

# Study on the Relationship between the Four Elements and Choosing a Major at University

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**Abstract---** In the Iranian ancient literature it was believed that the universe is based on four main elements which make the creatures and materials of the universe. The Iranian traditional medicine assumes that the human body is created based on these four elements (Fire, earth, water and air) make the four temperaments (yellow bile, the black bile, the phlegm and the blood). Dominance of each one of these elements can affect the person's morality, taste and psychological conditions. Various likes, attitudes and social activities could be emanated from the unbalance of the elements. This article is an effort to investigate this traditional belief. To do so, it puts on trial the idea that the physical education students should have been born on the fire, or the air months. To investigate this hypothesis, the information in the mentioned major was collected. Analysing the results and drawing and comparing the figs firmly proved the hypothesis to be true.

**Keywords—** month of birth, Physical education major at university, The four classical elements,

## I. INTRODUCTION

ACCORDING to the traditional medicine manifest of the world health organisation (1978), the traditional medicine is defined as "A set of practical and theoretical knowledge that can be used to diagnose, prevent and heal maladies. This knowledge is transmitted to the next generations in written or verbal forms [1].

Traditional medicine was redefined in 2000 as "Traditional medicine is a comprehensive term which is used for Chinese traditional medicine, Indian Ayurveda, Greek-Arabic medicine, and other types of local medicine. Treatments in traditional medicine include drugtherapy (such as using medical herbs, animal parts, and mineral) and non-drugtherapy (like acupuncture, massage, mental treatments). \*\*\* It includes all the hygienic procedures, approaches, knowledge and believes which are used to preserve health, predict, diagnose and prevent maladies in both drugtherapeutic and non-drugtherapeutic methods"[1].

Complementary medicine is used to call the set of diagnostic and treatment methods which are different from the conventional hygienic system. Most of these methods have a

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long history of even thousands of years. Ancestors of men have reached and used these methods according to their experiences, beliefs and understanding. During 1970's and 1980's, these methods played the role of alternative medicine for the conventional one. The sick accepted only one of them, so it was called "alternative medicine". As the methods were used along with the conventional medicine, the term "complementary medicine" was chosen for it [1].

The main objective to discuss this issue would be to resolve the psychic turbulence through knowing these elements. According to the traditional medicine and its use as complementary medicine, which was described above, and emphasizing the effect of the four elements based on the month of birth, this hypothesis is put on trial that there is a connection between the month of birth and choosing a major at university.

At first theoretical principles of traditional medicine and the concept and properties of it are introduced. Then a summary of all the researches on the effect of month of birth on mind, physic, behaviour and personality of people is presented in the history of the research. And afterwards, the stages of data analysing, including collecting data, correcting and defining them, are described. And finally, the conclusion and the possibility of using the results will be discussed.

## II. THE FOUR CLASSICAL ELEMENTS

Plato says: "The smallest particles of material are rectangular triangles which after combining and making equilateral triangles or quadrangles, join each other and make spatial geometry organised figures such as cube, quadrangle, octagon and icosahedron. These four spatial figures are the bricks of four classical elements of soil, fire, wind and water [2]. according to the viewpoint of traditional medicine, each compound is made from all the four elements and the inequality of these elements makes the compounds different from each other. Bear in mind that the terms earth, water, fire and air are just symbols. When we say "earth", it does not mean the earth which we live on it, but it refers to its specific definition and concept.

Iranian traditional medicine believes that our body is based on four elements. These four elements make the four temperaments. Fire makes the yellow bile, earth makes the black bile, water makes the phlegm, and air makes the blood. Dominance of each one of these elements leads to sickness and makes changes in our mental and behavioural moods.

Warmth and coldness, which are introduced as features of elements, refer to the density. According to that, the warm elements (Fire and Air) are lighter than cold elements (water and earth). Dryness and wetness refer to the fluidity of elements. According to that, the wet elements (air and water) are more fluid than dry elements (fire and earth) [1].

These four elements are presented in table I with their temperaments and features.

TABLE I

Name	Temperament	Feature	temperament
Fire	Warm and dry	Substance with absolute lightness	Yellow bile
Air	Warm and wet	Substance with relative lightness	Blood
Water	Cold and wet	Substance with relative heaviness	Phlegm
Earth	Cold and dry	Substance with absolute heaviness	Black bile

Below you can find the description of all the items in table 1.

#### A. Fire

It has got the most fluidity. Fire's task is to create complete porosity, ripeness, softness, and dissection and due to the speed it makes, the fusion of the materials becomes possible.

Fire months including Farvardin (The first Month in Iranian calendar, March-April), Mordaad (the fifth month in Iranian calendar, July-August), Azar (the tenth month in Iranian calendar, November-December),

#### B. Air

It has got more and faster formability and fluidity. Its task is to create softness and porosity in the material. For instance, the sage believed that when the fruit appears on the tree and becomes green, it is prehensile, but step by step the element air becomes dominant in it and makes it ripe. This process changes the taste. The material with lots of element air, tends to go up. Air months including **Khordaad** (the third month in Iranian calendar, May-June), Mehr (the seventh month in Iranian calendar, September-October), and Bahman (the eleventh month in Iranian calendar, January - **February**).

#### C. Water

Comparing to earth, It has got more density. Its task is to create formability and flexibility in the material, so that if this element exists more in a material, that has got more fluidity.

#### D. Earth

With the most density, and absolute heaviness, creates stability in the material. The effect is so high that if there was no element earth in the material, that would lose the integrity and by increasing the earth in a material, its flexibility decreases. Altogether, the element earth has got the task to create stability and form the material and keep that [1].

### III. HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH

The main idea of traditional medicine based on the effect of month of birth on all the mental, physical, psychic, behavioural and personality aspects on human has a history older than Iranian written literature. "According to the studies of Dr. Paul Hysen who has been active in traditional and complementary medicine for many years, history of medicine has started from Iranian traditional hunter (about eight thousand years BC) and then turned to a school, moved to India where it was known as Ayurveda. This school moved to the ancient Greece and became the base for the Greek-Arabic medicine later. This kind of medicine was known as the European traditional medicine until 150 years ago, and was expanded by Islam in the Middle East and India as the Greek Medicine" [1].

Hakim Abul-Qasim Firdawsī Tūsī, Iranian poet (940-1020 AD) [3], Fakhrudin As'ad Gorgani (11<sup>th</sup> century) [4], Naser Khosro (1004-1088) [5], Sana'ee (Iranian poet) [6], Anwari (died in 1189) [7], Hakim Nezami (12<sup>th</sup> century) [8], Mowlana (1207-1273) [9], Araqi (1213-1289) [10], Obeid Zakani (1300-1370) [11], Shah Ne'mat-Allah Wali (14<sup>th</sup> century) [12], Wahshi Bafqi in the tenth century (Died in 1583) [13], and Bidel Dehlawi (1642-1720) [14].

### IV. AND EXAMPLES OF RECENT RESEARCHES

Mitsuhiro Kawata and his colleagues investigated the connection between the month of birth and personality traits on 595 people in Japan [15]. Vi Jen Chin and colleagues investigated the effect of month of birth on risk of Schizophrenia between 2429 men and 1320 women in Taiwan [16]. And they concluded that the risk of this disease is more in people who were born in Aban and Dey. And Richard Wiseman and Jayanti Chotai investigated the connection between the month of birth and feeling lucky in an article titled "Born lucky? The relationship between feeling lucky and month of birth" published in 2005 [17]. Their study was performed on 29584 people and concluded that people born in the first half of year feel luckier. In another research, the connection between birth month and sensitization to outdoor aeroallergen was investigated by Park and colleagues in 2004 [18]. Gabriele Doblhammer and colleagues in 2005 in Germany conducted a research on the birth month and people who live more than 105 years, and concluded that people who are born in December have got 16% more chance to live more than 105 years comparing to those who were born in June with 23 percent less chance [19]. Jon J. Pfaff and colleagues conducted a research in Australia in 2006 on 859 elderly ambulatory patients and investigated the connection between birthday and depression and suicide [20]. In China, Lei Liu and colleagues investigated the connection between the birth month and Microtia among the patients who visited hospitals from the third month of 2009 to the third month of 2010 for surgeries on their earlobe. They concluded that people who were born on October and March showed more chance to have this disorder. Gender has some effect on this research as well [21]. E. Kim and colleagues investigated the relation between fungal sensitization and month of birth in children with allergy and published their results in 2005 [22]. A.C. Porto Neto and colleagues investigated the connection between month of birth

and sensitization to grass pollen or house dust mites and published their findings in 2009 [23]. Results of researches on this field indicate that the month of birth has effect on all mental, physical, physic, behavioural and personality aspects of people. Examples in the abovementioned articles prove this theory.

V. QUESTIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Four general questions have been asked in this research:

- 1- Is there any connection between the month of birth and choosing a major at university?
- 2- If there would be such a connection, which-month-born people tend more to choose physical education as their major in university?
- 3- Do the people who were born on air and fire elements tend more to be active?
- 4- Do the people who were born on water and earth tend less to be active?

VI. FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

Statistics of people with different month of birth extracted from the questionnaires is presented based on the day of month.

As the focus of this research is on the number of people who are born in a month, the sum of people born in different days of months, which was presented in table 2, is presented and summarized in table 3 according to the month of birth.

TABLE II  
NUMBER OF PEOPLE BORN IN DIFFERENT MONTHS

Month	The number	Number of people in the half of month
Farvardin	40	20
Ordibehesht	34	19
Khordaad	37	26
Tir	43	21
Mordaad	40	22
Shahrivar	63	17
Mehr	31	18
Aban	35	16
Azar	36	22
Dey	37	21
Bahman	37	22
Esfand	22	12

The third column of table 3 indicated the number of people born in the first half of the month. This number is presented for later usage.

Fig. 1 shows the frequency distribution of the birth month of the Physical education students of Azad university of Shahr-E-Rey, based on the table II.

There is no significant order in the Fig. 1. To investigate more the data according to the four classical elements, the sum of frequency distribution of each element's month is presented in Fig 2.

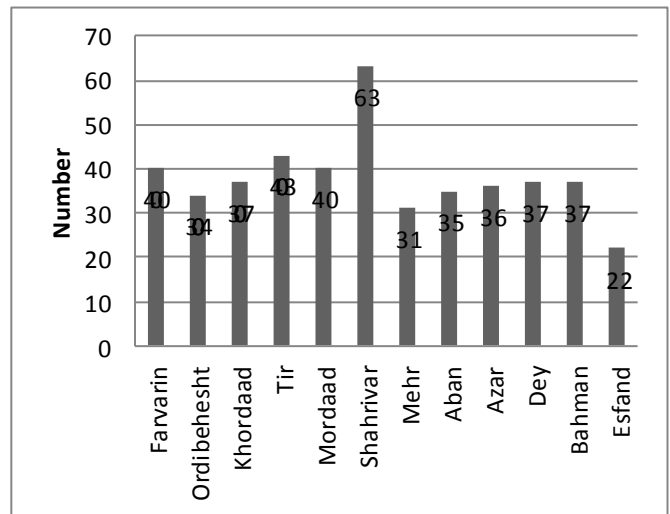


Fig. 1 Frequency distribution of the birth month of the Physical education students

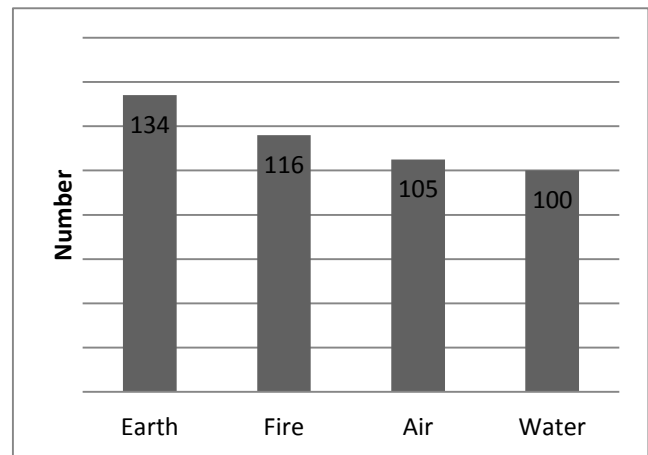


Fig. 2 Frequency distribution of four classical elements among physical education students.

The frequency distribution of earth, fire, air, and water in Fig. 2 shows that contrary to expectation, the frequency of earth is more than other elements. Due to its inherent features, the earth is not active and tends to inertia and inaction, so you should not expect tendency to be active in people who are born in this month. So we should look for the problem in data of table II.

VII. CORRECTED DATA

If you take a look at table 2 you will see that in all items, except for Shahrivar (\*\*\*\*), the number of people born in the first half of the month is equal to the second half. The significant point in table 2 is the abnormal excess of number of people born in the second half of Shahrivar (\*\*\*\*) comparing to other months. This abnormal difference is because of the Iranian parents' tendency to deliver their babies in the first half of year, or if their month of birth is Mehr (\*\*\*\*), they register that as Shahrivar, because by doing so, their children's education won't be delayed for one year. Moreover, their

children have one more year to study for university entrance exam before getting conscripted. These days, registering a wrong date of birth for children is impossible, but it was not that much difficult for the investigated students, at their birth time.

To correct this mistake in the data, the relation between the number of all students born in all months and the number of them born in the first half of the months was calculated. The manipulated months of Shahrivar and Mehr were omitted from the calculation. The result was 1.79. Then, as the possibility of changing the birth times in the first half of Shahrivar is near to zero, the number for people born in the first half of Shahrivar was assumed as exact and correct. The total number of students born in this month was calculated by this formula:

$$\frac{\text{The number of students born in Shahrivar}}{\text{The number of students born in the second half of Shahrivar}} = 1.79$$

So according to the calculations, the real number of students born in Shahrivar was 30. As that is less likely that parents of children born in months after Mehr, toward Esfand change the birth time to Shahrivar, and the most possibility is for Students born in Mehr, the total 33 additional students were divided among Mehr and other months to Esfand: 13 for Mehr, and 20 for other months (namely Aban, Azar, Dey, Bahman, Esfand). So the corrected form of table 2 is shown as table 3. In this table, 39 percent of surplus students are moved to Mehr, and 61 percent to other months to the end of year.

TABLE III

STATISTICS OF PEOPLE BORN IN DIFFERENT MONTHS, AFTER CORRECTION

Month	The number	Number of people in the first half of month
Farvardin	40	20
Ordibehesht	34	19
Khordaad	37	26
Tir	43	21
Mordaad	40	22
Shahrivar	30	17
Mehr	44	18
Aban	39	16
Azar	40	22
Dey	41	21
Bahman	41	22
Esfand	26	12

The corrected frequency distribution of data in table 3 is shown in Fig. 4.

The frequency distribution presented in Fig. 3 which was drawn after correcting the data, is almost steady. To investigate our theory, the number of people born in the months of each four classical elements was calculated from the table 3 and the frequency distribution diagram was drawn.

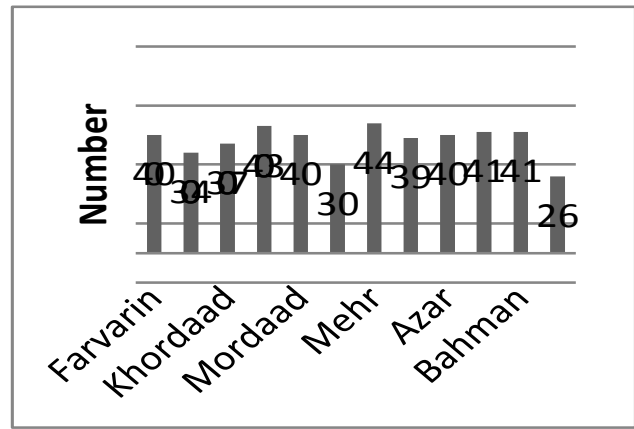


Fig. 3 Frequency distribution of month of birth for physical education university students, after correction.

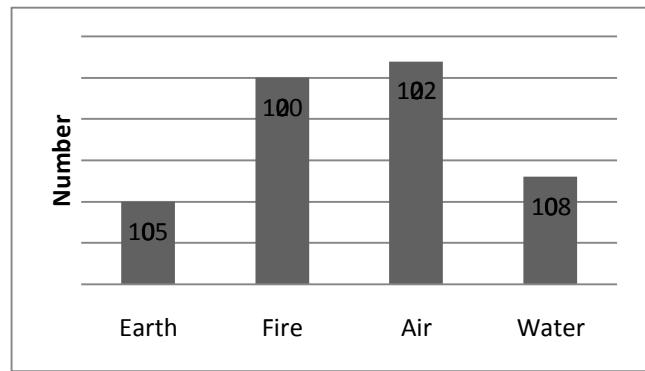


Fig. 4 Frequency distribution of four classical elements in physical education students at university, after correcting the data.

Based on the statistics of physical education university students in Azad university of Shahr-E-Rey, We can conclude that as we expected, the number of students who were born in the months attributed to air and fire is more than water and earth. So the air and earth group is less interested in choosing physical education as their major at university. Fig. 4 also shows a normal frequency distribution.

### VIII. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Analysing the statistics drawn from questionnaires, for 455 students we can conclude that people born in months attributed to element air (Khordaad, Mehr and Bahman) and element fire (Farvardin, Mordaad and Azar) show more interest to choose physical education as their major at university. This finding proves the theory of research. According to the features of elements air and fire, discussed in chapter 1, this phenomenon was predictable and it was proved by statistics.

Dividing people into four main groups of air, fire, earth and water enables us to adjust the treatment and education of people according to their inherent features. As lots of famous factories in the world do their marketing according to the people's personal features, we can plan a specific educational method for each group.

Bearing in mind today's political, economic and social crisis, paying attention to the application of all the sciences,

especially human sciences in today's life is so important. There are precious and useful solutions In Farsi(Iranian) Literature to resolve this universal crisis. These solution can be found if we use the literature. We have a precious history and priceless great men such as Roodaki, the father of Farsi poetry, to Sa'eb and then Parwin and Malek-O-Sho'araye Bahar who taught us useful lessons for life. We can get significant results by applying their ideas. Such perspective, move us to a new attitude, and a new attitude leads to an evolution.

#### IX. APPENDIX 1

##### Questionnaire

Dear students, please answer these questions which have been designed for a research. Your cooperation in completing the questionnaire helps us in conducting this research in a better and more accurate way. Thanks for your attention.

1- Date of Birth:

Year:

Month:

Day

2- Gender: Male Female

3- Grade:

4- Did you choose this major based on your personal interest? Yes No

5- Started in:

6- Did someone else lead you to choose this major? Yes No

7- Are you satisfied with this major? Yes No

8- If you had not chosen this major, what else would you choose?

9- Have you had any accomplishments in this major?

10- Write more descriptions for questions 5 to 9.

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