Assessing the role of creativity on the participation rate in women's political activities

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Abstract— the objective of this research is to assess the relationship between women's political activities participation rate and their creativity level in order to nurture creativity as a means for encouraging active presence in political society and to oppose negative conceptions. The statistical population used consisted of Iran's politically active women and the sample population consisted of a hundred individuals from this population. The questions presented in this research considered the level of women's political activity participation and their level of creativity. The research method used was scientific-comparative and the statistical population consisted of a 1000 individuals where 100 individuals were chosen by random sampling. The data was collected using researchers questionnaire titled 'Participation rate in political activities' which consisted of 30 questions related to 6 political participation steps along with the standard 'creativity' questionnaire consisting of 40 questions. By utilizing the Cronbach Alpha method the resulting coefficients obtained were 0.79 and 0.53 respectively. In addition to describing the level of political activities, the role of creativity in women's political activity participation is assessed to nurture this attribute so that innovative and active women are introduced in social and political fields so that they are not culturally alienated and can effectively use their creativity in these fields. In terms of personal characteristics, creativity is of vital importance for society in that it creates sustainable competitive advantage in today's complex and variable environments. The results of this research indicate that the level of participation in political activities were higher for women with excellent creativity levels compared to those of moderate or weak creativity levels. This research proves that individuals with higher creativity gained higher marks in all 6 political activity process steps.

Keywords— political participation, women, creativity

I. INTRODUCTION

With the occurrence of the Islamic revolution, Iranian women who's social and political participation up to that time was low, supported the revolutions goals alongside men and demanded their rights with audacity. They also attempted to remove barriers concerning political activities to pave the way for participating in the country's political and social fields.

Also, women's political-social participation was organized in terms of effective participation and has an important role in sustainable development. Based on official statistics, over half of Iran's 70 million people population consists of women .Women's participation in society is valuable and credible in that it creates the environment necessary to form sustainable development. Every Iranian especially women's main duty is to attain sources of knowledge because it is the wisdom of society's individuals that guides their society towards social wellness.

Based on personality theories, personal characteristics and individual personalities are important components in social and political participation. Creativity is a personal component and characteristic. Therefore this personal characteristic (creativity) was assessed in this activity (political participation rate). From all personal characteristics, creativity was chosen because it is a vital factor for individuals and society to create value and sustainable competitive advantage in today's complex and variable environment and is a necessary factor in terms of management.

Women considered politically active must have at least one of the following conditions:
- Have diplomatic positions including ministers, members of parliament, deputy ministers, vice presidents etc
- Membership or previous memberships of political parties
- History of political conviction
- Experts and researchers in women's fields including authors, reporters, etc.

This research aims to study the role of creativity in the participation rate for political activities and importance of this index by studying 100 politically active women using two standard questionnaires. The questionnaires used were the standard "creativity" questionnaire by Dr Soltani and the "participation rate in political activities" questionnaire.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Political Participation

The Oxford English dictionary defines 'participation' as 'the act or fact of taking part, or to form a part of something'. The United Nations research institute for social participation development defines participation as 'organized efforts to enhance control over resources and regulatory bodies under defined social conditions by some groups or movements who have been deprived of such control'. [4]

The meaning of political participation is the involvement in an organized public activity in order to influence or change the policies of those in power. Political participation features are: [9]
- Subject to the equality and freedom of people.
- The people's rights and arises from their conscious and concerted actions.

- The main influence on final political decisions in order to achieve political development.

It should be noted that women's political activities are not defined as their participation in elections and their voting rights. However, it is defined as their equal rights to participate at all levels of politics to be officially recognized so that they can participate voluntarily without any ideological concerns and to have decisive political roles. [10]

B. Women's Political-Islamic participation in Iran

Women's political participation at different eras is discussed briefly below: [5]

- Constitutional Revolution

This period of authoritarian ruling was of hereditary monarchy. People were deprived of political activity although even during that era Iranian women's role in society was incomparable to men's as they were only considered as being mothers and wives in a traditional framework. Therefore, Iran's political-social framework was entirely male oriented.

- Pahlavi (I)

During this era, transformations took place in Iranian women's personal and social lives such as conflicts of modernism and traditionalism cantered on women's rights. Reza Shah's most critical move in accordance to modernism was the restriction of the Hijab which changed women's position in society. By establishing educational institutions for women, they were encouraged to educate themselves, gain expertise knowledge and work. The University of Tehran was established and women were given equal entrance rights to be educated and to enter the job market. Attempts were made to enable women's voting rights but on the other hand due to Reza Shah's reputation for secularism; large populations of faithful Iranians were misled.

In Reza Shah's era, women were deprived from political rights which included voting rights due to the fact that society was severely male oriented which had reliance on family honor so the perspective on women could not be altered. Therefore, women's society experienced duality and cultural conflict which resulted in the majority of women staying at home.

- Pahlavi (II)

The association of state and provincial legislation was first approved but was suspended shortly after due to vast complaints by religious scholars and merchants in Tehran which was one of the most important occurrences during this era. A revolution called the white revolution was started by Mohammad Reza Shah which was later named the Shah's and people's revolution. After these occurrences, laws which prevented women from voting or becoming candidates for elections were omitted so women were able to take part in parliamentary elections.

- The Islamic Revolution

Iranian people's political participation peaked during the Islamic Revolution. During this time, women's comprehensive participation was one of the most prominent aspects of the revolution. This political participation in the revolutionary movements began from early formation which enabled millions of women to take part in protests alongside men.

During this period, due to the revolution's religious background, religious and traditionalist women who until then were absent from political scenes took part in organized political activities extensively without any sort of training. Their motivation for leaving their homes was to take part in revolutionary protests and gained political subjectivity from experiencing political crisis and war conditions.

The Islamic Republic of Iran recognized women's right to vote and be elected so in this respect they are no different to men. Religious authorities declared women's participation in the referendum held a year after the revolution.

C. Women's political participation worldwide

If political participating is considered conscious participation in government and social affairs, therefore it is also considered the most prominent sort of social activity and the basis of social life. Every individual has the right to take part in political activities and women's political participation is of great value and importance because it reduces injustices and creates appropriate environments to create sustainable development. The means necessary to accomplish this is to remove barriers. Ensuring women's participation in employment, management, and social decision making are part of their complete political and human rights. [3]

Algerian women have the lowest employment share with 8 percent and Finnish women have the highest employment share with 47 percent according to the International Labor Organization (ILO) [6]. Over 45 percent of the world's women population aged between 15 and 64 are involved in economic activities. In the United States in 1970, only 15 percent of the country's workforces were women. By 1989 this figure rose to over 40 percent. In 1995 women formed over 45 percent of the workforce even though only 6 percent of women are working in the management category. [7]

In terms of the world's political power, from 192 countries who are members of the United Nations, 19 countries are lead by women. The monarchical regimes of Denmark, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom have queens. In Finland, 12 out of 20 ministers are women [8]. A government which has the majority of ministers in its cabinet as women is unprecedented. Currently in Finland, 84 from a total of 200 members of parliament (42 percent) are women. In republican regimes, 8 presidents are women. In Afghanistan 3 women, Pakistan 1 woman, Kuwait 1 women, The Emirates 2 women, Qatar 1 women, Iraq 3 women, Vietnam 3 women have ministry positions.

Based on overall statistics it is clear that the presence of women in political and social scenes which were previously considered as male dominated fields, is growing. [11]

III. POLITICAL ACTIVITY PROCESS (POLITICIZATION)

For the process of political activities, 6 steps are considered:
- Keen on political issues without specific output
- Supporting parties and political organizations
- Membership in political parties and organizations (with no specific activity)
- Active membership in political parties and organizations
- Stating clear political views in society including political activism, journalism, human rights etc
- Political and diplomatic jobs tenure

IV. CREATIVITY

Creativity is defined in many ways. Some of the more prominent definitions are mentioned below:

Herbert Fox believes the process of creativity consists of any thinking process that solves problems in a useful manner. Eric Frum believes creativity is the ability to become aware and respond accordingly. It seems Kaizer has a more general approach in stating that creativity consists of utilizing mental abilities to create a new understanding.

Creativity is the ability to visualize, predict and create ideas. Mahmood Sa'atchi quotes Henry Puankare, a renowned French mathematician in stating that creativity is detection, insight, understanding and choice. By referring to the mentioned definitions, one can state that creativity is the production of innovative ideas and ways of thinking while practical innovation is implementing these innovative ideas. Innovation means using new ideas formed from creativity that an organization can use as new products or solutions for carrying out work tasks. Creativity refers to the ability to form new ideas and innovation refers to applying these new ideas [2]

Organizational creativity consists of producing modern organizational ideas and finding new solutions to solve organizational issues.

A. Clearness of thought methods (group creativity development techniques)

Organizations may use various group creativity development techniques continuously and persistently. These techniques are as follows: [1]
- Brain activity (brainstorming)
- Morphological analysis
- The Gordon method
- Questions which create ideas
- The 5-3-6 nominal group technique
- Parallel thinking
- Mandatory association
- Benchmarking from nature

V. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Main Hypothesis
- Average performance of creative individuals (excellent creativity) in the political participation process is higher than those of lower creativity levels.

The Secondary Hypothesis
- The average performance of individuals in the political activity process can be classified based on their creativity.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research assesses the relation between women's political participation and their level of creativity. The statistical population used was the population of politically active women and 100 individuals were chosen from this population. Women are considered politically active if they have one of the conditions mentioned below:

- Have diplomatic positions including ministers, members of parliament, deputy ministers, vice presidents etc
- Membership or previous memberships of political parties
- History of political conviction
- Experts and researchers in women's fields including authors, reporters, etc.

The research questions were designed considering women's level of participation in political activities based on their creativity. The method used for this research was scientific-comparative where 100 politically active women were chosen as a random sample from 1000 total women which formed the statistical population.

 Data was gathered using a standard political participation questionnaire consisting of 30 questions related to Political Activity Process and a standard creativity questionnaire designed by Dr Soltani with 40 multiple answer questions. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.79 and 0.53 were obtained respectively.

The questionnaire on women's political participation was prepared by the researcher for this research. Dr. Iraj Soltani's multiple choice 'creativity' questionnaires were also used.

Once the questionnaires were filled by the 100 randomly chosen politically active women, results were gathered and classified using the SPSS software and final results are presented below.

VII.   RESULTS

The information gathered from the completion of "creativity" and" women's level of participation in political activities" questionnaires were analyzed by the SPSS software and the following results were obtained:

Based on individual scores from Dr Soltani's creativity questionnaire, they were divided into three groups; less creative individuals, average creativity individuals, highly creative individuals. Each of these groups was then compared in terms of level of participation in political.

TABLE I
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION SCORES CONCERNING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN CREATIVE GROUPS

Standard deviation	mean	political participation / creativity
27.23	388.82	Less creative
	428.75	Average creativity
	513.95	Excellent creativity

TABLE 2
MEAN PARTICIPATION RATE CONCERNING PARTICIPATION STEPS FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES PROCESS IN CREATIVE GROUPS

Step 6	Step 5	Step 4	Step 3	Step 2	Step 1	Political Activity Process / Creativity
61	43	75	70	61	55	Less creative
52	48	55	51	57	58	Average creativity
76	71	77	75	70	73	Excellent creativity

As shown in this table, women with excellent creativity have higher mean scores at all participation steps compared to less creative women.

TABLE 3
WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION SCORES COMPARISON IN THREE CREATIVITY GROUPS

Significance level	Mark F	Degree of freedom	Mean square	The sum of squares	Variable
0.000	12.61	2	10054.33	20107.6	political participation in three creativity groups

As shown in this table, there is a significant difference between average scores of women with weak, moderate and excellent creativity which is more significant at the 0.01 level

VIII.   RESULTS ANALYSIS

zAs predicted in the hypothesis section, there is significant positive correlation between women's creativity levels and political participation rate. Results analysis proved that individuals with excellent creativity (most creative) gained higher scores in all 6 political participation process steps compared to everyone else. By comparing research results and relevant hypothesis, the research's main hypothesis was approved. Therefore, according to the results obtained, political participation for individuals with weak, moderate and excellent creativity are significantly different and it can be stated that this difference is clearly visible at all stages of the political activity process (main and secondary hypothesis approved). In order for women to make an effective impact on political scenes in one of the largest countries that has experienced a revolution with the help of women's bold presence, creativity must be nurtured as a vital personality component to ensure women's conscious and active presence in all social and political fields.

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