

Academic Social Networking Sites and Their Impact on the Quality of Higher Education Outcomes from the Perspective of University Lecturers: A Field Study at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou

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Abstract

The present study examined academic social networking sites and their effect on the quality of higher education outcomes. A descriptive research design was adopted, and the study sample comprised 60 university lecturers at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 25, and a range of statistical techniques. The findings showed that academic social networking sites had a statistically significant positive effect on the quality of higher education outcomes from the perspective of university lecturers. However, no statistically significant differences were found in lecturers' use of academic social networking sites according to academic qualification or academic rank.

Keywords: social networking sites, academic social networking sites, quality, higher education, higher education outcomes.

Introduction

Most contemporary institutions, regardless of their type or the diversity of their functions and activities, seek to move from traditional models that cannot keep pace with ongoing developments to modern models that respond to current changes, particularly in information and communication technology, which has become a defining feature of contemporary societies. Algerian universities are among the most important social institutions because they provide numerous services to society and produce graduates and knowledge needed across various fields. They must therefore benefit from the advantages offered by information and communication technology and integrate these technologies into the educational process.

Social networking sites are no longer merely spaces for meeting friends, communicating with colleagues and relatives, seeking entertainment, or learning about events around the world. They have also become valuable educational and knowledge-based tools. Their effectiveness and cost-free availability have made them useful for teaching and accessing scientific knowledge. Their ability to communicate information easily and directly has encouraged thousands of

schools, institutes, and universities, both nationally and internationally, to use them as important tools for sharing knowledge and supporting the educational process (Kechar, 2021).

Academic social networking sites are platforms that serve the scholarly community by supporting communication among researchers worldwide. The number of these platforms has continued to grow, and they compete to provide researchers with diverse services (Al-Luqmani, 2019). Given their importance to research, universities now devote considerable attention to these sites and encourage lecturers and students to use their services, particularly as contemporary universities seek to achieve a fundamental objective: ensuring the quality of higher education.

The substantial success of total quality management in various institutions, together with increasing competition to provide superior products and satisfy customers, has generated interest in applying it as an administrative approach in educational institutions. Universities have recognized the importance of quality management because of its potential to improve educational services and increase beneficiary satisfaction. Their ability to improve the standard of education, contribute to human-capital development, foster creativity, and enhance qualifications to meet society's needs requires sustained attention to the quality of higher education services (Chaour & Bensiroud, 2022).

Numerous studies indicate that the overall quality of university lecturers' performance enables higher education institutions to achieve their objectives by improving scientific and educational outcomes and increasing beneficiary satisfaction. The responsible authorities must therefore recruit and train university lecturers through programs that develop the skills required to perform their duties and roles in accordance with legal requirements and the quality assurance and improvement system (Farhi & Si Ahmed, 2022).

Many universities worldwide, particularly in developed countries, have made substantial progress in quality assurance and academic accreditation. In contrast, Algerian universities have remained far from fully implementing quality assurance standards. The quality of their outcomes has also declined, and these outcomes are not always aligned with labor-market needs or development plans. Many disciplines and programs are no longer priorities for society, and the local labor market has become saturated with graduates in these fields, contributing to unemployment. This situation has encouraged scholars and practitioners to conduct studies to develop evaluation systems that ensure the quality of higher education outcomes in Algeria while remaining compatible with the practices of leading international higher education institutions (Benaouda, 2020).

Based on the foregoing, the present study examines the effects of academic social networking sites on the quality of higher-education outcomes from the perspective of university lecturers. It also proposes recommendations intended to support a high-quality educational environment that responds to developments across different fields. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. Do academic social networking sites affect the quality of higher education outcomes from the perspective of university lecturers?
2. Are there differences in university lecturers' use of academic social networking sites attributable to academic qualification?
3. Are there differences in university lecturers' use of academic social networking sites attributable to academic rank?

Study Hypotheses

1. Academic social networking sites have a statistically significant effect on the quality of higher education outcomes from the perspective of university lecturers.
2. There are statistically significant differences in university lecturers' use of academic social networking sites attributable to academic qualification.
3. There are statistically significant differences in university lecturers' use of academic social networking sites attributable to academic rank.

Study Objectives

The present study aims to identify:

1. The effect of academic social networking sites on the quality of higher education outcomes from the perspective of university lecturers;
2. Differences in university lecturers' use of academic social networking sites according to academic qualification; and
3. Differences in university lecturers' use of academic social networking sites according to academic rank.

Definition of the Study Concepts

Academic Social Networking Sites

Academic social networking sites are a form of social media that represent a significant advancement in modern technology and contribute to scholarly social interaction, fostering cognitive and scientific development (Al-Luqmani, 2019). In the present study, academic social networking sites are operationally defined by each lecturer's score on the Academic Social Networking Sites Questionnaire developed by the researchers.

Quality of Higher Education Outcomes

The quality of higher education outcomes refers to the specifications and indicators that should characterize higher education outputs, including the quality of graduates, training programs for community institutions, scientific consulting services, scientific projects, books and scholarly publications intended to serve the community, research, conferences and seminars, university reputation, and beneficiary satisfaction. The availability of these elements enables assessment of the success of university education and its capacity to meet the needs of society as a whole (Hamama, 2020). In the present study, the quality of higher education outcomes is operationalized as each lecturer's score on the Quality of Higher Education Outcomes Questionnaire developed by the researchers.

Study Delimitations

Geographical Delimitation

The field study was conducted at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou.

Temporal Delimitation

The field study was conducted from October 13 to November 14, 2024, during the 2024–2025 academic year.

Population Delimitation

The field study included lecturers from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou.

Method

Pilot Study

Setting and Duration

The pilot study was conducted at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou from October 13 to October 31, 2024.

Sample

The pilot study sample consisted of 30 lecturers from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Mouloud Mammeri University during the 2024–2025 academic year.

Instruments and Psychometric Properties

Academic Social Networking Sites Questionnaire

The researchers developed the Academic Social Networking Sites Questionnaire based on the theoretical literature and several previous studies. It consists of 15 items.

Extreme-Groups Validity

To assess the validity of the Academic Social Networking Sites Questionnaire, an extreme-groups comparison was conducted.

Table 1

Extreme-Groups Validity of the Academic Social Networking Sites Questionnaire

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Upper group	8	58.00	1.77	12.220	< .001
Lower group	8	46.00	2.13	—	—

As shown in Table 1, the difference between the upper and lower groups was statistically significant ($p < .001$), below the .01 significance level. This finding indicates that the questionnaire distinguishes between high and low scores and provides evidence of extreme-groups validity.

Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the reliability of the Academic Social Networking Sites Questionnaire.

Table 2*Cronbach's Alpha for the Academic Social Networking Sites Questionnaire*

Instrument	Number of Items	Cronbach's α
Academic Social Networking Sites Questionnaire	15	.714

As shown in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha for the 15 questionnaire items was .714, indicating acceptable internal consistency. The questionnaire was therefore considered suitable for administration to the main study sample.

Quality of Higher Education Outcomes Questionnaire

The researchers developed the Quality of Higher Education Outcomes Questionnaire based on the theoretical literature and several previous studies. It consists of 15 items.

Extreme-Groups Validity

To assess the validity of the Quality of Higher Education Outcomes Questionnaire, an extreme-groups comparison was conducted.

Table 3*Extreme-Groups Validity of the Quality of Higher Education Outcomes Questionnaire*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Upper group	8	63.00	1.85	6.583	< .001
Lower group	8	49.37	5.55	—	—

As shown in Table 3, the difference between the upper and lower groups was statistically significant ($p < .001$), below the .01 significance level. This finding indicates that the questionnaire distinguishes between high and low scores and provides evidence of extreme-groups validity.

Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the reliability of the Quality of Higher Education Outcomes Questionnaire.

Table 4*Cronbach's Alpha for the Quality of Higher Education Outcomes Questionnaire*

Instrument	Number of Items	Cronbach's α
Quality of Higher Education Outcomes Questionnaire	15	.892

As shown in Table 4, Cronbach's alpha for the 15 questionnaire items was .892, indicating good internal consistency. The questionnaire was therefore considered suitable for administration to the main study sample.

Main Study

Research Design

A descriptive research design was adopted because it facilitates the description, analysis, and interpretation of the study problem within the available resources.

Setting and Duration

The field study was conducted at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou from November 3 to November 14, 2024.

Sample

The main study sample consisted of 60 lecturers from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou during the 2024–2025 academic year. The participants were selected randomly. Their characteristics are presented below.

Gender**Table 5***Distribution of the Study Sample by Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	24	40%
Female	36	60%
Total	60	100%

As shown in Table 5, female lecturers accounted for 60% of the sample, whereas male lecturers accounted for 40%.

Academic Qualification**Table 6***Distribution of the Study Sample by Academic Qualification*

Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Master's degree	10	16.7%
Doctorate	50	83.3%
Total	60	100%

As shown in Table 6, lecturers holding a master's degree accounted for 16.7% of the sample, whereas lecturers holding a doctorate accounted for 83.3%.

Academic Rank**Table 7***Distribution of the Study Sample by Academic Rank*

Academic Rank	Frequency	Percentage
Assistant professor	18	30%
Associate professor	30	50%
Professor	12	20%
Total	60	100%

As shown in Table 7, associate professors accounted for 50% of the sample, assistant professors accounted for 30%, and professors accounted for 20%.

Study Instruments

The study used the Academic Social Networking Sites Questionnaire and the Quality of Higher Education Outcomes Questionnaire.

Statistical Analyses

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 25. The following statistical procedures were used:

- means;
- standard deviations;
- simple linear regression;
- an independent-samples t test to examine differences between two groups; and
- a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine differences among more than two groups.

Results and Discussion

First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis stated that academic social networking sites would have a statistically significant effect on the quality of higher education outcomes from the perspective of university lecturers. Simple linear regression was conducted to test this hypothesis.

Table 8

Model Summary for the First Hypothesis

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.825	.680	.675	4.06991

As shown in Table 8, the correlation coefficient was $R = .825$, indicating a positive relationship between academic social networking sites and the quality of higher education outcomes. The coefficient of determination was $R^2 = .680$, indicating that academic social networking sites explained 68% of the variance in the quality of higher education outcomes. The remaining 32% was attributable to other factors and random error.

Table 9

Analysis of Variance for the Simple Linear Regression Model

Source	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Regression	2046.211	1	2046.211	123.532	< .001
Residual	960.722	58	16.564	—	—
Total	3006.933	59	—	—	—

As shown in Table 9, the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 58) = 123.532$, $p < .001$. Thus, the model significantly predicted the quality of higher education outcomes.

Table 10

Simple Linear Regression Coefficients for the First Hypothesis

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	20.402	3.702	—	5.511	< .001
Academic social networking sites	.697	.063	.825	11.115	< .001

As shown in Table 10, academic social networking sites significantly predicted the quality of higher education outcomes ($B = .697$, $SE = .063$, $\beta = .825$, $t = 11.115$, $p < .001$). The first hypothesis was therefore supported.

The researchers attribute this result to the importance of academic social networking sites in research. These sites facilitate access to research information, available studies, sources, and references; support discussion of research topics; and enable contact with researchers, experts, and specialists. These benefits contribute to lecturers' professional development, strengthen their skills, and provide them with diverse experiences to share with students. This process can improve the quality of academic life, which is a central objective of universities.

Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis stated that there would be statistically significant differences in university lecturers' use of academic social networking sites attributable to academic qualification. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to test this hypothesis.

Table 11

Use of Academic Social Networking Sites by Academic Qualification

Academic Qualification	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Doctorate	50	58.90	8.94	1.026	.309
Master's degree	10	55.90	4.79	—	—

As shown in Table 11, the difference in the use of academic social networking sites between lecturers holding a doctorate and those holding a master's degree was not statistically significant, $t = 1.026$, $p = .309$. The second hypothesis was therefore not supported.

The researchers attribute this result to lecturers' use of academic social networking sites for similar purposes, regardless of whether they hold a master's degree or a doctorate. These purposes include obtaining research information, sharing academic work, and discussing research topics. Lecturers holding a master's degree may use these sites to obtain information needed to prepare their theses, whereas lecturers holding a doctorate may use them to disseminate research required for promotion and other academic purposes.

Third Hypothesis

The third hypothesis stated that there would be statistically significant differences in university lecturers' use of academic social networking sites attributable to academic rank. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test this hypothesis.

Table 12

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Use of Academic Social Networking Sites by Academic Rank

Source	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between groups	268.072	2	134.036	1.940	.153
Within groups	3938.328	57	69.093	—	—
Total	4206.400	59	—	—	—

As shown in Table 12, there were no statistically significant differences in the use of academic social networking sites according to academic rank, $F(2, 57) = 1.940, p = .153$. The third hypothesis was therefore not supported.

The researchers attribute this result to university lecturers at all academic ranks—assistant professor, associate professor, and professor—recognizing the importance of academic social networking sites, particularly in light of developments in information and communication technology affecting higher education. Lecturers across academic ranks, therefore, use these sites to a similar extent to obtain research information needed in their academic work.

Conclusion

The analysis and discussion of the study findings led to the following conclusions:

- Academic social networking sites had a statistically significant positive effect on the quality of higher education outcomes from the perspective of university lecturers.
- There were no statistically significant differences in university lecturers' use of academic social networking sites attributable to academic qualification.
- There were no statistically significant differences in university lecturers' use of academic social networking sites attributable to academic rank.
- In light of these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:
- Provide the necessary information technology infrastructure and communication facilities.
- Increase lecturers' and students' awareness of the importance of academic social networking sites.
- Develop curricula and courses in accordance with ongoing global developments.
- Provide the resources needed to enhance the quality of higher-education outcomes.
- Conduct further in-depth studies on academic social networking sites.
- Conduct further in-depth studies on the quality of higher education.

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