

## **The Level of Collegiality among the Faculty Members at the University of Jarash – Jordan (A Case Study)**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed at assessing the level of collegiality among the faculty members at the University of Jarash in Jordan. The population of the study consisted of (196) faculty members (160 males and 36 females), and the sample consisted of (131) members (102 males and 29 females). To collect data, “An Instrument to Assess Collegiality among University Faculty Members” constructed by Dirani (2015) was utilized. The Instrument consists of three domains: Altruism (12 items), Civility (10 items), and Courtesy (7 items). The results of the study revealed that Altruism domain was rated as average ( $m=3.67$ ), and civility and courtesy domain were rated as high ( $m=4.14$ ) and ( $4.13$ ) consequently. The researchers introduced some recommendations among which were, for those who had rated Altruism as average should re-assess their behaviors toward their colleagues, and secondly, a code of ethics and conduct should be introduced and abide by comprehensively.

*Keywords:* collegiality, altruism, civility, courtesy, congeniality

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Recently while attending a Master’s thesis defense, one of the examiners, a 76 year old female associate professor, started by suddenly raising the manuscript up and shouting, “This is a piece of trash, it’s worth nothing.” Then she looked at the graduate student, who was a 40 year old high school English teacher, and said, “Take it and throw it away, you do not understand neither English nor Arabic.” Everyone in the audience was shocked and astonished, not believing what they just had heard. After seeking the motives behind this inappropriate, unethical, and uncivilized behavior; it appeared that she has had some differences and enmity between her and the student’s advisor. She meant to get back at him through embarrassing and humiliating the student, and degrading his work. This incident raised several questions:

Are all faculty members at this University aware of the meaning of collegiality?  
What is the level of collegiality among them?  
Has the subject of collegiality ever been researched in Arab universities?

Obsessed by the idea that the concept of this word might not be clear to some faculty members, the researchers reviewed the Arabic literature but, surprisingly, nothing was found, as this subject has never been researched before in Arab universities. In reviewing the English literature, hundreds of research papers, reports, and articles, pro and against collegiality were found. The incident, which had happened at the thesis defense, had aroused our curiosity to find the level of collegiality among the faculty members at this university.

### **Review of Literature**

Many faculty members believe that collegiality means congeniality, or just being nice to others, or smile and greet them when they pass you across the hall. Gappa, Austin, and Trice (2007) indicated that collegiality refers to opportunities for faculty members to feel that they belong to mutually respected community of scholars who value each faculty member's contribution to the institution, and feel concern for his colleagues' well-being. Krovetz and Cohick (1993) concluded that, when faculty members support, encourage, respect one another, and choose to work with each other, professional opportunities for growth and improvement are created. They also indicated that shared goals lead to common expectations and standards, and unless faculty members talk to each one another, and help one another, observe one another, very little positive change will occur. In this matter, Cipriano (2012) indicated that in an environment enhanced by trust, respect, and transparency, faculty members can be revived so that they can play an active and responsible role in academic matters. On the other hand, Felps, Terence, Mitch, and Byington (2006) wrote that having just one slacker, or jerk, in a group can bring down the team's overall performance by 30% – 40%. Robert Sutton (2007) indicated that having a few nasty, lazy, or incompetent characters around, can ruin the performance of a team, or an entire organization no matter how stellar the other employees. Boyce, Oates, Lund, and Florentino (2008) have noted that trends have already revealed the emergence of collegiality as a fourth category of formal assessment in some institutions. Cipriano (2013) noted that there are many departments that suffer from non-collegial, disrespectful, uncivil, and nasty encounters among faculty members and staff, and faculty members and students.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aimed at finding out the level of collegiality among the faculty members at the University of Jarash in Jordan. The following two research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of collegiality among the faculty members at the University of Jarash as they perceive it?
2. Are there significant differences between the means of scores of the level of collegiality due to sex, specialization, academic rank, age, and experience?

### Method and Instrumentation

This study utilized the survey research design. To collect data, the “Instrument to Assess Collegiality among the University Faculty Members,” constructed by Dirani (2015) was utilized. The Instrument consists of 29 items distributed into three domains: (Altruism, 12 items), (Civility, 10 items), and (Courtesy, 7 items). The validity and reliability of the instrument were established in a previous study using t-test ( $r=0.926$ ), Cronach-Alfa (0.946), validity of content, and the adequacy of factor analysis ( $\text{sig}=0.000$ ). To ensure transparency in responding to the instrument’s items, a self-addressed envelope was attached to each questionnaire, and the respondents were asked to return it sealed. A Likert – type scale with three possible answers was used to determine the level of collegiality as follows:

1.00 – 2.33	Low
2.34 – 3.67	Medium
3.68 – 5.00	High

### Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of 196 faculty members. This included 160 males and 36 females (see Table 1).

Table 1

#### *Distribution of Population*

Specialization	M	F	Total
Scientific	69	13	82
Literary	91	23	114
Total	160	36	196

The sample of the study consisted of 131 faculty members. This included 102 males and 29 females. Specialization, academic rank, age, and years of experience are included in the demographics (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Demographics*

Specialization	n	Total
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	102	131
Female	29	
<b>Specialization</b>		
Scientific	74	131
Literary	57	
<b>Academic Rank</b>		
Professor	17	131
Assoc. Prof	30	
Asst. Prof	84	
<b>Age in years</b>		
Less than 35	19	131
35 – 50	59	
More than 50	53	
<b>Years of Experience</b>		
Less than 10	91	131
10 – 20	24	
More than 20	16	

**Data Analysis and Results**

Data were analyzed by using (SPSS), and descriptive parameters including frequencies, percentages, means of scores, standard deviations, as well as t-test, and ANOVA were employed to analyze and summarize the data.

1. To answer the first question of the study, frequencies, percentages, means of scores, and standard deviations of the degree of the participants' perceptions were tabulated. The results revealed that 87.3 % of the faculty members rated the altruism domain as medium were for the items; "Agrees to teach courses he does not wish to teach in order to satisfy his colleagues" (m=3.67), "Shares with others materials and knowledge he possesses" (m=3.63), "Allocates a part of his time to help new faculty members to adjust to their new positions" (m=3.62), "Shows desire for others to teach his courses without complaints" (m=3.33), and "Agrees to change his lecture' schedule to satisfy others" (m=3.13). The highest rates in this domain were for the items: "Helps his colleagues in solving their personal problems even he is busy" (m=3.80) and "Gives advice to his colleagues when he is asked to even it was on his own free time" (m=3.81). The results also revealed that the respondents rated both of the civility and courtesy domains as high (m=4.14) and (m=4.13) consequently. The highest two items of the civility domain were: "Attends the departments' meetings

regularly” (m=4.40) and “Avoids absences unless for emergency” (m=4.37). As for the courtesy domain, the highest two items were: “Respects all colleagues and workers with no exceptions” (m=4.28) and “Discusses issues with his colleagues calmly and respects their opinions” (4.23).

2. To answer the second question of the study, t-test were employed to determine if significant differences existed between the faculty members' perceptions of the level of collegiality among them due to sex and specialization. The results showed no differences existed due to these two variables. ANOVA was also utilized to determine if there are differences due to academic rank, age, and experience. The results also showed no differences due to these variables.

### Conclusion

The results of the study indicated that faculty members at the University of Jarash are aware of the concept of collegiality and of the traits or observable behaviors of collegial and non-collegial colleagues. This concept remains the main factor of the success of their academic lives, their departments, colleges, and institutions.

It is impossible to ask a department chair to issue an executive order asking every faculty member to honestly assess his or her own behaviors toward others to see if he or she needs to change or modify the undesirable ones. This cannot happen unless a faculty member really believes that collaborative, honest, and trustful relationships among faculty members are the path to enhance their work and that of their departments and institutions. Finally, to minimize non-collegial behaviors, if they exist, the following recommendations may be used: accountability, adopting a code of conduct and ethics, and sanctions against those who violate the code of conduct and ethics by committing an unethical or inappropriate behavior.

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