

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Academic freedom in Al al-Bayt University and the level of practicing it from the view point of the faculty members based on some variables

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The purpose of this study is to identify the level of practicing academic freedom by the faculty members of Al al-Bayt University. The study population included all the faculty members (297) of Al al-Bayt University, during the academic year, 2010/2011. The study sample was randomly selected and included 250 faculty members. To achieve the aims of this study, the study tool was constructed in its final form of 43 paragraphs distributed on four areas: teaching, freedom of speech, decision making, and scientific research. To answer the questions of the study, standard deviation, arithmetic mean, t- test, Multiple Analysis of Variance and Scheffe's method were used to identify the statistical significance of the differences. The findings of the study indicated that the level of practicing academic freedom by the faculty members of Al al-Bayt University was average; teaching came first followed by freedom of speech, scientific research, while decision making came last. The findings also indicated the existence of differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) due to gender; the differences came in favor of males, and there were differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) due to the effect of academic rank; the differences favored assistant professor and beneath. In addition, there were no differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) due to age effect.

**Key words:** Academic freedom, faculty members, university, higher education.

## INTRODUCTION

The university has a great responsibility to the community where it is situated; it leads the scientific movement of the community and develops and achieves prosperity in all fields. Every university on the face of the earth fulfills three main tasks: teaching and transferring information and skills to students in order to increase academic efficiency of the individuals of a community, conducting studies and research closely related to the community based on human and material resources and through laboratories and scientific endeavor, intellectual expression, cultural debate and the search for truth and work updates the community and connects the bridges

between the educated people and the community. The university is no longer restricted within the frame of academic work only, it has also started to effectively contribute to the process of development and progress; it transfers communities from the state of intellectual backwardness and dependency into the stage of independence and prosperity. Thus, it undertakes many roles through its administrative and scientific staff in order to supply the community with the scientifically qualified technical competencies and expertise to take part in the development and modernization movement (Omar, 1992).

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Resposo (2012) described the university as a representative of a scientific community which is interested in the search for truth, and that its main functions lie in research and education, serving the community, developing its individuals, exploiting its energies and means, developing human resources and maintaining national culture and identity. The institution of the university contributes in performing other functions: it changes the backward state of the community into a modern one and transfers the attitudes and scientific skills from one community to the other and from one generation to the other. Thus, it develops scientific knowledge, the spirit of academic research, establishes ethical values in the coming generations, develops students' capabilities and abilities and reinforces their national and scientific personalities.

Thus, the modern university focus is to make itself a cultural center for enlightenment and a tool for constructing a new community. These functions include the following (Hareer, 1994):

1. Preparing specialized staff.
2. Leading modern technology and information revolution.
3. Training and developing within the scientific research field.
4. Providing service for the community in all fields.
5. Providing qualified faculty and staff.
6. Finding solutions for social and economic problems.
7. Guiding the generations of students towards knowledge, science, morals and values.
8. Connecting human and scientific conclusions with developmental national plans of countries.

A university cannot perform these functions effectively and efficiently in an atmosphere which lacks academic freedom. Its function in establishing an open minded individual cannot be achieved without academic freedom. This means that any university which does not contain academic freedom will not be able to establish a creative individual especially in the twenty first century, which witnesses an unprecedented explosion of technology and a wide spread in using it. This is notable in the revolts of the Arab nations against their leaders whether this technology is used in quantity or quality. It has become an obligation on the Arabic universities to be aware of this development which should inevitably exist in the functions of the universities in order to face the challenges of these modern technologies and new inventions. This could not be achieved in the absence of the rights of universities' academicians; most importantly, academic freedom. It facilitates free thought and the establishment of open dialogues. In addition, it provides continuous existence of intellectual and social values through time to the university as a facility of free argument and unlimited exchange of ideas. Moreover, academic freedom enables universities to raise individuals capable of development

and maintaining a free world and open-minded communities (Yakout, 2007).

This study shows the degree of academic freedom for the faculty members of Al al-Bayt University from their point of view. It sheds some light on it by reinforcing and revealing the weaknesses and strengths in providing it in order to arrive at the appropriate solutions. It also provides the scientific atmosphere which contributes to polished outputs that are capable of innovation and creativity.

Academic freedom is considered as a vital requirement of a university life because in it thought grows, cultures prosper and talents are revealed; and without it, it will be difficult for the university to deliver its message to the fullest. If this freedom is important for all societies, however, it is rather far more important to our Arab societies. This is due to the amount of problems and decisive dangers surrounding the community which requires the existence of conscious and educated intellectuals (Kumber, 2001). "Academic freedom is only one of many objectives which people seek to achieve" (Seithy, 2008).

Academic freedom is an efficient tool in discovering the truth; thus, institutions must provide a high level of freedom to their academic society members who would find the knowledge. It requires a commitment of the academic community to practice it. It also includes many activities such as freedom of education and research, the right to choose the topic of a research and its method, publish the production, freedom of speech and opinion, freedom of publishing and information transfer; in addition to the freedom of practice by the society, students, teachers and researchers ( Scott, 1996).

The value of academic freedom is closely related to the main objectives and functions of a modern university. The extended role of the universities in the information age has increasingly grown in importance. The knowledge of global economy, the unique stream of international ideas and thoughts and the increasing numbers of small democracies have commanded a continuous review of the nature and importance of academic freedom; thus, continuously confirming them. Indeed, defending academic freedom all around the world remains in the heart of the continuous political and economic battles in order to confirm the role and independence of universities.

Perhaps academic freedom benefits the society in direct and indirect ways. Directly, it immediately benefits society through applied knowledge and its effects and benefits and training skillful professors, teaching the citizens and leaders of the future. Indirectly, it achieves its benefits on the long term through creating knowledge and understanding, saving them and transferring them, regardless of immediate application.

Thus, academic freedom has a natural value and a scientific value. Most importantly, through using free thought and facilitating establishment of open dialogue,

academic freedom provides continuous existence to the social and intellectual values of the university such as free debate and unlimited exchange of ideas. In addition, academic freedom enables the universities to raise citizens who are able to evolve and preserve a free world and open-minded communities (Yakout, 2007). This means, that they do not only influence the faculty members, they also influence all the members and institutions of a community; therefore, it had received worldwide and local interest in academic freedom of the faculty members. Worldwide signs of academic freedom appeared in Leiden University in Holland in 1575, where teachers and students were given some level of freedom. It expanded during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries at the German universities especially Leipzig and Goettingen universities, and in the establishment of Berlin University under the chairmanship of the famous German philosopher, Joha Gottieb. Academic freedom became known as the freedom of education, learning, the absence of forcing in the principles of education and professor's freedom in research and submitting conclusions through publishing and education (Poch, 1993).

Locally, its beginning was humble until 1987 when academic freedom in the laws of Jordanian government universities included some kind of financial and administrative independence for each university. These laws stated that "a university is a financially and materially independent entity". In addition, article V of paragraph B of the Jordanian University act No (29) of the year 1987 states that " a university is scientifically independent; thus, it sets research programs and educational and training curricula, holds tests, gives scientific and honorary degrees and certificates". Jordanian University acts also stated that each university has a board of trustees who support the independency of the university, manage its resources and discuss its annual budget.

The concept of academic freedom is still new in discussion and processing since there are attempts to find support to academic freedom within the principles of human rights. And the most important support is the right of education which is clearly stated in the international covenants of human rights issued after the Second World War, and in various rights in international conventions. In addition, academic freedom supplements the freedoms mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other documents concerned with political and civil rights of man. It is an image of the scientific and intellectual freedom which is truly related to the right of being different, choice, knowledge and inquiry. Its main goal is to promote scientific reality and remove all obstacles which limit free scientific activity and research, limit the spread of scientific thinking and the spread of science and its infiltration in life.

Social and historic commitment are two important conditions to knowledge access for the researcher, especially the commitment to the humane, social and political

just issues including defending man's rights and freedoms and employing scientific research as possible. Academic freedom is not complete just by issuing the freedom of scientific research and affirming the privileges and rights of academicians through providing independency for research and university institution.

The university cannot perform its social developmental function represented in leading the community into a better life unless it stands in a frame of complete regulatory independence which insures the freedom of research and academic teaching. The independency required is the freedom of the university in running its internal affairs, choosing the faculty members, promoting and applying rules on them, setting exams and the terms by which it gives its degree to students. The elements of academic freedom which can be measured and verified on reality are internal independency within the institution, multiple sources of funding including funding main and applicable research, job security for the researchers and academicians, the existence of a professional association that takes care of researchers and academicians and defends their interests individually or socially (Owaidat, 2009).

Higher education has witnessed at present the reinforcement of the concept of academic freedom and the prosperity of modern technology and information technology. Thus, the functions of a university have evolved in facing the challenges of modern technology and keeping pace with the new inventions, establishing complete human preparation for university students which is reflected on the reinforcement of the concept of academic freedom in higher education institutions. In addition, the university focuses on preparing specialized technical staff, leading modern technology and information technology, training, evolving in scientific research, providing services to the community in different fields, finding solutions for social and economic problems, directing generations of students towards science, knowledge, morals and high values, connecting scientific and human research with national development plans (Hareer, 1994).

Academic freedom of faculty members takes place through their right in giving a description of the material they are teaching, teaching the material in the way they see fit and freedom in displaying their ideas and conclusions to the students without any interference (Mahafzah, 1994). Free science and education which is displayed without any pressure becomes an influential science, in which the students are convinced and they could sense its honesty; and, thus influence their thought and role in building the future of their community because this is the major benefit of academic freedom of the faculty (Nelson, 2010).

It is noted, that academic freedom of a professor is a right in all universities through practicing their job freely without any intervention or being monitored by others

whether the government or any administrative, political, religious or social authority, or any authority outside the university. Professors at universities and other academic institutions have every right and freedom of speech, expression, thought, discussion and argument. They also have a right and liberty in teaching, educating, learning, criticism and creativity, in addition to the freedom of sharing, choosing and conducting research, the freedom to publish the results of the research to the public and present them to the students and others without being monitored, deleted, adjusted or punished. The professor has the right and liberty in his academic duties, does not need to be reviewed by anyone regarding the course plan, research or articles and does not ask for permission from anyone to approve of his research or applaud the study or the research. During the lecture, the professor has full liberty to discuss the topic of the research avoiding controversial points that are not related to the topic. A professor should not lie or change or twist the results of the research in order to make them fit the presupposed prospects which serve political goals. Academic freedom gives the professor immunity to keep his academic and functional position as long as he remains eligible for it and does not impair his academic duties regardless of his personal beliefs. It also confirms that a professor or a researcher who seeks to discover new knowledge deserves his freedom from the beginning of being a student into becoming a professor though his reports, articles, research and results.

In this sense, no one can deny the position or role of a college or university professor in building and forming the nation and its development, and the great burden on his shoulders in developing it through his free teaching or non restricted conclusions of his research, or predesigned recommendations that follow the policies of a certain party.

Thus, this study reveals the extent of practicing academic freedom by the faculty members of Al al-Bayt University from their point of view. Since it is an international Islamic University that received Jordanian Royalty patronage from the Hashemite Family, this places a heavy burden on it to have a leading role not only in scientific research, but also in the extent of its influence on the entire community through its outputs. This will not be achieved without academic freedom of the faculty to practice it.

The purpose of this study is to reveal any of statistical significant differences of the freedom of the faculty members due to the different profiles of the sample individuals (age, gender, academic rank).

## LITERARY REVIEW

Glicksman (1986) conducted a study "Institutional Openness and Individual faculty Academic Freedom"; he

demonstrated that the professor might sometimes express opposing opinions to the philosophy of the university in which he works, and might have criticized under the pretense of academic freedom. However, the university cannot stand facing these situations for many reasons: the university depends on the community or the country for its existence, financial and moral support; thus, if criticism comes from the inside, then its image will be shaken and might weaken it. In addition, the university likes to work with opinions that come from within, and demands reformation which the administration needs to carefully study. Otherwise, the outlet of the professors would somewhere affect the university. The researcher concluded that academic freedom is that which is practiced by those who respect their job, respect truth and science and do not pretend to use this right in order to achieve personal, ideological and political aims.

Tanash (1994) conducted a field study titled, "The Concept of Academic Freedom among Teaching Members in the Jordan University". The study aimed to detect the concept of academic freedom among teaching members in the Jordan University, and their views toward practicing academic freedom in the Jordan University. Results of the study indicated that a high percentage of teaching members say that university law and teaching environment system at the Jordan University do not provide academic freedom. High percentage of them practices academic freedom according to their individual diligence and that the concept of academic freedom is fuzzy in the Jordan University.

In another study conducted by Keith (1997), "Faculty Attitudes Toward Academic Freedom", the questions of the research were: how does the faculty define educational academic freedom? What do they believe to be a threat to academic freedom and what protects it? How do the attitudes of the faculty regarding academic freedom vary through academic discipline, institution, the status of tenure of a professor? The researcher also demonstrated that the faculty has defined academic freedom as the freedom to teach and conduct research without any intervention or harassment; the freedom to choose whatever texts they wish and to choose their own methods in teaching, following and sharing their points of view. The researcher indicated that they feel academic freedom is limited and restricted to the academic institutions regulations, professional responsibility, the desire of not hurting others, respecting the institution's mission and not using the class as a platform to convince the students of the professor's personal point of view. The researcher also displayed that from the conclusions of his study, that the faculty does not see a great danger and a threat to academic freedom at their universities; rather, they felt that their academic freedom is well protected. They have presented high confidence in themselves as protectors and defenders of their academic freedom. Finally, the researcher demonstrated that the

non-tenured faculty members enjoy less academic freedom than the tenured members

Batchelor (1999)'s study titled, "Academic Freedom and Teacher's Probationary Period", aimed to detect tension and the difference between academic freedom and teacher's probationary period, that is, "getting fixed after the probationary period". The study also examined the development of law in Canada regarding the relationships of the teaching members in the university related to job fixation. The researcher adopted the traditional legal method for the purposes of this study. Courts' resolutions regarding conflicts between teaching members and universities during the period (1861-1996) were defined and abstracted. This descriptive study revealed that despite the fact that courts become less in considering and respecting academic decision makers, academic freedom is generally acquiring protection through group agreements between teachers' associations and universities. This denotes that group negotiation is becoming a significant factor in protecting university teachers, especially the unfixed ones.

In a study conducted by Al- Zaidy (2000), "College Education and the Problems of scientific research: Academic Freedom as a Model", he demonstrated the functions of a modern university and the concept of academic freedom. He also provided an accurate description of the characteristics of a university professor and the skills of creative thinking which he needs to possess. The study also clarified the main features of higher education in the Arab world, namely, the unprecedented growth in preparing the students, the disorder in the higher education structure and the public sector as a main source of funding higher education. The study also indicated the crisis of the academic freedom and the orientalism of the Arabic future. The researcher also gave many recommendations, most importantly, giving financial and administrative independency to universities in choosing the leaders within the institutions, practicing scientific dialogue and following honest means to achieve financial returns.

Warner (2000) did a study titled, "Opinions of Managers, Faculty and Students on Academic Freedom and Artistic Expression". The main objective of this study is to compare the opinions of the students, managers and members of the faculty at the Fine Arts Department regarding the institution's options and the replacement of the policies to display argumentative artistic works for the students at community colleges in Maryland, America. The author discussed the concept of academic freedom, the principle of institutional neutrality and the context of discussion. The results of the study showed the presence of different opinions between the managers, faculty members and students regarding academic freedom. These results support the research's original hypothesis. In addition, the study found that there is a variance in the practice and definition of academic freedom in every

institution.

In Kumber (2001)'s "Academic Freedom in Universities is Absent or Dilapidated: An analytical study", he described the modern Arabic educational system including higher education (2003) as a Western system cloned in philosophy, structure, methodology and techniques and does not contain any heritage. He also demonstrated that the university has given up the search spirit, and criticism approach to the teaching of topics, and has stopped teaching knowledge, which is taken for granted; which, according to the new Sociology Education, is removed from its social context. Even in the sciences there are no scientific researches or experiments or anything that develop creative abilities. The researcher also demonstrated that the student has become an individual lost in the crowd of other students; there are formalities and boring studies; grades and certificates are the standards that govern students and define their educational behavior and nothing else.

Rich (2002)'s "The Extent of Freedom of Speech and Practices by Educators at Governmental Educational Institutions in Florida in USA" focused on the freedom of speech and practice by the educators who work for American educational institutions, and many educators participated in it. The study concluded that academic freedom practiced by the educators was through discussing topics related to it. In addition, the teacher is aware of the extent of the protection of his freedom in expression, however, within the limits of responsibility where there would be enhancement of educational matters.

In Godell (2005)'s "Faculty Attitudes Towards Academic Freedom at Virginia Commonwealth University", the study population included all the faculty members at VCU and they were interviewed regularly; the questions of the study focused on the importance of academic freedom, and on the attitudes of the professors within different fields. The majority of the sample individuals agreed on the importance of academic freedom since it is a distinctive feature of university education. In addition, they have agreed on the presence of risks that threaten practicing academic freedom, and that these risks have increased especially after 11/9/2001. However, in spite of these risks, the study individuals have agreed on the fact that academic freedom is a right and must be practiced.

Ibrahim (2008) conducted a study titled "Academic Freedom of Researchers and University Faculty Members at Egyptian Universities". The study sample included researchers and faculty members at three universities: Alexandria, Cairo, Assiut. Two questionnaires were designed, one for the faculty members and the other for researchers. These questionnaires were distributed on the following fields: freedoms, commitments, obstacles, guarantee. The study arrived at many important conclusions: there are many obstacles facing practicing academic freedom whether for researcher or faculty

members; some aspects of academic freedom and the guarantee necessary to it were not fulfilled, and it showed that there was a variable for the college while there was no variable for academic rank of the extent of the achievement of academic freedom for faculty members.

Al-Sarhani (2008)'s "The Role of Academic Leadership in the Availability of Academic Freedom at the Education Faculties in the Northern Area in Saudi Arabia from their Point of View and from the Faculty Members' point of View" aimed at identifying the roles of academic leaderships in providing academic freedom in faculties of education in the Northern areas in Saudi Arabia. In order to achieve that, the study tool was designed in the form of a questionnaire distributed on four areas: decision making, freedom of speech, scientific research and teaching. The study concluded that the degree of providing academic freedom by academic leaders of education faculties was great. It also concluded that there are no differences in providing academic freedom by academic leaders in terms of gender and high rank (Professorship). It also displayed the existence of significant difference due to the variables of academic ranks and gender. The study arrived at a number of conclusions.

Hamdan (2008) tries to find out if there is a relationship between academic freedom and organizational loyalty as perceived by members of the faculty at Palestinian universities and explains if this would-be relationship differs according to variables of sex, college and academic rank.

The population of the study was all faculty members at An-Najah National, Bir Zeit, Al-Quds (Abu Dees) and the Arab-American universities.

To achieve the objectives of the study, two questionnaires were developed, that measured academic freedom and organizational loyalty respectively. The results indicated that there are no statistically significant differences at  $\alpha = 0.05$  in the relationship between academic freedom and organizational loyalty, as perceived by the faculty members, as well as years of experience and college. After collection of data and analysis, it was found that the degree of academic freedom exercised by the faculty members at Palestinian institutions of higher learning was averaged. The total degree of response was 67.6%. In contrast, the total degree of organizational loyalty was high (78.4%). There was no statistically significant relationship at  $\alpha = 0.05$  between academic freedom and organizational loyalty of the faculty members at the Palestinian university. There were also no statistically significant differences at  $\alpha = 0.05$  in both academic freedom and organizational loyalty of faculty members which might be attributed to sex, academic rank, experience and college variables.

Sayeg (2010) conducted a study with the aim of knowing the level of academic freedom of faculty members practiced through electronic administration at

Saudi Arabian universities. Descriptive analysis approach was used and the study sample was limited to the faculty members of King Abd-Al-Aziz University; the results indicated that the level of academic freedom in decision making, freedom of speech and scientific research was weak. The study recommended that more research on Saudi universities be conducted. In Ra'fet (2010)'s "The Degree of Academic Freedom Availability at Yarmouk University and Sultan Qaboos University", availability of the degree of academic freedom is given to the faculty members at both universities as the areas: teaching, scientific research, opinion and expression and community service. It was conducted on faculty members in both universities, and the results indicated that the degree of academic freedom availability was great in teaching and scientific research, and was medium in opinion and expression and community service. Al-khataybeh (2011) did a study titled, "Faculty Members' Perceptions of their Academic Freedom and its Relationship with Research Output at Jordanian universities". It aimed to identify the perceptions of faculty members of the Jordanian universities (Jordanian, Yermouk and Mutaa) of their academic freedom, and to investigate its relationship with research output. Data gathering was done, by using a questionnaire to identify perceptions held by faculty members regarding their academic freedom. The results revealed that faculty members' perceptions of their academic freedom and their research output were moderate. No significant correlation was found between academic freedom and research achievement of faculty members, whereas significant differences were found in faculty members' perceptions of research achievement due to university (public universities were favorable), and due to type of faculty (humanistic faculties were favorable). But no significant differences were found due to academic rank and graduation university. Related studies conducted so far have dealt with faculty members of many universities and some of them dealt with the same variables. However, this study dealt with faculty members of the University of Al- Albayt and focused on different variables, faculty members see it themselves. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, a questionnaire was distributed on four

### **Rational and need for the study**

Higher education system is witnessing problems that have led and still lead to the decline of the effectiveness of this system, and one of the most important reasons for this is the decline in the level of academic freedom for professors (The 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Arab World, 2003), which the faculty members of all Jordanian universities suffer from, and most specifically Al al-Bayt

University. This has probably led to many problems:

1. The immigration of the faculty members outside Jordan which is known as brain drain.
2. The feeling of depression among many faculty members due to lack of academic freedom.
3. Destroying the spirit of honest competition between faculty members.

These have negatively reflected on the performance of the faculty members in general, and scientific research in particular, leading to the decline in the levels of the outputs of Jordanian higher education facilities.

Thus, this study aims to reveal the level of faculty members' practice of academic freedom at Al al-Bayt University. Since it is an international Islamic University that received Jordanian Royalty patronage from the Hashemite Family, this places a heavy burden on it to have a leading role not only in scientific research, but also its influence on the entire community through its outputs.

The purpose of this study is to reveal any statistical significant differences of the freedom of the faculty members due to the different profiles of the individuals (age, gender, academic rank).

The study is important because of the extreme importance of the community where it was done and the faculty members' important role in the educational process.

It is done for Jordan not to go into the Arabic Spring, which the Arab region has witnessed since 2011; it aroused from the principle of rejecting oppression and dictatorships in any form and anywhere. This confirmed democracy and freedom in all the state's institutions, especially universities.

### **The questions and objectives of the study**

This study aims to identify the extent the faculty members of Al al-Bayt University practice academic freedom from their point of view. This was achieved by answering the following questions:

Question one: What is the degree faculty members of Al al-Bayt University practice academic freedom from their point of view?

Question two: are there any differences of statistical significance in the degree of practicing academic freedom by the faculty members of at Al al-Bayt University from their point of view due to the variables, age, gender, academic rank?

### **Procedural definitions**

Academic freedom: it is the right of every faculty member

to have freedom to express their points of view and ideas, they should have freedom to choose the content of their courses, freedom to choose research topics, freedom to publish in magazines that meet the basics of publishing in Jordanian universities, freedom to participate in social and political activities and freedom to participate in decision making without any pressure or intervention from whatever party.

Faculty members: involve people who teach at Al al-Bayt University during the academic year of 2010/2011.

### **Hypotheses of the study**

- There are statistically significant differences between the degrees of practicing academic freedom by the faculty members of Al al-Bayt University from their point of view due to the variable of age (Less than 35, 35-50 and over 50).
- There are statistically significant differences between the degrees of practicing academic freedom by the faculty members of Al al-Bayt University from their point of view due to the variable of gender (male, female).
- There are statistically significant differences between the degrees of practicing academic freedom by the faculty members of Al al-Bayt University from their point of view due to the variable of academic rank (Assistant professor and beneath; Associate professor, Professor) (Table 1).

### **METHOD AND PROCEDURES**

The study population and sample: the population of the study was made of all the faculty members (314) of Al al-Bayt University during the academic year, 2010/2011, and the study sample was selected through stratified random approach.

#### **Study tool**

In order to achieve the objectives of the study in identifying the degree of practicing academic freedom by the faculty members of Al al-Bayt University from their point of view, a questionnaire was constructed according to the following steps:

1. Using literary review and previous studies related to this study in Arabic and foreign scientific magazines, and scientific references related to this topic.
2. Using opinions of arbitrators and technical experts in this field from the officials of Jordanian universities.
3. Putting questions from related fields in the questionnaire and distributing it to a group of members of the faculty outside the study sample, and based on their responses some paragraphs were constructed.

The questionnaire primarily contained 50 paragraphs representing academic freedom at Al al-Bayt University. And each paragraph was given degrees according to Likert scale (a very large degree, a

**Table 1.** Frequencies and percentages based on the study variables.

	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	213	85.1
	Female	37	
Academic rank	Assistant professor and beneath	158	63.2
	Associate professor	66	26.4
	Professor	26	10.4
Age	Less than 35	48	19.2
	35-50	128	51.2
	Over 50	74	29.6
	Sum	250	100

**Table 2.** Cronbach alpha homogeneity coefficient and stability of repetition.

Areas	Homogeneity	Stability of repetition
Academic freedom in teaching	0.7	0.82
Academic freedom in freedom of expression	0.72	0.85
Academic freedom in scientific research	0.79	0.79
Academic freedom in decision making	0.72	0.75
Freedoms in general	0.85	0.83

large degree, medium degree, small degree, very small degree) distributed on four areas of academic freedom.

The following standard was adopted in order to analyze the paragraphs of the questionnaire:

From 1- 1.49 very small degree  
 From 1.5- 2.49 small degree  
 From 2.5 – 3.49 medium degree  
 From 3.5- 4.49 high degree  
 From 4.5- 5 very high degree

In order to verify the honesty of the study tool, it was displayed to a group of arbitrators (7) who are specialized and experienced in the field of the study to determine the usability of the paragraphs of the study tool in measuring what it was prepared to do, and to add, edit or delete any of the paragraphs. 6 paragraphs were deleted, 5 edited and 3 added based on their opinions. After that, the questionnaire was finalized to contain 43 paragraphs distributed in the following areas:

First: Teaching with 12 paragraphs assigned for it.

Second: Freedom of expression with 5 paragraphs assigned for it. Third: Scientific research with 18 paragraphs assigned for it.

Fourth: Decision making with 7 paragraphs assigned for it.

#### The stability of the tool

In order to verify the stability of the study tool, the questionnaire was applied on an exploratory sample from outside the study sample which included 40 faculty members twice, with two weeks apart. The reliability coefficient was calculated through Pearson's coefficient for both questionnaires, then, the reliability coefficient of

homogeneity (internal coherence) was represented by Cronbach alpha formula for the areas of the study tool as represented in Table 2.

#### Statistical processing

The data were entered into a computer, and the necessary statistical processes were conducted; the means and standard deviations were used to recognize the differences in responses, in addition to the T- test and the multiple analyses of variance and Scheffe's test to recognize these differences statistically.

Question one: What is the degree of practicing academic freedom by the faculty members from their point of view?

In order to answer this question, the means and standard deviations were calculated for the degree of practicing academic freedom by the faculty members from their point of view. Table 3 shows that.

Table 3 demonstrates that the means ranged between 2.56-3.67; and academic freedom in teaching comes first with the highest mean of 3.67, followed by academic freedom of expression (2.93), academic freedom in scientific research (2.62); while academic freedom in decision making came last (2.56). The mean for the freedoms in general is 2.96.

The means and the standard deviations for the evaluations of the study sample on the paragraphs of the questionnaire were calculated separately, as the following:

Question two: does the degree of practicing academic freedom by faculty members differ from their point of view depending on the difference in age, gender, and academic rank?



**Table 3.** The degree of practicing academic freedom by the faculty members from their point of view in descending order based on the means.

Rank	number	Area	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree
1	1	Academic freedom in teaching	3.67	0.34	
2	2	Academic freedom in freedom of expression	2.93	0.59	
3	3	Academic freedom in scientific research	2.62	0.5	
4	4	Academic freedom in decision making	2.56	0.52	
		Freedom in general	2.96	0.33	

**Table 4.** Means and standard deviations of the degree of practicing academic freedom from the point of view of the faculty members based on gender, academic rank and age.

Variable			Academic freedom in teaching	Academic freedom in freedom of speech	Academic freedom in research	Academic freedom in decision making	Freedom in general
Gender	Male	X	3.71	2.9	2.7	2.64	3.02
		Y	0.31	0.64	0.46	0.52	0.33
	Female	X	3.52	3.03	2.31	2.2	2.74
		Y	0.38	0.31	0.54	0.36	0.26
Academic rank	Assistant professor and beneath	X	3.76	2.96	2.67	2.62	3.02
		Y	0.33	0.57	0.44	0.59	0.25
	Associate professor	X	3.52	3	2.6	2.5	2.91
		Y	0.28	0.67	0.66	0.43	0.47
	Professor	X	3.6	2.64	2.46	2.43	2.82
		Y	0.34	0.46	0.23	0.3	0.2
Age	Less than 35	X	3.68	3.1	2.67	2.69	3.03
		Y	0.24	0.53	0.18	0.65	0.18
	35-50 years	X	3.66	2.99	2.6	2.42	2.94
		Y	0.4	0.69	0.62	0.49	0.43
	over 50	X	3.67	2.71	2.63	2.7	2.97
		Y	0.25	0.34	0.4	0.41	0.16

X= mean; Y= Standard deviation.

In order to answer this question, the means and standard deviations for the degree of practicing academic freedom from the point of view of the faculty based on gender, academic rank, age are given in Table 4.

Table 4 demonstrates an apparent variance in means and standard deviations of the degree of practicing academic freedoms by faculty members from their point of view due to the difference in gender categories (male, female), academic rank (Assistant professor and beneath, Associate professor, Professor) and age (less than 35, 35-50, over 50). To demonstrate the differences of statistical significance between the means, multiple variance analysis was used (Table 5) and the multiple analysis variance was used as the tool (Table 6).

Table 6 shows the following:

1. There are differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) due to the effect of gender in all areas except in freedom of speech; the differences are in favor of males.
2. There are differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) due to the effect of academic rank in teaching and freedom of speech areas. And in order to demonstrate statistically significant even differences between the means, Scheffe's method was used (Table 8). While there were no differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in scientific research and decision making areas.
3. There are differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) due to the effect of age in freedom of speech and decision making areas. And in order to demonstrate the statistically significant even

**Table 5.** Multiple variance analysis of the effect of gender, academic rank, age on the areas of practicing academic freedom by faculty members from their point of view.

Source of variance	Scopes of freedom	Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Square mean	F value	Statistical significance
Gender Hotleng=4.79	Teaching	1.428	1	1.428	14.954	0
	Freedom of speech	0.667	1	0.667	2.017	0.157
H=.000	Scientific research	5.901	1	5.901	25.895	0
	Decision making	7.928	1	7.928	36.729	0
Academic rank Welks=8.34	Teaching	2.744	2	1.372	14.368	0
	freedom of speech	3.44	2	1.27	5.199	0.006
H=.000	Scientific research	0.896	2	0.448	1.967	0.142
	Decision making	0.841	2	0.421	1.949	0.145
Age Welks=7.55	teaching	0.569	2	0.285	2.982	0.053
	Freedom of speech	3.303	2	1.652	4.992	0.008
H=.000	Scientific research	0.354	2	0.177	0.776	0.461
	Decision making	5.75	2	2.875	13.32	0
Error	teaching	23.295	244	0.095		
	Freedom of speech	80.733	244	0.331		
	Scientific research	55.603	244	0.228		
	Decision making	52.666	244	0.216		
Total	Teaching	28.036	249			
	Freedom of speech	88.144	249			
	Scientific research	62.754	249			
	Decision making	67.185	249			

**Table 6.** Multiple variance analysis of the effect of academic rank and age on the degree of practicing academic freedom by the faculty members from their point of view.

Source of variance	Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Mean of square	F. value	Statistical significance
Gender	3.033	1	3.033	31.735	0
Academic rank	1.131	2	0.566	5.918	0.003
Age	0.146	2	0.073	0.765	0.466
Error	23.317	244	0.096		
Total	27.628	249			

differences between the means, Scheffe's method was used (Table 9).

Table 7 shows the following:

1. There are differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between assistant professor and beneath, on one hand, and associate professor and professor, on the other hand. The differences came in favor of assistant professor and beneath in academic freedom in teaching and freedom in general areas.
2. There are differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between professor on one hand, and assistant professor on the other hand. The differences came in favor of each assistant professor and

beneath and associate professor in academic freedom of speech area.

Table 8 shows the following:

1. There are differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between more than 50 and less than 35 on one hand, and from 35-50 on the other hand. The differences came in favor of less than 35 and from 35-50 years in academic freedom of speech area.
2. There are differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between less than 35 and from 35-50 years. The differences came in favor of less than 35. And there are differences between 35-50 and more than 50 years in favor of more than 50 years in academic freedom

**Table 7.** Scheffe's method to demonstrate the effect of academic rank on the academic freedom in teaching and freedom of speech and freedoms in general.

		Mean	Assistant professor and beneath	Associate professor	Professor
Academic freedom in Teaching	Assistant professor and beneath	3.76			
	Associate professor	3.52	24.*		
	professor	3.6	16.*	0.09	
Academic Freedom in freedom of expression	Assistant professor and beneath	2.96			
	Associate professor	3	0.05		
	professor	2.64	32.*	37.*	
Freedoms in general	Assistant professor and beneath	3.02			
	Associate professor	2.91	12.*		
	professor	2.82	20.*	0.09	

\* Significant at (>0.05).

**Table 8.** Scheffe's method to demonstrate the effect of age on academic freedom in the area of freedom of speech and decision making areas.

		Mean	Less than 5 year	5- 10 year	Over 10 year
Academic freedom in freedom of speech	Less than 35	3.1			
	35-50	2.99	0.11		
	over 50	2.71	39.*	28.*	
Academic freedom in decision making	Less than 35	2.69			
	35-50	2.42	27.*		
	over 50	2.7	0.01	28.*	

in decision making area.

## DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The results related to the first questions showed that the mean of the responses of the faculty members of the study tool ranged between 2.56- 3.67, and the mean of freedoms in general was 2.96. This degree is considered moderate; that is the administration of the university is moderately working on providing academic freedom for the faculty from their point of view. This result agrees with the study of Keith (1997), Al-Zaidy (2000), Hamdan (2008) and Al-Khataybeh (2011), but disagrees with that of Kumber (2001), Ibrahim (2008), Sayeg (2010), which degree was low. In addition, this result disagrees with the study of Rich (2002), Goodell (2005) and Al-sarhani (2008), whose degree was high.

This result was unexpected for the researcher, perhaps due to the low status of democracy in the Arab world in general. It is known that Al – Al Bayt University is

a part of Jordan which is a part of the Arab world; thus, it is natural for it to be affected by the status even with small percentages. However, the policy of the Ministry of Higher Education in Jordan is heading towards the independency of the universities from the bodies of the state in all its affairs especially in the educational aspect. This probably has made some areas take high values such as academic freedom in teaching, whose mean was 3.67. Here the professors enjoy the right of choosing courses, method and topics they discuss during their lectures, and the method of evaluation and many other matters that support their academic freedom. In this area, this result agrees with the study of Ra'fet (2010) but disagrees with that of Sayeg (2010). On the other hand, it is noted that the means for academic freedom in the areas: freedom of speech, scientific research and decision making were 2.93, 2.62 and 2.56, respectively and they were moderate. This result agrees with the study of Ra'fet (2010) but disagrees with that of Sayeg (2010). This indicates that academic freedom is still incomplete and is being subjected to governmental and

societal interventions, or perhaps is pressured by some academicians who hold high administrative positions; it could be the president of the university, the vice president of the university or others who have power inside or outside the university. This limits the degree of academic freedom in most of its areas.

Question two: does the degree of practicing academic freedom by faculty members differ from their point of view depending on the difference in gender, academic rank and age?

The results related to the second question are as follows:

1. There are differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) due to the effect of gender in all areas except freedom of speech. The differences came in favor of men, which is natural in male-dominated societies, the Jordanian community being one of them. In addition, most of the decision makers at the university are males (The head of the board of trustees, members, the president and vice president are males), which directly reflects on the academic freedom to be given in favor of males at the expense of females; and perhaps academic freedom is perceived as an act of charity to females rather than a simple right of a faculty member, making their academic freedom lower. This result agrees with that of Al-sarhani (2008), but disagrees with that of Hamdan (2008).

2. There are differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) due to the effect of academic rank. This result agrees with that of Alsarhani (2008) but disagrees with that of Ibrahim (2008), Hamdan (2008) and Khataybeh (2011). There are differences between assistant professor and beneath and associate professor and professor. The differences came in favor of assistant professor and beneath in all freedoms. This is probably natural since those who have the higher rank mostly reach the aspired level of freedom in order to fit the rank which is the highest scientific rank at the university. Having now a higher rank, the professor would aspire for more freedoms than before being an assistant professor and then associate professor. The mean of this freedoms was moderate (2.82), unlike the assistant professor whose freedoms mean was 3.02; while the associate professor's mean of academic freedoms was 2.91; between the professor and assistant professor. This is a natural result of a rank that comes between professor and assistant professor; that the mean of freedoms is moderate perhaps because the increased experience leads to increased demands of freedom for the faculty member. Then, he feels that he needs more freedom than before because he realizes that academic freedom is an essential right in his academic life. Maybe, as experience increases, the more conscious the faculty member is of his rights, one of which is academic freedom.

3. There are no differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) due to age. Perhaps the faculty member's point of view or feeling of practicing academic freedom clearly does not vary with age because there may be is a 30 or 50 year old assistant professor who would have the same demands and duties in spite of the differences in age. Since they have the same rank, there are differences in freedom of expression and decision making for age, and this slight difference is self-evident due to the difference of characteristics of each age. Each age has physiological and biological characteristics that have to appear in a certain area.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the results, the following is recommended:

1. To work on giving the faculty members of Al-Al Bayt University enough space of freedom through participating in constructive criticism of the university policies and reforming the educational process.
2. Encouraging the administration of the university to increase interaction with the faculty members.
3. Establishing a union for faculty members to manage their issues and to provide more freedom for them.
4. Conducting more studies on the subject of academic freedom especially at Jordanian universities which include students, administration and faculty members.

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