

## Leisure Time among Students in Jordanian Universities According to Several Variables

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**Abstract:** The study aims at exploring the nature of leisure time among Jordanian university students in the capital Amman according to their demographic variables; those are gender, age, university, major and level of study. The sample of the study consists of 1312 male and female students responded to a questionnaire consists of 36 items. The results showed that the level of using leisure time by students was moderate. Moreover, there are significant statistical differences at the level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  attributed to the effect of gender in the favor of females. There are significant statistical differences at the level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  attributed to the effect of university type in the favor of public universities. Meanwhile, there are no significant statistical differences at the level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  attributed to the effect of average.

**Key words:** Leisure time, university students, gender, average, university type

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### INTRODUCTION

Leisure (or free) time analyzed by leisure studies particularly comprises the lapses preceding and succeeding usual activities as eating, sleeping and those related with personal hygiene, moreover it may also cover education when compulsory. Consequently, it represents time spent away from work domestic cores and/or business and especially dedicated to freely eligible practical activities. Synthesizing, it is a recreational period of discretionary use for satisfying personal needs and pursues rest amusement creative labors or subject development (Veal, 2006).

Leisure time is when people are graduating from the day's work for alleviation of fatigue and illness everyone favorite daily activities and freedom of action with her favorite leisure time will do. One of the programs can be effective in their leisure time students and be useful physical education and sports programs which is one important dimension of education goes and can be desirable as a means for providing healthy recreation renewed forces and society in order to maintain psychological balancing aspects of human existence is life (Leslie *et al.*, 2001).

However, time is one of those limited resources used in the achievement of life goals. Time as a resource is fixed in the sense that each person has only 24 h a day. For this reason, it cannot be accumulated for another day's use as material resources. Activities postponed to the next day therefore become an infringement on the next day and this can lead to accumulation of work. Many students are victims of this. The work gets so accumulated that they

get overwhelmed, stressed and overcome by the study and the resultant effect is carryover of courses which eventually lead to spending extra years in the university thus leading to wastage. The quality of life of an individual depends on his use of the human and non-human resources at his disposal (Netz and Raviv, 2004).

Ryan and Deci (2000) confirmed that time is limited and scarce in its use. It is however, one of the most important human resources available to individuals and families irrespective of their socio-cultural, economic and intellectual backgrounds. Therefore, students should consider resource allocations and decisions affecting the limited amount of time available to them to carry out their daily activities which include personal study, assignments and leisure effectively. There is the need to evolve strategies for creative use of leisure in our rapidly changing society and working patterns which become imperative especially after working hours and at weekends.

Therefore, the current study is seeking to explore the variance in leisure time among Jordanian university students according to their demographic characteristics.

**The study problem and questions:** Developments in technology and economy have given people, especially the youth more time and opportunity to participate in recreational activities for the uses of leisure and entertainment. Leisure time may improve familial and social relationships and provide physical and mental relaxation as well and increase work effort and study abilities. Therefore, leisure concepts have emerged as a

critical issue in people's live in the 21st century. The general problem of this study was to analyze leisure time among Jordanian university youth as they are the biggest category of people in the country according to certain variables, such as gender, age, university, major and level of study. Particularly, the current study is seeking to answer the following questions:

- What is the level of using leisure time among university students?
- Are there any significant statistical differences in using leisure time among the sample attributed to university type, average and gender?

**The study objective:** The study aims at exploring the nature of leisure time among Jordanian university students in the capital Amman according to their demographic variables; those are gender, age, university, major and level of study.

**The study importance:** Leisure time has becomes an important issue for investigation since decades because the types of leisure carried out by people have many political and social domains shaping the attitudes of arranging and managing time. The current study will give an insight about the nature and types of leisure activities of Jordanian students and this may provide universities with many recommendations about the suitable activities that students can do.

**The study limits:** The study was conducted within the following limits: A sample of male and female students from public and private universities in the academic year 2011/2012. The study discussed leisure time spending among students according to their demographic variables. Thus, findings are limited to those variables within the used procedures. The psychometric characteristics represented in the validity and reliability of the study instrument.

**Previous studies:** Crenshaw (2007) evaluated the encouraging interventions to change the habit of physical activity in leisure time among the students at University of Mississippi. The role of various factors such as race, sex, age and financial condition indicated that race has no influence in this regard. But, other independent variables were effective.

Olubor and Osunde (2007) conducted an analysis of leisure time among students in Nigeria. The survey showed that colleges having the greatest time of study did not necessarily have less physical activity. The results showed that managers and university authorities should have sporting facilities within dorms and teach social life skills to help students manage their leisure time.

Schlag (2009) conducted a study on 98 students at Birmingham Yang University the results showed that recreational activities did not impact students in their academic level. Men were also more willing to do activities, such as basketball, hiking, rock climbing, water skiing, surfing, tennis, cycling, volleyball, hockey and bodybuilding whereas women chose golf, swimming, ice skating and acrobats showing different preferences of men and women as far as leisure time was concerned. Based on the previous research, the present study considered the leisure time spent by students at all Islamic Azad Universities in Iran with a focus on physical activities trying to answer the following questions:

- How much leisure time is spent by genders?
- Where do the students spend their leisure time?
- What leisure activities are the students involved at?
- What makes students exercise in their leisure time?
- Why some students prefer not to do any leisure time activity?

Sirakoulis and Deffner (2006) compared the leisure preferences of students in the capital of Greece (Athens) and those of students in a medium-sized city in central Greece (Larissa) as well as the impact that leisure has on their quality of life. A questionnaire-based survey was used for the data collection. A sample of 440 students in both cities (400 of them in Athens and 40 in Larissa) participated in the research. Important inequalities exist in the most popular activities, according to the place of study. One major contradiction (which can be pinpointed to the time-space interrelationship) is that although, there is a greater plurality of resources in the capital, there are also more constraints, especially as far as transportation time is concerned.

Beeville examined the leisure time physical activity behavior of college students using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and two constructs. A sample of college students (n = 621) from a large, public university in the Southeastern United States participated. Data were collected via a self-report class room based assessment battery. The assessment battery contains questions related to leisure time physical activity, TPB constructs descriptive norm and self-efficacy and demographic information. In general, the results of this research indicate the utility of the TPB in examining leisure time physical activity among college students. In addition, this study supports the inclusion of the IBM constructs descriptive norm and self-efficacy in examining leisure time physical activity. The TPB constructs attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control were positively associated with intention to engage in leisure time physical activity among this sample of college students. The results of the final hierarchical regression

model indicated that subjective norm was negatively associated with leisure time physical activity and intention was positively associated with leisure time physical activity behavior. In addition, the two IBM constructs descriptive norm and self-efficacy were positively associated with leisure time physical activity behavior. Finally, the results also found gender differences in the TPB and IBM constructs. For males, intention and subjective norm were significantly related to leisure time physical activity. For females, intention, attitude and self-efficacy were significantly related to leisure time physical activity.

Alsoghair (2011) sought to identify how King Saud University Students spend their leisure time. Moreover, this study investigates the importance and the kinds of activities that students practice and to identify the variation in practicing these activities between male and female students. The findings of this study indicate that male students have practiced twelve activities, however three of them are extremely important sport activities, watching T.V channels and reciting and memorizing the Holy Quran. On the other hand, ten activities have been practiced by female students, three of them are extremely; important; reading magazine and newspaper; watching T.V channels and shopping. The results also show that there are statistical differences between male and female students responses in practicing common activities such as sports activities favor to male students. Reading newspapers and magazine, talking on the telephone and listen to lectures favor to female students. However, the results indicate that there is no statistical differences between male and female students in practicing the following activities, watching T.V channels, reciting and memorizing the Holy Quran and reading books.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**The study population and sample:** The population of the study consisted of all male and female students in public and private universities in Jordan in the academic year 2011-2012. Meanwhile, the sample of the study consisted of 1312 male and female students from public and private universities. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the study sample.

**The study instrument:** The study instrument is a questionnaire directed to the students. The questionnaire consisted of 36 items distributed on three domains academic social and recreation.

**Instrument validity:** Validity was established through content and face validity and the instrument was standardized on the response of 20 experts of psychology, curriculum and teaching methods and

Table 1: The study population and sample

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	637	48.6
	Female	675	51.4
University Type	Public	561	42.8
	Private	751	57.2
Average	<2	99	7.5
	2-2.49	492	37.5
	2.5-2.99	478	36.4
	3.346	243	18.5
Total		1312	100.0

Table 2: Alpha coefficients of the instrument

Domain	Alpha coefficients
Academic	0.76
Recreation	0.70
Social	0.71
Total	0.83

measurement and evolution at Jordanian universities. Those experts were asked to comment on and discuss any part of the instrument they might consider to be ambiguous.

**Instrument reliability:** Reliability of the instrument was determined through a pilot study and a sample of 45 male and female students from the study population. The reliability coefficient was 0.83 and it seems to be reliable for use a Jordanian population. Table 2 shows the reliability of the questionnaire.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**The first question:** What is the level of using leisure time among university students? To answer this question, means and standard deviation as well as percentages were calculated. Table 3 shows the means standard deviations and percentages of level of using leisure time among university students.

Table 3 showed that the means ranged from 2.82-6.47 as the social domain came first with a mean of 6.47 followed by the recreation domain with a mean of 3.57. Meanwhile, the academic domain came in the last rank with a mean of 2.28. The total level of using leisure time is 13.5.

It is clear that students see in the leisure time an opportunity to interact with their social environment within the activities of visits and gatherings since this time is given to students after a period of working and studying which may results in a temporary isolation from this environment. Moreover, the recreation activities, such as playing, trips, etc., are an opportunity to spend time far away from the academic life even if this leisure time is short or a temporary period. This finding is consistent with most of the previous studies such as Olubor and Osunde (2007), Schlag (2009) and Alsoghair (2011) that indicated that leisure time must be spent in social and recreation activities.

Table 3: Means, standard deviations and percentages of level of using leisure time among university students

Rank	No.	Domain	M	SD	Percentage
1	3	Social	6.47	2.073	65.0
2	2	Recreation	3.57	1.453	59.5
3	1	Academic	2.82	1.333	47.0
		Total	13.35	3.871	58.2

Table 4: Means, standard deviations of level of using leisure time among university students according to university type, average and gender

Variables	Categories	M	SD	No.
Gender	Male	12.78	3.880	637
	Female	13.89	3.787	675
University type	Public	14.29	3.969	561
	Private	12.66	3.646	751
Average	<2	12.54	3.789	99
	2-2.49	13.38	3.629	492
	2.5-2.99	13.43	3.988	478
	2.3.64	13.50	4.122	243

**The second questions:** Are there any significant statistical differences in using leisure time among the sample attributed to university type, average and gender?

To answer this question, means and standard deviation were calculated. Table 4 shows the means, standard deviations of level of using leisure time among university students according to university type, average and gender.

Table 4 shows that there is an apparent variance in the means and standard deviations for the extent of using leisure time among university students according to gender, university type and average. To calculate the significance of those differences three-way ANOVA was used. Table 5 showed that:

- There are significant statistical differences at the level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  attributed to the effect of gender as F value totaled 21.591 in the favor of females
- There are significant statistical differences at the level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  attributed to the effect of university type as F value totaled 55.865 in the favor of public universities
- There are no significant statistical differences at the level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  attributed to the effect of average as F value totaled 1.080 with a statistical significance of 0.357

As seen from the previous results, females reported higher active leisure efficacy this may be due to the social nature of females that tend to spend more time in interacting with family and friends in a different recreation activities such as visits or shopping or chatting on the internet. Moreover, students in public universities spent more time in recreation activities due to the holiday times given to them and the activities issued by public universities.

Table 5: Three-way ANOVA for the effect of gender, university type and average on the extent of using leisure time among university students

Variance	Sq.	Freedom	Sq. Mean	F	Sig.
Gender	304.435	1	304.435	21.591	0.000
University	787.698	1	787.698	55.865	0.000
Average	45.679	3	15.226	1.080	0.357
Error	18414.575	1306	14.100	-	
-Total	19646.194	1311			

## CONCLUSION

In this study, Alsoghair (2011) concluded that there are statistical differences between male and female students responses in practicing common activities, such as sports activities favor to male students. Reading newspapers and magazine, talking on the telephone and listen to lectures favor to female students. However, the results show that there are no statistical differences between male and female students in practicing the following activities; watching T.V channels, reciting and memorizing the Holy Quran and reading books.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended:

- Calling on Jordanian universities, especially private ones to plan and execute proper leisure activities for both genders every holiday
- Educating students and parents about the positive pastime activities that students can do
- Conducting more studies, especially comparative studies with different samples and within different variables

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