



## The role of sports and physical education in filling University students' leisure time

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### ABSTRACT

The present research considers the sport role in filling student's leisure time at Razi (Kermanshah), Bou Ali (Hamadan) and Kurdistan state Universities. The research was in descriptive from and carried out as field study. The statistical population in the research was the students of the 3 universities in academic year (2010-11). The statistical sample was 370 male students at these universities. The researcher-conducted questionnaire used to get the required data. It should be noted that the validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by the related professors and its reliability was, also, confirmed using Cronbach alpha test Coefficient ( $\alpha=0.92$ ). The results show that 21.49% take exercise in their leisure time which ranked second 26.61% after reading in the leisure time. 40.66% of the individuals would take exercise for the sake of their physical and psychological health. The findings, also, show that the individuals wouldn't take part at the universities physical education programs due to lake of sport facilities, the authority's inconsideration toward sport and lake of respective work force at the universities.

**Key words:** sport and physical education, leisure time, students

### INTRODUCTION

Leisure time is the brainchild of technology and culture. Nowadays sociologists give a great attention to leisure time activities. Other than its cultural aspects, leisure time can increase the efficiency of workforce. There is a close relationship between work and leisure; thus it goes beyond a mere social issue and enters economic affairs. The developing world takes long steps by taking measures and policy making in the area of leisure time and suggests the slogan of "leisure civilization" by increasing leisure time and decreasing working hours. Leisure time is defined as the time free from work and the time a person is free to take any activity according to their will and without any obligation [1]. Annie et al. (2008) concluded in their research that there is a relationship between the levels of participation of individuals in athletic activities and their understanding of their degree of freedom during leisure time [2]. In our current society sports is regarded as a human strengthening activity and is developing and extending among all social classes especially university students. Sociologies believe that in this condition that life is mechanized and leisure time is extended, sports can be regarded as an appropriate means for providing recreational activities and refreshing individuals and preserving their mental and physical welfare. The goal of planning programs and taking part in athletic activities in universities and higher education institutions is the optimization of a part of university students' leisure time for the growth and development of their ethical, mental and physical aspects along with the acquisition of other sciences and techniques. Physical education and sports have a special place in the young people's leisure time and considering the role of young university students in the social, cultural and economic structure of the society and the fact that they will participate in social activities in the future, it is essential that they enjoy full physical and mental health. This important issue is merely possible through the development and provision of evaluated programs in university students' leisure time. In the obstreperous world of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,

state officials have realized the great dangers threatening the society especially from the youth in the absence of systematic measures for the improvement of leisure time. Education scholars warn that if enough attention is not paid to how leisure time is spent, irreversible abnormalities appear in the behaviors and actions and consequently personalities of individuals. These can result in distortions and social deviance. Leisure time is an effective means for the development of mental, physical and moral stamina of individuals and is considered as a factor in the prevention of social distortions provided that enough attention is paid to it from families and governments. Otherwise with the exploitation of leisure time and conscious or subconscious adverse policies from the family and authorities can result in social damages [3]. Many researchers have indicated the benefits of exercising in leisure time. Mariani et al. (2009) stated that there is an inverse relationship between physical activities in leisure time and the level of depression in individuals in a way that the level of depression is decreased with increase in physical activity [4]. A research conducted in Canada indicated that participating in athletic activities can increase women's self confidence. Also female athlete students turn to drugs 92% less than non-athletic students and graduate three times more than them [5]. Karim and Alfred (2008) concluded in their research that there is a significant relationship between physical activities in leisure time and health indicators [6]. Las (1987) believe that public and recreational sports improve the quality of life of university students [7]. Lampkin (1991) after doing a research on university students declared that the participation of university students in recreational and public activities helps them achieve the required balance between physical, mental and social potentials [8]. Smith (1991) after his research declared that public exercise helps improve students' level of learning in their academic work [9]. The researches about leisure time suggest that there are several factors affecting participation in athletic activities in leisure time. The studies carried out in Canada indicate that athletic activities in leisure time are affected by age, gender, education and the income of individuals [10]. Chia Chen (2007) in a research conducted on school and university students in Hong Kong indicated that participation in physical and athletic activities is affected by the interaction between motivational, situational and intrapersonal factors [11]. Lamb and Morris (2004) after studying 20 female and 20 male students in University of Liverpool in UK stated that there is a significant relationship between athletic activities in leisure time and the students' feeling of being physically fit. Also Toni (2006) believes that male university students, younger university students and the students living in dormitory participate in extracurricular activities (especially athletic activities) more than others [13]. Lachezar (2007) believes that personal and interpersonal factors are the most important factors affecting participation in leisure time activities [14]. Dike Roeger (1992) in an article entitled "what has happened to universities' extracurricular programs?" suggested that extracurricular programs in student dormitories and universities be altered and developed according to the interests and needs of university students [15]. According to the above cases and the role and importance of sports in spending leisure time, the goal of this research is to study the place of sports and physical education in leisure time expenditure of Kurdistan, Hamedan and Kermanshah university students and analysis the factors affecting them.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a descriptive survey-based field study. The statistical population of this research includes all male Kurdistan, Hamedan and Kermanshah University and higher education students in the class year of 2010-11. The statistical sample of this research includes 370 male students from aforementioned universities who were selected with consideration of sampling conditions using Morgan Table. The number of samples from each university depended on the size of the university. The percentages of distribution ratio are presented in table 1. It is worth mentioning that due to the distortion of a number of questionnaires, 300 of them were analyzed. A questionnaire prepared by the researcher was used to collect the data and its validity was confirmed by related teachers and professionals. Its stability was also confirmed using Cronbach's alpha test with the ratio of 0.92.

**Table 1. The percentages of distribution ratio**

University	Boy student	N	Total Percent
Kurdistan	3600	81	26.76%
Hamedan	4500	99	33.45%
Kermanshah	5350	120	39.77%
Total	13450	300	100%

**Table 2. Average of Research populations' leisure times**

Options Frequency	1	2	3	4	5	6	total
	Less than 1 hour	1-2 hour	3-5 hour	More than 5 hour	Non any one	Non answer	total
Sample	15	94	132	40	11	8	300
Relative	5	31.33	44	13.33	3.66	2.66	99.98%

Table 3. Leisure time of the Students

Options Frequency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	total
	Exercise	Artistic work	Meet to friend	Reading	TV	Rest	Other thing	Non answer	
Sample	210	85	122	260	98	174	25	3	977
Relative	21.49	8.7	12.48	26.61	10.03	17.80	2.55	0.03	99.96

Table 4. Willingness of students to participate in sports activities in leisure time

Options Frequency	1	2	3	4	5	6	total
	Very many	Many	Average	Low	Very low	Non answer	
Sample	64	96	95	28	15	2	300
Relative	21.33	32	31.66	9.33	5	0.66	99.98

Table 5. Targets of students to engage in sports activities during the leisure time

Options Frequency	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
	Refreshment of Spiritual and Mental Fatigue	Refection	Reinforcement Physical and mental powers	Just spend leisure time	Promotions and championship success	Other things	
Sample	90	53	122	24	8	3	300
Relative	30	17.66	40.66	8	2.66	1	99.98

Table 6. The reasons for the failure of the exercise planning in university

Options Frequency	1	2	3	4	total
	time sports programs	Non-professional programmers	Lack of appropriate facilities	Other things	
Sample	54	79	137	30	300
Relative	18	26.33	45.66	10	99.99

Table 7. The problems of students in sports activities during leisure time

Options Frequency	1	2	3	4	5	Total
	The ratio of students to resources available	Little attention to the matter of physical training	Budget Problems	Others	Non answer	
Sample	78	130	96	37	14	355
Relative	21.97	36.61	27.04	10.42	3.94	99.98

Table 8. Causes of failure in sports and physical education at the university level

Options Frequency	1	2	3	4	5	Total
	Lack of equipment and facilities	Lack of qualified instructors	Not having enough time	Other things	Non answer	
Sample	142	44	102	35	21	344
Relative	41.27	12.79	29.65	10.17	6.10	99.98

Table 9. Frequency distributions of interest in any of the various activities

Levels	Very many		Many		Average		Low		Non		Total	
	F	%F	F	%F	F	%F	F	%F	F	%F	F	%F
various activities												
Sport	72	24	90	30	85	28.33	42	14	11	3.66	300	99.99
Science meeting	65	21.66	86	28.66	77	25.66	42	14	30	10	300	99.98
Study	52.	17.33	74	24.66	123	41	36	12	15	5	300	99.99
visiting friends and relatives	31	10.33	75	25	134	44.66	52	17.33	8	2.66	300	99.98
Spiking with friends	31	10.33	75	25	134	44.66	52	17.33	8	2.66	300	99.98
Attending in religious ceremonies	12	4	26	8.66	102	34	82	27.33	78	26	300	99.99
Writing	10	3.33	25	8.33	51	17	74	24.66	140	46.66	300	99.98
Artistic activity	45	15	23	7.66	54	18	74	24.66	104	34.66	300	99.98
Go to cinema	20	6.66	48	16	96	32	82	27.33	54	18	300	99.99
To engage in religious worship	22	7.33	80	26.66	104	34.66	52	17.33	42	14	300	99.98
Listen to music	62	20.66	81	27	88	29.33	46	15.33	23	7.66	300	99.98
Visiting of Antiquities and Museums	35	11.66	45	15	70	23.33	78	26	72	24	300	99.99
Participation in social activities	22	7.33	60	20	104	34.66	69	23	45	15	300	99.99
Education Classes	16	5.33	35	11.66	70	23.33	88	29.33	91	30.33	300	99.98
TV	13	4.33	74	24.66	105	35	82	27.33	26	8.66	300	99.98
walking in the streets and parks	30	10	58	19.33	97	32.33	81	27	34	11.33	300	99.99
Video	20	6.66	26	8.66	64	21.33	82	27.33	108	36	300	99.98
Listen to radio	14	4.66	55	18.33	93	21	88	29.33	50	16.66	300	99.98
Resting	32	10.66	70	23.33	126	42	48	16	24	8	300	99.99
Smoking	5	1.66	12	4	18	6	25	8.33	240	80	300	99.99
Go to the stadium	22	7.33	27	9	35	11.66	64	21.33	152	50.66	300	99.98

## RESULTS

The findings showed that 44% of the research populations have 3 to 5 hours, 31.33% have 1 to 2 hours, 13.33% have more than 5 hours and 5% have less than 1 hours of leisure time per day (table 2). Participating in sports activities (21.4%) was the second most popular leisure activity after studying (26.61%) (Table 3). Also about 85% of the students stated that they have average and upper-average tendency to participate in athletic activities and only 15% had lower-average tendency to participate in athletic activities (table 4). In terms of goal 40.66% of the participants said that they participate in athletic activities for strengthening their physical and mental stamina, 30% for mental and physical refreshment, 17.66 for strengthening, 17.66 for revitalization and 8% for solely spending leisure time (table 5). Among the most important reasons for exercise planning failure in universities from the point of view of students' inappropriate time of sports programs, non-professional programmers and lack of appropriate facilities can be named and the most important factor is sports programming failure in universities with 54.66% (table 6). In terms of the problems in doing athletic activities during leisure time 41.27% considered lack of equipments and facilities and 29.65% not having enough time their problem for doing athletic activities during leisure time (table 7). Also 36.61%, 27.04% and 21.97% of the university students considered little attention of the authorities to the matter of physical training, budget problems and compression ratio of students to existing facilities respectively the reason for the failure of sports and physical education in universities (table 8). In the peripheral findings of the research, it was specified that the majority of research community rated about 80% of their university's athletic programs poor in quality. Frequency distributions of the level of interest in different activities in the research community are entirely shown in table 9.

## CONCLUSION

The present research investigates the place of physical education in leisure time expenditure of male students of Hamedan, Kermanshah and Kurdistan and analyzes the factors affecting it. Despite the interest of a large percentage of research population in sports and physical education (about 85% of the research population had average and upper-average interest to participate in athletic activities), they have no appropriate place in the aforementioned universities. The major reasons for the students not participating in athletic activities in leisure time include the poor quality of the athletic programs of universities in leisure time with more than 80% of the participants, inadequacy of sports facilities of universities in leisure time expenditure (based on the findings 30% of the population were satisfied about the facilities while 70% of them stated that sports facilities are insufficient), little attention of the authorities to physical education and sports in universities with 36.61% of the research population, financial difficulties of university in sports section with 27.04%, compression ratio of students to facilities with 21.97% of students and finally lack of skilled personnel in sports and physical education with 12.79% of participants. The results of the above research are consistent with those of Seyed Zadeh (2008) which stated poor extracurricular sports programs in dormitories and lack of sports facilities as the reasons for the lack of student participation in athletic programs [16]. The results of this research about the maximum daily leisure time (3 to 5 hours) is consistent with those of Zarei (2003) who stated that the average leisure time of Azad University students is 275 minutes, that of Medical Sciences students is 246 minutes and that of State University students is 240 minutes [17]. The above research is inconsistent with that of Ehsani (2003) about the reasons for the lack of participation in athletic activities [18]. It is also consistent with the research by Azarnia (2005) which stated the reasons for the lack of participation in athletic activities, the lack of sports facilities and the little attention of authorities to sports [19]. The present research is consistent with that of King (2000) [20] which considers the lack of appropriate exercise environments for girls as one of the most important factors preventing women and girls from participating in athletic activities in their leisure time. The results are also consistent with those of Line et al. (2004) which states that the main obstacle to participating in athletic activities is unavailability of facilities to encourage participation in physical activity [21].

As it was pointed out, several researches have been conducted about the advantages and benefits of exercising on the human being among which the research by Christine et al. (2009) can be mentioned which states that exercising increases self confidence and reduces smoking [22]. Marcus and Eve (2008) concluded in their article that there is a significant relationship between physical activity during leisure time and stress and psychoanalysis [23]. Lampkin (1991) believes in his research that the participation of university students in recreational and public activities helps them achieve the required balance between physical, mental and social potentials [8]. Smith (1991) believes that public exercise helps improve students' level of learning in their academic work [9]. Catherine et al. (2007) believe that exercising and physical activities are a means for stress and anxiety reduction [24]. With respect to the aforementioned cases and the importance and role of athletic activities in leisure time expenditure and their advantages in providing physical and mental health of human, it is more than ever important to pay attention to this important issue and university authorities should provide the needed facilities for exercising and implement a proper program in this area so that students will exercise which is undoubtedly one of the best ways of leisure time expenditure.

It should be noted that lack of attention to sports and physical activity in leisure time would cause the students to turn to passive methods for leisure time expenditure. These conditions put their mental and physical health in danger. In this regard, in their research entitled *Watching Television during Leisure Time and Its Relationship with Coronary Heart Disease* on 413 male and 215 female participants, Jennie et al. concluded that the people who watch television during their leisure time are more likely to develop coronary heart disease [25].

According to the findings of the present research we can say that the reason for recession and lack of progress of sports in universities and also Students' unwillingness to participate in athletic activities during leisure time is due to adverse management of sports planning in universities and also the lack of attention of authorities to physical education in universities and also shortage and insufficiency in funding for the development, planning and also providing sports facilities and equipment in universities. If appropriate action is taken in this regard, we can witness the prosperity of student sports which is a factor preventing social deviance, crime and corruption. In order to eliminate the inefficiencies and problems and the provision of proper conditions for the active participation of students in sports activities and physical education during their leisure time and also optimization of the existing facilities and plans, it is recommended that efficient and specialized individuals be used for physical education to improve sports programs of universities. Moreover, the planning should be based on a timetable in accordance with the leisure time of the students so that the majority of the students would be able to participate in athletic activities and use sports facilities. Also the shortcomings caused by the lack of facilities should be resolved and all exercise equipments needed by the students should be provided and the limitations of programming should be removed with the participation of students. Also university authorities should take the required action to extend, expand and create contexts for the growth and flourishing of the talents of active generations in the area of sports in universities.

This research was planned as an approach for paying more attention to the role of physical education and sports in universities, and the results of this research and previous findings approve the role of physical education and sports in making a part of leisure time in societies more healthy and optimized.

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