

## The Role of Service Learning in Developing Life Skills among Students of Oum El Bouaghi University

Hassina leguene

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Oum El Bouaghi University, Algeria

E-mail: [hassina.leguene@univ-ueb.dz](mailto:hassina.leguene@univ-ueb.dz)

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### Abstract

This study aimed to identify the role of service learning in developing life skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University, by measuring its level of contribution across three dimensions: social skills, academic skills, and personal skills. The descriptive method was adopted to conduct this study, through the construction of a questionnaire to measure the three dimensions, which was distributed to a sample of 94 students.

The results of the study showed that service learning contributes significantly to the development of life skills among university students. Social skills ranked first, followed by academic skills, while personal skills ranked third, and all these skills were within a high level. These results indicate the effectiveness of service learning as an educational approach that links theoretical and practical cognitive aspects in university training, contributing to the preparation of students who possess essential life skills.

**Keywords:** Service Learning, Life Skills, University Student.

### Introduction:

In light of the rapid technological, cognitive, and economic transformations and the challenges they impose on societies, universities have become obliged to adapt their roles to these changes, as they are required to achieve both the general and specific goals of society and to improve levels of development in its various fields. Today, the university is called upon to prepare human resources with a high level of effectiveness by equipping them for their future professions, which are increasingly complex and changing, and by enabling their personal, cognitive, and social development—that is, by preparing students who possess a high level of life skills that contribute to the sustainable development of both the individual and society. This is achieved through linking university education with society and its needs.

The university also has a continuous commitment toward the local community, as it is required to contribute to achieving various aspects of development, improving and advancing the local community, finding solutions to its problems, and meeting its needs across different fields. Achieving this level of commitment requires the preparation of competent academic cadres who believe in community work and are imbued with the values of citizenship, freedom, justice, and mutual respect. This can only be achieved through educational curricula that include training programs and learning situations rich in real experiences that go beyond lecture halls and classrooms by linking educational and training activities with the community. These contribute to equipping students with concepts and values that enable them to engage directly in serving the community in which they live, at an early stage and before graduation. This type of education is known as service learning or community learning, which traces back to the

ideas of John Dewey, who emphasized the necessity of linking education to the reality or environment in which the individual lives, as education is a positive interaction between the individual and their environment. This type of learning contributes to developing students' communication, leadership, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills, as well as fostering values of citizenship and social responsibility.

### **1- Research Problem:**

Service learning is one of the modern educational approaches that focuses on active and effective learning aimed at linking theoretical academic knowledge acquired by the student with real-life experiences. This is achieved by involving students in field activities and services directed toward serving the local community. This type of education is based on integrating theoretical study with practical application, whereby the student participates in service-learning projects that have social value. This educational approach represents a fundamental entry point for developing various aspects of the student's personality, especially life skills, as it provides real opportunities for communication, teamwork, decision-making, and problem-solving, in addition to enhancing social responsibility, belonging, and adaptability. It also contributes to building the student's personality, motivating initiative and creativity, applying knowledge in real situations, and transforming learning into a meaningful life experience, making the student more prepared for positive participation in social life. Several studies have confirmed the importance of service learning in developing life skills, such as the study by Ismail (2023) and the study by Abdel Rashed (2018), which highlighted its role in enhancing students' self-efficacy. Through this study, we seek to identify the degree of contribution of service learning to the development of life skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University by answering the following questions:

- 1- To what extent does service learning contribute to the development of life skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University?
- 2- Are there statistically significant differences in the degree of contribution of service learning to the development of life skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University attributable to the gender variable?

### **2- Study Hypotheses:**

General hypothesis: Service learning contributes significantly to the development of life skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University.

#### **Sub-hypotheses:**

- 1- Service learning contributes significantly to the development of social skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University.
- 2- Service learning contributes significantly to the development of personal skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University.
- 3- Service learning contributes significantly to the development of academic skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University.
- 4- There are no statistically significant differences in the degree of contribution of service learning to the development of life skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University attributable to gender.

### 3- Importance of the Study:

The theoretical importance of this study lies in its contribution to enriching the educational scientific literature related to service learning as one of the modern approaches in higher education that integrates academic learning with community service. It also provides a conceptual framework linking service learning with the development of various life skills and highlights a research gap in higher education, where studies addressing service learning and its relationship with life skills remain relatively limited.

The practical importance lies in the possibility of benefiting from the study's results, especially by decision-makers in higher education institutions, in developing programs and university training content and integrating service learning into academic curricula. It also assists faculty members in adopting effective teaching strategies that promote active learning, develop student personality, and transform theoretical content into field-based service-learning activities.

### 4- Study Objectives:

This study aims to:

- Identify the degree of contribution of service learning to the development of social skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University.
- Identify the degree of contribution of service learning to the development of personal skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University.
- Identify the degree of contribution of service learning to the development of academic skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University.
- Identify the significance of differences in the degree of contribution of service learning to the development of life skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University attributable to gender.

### 5- Study Terms:

**1- Service Learning:** It is the integration of academic learning with community service. In this study, it refers to field-based educational activities carried out by students (internships, field research, volunteer work) included within the training content, which contribute to linking university education with community service and its needs.

**2- Life Skills:** In this study, they refer to the various abilities and behaviors that enable the student to interact positively with themselves, with others, and with different educational and life situations. These include social skills (effective and positive communication with peers, teamwork, participation in group activities, respect for others' opinions, etc.), personal skills (responsibility, decision-making, time management, self-confidence, emotional regulation, etc.), and academic skills (the ability to search for information, analyze it, link theoretical knowledge with practical application, problem-solving, critical thinking, etc.).

### 6-Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies:

#### 6-1- Previous Studies:

Amal Al-Adwali and ZaroualiWassila (2024) conducted a study aimed at identifying the level of life skills and the level of social responsibility among students at Oum El Bouaghi University. The researchers used the descriptive method and designed two questionnaires to measure life skills and social responsibility. The study was conducted on a sample of (444)

male and female university students from Oum El Bouaghi University. The results showed that the level of life skills and social responsibility was high, and there was a statistically significant positive correlation between life skills and social responsibility among students.

Abdel Rahim Fathi Mohamed Ismail (2023) conducted a study aimed at building a training program based on service learning supported by language projects and measuring its effectiveness in developing some life and work skills, as well as values of community participation among newly graduated Arabic language teachers. The study adopted the experimental method using a quasi-experimental design based on one group with pre- and post-measurements. The sample consisted of (34) newly graduated male and female Arabic language teachers who underwent a training program consisting of (17) sessions. A life and work skills scale and a community participation values scale—prepared by the researcher—were applied. The results showed statistically significant differences between the mean scores of teachers in the pre- and post-measurements in favor of the post-measurement, indicating a high effectiveness of the program.

Rafea Ahmed Taheri and Rabah Baghdadi Mohamed (2021) conducted a study aimed at identifying the degree of practice of some life skills among students in university residences in Bouira, and examining differences according to gender and academic level. The researchers used the descriptive method and distributed a life skills scale to a randomly selected sample of (240) students. The results indicated that the level of life skills was ,and no differences were found according to gender or academic level.

Hayat Touati, Amal Al-Omrani, and Amer Brabah (2021) conducted a study entitled “The Contributions of Training in Developing Life Skills among University Students: A Study on Psychology and Orthophony Students at the University of Mostaganem.” The study adopted the descriptive method and applied a life skills scale to a random sample of (120) male and female students. The results showed that university training did not contribute to the development of life skills except for thinking and discovery skills, and the study recommended revising training programs.

Youssef Omar Abdel Rashed (2018) conducted a study entitled “The Effect of Service Learning on Developing Self-Efficacy among Students at Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University in Saudi Arabia.” The researcher used a quasi-experimental method (control and experimental groups), relying on service learning activities as an experimental treatment. The sample consisted of (34) students in the experimental group and (35) students in the control group. A self-efficacy scale was applied, and the results showed statistically significant differences in favor of the experimental group, indicating the effectiveness of service learning in developing self-efficacy.

Mona Aref Hamed Omar (2017) conducted a study entitled “The Role of the University in Developing Life Skills among Its Students (A Field Study at Aswan University).” The study aimed to identify the life skills required in the present time and the current role of the university in developing these skills. The descriptive method was used, and the sample consisted of (500) male and female students from Aswan University. A questionnaire was used to assess life skills. The results showed a high level of life skills related to verbal and non-verbal social communication, inclination toward developing these skills, building positive relationships,

openness to the world, conflict resolution, leadership, cooperation, teamwork, and helping others solve their problems.

### **6-2- Service Learning:**

The idea of community-based learning emerged in Western countries since the time of John Dewey, but the term service learning gained importance in the late 19th century, aiming to link the school curriculum with the students' community and enable them to contribute to serving their local community through their education.

Service learning is defined as an educational model that aims to direct the human capacities of educational institutions toward achieving community goals, solving its problems, and promoting its development through organized planning implemented via academic subjects and various institutional activities (Ibrahim Refaat, 2016, p. 47).

Shester defines it as a teaching method aimed at developing students' knowledge, attitudes, and various skills through active participation in the local community, based on organized and well-designed learning experiences to meet community needs, promote cooperation between the university and society, integrate the university curriculum, provide opportunities for observation and reflection, and enable students to acquire new academic skills in real-life contexts (Mohamed Al-Farsan, 2018, p. 144).

Wade believes that service learning makes students active participants in service projects aimed at responding to community needs and achieving the objectives of the educational process, and that it provides a non-traditional model of learning within the classroom. (Fakhri, 2012, p. 1851)

Thus, service learning is an educational approach that integrates community service with learning by unifying the objectives of education with those of community service, leading to mutual benefit for both service providers and recipients.

### **6-3- Importance of Service Learning:**

Studies have shown that service learning:

- 1- Helps students build their personality, strengthens self-confidence, and gives them a sense of ability to contribute to society.
- 2- Increases students' motivation toward their education, leading to higher academic achievement due to opportunities for practical application.
- 3- Helps students discover their abilities and skills through real-life situations.
- 4- Promotes social and human interaction among community members.
- 5- Enhances students' awareness of others through direct interaction with society (Fakhri, 2012, p. 6).
- 6- Develops social responsibility and decision-making skills.
- 7- Makes teaching methods interactive through mutual learning between student and teacher.
- 8- Helps students identify strengths and weaknesses of civil society institutions in which they work.

### **6-4- Life Skills:**

Life skills are essential factors that help individuals adapt to contemporary life and interact positively with their environment. They have been defined in various ways. They are a set of diverse abilities encompassing psychological, physical, and cognitive aspects that help

individuals adapt to society and effectively solve problems and face challenges (Ayad, Saad Eddine, 2010, p. 183).

According to the Dictionary of Educational and Psychological Terms by Al-Qabsi (2006), life skills help students adapt to their society and focus on linguistic development, personal skills, responsibility, self-direction, household skills, economic activities, and social interaction (Arafa, 2017).

According to the World Health Organization (1993), life skills are classified into three main categories:

- **Emotional skills:** ability to regulate emotions, emotional flexibility, empathy, tolerance, and stress management.

-**Social skills:** abilities that facilitate positive interaction with others, such as responsibility, participation in group activities, decision-making, relationship building, negotiation, and cooperation.

-**Cognitive skills:** skills related to thinking processes, such as critical thinking, evaluation, creativity, problem-solving, understanding relationships, and time management.

## 7- Methodological and Field Procedures of the Study:

### 7-1- Study Method:

To achieve the objectives of the study, the descriptive method was adopted to describe and interpret the studied phenomenon.

### 7-2- Population and Sample:

The study population consists of final-year students in the Department of Social Sciences at Oum El Bouaghi University. The sample included (94) male and female students (21 males, 73 females), selected randomly.

### 7-3- Study Tool:

A questionnaire was designed by the researcher based on the theoretical literature on service learning and life skills. It consisted of (26) items distributed across three dimensions: personal skills, social skills, and academic skills.

### 7-4- Psychometric Properties of the Tool:

- **Validity:** The validity of the tool was verified through construct validity by calculating the relationship (Pearson correlation coefficient) between the total score of the questionnaire and the score of each dimension, as shown in Table (01).

**Table (01) shows the correlation coefficient between each dimension score and the total score of the service learning questionnaire among the sample members (n = 30).**

Dimension	Correlation Coefficient
Social Skills	0.898
Personal Skills	0.858
Academic Skills	0.878

Significant at 0.01

It is evident from the table above that the three dimensions are statistically significant in terms of their relationship with the total score of the questionnaire at the significance level (0.01), as

the correlation coefficients ranged between (0.858 – 0.898). This indicates the validity of the questionnaire.

**Reliability:** The reliability of the instrument was verified by calculating the variance of the questionnaire scores, where Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient being the most appropriate formula in this case reached (0.910). This value indicates a satisfactory and high level of reliability of the study instrument.

**8- Presentation, Discussion, and Interpretation of the Study Results:**

**8-1- Presentation, Discussion, and Interpretation of the General Hypothesis Results:**

The general hypothesis states that “service learning contributes significantly to the development of life skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University.” To verify or reject this hypothesis, the arithmetic means and standard deviations for each item were calculated, as shown in the table below:

**Table (02): Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations of the Service Learning Questionnaire for the Sub-dimensions and the Total Score.**

<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
<b>High</b>	1	0.328560	2.6181	Social Skills
<b>High</b>	3	0.309730	2.4894	Personal Skills
<b>High</b>	2	0.387210	2.5304	Academic Skills
<b>High</b>		0.287040	2.5459	Total Score

From our reading of the table above, it is evident that service learning contributes significantly to the development of life skills among university students, with a mean of (2.5459) and a standard deviation of (0.287040). Social skills ranked first at a high level, with a mean of (2.6181) and a standard deviation of (0.328560). This confirms that service learning constitutes a fertile environment for developing competencies and social skills, given its reliance on interaction, cooperation, exchange of knowledge and experiences among students, direct interaction with others, and participation in community activities.

It is followed by academic skills, with a mean of (2.5304) and a standard deviation of (0.387210), reflecting the ability of service learning to support academic achievement by linking theoretical concepts with real field applications. Students who participate in service learning activities demonstrate a deeper understanding of course content and their field of study.

Finally, personal skills ranked third at a high level, with a mean of (2.4894) and a standard deviation of (0.309730). This highlights the importance of field-based learning activities that allow students to discover themselves, enhance their confidence in their abilities, identify their interests, and increase their motivation for learning more effectively than theoretical approaches alone.

These results confirm the importance of service learning as an effective educational strategy in developing life skills, as it combines cognitive learning with real-life experience. This aligns with modern trends in higher education that emphasize active learning, linking education with community service, and reinforcing the role of the university as a space for shaping various aspects of the student’s personality and equipping them with the necessary competencies for integration into social and professional life. These findings are consistent with many previous studies that highlighted the role of the university in developing life skills, such as the study by Youssef Omar Abdel Rashed (2018) and the study by Mona Aref Hamed Omar (2017).

**8-2- Presentation, Discussion, and Interpretation of the Results of the First Sub-Hypothesis:**

The first sub-hypothesis states that “service learning contributes significantly to the development of social skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University.” To verify or reject this hypothesis, the arithmetic means and standard deviations for each item were calculated, as shown in the table below:

**Table (03): Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations of the Responses of the Study Sample on the Social Skills Dimension (arranged in descending order).**

No.	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Evaluation
1	Service learning activities develop students' communication skills	2.6915	0.508560	3	High
2	Service learning helps university students improve their ability to work in groups	2.7447	0.462260	1	High
3	Participation in project work improves teamwork	2.6277	0.548390	4	High
4	Participation in field learning activities helps students understand community problems closely	2.6170	0.550780	6	High
5	Through service learning activities, students acquire values of volunteer work	2.5745	0.577150	8	High
6	Participation in service activities enables students to take responsibility	2.5745	0.538600	9	High
7	Group work helps students learn to respect rules within the university campus	2.7234	0.495230	2	High
8	Through service learning, students develop initiative in carrying out community-oriented projects	2.6170	0.624010	5	High

9	Service learning helps students build new social relationships with others	2.5851	0.575660	7	High
10	Participation in service-based academic work helps students accept others	2.4255	0.558210	10	High
	<b>Total Score</b>	2.6181	0.328560		High

The results of Table (03) show that the overall mean for the social skills dimension reached (2.6181) with a standard deviation of (0.328560), which represents a high level. This confirms that service learning activities significantly contribute to the development of social skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University. It is also observed that all responses of the sample individuals to the items of this dimension obtained high ratings, indicating students' agreement on the positive role of service learning.

The statement "Service learning helps university students improve their ability to work in groups" ranked first with a mean of (2.7447), which confirms the importance of teamwork among university students, as it is one of the most important skills developed through service learning. It is followed by the statement "Participation in group work helps students learn to respect the rules applied within the university campus," as the more students engage in service and field-based learning activities, the more they learn discipline and respect for the university environment.

The statement "Through participation in service-based academic activities, students become able to accept others" ranked last, indicating that the skill of accepting others requires further reinforcement compared to other skills. This may be explained by the fact that this skill requires deeper cognitive and emotional maturity and is linked to cultural and value-based factors that may not develop as quickly as communication or teamwork skills.

The results also showed that service learning contributes to the development of a variety of other social skills, such as volunteer work, responsibility, building social relationships, and initiative, where the means for these items ranged between (2.5745) and (2.6277), all within a high level. Participatory environments are among the most important factors that develop social competencies, as students learn cooperation roles, task distribution, joint decision-making, and the enhancement of self-regulation and social discipline, which are key components of social and emotional development.

Moreover, service learning requires students to engage in real communication situations with their peers and members of the community, which contributes to developing skills of expression, active listening, constructive discussion, and the exchange of opinions, ideas, and experiences.

Based on these results, the first sub-hypothesis can be accepted, which states that "service learning contributes significantly to the development of social skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University." These findings are consistent with many previous studies that have demonstrated the role of service learning in developing social skills, as it provides real educational situations that enhance deep learning compared to traditional rote-based learning. It also confirms that integrating students into community issues contributes to developing their

social awareness and sense of responsibility, as shown in the study by Amal Al-Adwali and ZaroualiWassila (2024).

**8-3- Presentation and Discussion of the Second Sub-Hypothesis:**

The second sub-hypothesis states that “service learning contributes significantly to the development of personal skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University.” To verify or reject this hypothesis, the arithmetic means and standard deviations for each item were calculated, as shown in the table below:

**Table (04): Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations of the Responses of the Study Sample on the Personal Skills Dimension (arranged in descending order).**

No.	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Evaluation
1	Service learning enables students to enhance self-confidence	2.6383	0.504840	1	High
2	Through participation in university activities, students acquire problem-solving skills	2.4043	0.554920	7	High
3	Participation in applied learning activities improves students’ ability to adapt to various learning situations	2.6170	0.510250	2	High
4	Service learning enables students to manage time effectively	2.4255	0.595490	6	High
5	Through service learning activities, students develop the ability to understand others’ perspectives	2.5957	0.573970	3	High
6	Students learn self-control through service learning	2.3830	0.641010	8	High
7	Students gain a deeper understanding of themselves through engagement in service learning activities	2.3298	0.611510	9	Moderate
8	Through field-based learning activities, students discover their abilities and potentials	2.5213	0.543360	4	High
9	Service learning develops students’ decision-making skills through participation in applied learning situations	2.4894	0.581890	5	High
	<b>Total Score</b>	2.4894	0.309730		High

From the table above, it is observed that the overall mean for the personal skills dimension reached (2.4894) with a standard deviation of (0.30973), reflecting a high level of students’

perception of the role of service learning in developing their personal skills. Most of the items in the second dimension received high ratings, with means ranging between (2.3830 – 2.6383) and standard deviations between (0.504840 – 0.641010), while the seventh item was rated at a moderate level with a mean of (2.3298) and a standard deviation of (0.611510).

The skill of enhancing self-confidence ranked first with a mean of (2.6383), indicating that engagement in service learning activities provides real success situations that strengthen students' self-esteem and confidence. The statement "Participation in applied learning activities improves students' ability to adapt to various learning situations" ranked second, showing that students' involvement in field activities equips them with new experiences that enhance their adaptability. The statement "Through participation in service learning activities, students develop the ability to understand others' perspectives" ranked third with a mean of (2.6170), which falls within the high level. This reflects the importance of service learning in developing students' social and emotional competencies in interactive learning environments. Skills such as decision-making, time management, and problem-solving also recorded high means, indicating that service learning contributes to the development of higher-order thinking skills and applied executive skills in educational contexts. In contrast, the skill of self-understanding ranked last with a mean of (2.3298) and a moderate evaluation, suggesting a limited impact of service learning on deepening self-awareness compared to other skills.

Learning through direct, field-based, and interactive experiences provided by service learning enhances students' acquisition of knowledge and skills through engagement with real-life situations in their communities. This explains the high levels observed in skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, and self-confidence. Additionally, service learning activities enable social interaction and the development of personal skills, which explains the acquisition of skills such as understanding others and improving adaptability.

Based on the results presented in the previous table, the second sub-hypothesis, which states that "service learning contributes significantly to the development of personal skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University," is confirmed. These findings are consistent with many previous studies that emphasize the role of service learning in developing students' personal competencies and skills, as it integrates theoretical knowledge with practical application and provides an interactive learning environment rich in real-life situations. It also enhances students' sense of responsibility and social belonging, as confirmed by the study of Youssef Omar Abdel Rashed (2018), which highlighted the importance of service learning in developing self-efficacy.

#### **8-4- Presentation and Discussion of the Third Sub-Hypothesis:**

The third sub-hypothesis states that "service learning contributes significantly to the development of academic skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University." To verify or reject this hypothesis, the arithmetic means and standard deviations for each item were calculated, as shown in the table below:

**Table (05): Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations of the Responses of the Study Sample on the Academic Skills Dimension (arranged in descending order).**

No.	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Evaluation
1	Through service learning, students achieve a better understanding of course content	2.5532	0.615520	4	High
2	Through fieldwork, students can apply the theories and knowledge they have learned	2.6064	0.552960	1	High
3	Service learning increases motivation for learning	2.5957	0.554920	3	High
4	Participation in service learning activities develops students' critical thinking ability	2.4043	0.610290	7	High
5	Service learning develops students' creative thinking skills	2.4787	0.617460	5	High
6	Service learning helps improve students' academic achievement abilities	2.4787	0.599800	6	High
7	Service learning enables students to broaden their understanding of their field of study	2.5957	0.610290	2	High
	<b>Total Score</b>	2.5304	0.387210		High

From the table above, it is clear that service learning contributes significantly to the development of academic skills among university students, with a mean of (2.5304) and a standard deviation of (0.387210). All items of the third dimension received high ratings, with means ranging between (2.4787 – 2.6064) and standard deviations between (0.552960 – 0.599800).

The statement “Through fieldwork, students can apply the theories and knowledge they have learned” ranked first with a mean of (2.6064), reflecting students’ awareness of the importance of learning in a field context and within service-based activities. Engagement in fieldwork transforms abstract theoretical knowledge into tangible real-life experiences, making learning more effective and better retained by university students, and enabling them to practically apply what they have studied.

The statements related to “broadening students’ understanding of their field of study” and “increasing motivation for learning” ranked second and third respectively, with high means of (2.5957) and (2.5957). This can be explained by the fact that learning through applied field activities breaks the monotony of traditional theoretical learning and deepens students’ understanding of knowledge, while also increasing intrinsic motivation and engagement in learning. When students perceive what they study as having social value and practical usefulness, their academic enthusiasm increases, and their perspectives on their field of study expand, allowing them to recognize its importance in serving their community.

The statement “Service learning develops students’ creative thinking skills” ranked fifth, while the statement “Participation in service learning activities develops students’ critical thinking ability” ranked seventh; both received high evaluations. This confirms that service learning goes beyond lower-order thinking skills such as memorization and rote learning, and instead promotes higher-order skills such as analysis and evaluation. The relatively lower ranking of these skills may be explained by the fact that higher-order thinking skills such as critical and creative thinking require a longer time to develop and greater engagement in real-life activities by university students.

From the above, it can be concluded that service learning contributes to improving academic performance and achievement among university students, as well as developing higher-order skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and creative thinking, particularly through engagement in real service-based activities related to students’ fields of study. However, the relative variation among items indicates that the effectiveness of service learning is not absolute, but rather depends on the quality of the design of educational and training programs at the university, the nature of the field activities in which students engage, the extent to which these activities align with their interests and specializations, and their integration with the objectives of higher education and community needs. Accordingly, the third sub-hypothesis stating that “service learning contributes significantly to the development of academic skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University” can be accepted.

**8-5- Presentation and Discussion of the Results of the Fourth Sub-Hypothesis:**

“There are statistically significant differences in the degree of contribution of service learning to the development of life skills among university students according to the gender variable.” To verify or reject this hypothesis, the t-test was calculated to determine the differences between males and females, as shown in the table below:

**Table (06): t-test for the Significance of Differences between Males and Females in the Degree of Contribution of Service Learning to the Development of Life Skills among University Students in the Study Sample.**

Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	df	Significance Level
Males (n=21)	2.5887	0.266000	0.7740	92	0.441
Females (n=73)	2.5336	0.293390			

From Table (06), it is evident that:

There are differences between the two means, where the mean for females was (2.5336) with a standard deviation of (0.293390), while the mean for males was (2.5887) with a standard deviation of (0.266000). To determine the statistical significance of these differences, the researcher used the independent samples t-test (males/females). The calculated t-value was (0.774), which is not statistically significant, as the significance level (sig = 0.441) is greater than the adopted significance level (0.05) in the current study. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted, meaning that there are no differences

in the degree of contribution of service learning to the development of life skills among university students attributable to the gender variable (male/female).

This can be explained by the fact that service learning is a modern and comprehensive educational strategy that provides equal learning opportunities for all students, as they participate in the same field activities and real-life experiences, leading to similar acquired experiences. Additionally, the acquisition of life skills through learning activities and mutual social interaction tends to be similar for both genders. The absence of differences between males and females can also be attributed to the similarity of educational conditions experienced by students within the university, as well as the standardization of programs and training activities. Furthermore, the nature of life skills which are basic and universal skills such as communication, cooperation, and problem-solving does not differ based on gender.

### **Conclusion:**

The aim of this study was to identify the extent to which service learning contributes to the development of life skills among students at Oum El Bouaghi University. In light of the results obtained, the importance of service learning as a modern teaching strategy becomes evident, as it integrates cognitive learning with real-life experience and social interaction, transforming the university student from a passive recipient into an active and engaged social participant—an essential principle in contemporary education.

The study concluded that service learning develops life skills among university students, with results indicating a high level across various skills, with a clear prominence of social skills, followed by academic skills, and then personal skills. Service learning provides students with opportunities to enhance their deep understanding of theoretical content and their ability to apply what they have learned in practice. It also increases students' intrinsic motivation, as this type of learning is based on experience and practice, enabling students to develop effective communication skills, positive interaction, responsibility, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities in real educational situations. This allows university students to acquire essential life skills necessary for integration into professional and social life and to adapt to the demands of contemporary society.

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