

# Constructing **A Scale Of** University Students *Attitudes Toward* *Outdoor Recreation*

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## **Abstract**

*Attitudes measurement allows forecasting behaviors, thus provides a chance to positively guide those behaviors, the purpose of this study is to construct a scale of attitudes toward outdoor recreation for Helwan University students in Egypt. A sample of (416) students has been chosen randomly, it included (278) males and (138) females. The researcher depended on the following tools to collect research data: Interviews with University officials who are responsible for recreational activities, attitudes toward outdoor recreation scale – constructed by the researcher and comprises (36) items distributed on (4) dimensions, plus the list of outdoor activities participation.*

*The results of this study have shown positive attitudes of University students toward outdoor recreation and the males students participate in more various outdoor activities than females, plus, there were significant differences between males and females in attitudes toward outdoor recreation in favor of females. Results also suggest the need to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation activities participation in Helwan University (Safe, under supervision and for appropriate cost).*

## Introduction:

The popularity of outdoor recreation in parks and other protected areas in Egypt has increased in the last decade following the economic, political and social changes in Egyptian society that resulted in the evolution in lifestyles and leisure habits.

Outdoor recreation allows participants to focus and interact with the natural environment through a wide range of activities. For some people outdoor activities provide experiences that are emotionally and spiritually rewarding; for others the attractions are adventure, risk, challenge and thrills. (Ibrahim & Cordes 1999, p.186)

The most popular outdoor recreational activities are: outdoor sports, aquatics, fishing, bicycling, horseback riding, outdoor gathering, walking, international and local camps, outdoor picnics, and nature handcraft (El Hamahmy & Abdel Aziz 2009). Outdoor recreation has a special position in education sector's vision for its great role of developing students' leisure skills or recreational education that affects individual's attitudes to be positive toward recreation and leisure (Mohamed, Tahany 2001)

Attitudes have a great importance in the field of social psychology because the relation between attitudes and individual's behaviors in daily life situations (Abdel Rahman, Saad 2004, p.361). Attitudes can be considered as kind of social motives toward behaviors, i.e. positive attitudes toward physical activities play a vital role in developing people as they push individuals

to regularly participate in those physical activities (Bahy, et al. 2005).

Individuals differ in their attitudes and differ in the degree of this attitude, because degrees range from full positive feeling to full negative feeling (Galal 2001, p.240) also, attitudes toward recreation direct individuals to positively participate in recreational activities (El Quosy 1982, p.137).

The researcher sees that university education represents a major source to prepare the required manpower very well in all cognitive, psychological, social and physical aspects through different activities that play a major role in shaping the attitudes of students.

The role of outdoor recreation programming in a campus recreation department has grown over the years. Trips and equipment rental has been a staple of outdoor recreation program for decades. The purpose of any campus outdoor recreation program can be varied as opportunities they provide. Students often participate in outdoor activities to increase their knowledge or skill in a certain area or they are seeking a particular experience. Colleges and universities often desire and value outdoor programs as part of comprehensive campus recreational sport department because they add an additional avenue for the pursuit of well-rounded and healthy lifestyles, and this generally supports the mission and vision of such organizations (NISRA 2008, p.154).

### *Statement of the Problem:*

Understanding attitudes is one of the most important treated issues

by sociology and social psychology as they are considered as a pattern of human behavior, therefore attitudes play a key role in guiding the individual's behavior and positive attitudes have an important role in leisure investment and activity participation that leads to good development of the personality (Allawy 1991, p.219)

Today, the outdoor recreation profession is varied and encompasses many facets. A contemporary definition of outdoor recreation is "organized free-time activities that are participated in for their own sake and where there is an interaction between the participant and an element of nature" (Ibrahim & Cordes 2002, p. 5).

Based on the literature review there are many studies aimed to investigate attitudes toward recreation and leisure (Mohamed Said 2011, Mohamed Amin 2006, Taymour Ragheb, 1999), for different samples, but there is only one study – to the knowledge of the researcher – aimed to explore the attitudes of university students and officials toward outdoor recreation (Ebtisam Abdel Aal et.al. 2008). The importance of this study appears by providing a new scale for attitudes toward outdoor recreation.

The research problem is about the need of constructing and developing a scale to measure attitudes toward outdoor recreation for university students, as attitudes are formed at this age and because of the role played by the university in the preparation of young generation for the future by providing

opportunities for practicing various recreational activities.

### *Purpose of the study:*

The purpose of this study is to construct scale of university students' attitudes toward outdoor recreation, through answering the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of Helwan university students toward outdoor recreation?
2. What are participation rates by gender in outdoor activities for Helwan university students?
3. Are there significance differences in attitudes toward outdoor recreation between males and females?

### Method:

#### *Participants:*

Research Sample included (416) students from 7 colleges in Helwan university in Cairo, Egypt; (278) males (66.8%) and (138) females (33.2%) after excluding invalid or incomplete responses to the data collection tools.

#### *Research Design:*

The researcher has depended on the qualitative method because its appropriateness to the nature of the study.

#### *Measures:*

The researcher used the following tools to collect research data:

- 1- Interviews with the officials in sport

recreation department at Helwan University to investigate the offered and available outdoor activities, plus the interaction levels of the students.

- 2- The scale of university students' attitudes toward outdoor recreation – constructed by the researcher; which comprises (36) items distributed on (4) dimensions: Attitudes toward concept of outdoor recreation (9 items) - Attitudes toward importance of outdoor recreation (9 items) - Attitudes toward outdoor recreational activities (8 items) - Attitudes toward the role of campus toward outdoor recreation (10 items). The researcher has used three-point scale (Agree-Undecided-Disagree) for participants' responses (Appendix 1).
- 3- The list of outdoor recreational activities: it asked respondents to check the box next to any of (21) activities in which they had participated. Those activities are selected to match the most popular activities in the Egyptian society. There was also space to write in another activity not included on the list (Appendix 2).

### *Procedure:*

To develop the main scale of this research, a pilot study of (48) participants has been made to investigate reliability and validity of attitudes toward outdoor recreation scale. Then the application on the whole sample of (416) participants was made to collect the main data and answer the questions of the research. The data collection was made during the period from 18/3/2012 to 17/5/2012.

## Results

### *Analysis:*

The data from each survey were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and transferred to SPSS v. 8.0 for analysis. Descriptive statistics, frequencies, correlations and t-test were used. An alpha level of .05 is the standard.

### *Scale validity:*

Scale validity has been verified by the following techniques:

- 1- Logical validity (Content validity): based on the reviewed literature and analysis of previous attitudes scales to guarantee that items belong to the suggested dimensions.
- 2- Face validity (Judges validity): The scale comprising of (4) dimensions and (71) items was introduced to (7) professors in the field of sport recreation, sport psychology and measurements and evaluation, They agreed on the four dimensions and excluded total of (21) items because of duplication or not belonging to the dimensions, so the total of (50) items were in the scale version before the pilot study.
- 3- Internal consistency validity: by calculating Pearson correlation coefficient between the value of each item and the total value of its dimension (see Table 1) and total value of each dimension and the total value of the whole scale (Correlations was significant).

**Table (1):**

*Correlations between the value of each item and the total value of its dimension (N=46)*

First Dimension		Second Dimension		Third Dimension		Fourth Dimension	
Serial	r	Serial	R	Serial	r	Serial	R
1	0.084	1	0.368**	1	0.202	1	0.559**
2	0.630**	2	0.631**	2	0.219	2	0.528**
3	0.189	3	0.715**	3	0.371**	3	0.859**
4	0.351*	4	0.680**	4	0.018	4	0.499**
5	0.526**	5	0.054	5	0.197	5	0.676**
6	0.499**	6	0.152	6	0.530**	6	0.604**
7	0.125	7	0.458**	7	0.481**	7	0.588**
8	0.021	8	0.674**	8	0.655**	8	0.149
9	0.540**	9	0.533**	9	0.787**	9	0.470**
10	0.555**	10	0.470**	10	0.114	10	0.679**
11	0.755**	11	0.521**	11	0.458**	11	0.552**
12	0.517**	12	0.178	12	0.517**		
13	0.321*			13	0.073		
14				14	0.643**		

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01.

As shown in (Table 1) most of items correlations were significant except 14 items (excluded). The final total of scale items was 36 items distributed on the 4 dimensions as follows:

The first dimension (Attitudes toward concept of outdoor recreation): comprise 9 items (2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, 26, 30 and 34). Second dimension (Attitudes toward importance of outdoor recreation): comprise 9 items (3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 31 and 35). Third dimension (Attitudes toward outdoor recreation activities): comprise 8 items (4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, and 32). Fourth dimension (Attitudes toward the role of campus toward outdoor recreation): comprise 10 items (1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29, 33, and 36).

### **Scale reliability:**

Scale reliability has been verified by the following techniques:

- 1- Test-Retest Method: the scale was tested on 33 students and retested after 2 weeks, Correlations varied between 0.764 and 0.922 which show that current scale is reliable.
- 2- Split-halves Method: using Cronbach's reliability coefficient (alpha), results has shown that (alpha) values are high for all scale dimensions as varied between 0.630 and 0.791, which shows high level of scale reliability. A Cronbach's reliability coefficient (alpha) of 0.60 or higher was required for a scale to be considered reliable (Tabachnick and Fidell 1996).

Attitudes toward outdoor recreation

To answer the first question of the study: What are the attitudes of Helwan university students toward outdoor recreation? See Table 2.

**Table (2):**

*Descriptive statistics and frequencies for scale items (N=416)*

Item	M	Frequencies			Total	%	Rank	Item	M	Frequencies			Total	%	Rank
		Agree	Un.	Dis.						Agree	Un.	Dis.			
<i>First Dimension</i>															
2	2.53	272	94	50	1054	84.46	8	4	2.72	300	116	0	1132	90.71	1
6	2.85	366	37	13	1185	94.95	2	8	2.39	174	229	13	993	79.57	4
10	2.72	317	82	17	1132	90.71	5	12	1.81	120	97	199	753	60.34	8
14	2.59	264	135	17	1079	86.46	7	16	2.52	230	173	13	1049	84.05	3
18	2.76	49	0	367	1150	92.15	4	20	2.38	207	161	48	991	79.41	5
22	2.70	17	90	309	1124	90.06	6	24	2.29	200	137	79	953	76.36	7
26	2.80	17	48	351	1166	93.43	3	28	2.67	282	131	3	1111	89.02	2
30	2.86	17	25	274	1189	95.27	1	32	2.30	201	139	76	957	76.68	6
34	2.36	150	266	0	982	78.69	9	1	2.93	386	30	0	1218	97.60	2
3	2.62	258	0	158	932	74.68	8	5	2.96	400	16	0	1232	98.72	1
7	2.69	287	129	0	1119	89.66	3	9	2.55	229	178	0	1043	83.57	10
11	2.64	284	115	17	1099	88.06	5	13	2.80	334	79	3	1163	93.19	5
15	2.68	284	132	0	1116	89.42	4	17	2.66	273	143	0	1105	88.54	7
19	2.30	210	121	85	957	76.68	7	21	2.81	335	81	0	1167	93.51	4
23	2.72	299	117	0	1131	90.63	2	25	2.52	294	45	77	1049	84.05	9
27	2.56	263	121	32	1063	85.18	6	29	2.66	307	77	32	1107	88.70	6
31	2.06	109	222	85	85	68.15	9	33	2.58	243	173	0	1075	86.1	8
35	2.77	336	63	17	17	92.23	1	36	2.88	365	51	0	1197	95.9	3
<i>Third Dimension</i>															
<i>Fourth Dimension</i>															
<i>Second Dimension</i>															

As shown in Table 2, students' general attitudes toward outdoor recreation are positive as most of their responses' means are more than 2.5. For the first dimension (Attitudes toward concept of outdoor recreation), the highest ranking item was "the outdoor activities are not only for talented and skilled people" but they are suitable for all, while the lowest ranking item was "Outdoor activities is practiced in the nature" as it might be practiced in urban areas too.

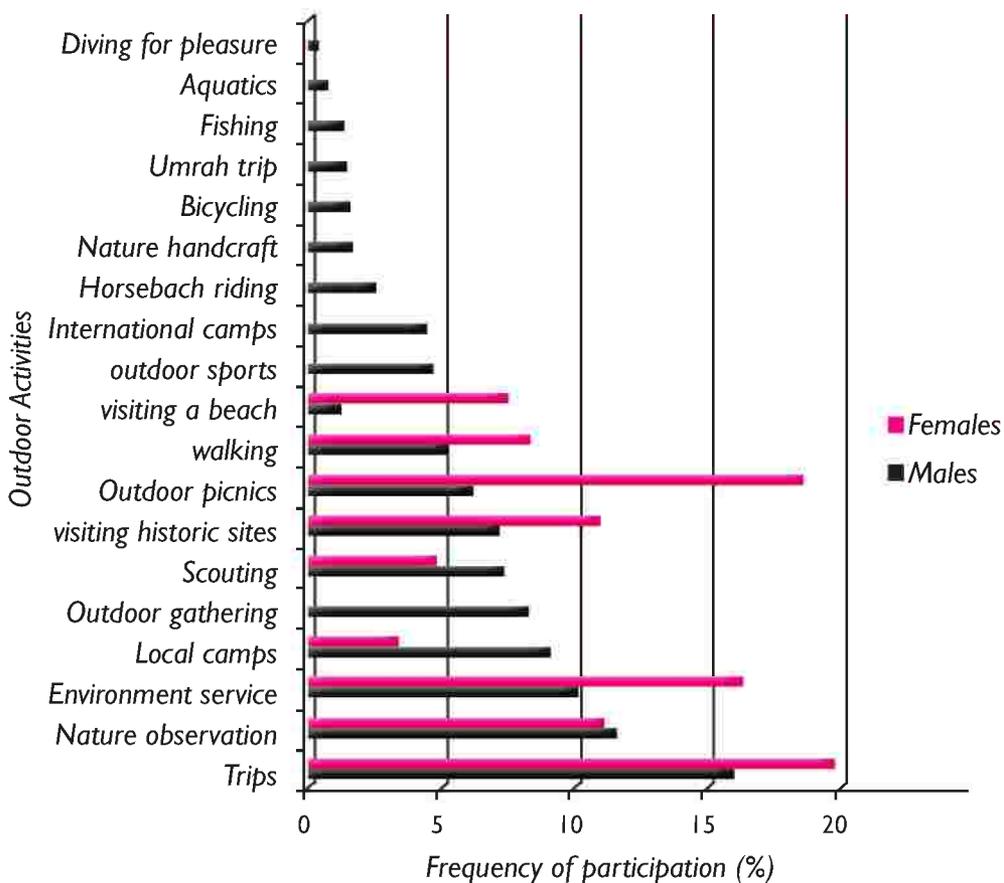
For the second dimension (Attitudes toward importance of outdoor recreation), the highest ranking item was "the outdoor activities makes me explore nature", while the lowest ranking item was "Outdoor activities save me from obesity and let me lose my weight" as they may not affect the weight of participants.

For the third dimension (Attitudes toward outdoor recreation activities), the highest ranking item was "I try to convince other to share me in outdoor activities", while the lowest ranking item was "I like to practice outdoor activities alone" as they may like group participation.

For the fourth dimension (Attitudes toward the role of campus toward outdoor recreation), the highest ranking item was "The campus must provide the required equipment and tools for outdoor activities", while the lowest ranking item was "The campus should conduct training courses for skill development in outdoor activities".

#### *Participation in outdoor activities*

To answer the second question of the study: What are participation rates by gender in outdoor activities for Helwan university students? See Figure 1



*Figure1. - Participation rates by gender in outdoor activities for Helwan university students.*

As shown in Figure 1, the type and number of outdoor activities is different from male students to female students. Males participate in 19 outdoor activities and females participate only in 9 activities. The top ranked outdoor activity for both males and females is “Trips”.

***Gender differences in attitudes toward outdoor recreation:***

To answer the second question of the study: Are there significance differences in attitudes toward outdoor recreation between males and females? See Table 3.

**Table (3):**

*Differences significance between males and females students (t-test)*

Serial	Scale Dimensions	Males (278)		Females (138)		t value
		M	SD	M	SD	
1	Attitudes toward concept of outdoor recreation	23.820	2.870	24.920	1.068	4.354
2	Attitudes toward importance of outdoor recreation	23.032	3.031	33.036	2.203	0.013
3	Attitudes toward outdoor recreational activities	18.699	3.104	19.920	1.683	1.121
4	Attitudes toward the role of campus toward outdoor recreation	26.022	2.411	30.000	0.000	19.374
5	Total score of the scale	91.543	6.234	97.877	3.880	10.796

t value < .05. = 1.966.

As shown in Table 3, there are significant differences in attitudes towards outdoor recreation between males and females students for the benefit of female students for the first, third and fourth dimensions of the attitudes scale toward outdoor recreation plus the total score of the scale.

But for the second dimension, no significant differences have been revealed between males and females students in attitudes toward outdoor recreation.

## **Discussion**

This study aimed to construct and develop an attitude scale toward outdoor recreation for university students. The new valid and reliable scale comprises (36) items distributed on (4) dimensions.

Students' attitudes toward outdoor recreation were positive and high. The current results agree with the results of

the study of (Abdel Aal et al. 2008, p.19). This could be due to the stress of everyday life and crowded and polluted cities, plus the good promotion for outdoor activities inside campus or by tourism companies that offer creative and new activities.

The type and number of outdoor activities is different from male students to female students, males participated in more various outdoor activities and females participated in less number of activities although their participation rate is higher than males in many activities. Traditionally, many women have provided certain outdoor activities that were typically associated with males. (Ibrahim & Cordes 1999, p.187).

There are still differences in experiences, attitudes, and expectations of women's participation in sport and recreation versus that of men. (McLean et al. 2005, p.148) as there are many social constraints in the Egyptian society

related to female participation in outdoor activities, such as required supervision.

There are significant differences in attitudes towards concept of outdoor recreation, attitudes towards outdoor activities and the role of campus toward outdoor recreation between males and females students for the benefit of female students; this is consistent with the study of (Abdel Aal et al. 2008, p.20). This may probably due to that female students have more leisure time than males, plus the available outdoor activities for females are limited comparing to males, also because they mainly depend on campus activities for supervision and safety factors.

But for the affective part of the attitudes (importance of outdoor recreation), no significant differences

have been revealed between males and females students. This may probably due to that gender is ineffective factor for the emotional part of the attitudes toward outdoor recreation.

Results suggest using the new scale to compare between different samples in different communities. Results also suggest the need to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation activities participation in Helwan University (Safe, under supervision and for appropriate cost).

The researcher recommends that campus should provide more national and international camps and trips for the students with financial support and should encourage students to participate in community services and environment development.

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