

Freedom of Students in the Selection of the Unsystematic Activity in the Jordanian Universities in Amman Governorate

Lubna Akroush and Ayman Suliman Mazahreh
Department of Applied Science, Al-Balqa Applied University,
Princes Alia University College, P.O. Box 941941, 11194 Amman, Jordan

Abstract: The study aimed at identifying the extent of students' freedom in selecting unsystematic activities in the Jordanian universities. The sample was selected randomly (8 universities) and consisted of 658 students 48.6% males and 51.4% females. The researchers had developed a questionnaire using appropriate statistical method (Kay Square box). The results were: 57.8% of students hadn't been to any activities center, government university students freely select activities and the rate of participation increased and decreased due to their level and GPA. The study recommended to encourage students to participate, choose freely, incentive awards, provide budget and exploitation preferences talents in dealing with activities.

Key words: Unsystematic activity, extracurricular activities, educational activity, activity outside of the university, government

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions sought to affect the lives of its students during the years they spent in their campus. This can be provided through various set of activities considering their desires, interests and abilities. Extra-curriculum activities give all members of the party the opportunity to break out of every day study life and to leave curricula, classmates, marks, time pressure, etc., Behind (Halverscheid, 2004).

It is known that the youth are the wealth of any society so it is very important to train them to use their time properly through extra curriculum activities. Extracurricular activities are activities performed by students that fall outside the realm of the normal curriculum of school or university education. Extracurricular activities exist at all levels of education, from 4-6th, junior high/high school, college and university education. Such activities are generally voluntary as opposed to mandatory, non-paying, social, philanthropic as opposed to scholastic and often involve others of the same age. Students often organize and direct these activities under faculty sponsorship although, student-led initiatives such as independent newspapers are common (Plucker and Stocking, 2001).

In this context, Green (1979) studied extra activities in religion colleges in Utah State concluding that those activities are a supplementary part of students'

educational experiences and the related programs can enhance students' learning as a whole. Moreover, Jordan (1978) studied the attitudes of black and white Undergraduate students towards selected extra activities in Iowa University and found that all students regardless of their race have the same attitudes towards social and sports activities. Further Kapp agreed with those results noting that 80% of graduate students prefer such activities during their study.

Statement of purpose: The problem of this study represented in exploring the range of freedom given by the Jordanian universities to their students to select their extra activities. This is conducted in order to increase students' attitudes towards selecting such types of activities. Particularly, the study is seeking to answer the following questions:

- Is there any statistical relationship between practicing extra curriculum activities and gender?
- Is there any statistical relationship between practicing extra curriculum activities and study level?
- Is there any statistical relationship between practicing extra curriculum activities and university type?
- Is there any statistical relationship between practicing extra curriculum activities and accumulative average?

Study importance: The current study importance emerges from the importance of those activities for the social, academic and psychological development of students. The importance of this study can be summarized as follows: the study may benefit faculty members in promoting their efforts in providing students with various of choices outside the curriculum.

Universities may benefit from the findings of this study through exploring the strength and weakness aspects in giving students' the freedom of selecting their own extra activities.

The Ministry of Higher Education may benefit from the recommendations of this in providing universities with extra programs and activities to be applied by students.

Study limitations

Public and private universities students in Amman governorate: Undergraduate students from the first to the fourth level males and females registered in the academic year 2007/2008.

Study terms

Extra curriculum activities: Activities performed by students that fall outside the realm of the normal curriculum of school or university education (Halverscheid, 2004). In this study, it is every educational activity conducted by students inside or outside the school within the opportunity of selecting this activity according to the student's ability and needs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study population: The population of the study is consist of all male and female students in public and private universities in Amman governorate in the academic year 2007/2008.

Study sample: The sample was chosen randomly from public and private universities in Amman governorate totaling (658) male and female students distributed according to gender, university type, average and study level.

Instrumentation: The study instrument is a questionnaire directed to the students. The questionnaire consisted of two parts, the first was about the independent variables (items 1-13) (Table 1) and the second consisted of (items 14-36).

Table 1 showed that female students percentage is higher within three points of males totaling (51.4%) as second year level was the highest with a percentage of

Table 1: Sample distribution according to study variables

No.	Independent variables	No.	Percentage
1	Gender		
	Male	320	48.6
	Female	338	51.4
2	Study level		
	First	93	14.1
	Second	211	32.1
	Third	201	30.5
	Fourth	153	23.3
4	University type		
	Public	282	42.9
	Private	376	57.1
5	Accumulative average		
	<2	50	7.6
	2-2.49	247	37.5
	2.5-2.99	239	36.3
	3-3.64	122	18.5
6	Visited extra-activity center		
	Yes	278	42.2
	No	380	57.8
7	Participating in extra-activities		
	Yes	302	45.9
	No	356	54.1

32.1% followed by third year students (30.5%). Moreover, private universities students were higher than public universities students' within 15 points totaling 57.1% and 2-2.49 average students were the highest. The 42.2% of students visited the activities center while 49.5% participated in such activities.

Validity and reliability: Validity was established through content and face validity and the instrument was standardized on the response of expert group of psychology, curriculum and teaching methods. Further, the reliability coefficient was 0.91 and it seemed to be reliable for use aJordanian population.

Statistical procedures: Data were collected then analyzed through (SPSS) as the first part was analyzed by using numbers and percentages while the second part was analyzed through Chi-square to measure the relationship between the variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study after being analyzed through analytical descriptive approach according to the study questions and variables are:

The findings of the first question: Is there any statistical relationship between practicing extra curriculum activities and gender?

To answer this questions means and standard deviations and Chi-square values were calculated as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Study sample distribution according to questioner items with gender

No.	Items	Male (%)		Female (%)		F	χ^2 -value	Sig.
		Yes	No	Yes	No			
14	You have the confidence with the type of activity you practice	78.0	22.0	75.3	24.7	1	0.605	0.437
15	Your syllabus contains extra-activities	45.6	54.4	46.9	53.1	1	0.105	0.746
16	You wish to be a leader in your activity	75.3	24.7	69.4	30.6	1	2.830	0.093
17	The university gives you the chance in the activity you practice	57.8	42.2	66.2	33.8	1	4.874	0.027*
18	Your family have a decision in your activity choice	21.9	78.1	44.5	55.5	1	4.874	0.027*
19	Your friends have a role in your activity choice	57.2	42.8	62.0	38.0	1	1.591	0.207
20	Your average has a role in your activity choice	39.4	60.6	40.4	59.6	1	0.066	0.797
21	An academic penalty prevents you from selecting your activity	31.6	68.4	35.1	64.9	1	0.932	0.334
22	University allows you an opportunity to express your views and suggestions about extracurricular activities	51.3	48.7	58.6	41.4	1	3.608	0.057*
23	University tries to make extracurricular activities enjoyable and useful activity	61.6	38.4	66.8	33.2	1	1.934	0.164
24	The University offers the practice of extra-curricular activities flexibility	50.9	49.1	57.6	42.4	1	2.907	0.088
25	University meets students desire to exercise extra-curricular activities that they desire	51.9	48.1	60.8	39.2	1	5.515	0.021*
26	Steps of laws and regulations implementation at the university long, complicate and impede the implementation of extra-curricular activities	54.4	45.6	52.2	47.8	1	1.409	0.494
27	University tries to make extracurricular activities enjoyable and useful activity	42.5	57.5	65.9	34.1	1	36.167	34.100
28	Customs and traditions hinder your choice for the type of activity you like	65.6	34.4	70.6	29.4	1	1.890	0.169
29	The university held and exhibition to some extracurricular activities for students	71.2	28.8	78.6	21.4	1	4.779	0.029
30	Practicing extra-curricular activities encourages you to continue your education	84.7	15.3	95.5	9.5	1	5.138	0.023*
31	Extracurricular activity helps you to develop your personality	33.1	66.9	32.6	67.4	1	0.017	0.895
32	Extracurricular activity negatively affects your achievement	47.3	52.7	51.9	48.1	1	2.540	0.281
33	Your participation in extracurricular activities reduces your study time	79.1	20.9	84.9	15.1	1	3.753	0.053*
34	Your participation in extracurricular activities help to increase the number of your friends	75.3	24.7	33.3	26.7	1	0.350	0.554
35	Increasing relationship with the university through your participation in extracurricular activities	52.5	47.5	54.9	45.1	1	0.379	0.538
36	Faculty members encourage you to participate in extracurricular activities	53.1	46.9	56.1	53.9	1	0.580	0.447

Sig.: $\alpha > 0.05$

Table 2 shows the sample's responses on the items of students' freedom with the independent variable (gender). It is evident that there is an effect for gender on the student freedom to select extra-activities as 66.2% of females indicated this especially about the university attitude of giving students the chance to select their activities. Moreover, family interference of such activities were higher among females 44.5% compared to 21.9% for males as this is a natural norm in the society, customs and traditions too have their role in selecting those activities especially for females. However, most of female students think that those activities can develop their personality and education. Thus, males and females are no equal in selecting their extra activities.

The current study showed that female participation is higher than males participation with a value of 51.4%

compared to 48.6% and this is different from the results of many studies that showed otherwise however, this can be attributed to the big number of females participated in this study especially from private universities.

The findings of the second question: Is there any statistical relationship between practicing extra curriculum activities and study level? To answer this questions means and standard deviations and chi-square values were calculated as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 showed the responses of the sample according to the study level. It was evident that there is an effect of the study year variable on student's freedom for selecting extra-circular activities. Third and fourth year students showed more freedom and leadership in selecting their activities. This means that if the study level

Table 3: Study sample distribution according to questioner items with study level

No.	Items	First (%)		Second (%)		Third (%)		Fourth (%)		F	χ^2 -value	Sig.
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			
14	You have the confident with the type of activity you practice	70.1	29.9	75.4	24.6	82.0	18.0	75.4	24.6	3	5.430	0.143
15	Your syllabus contains extra-activities	39.8	60.2	47.4	52.6	48.3	51.7	46.4	53.6	3	1.999	0.573
16	You wish to be a leader in your activity	68.8	31.2	66.4	33.6	81.1	18.9	71.2	28.8	3	12.151	0.007*
17	The university gives you the chance in the activity you practice	71.0	29.0	60.7	39.3	62.2	37.8	58.2	41.8	3	4.290	0.232
18	Your family have a decision in your activity choice	35.5	64.5	36.0	64.0	38.3	61.7	22.2	77.8	3	11.597	0.009*
19	Your friends have a role in your activity choice	57.0	43.0	60.2	39.8	60.2	39.8	59.5	40.5	3	0.324	0.955
20	Your average has a role in your activity choice	36.6	63.4	40.8	59.2	39.8	60.2	40.5	59.5	3	0.522	0.914
21	An academic penalty prevents you from selecting your activity	33.3	66.7	33.6	66.4	33.0	67.0	33.3	66.7	3	0.019	0.999
22	University allows you an opportunity to express your views and suggestions about extracurricular activities	61.3	38.7	55.5	44.5	57.2	42.8	47.4	52.6	3	5.477	0.140
23	University tries to make extracurricular activities enjoyable and useful activity	76.3	23.7	66.4	33.6	62.7	37.3	56.2	43.8	3	10.853	0.013*
24	The university offers the practice of extra-curricular activities flexibility	64.5	35.5	55.5	44.5	55.2	44.8	45.1	54.9	3	9.312	0.025*
25	University meets students desire to exercise extra-curricular activities that they desire	74.2	25.8	56.9	43.1	57.2	42.8	22.4	77.6	3	20.951	0.000*
26	Steps of laws and regulations implementation at the university long, complicated and impede the implementation of extra-curricular activities	44.1	55.9	52.1	47.4	55.7	44.3	57.5	42.5	3	6.936	0.327
27	University tries to make extracurricular activities enjoyable and useful activity	53.8	46.2	55.9	44.1	56.7	43.3	50.3	49.7	3	1.665	0.645
28	Customs and traditions hinder your choice for the type of activity you like	68.8	31.2	70.1	29.9	70.6	29.4	62.1	37.9	3	3.572	0.311
29	The university held and exhibition to some extracurricular activities for students	75.3	24.7	80.1	19.1	76.6	23.4	66.0	34.0	3	9.813	0.020*
30	Practicing extra-curricular activities encourages you to continue your education	82.8	17.2	89.1	10.9	91.0	9.0	84.3	15.7	3	6.163	0.104
31	Extracurricular activity helps you to develop your personality	32.3	67.7	31.3	68.7	34.8	65.2	32.7	67.3	3	0.608	0.894
32	Extracurricular activity negatively affects your achievement	58.1	41.9	44.3	55.7	50.2	49.8	50.3	49.8	3	1.037	0.317
33	Your participation in extracurricular activities reduces your study time	81.7	18.3	79.6	20.4	86.1	13.9	80.4	19.6	3	3.345	0.341
34	Your participation in extracurricular activities help to increase the number of your friends	74.2	25.8	74.4	25.6	78.1	21.9	69.3	30.7	3	3.549	0.314
35	Increases relationship with the university through your participation in extracurricular activities	54.8	45.2	55.0	45.0	53.2	46.8	52.3	47.7	3	0.325	0.955
36	Faculty members encourages you to participate in extracurricular activities	50.5	49.5	50.7	49.3	58.2	41.8	57.5	42.5	3	3.487	0.322

Sig.: $\alpha > 0.05$

is higher, the student become more willing to hold leadership actions. In this sample role of family and actions of university has a clear role in their activities. However, the opinions of first and second year students showed a less positive trend towards that act of the university in this regard (74.2%). This may be attributed to the lack of experience in this level while the older students had more interactions with their university.

The findings of the third question: Is there any statistical relationship between practicing extra curriculum activities

and university type? To answer this questions means and standard deviations and chi square values were calculated as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 showed the responses of the sample with regard to the variable of university type (public or private). The findings showed that there are significant statistical indications between students in both types of universities. It was evident that public universities students had more freedom in selecting extra-circular activities than students in private universities as family interference is 44.3% against 25.6% that means families

Table 4: Study sample distribution according to questioner items with university type

No.	Items	Public (%)		Private (%)		F	χ ² -value	Sig.
		Yes	No	Yes	No			
14	You have the confidence with the type of activity you practice	78.4	21.6	75.6	24.4	3	4.261	0.235
15	Your syllabus contains extra-activities	50.7	49.3	43.0	57.0	3	5.816	0.121
16	You wish to be a leader in your activity	75.5	24.5	70.1	29.9	3	5.411	0.144
17	The university gives you the chance in the activity you practice	66.0	34.0	58.8	41.2	3	4.702	0.195
18	Your family have a decision in your activity choice	44.3	55.7	25.1	79.9	3	29.103	0.000*
19	Your friends have a role in your activity choice	63.1	36.9	57.0	43.0	3	4.693	0.196
20	Your average has a role in your activity choice	42.9	57.1	37.4	62.6	3	4.184	0.424
21	An academic penalty prevents you from selecting your activity	35.9	64.1	31.3	68.7	3	4.068	0.254
22	University allows you an opportunity to express your views and suggestions about extracurricular activities	58.4	61.4	52.1	47.9	3	4.156	0.245
23	University tries to make extracurricular activities enjoyable and useful activity	67.7	32.3	61.8	38.2	3	4.848	0.183
24	The University offers the practice of extra-curricular activities flexibility	63.1	36.9	47.9	52.1	3	17.463	0.001*
25	University meets students desire to exercise extra-curricular activities that they desire	60.3	39.7	53.5	46.5	3	4.750	0.206
26	Steps of laws and regulations implementation at the university long, complicate and impede the implementation of extra-curricular activities	61.7	37.9	47.3	52.7	3	17.368	0.008*
27	University tries to make extracurricular activities enjoyable and useful activity	62.1	37.9	48.9	51.1	3	13.207	0.004*
28	Customs and traditions hinder your choice for the type of activity you like	68.4	31.6	68.2	31.8	3	2.620	0.454
29	The university holds and exhibition to some extracurricular activities for students	79.4	20.6	71.9	28.1	3	8.189	0.042*
30	Practicing extra-curricular activities encourages you to continue your education	90.1	9.9	86.4	13.6	3	16.337	0.001*
31	Extracurricular activity helps you to develop your personality	37.2	62.8	29.7	70.3	3	5.142	0.162
32	Extracurricular activity negatively affects your achievement	53.2	46.5	46.6	53.4	3	6.239	0.397
33	Your participation in extracurricular activities reduces your study time	82.6	17.4	81.8	18.2	3	4.870	0.182
34	Your participation in extracurricular activities help to increase the number of your friends	79.4	20.6	70.6	29.4	3	9.830	0.020*
35	Increases relationship with the university through your participation in extracurricular activities	60.3	39.7	48.7	51.3	3	10.547	0.015*
36	Faculty members encourages you to participate in extracurricular activities	53.5	46.5	55.3	44.7	3	2.244	0.523

*Sig.: α>0.05

observe and control their kids activities in public universities. Moreover, they think that university provides flexible activities (63.1%) while custom and traditions prevent their choices (62.1%). It is noted that public university students had more freedom in selecting extra-circular activities than their peers in private universities.

The findings of the fourth question: Is there any statistical relationship between practicing extra curriculum activities and accumulative average? To answer this questions means and standard deviations and chi square

values were calculated as shown in Table 5. Table 5 showed that there is an effect for the accumulative average since most of the item had no significant. Most of students in all categories had the same desire to practice extra-circular activities, though most of them think that the university provide them with enjoyable and free activities that may enhance their education and develop their personalities.

The results show that the grade point average proportion of students with high GPA participating in student activities is higher that their colleagues with low GPA.

Table 5: Study sample distribution according to questioner items with study accumulative average

No.	Items	<2 (%)		2-2.49 (%)		2.50-2.99 (%)		3-3.64 (%)		F	χ^2 -value	Sig.
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			
14	You have the confident with the type of activity you practice	69.4	30.60	74.8	25.2	77.1	22.9	82.6	17.4	3	4.208	0.240
15	Your syllabus contains extra-activities	46.0	54.00	46.6	53.4	44.8	55.2	49.2	50.8	3	0.640	0.887
16	You wish to be a leader in your activity	68.0	32.00	67.6	32.4	77.8	22.2	73.0	27.0	3	6.846	0.077
17	The university gives you the chance in the activity you practice	44.0	56.00	60.7	39.3	66.5	33.5	63.1	36.9	3	9.190	0.027*
18	Your family have a decision in your activity choice	38.0	62.00	35.6	64.4	29.7	70.3	34.4	65.6	3	2.548	0.467
19	Your friends have a role in your activity choice	48.0	52.00	59.9	40.1	59.8	40.2	63.1	36.9	3	3.435	0.329
20	Your average has a role in your activity choice	40.0	60.00	40.5	59.5	39.7	60.3	38.5	61.5	3	0.132	0.988
21	An academic penalty prevents you from selecting your activity	30.0	70.00	34.8	65.2	32.2	67.8	33.9	66.1	3	0.645	0.886
22	University allows you an opportunity to express your views and suggestions about extracurricular activities	52.0	48.00	54.3	45.7	56.7	43.3	54.1	45.9	3	0.562	0.905
23	University tries to make extracurricular activities enjoyable and useful activity	58.0	42.00	64.8	35.2	67.8	32.2	59.0	41.0	3	3.635	0.304
24	The University offers the practice of extra-curricular activities flexibility	52.0	48.00	55.5	44.5	54.0	46.0	53.3	46.7	3	0.303	0.960
25	University meets students desire to exercise extra-curricular activities that they desire	62.0	38.00	55.1	44.9	56.9	43.1	56.6	43.4	3	0.839	0.840
26	Steps of laws and regulations implementation at the university long, complicated and impede the implementation of extra-curricular activities	56.0	44.00	51.8	47.8	54.4	45.6	53.3	46.7	3	0.478	0.912
27	University tries to make extracurricular activities enjoyable and useful activity	54.0	46.00	56.3	43.7	50.2	49.8	59.8	40.2	3	3.494	0.322
28	Customs and traditions hinder your choice for the type of activity you like	64.0	36.00	69.6	30.4	70.7	29.3	62.3	37.7	3	3.299	0.348
29	The university held and exhibition to some extracurricular activities for students	58.0	42.00	77.3	22.7	77.4	22.6	73.0	27.0	3	9.449	0.024*
30	Practicing extra-curricular activities encourages you to continue your education	82.0	0.18	89.5	10.5	86.6	13.4	88.5	16.5	3	2.564	0.464
31	Extracurricular activity helps you to develop your personality	34.0	66.00	32.0	68.0	28.9	71.1	41.8	58.2	3	6.266	0.099
32	Extracurricular activity negatively affects your achievement	56.0	42.00	47.8	52.2	48.3	51.3	52.5	47.5	2	3.420	0.754
33	Your participation in extracurricular activities reduces your study time	70.0	30.00	83.4	16.6	83.3	17.6	82.0	18.0	3	5.470	0.140
34	Your participation in extracurricular activities help to increase the number of your friends	68.0	32.00	70.9	29.1	78.7	21.3	75.4	24.6	3	5.040	0.169
35	Increases relationship with the university through your participation in extracurricular activities	46.0	54.00	55.9	44.1	56.5	43.5	47.5	52.5	3	4.266	0.234
36	Faculty members encourages you to participate in extracurricular activities	58.0	42.00	55.5	44.5	50.2	49.8	59.8	40.2	3	3.515	0.319

*Sig.: $\alpha > 0.05$

CONCLUSION

The study concluded the following:

- The participation of females in extra activities is higher than males' participation
- Family interferes in females lives more than males' lives
- Customs and traditions hinder students' choices
- Females indicated that extra-activities can develop their personalities
- The rate of participants from the third and fourth years is less than those in the first and second years of study

- Public university students' have more freedom in selecting their activities
- The highest the average is the highest is the participation
- Female students think that their universities give them more chances to select their activities

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the researchers recommended the following:

- Exploring the needs and trends of students and using their gifts

- Encouraging students to participate in activities and providing them with incentives
- Allowing students to select their activities freely
- Educating families about the necessity of extra-activities for their sons and daughters
- Providing all needed equipment to participate in such activities
- Preparing extra-activities centers properly
- Providing training and support for human resources in such centers with a suitable budgeting system
- Calling on private universities to encourage students in participating and selecting extra-activities

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