

Types of Achievement Tests Which Are Preferred By Outstanding Students at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University

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Abstract

The present study aims to identify the prominent types of tests preferred by outstanding students at Al Hussein Bin Talal University in eight faculties. The study sample consisted of (100) students in the faculties of - Educational Sciences, Arts and Science. They were selected randomly from the study population consisting from eight faculties including all students who have obtained (84) and above, rating excellent during the second semester of the academic year 2009/2010. The results showed that 59% of the students prefer multiple choice tests, and 36% prefer essay tests, while 5% of the respondents prefer performance tests.

The study also showed that 72% of the outstanding students who preferred multiple choice tests are students of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, and that 16% of the outstanding students who preferred multiple choice tests are from the Faculty of Arts, while outstanding students from the Faculty of Science who preferred multiple choice tests form 12% of the sample. In addition, 41% of the outstanding students who preferred essay tests are from the Faculty of Educational Sciences and 59% of the outstanding students who preferred the essay tests are from the Faculty of Arts. On the hand, all students who preferred performing tests are from the faculty of Science.

With regard to the differences between males and females, it is found that 44% of the outstanding males prefer multiple choice tests while 58% of the outstanding females prefer multiple choice tests. It is noted that 33% of the outstanding males prefer essay tests compared with outstanding females of whom 40% prefer essay tests. Also 23% of outstanding males prefer performance tests, while 2% of the outstanding females prefer performing tests.

Keywords: outstanding, multiple choice tests, Achievement tests, Essay, Performance, sample

1. Introduction

There are many evaluation methods used by teachers in the universities to assess their students' achievement, and the most important and most commonly used method is perhaps the achievement test in its various forms, it may be an multiple choice or Essay or performance based test (Oosterhof, 1994).

Performance tests are considered as tests of ability whether used at school or university. The teacher seeks to identify the level of students achievement for the goals and objectives after learning different courses . (Zyoud and Alia, 1990).

1.2 Tests can be divided into three types according to students' response (Rajah, 2001): -

1. Written tests include: -

A) Multiple choice tests.

B) Essay tests.

2. Oral tests.

3. Practical tests (performance).

Each of these types of tests has both advantages and disadvantages in terms of preparation or time needed for being applied or being checked.

University of Al-Hussein Bin Talal, like other Jordanian universities, applies credit hours system. In order to evaluate the students, there must be three tests during the semester; the first test with 25% and the second test with 25% and the final test with 50% of the total scores. Any professor, after having permission, may take off 10% of the first and second tests scores for participation, home works and the general performance. a professor also has the choice to provide any type of tests whether multiple choice, essay or performing in some courses that require the practical performance.

Al Hussein Bin Talal University, under the principle of "We are seeking excellence" rewards outstanding students. Every student's name who obtains a GPA in a semester 84% and above (excellence), will be placed on the Honor list of the College and will be provided material reward. Because of the fact that these students are outstanding in their academic achievement and - like other colleagues – subjected to different kinds of tests, this study should explore the best type that these students prefer.

2. Problem statement

Achievement tests are considered very important as a measure instrument to be used in the evaluation process, so to developing compatible tests must be taken into consideration with good properties and taking into account the psychological and social effects of the tests. In order to reduce the negative effects students must be psychologically prepared and guided for the test and taught how to organize studying, they must be introduced to how the test would be like. (Odeh, 2000). As the students are assessed according to their performance, their preferable type is very important, especially for outstanding students - excellent cumulative (84)- and above in the second semester of the academic year 2003/2004.

The problem of the current study is determined by the following questions: -

1. What kinds of achievement tests do outstanding students at the University of Al-Hussein Bin Talal are preferred?
2. Does the Outstanding students in the three colleges differ in their preference for the three types of the achievement tests?
3. Are there any differences between excellent male and female students in their preference for the different types of achievement tests?

3. Aim of the study

The present study aims to identify the types of tests preferred by outstanding students at the University of Al-Hussein bin Talal in three faculties: - Educational Sciences, Arts, and Sciences.

4. Terms of study

1. Achievement test: - is a structured way to determine the level of student achievement for the information and skills included in the subject of study learned through answering a sample of questions (paragraphs) that represents the content of the subject. (Odeh, 2000)
2. Outstanding students: - They are students whom GPA in a particular semester is (excellence) (84) and above. The university places their names on the honor list; this study has used outstanding students in the second semester of the academic year 2009/2010.
3. Al-Hussein Bin Talal University: - a higher education independent Jordanian official institution, founded in accordance with a Royal Decree No. 28/4/1999, and it includes eight colleges.

Limitations of the study: - This study is limited to academically outstanding students at the University of Al-Hussein Bin Talal.

5. Previous studies

No previous studies discussing this topic were found according to the researcher's knowledge, but there are some studies related to the subject, including: - Gillman and Barcotaz (Gelmman & Barkowitz, 1993) conducted a study aiming to identify student's views regarding the way used to evaluate them by their teachers. The study sample consists of (322) male and female students, the results indicated that male students prefer multiple choice tests while the female students prefer essay tests.

A study conducted by Zolar and Ben Shem (Zollar & ben-chaim, 1988) also showed that students prefer the evaluation types which save time and not difficult to remembering, and the results show also that female students prefer homework tests more than male students, and they do not tend to do oral tests regardless of the type of items used.

Moreover, the aim of Aldogan (1995) study is to explore the students trends at King Saud University towards the essay and multiple-choice tests and to identify the relationship between that trend and their levels, majors and performance. The sample consisted of (323) students and the results showed that the trend of university

students toward multiple choice tests is more positive than towards essay question tests, regardless of other variables.

A study by Birinom (Birenbaum, 1997) showed that there are many variables affectun students perception of different evaluation methods, like learning styles, gender and academic major.

A review of previous studies shows that there are differences between males and females in their preference for the types of tests, and that students generally prefer evaluation methods that save time requires less remembering effort. Also, it shows that the major, the academic level and the achievement level have no effect on students' attitudes towards the types of tests. On the other hand, the impact of the learning styles, gender and academic major was clear on student's perceptions of the different evaluation methods.

6. Method and procedures

6.1 The study population: - The study population consisted of all excellent students at University of Al-Hussein Bin Talal, obtaining (84) above, second semester of the academic year 2009/2010. Their number was (214) students in the eight faculties: College of Arts, College of Science, College of Information Technology, College of Education , College of Engineering, Petra College for Tourism and Archaeology , College of Business Administration & Economics, Princess Aisha Bint Al-Hussein Faculty of Nursing. Table (1) shows the distribution of study population according to variables of gender and faculty:

Table (1). The distribution of study population according to variables of gender and faculty

Faculty	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Education	-	55	55
Arts	5	29	34
Science	4	7	11
Business Administration & Economics	16	18	34
Engineering	7	23	30
Information Technology	6	5	11
Princess Aisha Bint Al-Hussein Faculty of Nursing	-	12	12
Petra College for Tourism and Archaeology	17	10	27
Total	55	159	214

(Unit of Admission and Registration)

6.2 Study sample

Three colleges were selected randomly, among eight colleges (total number of colleges at University)

The selection was from Education College, Arts and sciences. The number of outstanding students was 100 male and female students of whom 9 students were males, and 91 students were females

Table 2 shows the sample distribution according to variables of gender and college.

Table 2

The sample distribution according to variables of gender and college

Faculty	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Education	-	55	55
Arts	5	29	34
Science	4	7	11
total	9	91	100

6.3 Study instrument

the instrument of this study is a developed questionnaire . The questionnaire consists of two parts, the first is for the general statements to explain the goal of the study and monitoring the various information and aspects of the students (with regarding gender and faculty). The second part consists of a question addressed to the respondent about the types of preferred tests and followed by three preferred alternatives so that to select one of them .

To ensure reliability of the study, the instrument was presented to a group of Jordanian university professors (Mutah University, Al-Balqa Applied University, the University of Al-Hussein Bin Talal). Some of them suggested important notes that helped to develop the final form of the questionnaire, and they were as follows:

6.3.1 Reliability of the instrument: - testing and retesting method on a number of outstanding students has been used. Twenty students were selected randomly from the study population, 3 female students were selected from faculty of Education and 2 female students from faculty of Arts and 1 male student from the faculty of sciences in different periods and the time lag between the two periods was ten days. The correlation coefficient between the two periods has been calculated using the Pearson equation where the Pearson reliability coefficient was 0.80. Appendix (1) explains the study instrument.

The instrument was applied on the sample of the study which included the outstanding students in the three colleges , the second semester of the academic year 2009/2010.

Statistical treatment: - percentages have been used to answer the questions and to explain the different preferred type of tests for the students.

7. Results

1. Regarding answering the first question (What kind of achievement tests do University of Al-Hussein Bin Talal outstanding students prefer?) the number of students and percentages are shown in Table No. (3)

Table (3)

The number of students and percentages of the preferences for the types of tests.

Test type	Number	Percentage
Multiple choice	59	59%
Essay	36	36%
Performance	05	5%
Total	100	100%

It is clear from this table that 59% of the study sample prefer multiple choice tests, and that 36% of the sample prefer essay tests, while 5% of the sample prefer performance tests.

2. Regarding answering the second question (Do Outstanding students in the three different faculties vary in their preference for types of tests?) Table (4) shows the number of students and percentages of the preferences of the types of tests for each faculty.

Table (4)

The number of students and percentages of the preferences of the types of tests for each faculty.

Faculty	Achievement tests					
	Multiple-Choice		Essay		Performance	
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
Educational	37	72%	18	41%	----	-----
Arts	08	16%	26	59%	----	-----
Science	6	12%	----	-----	5	100%
Total	51	100%	44	100%	5	100%

It is clear from Table (4) that 72% of the outstanding students who preferred objective tests are that students from the Faculty of Education Sciences, and that 16% of the outstanding students who preferred multiple choice tests are from the Faculty of Arts, while 12% of the outstanding students from the Faculty of Science who preferred multiple choice tests.

Also, 41% of the outstanding students who preferred essay tests are from Faculty of Educational Sciences, and 59% of the outstanding students who preferred essay tests are from Faculty of Arts. While all of the students who preferred performance tests are from Faculty of Science.

3. Regarding the third question (are there any differences between male and female excellent students in their preference for the types of the tests?) Table No. (5) Shows the number of the students and the percentages of the preferences for the types of tests.

Table (5)

The number of students and percentages of the preferences for the types of tests.

Type of the achievement test	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Multiple choice	4	44%	53	58%
Essay	3	33%	36	40%
Performance	2	23%	2	2%
Total	9	100%	91	100%

Table (5) shows that 44% of the excellent male students prefer Multiple choice tests and that 58% of the excellent female students prefer multiple choice tests, while 33% of the excellent male students prefer essay tests while excellent female students (40%) of them preferred essay tests, and 23% of outstanding male students prefer performance tests, while only 2% of the outstanding female students prefer performance tests.

7.1 Discussion of the results

The results of the first question answers regarding the type of tests favored by outstanding students at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University indicate that multiple choice tests are the preferred ones, essay tests come in the second place, and performance tests are in the third place. This could be referred to the several advantages of multiple choice tests in comparison with essay performance tests like : - marks are estimated objectively and fairly and do not require students to write , express , organize ideas or make a lot of effort ,thus these tests are easy_ (Algereeb, 2001) . In addition, outstanding students naturally seek to obtain full or nearly full marks and this could be achieved through multiple choice tests.

The results of this study agreed with the results of (Aldogan, 1995) study which has shown that students prefer multiple choice tests more than essay tests, regardless of other variables.

As for the second question : - (Do outstanding students in three colleges differ in their preference for types of achievement tests?). The results showed that there is a difference between students in their preference for objective tests. Students at Faculty of Education are in the first class, then students of Faculty of Science in the second place, while Faculty of Arts students are in the third place.

As for the essay tests, Faculty of Arts students results were higher in their preference for this type of testing than students of Faculty of Educational Sciences. The results were in favor of Faculty of Science students regarding the performance tests.

These results can be explained as follows: - students of Faculty of Educational Sciences have high results in comparison with students of the faculties of Science and Arts and this could be attributed to the nature of the study plan for Educational Sciences Faculty, that includes two obligatory courses which are Statistics and introduction to Measurement and Evaluation. In these courses, students study the functions and types of tests, test's positive and negative aspects, test's importance, how to check their suitability and how these tests are prepared. As a result, Students of Faculty of Educational Sciences understand these courses in a better way than other students whom their study plans do not include those courses.

The high results of Faculty of Arts students compared to students of Faculty of Educational Sciences in their preference for essay tests, could be attributed to the nature of materials and objectives that professors seek to be achieved in the Department of Arabic and English languages, which requires that student has to express, discuss, conclude, write and analyze literary texts (poetry & prose) in the tests. Since the way of teaching in these faculties is based on explanation, clarification and imagination, then essay tests is the best to measure whether the objectives are achieved or not in these materials.

The high results of students of Faculty of Science in performance tests could be attributed to the nature of scientific classes that need laboratories, and the focus is on the practical aspect as well as the theoretical aspect unlike Faculties of Arts and Education.

The results of this study partly agree with the results of a Birnbaum's study (Birenbaum, 1997) which showed that the student's major affects their perception of the different evaluation method. The results of this study were different from Aldogan study (1995) regarding the second question that the academic major and the level of achievement for students has no effect on the preference of multiple choice tests more than essay tests.

The results of the third question show that females' results were higher than males in their preference for multiple choice and essay tests. However, the results showed that males' results were higher in their preference for performing tests.

This result can be explained through considering the social values of the society and gender roles. Men are expected to do things that need physical strength and patience while women are not. So, as a result, men may tend to prefer performance tests more than women.

females dislike to play such a role could be attributed to their attempt to preserve their femininity and its requirements. (Alrfoa, 1995).

Students' preference for a particular type of tests could be attributed to their belief that a particular type tests has better chance to succeed. Male student's preference for the performance tests could be an example on that.

The results of this study have partly agreed with Birnbaum study (Birenbaum, 1997) regarding answering the third question on that gender affects student's perception of the various evaluation methods. On the other hand, this study did not match with Barcotaz (Gelman & Berkowitz, 1993) study regarding answering the third question on that male students prefer multiple-choice tests, while the female students, they prefer to essay tests. It was also partly different from the results of Zolar and Ben Shem study (Zollar & ben-chaim, 1988) in that female students prefer homework tests more than males, and they are less willing to do oral tests regardless of the questions types.

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