

## Evaluation of Students' Communication Skills and Academic Performance in the University of Baghdad

### تقويم مهارات التواصل والاداء الاكاديمي لطلبة جامعة بغداد

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#### المستخلص

**الأهداف:** لتقويم مهارات التواصل والاداء الأكاديمي للطلبة وعقد المقارنة ما بين هؤلاء الطلبة فيما يتعلق بمهارات التواصل والاداء الأكاديمي في جامعة بغداد والتعرف على العلاقة ما بين مهارات التواصل والاداء الأكاديمي لهؤلاء الطلبة والصفات الديموغرافية-الإجتماعية كالعمر والجنس والمستوى التعليمي والحالة الاقتصادية الإجتماعية.

**المنهجية:** إتمد منهج وصفي يستخدم التقويم خلال الدراسة الحالية لتقويم مهارات التواصل والاداء الأكاديمي لطلبة الكليات في جامعة بغداد للفترة من ٧ كانون الثاني ٢٠١٩ ولغاية ٢٨ آب ٢٠١٩. أختيرت عينة غرضية - غير إحصائية من (٨٠) من طلبة الجامعة. إستخدم إستبيانان إحتوى الأولى (١٥) فقرة لقياس مهارات التواصل للطلبة وتكون الثاني من (١٤) فقرة لقياس الاداء الأكاديمي للطلبة. تم تحديد الثبات والصدق للإستبيانين من خلال الدراسة الإستقرائية. جمعت البيانات من خلال إستخدام أدوات الدراسة وتقنية المقابلة المنظمة كوسيلتين لجمع البيانات. وحلت البيانات من خلال إستخدام أسلوب التحليل الإحصائي الوصفي والذي تضمن التكرارات والنسب المئوية والقيم الإجمالية والمعدلات والإسلوب الإحصائي الإستنتاجي كإختبار التضاد المتعدد الخطي.

**النتائج:** أشارت نتائج الدراسة إلى أن أغلب الطلبة كانت مهارات التواصل لديهم معتدلة (٦٩%) وأدائهم الأكاديمي معتدل أيضا (٦٧%). تأثرت مهارات التواصل للطلبة بأعمارهم ومستواهم التعليمي وأدائهم الأكاديمي بحالتهم الاقتصادية الإجتماعية.

**التوصيات:** أوصت الدراسة إلى إطلاع الطلبة على أهمية مهارات التواصل والاداء الأكاديمي. إحتواء مناهج الكليات على مادة دراسية في الأقل عن مهارات التواصل والاداء الأكاديمي. إمكانية إجراء بحوث إضافية عن الموضوع ذاته بإستخدام عينة كبيرة ومتنوعة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تقويم، مهارات التواصل للطلبة، الاداء الأكاديمي للطلبة.

#### Abstract

**Objective(s):** To evaluate students' communication skills and their academic performance; to compare between the students relative to communication skills and their academic performance in the University of Baghdad and to identify the relationship between students' communication skills, academic performance and their socio-demographic characteristics of age, gender, grade and socioeconomic status.

**Methodology:** A descriptive design, using the evaluation approach, is carried through the present study to evaluate colleges' students' communication skills and their academic performance in the University of Baghdad for the period of January 7<sup>th</sup> 2019 to August 28<sup>th</sup> 2019. A non-probability, purposive sample, of (80) university students, is selected. Two questionnaires are utilized; the first is contained of (15) items that measure the students' communication skills and the second is comprised of (14) items that measure the students' academic performance. Reliability and validity of the questionnaires are determined through pilot study. Data are collected through the use of study instruments and the structured interview technique as means for data collection. Data are analyzed through the application of the descriptive data analysis approach which includes frequency, percent and total scores and ranges and inferential statistical data analysis of approach of Multiple Linear Regression.

**Results:** The study indicates that most of the students have fair level of Communication Skills (69%) and fair level of academic performance (67%). Students' communication skills is influenced by their age and education stage and students' academic performance is affected by their socioeconomic status.

**Recommendations:** The study recommends that college students should be very well aware of the importance of communication skills and academic performance. Colleges' curriculum should contain at least one course about communication skills and academic performance. Further research can be conducted on the same topic with wide-range sample size.

**Key Words:** Evaluation, Students' Communication Skills, Students' Academic Performance.

## Introduction:

The badly-behaved, of poor academic performance of students, in Iraq concern, is on-going. The subject is so much that it is rushed to widely praising fallen level of education in all Iraqi Colleges. Reproachful fingers are pointed to interaction and communication of students for existence responsible for the declined typical of education. Several studies specify that the goodness of education be contingent on the students' efficiency conveyed and reflected in the performance of their liabilities<sup>(1,2)</sup>.

Communication is defined as exchange of information among population by means of writing, speaking or using a mutual system of behavior or signs, and the course of communication can label is swapping of information. The other wisdoms in the communication are: act of communicating: the communicating of information; message: written message or spoken; affiliation: compassion and thoughtful<sup>(3)</sup>.

The communication actually is important skill by oral conduction and transcription of mutual understanding. It is a precarious skill for achievement in every arena, but precise substantial for students in specific<sup>(4)</sup>.

The academic performance is well-defined by students' recording of preceding semester CGPA/GPA and their anticipated GPA for the existing semester. The grade point average or GPA is now utilized by utmost of the tertiary institutions as a suitable summary measure of the academic

performance of their students. The GPA is a fine indicator because it gives improved understanding into the effective level of performance of characters and diverse cluster of students<sup>(5)</sup>.

The academic performance of students is considered a substantial aspect in education. Academic performance is essential for the effective progress of young people in society. Students who do fine in school are well able to make the evolution into adulthood and to reach occupational and economic completion. Academically successful students, who are academically successful, have developed self-esteem, have lesser levels of depression and anxiety, are socially inspired, and are less likely to abuse alcohol and involve in substance abuse. Positive self-esteem and self-confidence are deliberated as critical factors in promise to academic achievement<sup>(6)</sup>.

Communication skills for students are deliberated as very important dispute to academic attainment and at the similar time display a vital role in educational success<sup>(7)</sup>.

Based on the early stated evidence, the present study attempts to evaluate students' communication skills and their academic performance; to compare between the students relative to communication skills and their academic performance in the University of Baghdad and to identify the relationship between students' communication skills, academic

performance and their socio-demographic characteristics of age, gender, grade and socioeconomic status.

### **Methodology:**

A descriptive design, using evaluation approach, is carried throughout the present study to evaluate college students' communication skills and academic performance in the University of Baghdad.

All participants in the present study have signed consent form for their agreements to be involved in the study.

The study is conducted on students in Medical Colleges (Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy and Nursing), College of Engineering, College of Sciences, and College of Education Ibn Al-Rushid. All of these colleges are within the University of Baghdad.

A non-probability, purposive, sample of (80) university students, is selected. The sample is comprised of (20) students from Medical Colleges (Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy and Nursing), (20) students from College of Engineering, (20) students from College of Sciences, (20) students from College of Education Ibn Al-Rushid. It is consisted of (40) males and (40) females aged (18-23) years old.

The students' communication skills questionnaire is comprised of (15) items that measure the college student's communication skills, the communication skills are measured as poor (15-24), fair (24.1-34) and good (34.1-45) and the students' academic performance questionnaire is

comprised of (14) items that measure the college students' academic performance. The academic performance is measured as poor (14-22.33), fair (22.34-32.66) and good (32.67-42).

A pilot study is carried out from January 7<sup>th</sup> 2019 to February 20<sup>th</sup> 2019 to determine the content validity and internal consistency reliability of the study instruments.

Content validity of the instrument is determined through panel of (10) experts. All of them faculty members from the College of Nursing University of Baghdad. They provided with copies of the questionnaires and asked to evaluate their content clarity and adequacy. Their responses support that the instruments are valid measures for the phenomena underlying the study.

Internal consistency reliability is determined for the study questionnaires with a split-half technique. A purposive sample of (20) student is selected for the purpose of the reliability of the questionnaires. Cronbach alpha correlation coefficient is computed for such reliability. Findings indicate that the correlation coefficient is ( $r=0.87$ ) for the students' communication skills questionnaire and ( $r=0.88$ ) for the students' academic performance questionnaire which are considered adequate for the reliability of the questionnaire as measure for the phenomena underlying the study.

Data are collected through the use of the study instruments and the structured interview technique as means for data collection for the period of February 21<sup>st</sup> 2019 to May 20<sup>th</sup> 2019.

Data are analyzed through the application of the descriptive data analysis approach which includes frequency, percent, total scores and ranges and inferential statistical data analysis approach of Multiple Linear Regression.

#### Ethical Considerations

#### Results:

**Table (1): Evaluation of Students' Communication Skills**

Poor (15 - 24)	Fair (24.1 - 34)	Good (34.1 - 45)
1	69	10

Results out of this table present that most of the students have fair level of Communication Skills (69%).

**Table (2): Evaluation of Students' Academic Performance**

Poor (14 -22.33)	Fair (22.34 – 32.66)	Good (32.67 - 42)
5	67	8

Results out of this table indicate that most of the students have fair level of academic performance (67%).

**Table (3): Analysis of Variance for the Comparison between Students relative to Their Communication Skills**

Source of variance		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean of Square	F	Sig.
CSM	Between Groups	1149.633	11	104.512	1.752	0.218
	Within Groups	477.167	8	59.646		
	Total	1626.800	19			
CSE	Between Groups	591.383	11	53.762	0.353	0.944
	Within Groups	1219.167	8	152.396		
	Total	1810.550	19			
CSS	Between Groups	846.833	11	76.985	0.657	0.746
	Within Groups	937.167	8	117.146		
	Total	1784.000	19			
CSEDUC	Between Groups	495.667	11	45.061	0.506	0.854
	Within Groups	712.333	8	89.042		
	Total	1208.000	19			

**CSM: Communication Skills of Medical Students, CSE: Communication Skills of Engineering Students, CSS: Communication Skills of Sciences Students, CSEDUC: Communication Skills of Education Students, DF: Degree of Freedom, F: F-statistics, Sig.: Level of Significance at  $p \leq 0.05$**

Results out of this table reveal that there is no significant difference between students' communication skills with respect to type of college.

**Table (4): Analysis of Variance for the Comparison between Students relative to Their Academic Performance**

Source of Variance		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean of Square	F	Sig.
APM	Between Groups	1150.050	18	63.892	0.354	0.890
	Within Groups	180.500	1	180.500		
	Total	1330.550	19			
APE	Between Groups	1072.050	18	59.558	0.191	0.966
	Within Groups	312.500	1	312.500		
	Total	1384.550	19			
APS	Between Groups	957.300	18	53.183	0.879	0.700
	Within Groups	60.500	1	60.500		
	Total	1017.800	19			
APEDUC	Between Groups	1465.500	18	81.417	0.563	0.801
	Within Groups	144.500	1	144.500		
	Total	1610.000	19			

**APM: Academic Performance of Medical Students, APE: Academic Performance of Engineering Students, APS: Academic Performance of Sciences Students, APEDUC: Academic Performance of Education Students, DF: Degree of Freedom, F: F-statistics, Sig.: Level of Significance at  $p \leq 0.05$**

Results out of this table present that there is no significant difference between students' academic performance with respect to type of college.

**Table (5): The Relationship between Students' Communication Skills and Their Socio-demographic Characteristics**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	52.395	6.342		8.262	0.000
Gender	-8.624	2.441	-0.455	-3.533	0.001
Education	3.661	1.147	0.432	3.192	0.002
SES	0.005	0.126	0.003	0.039	0.969

**Dependent Variable: Self-management**

**B= Regression Coefficient, Std. Error= standard error, t= T-test, Sig.= Level of Significance at  $p \leq 0.05$**

This table depicts that there is highly significant relationship between students' communication skills and their gender and education only and age is excluded out of the regression model.

**Table (6): The Relationship between Students' Academic Performance and Their Socio-demographic Characteristics**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	32.861	9.824		3.345	0.001
Gender	5.667	3.781	0.357	1.499	0.138
Education	-0.407	1.777	-0.057	-0.229	0.819
SES	0.556	0.195	0.381	2.856	0.006

**Dependent Variable: Academic Performance**

**B= Regression Coefficient, Std. Error= standard error, t= T-test, Sig.= Level of Significance at  $p \leq 0.05$**

This table indicates that there is highly significant relationship between students' academic performance and their socioeconomic status only and age is excluded out of the regression model.

**Discussion :****Part I: Discussion of Colleges Students' Communication Skills**

Findings that result out of the data analysis indicate that most of the colleges' students have experienced fair level of communication skills (Table 1).

Communication is basically an act of interaction and sharing emotions and thoughts with others. It is the best way to receive, provide and exchange information, widely used in the business and professional sector. This is the most sought after trait every employer looks for in a candidate during the hiring process.

The communication is not only important in the work area but can be applied in all stages of life. With appropriate communication, even the largest problem can be solved it, the communication skills are three types nonverbal, verbal and visual communications <sup>(8)</sup>.

**Part II: Discussion of Colleges Students' Academic Performance**

Findings that result out of the data analysis reveal that most of the colleges students have experienced fair level of academic performance (Table 2).

Many studies have focused to about the factors that are regarding to the academic performance of students, They know the many factors like study habits, learning skills, home environment, hardworking, academic

interaction and communication skills effect of academic performance <sup>(9)</sup>.

**Part III: Comparison between Colleges Students Relative to Their Communication Skills and Academic Performance**

Such comparison shows that there are no differences between colleges' students' communication skills (Table 3) and academic performance (Table 4).

In general, such findings present evidence that these students almost share almost the same level of communication skills and academic performance regardless of differences in their study.

A descriptive correlational study that aims at attainment of an insight into the connotations of oral communication proficiency of students with their overall academic performance by inspecting the different features on how oral communication effects the academic performance of a group of transfer students at the tertiary stage in the American Degree Transfer Program in Sunway University. An investigation of the direct correlations between the two variables will offer an overview relationship between communication and academic behavior; whether student's oral communication impacts their academic achievements or then, incongruent. The findings designate that accomplishing competency in oral communications is imperious in confirming that students accomplish well academically <sup>(10)</sup>.

Another descriptive correlational non-experimental quantitative study of a sample of (779) male and female learners in the secondary phase in Kannaland District, Western Cape supports that communication skills of learners are important for their academic performance. It will permit for a well understanding of the effect of communication skills and could benefit teachers to understand learners' fear, distress or ability to communicate <sup>(11)</sup>.

#### **Part IV: The Relationship between Colleges' Students Relative to**

#### **Communication Skills, Academic Performance and Their Socio-**

#### **demographic Characteristics**

Analysis of such relationship indicates that there is highly significant relationship between students' communication skills and their gender and education (Table 5). Such finding can be interpreted in a way that the better the students education the well they perform communication skills, as well as male and female students present different application of communication skills through their study. There is also highly significant relationship between students' academic performance and their socioeconomic status (Table 6). This finding can be understood in a manner that the better the students' social class the better their academic performance is going to be.

A descriptive study, using the evaluation approach, is tried to

determine the communication skills of university students with their socio-demographic characteristics. The accessible population of the study is comprised of students studying at Marmara University. The findings of the study have presented supportive evidence that university students' communication skills are significantly related to their socio-demographic characteristics <sup>(12)</sup>.

A descriptive study, that explores the relationship between (490) medical students' attitudes toward communication skills at the Universities of Nottingham and Leicester and their demographic characteristics. Medical students attitudes towards communication skills learning are meaningfully connected with a quantity of demographic characteristics. Both groups of medical students are found to have more positive attitudes toward communication skills learning are inclined to be female, have a propensity to think that their communication skills required sanitizing and are likely not to have parents who are doctors. In contrast, students with further negative attitudes toward communication skills learning are to be apt to think their communication skills do not necessitate cultivating. The results depict that those medical students' attitudes toward communication skills learning are connected with their demographic characteristics <sup>(13)</sup>.

In contrast, there are several factors that affect the academic performance of the students like poverty, factors linking to academic achievement, number of students in



class and other causes of reduction in academic achievement<sup>(9)</sup>.

A study is carried out mainly to assess the factors donating to improvement in academic performance of Junior High Students (JHS) in Gomoa Manso Basic School which is in the Gomo-East District in the Central Region of Ghana. A mixed and descriptive research design is employed and a sample size of (87) respondents (79 students and 8 teachers) is randomly designated. The findings depict that the average academic performance (47.0%) of the JHS students in Gomoa Manso Basic School is feeble. It is noted that student factors that donate to an improvement in academic performance include; regular studying, self-motivation, punctuality and regular class attendance, hard-work and interest in a subject. The teacher factors are accomplishment of syllabus, use of TLM's, frequent feedback to students and given students special consideration. Per the results, parent factors which are very significant is parent presenting interest in their children's academics and providing them their academic necessities. School factors that are remarkable contained of availability of text books and TLM's. The study also finds that parent level of education and gender has a positive relationship with academic performance but it's unimportant. However, age has a positive noteworthy (5% significance level) relationship with academic performance<sup>(14)</sup>.

In sum, the study can conclude that most of the colleges' students experience fair level of communication

skills and academic performance. Students' communication skills is influenced by their age and education stage and students' academic performance is affected by their socioeconomic status.

### Recommendations:

1. College students should be very well aware of the importance of communication skills and academic performance.
2. College curriculum should contain at least one course about communication skills and academic performance.
3. Further research can be conducted on the same topic with wide-range sample size.

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