

Practicing the Leisure Sports Activities and their Relation to Alleviating the Examination Anxiety among the Students of Al-Balqa Applied University

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Abstract

Background and Objective: This study aimed to identify the practice of the leisure sports activities and their relationship in reducing the examination anxiety among the students of Al-Balqa Applied University.

Subjects and Method: The study adopted the descriptive, analytical method. The study sample consisted of (200) male and female students at Al-Balqa Applied University who were randomly selected from the study population. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher prepared a questionnaire as a study tool for gathering information from the members of the study sample. Statistically analysis have used to verifying the validity and reliability of the study tool and to get the results.

Results: After verifying the validity and reliability of the study tool, the researcher concluded that there is a high degree in practicing the leisure sports activities and their relationship to alleviating the examination anxiety among the students of Al-Balqa Applied University and that there are statistically significant differences at sig. ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) among the viewpoints of the members of the study sample on reducing the examination anxiety among the students of Al-Balqa Applied University in favor of the practitioner of sports activities.

Conclusion: According to the results, the researcher in the study recommended the need to work on paying attention to the leisure activities and work on their development and activation among the university students in order to relieve the pressures of the exam for them and working on holding free training programs for students on the leisure activities and their types, and showing their importance in the students' university life in order to relieve the exams' pressure and to achieve a psychological well-being.

Key words: *Exercise- Leisure sports- Examination anxiety- psychological.*

Introduction

Studying at university is considered one of the most important stages through which man passes; it is one of the main pillars in the progress and development of societies, as universities are educational institutions containing an important segment of society that cannot be underestimated, namely the students. Through students, the development and advancement of the members of the society lie in them in all the fields of life.

One of the most prominent of these areas at the university level is the leisure sports activities, which play an important role in raising the efficiency of the

performance of the university student mentally and physically through the students' practice of some leisure sports activities.

Furthermore, the sports activity in its modern sense is considered an important dimension of education and a strong element in the process of preparing the student's personality alongside the curricula¹. One of the most important problems that the leisure sports activities can alleviate is the anxiety from which many members of the society suffer from in their daily lives in general.

Psychologists and sports psychologists have agreed that play is the basic building block of this phenomenon;

therefore, it had a great importance in the social life. It is now known as the leisure sports activities which contribute to the development of the cognitive and educational skills, values, and trends among persons practicing their activities².

The leisure sports activities are one of the most prominent and important means of physical and psychological recreation that help people achieve a balanced life, especially when sports activity becomes a leisure activity invested by the student at all times³. According to Scully et al., the sports and leisure activities have a positive role in achieving psychological well-being, physical health, reducing anxiety and stress, and improving the mood⁴.

The phenomenon of anxiety is one of the general phenomena that characterize the current era. The degree and severity of anxiety vary from person to person. Examination anxiety, as a topic, is tackled by many modern educational studies and researches. It is defined as a psychological status or an emotional phenomenon affecting the student before and during the test; it arises from his fear of failure or his fear of not getting results that satisfy him and others. This case affects the student's mental processes such as concentration, attention, remembrance, and thinking⁵.

As a result of linking tests to important decisions in the lives of individuals such as admission to universities, they are considered as a source of anxiety for students. This will negatively affect the student's performance, which may be a cause of failure or lower percentages than he expects or than what should be achieved. This deepens the hatred of tests that causes some individuals to face the neurotic anxiety of examinations⁶.

There are many definitions for the leisure sports activities see Al-Anzi⁷, Al-Fayiz⁸, Barwais et al.⁹. Taqi Al-Din defines the leisure sports activities as the games or sports that are exercised in leisure and free of intense competition. In other words, they mean the sports outside the regulatory activity, which is a leisure physical activity for pleasure and happiness at its fullest¹⁰.

According to the viewpoints of many researchers, the leisure sports activities are divided into the four major groups¹¹: Games and competitions with simple organization, individual games or sports, couple sports

and team games.

Many researchers have defined the examination anxiety, Saihi one of them. Saihi defined the examination anxiety as "a state of the student's feeling of tension and discomfort as a result of disorder in the cognitive and emotional aspects. It is accompanied by certain physiological and psychological symptoms that may appear on him. They may feel them when facing the examination situations or remembering them, or when their experiences are invoked in testing situations"¹². Another definition by Al-Khazi. He defined the examination anxiety as a psychological state of discomfort and stress felt by the university student before and during the test; it affects his or her performance and the requirements of the normal education¹³.

Several studies exist for understanding the relation between the leisure sports activities and the examination anxiety, such as Türkmen & Balci study¹⁴, Zobairy et al., study¹⁵ and Bouzidi study¹⁶.

Study Methodology and Procedures

Study methodology: The study adopted the survey descriptive approach due to its suitability to its nature.

Study population: The study population consisted of all the students of Al-Balqa Applied University in all the governorates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Study Sample: The sample of the study consisted of (200) students from Al-Balqa Applied University. Table 1 shows the distribution of the sample members according to the personal variables.

Table 1: Distribution of the members of the sample according to the personal variable (n = 200)

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Practitioner of Leisure sports activities	110	55.0
Non- Practitioner of Leisure sports activities	90	45.0
Total	200	100.0

Study tool: For the purpose of achieving the study objectives and answer its questions, the researcher adopted the questionnaire as a means of collecting information from the study sample members. Here are the procedures of preparing for the study tool.

Preparing the study tool: After reference to theoretical literature and the previous studies, the researcher prepared the study tool, the questionnaire, which consisted of two parts: the first included the personal information of the members of the study sample and the second included (25) items that measure the extent of practicing the leisure sports activities and their relations with alleviating the anxiety among the students of Al-Balqa Applied University.

Validity of the study tool: To confirm the validity of the study tool, it was presented to (6) experts with experience for the purpose of identifying an appropriate degree for the language formulation, the item's extent of belonging to the field in addition to deletion, addition and modifications necessary. In accordance to the consensus of the majority of experts, the appropriate adjustments were conducted to the questionnaires.

Reliability of the study tool: To verify the reliability of the study tool, the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for the study tool as a whole was extracted. Table 2 shows that clearly.

Table 2: Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the Study Tool as a Whole

Tool as a whole	(Cronbach's alpha) coefficient
	0.81

Table 2 shows that the values of the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the study areas ranged (0.72-0.84) and that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the tool as a whole was (0.81), which is considered high for the application purposes. Most studies indicated that the degree of accepting the reliability factor was (0.70).

Scale Correction: The questionnaire consisted of (20) items. The researcher used the fifth Lickert scale for measuring the viewpoints of the members of the study sample as follows: very high (5), high (4), moderate (3), low (2), very low (1). This was done through placing a

(√) signal before the answer that reflect their approval degree. The following classification was adopted to indicate the means as follows:

- Less than 2.33 low.
- From 2.34-3.66 moderate.
- From 3.67 to 5.00 high.

Statistical Treatment: To answer the questions of the study, the following statistical treatments were used throughout the SPSS:

- Frequencies and percentages of the personal variables of the members of the study sample.
- Internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for the study tool.
- Means and standard deviations for the answers of the members of the study sample.
- Results of applying the Independent Samples T-Test on the study tool.

Results and Discussion

This section includes the presentation of the results of the study which aimed at identifying the extent of practicing the leisure sports activities and their relationship in alleviating the anxiety of examinations among the students of Al-Balqa Applied University through the study questions. Here are the results:

First: The results of the first question: What is the degree of the extent of practicing the leisure sports activities and their relation with alleviating the examination anxiety among the students of Al-Balqa Applied University?

To answer this question, means and standard deviations of the answers of the members of the study sample for the study tool were extracted. Table 3 explains this.

The data collected by questionnaire shows that the means of the respondents' answers to the items of the study tool ranged from (3.59 to 4.01). Item (1) which stated "practicing the leisure sports activities contributes to providing me with confidence and satisfaction while answering the exam questions" came in the first rank by

a mean of (4.01) and a high evaluation degree. However, in the final rank, came item (7), which is “Practicing the Leisure sports activities contribute to alleviate my feelings of panic and fear before and during the test” with the mean of (3.59) and a high evaluation degree. The researcher attributes this result to the students’ awareness of the importance of practicing the leisure sports activities and their role in filling their free time positively, and because of their psychological, mental and social benefits, which help them achieve a sense of confidence and satisfaction during answering the questions of the exam. Furthermore, practicing the sports activities also reduces the feeling of panic, fear and extreme confusion among the university students before and during the exam. Also, practicing the sports activities works to guide the university students towards living in a high spirit of sportsmanship that help them expel the negative energy left by the process of preparing for the exam and its accompanying anxiety.

There is no doubt that the practice of leisure sports activities reduces the level of anxiety of the exam, where the anxiety of university students causes an overall tension that affects the student as well as the mental processes of attention, thinking, concentration and remembering, which is one of the most important requirements for passing the exam. Such state of tension therefore negatively affects the achievement of university students.

The practice of leisure sports activities also helps the university students to improve their academic level, and reduces anxiety, which is one of the psychological phenomena that clearly affect the students’ personality.

The anxiety of the exam is reflected in students’ performance and level of educational and cognitive achievement at university, which has the greatest impact on the future of the university student.

Second: Results related to the second question: Are there statistically significant differences at sig. ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the degree of practicing the leisure sports activities and their relation in alleviating the examination anxiety among the students of Al-Balqa Applied University due to the practitioner of leisure sports activities and non-practitioner of leisure sports activities?

To validate this hypothesis, the Independent Samples T-Test was applied on the study tool according to the variable (practitioner of sports activities). Table 3 illustrates this.

Table 3: Results of applying the Independent Samples T-Test to the study tool according to the variable of practitioners of sports activities

Level	Mean	SD	T	SS
Practitioner of Leisure sports activities	4.04	0.57	5.71	0.00
Non-practitioner of Leisure sports activities	3.59	0.54		

Where: SD (Standard Deviation), SS (Statistical Significance)

Table 3 shows statistically significant differences at sig. ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) between the opinions of the sample members about the study tool according to the variable of the practitioner of leisure sports activities where the value of (T) was (5.71), which is a statistically significant value in favor of the practitioner of leisure sports activities with a mean of (4.04). However, the mean for the Non-practitioner of leisure sports activities was (3.59) which is attributed to the fact that the university students who practice the leisure sports activities before the exams get better results in the exam. This was proved through applying some mental tests on them and their results were better than the students who did not practice the leisure sports activities before the exam. The researcher also noted that practicing the leisure sports activities clearly increased the concentration of students in their studies. Also it reduced the anxiety of the exam for students, achieved success and led to getting rid of leisure time and a sense of psychological comfort as well as physical and mental health.

Conclusion

Leisure sports activities with all their kinds and names are not only leisure activities, but also educational, mental, social, physical and purposeful activities that cannot be achieved without proper and careful planning of these activities, and the provision of physical and technical facilities and appropriate conditions for the implementation of these activities. Based on the results,

the study recommended:

1. The need for paying attention to leisure activities and working on developing them among the university students in order to relieve their pressures of the exam.

2. Working on holding free training programs for students in particular whose topic are the leisure activities and their types, and showing their importance in the life of university students in order to relieve the pressure of examinations, and to achieve the psychological well-being.

3. The need for working on conducting further studies examining the leisure sports activities and their relationship to certain variables, such as self-efficiency, methods of entertainment, achievement, and emotional intelligence. The study also recommended conducting further studies on the psychological well-being of students and their relationship to certain variables such as happiness, optimism, social intelligence, and emotional intelligence.

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