

LEISURE ATTITUDE AMONG PREPARATORY YEAR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN EAST SAUDI ARABIA

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to identify the level of leisure attitude among university students at the University of Dammam, Saudi Arabia. The study utilizes a quantitative method. Preparatory year students are chosen as a research sample where 209 students using random sampling and questionnaire survey was employed for data collection. Based on the findings, the entire study variable, which is leisure attitude, was revealed to have average level. In addition, the findings revealed no differences were found between males and females students on the level of leisure attitude. The study recommends that university management needs to plan and develop programs in an attempt to facilitate students' positive attitude towards the university.

Keywords: Leisure Attitude, Preparatory Year, Undergraduate Students

Introduction

Recently, researchers confirmed that a country's success is dependent on the current generations and their possession of intellectual along with their stable psychographic characteristics. More recently, stakeholders' expectations on the quality of graduates in Higher Learning Institutions have experienced an increase. This is consistent with the declared objective of the Ministry of Education Saudi Arabia and the calls done by researchers (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Saudi_Arabia#cite_note-24; Aznina et al., 2013; Bradley, 2012; Beard, Clegg and Smith, 2007; and Hill and Reddy, 2007) in which it emphasized on the importance of extracurricular activities for the development of intellectual, creative and communicative skills as laid down in the King Abdullah Project for General Education development. Thus, the realization of such objective calls for active education planning and designing focused on improving the education provided to youth.

Problem Statement

People generally experience different types of effects brought about by these challenges that adversely influence their psychosis and their social, cognitive and behavioral aspects. Such effects differ from one individual to the next and hence, their reactions towards them also vary. Studies such as Appleton, Chrisenson and Farlong (2008), Raver and Knitzer (2002), and Ackerman, Kogos, Youngstorm, Schoff and Izard, (1999) related adolescent issues to a dip in self-esteem, behavioral issues combined with adverse influence from peers, and failure in school performance, lack of social and emotional skills and social adjustment skills.

In the context of Saudi Arabia, a few studies have highlighted issues pertaining to the adolescent phase like emotional and behavioral issues, psychological issues, lack of leisure (Abo-Zeid, et al., 2009; Al-Anazi and

Al-Shamli, 2011). However, the consequences of these issues may result in the individual's lack of tendency towards task performance, effective studying, and effective memorization of details; attempt to steer clear of failure, selection of effective performance settings, setting and achieving goals and maintaining effort for a span of time. However, literature showed that psychological constructs are significant factors that could lead to the enhancement of the student's success, particularly university level students (Azniza et al. (2013).

In sum, researchers are of the consensus that leisure activities is a major factor that could bring about superior well-being and in turn, enhance successful university performance and involvement in extra-curricular activities (Aznina et al., 2013). Nevertheless, studies dedicated to examining the concept in a general context, and in the context of Arab countries are still few and far between. Therefore, the present study contributes to literature by examining the level of leisure attitude among preparatory year university students in general and in Saudi universities in particular.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the present study is as follows:

1. To investigate the level of leisure attitude among preparatory year university students in the University of Dammam, Saudi Arabia.
2. To conduct a comparison among the leisure attitude of preparatory year university students in the University of Dammam, Saudi Arabia on the basis of gender.
3. To conduct a comparison among the leisure attitude of preparatory year university students in the University of Dammam, Saudi Arabia on the basis of study tracks.

Study Method

Sample and Procedure

The present study utilized a quantitative method for data collection. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) survey refers to the research method that simply notes the phenomenon accurately and provides a description of the observation. Participants were 209 undergraduate preparatory year students at a University of Dammam in West Saudi Arabia. The majority of the students were males (120) and (89) were female's students. The students were studying in three tracks namely medicine, engineering and science, and were characterized by similar demographics with few differences in their teaching and learning process. Data collection was conducted towards the end of the second semester of 2013/2014. They were requested at the end of the timetable session by the researcher who also took the opportunity to explain the purpose behind the study.

Measurement

A two section measure were used in the present study which are first sections namely background and the second leisure attitude. The first section (background) was developed to obtain required information of the respondents such as student gender and study track. The leisure attitude scale (Raged & Beard, 1982) was used as an overall measure of leisure attitude. The leisure attitude scale is a 18 items that are developed to measure three dimensions namely general knowledge and beliefs concerning leisure, beliefs concerning leisure relationship with health, happiness and work, and other concepts like qualities and characteristics. The Cronbach's alpha reliability for this scale was found to be 0.79.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data was carried out through descriptive statistics and MANOVA tests. The study's first objective is to determine the level of leisure attitude among preparatory university students. In Table 1, the mean score of students in leisure attitude scale has a mean score of 3.33. It can therefore be contended that the level of leisure attitude of the students was found to be average.

Table 1: Means Scores and Standard Deviations of Participants for the Research Variables

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Leisure Attitude	209	1	5	3.33	.895

The second objective of this study is to conduct a comparison between the levels of leisure attitude between students based on their gender. The results of data analysis dedicated to this objective are provided in Table 2. T-test was conducted on the leisure attitude. The independent exists in male group and female group. An initial set of analysis generated no significant main effects based on gender with the dependent variables as presented in the Table 2. It can therefore be concluded that no significant difference exists in the average total score of leisure attitude between genders. Additionally, the average total score of the dependent

variables for the male group is considerably lower compared to that of the female group as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: T-Test Result Differences of Gender on Leisure Attitude

Factor	Gender	N	M	df	Sig- (2-tailed)
Leisure Attitude	Male	120	3.32	215	.922
	Female	89	3.35		

Discussion

The present study examined the leisure attitude of the students enrolled in preparatory year at the University of Dammam. Among the primary findings obtained that leisure attitude of the students was above average. This may be attributed to the fact that the students were relatively new to the university and they are still in the transition of coping with the environment and thinking about their future majors.

This study's major contribution to literature is the finding that shows non-significant differences between the genders in terms of leisure attitude. This result is expected and attributed to the male and female students need to put more effort and their willingness to face challenges. Additionally, both males and females students may be more confident in their performance ability in their tracks and in tackling difficult challenges. As for the study limitations, first, study data was collected from self-report measures, which may be susceptible to inflated biases owing to the social desirability effects. Second, the present study design is a descriptive design– in this regard, future studies may adopt longitudinal and experimental designs to effectively encapsulate the objective of the study. Third, the study sample comprised of students from the University of Dammam, Saudi Arabia and thus the results generalizability to other universities should be considered with caution. Future studies may include students from other Saudi universities to provide broader and more generalized findings.

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