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## To Assess the Relationship of Students Use of Campus Recreation Centers on Social Belonging and Retention

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### ABSTRACT

*Interaction with each other is considered an important factor for recreational activities which it is observed in intramural competitions. Intramural sport programs provide proper conditions for students to interact with others. These interactions can guide students toward conditions and belongings in line with university and also increase loyalty sense among students. The purpose of this study was to assess the relation of student recreation center use on feelings of social belongings and retention at 8<sup>th</sup> district of Islamic Azad University. 638 female and male students of district 8 of Islamic Azad University with age average  $22 \pm 1$  year completed the researcher questionnaire with 85% reliability. Descriptive and inferential or Pearson correlation statistics have been used to analyze research findings. Findings showed that students who use student recreation centers enhances their sense of belonging to the university however male students prefer high interaction with peers. The correlation results indicate that the number of times a student works out at the student recreation center influences the way in which they interact with new people, relates to his or her perceived self-confidence and leadership abilities, and improved their perceived ability to manage time. The students that utilize the student recreation center more frequently are more likely to participate in both competitive and recreational activities. Students feel more social belonging to peers through involvement in activities offered at the student recreation center. Suggestions for future research are made in the context of limitations of the study.*

**Keywords:** Student Recreation Centers, Social Belonging, retention

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### INTRODUCTION

A number of wide studies have been carried out in last four decades to examine the effect of student recreation centers on students. It is for a number of years that sports and recreation specialists are discussing about the positive effect of participating in recreational – sport activities on social development and continuing education among students. Wade (1991) said that an important part of the student's retention process is the student's belonging feeling. Britni C. Henderson (2010) revealed that students who utilize the student recreation center more frequently are more likely to experience perceived improvement in personal characteristics, social belonging to the recreation center and the university, integration into the university and hence retention at the university.

The opportunity to socialize with other ones can be considered as a vivid and inherent characteristic in recreational activities which is more obvious in intramural activities. These intramural programs prepare suitable and important conditions for students to socialize. These relationships can lead to significant improvement of social skills and belonging sense and coordination with university, it can even rise the rate of retention among the students who participate in these activities continuously [3]. Since these recreational- sport programs cause an improvement in development and retention among students, understanding the importance of sport activities will be of benefit for decision makers and programmers in the university. In addition, researchers should also examine and understand the importance of sport- recreational activities and co-operative relation between using recreational centers and developing university goals, so that they can deliver better services to the students. On the other hand, if sports and recreation specialists carry out these kinds of studies, they will understand the importance of their role, so they will plan their programs more effectively [1]

The hypotheses about the effect of student recreation centers on social belonging and retention is based on three social hypotheses considered as experimental prerequisites. First, involvement theory, as a theoretical base for this study insists on the great effect of surrounding environment on maturity and nurture of the student [2]. Haines & Fortmann (2008) suggest that participating in sport recreation centers can help students improve leadership skills, belonging sense and gaining experience among different groups.

According to different studies the existence of sport recreation centers is mandatory in the university environment. Not only these centers produce powerful resources to attract and continue studying at university, but also produce conveniences for students, they can make new friends and socialize with other students. Intramural sport activities are an important part of the student experiences and different studies have shown that participating in sport activities leads to reduced stress, improved self- confidence, academic achievement, and facilitate social relationships.

Although there have been a number of studies which examine the effect of participation in sport clubs on social-emotional development and the quality of learning, but the total number of similar studies in sport- recreational environment is limited [11] An important issue is that we should know which part of recreational activities have a stronger link with student daily life and what are the benefits gained by participating in recreational activities for students. Researchers have shown that there is a relationship between the use of student recreational centers and student development [7], social benefits gained by sport programs in leisure time and improved rate of higher levels of academic studies among students who use recreation centers in the university environment.

Student recreation center can be considered as an employment means for many students and the facilities which are provided for them impacts on continuing study in higher academic levels. It is shown that participation and continuing study in higher levels are directly linked to each other and it can be measured through the facilitated relationship between student and teachers, which usually increases through the participation of both of them in recreation center. In addition, it will be worthwhile if we examine the attitudes of the students who are going to leave the university to test the effect of recreational centers.

Despite these findings, there has been no study which has combined several items with each other to gain more generalized results except this one. As a result a study should be carried which has a broad insight to recreational programming of leisure time and examines its effect on social belonging and continuing study among students. Not only this study wants to fill in this gap, but also aims to give some general information about universities, and some special ones about the sport recreation centers which will lead to remaining and increasing these programs.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Participants**

The statistical community of this research includes all students who use university recreational centers and they studied in Islamic Azad university branches of district 8 in educational year 2011-2012. Among the 638 students were selected by Cochran formula samples and authentic standards ( $M=22$  year), The sampling formula Cochran Notably, the optimal level in this study as in other studies, 95 percent are considered equal, and in which case the value of  $T$  equals  $1/96$ .

### **Sampling:**

One method of identifying a group of people, gathering information from all its members. This method is expensive

for large groups and it is impossible due to time limitation. For this reason in this research the list of recreational and educational centers was provided and finally using random sampling some questionnaires was distributed.

### Measuring instruments:

To assess variables and for purposes of the study, the researcher made questionnaire was used. The questionnaire, given the nature of the research is twofold. The first part of the question relating to the individual subjects and the second part is a special measure sense of community and sustainability. The researchers investigated the relationship between variables can be examined through a questionnaire and data was collected.

The questionnaire contains 30 questions based on a Likert rating scale of five values have been established. In this study to determine the internal reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used. In order to determine the internal reliability of the questionnaire, the population of 30 individuals was chosen randomly between their distribution and collection. It is explained that these people were not part of the sample. The internal reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 85%.

### Statistical methods:

For the analysis of variables, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation of the mean frequency) and test the hypothesis of Pearson parametric test at  $05/0 \geq p$  is used.

### Findings:

Total 624 students filled out the questionnaires , of which 285 students (44.7%) male and 339 (55.3 %) were female. 70 (13.6 %) of 18 respondents, 33 (5.3 %) 19 years, 29 (4.6 %) 20 years, 63 students (10%) 21 years, 101 (16.1 %) 22 years, 93 (14.8 %) 23 years, 80 students (12.8 %) and 223 persons 24 years and older (22.8 %) of age. 86 (13/8 %) of the students in the first year, 136 students (21.8 %) in the second, 200 (32.1 %) in the third year, and 202 (32.4 %) in the fourth year at the were studied. Total 126 people in competitive sports and 330 people participated in recreational sports.

**TABLE 1- Mean and Standard Deviation Values for the Social Belonging and Retention**

		males		females	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	participation in recreational activities-University:				
1	Social Belonging to the Student Recreation Center	15.05	2.56	14.93	3.04
2	Personal Characteristics	14.99	2.61	13.90	3.25
3	Social Belonging to the University	14.25	2.80	13.33	3.46
4	Retention	13.40	3.19	12.93	3.24
5	University Integration	13.12	3.41	11.72	3.93

**TABLE 2—PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

Correlation to number of times each week respondent works out at the SRC (M = 2.38, SD =1.08), n=638

statement	Mean	SD	Pearson	Sig (1-tailed)
Involvement at the Student Recreation center has improved my ability to interact with new people.	3.74	.903	.200	0.001
My self-confidence has increased since I began taking part in activities offered by the Student Recreation center .	3.63	1.02	.119	0.001
I have been able to utilize my leadership abilities as a result of my participation in Student Recreation Center activities.	3.59	1.03	.127	0.001
Involvement in activities at the Student Recreation Center has helped me to better manage my time.	3.42	1.02	.154	0.001

As a response to the most number of students from recreational Centers week in sports related to once and about 57 percent and the lowest number of times six times or more and about 2 percent. Most participants only a series of sports activities as above the program in about 65.4 percent and the lowest in the participants who about 1 percent is four sport have chosen. Most participants in the program will participate in recreational activities, which are about 78 percent.

Respondents indicated that they benefited the most in the area of social belonging to the student recreation center (mean = 15.05 of the total 20, SD = 2.56) and the least in the area of university integration (mean = 14.25 of the total 20, SD = 2.80). In each case, males reported higher benefits (Table 1).

The correlation results indicate that the number of times a student works out at the student recreation center influences the way in which they interact with new people. The number of times a student works out at the student recreation center also relates to his or her perceived self-confidence and perceived leadership abilities. Finally, the number of times students work out at the student recreation center improves their perceived ability to manage time.

**TABLE 3—SOCIAL BELONGING TO THE STUDENT RECREATION CENTER**  
Correlation to number of times each week respondent works out at the SRC (M = 2.38, SD =1.08), n=638

statement	Mean	SD	Pearson	Sig (1-tailed)
When participating in intramural sports, I would prefer they be: competitive, recreational, or either.	3.88	1.11	0.073	0.034
I prefer to be involved in activities planned by the Student Recreation Center such as intramural programs.	3.97	1.15	.118	0.002
The Student Recreation Center provides a venue for interaction with others	3.80	.984	.057	0.076
I feel more committed to my peers due to our mutual involvement in activities offered at the Student Recreation center	3.34	1.05	.127	0.001

The correlation results indicate that the number of times a student works out at the student recreation center is related to their preference for competitive intramural leagues. The students that utilize the SRC more frequently are likely to participate in planned activities. The number of times a student works out at the SRC only helps increase their perceived commitment to peers.

**TABLE 4—SOCIAL BELONGING TO THE UNIVERSITY**  
Correlation to number of times each week respondent works out at the SRC (M = 2.38, SD =1.08), n=638

statement	Mean	SD	Pearson	Sig (1-tailed)
I usually go to the Student Recreation Center with one or more friends.	3.17	1.20	.137	0.001
The Student Recreation Center provides a sense of community to establish relationships with other students.	3.75	.998	.104	0.005
The social bonding that takes place during activities offered by the Student Recreation Center has been essential in creating my network of friends.	3.52	1.04	.098	0.007
Participation in activities offered at the Student Recreation Center has improved my sense of belonging to the university.	3.29	1.16	.084	0.018

The correlation results indicate that the number of times a student works out at the student recreation center shows they are more likely to go to the SRC with friends as well as feeling a sense of community related to SRC use that allows them to establish relationships with fellow students. The number of times a student works out at the SRC also allows for a social bonding that is often essential in creating a network or friends. Finally, the number of times students work out at the student recreation center enhances their perceived sense of belonging to the university.

**TABLE 5—RETENTION**  
Correlation to number of times each week respondent works out at the (M = 2.38, SD =1.08), n=638

statement	Mean	SD	Pearson	Sig (1-tailed)
Participation in activities offered at the Student Recreation Center has increased my satisfaction with my overall college experience.	3.35	1.14	.131	0.001
see professors from class working out at the Student Recreation Center regularly.	3.55	1.20	.022	0.001
My overall happiness has improved since I began taking part in activities offered by the Student Recreation Center.	3.61	1.05	.127	0.016
The primary reason for me not leaving this university is the activities offered at the Student Recreation Center.	2.61	1.22	.154	0.001

The correlation results indicate that the number of times a student works out at the student recreation center relates to a perceived increase in their overall satisfaction as well as an increase in overall happiness. The number of times a student works out at the SRC allows for the student to interact with professors in a non-academic environment. Finally, the number of times a student works out at the SRC contributes to their perceived likelihood of staying at the university.

**TABLE 6—UNIVERSITY INTEGRATION**  
**Correlation to number of times each week respondent works out at the SRC (M = 2.38, SD =1.08), n=638**

statement	Mean	SD	Pearson	Sig (1-tailed)
I feel more responsible to the University as a result of my participation in activities offered by the Student Recreation center.	3.12	1.13	.144	0.001
Activities at the Student Recreation Center are a major influence on my positive experience at university.	3.34	1.10	.107	0.004
The Student Recreation Center was an important factor for Me when choosing universities.	2.72	1.31	.220	0.001
feel I am better able to trust my peers due to our interaction and commitments as a result of my participation in Student Recreation Center activities.	3.15	1.13	.119	0.001

The correlation results indicate that the number of times a student works out at the student recreation center is associated with an increase in perceived responsibility to the university. The number of times a student works out at the SRC also allows for that experience to be a major influence in their positive college experience. The number of times a student works out at the SRC also increases the perceived importance of the SRC as an important factor when choosing universities. Finally, as a result of their participation in activities at the SRC, respondents experienced an increase in perceived ability to trust peers.

## DISCUSSION

This study was designed to examine the perceived benefits of student recreation center use focusing particularly on the following areas: personal characteristics, social belonging to the student recreation center, social belonging to the university, retention and university integration.

In this study it was found that by increasing the number of students trained in these centers get more confident. There are significant, and previous research has often been limited to a specific group of students, but the results of the present studies [2, 7, 13] found that as many students in recreational activities or sports participate as a way to increase social interaction by interaction with the students is to be consistent. Also research [8, 16], which showed that the recreational sports community is a place where students can communicate with their peers to provide, without regard to whether to participate or not and also, increasing conscious leadership ability, the students stay at recreational areas and other areas interested. Improving Time Management among students, as another important factor, this paved the way for a stay at the University and has been followed by improvements in education.

Other findings of the study indicated increased commitment to participating peers and participate in athletic activities scheduled classes and increase commitment to others. Investigation showed that the average constituent elements of social belonging at roughly the same rate, but the average attendance at scheduled relative to other factors a bit further.

Researchers showed that men and women motivation of participants in recreational activities, there are significant differences. The study results were not consistent [10, 14].

The results of the study show that students are more than twice a week the student center for the University to have a greater sense of community. Belch & Gable and Mass (2001) reported an increased sense of community of students. Artringers et al, (2006) showed a creation a sense of community to the university, the student may be enrolled in other University activities. This increases the sense of him. In this way, students can significantly improve their individual characteristics and their ability to communicate with others. Knowing that when students are studying in a university environment that continues to feel perfectly.

Due to social factors belonging to the university, investigating the descriptive results showed that all scores were above average variable belong to the university community. They further showed that the mean scores with friends who prefer leisure centers - to see the sport in the mean scores were higher in boys than girls. The results showed that the amount of Recreation - sport and social interests of the university, there is no correlation. For example, if a student accepts these centers as a place to interact, may also come with friends. The social bond that takes place in a recreation center that can grow conscious commitment to help students. The relations between the agents of the importance of recreational activities from the university showing that the best results [7, 15].

The other results showed that the amount of entertainment center- sports college life at the University, there is no correlation. However, both male and female students, the average score of all factors remain high. But the girls had a higher mean score than male students. It is also about the main reason for leaving college was also positive and significant.

Collins et al (2001) study was consistent with the study's researchers found that participation in leisure activities has a direct relationship with self-esteem of the participants. In other words, the more students take advantage of the recreational facilities, as well as gain greater self-esteem.

In addition, Frauman (2005) showed that the survival of the university can participate in extracurricular activities, including recreational programs and services for the proposed campus related to the availability of recreational sports is a significant factor in Site selection and the availability of recreational sports is an important factor in the choice of location was consistent with previous results [14]. Frauman (2005) found that students who use the recreation central most in terms of satisfaction and happiness than those who do not use the recreation center, are equal, the present study was consistent. In the same year that the satisfactions level of the university experience and the users of the center of recreational ones that student not use difference not found, that it also did not fit with present research [9]. Astin (1999) stated, communicate with professors, participate in recreational sports - sports and other activities, the student will be more joy and satisfaction.

The findings of this study corroborated the fact that all factors of academic integrity by students are high. Similarly, the mean scores for girls were higher than boys in all variables. However, prioritized students to participate in recreational activities - Sports University, the agent, the student have the fifth priority. So, the number of recreational exercise - exercise more responsibility than the University, University College of positive experiences, choose University and enhance the university's ability to trust in the relationship is positive and significant. The increase in the number of training centers, university students feel more responsible for their own gain. Hall, D. (2006) showed that college sports teams to non-sports teams' recreational activities that are more motivated to achieve higher levels of social trust and social aggression than non-athletes showed that the results this study was consistent. Chen, C.C. (2002)" Positive effect on social interaction of students participating in recreational sports have been confirmed by the present results are consistent with retention".

Wade, (1991) showed that the majority of students who participated in recreational activities and fitness to interact with other students and the sense of belonging were created. As a student gains a sense, they were of greater solidarity, which was consistent with the present study.

Contribution to the theory of Astin (1999) stresses that surround a student's progress and development makes him a strong impact. Ahead with research showing an association between recreational activity and growth in Austin's theory of personality students can reinforce and support [1].

## CONCLUSION

It has been shown that the use of the Student Recreation Center is one of the most important areas for students. This study showed that the students who used SRC had more sense of commitment to the university than the students who did not used, and hence retention at university. The findings provided useful information for university administrators and recreational sports professionals. Now the recreational professionals know that their duties and actions are very important because of impact of student recreation center use on social belonging. With regard to these, it should be pointed out that using the recreational sports center is one of the most important ways of understanding social belonging and integration with University. However, many programs and organizations across campus can provide similar benefit, but the students prefer to be involved in SRC as a way to find social identity. Although there are limitations to the study, the results provide further evidence that students report that the availability of recreational sports programs has an impact on both their decisions to attend and remain at an institution. This is a finding that can only serve to increase the practitioner's understanding of those who use such facilities and programs. More studies are needed to further examine the impact of campus recreational facilities and programs on African American students.



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