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# Investigating of leisure time activities in male students at Iran's Islamic Azad University: An emphasis on sports participation

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**ABSTRACT**

*The present study aims to investigate the sport-centered approaches to filling leisure time in male students at Iran's Islamic Azad University. The population of the study consisted of all undergraduate male students in 14 instructional districts of Islamic Azad University in the 2010-2011 academic year. A number of 1125 students were selected as the participants using multi-step cluster random sampling. Tond Nevis questionnaire (1996) was used to collect the data. The reliability of the questionnaire was originally calculated to be 0.85 and currently calculated to be 0.95 using Cronbach alpha formula. Both $X^2$ and Friedman tests were run to analyze the data. The results showed that students had 2.7 hours leisure time on average every day. During summer holidays, they reported to have 6-12 hours leisure time every day. Their first four priorities for filling leisure time included watching TV, Watching VCD and DVD, leisurely work at the computer (internet, chat, etc) and watching satellite TV broadcasts, respectively. Both male and female students spent most of their leisure time at home or dorm in the first place and at sports-recreational centers either inside or outside the university in the second place. The students agreed that leisure time significantly affected their physical and mental health. They reported that medical advice and habitual training were the strongest incentives for leisure time sports participation. The main reasons why they did not do sports included lack of time, laziness, impatience and lack of training habit, respectively.*

**Keywords:** Islamic Azad University; Leisure time; Sport training

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## INTRODUCTION

Students are considered as the national capital and scientific support across the nation. It is, therefore, of utmost importance to appropriately recognize their leisure time needs. Since physical education and sports bear a crucial importance in filling student leisure time, it may become a leading edge to help university recreational directors provide sports and recreational facilities in the universities. Leisure sport policies in a country may not be considered irrespective of socio-political factors as well as cultural, environmental, marketing and educational considerations. These policies need to be reviewed permanently by authorities to identify and eliminate their potential strengths and weaknesses [8]. University sports assume a well-documented system and high-level executive guarantee in developed countries because it is a non-trifling requisite to provide high-level sport facilities.

The social status of colleges is often associated with the social status of their successful sports teams. In this regard, influential groups such as graduates, authorities and pro bono benefactors may feel proud when their respective university wins sports competitions [1]. The prophet of Islam says on the filling of leisure time "the strong believers are more respectable than the weak ones". He refers to body as an independent identity entitled to certain rights presumably in order to draw Muslims' attention so that he says, "your body demands a right on you, which you should fulfill." According to a Hadith by the prophet, "most of the people suffer from aberrance in two domains: health and leisure." Imam Ali advices the faithful on leisure time so that he says unto Abazar, "Oh Abazar, take care of my words if you would like to achieve prosperity. Oh Abazar, most people ignore two blessings: health and leisure" (Ma'ani el-Ekhbar).

**History of university recreations**

The origins of university recreational sports may be traced in English people's participation in sport clubs. University students used to establish and finance campus clubs and play the role of coach and athlete. Campus competitions such as competitions between freshmen and seniors were considered as a strong incentive to attract students towards sports, which came to be a strong tradition in school leagues. Between 1875 and 1900, there were plenty of intercollegiate competitions mostly in the form of running competition. In 1904, Cornell University proposed a system allowing the students to specialize in certain sports and there were coaches to train the students who did not participate in intramural competitions. This was the first system to emphasize what is now called instructional sport. Between 1904 and 1912, the campus recreational activities grew so exponentially that institutions set to organize their activities under the supervision of a central power. In 1913, Ohio and Michigan universities opened athletic departments. Gradually, the development of intramural sport programs required the allocation of more facilities to support different sports. Michigan state university inaugurated the first building for recreational sports in 1982. In the early 1920s, sports conferences were held and physical education associations were gradually developed out of annual meetings. Following world war II, campus recreational programs were further developed. In 1950, Dr. William Wasson established National Intramural Association (NIA) at Dillard University in New Orleans. Some institutions had physical education bureaus manage intramural sports programs when the rivalries began for taking over the leadership role in these programs. The controversy over the double responsibility for both recreational and sports programs has currently turned into a philosophical discussion and obscured the prioritization. Do physical education programs require more budgets due to the larger number of students that participates in or the number of fans that enjoys the programs? If so, what about recreational programs? But time has dramatically changed. Now, campus recreational directors often report to student development office. This mainly relates to the positive role of intramural recreations in entertaining students and increasing the student quality of life. Though full-time employees are hired to manage the affairs, they may not make considerable progress unless the students cooperate. The aims of campus recreational programs include offering various entertaining programs for students, colleges and employees to increase the quality of academic life. Most of the graduates and their families can use these facilities so that they are recognized as an important part of campus recreational missions [1]. University sports are extensively developed in the US so that The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) was developed to support campus athletics. From 1983 to 1984, a number of 178265 male and female students participated in intercollegiate sports competitions. This value only refers to sports that are managed by The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The association was established in 1906 to develop and supervise collegiate sport competitions and introduce fair play regulations in more than eleven sports. Today, sport-union associations comprised of male and female students in Britain, Canada and US work to promote collegiate sports. This helps promote student sports participation in these countries [1]. Several studies have yet been done on leisure time. Radio and Television organization, Social Study Association of Tehran University, faculties of architecture and urban development and postgraduate students have conducted many studies on leisure time activities. Gudarzi and Asadi (1999) investigated the type of recreational-sports activities in the professors of Tehran University and reported that only 33% of the professors did sports [12]. Tond Nevis (2001) studied the role of sports in filling leisure time in Iranian citizens. He reported that Iranian townspeople had about 3.5 hours leisure time on average per day, which corresponds to the average leisure time in developed countries (3-4 hours). People in the two provinces of Yazd and Sistan had the lowest average leisure time (3.3 hours) while people in the three provinces of Ilam (4 hours), Lorestan and Markazi (3.9 hours) had the highest average leisure time per day. Watching TV (120 minutes per day) was reported to be the main free time filler in Iranian citizens. 43.5% of women and 54.5% of men were reported to do physical exercise for 3.5 to 4 hours a week on average. People who took physical exercise were reported to be more satisfied with their leisure time comparing with those who did not. The longer they did exercise training the deeper they were satisfied with their leisure time. Factors such as the number of children, working time, income and amount of exercise training were found to act as predictors of leisure time satisfaction. Those who did

exercise had higher levels of satisfaction with their life and leisure time [2]. The results of a study conducted by Iranian National Youth Organization in 2004 on the young people ranging in age from 15 to 29 in eleven provinces showed that most of the participants (56.5%) did not know the organizations responsible for the affairs pertaining to leisure time. 65.8% of them had never participated in the programs conducted by these organizations. 66.6% of them believed that the youth priorities were not heeded in designing recreational programs. 56.9% of the participants were interested in contributing to develop recreational programs. The priorities of youth for leisure time activities included sports programs (46%), politics and tourism (19.9%) and art programs/handicrafts (16.5%). 70.9% of the participants used to study in their leisure time and the average study time was reported to be 7:14 hours per week. The topics of interest for study were reported to be novel and fiction (32.1%), specific topics (14%) and poetry and literature (13%). Most of the participants (60.4%) used to read newspapers and magazines for 2:30 hours on average per week. They used to listen to radio for 2:21 hours on average per week. The participants reported to be interested in radio programs such as music (38.7%), News and commentaries (25.2%) and entertainment programs (21.5%). The TV broadcasts that were favorable to youth often happened to coincide with their leisure time (64%). The participants reported to listen to expatriate Iranian singers (30.4%), Iranian pop music (28.6%) and traditional music (22.2%). Most of the participants went to cinema (54.2%) and were mostly interested in romantic genres (44%). Only did 36% of the participants use Internet and they mostly surfed the net for entertainment. They used the Internet for 2:54 hours on average per week. While 73.6% of the participants did not attend religious services in their leisure time, those who did reported to attend such services for 4:23 hours on average per week. 66.4% of the participants did not participate in art/handicraft activities in their leisure time while those who did reported to participate for 5 hours on average per week. 88.1% of the participants went on excursion and they mostly preferred going to the country (41.7%). 66.8% of the participants reported to do sports in their leisure time for 6:31 hours on average per week. Besides, 49.9% of the participants went to sports competitions. About three quarters of the participants did not do professional sports (73.1%) and 8.3% were not a member of any sports club. 64.2% of the participants reported to do games in their leisure time for 4:33 hours a week. 44.9% of the participants took training courses in their leisure time and 80.2% were either satisfied or highly satisfied with their lessons.

48.4% of the participants believed that non-governmental associations could significantly facilitate the filling of leisure time while 48.6% believed these associations might not be counted on. 36.2% of the participants contended that the State could finance these associations to increase their efficiency in developing leisure time programs. 54.8% of the participants did not noticed the advertisements of recreational organizations while most of those who did (85.4%) contended that these advertisements were either good or very good in quality. 53.3% of the participants used to schedule their summer leisure time while 46.7% did not. About 45% of the participants reported that their parents disagreed with their leisure time schedule. 59.1% of the subjects were not content with their leisure time schedules. The subjects reported their priorities for spending leisure time to include excursion (85.1%), travel (80.8%), sports (74.7%), reading (63%), working at the computer and Internet (56%), religious services (45.5%) and artistic activities (44.8%) [11]. Crenshaw and Phillip (2007) investigated the effect of intervening incentives for changing leisure time habits of physical activities in Mississippi State University students. The study was conducted in 10 colleges of Mississippi University and showed that a change of attitude takes on a long process that may occur in 5 stages. The efficacy of intervening factors on time phase of such incentives as race, gender, age and economic status revealed that the race did not affect the stage of change while other dependent variables did. In this study, 35% of the subjects were in the inactivity stage while 64.9% were kept in three stages of preparation, motion and maintenance. The results showed that the intervention coordinated with the stages of change may be necessary to increase and maintain good habits of physical exercise [20]. Haase et al. (2004) studied the relationship between physical activities and health beliefs, risk awareness and development of national economy in the students in 23 countries. They investigated a number of 19228 students from 23 countries with different socio-economic statuses, rest time, health beliefs and health knowledge. The results showed variable prevalence of immobility in leisure time with different socio-cultural factors. The prevalence of immobility was 23% in Northwestern Europe and US, 30% in Central and Eastern Europe, 39% in Mediterranean regions, 42% in East Asia and 44% in developing countries [17]. KaGdula et al. (2003) studied leisure time activities in the juniors of Pharmaceutics and medicine at the University of Dublin. They found that women had less leisure time than men did. The participants consisted of 32 men and 82 women. The results also showed that, on average, students studied for 3.6 hours, watched TV or listened to the radio for 4 hours, socialized with their peers for 1.9 hours and practiced their personal hygiene for 1.1 hours a day. However, they allocated a limited time to physical activity. Women used to take a walk while men did sports as usual ways of doing physical activities in their leisure time [16].

Olubor and Osunde (2007) investigated the study hours and leisure time in the undergraduate students of Southern Nigeria. An investigation of a number of 2400 students showed that those with the longest study hours did not necessarily have the shortest average time of physical activity. They usually spent 26 hours a week studying or doing assignments. The findings suggested that university authorities should develop indoor sports facilities in the campus and social life skills needed to be taught in universities to help manage student leisure time [30]. Huziao et al. (2005) studied exercise-training behavior among the students of 5 universities in Beijing. A number of 205 subjects were studied and the results showed no satisfactory exercise training frequency at leisure time. The most popular sports included basketball, soccer, ping-pong and badminton. The data was collected through physical education classes and personal investigation. Physical exercise was shown to be influenced by such factors as time, environment, clothing and sports facilities [25]. Xiuxiao et al. (2004) investigated extracurricular sports activities among college students in Liaoning province. The study was conducted on a number of 2000 students from 10 universities in this province. Most of the students were interested in physical activities though with different motives for participation. The typical constraining factors included facility deficit and student workload. There was no significant difference in the rate of participation, average weekly time and the type of sports between men and women [37]. Makinen et al. (2008) studied twenty-five year socio-economic trends in leisure-time and commuting physical activity among employed Finns. The study was conducted between 1978 and 2002. The participants of the study consisted of 25513 women and 25302 men. Social factors including education, occupation and income showed that lower income resulted in lower physical exercise at leisure time. Women at lower job positions took lower physical exercise while no such relation was found in male subjects [34].

Studies in Harvard University (2004) on a number of 1453 men ranging in age from 42 to 60 showed that average 2.2 hours of physical exercise per week reduced the risk of heart attack as much as 69%. Harvard Health Publications (2004) suggests that the calculation of leisure time should be the first stage. Health and happiness requires a balance between labor and leisure, duties and free time. When you are too busy to reserve time for physical exercise, consider revising your schedule. Then look over your health. Most people may do sports without dubious concerns; however, those with heart disease, diabetes or other conditions should seek their doctors' advice. You need to have a general assessment of your experiences with physical exercise. You had better make your schedule so that you can keep doing exercise with changing seasons and during travels [33]. Schlag (2009) studied a number of 98 students at Brigham Young University. The results showed that the rate of students' recreational activities did not affect their academic performance. The results also showed that men were more readily prepared to participate in such sports as basketball, mountain climbing, rock climbing, water skiing, surfing, tennis, cycling, volleyball, hockey and bodybuilding while women were more interested in golf, swimming, acrobatics and ice skiing. Thus, men and women seem to have different preferences for leisure time sports [32]. Huang and Carleton (2002) investigated the relationships among leisure participation, leisure satisfaction, and life satisfaction of college students in Taiwan. They studied a number of 470 students and reported that they found a positive relationship between leisure participation and leisure satisfaction with life satisfaction of college students. The results also showed that assisting students to manage their leisure time may help create a satisfactory academic environment for students [21]. Molina et al. (2009) studied the determinants of leisure-time physical activity and future intention to practice in Spanish college students (N=321 men and 318 women; Mean age=21.43). They reported that men had more physical activity and higher future intention to practice in their leisure time comparing with women [26]. Khongchiu (2009) investigated attitude, self-efficacy and motivation regarding leisure time physical participation in college students. He studied a number of 551 male and 801 female students and found a positive correlation among leisure time attitude, motivation, self-efficacy and participation in physical activities in undergraduate students [29]. Sofian et al. (2009) studied college students' attitude towards the utilization of the sport recreation center in both users and non-users. They reported that three main factors influence the users' utilization of facilities including health factors, good facilities and socialization. On the other hand, there were four factors to influence non-users' lack of utilization of facilities including difficulties, personal incompetence, insufficient access and disinterest [30].

Sidman et al. (2009) investigated exercise self- efficacy and perceived wellness among college students in a basic studies course. They reported that basic studies courses provide a rewarding opportunity for students to acquire knowledge, skills and benefits and help maintain health-related behavior throughout lifetime [19]. Lamont and Maks (2008) conducted a longitudinal study on physical activity in Saint Mary's College students, their families and friends. They showed that a large portion of population were still inactive [23]. Cuaderes et al. (2004) studied leisure time physical activity in adult Americans, both male and female, and reported that three variables including self-motivation, self-belief and difficulties were common among men and women [24]. Farmanbar et al. (2009) studied the prediction of training behavior in Iranian college students using transformation theory and structural equation

modeling. They studied a number of 418 Iranian college students as well as a larger number of students from 23 nations. They reported that student leisure physical activity was lower than recommended. They suggested that since the majority of college students are not sufficiently active, further research should address the factors that affect student decision for initiating activity [31]. Judy et al. (2005) investigated leisure exercise behaviors in Hong Kong university students and found that time, attitude towards training and structure may prevent leisure exercise; however, increasing the efficiency of leisure exercise, promoting motives for leisure time exercise and propagating sports culture in university may help increase student participation in leisure exercise [28]. Ebben and Brudzynski (2008) investigated motivations for and barriers to exercise among college students, reporting that the main general reasons for sports participation included promoting health and fitness, lowering stress, gaining pleasure and better feeling. 88.8% of inactive students wished they could do physical exercise. The conditions that may help direct them towards physical exercise included having more time, an exercise partner, lower demands, higher motivation and better equipment and space [36]. Hiseh et al. (2004) conducted a qualitative study on leisure time benefits for Taiwanese nursing students and reported a significant relationship between leisure attitudes and leisure behavior in the students. Their findings could be of great help to educational authorities, associations and government in terms of management and consultation [33]. Lombardi et al. (2003) investigated the sports imperative in America's research universities and reported that intercollegiate sports held a special position among American universities, which may help refresh campus environment. Judy et al. (2003) sought to answer the question whether or not a required physical education program change Leisure exercise behaviors in Hong Kong university students. They reported that the participants thought of three training inhibitions including time, attitudes toward sports and structure as the main factors preventing leisure physical activity [28]. Fountaine et al. (2011) studied physical activity and screen sedentary behaviors in college students and found that American students like many Americans did not take physical exercise. College students were found to spend their leisure time primarily watching TV, working at the computer and playing videogames. They also found that active students had significantly less screen sedentary behaviors [20]. Daskapan et al. (2006) investigated perceived barriers to college students' physical activity. They found that most students reported busy lessons, priority of academic success set by parents and lack of time due to family or social responsibilities as the major barriers to leisure physical exercise [18]. Hung (2009) conducted a study on the development of the leisure –related programs in Taiwan higher education. They reported that economic growth over the past 20 years has contributed to family income so that people could increase the quality of their life. Leisure activities were emphasized to improve the quality of life. Since 1992, over 30 programs have been launched in universities to promote the quality of leisure time [38]. A study was conducted in 2009 on social activities, leisure behavior and working for a living along with academic education among Icelander college students. It compared different types of unorganized leisure activities in 2000, 2004 and 2007 among college students. The results showed an increase in leisure activities from 2000 to 2007 in both male and female students whose major activities included watching movies, going to coffee shops and weekly partying. The research published by US department of labor shows that from 2005 to 2009, American college students spend 3.6 hours on average in 24 hours doing physical exercise. A report published in Journal of Educational Opportunities in 2011 shows that 18-24 year old full-time college students, studying in universities from 2003 to 2009, spent about 4.2 hours out of 24 hours doing physical exercise and leisure activities. The present study aims to investigate leisure activities in the students at Islamic Azad universities and examine answers to the following questions:

1. What is male students' free time like?
2. Where do the male students spend their leisure time?
3. What do they do in their leisure time?
4. Does leisure time utilization promote students' physical and mental health?
5. What are male student' motivations for doing leisure exercise?
6. What are the reasons for not doing sports at leisure time?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of the present study is descriptive with a survey design. The population of the study consisted of all undergraduate students at Islamic Azad universities in 14 educational districts, which involved a number of 251 university branches across the country in the 2010-2011 educational year. Morgan table was used to determine the sample size. The sample consisted of 1125 subjects. The participants were selected using cluster random sampling whereby three university branches were randomly selected from every district, which totaled 42 university branches. From the select branches, the students who had taken basic physical education courses 1 & 2 in the first semester 2010-2011 educational year were chosen as the participants. A student-based questionnaire was used to collect the

data. The questionnaire was developed and used by Tond Nevis (1996) to investigate leisure activities in state university students. Safa Nia (2000) reported the reliability of the questionnaire to be α=0.95 using Cronbach alpha formula. The reliability of the scale was calculated to be α=0.85 in the present study. The content validity of the questionnaire was also investigated in the present study.

## RESULTS

The mean and standard deviation of male students' leisure time per day during the semester and summer were found to be 3.77±2.539 and 6.84±5.01, respectively (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Male students' leisure time per day during the semester and summer**

| Variable | N | M±SD |
|---|---|---|
| **Leisure time during the semester** | 848 | 3.77±2.539 |
| **Summer leisure time** | 1124 | 6.84±5.01 |

The students reported to spend the majority of their leisure time at home or dorm primarily as well as campus sports centers, off-campus sports places, campus recreational centers, in the street, at cultural-art centers, parks, coffee shops, restaurants and coffee nets, respectively.

**Table 2. Mean and standard deviation of the time male students spent in different places**
*(in minutes)*

| Variable | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| **Home or dorm** | 417.18 | 262.43 |
| **Campus sports centers** | 144.72 | 111.24 |
| **Campus recreational centers** | 117.87 | 86.67 |
| **Streets** | 107.56 | 76.11 |
| **Parks** | 69.810 | 57.01 |
| **Cultural-art centers** | 94.75 | 67.92 |
| **Off-campus sports places** | 137.25 | 84.94 |
| **Coffee nets** | 49.63 | 28.31 |
| **Coffee shops and restaurants** | 66.57 | 30.34 |

Male students were found to often spend their leisure time watching TV, Watching favorite programs on DVD/VCD and leisurely working at the computer such as chatting and Internet. They spent little time doing religious services such as reciting Quran and research works. The results of Friedman test showed a significant difference in the amount of time male students spent doing different activities ($X^2$=38.45, P<0.010).

**Table 3. Mean and standard deviation of the time male students spent doing different leisure activities per day (in minutes)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Reading | 29.14±19.23 |
| Watching TV | 68.11±39.24 |
| Watching Satellite broadcasts | 60±28 |
| Watching favorite programs on DVD/VCD | 69.71±45.36 |
| Listening to the radio | 28±18.81 |
| Research work | 10.81±13 |
| Leisurely work at the computer (chat, Internet, etc) | 68±30.02 |
| Using cell phone utilities (SMS, Bluetooth, etc) | 35.25±27.67 |
| Artistic activities (calligraphy, painting, etc) | 15±9.87 |
| Going to parks | 15.25±11.67 |
| Walking in the street | 42.94±25.65 |
| Going to shopping centers | 45±28.09 |
| Socializing with friends and relatives (partying) | 27.06±19.66 |
| Going to sports places | 58.29±37.85 |
| Going to cinema and theatre | 22±8.9 |
| Practicing music | 50±27.80 |
| Taking extracurricular lessons (language, computer, etc) | 35.08±15.81 |
| Doing religious services such as reciting Quran | 7.50±4.89 |
| Doing crossword puzzles | 25±21.70 |
| Playing videogames | 28.08±19.09 |

The results showed that 59.80% of the male students considered leisure time as significantly affecting physical and mental health. They reported that leisure time significantly affected their physical and mental health ($X^2$=27.6, P<0.001).

**Table 4. Frequency distribution of the effect of leisure time on students' physical and mental health**

| No effect | Small | Moderate | Strong | No idea |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.60% | 15.60% | 16.30% | 59.80% | 3.70% |

As shown in Table 5, the students' major motives for leisure exercise included medical advice, habit, entertainment and filling free time while physical and mental health were not strong incentives for sports participation. The results of Friedman test showed a significant difference among male students' incentives for sports participation ($X^2$=134.4, P<0.001).

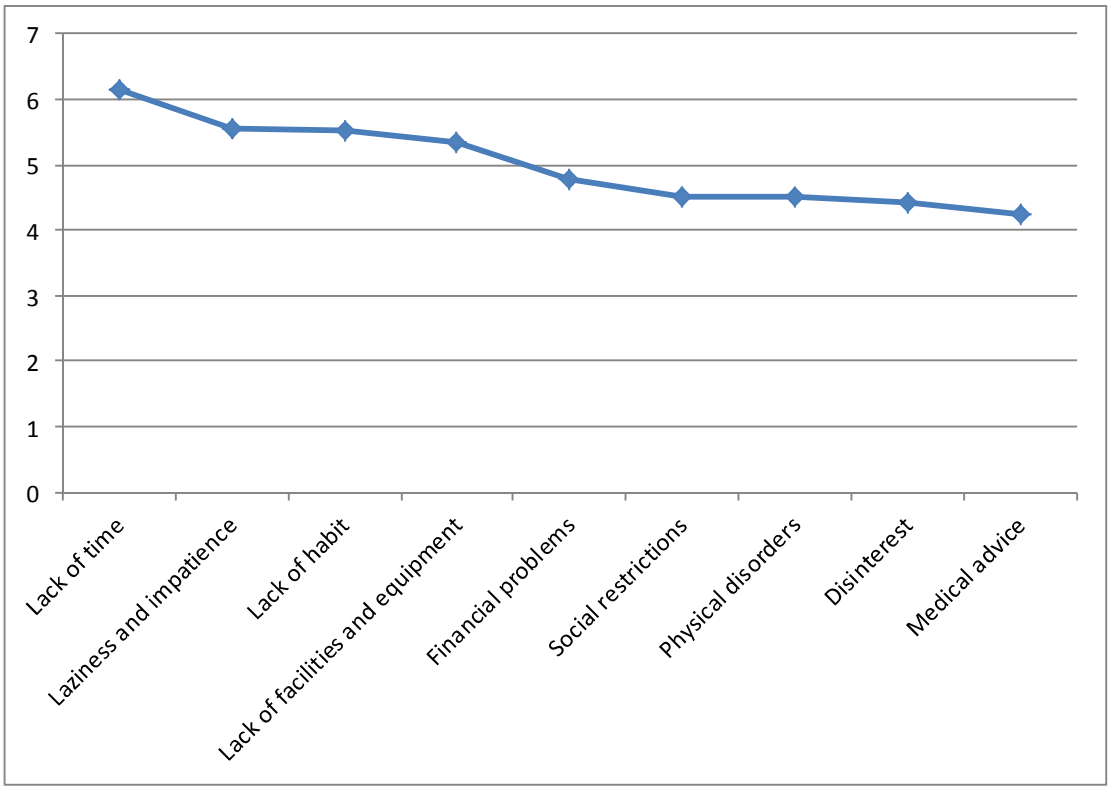


**Figure 1. Frequency distribution of reasons for lack of sports participation**

**Table 5. Mean and standard deviation of students' incentives for sports participation**

| Variables | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Physical health | 1.36 | 0.59 |
| Mental health | 1.60 | 0.81 |
| Socializing with friends | 2.14 | 1.08 |
| Entertainment | 2.44 | 1.11 |
| Medical advice | 3.23 | 1.35 |
| Enjoyment and freshness | 1.74 | 0.82 |
| Physical fitness and weight control | 1.85 | 1.13 |
| Keeping up strength | 1.66 | 0.83 |
| Habit formation | 2.49 | 1.29 |

The results of Friedman test showed a significant difference in students' reasons for lack of sports participation ($X^2$=53.7, P<0.001). The major reasons why the students did not do sports included lack of time, laziness and impatience, and lack of habit, respectively.

**Table 6. Frequency distribution of reasons for lack of sports participation**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Laziness and impatience** | 5.54 |
| **Lack of habit** | 5.52 |
| **Disinterest** | 4.43 |
| **Lack of time** | 6.15 |
| **Lack of facilities and equipment** | 5.34 |
| **Physical disorders** | 4.50 |
| **Medical advice** | 4.23 |
| **Social restrictions** | 4.52 |
| **Financial problems** | 4.77 |

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results showed that male students had 2.7 hours leisure time per day on average. They had 6-12 hours average leisure time per day in summer. The present findings correspond to the findings of Safania (2000), Tond Nevis (1996), Zareie (2001), statistics published by US department of labor for weekly leisure activities among American full time college students (2005 - 2009), Safi (1974), Iran's Medical College and Research Center for Health Sciences (1987), Jamhari (1991), Vajihe Sadat (1992), Mahdi Pur (1993), Saneie (1994), Mohammadi (1995) and Bafghi (1997). Overall, research has shown that college students have plenty of free time, which varies among working days, holidays and summer. The students have 3-5 hours free time in working days and about 8 hours in holidays on average per day. Since students spend the greater part of their time in the campus, they need to be helped with planning their leisure time so that all students including married, single and employed ones may better utilize their leisure time particularly in summer. Based on the available facilities, the first four leisure activities among students included watching favorite programs on DVD/VCD, watching satellite broadcasts, watching TV and working at the computer (chat, Internet, etc). Safa Nia (2000) reported the first four leisure activities among students to be working at the computer, doing sports, listening to music and reading. Tond Nevis (1996) found that Iranian students' priorities for leisure activities included doing sports, reading, working at the computer, watching TV and listening to music. Verleyen (1991) reported that the major leisure activities among Chinese and American male students in the Michigan University included going to cinema and watching TV. The students reported to do such activities mostly due to their low cost and interesting nature. Verleyen compared students' leisure activities in 2000, 2004 and 2007 and concluded that both male and female students spent the majority of their leisure time watching TV, going to coffee shops and partying weekly. One may conclude that most students spent their leisure time doing sports, watching TV and videos, and working at the computer. Thus, it seems necessary to develop schedules for leisure time and activities. Students referred to medical advice as the first most important reason for doing sports in their leisure time, which may indicate the special position of physicians and their advices among students. Tond Nevis (1996) and Safa Nia (2000) reported the major motives of students for doing sports to include pleasure and happiness, maintaining health, a sense of strength and fitness. Ebben and Brudzynski (2008) referred to the main general reasons for doing sports as maintaining health and fitness, reducing stress, gaining pleasure and better feeling. Since sports exert favorable effects on different aspects of human life, the students may be encouraged to do sports when informed of these effects. The students' main reasons for lack of sports participation included lack of time, lack of exercise habit, lack of facilities and equipment, laziness and impatience, social restrictions and financial problems. This is consistent with the findings of Safa Nia (2000), Tond Nevis (1996), Mahdi Pur (1993), Saneie (1994), Farajollahi (1994), Yazdani Farooghi (1994), Atighe Chi (1995), Mohammadi (1995) and Sabagh Langroodi (1998). Daskapan et al. (2006) reported the major perceived barriers to sports participation to be busy lessons, priority of academic success set by parents and lack of time due to social and family responsibilities. The present findings suggest that leisure time may be appropriately filled through principled planning, designing annual calendars, developing facilities and equipment, allocating adequate budgets, manpower, sports places, and encouraging people and students towards sports participation.

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