

## The Determinants of Leisure Attitudes: Mediating Effect of Self-Efficacy among Students from Science, Engineering and Medicine Colleges

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### ABSTRACT

This resent study investigated the relationships between leisure attitude, self-efficacy and achievement motivation among first year university students. Furthermore, this study examined the mediating role of self-efficacy on the relationship between leisure attitude and achievement motivation among university students. A total of 190 students were selected from Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University using cluster sampling method. The questionnaires consisted of the revised version of the self-efficacy scale, leisure attitude measure and achievement motivation measure. The results revealed that there were significant positive relationships between the study variables. Additionally, the result also showed that self-efficacy partially mediated the achievement motivation-leisure attitude relation. The implication is that students' abilities should be improved by promoting leisure activities which may motivate them to participate in the learning activities.

**Keywords:** University students, mediating effect, leisure attitude, learning, self-efficacy.

### INTRODUCTION

Leisure attitude has long been viewed as a major predictor to determine people's lives in light of meaning and direction (Choi & Yoo, 2017). Lee, Payne and Berdychevsky (2018) laid emphasis on the importance of leisure to the health and well-being of individuals throughout their lives. Although university transition a common occurrence in student life, it can be a challenging phase because of the increasing onset of behavioral, cognitive, personal and social changes (Jdaitawi, 2019; Wangeri, Kimani & Mutweleli, 2012; Fared, Jdaitawi & Sheta, 2018), when the interrelationships among family members, peers and self-autonomy come to fore (Wangeri et al., 2012). This involves residential changes, responsibility and autonomy increases, peers pressures, coursework maneuvering and tough schedules handling



(Joseph, Royse, Benitez & Pekmezi, 2014; Arnett, 2000). It is crucial for university students to create a balance among their personal, social and academic lives. In the universities, they are free to participate in leisure activities such as sport, social and cultural activities that are crucial to their life experiences, and give them a break from school duties as well (Freire & Teixeira, 2018). These participations may also contribute to their life happiness, lower their depressions and promote an active lifestyle as well as enhancing their health and social lives (Chin & Kayat, 2010; Mence, 2003; Davison & Lawson, 2006; Drakou et al., 2008), which all contribute to a successful academic life stage.

Leisure has also been deemed to be one of the most influential experiences in the lives of students. They are basically attributed to non-work activities based on enjoyment and interest of individual in his free time (Holder, Coleman & Sehn, 2009; Kim, Sung, Park & Dittmore, 2015). In literature, leisure defined as the freedom from obligations and barriers, leftover time from work or from mandatory social behaviors (Gokyurek, 2016).

In relation to leisure, attitudes have been generally considered as being affective, cognitive and behavioral. According to literature (Karakas, Turker & Turanh, 2008; Alwahaib, 2019), attitude is the positive/negative reaction or intention of an individual towards a specific objective, event or circumstance. Therefore, leisure attitude is the cognition, faith, positive or negative affection of an individual towards leisure and his/her preparedness in facing leisure time or period (Ragheb & Beard, 1982). Such attitude provides psychological health development, a sense of achievement when participating in recreational activities among students and harboring leisure attitude (Karunaanithy & Karunaanithy, 2014; Kelly & Freysinger, 2000). In the context of universities, leisure activities have shown an increase and it is extensively accepted as a crucial factor in the students' personal self-efficacy and social support (Ra, An & Rhee, 2013) that have powerful influence on the students' psychological and physical health (Kim et al., 2015; Tsai, Huang & Wu, 2014). Such recognition has resulted in great attention level directed from the health and psychological associations and academicians, frequently linking leisure with the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, on the basis of the premise that leisure attitude is related with leisure motivation, leisure involvement, leisure satisfaction and happiness (Chen, Li & Chen, 2013; Nawijin & Veenhoven, 2013).

Specifically, in Ma, Tan and Ma's (2012) study, the authors revealed that positive leisure attitudes are improved when a desired status (e.g., personal development) is under expectation. Contrastingly, when an individual believes that leisure is not a good choice to spend time in since it seems to produce inefficient outcomes, he/she is unlikely to participate in leisure activities. Regardless of the fact that leisure attitudes may be predictors of lifestyle, along with its results, to a certain extent, literature mentions limitations (e.g., Choi & Yoo, 2017; Chiu & Kayat, 2009). In prior literature on the topic including Kim, Sung, Park and Dittmore (2015), Muzindutsi and Masango (2015) and Gokyurek (2016), the relationship between leisure attitudes and variables were examined with some of them that making contextual changes (e.g., Muzindutsi & Viljoen, 2016; Chiu, 2009). Moreover, the relationship with achievement motivation and self-efficacy seemed to be mixed in literature since, the direct/indirect effect of any of the above factors with leisure attitude largely ignored, particularly in the context of universities (Liu & Cheng, 2017; Andrew & Katherine, 2017; Gannouni & Lalao, 2016). Various factors like achievement motivation and self-efficacy may provide a description for student point of view on leisure. Owing to the lack of studies that examined the factors impacting leisure attitudes, the present study is an attempt to determine the key motives of leisure attitudes among first year university students. In sum, this study primarily aims to empirically assess the effect of achievement motivation and self-efficacy on the leisure attitudes of first year university students and to examine whether the effect of achievement motivation is mediated by self-efficacy.

There is a distinction in terms of achievement motivation between an individual and other individual, because each individual may be motivated according to their own aspirations, desires and abilities. In this regard, Tsang et al. (2006) described achievement motivation as the desire or passion of an individual towards success, achievement, activity participation, wherein success bases on the ability of an individual and self-factors. Therefore, an individual, who is highly motivated, exerts efforts to support the goals of work generated in the organization, while his lowly motivated counterpart will only exert minimal effort towards work. More importantly, the leisure attitude-achievement motivation relationship was noted in Chiu and Kayat's (2009) study, and in other studies that found a positive relationship among the students from two different universities (e.g., Choi & Yoo, 2017) although there is still lack of studies at such caliber (Choi & Yoo, 2017; Chiu & Kayat, 2009). In the present study model, achievement motivation is assumed to have a significant relationship with leisure attitude.

Self-efficacy is one of the crucial concepts of self-learning theory and is defined as the ability used for the description of how to behave and possess skills to do something, that determines whether or not a behavior is conducted (Bandura, 1982). It is the degree of efforts exerted for tasks accomplishment (Bandura, 1977) and it has a key role in determining the way of individuals to overcome their challenges and changes that take place in either cognitive, emotional or physical aspects, and motivation towards solving a problem regardless if there is a positive or negative attempt.

According to Sahebihagh, Khorshidi, Atri, and Jafarabadi (2017), individuals with high levels of self-efficacy have the ability to deal with obstacles by improving their skills, resist difficulties, and control the surrounding affair. At the same time, understanding self-efficacy can lead to maintain health-promoting behaviors. Thus, self-efficacy is a structure that reflects on self-control of body, mind, and life (Moradi et al., 2010). According to studies dedicated to the topic, self-efficacy has a significant relationship with leisure attitude (e.g., Orsega-Smith et al., 2007). Meanwhile, Ajzen (1985) revealed that behavior's proximal predictor is the intention of the individual to perform a specific behavior in a certain context and period. Similarly, Bandura (1997) revealed that an individual with high self-efficacious has a high tendency to preserve and overcome challenges faced in task performance. The leisure attitude-self efficacy relationship reported in some studies (e.g., Lee, Payne & Bedychevsky, 2018). Moreover, other studies documented a positive self-efficacy and physical activity intentions among the young individuals (e.g., Hagger, Chatzisarantis & Biddle, 2001), but the relationship has not been extensively examined in the context of university students. Therefore, this study proposes a model that self-efficacy is significantly related to leisure attitude.

According to Gokyurek (2016), it is important to develop positive attitudes through self-motivation to achieve a given task. There are several factors that can have a positive relationship with leisure experiences, and motivation is one of the important ones. In fact, the fundamental stimuli of leisure is motivation (Iso-Ahola, 1999). Motivation may be defined as the forces causing timely and permanent individual behavior. It stems from the physical or psychological needs in the behavioral process of an individual. Motivation was defined by Robbins (2001) as the inclination towards exerting continuous efforts to achieve goals and to meet personal needs. In addition, Deci and Ryan (1985) developed and proposed the theory of self-determination, based on which, the attitude of an individual stems from internal or external motivation or lack thereof. In other words, individuals are motivated internally or externally in high or low levels, or remain unmotivated as a result of the certain activity which they quit. More specifically, internally motivated individuals are active and autonomous, they participate in the course and enjoy learning skills (Trilianos, 1993), while external motivation caused by marks, rewards or praises (Filippou et al., 2009). Thus, the

promoted premise is that intrinsic motivation is more important than extrinsic motivation. In this regard, Cho (2004) indicated that intrinsic motivation as opposed to extrinsic motivation dominates leisure behavior cases. and Wu (2008) laid stress on the indirect relationship between leisure motivation and leisure behavior of an individual. According to other authors (Hseih, 1998; Texeira & Freire, 2013), motivation of individuals to take part in leisure activities will be less as they have more negative leisure attitudes. Therefore, self-efficacy affects achievement, motivation and leisure attitude in the educational institutions' context.

Literature shows that achievement motivation influences the leisure attitude of students with low level of self-efficacy by predicting personal or social issues (e.g., isolation, lack of social support) compared to their counterparts with high level of self-efficacy. In relation to this, Tsang et al. (2006) referred to achievement motivation as the desire or passion of an individual to reach success and take part in activities wherein success largely bases on the ability of an individual and personal factors. In addition to above mentioned, a person who is highly motivated exerts extra effort to achieve goals in the organization, compared to one that is lowly motivated. Studies have been extensively carried out for the determination of the low achievement motivation among students and majority of them focused on cognitive and behavioral factors affecting achievement motivation (e.g., Liu & Cheng, 2018; Andrew & Katharine, 2017; Gannouni & Lalao, 2016). According to Bandura et al. (1996), several qualities including motivation, perseverance, resilience and analytical thinking indicate positive self-efficacy (p. 1206). Other studies indicate that self-efficacy affects different personality traits. In fact, in literature (e.g., Liu & Cheng, 2017; Andrew & Katharine, 2017; Gannouni & Lalao, 2016) self-efficacy has been extensively illustrated to be a predictor of achievement motivation, especially when it comes to academic and work-related achievement (e.g., Multon, Brown & Lent, 1991; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). This indicates that self-efficacy is related with positive factors and is a critical element of positive behavior (Cuevas, Wolff & Baglivio, 2017).

More importantly, self-efficacy refers to the ability to provide a description for the behavior that it should be and the possession of skills to get something done, and determines whether or not a behavior should be carried out (Bandura, 1982). It is the level to which efforts are exerted for tasks achievement (Bandura, 1977). Majority of studies in this caliber reported the influence of self-efficacy on the motivation, achievement, selection, interest, degree of effort and persistence of students in tackling obstacles (Schunk, 1995; Pajares, 1996). Self-efficacious individuals are inclined to face challenging tasks rather than managing clear of failure, and they focus on their efforts on achieving the goal against to potential setbacks, recovering quickly form following feelings of frustration (Khalkhali & Aryampour, 2013). Nevertheless, studies are still lack of coherent, comprehensive and developmental outcome and as such, this study attempts to examine the clear relationship between achievement motivation and leisure attitude among university students with, self-efficacy as the mediating variable.

The relationship between attitude and behavior was noted by Crandall and Slivken (1980) to be often weak, which can be attributed to the influence of other factors that leads to individual's non-action on every attitude. Also, in Wu's (2008) study, the author reported the indirect relationship between leisure motivation and leisure behavior while other studies in literature revealed the direct or indirect effect of self-efficacy on other variables. Among them, some studies evidenced a positive relationship between self-efficacy and achievement motivation, but only a few examined any effect among first year university students. In literature, studies also evidenced the effect of leisure attitudes on students' learning process, as students are more inclined to complete their education, but this relationship has yet to be extensively examined. Thus, it is necessary to examine whether the leisure attitude directly and indirectly affect first year university students' achievement motivation, with self-efficacy

as the mediating variable as such students are in their transition stage with increasing freedom and responsibility.

Therefore, this study presents an integrated approach to provide insight into the relationship among the study variables namely, leisure attitude, achievement motivation and self-efficacy among first year university students by extending theoretical and empirical evidence on the relationships. This study examines the combined effect of self-efficacy and achievement motivation in predicting leisure attitude among Saudi first year university students. Additionally, it also examines the mediating effect of self-efficacy on the above relationship and therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Achievement motivation positively influences leisure attitude.

H2: Self-efficacy positively relates with achievement motivation.

H3: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between achievement motivation and leisure attitudes.

## METHODS

A positivist approach is adopted in the present study, using the quantitative data collection instrument of questionnaire survey. Prior studies of the same caliber have adopted similar method to examine the study variables in the context of universities (e.g., Liu & Cheng, 2018; Elias et al., 2010). This research was conducted at the Preparatory Year college of a Saudi Arabia public university. The sample of the study consisted of 190 first year students (aged 18-19 years) from preparatory year college from Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University, in Dammam, Saudi Arabia. The students were selected from a population (700 students) by using stratified random sampling, 120 male students and 70 female students in total as presented in Table 1. The survey questionnaire copies were administered to the sample following the approval of the Scientific Research Council of Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of the study sample

Variables		N	Percentages
Gender	Male	120	63.15
	Female	70	36.85
Study Track	Science	61	32.1
	Engineering	57	30.0
	Medicine	72	37.9

### a) Measurement

In the study, a questionnaire survey was developed by reviewing the scientific literature concerning the topic and the items were adopted from prior instruments by using them in the four sections of the survey. The first section was included information on the respondents (e.g., gender), the second section was included items that assessed the frequency experienced by the students in measuring achievement motivation (10 items) (Azniza et al., 2013), and the third was included of items that measure self-efficacy of students, specifically the way students handle their daily challenges in the university (9 items) (Azniza et al., 2013). Lastly, the fourth section was included items that assess the leisure attitudes of students (18 items) (Raghd & Beard, 1982). The items were extensively utilized in prior studies and they were weighted on a five-point Likert scale ranging in strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree (Azniza et al., 2013; Raghd & Beard, 1982). The instrument's validity was confirmed in term of testing content validity by using experts' judgment and testing construct validity by using exploratory factor analysis on each variable. Bartlett Sphericity test (chi-

squared and  $p < 0.05$ ) and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) evaluation criteria was used in the study. Bartlett Sphericity test (chi-squared=11.69.776, with  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) and sampling adequacy value by using KMO to be 0.798 with Cronbach's alpha of 0.88 was found for achievement motivation. Bartlett's Sphericity test (chi-squared=1106.959, with  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) and KMO for self-efficacy was 0.897 with Cronbach's alpha of 0.91 was found with regards to self-efficacy. Lastly, Bartlett's Sphericity test (chi-squared=1300.259,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) and KMO of 0.818 with Cronbach's alpha of 0.74 was found for leisure attitude. The overall questionnaire reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. In this case, the high Cronbach's alpha values confirmed the instrument's reliability and validity.

## FINDINGS

Data was analyzed by using SPSS tests including internal consistency, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis. The results in Table 2 lists the statistically significant positive correlations among the study variables. More specifically, achievement motivation was found to have a significant correlation with self-efficacy (0.841\*\*,  $p < 0.05$ ), and leisure attitude (0.684\*\*,  $p < 0.05$ ). Moreover, self-efficacy was found to have a significant correlation with leisure attitude (0.741\*\*,  $p < 0.05$ ). These correlations show that the students enjoy their university environment as much as convinced in their abilities to motivate their tasks performance.

**Table 2.** Correlation matrix between the study variables

Variables	Achievement Motivation 1	Self-Efficacy 2	Leisure Attitude 3
1	1	0.841 .000**	0.684 .000**
2	0.841 .000**	1	0.741 .000**
3	0.684 .000**	0.741 .000**	1

### a) Regression Analysis

The effects of achievement motivation on leisure attitudes were determined by running a regression analysis between the independent and dependent variables. The results in Table 3 showed that achievement motivation explained a significant level of variance in leisure attitude ( $R = 0.684$ ,  $R^2 = 0.468$ ,  $F = 165.622$ ,  $P = < 0.000$ ).

**Table 3.** Regression analysis: predictors of leisure attitude

R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	F	Sig.
0.691	0.684	0.468	165.622	0.000*
Variables	B	t	Std. Error	Sig
Achievement Motivation	0.497	12.869	0.039	0.000*

Note: \* $p = < 0.05$

### b) Mediating effects of self-efficiency

There are three required criteria that have to be established in order for mediation to exist (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The first criterion is the significant relationship between the independent variable (achievement motivation) and the mediating variable (self-efficacy). The second criterion is the significant relationship between the mediating variable (self-efficacy) and the dependent variable (leisure attitude). The third criterion is that there's partial mediation when the significant relationship between the independent (achievement motivation) and the dependent variable (leisure attitude) is minimized, but there's full mediation when it disappears. In this study, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> criterion were tested, and the result was partial mediation as shown in Table 4. Mediating model was developed to test the self-efficacy and to test the hypothesis, the result of which indicated that achievement motivation correlated with leisure attitude with significant cumulative variance explained for the latter ( $R= 0.684$ ,  $R^2= 0.468$ , Adjusted  $R^2= 0.468$ ,  $F= 165.622$ ,  $0.000$   $p<0.05$ ;  $B= 0.497$ ,  $t= 12.869$ ,  $Sig= 0.000$ ). When self-efficacy's mediating effects were introduced, explained variance of achievement motivation was significantly in decrease ( $R= 0.750$ ,  $R^2= 0.562$ , Adjusted  $R^2= 0.558$ ,  $F = 40.103$ ,  $0.000$ ,  $p<0.05$ ;  $B= 0.151$ ,  $t = 2.317$ ,  $Sig = 0.022$ ). Therefore, self-efficacy partially mediated between the achievement motivation-leisure attitude relationship.

**Table 4.** Mediating self-efficacy

<b>R</b>	<b>R-square</b>	<b>Adjusted R-square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
0.750	0.562	0.558	40.103	0.000*
Variables	B	T	Std. Error	Sig
Achievement Motivation	0.151	2.317	0.065	0.022*

Note: \* $p<0.05$

## DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The current study is a pioneering one to assess the complexity of the relationship among achievement motivation, self-efficacy and leisure attitude with the mediating role of self-efficacy for first year college students. There is no existed study in the recent literature that examined the psychographic variables of the current study and the mediating effects of self-efficacy. This study's major contribution is the incorporation of self-efficacy as a mediating variable, as this examination has eluded past studies of this caliber. This study extends prior studies in literature and their outcomes, it has implications for academicians and educators when it comes to the important factors relating to students' learning emotions. From a methodological perspective, future studies are urged to focus on the students' self-efficacy and its mediating role from a practical perspective. Moreover, it is highly recommended that counseling and intervention programs to be developed to promote the psychological well-being and learning among students. The present study is limited in its data collection method, using self-report measures, as this could be exposed to inflated biases, owing to the influence of social desirability. This study is also limited to its research design, which is a correlation research design. Thus, it is suggested that future studies adopt a longitudinal or experimental design to encapsulate the objective responses keeping the directionality of effects from the variables into consideration. Moreover, the sample study comprises of students from one Saudi university, and thus generalizability should be done with caution. In this regard, future studies should include other students from other Saudi universities from different region in the country, especially those universities that are located in a rural area in which the idea of the leisure attitudes is not well understood between individuals in such societies.

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