



The Impact of Gender on the Academic Achievement of Students of Foreign Languages at the University of Jordan

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Abstract

Jordan is an Arab country where the official language is Arabic, and English is the first foreign language. The University of Jordan is the oldest and largest public university in the country. The Faculty of Foreign Languages at the university offers several specializations such as English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Chinese and Korean. In a previous research that examined the relationship between socio economic factors and the academic achievement of students of foreign languages at this university, gender was the most significant factor in predicting the academic achievement. The results showed that the difference between female and male cumulative GPA was statistically significant for the benefit of females. The majority of researchers believe that it is not gender that plays a role in the ability to learn a foreign language, but the socio-cultural environment of learners. Several studies reached the conclusion that language-learning progression is shaped by gendered social practices and culture. This paper aims at sorting out the effect of other variables that might be influencing the achievement of female students. The following variables will be used and controlled for: Parents educational background, type of university acceptance program, governorate where students come from, in addition to motivation of students. Our research uses quantitative data based on an empirical study that applied a questionnaire to the total number of registered students in the bachelor level at the Faculty of Foreign Languages. The total number of students who participated in this study comprises of 2772. To achieve our objective, the data was subjected to both descriptive and advanced statistical analysis; T-test and ANOVA techniques were used. The findings reveal that mother education is the most significant factor that influences female students' achievements, as students, whose mothers have higher educational levels, reach better academic GPAs. The governorate where students come from also has an impact on their academic achievements; the results of the study show that female students who live in the capital governorate project better results than those who live in other governorates.

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