

The Reality of Social Skills within the University Institution: Students of Social Sciences at Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret as a Model

واقع المهارات الاجتماعية داخل المؤسسة الجامعية - طلبة العلوم الاجتماعية بجامعة ابن خلدون بتيارت أنموذجا -

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Date of receipt: 03/04/2025

Date of acceptance: 03/08/2025

Date of publication: 30/09/2025

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ملخص:

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى تشخيص واقع المهارات الاجتماعية لدى طلبة قسم العلوم الاجتماعية بجامعة ابن خلدون بتيارت، على اعتبار أن المهارات الاجتماعية تعد مؤشرا هاما يدل على قدرة الطالب على التواصل الاجتماعي وتحقيق العلاقات الإنسانية داخل المؤسسة الجامعية. وقد تكونت عينة الدراسة من (100) طالب وطالبة من قسم العلوم الاجتماعية. لتجسيد هذا الهدف تم استخدام مقياس المهارات الاجتماعية المعد من طرف أحمد علوان. ويتابع المنهج الوصفي، توصلت الدراسة إلى النتائج التالية:

- يتمتع أغلب طلبة العلوم الاجتماعية بجامعة ابن خلدون بتيارت بمستوى مرتفع من المهارات الاجتماعية.
- يتميز أغلب طلبة العلوم الاجتماعية بجامعة ابن خلدون بتيارت بمستوى مرتفع من مهارة التعاون.
- يتمتع أغلب طلبة العلوم الاجتماعية بجامعة ابن خلدون بتيارت بمستوى مرتفع من مهارة عادات العمل
- يتمتع أغلب طلبة العلوم الاجتماعية بجامعة ابن خلدون بتيارت بمستوى مرتفع من مهارة ضبط النفس.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المهارات الاجتماعية؛ المؤسسة الجامعية؛ الطالب الجامعي.

Abstract:

The current study aimed to diagnose the reality of social skills among students of the Department of Social Sciences at Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret, considering that social skills are an important indicator of a student's ability to communicate socially and build human relationships within the university institution. The study sample consisted of 100 male and female students from the Department of Social Sciences. To achieve this goal, a social skills scale developed by Ahmed Alwan was used. By following the descriptive approach, the study reached the following results:

- Most students of the Department of Social Sciences at Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret have a high level of social skills.
- Most students of the Department of Social Sciences at Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret demonstrate a high level of cooperation skills.

-Most students of the Department of Social Sciences at Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret show a high level of work habits skills.

-Most students of the Department of Social Sciences at Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret exhibit a high level of self-control skills.

Keywords: *Social Skills; University Institution; University student.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

University youth, in particular, are considered a human resource that must be prioritized in psychological and social studies. University students are the future and the true asset upon which hopes are pinned to build the nation's comprehensive development. University is one of the vital educational institutions in any society. Its role is not limited to providing students with various knowledge and developing their scientific talents or intellectual abilities. Rather, its scope extends, and its goals are multiple, including contributing to the development of the student's human personality.

If we focus on the aspect of building personality, we must, first and foremost, enhance successful social interaction among students, and their professors, and between students and administrators or staff. This is because social interaction plays a crucial role in strengthening social relationships within the university environment, which positively reflects in various aspects of cohesion, unity, and communication among students at the university.

Since the topic of social interaction and human relationships within the university setting, especially among students, is of great importance, it is necessary to teach the skills and abilities that help students engage in effective social interaction and build human relationships within the university. Social skills are among the most important of these abilities.

The university institution is considered a vital institution where human relationships are strengthened. Within its spaces, students form numerous social relationships and gain valuable experiences through their interactions with other students, professors, and staff from diverse cultures. All of these factors contribute to developing their communication skills with others. The significance of this study also lies in the fact that it explores the reality of university students through their social relationships, aiming to determine whether students benefit from the university space in developing their communication skills with others.

Based on the importance of social skills in the context of university students' various interactions, the study's objectives can be summarized as follows:

- To assess the general level of social skills among university students.
- To assess the level of cooperation skills among university students.
- To assess the level of work habits skills among university students.
- To assess the level of self-control skills among university students.
- To identify the most prominent social skill among university students.

Thus, we aim to focus on achieving human relationships within the university by evaluating students' social skills, in terms of cooperation, work habits, and self- control, and identifying which social skill is most prominent among university students. This will allow us to assess the students' ability to interact within the university environment.

2. Statement of The Problem:

The educational process at various levels, whether in schools, middle schools, or universities, aims to develop well-rounded individuals in terms of their mental, physical, emotional, social, and psychological growth. This is particularly evident in the development of relationships at various social levels. At school, students form social relationships with their peers within their class and school, while university students seek to deepen their relationships with fellow students and professors. No matter how much an individual tries to distance themselves from the university, they are always in need of interacting with it, whether in normal or emergency circumstances, requiring them to adapt and coexist within the university environment. Barakat, Ziad (2006) emphasized that students sometimes need to make certain concessions to adapt to the general conditions of the environment they live in with their community.

Despite the importance of successful interaction within the university and its role in achieving the educational goals of academic and personal development, this interaction requires social communication skills. According to Ibrahim, Abdelwalid (2012), social skills are fundamental for social interaction and daily success in life with peers and all individuals the person interacts with in their roles. These skills help solve many social problems in a manner that is accepted and recognized by society in line with social norms and the psychological and social climate.

In this context, Ali, Mohamed (2011) referred to Kelly's perspective, who considered social skills as learned behaviors that are easy to identify and used by individuals in interpersonal situations to obtain or maintain positive social environments. Social skills reflect the individual's ability to express both positive and negative emotions in interpersonal relationships and include appropriate responses. Social skills are acquired behaviors aimed at social interaction and positive reinforcement with others, focusing on methods of dealing and understanding among individuals to strengthen relationships and solve problems.

Given the importance of social skills in ensuring successful interaction and communication among students, and in fostering a healthy environment at the university, which in turn creates a conducive climate for success and achievement at both academic and professional levels, it is essential to conduct a diagnostic study aimed at assessing the level of social skills among university students. This study also attempts to predict the extent to which human relationships are achieved within the university institution, particularly among its most important element: the students.

- Research Question:

Based on this, the following questions were raised:

- What is the level of social skills among students of the Department of Social Sciences at Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret ?
- What is the level of each of the skills (cooperation, work habits, and self-control) among students of the Department of Social Sciences at Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret?
- Which social skill is most prominent among students of the Department of Social Sciences at Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret?

3. Study Concepts:

The study includes several concepts that we will define for clarity, as follows:

3.1-Social Skills:

Ali (2009) referred to Combs' definition of social skills as "the ability of an individual to interact with others in a specific social context, in socially acceptable ways, which are socially valuable, beneficial to the person, and useful to others."(p.56). Jaber and Kafafi (1995) define social skills as the acquired ability to perform a pattern of behavior aimed at influencing others and interacting with here (p.60). For the purpose of this study, this concept was operationally defined as the total score a student receives on the social skills scale, based on their responses to its items, with scores ranging from 1 to 5. This includes cooperation, work habits, and self-control.

3.2- Cooperation:

Khalil, Ferial (2011) defined cooperation as one of the positive social skills through which an individual works with the group in a positive spirit, sharing in the completion of tasks and required duties (p. 26).

Operationally, cooperation represents the scores a student obtains from items (3, 5, 6, 15, 17) on the social skills scale, with scores ranging from 1 to 5.

3.3-Work Habits:

Alwan, Ahmed (2011) considered work habits to be one of the social skills that include behaviors like seeking information, introducing oneself to others, and responding appropriately to others' actions (p.133).

Operationally, work habits are represented by the scores a student receives from answering items (1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19) on the social skills scale, with scores ranging from 1 to 5.

4.3-Self-Control:

Okasha, Fathi (2009) defined self-control as the individual's ability to control their emotions during situations of conflict with others and respond appropriately to provocations (p.122).

Operationally, self-control is represented by the scores a student receives from answering items (7, 8, 9, 20, 21, 22) on the social skills scale, with scores ranging from 1 to 5.

5. Research Methodology:

Al-Rashedi, Bachir (2000) defined methodology as the method and procedures followed by the researcher in studying the problem in order to reach the truth in science (p.21).

The methodology used differs depending on the nature of the study and the subject being researched. Since this research aims to diagnose the reality and assess the level of social skills among Algerian students, we adopted the descriptive methodology, which is suitable for the nature of this study. In this context, Turki (1994) explained that "the descriptive methodology is any inquiry that focuses on an educational or psychological phenomenon as it exists in the present, aiming to diagnose and reveal its aspects, and to determine the relationships between its components or other elements.» (p.199).

5.1-Study Sample and Characteristics:

The method of selecting the research sample varies from one researcher to another depending on the subject being studied and the objectives to be achieved. In this current study, it was necessary to specify the type of sample, which is the purposive sample, to select the individuals relevant to the research, namely the university students from the Faculty of Social Sciences in Tiaret. The sample consisted of 100 male and female students from the Department of Social Sciences at Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret.

The individuals were distributed according to sample characteristics such as gender, specialization, and age, as shown in the following table (01).

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	31	31%
Female	69	69%
Total	100	100%

Table 1: Distribution of the Sample According to Gender

We observe from Table 1 that the percentage of female students exceeds that of male students. The number of male students is 31, which represents 31%, while the number of female students is 69, making up 69%. Therefore, females are more than males, which is attributed to the higher proportion of female students in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Specialization	Frequency	Percentage
Humanities	53	53%
Social Sciences	47	47%
Total	100	100%

Table 2: Distribution of the Sample According to Specialization

From Table 2, it is clear that the proportion of students in the Humanities is higher than that of students in Social Sciences. The percentage of Humanities students is 53%, while the percentage of Social Sciences students is 47%, which corresponds to 47%. This is due to the higher proportion of Humanities students compared to Social Sciences students within the college as a whole.

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
(18-20)	14	14%
(21-23)	70	70%
(24-26)	13	13%
(27-29)	3	3%
Total	100	100%

Table 3: Distribution of the Sample According to Age

Table 3 shows that the largest proportion of the sample falls within the (21-23) age group, which makes up more than half of the total sample (70%). This is followed by the age group (18-20), representing 14% (14 students), then the (24-26) age group with 13% (13 students), and the smallest proportion of the sample falls within the (27-29) age group, with 3% (3 students). This age distribution reflects the inclusion of students from various academic levels in the Department of Social Sciences, ranging from first-year to third-year students, as well as Master's students.

5.2- Tools of the Study:

The success of any study depends on how the data is collected and the methodological tools used for this purpose. In this study, we relied on the social skills scale developed by Ahmad Al-Alwan. This scale was adapted after reviewing various social skills scales in some published studies (Elliott, 1991; Miller, 1995; Merrell et al., 1999; Attar, 2007) to fit the sample of this study. Some of the scales Al-Alwan reviewed were developed for non-university student samples and were tailored to fit the Jordanian context. The final version of the scale consists of 22 items distributed across three dimensions, as defined by Al-Alwani (2011, p. 132) as follows:

- **Cooperation:** Includes behaviors such as asking for help from others, participating, and complying with rules and instructions. It consists of the following items: (3, 5, 6, 14, 15, 16, 17).
- **Work Habits:** Includes proactive behaviors like asking for information, introducing oneself to others, and responding appropriately to others' actions. It consists of the following items: (1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19).
- **Self-Control:** Includes behaviors such as responding appropriately when others annoy you, behaving in situations where conflicts occur, requiring adjustments or taking different viewpoints. It consists of the following items: (7, 8, 20, 21, 22).

As for scoring the scale, it is done using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5. According to Al-Alwan (2011, p. 133). The scale works as follows:

- **1 point** for "never."
- **2 points** for "rarely."
- **3 points** for "sometimes."
- **4 points** for "often."
- **5 points** for "always."

Al-Alwan (2011) also ensured the psychometric properties of the social skills scale through its validity and reliability.

For validity, the scale was subjected to content validity. Al-Alwan presented the scale to seven university faculty members and specialists in educational psychology, measurement, and evaluation at the University of Jordan. He accepted items that received at least an 80% agreement rate from the raters. Based on this criterion, no items were removed, except for minor linguistic adjustments. Additionally, he used construct validity through factor analysis using the principal components method and performed orthogonal rotation. Three items from the initial 25-item scale were excluded, as their factor loadings were below 0.30, resulting in the final 22-item version of the scale.

As for the reliability of the social skills scale, Al-Alwan checked it by applying it to 55 students outside of the study sample. He calculated internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each dimension of the scale. The reliability coefficients were as follows:

- **Cooperation:** 0.80
- **Work Habits:** 0.71
- **Self-Control:** 0.81

He also calculated the stability coefficient by applying the test-retest method on the same reliability sample and then re-administering the scale to the same sample after two weeks. The stability coefficients for the scale's dimensions were as follows:

- **Cooperation:** 0.80
- **Work Habits:** 0.78
- **Self-Control:** 0.81

6. Statistical Treatment:

The data collected was analyzed using the following methods:

- **Frequency** to calculate the characteristics of the sample.
- **Percentage** to calculate the characteristics of the sample and verify the first hypothesis.
- **Pearson correlation coefficient** to determine the relationship between the study variables.
- **Mean and standard deviation** to calculate central tendencies and variability in the data.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

We will present the results obtained from this study according to the order provided at the hypothesis level, and then move on to the discussion.

7.1- Level of Social Skills among University Students:

To determine the level of social skills among university students, the frequencies and percentages for the total social skills score were calculated, as shown in Table (04).

Levels	Sample	Percentage
High	53	53%
Medium	46	46%
Low	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Table 4:Level of social skills among the sample participants.

The preliminary reading of Table 4 shows that 53 students from the sample, or 53%, have a very high level of social skills, 46 students, or 46%, have a medium level of social skills, and only 1 student, or 1%, has a low level of social skills. Thus, the majority of university students have either a high or medium level of social skills.

7.2- Level of Cooperation Skill among the Social Skills of the Sample Participants:

To assess the level of cooperation skill among university students, the frequencies and percentages for cooperation skills were calculated, as shown in Table (05).

Levels	Sample	Percentage
High	39	39%
Medium	59	59%
Low	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Table 5: Level of cooperation skill among the sample participants.

It is clear from Table 5 that 39 students from the sample, or 39%, have a high level of cooperation skill, 59 students, or 59%, have a medium level of cooperation skill, and only 1 student, or 2%, has a low level of cooperation skill. Therefore, most university students have a medium level of cooperation skill.

7.3- Level of Work Habits Skill among the Social Skills of the Sample Participants:

To determine the level of work habits skill among university students, the frequencies and percentages for work habits were calculated, as shown in Table (06).

Levels	Sample	Percentage
High	54	54%
Medium	45	45%
Low	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Table 6:Level of work habits skill among the sample participants.

It is clear from Table 6 that 54 students from the sample, or 54%, have a high level of work habits skill, 45 students, or 45%, have a medium level of work habits skill, and only 1 student, or 1%, has a low level of work habits skill. Therefore, most university students have a medium level of work habits skill.

7.4- Level of Self-Control Skill among the Social Skills of the Sample Participants:

To determine the level of self-control skill among university students, the frequencies and percentages for self-control were calculated, as shown in Table 7.

Levels	Sample	Percentage
High	43	43%
Medium	51	51%
Low	6	6%
Total	100	100%

Table 7: Level of self-control skill among the sample participants.

The preliminary reading of Table 7 shows that 43 students from the sample, or 43%, have a high level of self-control skill, 51 students, or 51%, have a medium level of self-control skill, and only 1 student, or 6%, has a low level of self- control skill. Therefore, most university students have a medium level of self- control skill.

7.5- The Most Prominent Social Skill among the Sample Participants:

To determine the most prominent social skill among the sample participants, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for each skill were calculated separately, and then ranked according to their means. This is shown in Table 8.

Social Skills	Sample Size (N=100)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
Cooperation Skill	100	25.32	4.58	2
Work Habits Skill	100	33.11	4.32	1
Self-Control Skill	100	20.82	3.84	3

Table 8: Shows the most prominent social skill among the sample participants.

It is clear from Table 8 that the most prominent social skill among the sample participants is the **Work Habits Skill**, with a mean of 33.11 and a standard deviation of 4.32. This is followed by **Cooperation Skill**, with a mean of 25.32 and a standard deviation of 4.58. Meanwhile, **Self-Control Skill** ranked last, with a mean of 20.82 and a standard deviation of 3.84.

The results of the study confirm that the majority of students in the Department of Social Sciences at Ibn Khaldun University - Tiaret have a high level of social skills. These findings align with the study by Miqatli (2011) on the relationship between alexithymia, emotional states, and social skills from an Islamic perspective among students at the University, which found that the majority of the 211 students in the sample had high social skills.

Therefore, university students possess the ability to communicate with others, engage in effective social interactions, and build strong social relationships with peers, teachers, administrators, workers, and other individuals. These results may be attributed to the fact that university students have received socialization in an Arab-Islamic culture that encourages communication and social interaction through various social events. Despite social changes, Algerian families still maintain strong cohesion, which allows students to learn social skills by imitating and modeling their parents, teachers, and other role models. These skills continue to thrive due to intergenerational interaction and communication.

The results also emphasize that most university students have a medium level of cooperation and self-control skills, and a high level of work habits skills. Thus, university students are capable of succeeding in group work due to their ability and willingness to cooperate with others, as well as their work habits based on initiative, interaction with others, and avoidance of conflicts.

However, the study results show that social skills vary in terms of value, with Cooperation Skill being the most prominent, followed by Work Habits Skill, while Self-Control Skill ranked last. These differences may be attributed to socialization in the Algerian environment, which embraces Islamic values. Helping others, with or without reward, is a highly regarded trait in Algerian society, and is encouraged by the Islamic faith.

Based on this, the success of a student in acquiring and developing their social skills contributes to increasing their abilities to establish successful and healthy social relationships and interactions, as well as integrating with peer groups and others in an atmosphere of tranquility and familiarity. This, in turn, leads to further progress in acquiring social experiences in a healthy manner.

Social skills enable university students to set social goals, develop strategies to reach them, and understand the context of interactions, allowing them to monitor, adjust, and guide their behavior accordingly. They are also capable of expressing affection toward others, making efforts to help them, and maintaining politeness in their dealings with others.

Desouki, Kamal (1990) views social skills as the ability to perform social interactions between two or more individuals, the capacity to respond to changes or adjustments in the behavior of others, and the skill to adapt to societal demands and cooperate with others in an open and responsive manner. Social skills also involve the ability to mix freely in various activities. In essence, they represent the ability of an individual to acquire socially acceptable behaviors when interacting with others, which enhances their capacity to succeed in social living.

In this context, Hassouna (1995) clarifies that mastering social skills leads to an increase in the student's psychological and social adjustment (p.15). This is achieved through their ability to engage in tasks and activities that distinguish their social interaction style with people and things around them.

9.CONCLUSION:

Social communication and the ability to share with others are essential factors for the growth of social relationships. Therefore, the social skills that a student is able to apply correctly in their daily life are significant indicators of their psychological well-being. In contrast, the lack of such skills represents an obstacle that negatively affects the student's ability to showcase their hidden talents and prevents the fulfillment of their psychological needs, as these social skills enable them to integrate socially in a positive manner. Furthermore, possessing these social skills components, such as cooperation, work habits, and self-control, helps strengthen their relationships with others, enables them to take responsibility, and aids them in facing problems and various life situations.

To enhance social skills among students, universities can implement various strategies. First, integrating social skill development into the curriculum through workshops or seminars focused on communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution can be beneficial. Encouraging group activities and collaborative projects will provide students with opportunities to practice these skills in real- life scenarios. Furthermore, organizing extracurricular activities such as clubs, volunteer opportunities, or social events will help students engage with diverse groups, thus enhancing their ability to work and communicate with others. Lastly, providing students with feedback on their social interactions through peer evaluations or self-assessments can support their growth and awareness in social settings.

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