in outdoor leisure activities. Shaw (1994) have also mentioned the economic problems as one of the constraints for the elders' leisure activities. Aging comes with retirement and decrease in income that affects one's life in many aspects. Financial problems are among the decisive factors in hurdling the leisure activities (Jackson, 2005). Therefore, limited financial resource can shadow the elders' life like an umbrella. Accordingly, the leisure time activities will be influenced by this problem as well. Scott & Munson (1994) also realized that income is the best index to understand the constraints of outdoor leisure. They realized that even when the role of gender, age, and education on leisure are controlled, income still is a decisive factor. The findings of this study support the findings of the previous studies, which had shown that those who have lower income face more leisure constraints than others do (Burdge, 1969; Jackson, 2005; McCarville & Smale, 1993). The findings of this study are also in

line with the findings of the study conducted by Scott & Munson (1994). The people with low income who had been investigated by them had maintained that the high price of the outdoor leisure facilities limits their use of these facilities. The findings of the study conducted by Godbey et al. (1992) shows that impoverished people have less participation in the public parks and leisure programs because of the high expenses of leisure facilities and services. In a similar way, the research conducted by Kay & Jackson (1991) illustrated that lack of financial resources and money, is the most common leisure constraints.

The effect of the low income on leisure behaviors has been evident in the previous studies. De Grazia (1994) maintained that in comparison to people with higher income, people with lower income use only one fifth of their income for leisure activities. Hillier et al., (2011) illustrated that the people with low income travel shorter distances and in comparison to people with high income, they have less attitude to spend money for travelling. People with lower income also have low participation in artistic events and activities (Robinson, 1994), zoo and museums (Hood, 1993), physical exercise (Shaw et al., 1991).

The outcomes of this study also revealed that low income also affects leisure preferences; a view which was also mentioned by Howard and Crompton (1980) in their study. According to the findings of this study, increase in income could have provided some possibilities with which people could behave according to their leisure preferences. People with higher incomes, had skills and resources to experience different styles of leisure. In addition, they also had broad knowledge to have access to leisure services and activities.

The result of the study also illustrated that the leisure activities of the people with lower income might be constrained due to the high price of fuel and lack of personal transportation. In other words, low income restricts the access to resources and skill

required for participation in outdoor leisure activities. The findings of this study also support the findings of the study conducted by Searle and Jackson (1985b). Kay and Jackson (1991) also found out that leisure opportunities for the low-income people were restricted by transportation expenses in Britain. This view was also supported by Chubb and Chubb (1981). Impoverished people do not have access to the favorite things like automobile, leisure facilities, and summer houses that enhances the recreational and leisure environments of rich people.

In addition, the findings of the study have revealed that lack of access to financial resources has constrained the life in general and leisure in particular more for women than it has for men. The findings of the study are in line with the findings of the previous studies which had indicated that women's limited financial resources as the obstacle for their participation in outdoor leisure activities (Hunter & Whitson, 1992).

Fear of Familiarity: The outdoor leisure of the informants of the study was also restricted due to the fear of familiarity of their teen with Muslim teens. In fact, what they were worried about was the possibility of a relationship between their teens (boy or girl) with Muslim ones, their falling in love with each other and consequently their marriage. Thus, some of the informants of this study mentioned that their outdoor leisure have been constrained. They preferred to stay at home rather than going out and get worried about this problem. According to Islamic rules, one of the barriers to exclude one from heritage is atheism. In other words, Muslim can inheritage from non-Muslin, but not vice versa. This is an issue over which almost all the Imamia clerics of Islam have consensus (Civil Law of Islamic Republic of Iran, 2005). The act number 881 of Iranian civil law passed in 1990 indicates that “ in case there is a Muslim member among the family members of a non-Muslim, neither of the non-Muslim members are entitled to benefit from heritage and all the heritage should be passed to the Muslim member (Civil Law of Islamic Republic of Iran, 2005, act. 881). Although

in 2012/08/26 some of the members of the parliament proposed a bill to the Islamic parliament, asking for the addition of a note to the act 881 passed in 1990. This note indicates that: “The religious minorities recognized by Islamic republic of Iran’s constitution are exceptions to this act”. This proposal has been received by the center of research of Islamic parliament; however, still it has not been passed. Therefore, the worries of Zoroastrians in this regard are continuing. The fear of coming to know someone is one of the restricting factors functioning as an obstacle in participating their outdoor leisure.

Requirement of Modesty and putting on hijab: Another constrain that the informants of the study were facing was the obligation to wear hijab. Although Zoroastrianism has some restrictions that imposes to its followers and limit them, contrary to the restricting rules of Islam about women’s clothing, there are no specific role about women’s clothing in Zoroastrianism functioning as an obstacle in the participation in outdoor leisure activities (Alimardi & Alimardi, 2010). However, the Zoroastrian community living in Islamic society of Iran has to obey the Islamic rules and regulations including wearing hijab in public places. Moreover, the relationship between men and woman and their interactions with each other does not affect Zoroastrians’ life in remarkable way. In other words, during their leisure activities (like group sports) Zoroastrians can easily interact with the opposite sex freely but not in western sense.

The findings also revealed that the Zoroastrian faith also imposes some direct restrictions to the behaviors of its followers. According to Zoroastrian faith, the leisure activities should be performed with a kind of humbleness, the opposite point of being self-centered, rude and violent (Pourdavoud, 2008). The leisure activities should not include any kind of violence, rudeness, curse, pollution, dirtiness and nakedness. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of study conducted by Egenes (2000).

Based on results, participating in the leisure activities, demands a decision-making about the appropriacy and a satisfactory evaluation of the content and the framework within which this leisure is going to take place. As it was mentioned before, Zoroastrianism does not impose any kind of compulsion to its followers concerning wearing hijab, but as the informants of the study live in Iran, they have to observe it. It seems that requirement to wear hijab is a leisure constraint affecting some of the leisure experiences of the individuals and alerting the person in a non-stop way about the borderlines imposed to one's life.

6.3.4. Culture and Leisure Constraints

Culture has been defined differently by different scholars. Kroeber, Kluckhohn, and Untereiner (1952) have collected 164 different definition of the term "culture". One of the most famous and comprehensive definitions of culture belong to Taylor (1871). He believed that " culture is that complicated whole which embraces the knowledge, belief, art, rules, morals, traditions and any kind of capabilities and rituals that one has acquired as a member of society". This definition include both idea, activities and rituals. According to this definition, the concept of leisure, leisure activities, the way they pass, and leisure constraints has been affected by the culture of each community.

Most of the investigations concerning leisure have been conducted in North America and less reliable studies about the model of leisure constrains have been conducted in non-American and European societies (Arab-Moghaddam, Henderson & Sheikholeslami, 2007). The theories and models developed in north-American countries are simply not applicable to Asian societies. Based on the above-mentioned assertion, the purpose of this study is to investigate the validity of Crawford & Godbey (1987) model of leisure constrains in Iranian society. Culturally speaking, this society is totally different from the North American and European society. In this study, the leisure

constraint model has been investigated. This model was primarily introduced by Crawford and Godbey (1987) and then developed by in 1991 by Crawford et al. (1991).

While the three categories of leisure constrains have been examined in many studies (Blazey, 1987; Crompton, 1977; Lansing & Blood, 1964; Norman, 1995; Tian, Crompton, & Witt, 1996), the debate of culture as both a constraining and encouraging category has been less investigated. According to Chick and Dong (2003, p. 342), “rationally, culture has priority over intrapersonal and interpersonal constrains and is more a structural constrains”. Culture is both descriptive and prescriptive, therefore on the basis of these two characteristics, what might be available in one culture, might not be available and even forbidden in another culture (Walker, Jackson & Deng, 2007). Therefore, cultural constrains, are either descriptive (people should do certain things) or they are preventive (people should not do certain things). Therefore, inside a “social group” people either do certain things or are prevented from doing them just because it is their culture that is telling them to do or not to do. Of course, some people disobey these prescriptions and bans and do not do the things they are ordered to do. The outcome of this disobeying might be warning or punishment. This punishment ranges from disrespectful words to capital punishment.

The findings of the study has illustrated that Zoroastrian’s elderly constrained by interpersonal, intrapersonal and structural constrains model (Crawford & Godbey, 1987), any time they wanted to participate in an outdoor leisure activity. In addition, some different types of constrains were also observed that do not match any of the categories introduced by Crawford et al. (1991). These constrains which seemed to be a category imposed by culture was not easily deducible by the structural, interpersonal and intrapersonal categories. Findings of this study revealed that some of the constraints are obviously culture-based. For instance the traditional culture of Zoroastrianism discourages the leisure time for women and emphasizes that they should stay home and

take care of their grandchildren. Therefore, most of the Zoroastrians women claimed that the traditional culture of Zoroastrianism constrains their outdoor leisure activities and make them give up their outdoor leisure activities. In other words, in the traditional culture of Zoroastrianism, when the grandmothers and grandfathers get retired, they should take care of their grandsons.

On the other hand, in the Zoroastrian's culture, leisure participation prescribes by the collective leisure as well (Joshani & Ghaedi, 2009). Although everyone knows that jumping over fire is a dangerous leisure activity especially for children, Zoroastrian's culture suggests this activity to be done the last Wednesday of every year simply because they believe that jumping over the fire can bring happiness and remove badness.

It seems that both interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints are motivated by culture. Therefore in general, it seems that Crawford's et al. (1991) "theory of leisure constraints" should be modified on the basis of the findings of cross-cultural studies because culture itself is a constraining factor. Therefore in the modified model of this theory in the study, the cultural constraints are added to the hierarchical model of leisure constraints taking the higher level up the individual and structural constraints. It is felt that this model can provide the researchers with a better method for understanding the leisure constraints within a cross-cultural or multicultural framework. In their study Chick and Dong (2003) has also introduced culture as leisure constraint.

The issue of gender and its relationship with cultural expectations is a field, which is more related to men. These constraints might be interwoven with some certain activities. For instance, Culp (1998) has realized that the gender roles such as the family and friends' expectation about the women, had constrained the women who were interested in outdoor leisure activities. As it has been discussed by other scholars (Khan, 1997b; Manrai & Manrai, 1995; Tirone & Pedlar, 2000; Tirone & Shaw, 1997)

to perceive an activity as appropriate or inappropriate is a matter of culture which varies in different ethnic groups. In addition, social disapproval to some activities might be considered as an inter-individual constraint. Controlling the women's leisure by family belongs to this group of constraints (Green & Hebron, 1988). The degree of the effect of social approval and control of women's leisure cannot be realized because practically no study is conducted in this relation (Shaw & Henderson, 2005). The social background of such decisions might not be taken into account or downgraded (Shaw & Henderson, 2005). Therefore, investigating the social and individual levels of leisure constraints are significant (Shaw & Henderson, 2005). This view demands to move beyond the simple investigation, and study this issue at individual, social and structural levels. The cultural structure of gender and social structure should be taken into consideration while conducting studies about the groups of Iranian women.

The results of this study illustrated an obvious pattern of relationship between culture and religion. Leisure constraints cannot be investigated apart from other aspects of life. Investigating the leisure constraint as a topic might be challenging in any culture especially where religion is directly tied to people's life. Livengood and Stodolska (2004) have also emphasized that while conducting studies about the leisure constraints, scholars should not confine ourselves to the immediate, short-term definitions and specific activities, rather they have to look at it in a more broad view.

Finally, the results of the study indicated that informants did not experience leisure constraints merely because they belonged to a religious ethnicity, while the studies conducted in North America had shown that some ethnic and religious minorities had faced leisure constrain while using public parks and leisure faculties (Rideout & Legg, 2000). One of the reasons for the contradiction observed between the findings of the study and the previous studies might originate from the fact that, though Zoroastrians are different from other Iranians in terms of their religion, but ethnically, they are not

different from other Iranians. Contrary to them, African Americans, Indian American and Asian Americans, are different from the majority of the population in North America in terms of skin color, physical appearance and facial features. As the previous studies have also illustrated, ethnic groups' use of public leisure spaces and facilities is constrained by these ethnic characteristics.

6.4. Contribution of Leisure to Religious Continuity

The Zoroastrian minority living in Iran believe that they alone are preserving the ancient civilization of this land (Foltz, 2011). They share many commonalities with other Iranians in terms of feelings of dependency and the sense of belonging to a group because Iranian Zoroastrians are loyal to the faith of their ancestors.

Due to the significant emigration of the Zoroastrians' youth and the low birth rate, the Zoroastrians' community has faced a drop in population in recent years. This has had a remarkable effect, weakening their identity and endangering the existence of their community. The worry among Zoroastrians is seeing their culture being wiped out in the same manner. Studies undertaken among the Zoroastrians' community have shown that the main concern of Zoroastrians is to preserve their faith at any cost (Fakouhi, 2010).

During the past three decades, Zoroastrians' community have come up with some strategies to solve this identity challenge. They have frequently modified their sacred elements in order to preserve their cultural identity. At times, their religious rituals, ceremonies and fundamental beliefs have faded or even been ignored. Reforms within the Zoroastrian religion have been an acceptable response but, during the past three decades, these changes have had an accelerating rate. Holy leisure, meaning a process of simplification of religious rituals and festivals whose purpose is to attract more Zoroastrians especially ordinary people to these rituals, is a way to pass this challenge.

This simplification process has, at times, gone so far that it has even generated a new religious identity.

Sanctification and desanctification are dichotomies which have played a fundamental role in the generation and regeneration of the Zoroastrians' identity residing in Iran. The followers of this religious minority have frequently modified the features and forms of their religious rituals and beliefs through of sanctification and desanctification. The purpose of modifications have been to define the elements that construct their identity, on the one hand, distinguishing the "self" from "others" and, on the other hand, regenerating their identity. Sanctification refers to the process on the basis of which the believers of a faith tend to establish religious dependencies within the scope of their beliefs. During this process, at times, they even propose some non-religious elements in a sanctified manner in order to postulate a religious load for these elements. The term desanctification refers to a process during which the believers of a faith try to moderate the sacredness of some religious elements through simplification of religious rituals, proposing new items which were hitherto prohibited. The purpose of desanctification was to cope with the new challenge of identity for the Zoroastrians which was a threat which could lead to their cultural fading away as a result of their population decline (Connolly, 1997).

To allow Muslims to take part in the *Sade* festivals and other ancient festivals is not only indicative of a desanctification process, but also is an attempt to introduce Zoroastrian rituals and ancient festivals to the *shi'a*-dominated Iranian society. It is also indicative of Zoroastrians' efforts to show their cultural-religious identity to others and overcome their new identity crisis. For Zoroastrians, holding religious festivals, fairs, and rituals is a way both to remember their past and to use it to regenerate their new identity. The purpose of these modifications was to attract the younger generation and consequently to reduce the migration rate. To permit Muslim visitors and visitors from

other religions to attend the Zoroastrian rituals is seen as a way to regenerate the Zoroastrian identity. Sometimes, the reverse process has been adopted in which the religious elements have been emphasized in order to generate a solid religious identity. These can also be regarded as instances of desanctifying processes undertaken by Zoroastrians to create harmonization, simplification and regeneration of a new modern identity. These activities promoted the religious identity of Zoroastrians by educating youth and others about the Zoroastrian ethics and rituals. Simplification of Zoroastrian religious rituals and a lack of emphasis on legitimating the rituals were also observed which was characteristic of the Zoroastrian faith during the Sasanian Empire.

In addition, the Association of Zoroastrians has requested that Zoroastrians go beyond this simple improvement of Zoroastrian society, maintaining their desirability and freshness within the borders of the *shi'a*-dominated society of Iran and continuing to survive.

6.4.1. Rethinking Identities through Hybridization

From long ago, religion has played a fundamental role in the formation of human identity (Oppong, 2013 & Wang, 2012). Although religious identity has faded or been fully abandoned in favor of newly-emerging modern identities, the identity challenge of religious minorities in generating a meaningful identity different from the dominant majority still revolves around religion (Cosgel & Minkler, 2004).

Changes in the Zoroastrian rituals, traditions, and festivals have depended on the fundamental development of those ideas and beliefs which have created the essence of those rituals, festivals, and traditions. Contrary to the slow trend of changes undergone by the Zoroastrian written traditions and ancient rituals before 1950, since this temporal border, the performance of these traditions has stepped into a new world which is no longer sacred but, rather, is secular. In the secular world, in the hierarchy of new

conceptual values, and in the era of the superiority of technology and science, the performance of old rituals and traditions has no value. Developments which had happened before this date have paved the way for the new forms of Zoroastrian traditions, rituals, and festivals (Figure 6.4).

Most of the traditions, festivals, and rituals performed up to 1970 are no longer even taught to children. Even observing and applying them seems to be unreasonable and odd. It should therefore be inferred that the old traditions of Zoroastrians have undergone drastic changes. These traditions, which once had a determinant role as an independent unit in the general construction of the society's culture, no longer have been able to preserve that old role, losing their position in the minds of the holders of those traditions. The rationale behind this development is the transition from the era of sacredness to the era of secularity.

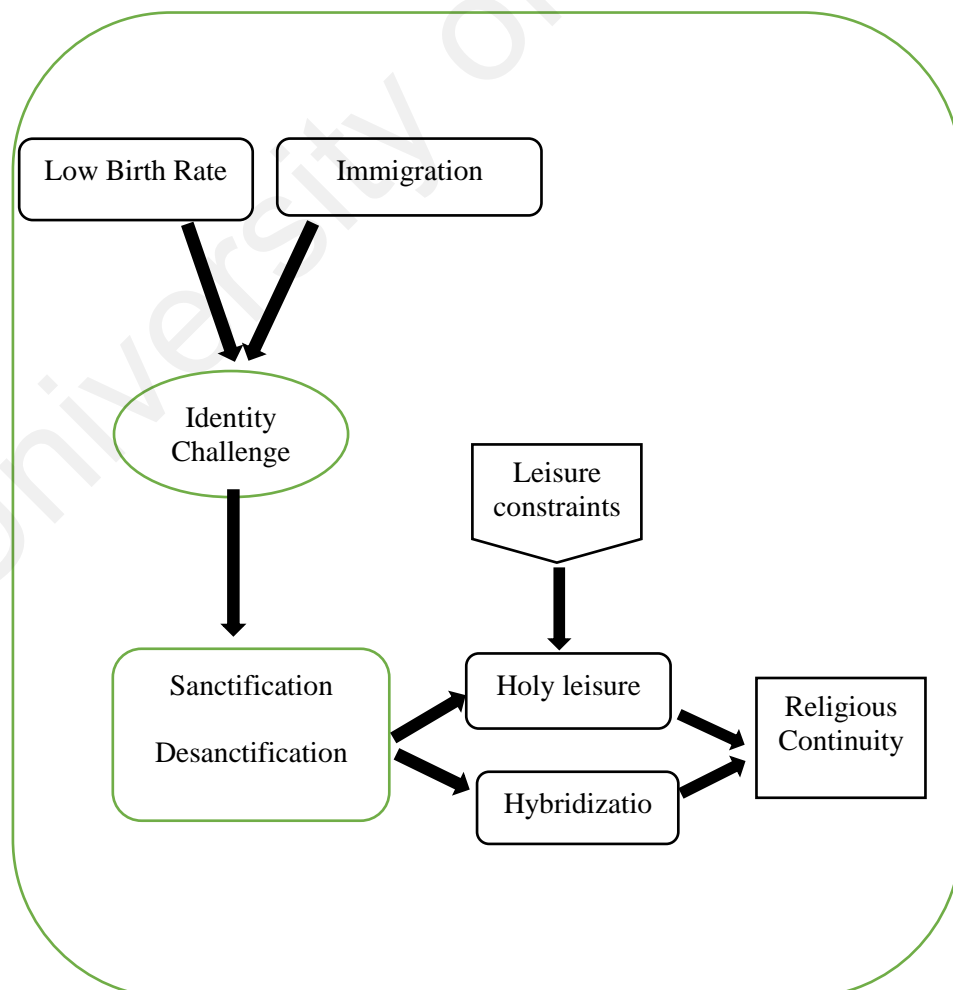


Figure 6.4: Religious Continuity among Zoroastrians' Community

Throughout such a change, only one or some of the constructing components are eliminated but the whole collection, its name and its identity remains the same. The role and position of the whole set and the independent identity of the tradition might be modified in order to match the new conditions and to be sustained within them. Thus, one or some of the constructing components can be eliminated, changed, or even added without damaging the essence and totality of a tradition.

Even modification or elimination of the role and position of a significant part of an independent set comprising an independent tradition might result in the surface of a tradition remaining; however, even this can be regarded as a minor change and development within a bigger unit and the identity and main meaning of the bigger units might not change. In this case, the totality of the bigger unit preserves a sketch of the tradition and helps it to survive even though only a name or an opaque image remains or it may fully vanish. It is even possible that a small part of a certain tradition, which is a member of a unit, survives independently and survives singly so that its relation to the old tradition is entirely forgotten. These mechanisms guarantee both change and survival of the tradition until factors preserving that tradition in the whole culture and thought of society survive and providing that it has not been eliminated by other significant changes (Mazdapour, 2004).

It is in the consequence of these mechanisms that the slow trend of the development of written rituals and traditions of Iranian Zoroastrians before 1950 can be observed. Despite the constant developments, the totality and the main meaning of the old traditions and rituals have been preserved. The created changes not only have not eliminated the old traditions, they have also created a kind of solidarity and coherence in society through the developments created in the old traditions. These traditions have been so solid and coherent that they have functioned as the main pillar to preserve and

carry the ancient culture despite the fact that it has been exposed to challenges and danger.

On the one hand, the ease created following the abolition of the *jizya* (1882 AD) for the Zoroastrian community in Iran and, on the other hand, the value given to the old Iranian culture during recent periods have created a valuable position and role for old traditions in the hierarchy of personal and social values and people's mentality. These new roles and values will help the surviving remainder of these traditions to flourish once again and to gain a new trend and form. As a result, in comparison to the old traditions before 1950, new items have been added to the inventory of festivals.

The way each component of a tradition is able to survive depends both on the nature of that tradition itself and the type of relationship that this tradition builds with the other comprising units of traditions of the society. Zoroastrian *Mubeds* have preserved these traditions for many millenniums and, they welcome the changes and, in some cases, they themselves even lead these changes. Agreements based of old religious jurisprudence have been the origin of many developments in the present traditions of the Zoroastrian community in Iran and have functioned as an independent factor in the change of old traditions. No doubt, the beliefs of the time have played a significant role in these changes. Most of these traditions will continue to survive as long as positive and supporting points help them to survive and guarantee their preservation.

The developments that Zoroastrian rituals and festivals have undergone during their transition from the sacred world to the secular world have not resulted in the elimination of these rituals and festivals: rather, the formation of joint types of traditions which are neither fully secular nor fully sacred have been witnessed. Cultural hybridization refers to the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices" (Pieterse, 2004:64). The identities are not independently assimilated or altered but, instead, elements of cultures are incorporated

to create a new hybrid culture. The result is a form of hybridity that signifies the encounter, conflict, and/or blending of two ethnic or cultural categories which, while by no means pure and distinct in nature, tend to be understood and experienced as meaningful identity labels by members of these categories (Lo, 2002). As Canclini (2005: xxv) stated, hybridization is socio-cultural processes in which discrete structures or practices, previously existing in separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects, and practices. In modern anthropology, this process is the outcome of the presence of modernity in all aspects of human life. Based on this point of view, there is not just one single modernism or tradition; rather, there is an infinite number of versions of modernism and an infinite number of traditions, each of which has its own features and characteristics (Arce & Long, 2000).

Moreover, based on the findings of this study, there is not any clear and obvious sort of separation and parting in the relationship between tradition and modernism; rather there is very complicated line of cultural phenomena which connects the past and present. Therefore, as mentioned before, in this line one observe the formation of phenomena, called joint phenomena or sometimes mixed-oriented phenomena. Joints are actually entities which are the outcome of the collapse and decomposition of modernism as a global and imported pattern whose reformation in the form of new modernism results in the formation of a new and endless number of other versions of modernism. This process is called reconfiguration (Arce & Long, 2000). The other point about the joint forms created from the unity of modernism and tradition is that there is a kind of contradiction in terms of their form and content: modern forms with traditional content or traditional forms with modern content. In terms of the secularization of many religious rituals, the changes created in the traditional context do not eliminate the rituals; rather, new contexts are created which change the existing varying degrees of modernism to different forms and representations of new modernism with new

interpretations. As a result, these new forms are used for their own survival. Therefore, in this way, the separation and contradiction between tradition and modernism turns to a constant process of mutual impact and mutual actions in both areas.

6.5. Summary

In general, there is relatively limited empirical research on the religious attitudes and behaviours of the elderly. One reason for this limitation is that this aspect of the elderly lives is assumed to be ascertained and evident. In other words, it is assumed that compared to younger people, the elderly are more religious and the role of elders in religious activities is very strong and bold. The reason for increased participation and engagement of the elderly people in religious organizations with age refers to the notion that this participation and engagement can provide social support, sense of belonging and security for the elderly people. Religious organizations often act as social networks that can provide sources of social support for the members of these organizations to cope with critical situations. Conducting the activities as a group and membership in voluntary associations such as Zoroastrians association can have significant benefits for the Zoroastrians' elderly.

In addition, familial socializations comprises a large proportion of outdoor spending of leisure time for Zoroastrian elderly and this suggests that among the Iranians and also the Zoroastrians, the family still plays an important role in people's outdoor leisure time. In other words, most of the activities of the studied elderly people were collective. These results can be analysed in such a way that religion is deeply rooted among Zoroastrians and they feel it necessary to act based on religious teachings. Thus, on the one hand, visiting relatives and friends are typically regarded as religious orientation and acting based on religious teachings and on the other hand, indicates stronger emotional relationships in the family. Iranian traditional culture has played an important

role in this context. Cultural values such as talking or meeting with neighbours or friends have played an important role in the formation of some activities. This is due to the fact that many informants have still retained most of their ethnic and familial origins and many of them have maintained their communications and interactions with their friends, acquaintances and relatives. At a time, when the Iranian society was more traditional, most of the leisure time of individuals was spent collectively within families and communication and talking with relatives or friends and neighbours were considered as the informal ways of spending the leisure time. Also, the social intentions had priority over individual intentions and these affairs are still ongoing and dominant. Although with the development of the society and the distribution of tasks, the family received an official aspect, but still the family, relatives and friends, among which face to face relationships are prominent, have retained their great importance in Iranian society.

CHAPTER 7: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1. Introduction

The main objective of the research was to explore the leisure activities of the Zoroastrians' elderly in Kerman, Iran. Subsidiary objectives of the study were: a) to identify the outdoor leisure activities and preferences of the Zoroastrians' elderly in Iran b) to explore the leisure constraints which limit the leisure participation of the Zoroastrians' elderly in leisure activities c) to explore the contribution of the leisure activities to religious continuity of the Zoroastrians' community d) Suggestions to improve the leisure aspects of the Zoroastrians' elderly in Iran. Therefore, this chapter is divided to the following sections: a) answering to the research objectives, b) contribution of findings to the knowledge c) implications of the findings to existing theories, and d) suggestions for leisure managers and providers and further research.

The importance of the research is related to the crisis of aging in Iran. Research such as this, can provide rich information about the aging and their needs especially leisure time needs. In addition to this, another significant of this research trace back to term of culture. Culture is not neutral on aging, it forms the attitudes and behavior of older persons toward participation in and withdrawal from leisure activities and the perception and practices of the society around them. Therefore it is essential to understand the role of culture as prescriber or proscriber in leisure behavior, especially in leisure preferences and activities, and leisure constraints.

The main objective of the study was to explore the leisure behavior of the Zoroastrians' elderly in Iran. The study tried to answer to these objectives:

1. To identify the outdoor leisure activities and preferences of the Zoroastrians' elderly in Iran.
2. To explore the leisure constraints which limit the leisure participation of the Zoroastrians' elderly in leisure activities.
3. To explore the contribution of the leisure activities to religious continuity of the Zoroastrians' community.
4. Suggestions to improve the leisure aspects of the Zoroastrians' elderly in Iran.

Chapter Four introduces the important findings of the study. This chapter tried to provide synthesise of data in relation to research questions.

First Objective: To identify the outdoor leisure activities and preferences of the Zoroastrians' elderly in Iran.

Almost all the informants participated at least in one or more outdoor leisure activities. The common styles of outdoor leisure time among them were aa following: religious activities, social activities, meeting and socializing with friends and relatives,

attending family gatherings, daily and nightly friendly and family picnics, chatting with other elderly people in local centers, going to the parks, exercises in the morning or evening times, eating out, travel, walking for pleasure, going to the sport clubs and doing or watching sport activities, shopping for pleasure and going to the movies. Religious and social activities and spending the leisure time with friends, relatives and family are perhaps the most popular ways of spending outdoor leisure time among the studied informants.

Among those with low level of education and income, it is family and neighbor relations which are more common. In contrast, friend and colleague relationships are more common among the high level of education and income. Some activities like the activities of Zoroastrians' association, are among those activities during which, one is connected to a totally civil organization where people try to achieve a common goal. According to the findings of this study, there is a positive relation between the rise of family's socio-economic status and the increase of relationships with friends and colleagues, while there is no change in the relation between family's socio-economic status and relationships with family.

Three main ways to spending the leisure time among them were as following:

A) Collective and inactive ways including watching sport matches and chatting with family members. The results of the study illustrated that the major part of elders' leisure time is spent for socializing and chatting with friends, relatives and family members. Therefore, in Iran, family still meets the major part of individuals' leisure needs and in general, it can be argued that Iranians' leisure time is mainly defined within the framework of family and relatives. Some of the particular traditions and rituals of Iranian society also has profound impact on the formation of the leisure within the framework of relative's relationships. For instance, paying visit to relatives is considered to be necessary; a tradition which strengthen the family relations and ties

and gives a certain form to leisure time. Here, the researcher can come up with this conclusion that leisure in Iranian society, is still a group attitude.

B) Individual and active ways of spending leisure time including taking part in charity activities. In contrast to women, men were more active participation in charity activities, and amount of attention paid to charity activities increases by age. Different types of charity activities including “helping poor people, helping to religious places and activities. Another leisure activities in this part are visiting museums and exhibitions; and walking in the parks. Walking in the parks and streets are considered as two inexpensive leisure activities which are preferred mostly. In fact, they prefer to spend their leisure time through inexpensive facilities like walking in the parks or streets and neighborhood. Going to parks and recreational complexes are mainly preferred by men rather than women. In addition, as the age increases, the tendency to go to park decreases. Marital status plays no role in going to park but in comparison to married woman, single women go to park and recreational centers more often. Regarding the leisure companion, women’s tendency to go to park along with family members was twice more than men, in contrast, men’s tendency to go to park with friends was four times more than women’s tendency. As the age increases, the tendency to walk on the streets and shopping centers reduces. In general, married men and woman go walking on streets less than single men and women respectively. In relation to using parks, some of the elders used parks for walking, some of them used parks for relaxing and sitting and some of them used them to have friendly chats. The patterns of going to park and recreational centers also varied in that women’s tendency to go to park along with family members was twice more than men, in contrast, men’s tendency to go to park with friends was four times more than women’s tendency. Some of them also preferred to go to park with their relatives. The obvious pattern is that as the age increases, the amount of going to walk, going to park and walking in the streets reduces.

These findings are also indicative of the inexpensive nature of this type of spending leisure activities.

C) collective and active ways of spending leisure time including playing and sports, going to cinema, going to picnic, and leisure and pilgrimage travels, chatting and visiting the relatives and friends. One of the social and group activities which is the most preferred by Zoroastrian elders is to take part in the religious festivals and public ceremonies. Among the Zoroastrians, family and friend have the highest attraction, due to their availability and being without expense. Of course, its most important feature might be the possibility of establishing relationship with same-age group mates and friends. The findings illustrate that the greatest part of Zoroastrian elders' leisure time is spent outdoor, spending time with friends and visiting others. In all cases, family plays a significant role in providing and meeting the leisure needs of Zoroastrian elders.

The findings illustrated that in sum, informants preferred to participate in those social activities, which did not demand much physical involvement, even though the results illustrated variations in terms of gender. For instance, male informants preferred to participate in the recreational and leisure activities, which required more energy like physical activities while female informants preferred to participate in social activities. It was also found out that there was a relation between the increases of age on the one hand and decline of interest towards highly energy- demanding leisure activities. Informants with higher level of education preferred the leisure activities, which had lower social interaction and done in individualistic manner, while those with lower levels of education preferred group activities with higher social interaction. People with low income preferred social leisure activities more, while well-off people inclined more towards individualistic leisure activities.

The results illustrated that those were on the verge of aging, who were married, and had a better physical condition, had more tendency for participation in leisure activities.

This participation helped them maintain their optimistic view, whose outcome was their healthy aging. In addition, the informants did not feel the need to run away from life difficulties. In general, they were satisfied with their participation in leisure activities and consequently life.

Second Objective: To explore the leisure constraints which limit the leisure participation of the Zoroastrians' elderly in leisure activities

Informants of the study mostly belonged to middle class, lived in traditional families and were closely and precisely attached to their role as head of household. In case of women, except some divorced, widow and single, the rest introduced themselves as housewife. Most of the Zoroastrian women had accepted and internalized this role. They maintained that as housewives, they have to take care of their husbands and feed their grandchildren and clean the house. Doing all these things made them extremely tired. This tiredness itself can be considered as a leisure constraint. Most of the married Zoroastrian women participating in this study mentioned the household responsibilities as the main constraints of leisure participation. Therefore, they formed their leisure activities while performing some household duties like taking care of their grandchildren. Preserving the values of ethic of care of children and husband was a priority for these women. This ethic of care has been interpreted as a kind of relationship that woman have in order to take care of other's needs. One of the leisure constraints of elderly Zoroastrian's women was taking care of grandchildren. Among Iranians, in general, and Zoroastrian in particular, family has a high status. In addition, contrary to what appears, collectivism is a very strong attitude among Iranians. Commitment to family values, such as living in extended families, is still common among many families. Among the Zoroastrians informants, ethic of care is clearly indicative of the priority of group's benefits to individual benefits, which as the informants of this study also mentioned in most of the cases, is resulted in the formation

of “lack of a sense of entitlement to leisure”. Informants of the study also mentioned that, despite this fact, the only chance for them to participate in outdoor leisure activity was when they took their grandchildren with themselves to parks and other leisure spaces.

Another leisure constraint was time, which was linked to the ethic of care. Time somehow also was linked to the family and its responsibilities, and was one of the leisure constraints which almost most of the study informants of the study has mentioned that as a leisure constraints. Permanently family care responsibility often was enhanced when the women of this study complained about the compression of their time.

Lack of social support and approval were another leisure constraints. Most of the informants of the study take parts in leisure activities especially those belonging to the lower class of society, confronted the constraints such as lack of family and friends support. This point is indicative of the significance of the relatives in Zoroastrians’ family life. Based on the results of the study, family plays a particular role in Zoroastrians’ life. Sometimes the eldest children prevent their parents from going out and walking in parks and taking part in leisure activities in “local gatherings” because they are worried about their falling, being injured or having accident with automobiles. This ban also included their trips to the countryside, until and unless they were sure that these trips were organized by the association of Zoroastrians in a group manner. Therefore, obeying husband and not accompanying the family in journeys had significantly influenced the physical leisure activities of these women. Some of these women were not able to go on a trip without having a male companion like her husband, father or brother. These obligations restricted their outdoor physical activities. Some of the Zoroastrian women maintained that they could participate in outdoor leisure activities, only when their husbands permitted them.

The worry about the household responsibilities also showed that in Zoroastrian culture, spending time for outdoor leisure especially for most of the housewives, was not acceptable. When the women informants of the study talked about the outdoor leisure activity they had experienced, most of them emphasized on the importance of their household duties, which was related to family. In addition, the labor division and traditional family responsibilities for taking care of husband and grandchildren directly influenced their free time.

In Iranian and Zoroastrian society, traditional attitude about gender roles are gained through the socialization of gender roles and men and women internalize these gender roles. Among the Iranian families, especially those who live far from capital city, families, persuade their daughters to be dependent and obedient, while boys are permitted to be independent and aggressive, because boys are expected to cope with the challenges of the outside world.

The ideas about the ethic of care as a constraint for outdoor leisure activity among all Zoroastrian women was in line with the lack of a sense of entitlement to leisure. Ethic of care is a common issue regardless of place and culture of informants. For instance, the elderly women informant in the study, said that they had to sacrifice their leisure time in order to respect the needs of their children and grandchildren. They preferred to take part in outdoor leisure activities after their children and grandchildren grew up. Their sense of entitlement to leisure and the right to take part in outdoor leisure activity were notably influenced by this ethic of care.

However, for many of the women participating in this study, most of the constraints on outdoor leisure activities rooted from the cliché believes about gender roles and others' approval of these roles in social and family responsibilities. Even when these women managed to arrange time for both family responsibilities and outdoor leisure activities, social approval still functioned as a constraint. The findings of this study also

illustrated that lack of social support influences women's participation in outdoor leisure activities.

Third Objective: To explore the contribution of the leisure activities to religious continuity of the Zoroastrians' community.

The sharp fall in the population growth of the Zoroastrian community in Iran due to, on the one hand, the low birth rate and, on the other hand, the immigration of their youth abroad on a vast scale has made Iran's Zoroastrian community confront a new identity challenge, that is, survival. The main concern of Zoroastrians residing in Iran is to survive at any cost. In addition, due to the historically strict rules concerning the wide participation of youth in Zoroastrian religious rituals, Zoroastrians have lost their motivation for attending these rituals.

The formation and endurance of the identity of the investigated minority has always been dependent on the social and historical conditions in which they have been situated. This minority has experienced the constant replacement of beliefs through processes of desanctifying and sanctifying used as a dichotomy process to regenerate their identity. They have tried to tackle the challenge of Zoroastrian population loss caused by low birth rate through, on the one hand, simplification and desanctification of religious festivals and rituals and, in some cases, on the other hand, sanctification.

In order to achieve the simplification of religious rituals and festivals, the Zoroastrian minority has embarked on desanctifying measures and, only in certain cultural and sometimes political situations, have they adopted sanctifying measures. Such a process perhaps owes itself to the mentality that Zoroastrians propose for themselves and other Iranians. They consider themselves as the heirs of their ancestral religion who live in their homeland. Iranian Zoroastrians also honor their racial origin. As they have not mixed with other minorities and Muslims, they consider themselves to be a pure and clean Aryan race. Despite marriages between Iranians and other

minorities or ethnicities such as Arabs, and Mongols, Zoroastrians have never considered themselves as alien to other Iranians. They have not drawn a thick line between “I” and “others” in order to distinguish themselves from Muslims. Wherever they have been allowed to do so by Iranians, Zoroastrians have peacefully coexisted beside Iranians. A Muslim never feels a stranger among Zoroastrians especially as their common language is Persian and they speak in the Behdini dialect.

This investigated minority has followed their identity-constructing processes through two lines of desanctifying and sanctifying. There was a meaningful difference in both foci selected by the investigated minority in terms of following up or refraining from the discussed ideas. In sum, it can be argued that the Zoroastrian minority has followed a distinguishing trend to varying degrees. This distinction has been through reducing the desanctifying measures or fortifying the sanctifying measures, a process which, despite the wide cultural developments in Iran, still makes it possible to distinguish the difference between the minority and the majority. Despite the reduction in their population and following the decrease in external pressures, Zoroastrians’ social lives are prominently lively. They attend religious rituals; religious events; art exhibitions and theatres; outdoor recreational excursions like picnics or walking; educational programs like religious education, scientific workshops, historical topics, or computer classes; and, most prominently, sports’ activities. These are some signs which can be interpreted either as the liveliness of the Zoroastrian community or their alarmed efforts to survive.

Forth Objective: Suggestions to improve the leisure activities of the Zoroastrians’ elderly in Iran

The following suggestions which are proposed to the authorities and leisure activities’ providers, are extracted from the findings of the study to improve the leisure activities of the Zoroastrians elderly in Iran:

1. The findings of the study can provide helpful information for the gerontologists, social workers and those involved in mental health care. The results of having leisure are complicated and can have impact on various aspects of human life.
2. When the providers of leisure services embark on planning or providing leisure services for old people, it is important for them to be aware of the relationship between leisure activities and life satisfaction. They must take into consideration that their plans and services have potential effects on promoting old people's health and increasing their life satisfaction.
3. The results clearly illustrated the lack of leisure spaces for Zoroastrians' women. This can remind the leisure service providers to plan and take measures in order to meet the leisure needs of various age and gender groups. One of the obstacles for participating in leisure activities for the old people participating in this study, was the long distance between their houses and leisure spaces. As the results of the study illustrated, despite the measures taken to solve the leisure spaces problem, still their lack is tangible. Since the parks are the spaces where Iranian old people and Zoroastrians also go to spend their leisure time, providing some of the following facilities in parks can provide a better leisure space for them. For instance, enhancing accessibility, leisure facilities, security, enough light, proper sidewalks and signboards fitting their need; as well planting the trees which are suitable for all seasons.
4. Providing the leisure activities and exercise for those with physical weakness, as well as leisure activities with high social interaction meant for life-long learning.

5. Creating and enhancing the indoor leisure activities for those elderly who cannot participate in outdoor leisure activities for any reasons like bad climate conditions, or physical pains. These indoor activities should be designed in the most convenient way to be practiced simply. These activities should also be coupled with adequate medical information.
6. Providing spaces for social interaction, especially for widows and singles who live alone. Their participation in social activities can result in their positive attitude whose immediate consequence is their increasing participation in leisure activities.
7. Authorities and providers of leisure activities should be aware of women's fear of violence, and take it into consideration as a leisure constraint while planning. For instance, time and place of providing leisure activities should be taken into consideration. If necessary, the internal and external security conditions of leisure facilities and spaces should be evaluated and improved. Providers and authorities of leisure activities should make sure about the security of the parks and their facilities. Instances of proposed security measures might be controlling through closed circuit cameras and providing more lighting in leisure spaces.
8. As the population ages, it becomes the responsibility of all social groups including families and governments to avoid the deepening of aging problems by taking measures like planning for the enhancement of various aspects of their life such as recreation and leisure patterns. Government and the authorities in society should adopt macro outlook towards old people's leisure time. The adopted plans should serve their psychological and physical enhancement. The following measures can be considered as influential: providing the appropriate recreational spaces and facilities for leisure

activities; establishing and promoting the local centers where old people can come together; creating some local centers with social programs as well as some venues for elderly to have interaction with their age mates and fellows; promoting the membership and participation in locals centers; holding religious contests and programs; and arranging the group trips and journeys. Institutionalizing the sport and travelling culture can enhance their leisure time and consequently their life style and health state.

7.2. Contribution to the Knowledge

This study revealed that, although the informants of this study had some constraints, especially structural constraints in their outdoor leisure activities, still they tried to use these outdoor leisure activates to cope with the new identity challenges due to reducing in population and migration to abroad. Through the dichotomy processes of sanctification and dissanctification, they tried to simplify their religious rituals and ceremonies to tract the new generations and even people from other religion. This processes led to religious continuity among them.

7.3. Implications of the Findings to Existing Theories

In the literature review section, some of the theories related to leisure activities, were discussed. These theories were continuity theory, disengagement theory, and activity theory. In this section, the extent to which the findings of this study are in line with the discussed theories will be discussed.

Finding of the research support the activity theory. According to this theory, successful elderly are person who are capable of maintaining their previous habits. Based on the findings of the research, pre-aging period is a period during which individual have developed their character, needs, and life style. Finding of the research

revealed that, as people age, they try to continue the activities they used to do before. The findings of the study supported the idea that those elderly who are engaged in leisure activities have more life satisfaction than those who are not engaged in such activities.

Results of the research has also support the disengagement theory. According to this theory, both old people and society restrict many of their relationships mutually and extensively. Findings of the research showed that, preserving the community, encourage and in some cases forces the informants to withdraw from the most important part of their social and religious activities. At the same time, Zoroastrians' community also withdraws itself from elderly through isolating them in terms of their accommodation, education, and leisure. Therefore, the study revealed that, successful aging has been achieved, as a process of drawback of informants from relationships and reduction of social and religious activities.

Activity theory also has been supported by the findings of this research. Findings revealed that, successful elderly were person who were physically, socially, and mentally active and maintains their interactions with the whole Zoroastrians' society actively. The findings of the research also showed that the leisure activities of the elderly increased the health during the aging period. Therefore, those elderly who were active, and got new relationships, amusements, and interests spent their aging with more satisfaction. Successful elderly were person who maintained their social relationships and were busy doing group activities, taking journeys, and having amusements. The study has investigated both active and passive aspects of the leisure activities of the informant of the study. According to the findings of the study, those elderly who were more active, had more satisfaction from their leisure, enjoyed it more and consequently had more satisfaction from life.

7.4. Suggestions for Further Research

Taking into consideration the findings of the present research, the future researchers might want to take up the following issues:

1. The extent to which the demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural variables hinder or promote the participation in leisure activities.
2. A similar research is suggested to be undertaken in order to investigate the status of other religious minorities in Iran in order to find out whether they also face the same identity challenges, and in case they do, what has been the cultural response to this challenge.
3. In addition to the study conducted on religious minorities in Iran, it is suggested to design a study to investigate the status of Muslim majority in Iran to find out the constraints they experience on their leisure preferences and participation.
4. Further research might aim to evaluate the leisure facilities in leisure spaces as well as the extent to which they are in line with old people's needs.

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- 1- Daneshvarinasab, A., Melasutra, M. D., Fauzi, Y. (2015). The Contribution of Leisure to Religious Continuity among the Zoroastrians. *Anthropological notebooks*, 21(1): 61-81. (ISI-Cited Publication)
- 2- Daneshvarinasab, A., Melasutra, M. D., Fauzi, Y. (2015). Leisure Constraints among the Elderly: An Ethnic Perspective. *Journal of Leisure Sciences*. (Accepted). (ISI-Cited Publication)
- 3- Daneshvarinasab, A., Melasutra, M. D., Fauzi, Y. (2013). *Leisure Constraints among the Elderly: An Ethnic Perspective*. International Conference on Social Sciences, Cairo, Egypt.

APPENDICES

University of Malaya

A: Interview Protocol

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is Abdolhossein and I would like to talk to you about your leisure activities,

The interview should take less than an hour. I will be taping the session because I don't want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I can't possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we're on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we don't miss your comments. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that I will ensure that any information I include in my report does not identify you as the informant. Remember, you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to and you may end the interview at any time.

Are there any questions about what I have just explained?

Are you willing to participate in this interview?

Interviewee

Witness

Date

Time of interview:

Date of interview:

Place of interview:

Interviewee of interview:

Age of interviewee: 1) 60-69; 2) 70-79; 3) 80+

Gender of interviewee (by observation): Female_____ Male_____

1 -Socio-demographics Information

- Tell me a about yourself:
- What is your education level?
- What is your marital status?
- What is your health status?
- Where is your residence?
- How many children do you have?
- How many sisters and brothers do you have? Or did you have?
- Currently employed? If yes, what is your job?
- How much is your income? (Salary / Pension)
- Is your income adequate to live comfortably or are you living on limited funds?
- How much do you estimate spend each day/ week / month on leisure?
- With whom are you living? (Yourself / Your children and family members / other person / Alone)
- How do you meet your transportation needs? Give reasons why?

2- Aging definitions

- Do you feel that you are old? If yes, since when? And, why?
- Do other people perceive that you are old? If yes, who are they? And, how?

3. Leisure interests and preferences

- What do you usually do in your daily life for leisure? What leisure do you currently enjoy? (What leisure activities do you usually do)?
 - How often do you do them (every day, every week /every month)? Describe a typical weekday. What is a typical weekend like for you?
 - Which days do you often go out for leisure activities?
(Weekdays/weekends/both)
 - How much time do you usually spend for them?
 - What leisure have you enjoyed in the past? Does your leisure activities differ from those did in your young adulthood? What leisure has your older adult enjoyed in the past?
 - Have you increased/ decreased/ maintained leisure activities compared to your young adulthood?
- Do you think your leisure activities have changed from past to present? Why?
- If you have free time, which leisure activities do you want to do?
 - What motivates you to do leisure activities? When you think about doing a leisure activity, what is it that draws you to doing it?

4. Leisure Constraints

- At age 60 or over, have you ever encountered any factors/difficulties that affect your leisure participation? In other words, have you ever encountered any factors/difficulties that lead to 1) Inability to maintain or increase leisure activities

at desired levels; 2) Ceasing leisure activities; 3) Nonparticipation in leisure activities; 4) Insufficient enjoyment of current leisure activities?

- If yes, what are those factors/difficulties?

- How did you manage these difficulties?

- Please give the reasons for nonparticipation.

- Did those factors exist in your young adulthood too?

- If yes, did they influence your leisure activities in the same way as they did at your age of 60 or over?

- If no, how different were the influences of those factors on your leisure activities in your young adulthood and at age 60 or over?

-What is your biggest constraint to having your leisure time?

5- Perceptions of leisure:

- Tell me about the importance of leisure in your life; how do you define it? Do you feel you have enough, not enough, or too much leisure?

- What activities do you enjoy doing at home?

- What activities do you enjoy doing away from home?

- How would you compare your leisure to most other people that you know?

- What do you hope to gain from leisure activities? That is, what do you get out of leisure?

B: Participant observation plan

- Behaviors, social relations, meetings, interactions, and networks
- Situations and events
- Rules and social conventions
- Ceremonies and rituals (weekly, monthly, and annually ceremonies, feast, and celebrations)
- Beliefs, attitudes, values, stereotypes, and opinions
- Emotions and motivations
- Cultural products (such as pictures, paintings)
- Documents and texts (historical, literary, journalistic)

C: List of informants

Female, Single, 68	Female, Married, 72	Male, Widower, 64
Female, Married, 65	Female, Married, 71	Male, Married, 71
Female, Single, 69	Female, Married, 76	Female, Married, 73
Female, Married, 66	Male, Married, 62	Male, Married, 74
Female, Married, 69	Male, Married, 69	Female, Married, 79
Female, Married, 67	Male, Widower, 67	Female, Widow, 79
Female, Widow, 69	Female, Widow, 83	Female, Married, 76
Male, Married, 60	Male, Widower, 81	Male, Married, 64
Male, Widower, 75	Female, Married, 81	Male, Married, 65
Male, Widower, 80	Male, Widower, 82	Female, Widow, 70
Male, Married, 79	Male, Widower, 77	Female, Widow, 74
Female, Widow, 80	Female, Married, 67	Female, Widow, 75
Male, Widower, 84	Male, Widower, 78	Male, Widower, 76
Female, Widow, 82	Female, Widow, 68	Female, Widow, 77
Female, Widow, 72	Male, Widower, 78	Female, Widow, 76
Female, Widow, 74	Female, Widow, 67	Female, Widow, 74
Female, Married, 68	Male, Married, 70	Female, Widow, 74
Male, Married, 61	Female, Widow, 69	Male, Married, 66
Male, Married, 68	Male, Married, 72	Male, Widower, 79
Male, Widower, 66	Female, Widow, 68	Male, Married, 67
Female, Widow, 81	Male, Widower, 69	Female, Widow, 74
Female, Widow, 78	Male, Widower, 68	Female, Married, 68
Female, Widow, 72	Male, Widower, 79	Female, Married, 69
Female, Married, 70	Male, Widower, 79	Male, Widower, 74
Male, Widower, 83	Female, Married, 66	Male, Widower, 65
Male, Widower, 76	Female, Widow, 72	Female, Widow, 70
Male, Married, 77	Female, Widow, 71	Female, Married, 78
Male, Married, 75	Male, Widower, 78	Female, Married, 74

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