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## The Impact of Extracurricular Activities in Egyptian Colleges on the Job Market

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## **The Impact of Extracurricular Activities in Egyptian Colleges on the Job Market**

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### **Abstract**

The research discussed the impact of extracurricular activities in Egyptian colleges on the job market. Two major questions in this research were: is there a difference between the extracurricular activities in the Egyptian private universities and public ones? Does it make a difference to be engaged in extracurricular activities in Egyptian public or private universities on employment? Forty-eight Egyptian graduates took part in an online survey for a quantitative research to examine their involvement in these activities and how these activities reflected on their employment. At the end of the data gathering process, interesting findings resulted from the online survey. One of these interesting findings was that extracurricular activities in public universities seem to differ from private ones. It was found that extracurricular activities in private universities were more effective than in public universities due to the funds collected for private universities. These differences would eventually affect the participants' job employment.

### **Introduction**

According to Roulin and Bangerter (2013), recently, there is a high competition among applicants in the job market due to the limited job opportunities. Another reason behind this competition is the large number of candidates who have the same academic achievements, qualifications, and skills written in their CVs. Chia (2005) stated that the technical academic skills became



less required than before because of the alteration in the international business environment which is affected by the technological advancement in the world. As a result, it started to change its requirements from an applicant with high academic performance into an applicant with soft skills combined with academic success to ensure the flexibility and change in the way of managing and working in a company. Since participants in extracurricular activities learned how to adapt and manage any situation, the company will be benefited from these skills. Eventually, companies decided to ask for more qualifications besides academic success to differentiate among applicants. These qualifications are gained by participating in extracurricular activities. (“Extracurricular Activities”, n.d.), extracurricular activities are called on the activities which are not related to any academic courses or career. However, universities decided not to be limited only on academic learning, but also on soft skills competences. Therefore, they started to provide their students with different extracurricular activities to acquire soft skills which could be added to their resumes. The purpose of this research is to investigate the difference between extracurricular activities in public and private universities and whether it differs on the employment.

### **The Relation between Emotional Intelligence and Job Market**

Referring to what Chia (2005) said, emotional intelligence (EI) and extracurricular activities (ECAs) are considered one package required when any applicant

applies for a job. Emotional intelligence is the ability to control the stress during interviews, solve obstacles and manage the one's actions as Salovey and Mayer (1990) mentioned. For that reason, companies are looking for these previous characteristics in any applicant. In addition to these qualifications, companies search for candidates who joined extracurricular activities because of skills they acquire during their experience. Chia (2005) classified interviews into three stages. The first two stages, initial job interview and subsequent job interview, are checking the emotional intelligence and soft skills of the applicants while the third stage, the final interview for job offer, examines the academic achievement. This shows the priority of the EI and ECAs on academic achievement. Furthermore, interviewers test the interviewees' emotional intelligence through their reactions and responses towards their questions. According to Ljungholm (2014), the reason why companies prefer to employ people with emotional intelligence is that these characteristics help them to take successful decisions and be able to adapt with any circumstances without struggling. Emotional intelligence also provides them with leadership qualification which is considered an important skill to lead and apply any strategic plan.

### **The Reasons for Participating in Extracurricular Activities**

Roulin and Bangerter (2013) stated that there are two reasons for joining extracurricular activities. Referring to the previous study, it was found that students participate

mainly in these activities for the sake of joy and interest. After joining, their motivation changes from internal motives, interest and joy, to external motives. It was found in the same study that external motives are more effective in the labor market than internal ones. The main pressure which affects their external motive is the competition in the labor market. The participants found that these activities increase the possibility of having a good job position due to the gain of the leadership characteristic. On the other hand, there are other three equally likely reasons mentioned in another article. Roulin and Bangerter (2011) said that the first reason is just entertainment which is related to internal motivation while the second reason is to gain an experience which could be added later to their CVs. In the previous case, it will be mainly external motivation. The third one is a mixture of the two reasons. This means that whatever reasons for joining the extra-curricular activities will be related either to internal or external motivations.

### **The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Job Market**

There are two types of currencies required when anyone apply for a job which were mentioned in Greenbank's journal (2015). The first one is the hard currencies which are mainly the learning outcomes and these currencies are common among applicants. The other currency is the soft one which is related to all the soft skills and personal traits. Roulin and Bangerter (2011) stated that the soft skills are communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and numeracy. Supporting the previous point,

Maher and Graves (2008) added that there are another 5 major research studies support that these soft skills are demanded through examining the types of these skills required by companies. Referring to Stuart, Morgan, and May (2011), these skills gained from extracurricular activities make participants more employable and differentiated in the labor market. In Vermeulen and Schmidt's research (2008), students gain knowledge which could help them in their career and employment. They also have a critical eye to judge and choose jobs which could be suitable for their career in the future. On the other hand, the personal traits acquired from these activities are confidence, flexibility, commitment to tasks, motivated to work, self-development, and having social networks with other people. All these characteristics are demanded by any company. Participants who join the extracurricular activities are provided with a lot of experiences which will guarantee a good job position. Greenbank (2015) revealed that when students have the opportunity to choose which activity to join, they choose activities related to leadership and determination, so they can add them later to their resumes and also help them in their future communications. Although these activities provide their participants with higher positions as Tchibozo and Pasteur (2007) mentioned, they increase the period of unemployment. On the other hand, people who do not participate are offered less positions in their jobs regardless of the less time spent without being employed.

## **Benefits of Participating in Extracurricular Activities on Faculty and Students**

Everything can be considered a double-edged weapon. According to Reaves, Hinson, and Marchant (2010), there are advantages and disadvantages for these activities for both faculty and students. Since universities provide their students with learning outcomes, extracurricular activities provide their participants with soft currencies to reach their aims easily. The benefits of these activities on students are professional skills, leadership, time management, flexibility, and other skills which can be developed through these activities. They can make use of these activities in both their university and career lives. In university life, time management and the flexibility with any circumstances are considered the key of success in any academic life. On the other hand, regarding the career life, these skills are required by any company when it asks for an applicant. Moreover, these activities also affect the faculty positively. Although there are some concerns about these activities, faculty find some benefits in them. The time spent with the students is considered a personal reward. They feel proud of themselves because they help younger generations to achieve their goals. At the same time, these activities are considered an interesting way to allocate a part of the faculty's teaching to apply what they learned in real life. When a study was done to explore the reasons for joining the extracurricular activities, it was done on both parties, faculty and students. In the study, students were asked questions about the factors which encouraged them to participate.

After analyzing their data, they found that the reasons are mainly matching to the benefits. The study was also done on faculty, but the results were different after analyzing. The responses showed that faculty participated in these activities for the sake of joining and having the chance to gain networks with different people which could help them in their career lives.

### **Cons of Participating in Extracurricular Activities on both Faculty and students**

Furthermore, there are disadvantages concerning the extracurricular activities. Reaves, Hinson, and Marchant (2010) stated in their paper that these activities are considered, somehow, a wasting time tool when students have to attend meetings or join events. All these preparations take a lot of time from their private life. They could have used their time more efficiently in case they did not join these extracurricular activities. Thompson (2013) suggested in his article that extracurricular activities cannot replace good degree, but they can act as a way to reinforce high academic achievement. In this journal, it was mentioned that these activities can have a negative impact on the academic life although they can provide students with skills such as time management and organization. The impact of these activities is still debatable because they depend on the characteristics of the participant. There is a group of students who can make use of these skills in their academic life and study and, eventually, they can have high grades. On the other side, there are some students who sacrificed high grades in order to gain skills for

their future employment which led to low grades. For that reason, there should be an acceptable balance which is difficult between academic life and extracurricular activities. The cons in the case of the faculty are more than the disadvantages in the case of students. In extracurricular activities, a lot of time is used to prepare and do anything related to the activity. Hence, all what faculties are concerned about is the time consumption which could be used differently. They think that they could have spent this time with their families or on any other interest. Reaves, Hinson, and Marchant (2010) said that faculty spent on average 72 hours per academic year and sometimes more on these activities which is considered a lot of time. They also think about the registration fees and travel. In some activities, members have to travel to other states or places to offer a service in case the activity is related to community service. Consequently, the faculty or the members in this case will pay money for the travel. All these issues concern the faculty in universities. At the end of this paper, it was stated that both the benefits and the cons of these extracurricular activities are intangible.

To conclude, Faculty, students, and the job market are affected by extracurricular activities. Job market also depends on the emotional intelligence. On the other hand, participating in these activities differs from one person to another. Everything has a limit to obtain benefits from and so as extracurricular activities. Related to that, in Roulin and Bangerter's research (2011), the more people participate in extracurricular activities, the less worthy it will be. The reason for this is that people

join these activities to differentiate themselves and in case all people participated then all the experiences and CVs will be the same. For that reason, people should not be limited only to extracurricular activities and learning outcomes; they should always try to find new ways to differentiate themselves in the labor market to ensure a good job opportunity. Nevertheless, researchers did not find whether there is a difference between the impact of extracurricular activities in private universities and public ones, specifically in Egypt. Is there a difference between the extracurricular activities in the Egyptian private universities and public ones? Does it differ to be engaged in extracurricular activities in Egyptian public or private universities on the employment?

### **Methods Participants**

Forty-eight Egyptian college graduates (42 females and 6 males) from different Egyptian universities participated in the survey. Universities included: The American University in Cairo, Ain Shams University, The German University in Cairo, Modern Academy, Helwan University, Cairo University, Misr International University, Damietta University, Port Said University, AAST, and MSA. In addition to the different universities, a number of different fields of study were represented including: CMA, Business Administration, Biology, Broadcasting, Law, English and Comparative literature, Architecture, Mass communication, Computer science and Engineering, Economics, English commerce, Construction Engineering, IMC, Political science, Computer engineering, Accounting, English Literature

and translation, Dentistry, Mechatronics Engineering, Psychology, Pharmacy, TEFL, Art Educating, Civil Engineering, Information system, and Operation and Production Management and GPAs. The participants were non- randomly selected by snowballing method and they did not receive any compensation for their involvement in the survey. However, the graduation period differs among the participants; it ranges from 2002 to 2015. Three participants failed to answer some of the questions in the survey.

## **Materials**

The research method was a quantitative one. An online survey consisting of 10 questions was shared among graduates of Egyptian universities; the survey consisted of 9 multiple choice questions and a rating scale item. The rating scale question included 12 statements asking about the participants' opinion in these statements. The aim of the rating scale question is to infer and discuss the opinions of the participants about their engagement in extracurricular activities and the relation between these activities, type of the university, and the job market.

Furthermore, the online survey was identical for all participants without any modifications or editing during the process of gathering data. The questions of the survey reflect the participants' perspectives and information about the relation between extracurricular activities and job market for both public and private universities' graduates.

Participants replied to the demographic questions regarding their gender, university graduated from, cumulative GPA, major, and the year of graduation. At the end of the survey, participants were asked about the period in which they stayed unemployed and their current job description.

### **Procedure**

The primary data was gathered online and the link to this survey was posted on the following social media platforms: Facebook, WhatsApp, and emails. The duration of opening the survey was two weeks. Before beginning the survey, the participants agreed on the consent forms and were reminded that the information of the participants will be anonymous and they have the freedom to leave the survey whenever they want. The participants started the survey with some background questions. Participants spent approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey. After submitting the survey, participants were thanked and had the chance to ask any questions by sending an email to the researcher.

The pilot testing of the survey was not so different from the actual survey. The pilot testing was distributed to undergraduate students who were not the targeted population and collected their feedback about changes which could be made to the survey. The main change was the question of the participants' nationalities. This question was replaced by the cumulative GPA because GPA was a factor in the employment of the participant as well as the engagement in extracurricular activities.

Another change was the ranking scale question as it was just a multiple choice question without several statements. These statements could help in the results and discussion section through the inferences.

## **Results & Discussion**

As illustrated in table 1, referring to the ranking scale question, the questions were classified to five categories. The first category was related to the type of university, extracurricular activities, and the job market. In statement one, 60 % agreed that the type of extracurricular activity differs according to the type of university whether it is public or private, while 22 % disagreed. In statement four, 44 % felt neutral about the effect of the difference of engaging in extracurricular activities between public and private universities on the job market. On the other hand, 33 % disagreed and 23 % agreed on this statement. Referring to statement five, 58 % of the participants agreed that the type of the university affects employment, while being neutral took was 25 % of the participants and only 17 % disagreed on the statement.

The second category was about the competition in the job market and the impact of the extracurricular activities on the job market. In statement two, around 80% agreed that there is a high competition in the job market. On the other hand, the percentages of both neutral and those who disagreed were almost the same. According to statement eight, 56 % of the graduates agreed that the type of the extracurricular activity has an

impact on the job market and small percentages disagreed or were neutral.

The third category was only related to statement six, 77 % agreed that there is a correlation between emotional intelligence and being employed. The rest of the percentages were divided almost equally between people who disagreed and people who felt neutral about the statement.

In the fourth classification, there were four statements related to each other. The first one was that 75 % disagreed that extracurricular activities are useless and time consuming. The percentage of feeling neutral was placing the second position while the last one was the percentage of the people who disagreed. Referring to the statement seven, 38 % of the participants agreed that they are satisfied with their level of engagement. However, the rest of the percentages were divided on disagreeing and feeling neutral. 79 % out of 48 participants agreed that the different positions in the extracurricular activities provide them with different skills. Also, 70 % agreed that they learned soft skills from joining extracurricular activities.

The last category was related to joining extracurricular activities and GPAs. In the statement nine, 76 % disagreed that engaging in extracurricular activities negatively affect the academic achievement. Finally, 34 % disagreed that extracurricular activities can replace the good GPA.

Elkklisly: *Extracurricular Activities*

The Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1) I believe that the type of extracurricular activities differs according to the university whether it is public or private.	6.67%	15.56%	17.78%	46.67%	13.33%
2) I feel that there is a high competition in the job market.	8.51%	0.00%	10.64%	40.43%	40.43%
3) When I hear the word " Extracurricular activities", I feel that it is something useless and time consumption.	41.67%	33.33%	14.58%	8.33%	2.08%
4) I think that there is a difference to be engaged in extracurricular activities between public and private universities on job employment.	4.17%	29.17%	43.75%	16.67%	6.25%
5) I feel that the type of university has an effect on the job employment.	10.42%	6.25%	25.00%	37.50%	20.83%
6) I believe that the type of university has an effect on the job employment.	4.17%	4.17 %	14.58 %	62.50 %	14.58 %
7) I believe that there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and job employment.	4.26 %	25.53 %	31.91 %	23.40 %	14.89 %
8) I am satisfied with my engaging level in extracurricular activities during university.	0.0 %	14.58 %	29.17 %	47.92 %	8.33 %

## Elklišy: Extracurricular Activities

Elklišy: *Extracurricular Activities*

8) I think that the type of extracurricular activities has different impacts on the job employment.	41.30%	34.78 %	21.74 %	2.17 %	0.0 %
	6.25 %	4.17 %	10.42 %	45.83 %	33.33 %
9) I believe that extracurricular activities affect negatively the academic achievement.	2.27 %	18.18%	9.09 %	45.45 %	25.00 %
10) I feel that the different positions in the extracurricular provide me with different skills.	12.77%	21.28%	34.04 %	23.40 %	8.51 %
11) I learned many soft skills from engaging in extracurricular activities.					
12) I believe that extracurricular activities cannot replace the good GPA.					

**Table 1:** The participants' opinions about some statements

### **Extracurricular activities in Public and Private Universities & job market**

To clarify, the reason why a high percentage of participants thought there was a difference between joining an extracurricular activity in public and private

university is that the quality of these activities differ according to the funds, missions of the activities. The more the funds, the more advanced the club or the activity will be. There are other factors that may have an impact on the quality of the activity; however, this research did not cover that. Furthermore, different skills obtained from different activities have different impacts on the job performance. For instance, participants in clubs which are related to teamwork will obtain the teamwork skill. On the other side, participants in activities which are related to leadership will gain this skill. All these different of skills will affect the participants' performance in their work.

### **Competition in Job Market**

The results of the survey confirmed the findings of Roulin and Bangerter (2013) that there is a high competition in the job market. For that reason, people started joining extracurricular activities to compete in the job market with other applicants.

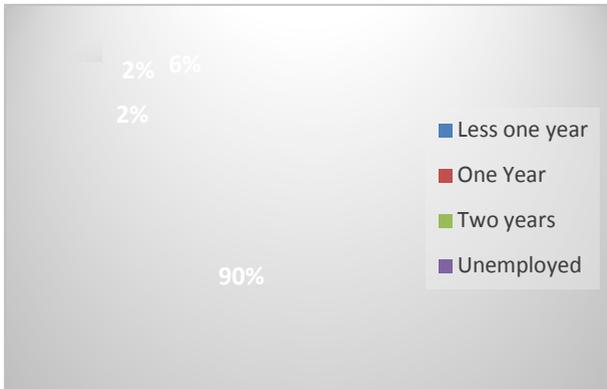
### **Emotional intelligence & Job Employment**

In addition to that, the results of the survey confirmed research findings of Chia (2005) and Salovey and Mayer (1990) that there was a relation between emotional intelligence and job employment. The participants may think that there is a relation between them because the higher the emotional intelligence, the more people can control their reactions and attitudes.

## **Extracurricular activities & GPA**

However, results conflicted with Reaves, Hinson, and Marchant (2010) findings in their paper when they said that these activities are useless and engaged people could have made use of their time more efficiently. According to the online survey responses, participants disagreed with Thompson (2013) that extracurricular activities negatively affect the GPA. In Thompson's paper (2013), the effect of these activities is still debatable although these activities provide the engaged people with skills, however, these activities still affect their GPA because of the time spent on them. Furthermore, results still confirm with Thompson's (2013) theory that these activities cannot replace good GPA, but they can reinforce high GPA.

According to figure one, 90 % of participants stayed less than one year to get employed. On the second place, 6 % of the participants are still unemployed, while the percentages who became employed in one or two years are the same.



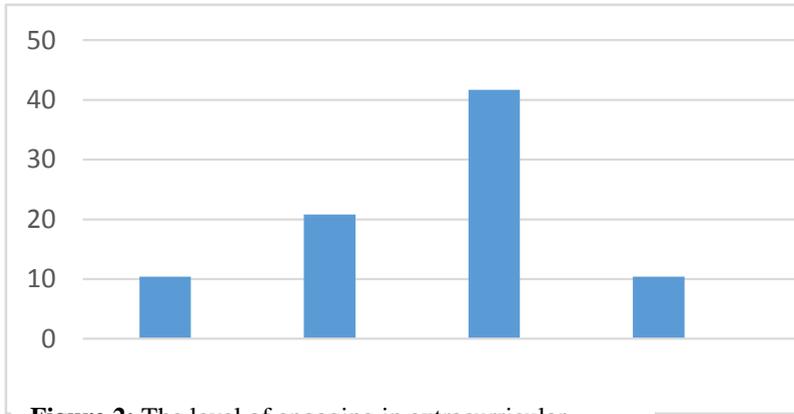
**Figure 1:** The time taken to get employed

### Unemployment period

Most of the participants engaged in extracurricular activities and the majority also took less than one year to find employment. For that reason, extracurricular activities may have an impact on the job employment. Referring to the percentage of the people who are still unemployed, they may be the people who graduated in 2015. However, the percentages of both people who stayed unemployed for one or two years may be the participants who did not participate in extracurricular activities, but this research did not cover this hypothesis.

As illustrated in figure 2, the level of engagement in extracurricular activities during university differed among the participants. 42 % participated sometimes in

these activities during their university life, while the percentage of rarely engagement is slightly higher than the percentage of always engagement.



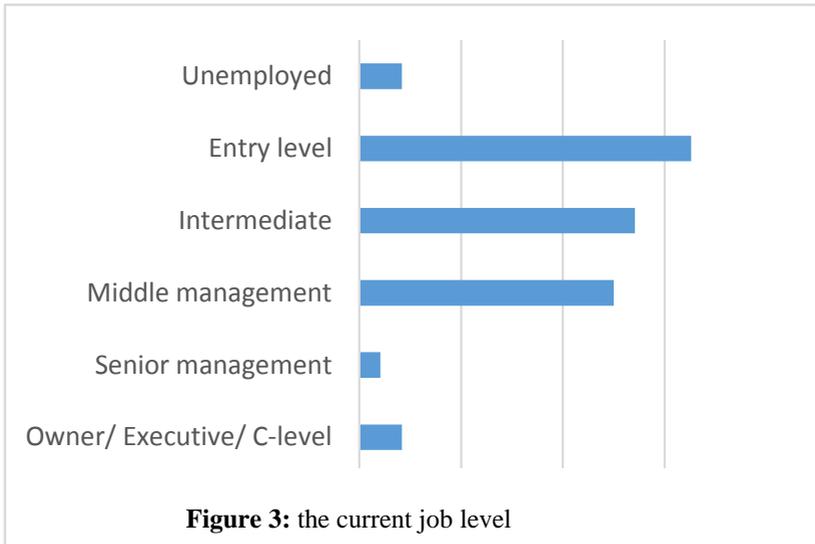
**Figure 2:** The level of engaging in extracurricular activities during university

### **Level of Engaging in Extracurricular Activities during University**

Generally, most of the participants engaged in extracurricular activities during their college years; however, there was a percentage of 20 % of the participants engaged rarely or never. The participants who engaged rarely or never may be the same participants who did not become employed in less than a year.

As shown in figure three, 38 % of participants were employed in entry-level position, while intermediate and

middle management positions were almost 25 %. Senior management, owner/ executive/ C level, and unemployed scored the lowest percentages which were around 3 %.

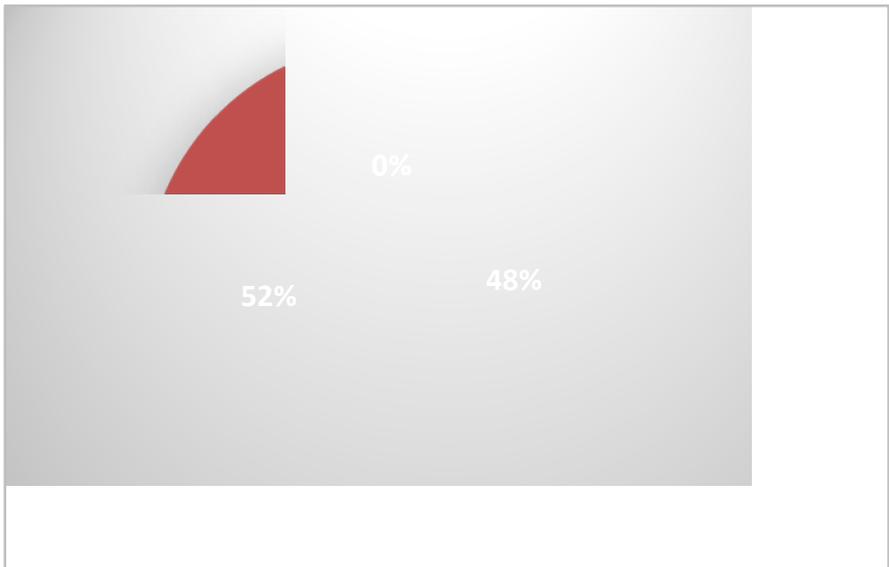


Although, the percentage of the people who work in an entry level job is considered the highest one, it is still not an indicator about how they became employed. There is a probability that they chose to start from the beginning with small tasks to learn more. However, the people who work in more advanced job levels may be working in their own or families' businesses.

Though the results of the survey confirmed the findings of previous researches and conflicted with others, the sample of this survey was only forty-eight participants

which was not enough to generalize the findings to all Egyptian graduates.

Referring to figure four, 52 % were not asked about their engagement in extracurricular activities during university in form of a transcript. However, 48 % of the participants were asked about their transcripts.



**Figure 4:** people asked about the extracurricular activities transcript

### **Extracurricular Activities Transcript**

Based on the previous figure, researchers can say that some companies may not be able to realize the importance of these activities and their impact on the

applicants' employment. Yet, these companies may aim to see the real impact during their employment because it is not necessary that they really engaged during university. They could have just joined clubs, but not really engaged in the activities.

## **Recommendations**

The reason why public universities do not pay attention to these kinds of activities may be that they think it is a waste of money. Moreover, extracurricular activities are considered a part of the liberal arts education, for that reason the ministry of Higher Education should raise awareness about the importance of these activities on the job market by making campaigns to collect funds for them. The ministry should also ask public universities to improve the extracurricular activities for the students and encourage them to join these activities. The ministry should also concentrate on public universities in rural areas. The universities do not even know anything about these activities. In addition to these activities, education in private universities is better than public ones which make a difference when graduates apply for any job. Mostly, managers prefer to accept a private university graduate than a public one, so it is considered unfair competition. The ministry should provide college students with education similar to the private education to have honest and fair competition among graduates when they apply for a job. The government should request companies to ask applicants for a transcript for their engagement in extracurricular activities to increase

awareness about its importance. On the other side, the government will force public universities as well as private ones to provide students who engaged in any activity during their university life with a formal transcript which confirm all their participation. In that case, universities in general will apply a part of liberal arts education.

### **Limitations**

There were some limitations on the completion of this research. Initially, there was a time constraint. In addition to the time constraints, there was a problem in convincing graduates to participate in this survey. I recommend for future researchers to try to collect more participants for their primary data to be able to generalize. However, other researchers failed to do research about the relation among emotional intelligence, extracurricular activities, and job market. For that reason, I advise future researchers to look into relation among them. They could also discuss liberal arts education in relation to applying extracurricular activities. Another perspective which researchers can search for is how far there is a difference between public and private universities and how this difference affects graduates.

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## Appendix 1:

### Questions of the online survey

- 1) What is your gender?  
Female  
Male
- 2) What is your nationality?
- 3) Which university did you graduate from?  
The American University in Cairo  
Ain Shams University  
Other (please specify)
- 4) What was your major?
- 5) When did you graduate?  
2015  
2014  
2013  
Other (please specify)
- 6) To what extent did you engage in extracurricular activities during university?  
Never  
Rarely  
Sometimes  
Usually  
Always
- 7) In interviews, are you asked about your extracurricular transcript?  
Yes  
No
- 8) How long did it take you to get employed?

- Less one year
- One year
- Two years
- Other (please specify)

9) Which of the following best described your current job level?

- Owner/Executive/ C-level
- Senior Management
- Middle Management
- Intermediate
- Entry level
- Other (please specify)

10) What do you think about the following statements?

## Elklisy: Extracurricular Activities

### Elklisy: *Extracurricular Activities*

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1) I believe that the type of extracurricular activities differs according to the university whether it is public or private.					
2) I feel that there is a high competition in the job market.					
3) When I hear the word "Extracurricular activities", I feel that it is something useless and time consumption.					
4) I think that there is a difference to be engaged in extracurricular activities between public and private universities on job employment.					
5) I feel that the type of university has an effect on the job employment.					
6) I believe that there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and job employment.					
7) I am satisfied with my engaging level in extracurricular activities					

<p>during university.</p> <p>8) I think that the type of extracurricular activities has different impacts on the job employment.</p> <p>9) I believe that extracurricular activities affect negatively the academic achievement.</p> <p>10) I feel that the different positions in the extracurricular provide me with different skills.</p> <p>11) I learned many soft skills from engaging in extracurricular activities</p> <p>12) I believe that extracurricular activities cannot replace good GPA.</p>					
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