Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal – Vol.2, No.10
Publication Date: Oct. 25, 2015
DoI:10.14738/assrj.210.1500.
Hilmi, F. (2015). The Structure and Development of University Students' Frustration Field Study in Jordan. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal,* 2*(10)* 11-27.

The Structure and Development of University Students' Frustration Field Study in Jordan

Dr. Fares Hilmi
Psychology Department, Faculty of Arts,
University of Jordan Amman Jordan

Abstract

Aim : The goal of the present study was to investigate the frustration structure of university undergraduates, and find out how their frustration changes during their years of study. The psychological concept of a mental state of frustration was employed to identify the reasons, situations or mechanisms that stop students from achieving their learning goals in the university.Tool and Sample: An open-ended questionnaire was developed asking students to mention five different situations or incidents that caused them frustration. A sample of 425 subjects responded to the questionnaire during class hours. Eighty percent of the subjects were females. Results: The content analysis of the responses of the subjects revealed that six aspects of university life were mentioned more than others as sources of frustration. The lecturers' negative behaviors such as discriminating between students and unfair marking. Also lecturers' outdated scientific knowledge, and not knowing how to deliver lectures. Fellow students' violent behavior, oral and physical harassment, disruption of classes during lectures, littering classrooms and sitting areas.The university's registration system and the departments during registration period. Problems included most classes being closed, registration occurring during lectures.Other aspects of university life were mentioned as a source of frustration less often but still with more than five percent frequency. These included the university infrastructure, such as, classrooms or laboratories being unsuitable or not properly equipped. The courses taught were described as not relevant to students' specialty, or having lots of material to read.
The non-academic staff was mentioned as a source of frustration. They were described as not helpful to students and unfair. Conclusion: Certain polices can be adopted by university's top management, such as orientation seminars for academic staff before they start teaching in the university, covering treatment of students, lecturing and exams preparation, solving problems.

Key Words: Frustration University Students University Management Content Analysis Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

This study was intended to identify the sources of frustration among undergraduate students at the University of Jordan. This is a part of the general university policy designed to develop and improve the quality of its graduates' attainment of scientific theoretical knowledge and practical skills, and positive attitudes and behaviour as members of society in Jordan and humanity in general. The university's effort is part of a general effort in Jordan as a whole to improve the education and work standards of Jordanians.

Therefore this study was intended to find out why university students did not achieve the standards expected and required by University of Jordan, as a representative sample of all universities in Jordan.

The psychological state of frustration was chosen to find out what happened to students during their study at the University of Jordan that stopped them from achieving the standards

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required by the University of Jordan, and expected by the students themselves, who joined the university with high expectations of learning new scientific skills, knowledge, and attitudes. This concept is a major psychological concept used to understand behaviour for the sake of developing, improving and controlling individual's performance (Mullins 1996).

Need satisfaction leads to positive feelings such as joy and happiness, and therefore to more of the same behaviour. In contrast, stopping satisfaction creates negative feelings such as disappointment, tension and anger, and the consequence is that people stop practicing the behaviour that caused such painful feelings. Such feelings disrupt daily life practices, including learning activities. In other words, the consequences of such disruption affects negatively students's performance in university learning situations (Gulzar.S et al 2012, Prodrigo et al 2009, Sierpinska, A 2008, Snow et al 2003, Regiew 1999, Specter 1978.

The Meaning of Frustration Mental State

Frustration is defined in the Oxford English Language Dictionary (2002) as the stopping of actions intended by an individual to satisfy a need or achieve a goal. The Oxford Dictionary of Psychology (Andrew M. Colman 2001) adds to this meaning the resultant emotional state or states, such as dissatisfaction, anger and exhaustion. But these emotions are also connected to physiological changes in the body, such as high tension, tiredness, high blood pressure, fast heart beat, and rapid breathing.

In other words, in the case of successful effort to satisfy a need, the outcome will be a mental state characterised by pleasant and happy feelings and emotions. The individual likes to repeat such states time and time again. Also, he or she will not suffer boredom. On the other hand, the results of preventing someone from achieving satisfaction will be a negative and painful mental state characterised by feelings such as dissatisfaction, anger, tension and fear, coupled with physiological changes such as high blood pressure, fast heart beat and rapid breathing. Such feelings are painful, and the individual does not want to experience them again. Therefore, frustration in psychological literature means a negative mental state as a result of stopping someone from satisfying one of his needs or goals, and the resultant emotions and physiological changes.

Still, there are psychologists who use the terms of anxiety, psychological stress, psychological pressure, burnout and frustration as synonyms, i.e. to indicate the same meaning as shown above for the term frustration (Chen and Spector, 1992 and Lazaraus, 1966.

If the negative mental psychological state continues for long periods of time, then more negative and painful feelings such as worry, fear, anxiety, low morale, and low well-being will emerge, accompanied by painful physiological changes such as fast heart beat and high blood pressure. Such painful mental states will disrupt daily normal life of adults, which include productive work at work settings, and successful learning activities in learning settings such as universities.

Therefore, if university students go through severe or permanent mental states of frustration as a result of problems they encounter while trying to satisfy their needs, then their learning activities will be hampered. They will not learn what they are supposed to learn (Gulzar, S et al., 2012, Sierpinska, A 2008).

All people, irrespective of age, gender, culture or race, have thousands of needs, goals and motives that they need to satisfy, every hour if not every minute. If they succeed, that creates

pleasant feelings and they like to repeat the activities. But if for any reason their efforts fail to help them attain the goal or satisfy any of the need or needs in question, this creates painful feelings which the person does not want to experience again. If the need continues demanding satisfaction in spite of persistent obstacles, the negative feelings and emotions will develop physiological changes in the individual that will stop the normal routine of daily life until the situation is resolved successfully. That means the person's daily activities will be disrupted, including productive activities such as learning in a university.

There are very few psychological studies devoted to studying the effects of frustration in general on learning behaviour at the university level (Gulzar, S 2012, Sierpinska, A 2008) compared to the enormous literature identifying its effects on workers' productivity in industrial settings, (Regiew, D. 1999, Spector, P.E. and Fox S. 1999, Spector, P.E. 1975,).

Nevertheless, many studies have concentrated on discovering the effects of frustration in certain individual aspects of university learning, such as learning mathematics (Tohm, C. 2012, Horspool, A. & Yang, S.S. 2010, Rodrigo, M.T. et al. 2009, Sierpinska, A 2008, Alessio, H. 2004, , Burns, R.B. 1991).

Therefore, this study is intended to find out the sources of these states of frustration among University of Jordan students, and how the sources correlate to the year of study in the university, for the purpose of intervention to improve university graduates' standards in attaining better scientific knowledge and skills and in applying scientific knowledge in work settings, and to improve students' attitudes towards society and the world at large.

Frustration Mental State Duration and Intensity

Several factors affect frustration state intensity and duration. The level of importance the individual attributes to his need makes a lot of difference for his or her reaction to whatever blocks the way to satisfy the need. But his reaction is also influenced by several other factors related to his personality characteristics (Mullins, 1996).

If his personality is labelled as type A, his reaction to any frustration will be far more intense and severe than those with type B personalities. Type A personality people are usually not patient. They like to compete and achieve more and very fast. Their responses to a frustration situation usually invoke harmful physiological changes.

Kobasa(1982)introduced the concept of hard personality characteristics. People with such characteristics can stand and successfully resist the consequences of frustration, because they trust their ability to shape their life and future and to influence their environment. This concept is very close in meaning to the concept of locus of control in personality literature. Those who perceive what happens to them is a result of their own will and their own planning and actions have less chance of being affected by frustration consequences than those who feel that they have no control over what happens to them (Holahan et al 1984, Lazarus 1966, Butterfield 1964).

The intensity and duration of a frustration state can also be affected by the type of work the individual is doing. It has been found that blue collar workers suffer from higher levels of frustration than those with white collar jobs (Lowenberg 1998, Cobb & Rose 1973).

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The individual's ability to learn different ways to overcome different causes of frustration states helps him to successfully satisfy his needs and achieve his goals. But if he does not have that ability or knowledge, he will suffer painful frustration states that may last a long time.

In other words, the duration of a frustration state and its intensity depends upon the interaction between external factors, such as work and work management style, the type of need and its importance to the individual, his personality characteristics, and his knowledge and experience in coping with obstacles stopping him from achieving his goals.

In short, individuals differ in the way they respond to frustrating situations because they differ in need strength, personality type, and in their perception of the situations (Mullins 1996).

LITERATURE REVIEW

It has been interesting to notice that the number of studies using the term frustration to identify problems of achievement in university settings is very few compared to those studies using the same term in investigating problems of productivity in industrial work settings.

Nevertheless, Gulzar et al (2012) in a study conducted in Pakistan, found that university students were affected severely by incidents that took place outside the university boundaries and environment such as the death of one of their loved ones, especially their parents. Such incidents caused negative strong feelings. Such feelings caused a depressed mood, crying spells and feelings of fatigue and anger. This state of affairs led students to have difficulty in making the right decisions, and separated them from family and friends. Such negative feelings went on for around one month. Unfortunately this study did not report any sources of frustration caused by the learning institution, i.e. the university.

Jemal (2012) studied the adjustment problems of freshman students in an Ethiopian university and found that the major adjustment problems were in social relations. Female students were affected by such problems more than males.

Similar results were found by Burns (1991) in an Australian university. He found that overseas students suffered from higher degrees of stress than local students in areas of managing the demands of study, such as study methods, independent learning, language skills, participation, and time management.

Lazar et al (2005) studied the impact of computer user frustration on university students and found that time lost, time to fix the problem, and importance of the task strongly correlate with frustration levels for students.

Mudhovozi (2012) studied adjustment problems of first year students in a South African University. The results showed that first year students had various social and academic adjustment problems. The students over-relied on social networks and efficacious beliefs to cope with the challenges.

Rodrigo et al (2009) found that it is possible to detect frustration from students' behaviour within a learning environment.

Sierpinska (2008), in a study of students' performance in prerequisite mathematics courses, identified several sources of frustration as important among the respondents: fast pace of the courses, insufficient learning strategies, the need to change previously acquired ways of

thinking, difficult rapport with truth and reasoning in mathematics, being forced to take these courses, insufficient academic and moral support on the part of their teachers, and poor achievement. These sources of frustration had an impact on the quality of mathematical knowledge that students developed in the courses.

Brenders et al (1999) found that university bureaucracy and balkanization of information were factors that negatively influence students' perceptions of the quality of university services. They found also that students' strategies for service recovery could contribute to the overall confusion and poor performance of students.

Dean (1998) found that students perceived the classroom environment as a barrier to their success in the university, or blame factors not in their control, and lack of orientation and guidance from the university.

Rithbart,et al (1971) studied the effects of teachers' expectations of students' academic achievement on student-teacher interaction in Canada and found that teachers were far more attentive to high expectation students. However, that did not affect the amount of reinforcement given by teachers to students both high and low on the expectancy measure. Teachers described the low expectation group as less intelligent, having a smaller chance of success in the future and having a higher need for approval.

A study by Tohm (2012) of student satisfaction and frustration with online education showed that computer mediated communication theory should advance to reflect current channel and rate capacity if we are to fully understand the potential of online education.

Ditcher and Tetley (1999) found that academics and students agreed that the most important factor affecting students' success or failure is the availability of self-motivation for success and lack of self-motivation for failure. Academic staff and students also agreed on three other factors among the next five affecting success: fair and appropriate assessment, ability to manage stress, and good time management and organisational skills. Also, both groups agreed on another three factors affecting failure: insufficient effort, poor time management and organisational skills, and inability to manage stress.

Horspool & Yang (2010) found no significant differences in success learning music online versus face-to-face as measured by final grades.

Alessio (2004) found that students perceived traditional teacher-centered learning more favourably than student-centered education. Nevertheless, test scores were similar. Negative student perceptions about learning in problem- based learning classes did not support either teacher observations of learning activity in the classroom or compromised test performances.

METHOD

Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study were:

(a) to discover the main sources or causes of university students' frustration as reported by students themselves. This part represents the structure of frustration elements, i.e. which aspects of university life represent a hurdle or obstacle that keeps the individual student from satisfying his learning goals.

(b) to find whether the year of study of the student affects his frustration causes structure. For example, is it reasonable to expect that certain elements in university life affect students in their first year, but not during the fourth or final year of their study?

The Development of the Study Questionnaire

It was decided that this study would follow the qualitative style of research in order to let student subjects use their own words to express themselves and to describe their experiences in the university. It was decided that they should decide whether an element of university life is a problem for them or not. From the outset of this study it was decided to allow students to decide what aspects or elements of university life could be viewed as a source of dissatisfaction and hence be considered as a cause of frustration, or what makes an element or part of university life a problem for the individual student.

The expectation was that this style of research would be able to draw an overall or gestalt picture of university life and services offered from the point view of students.

Since this was a qualitative study, one way to do it was to develop an open-ended question, asking students to think of incidents, situations or experiences they came cross during their presence in the university and caused them to feel disappointed, dissatisfied, or angry so that their learning attainment schedule was negatively affected.

Many researchers have used this methodology in different formats. Some asked respondents to complete an incomplete sentence. Others asked respondents to respond to one question and give—if possible—twenty different answers (Manfurd Kuhn 1978). Other researchers were satisfied with 10 different answers, while still others were looking for five different answers (Delany et al 2010).

Therefore, a question was phrased in such a way as to encourage students to think of their university experience during the previous academic year and to recall incidents or situations that created in them feelings of disappointment, dissatisfaction, anger or unhappiness and stopped them for a while from continued learning according to their learning schedules. Each answer was given two lines to describe the incident or situation in detail if possible. The answers were numbered from one to five. Also, respondents were asked to say why that incident created the disappointment or dissatisfaction feelings in them.

The second part of the questionnaire asked students to give some demographic data such as age, year of study, sex, college and total grade average, to get an idea about the characteristics of the sample.

The questionnaire was distributed to several psychologists in the Department of Psychology and other departments in the College of Education for comments. Their remarks were taken into consideration and improved the wording and the layout of the questionnaire.

Then the questionnaire was administered to a class in the department of psychology. Examining students' responses showed that all the responses were of the type expected. Minor changes to the layout and fonts of the printed questionnaire were suggested and implemented.

Pre-Testing

Before the final data collection started, the open-ended questionnaire was administered again to another class of students to make sure that the final version of the questionnaire was clearly

understood by students and the responses they gave would be within the expectations of the researcher.

The examination of the responses showed that the elicited responses were of the expected response type, i.e. they were related to the meaning of the frustration concept. Therefore, the next stage was administering the questionnaire to collect the needed data.

Participants

The sample consisted of 425 undergraduate students in a major state university in Amman, the capital of Jordan. All of the students were enrolled in two courses (Introduction to Psychology, an elective course for all university students, and a non-elective course, the National Awareness course, which is a required course for all university students). The students in the study through these classes were approached by the class instructors. The author explained the aim of administering the questionnaire and assured them that the data would be used only for scientific purposes and no one need to write his or her name anywhere on the questionnaire sheet. This sample method can be labelled "opportunistic or convenient" sample.

The participants' mean age was 20 years (sd = 4). 157 students (37 %) were from year one, 112 (26.4 %) from year two, 93 (21.4 %) students from year three and 63 students (15 %) from the final year. The overall grade average was 2.8. Of the total sample, 352 students (83%) were female, and 74 students (17 %) were male. The administration of the open-ended questionnaire lasted 20 to 25 minutes.

Content Analysis and Themes Extraction

After the data collection, participants' responses to the open-ended question were content analysed. The quantification process (sampling and finding themes) was done in line with the guidelines of Sommer & Sommer (1986). A sample of 100 subjects' responses was chosen randomly from the 425-subject sample to create the list of themes representing all the causes of frustration mentioned or reported by the study subjects.

The sub sample of 100 respondents' responses was used to create a single long list of responses, i.e. causes of frustration. All the responses were listed. The next step was to create a short list that combined all those responses similar in meaning into a single response or cause. Possible disagreements between different coders were sorted out by consulting a small group of students enrolled in the master's degree program of the psychology department.

After creating the complete list of causes of frustration mentioned by the subjects, the author content analysed the sample taken from the subjects following the steps mentioned above. The level of agreement between the two final lists of themes was measured by Cohen's Kappa. The results was K = 0.82, which is a very acceptable level of agreement, i.e the reliability level of the coding method is acceptable. It is worth mentioning here that the validity of open-ended questions and all qualitative methods of research relies on face validity, concept validity or theoretical validity, and practical validity. The actual responses given by the subjects were in line with the expected responses.

Then the author created a list of major themes, which further summarized the long list of very specific themes. This shorter list, which consolidated all the long list themes, may help to guide the policies of future intervention for possible improvement of Jordanian universities.

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The resultant final list of major and sub themes is presented in Table 1, with the frequency and corresponding percentage of subjects that mentioned each theme separately.

RESULTS

The result of the content analysis procedure was a list of 36 separate mutually exclusive categories or themes mentioned by all the study respondents. However, it was found that these could be categorised into six different major aspects of academic life in any university. Those major categories are the major sources of frustration in any university. They are as follows: 1) academic staff i.e. the lecturers; 2) fellow students or colleagues; 3) the university registration system; 4) the university infrastructure and physical facilities; 5) the study courses offered; 6) the non-academic staff with whom students have to be in contact at different stages of their life in the university. These six major categories covered 95% of the subjects' responses. The remaining responses were mentioned just once by just one or two respondents. Some such responses were not readable or could not be coded. These responses totalled less than five percent of all the responses given by all the subjects in the study sample.

Therefore the coding system is organized into major categories and themes (sub-categories), and these are presented in Table 1 along with the frequency and percentage of individuals mentioning each specific category or theme.

All the major themes and sub themes are presented in order from higher percentage to lower percentage of subjects mentioning each one.

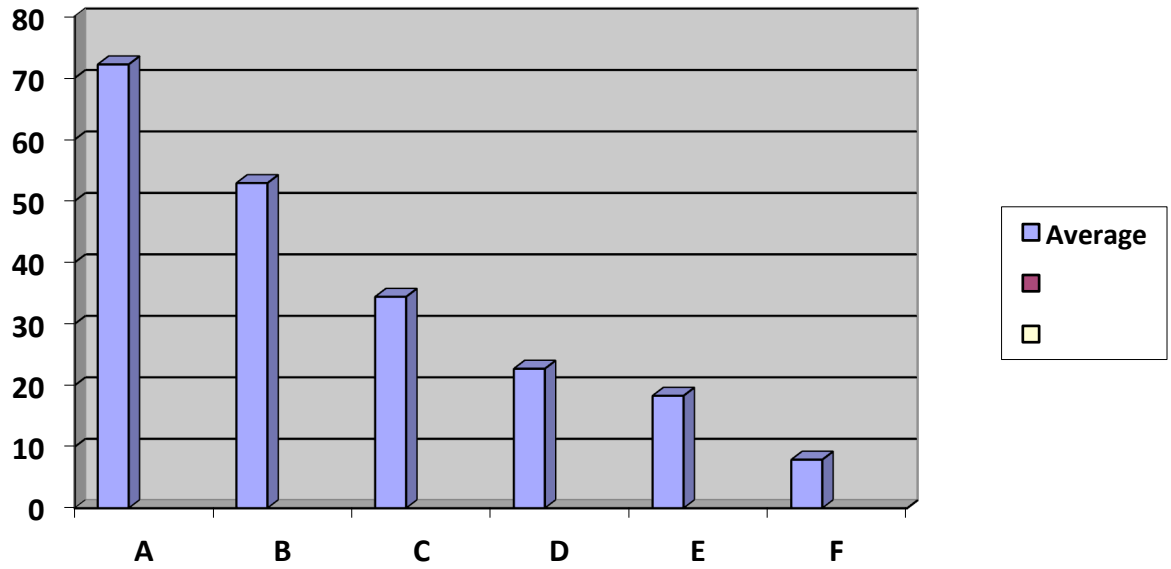


Figure 1 percentage of subjects mentioning each of the major categories

Key : A - Relations with academic staff
B - Relations with other students
C – University registration system
D – University infrastructure buildings
E – Study courses
F – Relations with non-academic staff

RESULTS

The Structure of University Student's Frustration

Categories and sub themes of the major frustration sources of university students as a whole irrespective of year of study

Looking at Table 1 reveals a very striking picture divided into just two overarching categories. First, relations with others, formed by three themes listed by percentage of reporting from higher to lower: relations with academic staff, relations with other students, and relations with non-academic staff. A very small percentage of students came into contact with non-academic employees, mostly during the final two years of university; on the other hand, relations with lecturers and other students affect students throughout their study in the university.

The second half of the picture consists of students' feelings and attitudes towards the university's system of doing things: the university registration system, the university infrastructure (such as buildings and classrooms), and the students' attitudes towards the study courses offered by the university academic staff.

It is worth looking closely into each major category or aspect of university life which is seen by a sizable number of students as a source of frustration to find out how these aspects may be sources of frustration.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of subjects mentioning each sub-theme in each major category:

Major categories sub-themes	
A – Relations with academic staff (72.7 %)	
1 - *Wasta*, discriminating between students based on family or tribal grounds	112 (23 %)
2 - Unfair marking	100 (20.5 %)
3 - Not knowing how to treat students	84 (17.2 %)
4 - Unable to teach properly	76 (15.6 %)
5 - Not allowing students to be two minutes late	36 (7.4 %)
6 - Coming very late to lectures	28 (5.7 %)
7 – A lot of material to study	28 (5.7 %)
8 - Not up to-date in their specialty	24 (4.9 %)
B – Relations with other students	
1 - Students' union election violence	76 (19 %)
2 - Behaving against Islamic values during Ramadan	76 (19%)
3 - Verbal & physical harassment	60 (15 %)
4 - Quarreling for silly reasons	48 (12 %)
5 - Discriminating between students based on tribal or racial grounds	44 (11%)
6 - Not wanting or being unable to learn	40 (10%)
7 - Disrupting lectures with loud noises	32 (8 %)
8 - Littering classrooms and sitting places with rubbish	24 (6 %)

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C – University registration system	
1 - Exams time table and frequency	60 (27.3 %)
2 - Classes closed	56 (25.5 %)
3 - Fees payment before registration	40 (18.2 %)
4 Lectures' time table not suitable	28 (12.7 %)
5 - *Wasta* in registration	20 (9.1 %)
6 - Registration during lectures	16 (7.3%)
7 - Registration staff not helpful	16 (7.3 %)
D – University infrastructure	
1 - Classrooms very hot or very cold	80 (37 %)
2 - Very dirty toilets	40 (18.5 %)
3 - Computer lab printers without paper and ink	32 (14.8 %)
4 - College buildings very far from classrooms	24 (11.11 %)
5 - No good transport system in the university	20 (9.3 %)
6 - Bad seats	20 (9.3 %)
E – Study courses	
1 - Courses not being up to-date	28 (31.2 %)
2 - A lot of material to study	24 (27.3 %)
3 - Laboratories without equipment	16 (18.18 %)
4 - Courses without practical part	12 (13.6 %)
5 - Courses not useful or relevant to student specialty	8 (9.1 %)
F – Relations with non-academic staff	
1 - *Wasta* and not helping students	48 (63.2 %)
2 - Discriminating between students on basis of backgrounds	28 (36.8 %)

A – University lecturers as a source of frustration

How can university lecturers become a source of frustration for their students? University students said that lecturers behaving in the following ways were a source of frustration:

A-1 – Some lecturers were seen as showing preference to certain students on certain bases such as tribal, familial or religious factors and wasta (influential connections). The frequency of students who mentioned such behaviour was 112, representing 26 % of the total sample.

A-2 - Lecturers were judged by students as not fair in marking exam papers. 100 students mentioned this type of behaviour, 20.5% of those who mentioned the lecturers' behaviour.

A-3 – Respondents said lecturers did not know how to treat their students properly in different situations. %?

A-4 – Lecturers were considered by students as bad teachers or not able to teach properly. %?

A-5 – Lecturers were seen as very strict and did not allow students to be late two minutes to attend the class. %?

A-6 – Lecturers were reported as coming very late to lectures. %?

A-7 – Lecturers gave students a very large amount of material to study for exams. %?

A-8 – Lecturers were seen as not up to date on scientific knowledge in their own specialty.

The first aspect of behaviour was mentioned by 112 students but the last and the least mentioned was mentioned by 24 students, 4.9% of students.

B – Fellow university students as a source of frustration

B-1 and B-2 – Two different types of negative behaviour were most frequently mentioned as a source of frustration, by the same number of students: the violence that erupts among students during student union election time, and neglecting Islamic values for behaviour during the holy month of Ramadan. In each case 76 students mentioned this type of behaviour as a source of frustration, for 19% of students mentioning each.

B-3 – Verbal and physical harassment and bullying of female students by male students was mentioned by 60 subjects, 15% of students in the sample.

B-4 - Students who quarrel for silly reasons frighten other students. This type of behaviour was mentioned by 48 students, 12% of the sample.

B-5 – Students who discriminate against other students on tribal, racial and familial grounds were mentioned by 44 students, 11% of the sample.

B-6 – Students who do not want to learn or cannot learn were mentioned by 40 students, 10% of the study subjects.

B-7 – Students who disrupt lectures with loud voices and noises, making it difficult for those who want to learn to do so were mentioned by 32 subjects.

B-8 – Students who litter classrooms and campus seating areas with rubbish were mentioned by 24 subjects.

C – University registration system

C-1 – The time table and frequency of exams was mentioned as a source of frustration by 60 students, 27.3% of the sample. Students felt there were a lot of exams and their time table was not suitable. Most of the time, many students have two exams per day and sometimes two different exams on the same day and at the same time, which they cannot fulfil properly. This does not fit here, not related to registration.

C-2 – Classes closed for computer registration was mentioned with second frequency. The system of first come first served means those who start registration first have the chance to choose suitable times for themselves and those who register later find the classes suitable for their time table closed, through no fault of their own.

C-3 – Fee payment before registration forces students to pay the fees before having a chance to choose the right schedule for themselves. This causes frustration when all the suitable times for them have been taken up by other students.

C-4 – The lectures timetable was seen always unsuitable for a certain number of students, making their life during the whole term terrible.

C-5 – Wasta enables students with influential connections to choose the best timetable for themselves with the help of the staff in the registration department. Twenty students, 9.1% of the sample, mentioned this.

C-6 – Registration time occurring during the times of other lectures creates a very awkward situation for some students. They have to choose between attending the lecture or registering for the next term, and each choice has negative consequences for them.

C-7 – Registration staff not helping students to understand the procedure of registration so as to make the task easier for them was reported by 16 students (7.3%).

D – University infrastructure

This category included college buildings, classrooms, seats and bathrooms. Students complained about several different aspects, as follows.

D-1 – Eighty subjects (37%) reported that classroom temperatures were very hot in the summer and very cold in the winter. There is no air-conditioning and with many students in

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classrooms that makes breathing difficult and the conditions are not conducive to listening and understanding what the lecturer is saying.

D-2 Dirty toilets that are impossible to use when urgently needed were mentioned by 40 subjects (18.5%).

D-3 Eleven students (11.1%) reported that computer laboratories were always without paper and ink, and this was very irritating for them.

D-4 Some college buildings are very far from classrooms, which makes it very difficult for a certain percentage of students to be on time for classes. For some students being late is unavoidable, and that does not please the lecturer.

D-5 There is no good transport system within the university campus. Twenty subjects (9.3 %) mentioned as a source of frustration.

D-6 Bad seats in classrooms were mentioned by 20 subjects (9.3%). Some seats can hurt students' backs and need attention.

E – Study courses

In this aspect of university life, students made comments concerning the value of the courses they are studying.

E-1 Certain courses are not up to date in their contents, i.e. the scientific knowledge is outdated and not useful for students. Perhaps the some of the texts were written several decades back. Twenty-eight subjects (31.2 %) mentioned this as a source of frustration.

E-2 The amount of material given by certain lecturers is huge and one cannot study it all. Twenty-four subjects (27.3%) mentioned this.

E-3 Sixteen students (18.18%) were frustrated by many laboratories without modern equipment.

E-4 Some courses do not have accompanying practical lessons, which makes studying them useless in certain situations. Twelve students mentioned this (13.6%).

E-5 Likewise, 12 students (13.6%) reported that certain courses they are studying are not relevant to their specialty and will not be helpful to them when the time comes to practice their specialty.

F – Non-academic staff

Though the non-academic staff is not very frequently in contact with students, apart from the secretaries of departments and colleges and the security staff, nevertheless students reported that they do not help them as they expected. Students made two different types of comments in this category, though they are not mutually exclusive.

F-1 – Wasta (influential connections) can help students. If a student wants some help, he will look for someone he or she knows in a high position, or with influential connections. This person can help the concerned student to get the needed help he or she wants.

F-2 – Twenty eight respondents (36.8%) mentioned that these employees discriminate between students on the basis of race, religion, tribe or family.

Key for Table 2 is presented here:

A - Relations with academic staff
B - Relation with other students
C - University registration system
D - University infrastructure
E - Study courses
F - Relations with non-academic staff

Table 2 Frequency of subjects in each year of study mentioning each of the major categories, and their corresponding percentages

Major themes	1	2	3	4	AVERAGE
A	99 63.1 %	85 75.9 %	75 80.6 %	48 76.2 %	72.2 %
B	84 53.5 %	58 51.8%	53 56.9 %	30 47.6 %	52.9 %
C	64 40.7 %	42 37.5	15 17.1 %	25 39.7 %	34.4 %
D	55 35.1 %	37 33.1 %	16 17.1 %	3 4.7 %	22.7 %
E	16 10.2 %	25 22.3 %	17 18.3 %	15 23.8 %	18.3 %
F	8 5.1 %	6 5.4 %	14 10.1 %	7 11.1 %	7.9 %

RESULTS: UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FRUSTRATION DEVELOPMENT

Frustration sources change in accordance with year of study in the university. Looking carefully at Table 2, which lists the frequency and percentages of subjects mentioning each of the major categories, irrespective of its sub themes, broken down by year of the subjects' study at the university reveals the following:

More university students in the third and fourth year mentioned the non-academic staff of the university as a source of dissatisfaction and disappointment, i.e. frustration. This seems logical, since students at this level start thinking of graduation day and how they can meet all the requirements to achieve their goal, which is the graduation from the university. University employees are the ones entrusted with the task of making sure that students meet all the requirements and criteria for graduation. Some students may have difficulties in this regard; hence the complaints about the university's non-academic employees. The percentages of third and fourth year students mentioning this aspect of university life is double that of the first and second years. However, the figures are very small indeed, 10.1% and 11.1% respectively, since most students are expected to go through their university education without any major problems stopping them from graduating.

As far as the university infrastructure and physical facilities such as college buildings, classrooms, seats, cleanness, transport and air-conditioning, Table 2 show that fewer third and fourth year students mention this aspect as a source of frustration: 17.1 % of third year and 4.7 % of fourth year students, compared with 35.1% of first year and 33.1% of second year students.

Among first year students, very few expressed complaints or concerns about the study courses. Only 10.2% did so, which is roughly half of the percentages of the second, third and fourth years.

Also, a smaller percentage of first year students complained about the academic staff, i.e. the lecturers: 63.1%, which though high is substantially smaller than the percentages for the second, third and fourth years.

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It is interesting to notice that the percentage of third year students to complain about the registration system was the smallest among the percentages for the various years of study.

However, the number of students complaining about relations with fellow students in class or in the university at large did not differ very much from year to year. Around 51% of the students in each year complained about problems with other students, i.e. their colleagues.

DISCUSSION

To improve the quality standards of a university, most probably we need to start with answering the simple question: What is a university? One answer is that a university is a learning community entrusted with one or both of the following tasks: science application and science creation Dreijmanis (2008).

These two tasks are mutually exclusive. They are very different in nature. Hence, very few universities in the world shoulder both goals at the same time, and very few universities in the world devote themselves to science creation only.

But all learning communities are work institutions. Like any work institution, they employ a large number of people. Perhaps each employee hates or likes his duties. Perhaps they know their duties, perhaps not. Each one has colleagues and bosses. Each one has a timetable and deadlines. Each has someone who evaluates his work quality, and whose judgment is instrumental in the rewards that he may get as a result of his effort. Each work institution's output varies in the eyes of other people. Sometimes it is good, sometimes better, sometimes worse. Institutions try to improve their standards and be continually up-to-date, since change is always taking place. The University of Jordan is no exception.

Psychologists have used several concepts to improve ultimate output quality and quantity. The following terms are among those used for these concepts: morale, satisfaction, motivation, wellbeing, happiness and frustration.

The present study employed the term frustration to pinpoint obstacles in the different aspects of university life that kept students from achieving what they wanted to achieve by entering the university. A qualitative style of research method was employed to let students who found it difficult or impossible to achieve their goals to express themselves using their own words to identify those obstacles.

The results were interesting. Students identified various obstacles as stopping them from achieving what they wanted to achieve. They identified those obstacles as follows.

1. Academic staff, i.e. the lecturers, behaving unfairly or unhelpfully. If the lecturers do not treat them in an acceptable way, if they do not evaluate their performance on exams in a just way, then feelings of happiness or joy will not be created as far as Freud's theory is concerned. In Pavlov's terminology, there will be no rewards received by those students. In the end, learned helplessness (Seligman 1967) will be the result. That means they will not try to achieve what they are supposed to achieve, since learned behaviour (in Skinner's terminology) is the function of its consequences.
2. If some of their colleagues harass them physically or verbally, keep them from following the lecture by creating disruptive noises in lectures, behave in ways not in line with their value system, or make the environment dirty, then there is nothing in the environment that encourages them to make the necessary effort to learn and achieve what they came to university to achieve. The social pressure from negative behaviour of

academic staff and fellow students is not conducive to learning. On the contrary, it is it encourages students not to bother. In this case there is no positive conformity to learn, in social psychological terms.

3. If lecture and exam time tables and frequency are not convenient to students' circumstances and not creating a convenient environment, then the university life is not conducive to learning.
4. The classrooms become very hot during summer, especially if they are crammed with students. Heat and lack of fresh air to breathe makes learning a difficult venture. Listening to and concentrating on the lecturer becomes an impossible task.
5. Two other aspects of university life were mentioned by a very small percentage of subjects. On the relational side, some subjects mentioned non-academic employees who do not help students or discriminate between them and rely on wasta (influential connections) to help students. This creates feelings of injustice as far as some students are concerned. This is a very painful feeling and prevents some students from learning what they wanted to learn.
6. The second aspect of university life that received little mention is the study courses themselves. If those courses are out of date, irrelevant or too large, this creates negative feelings and makes learning an unpleasant experience since it becomes a waste of time. Such feelings make motivation to concentrate, absorb the information, understand and make connections between the different elements of information impossible. The end result will be a negative learning experience which students do not want to continue or repeat.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study show that certain measures and policies can be implemented to improve the performance of the university's academic and non-academic staff and thus to improve the quality standards of its graduates.

1. Orientation and training seminars for newly appointed lecturers are conducted by many universities around the globe. In such seminars, some of the problems mentioned by students can be addressed by experienced lecturers in the university. Exam preparation, administration and marking can be discussed in detail, along with how to answer questions frequently asked by students. The amount of scientific knowledge to be given to students can be presented, as can examples of recurrent problems and how one can solve such problems. Lecturers can be shown where to get assistance and advice in difficult situations. Lecturers can be introduced to the university's philosophy of teaching, such as teacher-based, student-based or problem-based.
2. Students can be directed to take courses that teach them how to approach others and establish successful relationships, whether with fellow students or lecturers, and how to solve problems peacefully and successfully.
3. The university can address problems with registration by talking to students. The advancements in the world of computers make this very possible.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research can draw from other universities in the country, especially in the far south and the far north. Perhaps problems in such places differ from the problems in Amman, the capital of the country. Also, a quantitative study based on the present qualitative research might be very useful to work out the causality relationship between dependant and independent variables.

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