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E-Collaboration and Academic Performance of Lecturers:
Evidence From a Jordanian University

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ABSTRACT

Electronic collaboration is increasingly becoming more popular among both the practitioners and the academics; however, the practitioners have taken more advantage of it than the academics. Despite the importance of e-collaboration to the education sector over the years, there appears to have been a dearth in literature. Academic literature is yet to be explored more deeply. Only a few studies on e-collaboration are still considered a crucial feature in collaboration research in the academic domain. The correlation analysis result revealed that e-collaboration has positive strongly correlation with both teaching and research performance at $p>0.01$. Also, the hypothesis testing result revealed that there is a significant relationship between e-collaboration and teaching performance, and between e-collaboration and research performance at $p<0.05$ respectively. Based on this, the study therefore concluded that e-collaboration has a positive significant relationship with both teaching and research performance. The study offered limitations and suggestions for future studies.

KEYWORDS

Academic Performance, Collaboration, Electronic Collaboration, Jordan, Lecturers

INTRODUCTION

The practice of e-collaboration is becoming increasingly popular among practitioners and academics; however, practitioners have taken more advantage of it than academics (Cassivi et al., 2004; Iyer, 2014; Razmerita & Kirchner, 2015; Saks et al., 2024). Razmerita and Kirchner (2015) acknowledged that collaboration, in general, as a concept, would continue to attract attention and become more important for learning and working in the 21st century, particularly in student-centered academic environments rather than teacher-centered ones. They noted that collaboration, including collaborative technologies, has become natural to adopt in different forms, including co-creation. Organizations such as the Bible Broadcasting Network (BBN; now GTE Internet-Working) have a long history of supporting educational collaboration online. It has played a major role in an e-collaboration system that has helped educators develop new pedagogical models, share their learning, and collaborate over the net

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to support school reform. It advocates the use of communications technology, such as e-collaboration, to support educators who are implementing new state curriculum standards (Onifade et al., 2015).

Two major issues are relevant for this study to address. First is a deficiency in the study of electronic collaboration in developing countries. For example, while developed countries such as the USA and the UK appear to have gone far with e-collaboration, it is saddening that e-collaboration is yet to be effectively explored in developing countries such as Jordan, as many academics still favor traditional face-to-face collaboration. Besides this, opportunities for collaboration do not always exist within a school. Electronic collaboration allows teachers to connect to a new set of colleagues. In other words, there is a paucity of studies on e-collaboration in developing countries, particularly when compared with that of the developed countries highlighted above.

Despite the importance of e-collaboration to the education sector over the past years, there appears to have been a dearth of literature in this area (Atkinson et al., 2007; Vangrieken et al., 2015; Zascerinska & Ahrens, 2009). It is yet to be explored in academic research as deeply as other concepts. Only a few studies on e-collaboration are still considered a crucial feature in collaboration research, e.g., Koufman-Frederick et al. (1999) and more recently, Habes et al. (2018), Iyer (2014), Razmerita and Kirchner (2015), and Shannak (2013). That gap makes this study imperative, particularly in a developing country such as Jordan, which places great importance on education. Thus, the paucity of research in the area of e-collaboration and academic performance has propelled the present study to investigate the relationship between e-collaboration and academic performance among academics in Jordan's higher institutions, with particular interest in Jordanian University. This would substantially contribute to the nascent literature and data in the sector.

Besides this, research has revealed that e-collaboration is a vital skill for 21st-century academics (Ronfelft et al., 2015; Irajpour et al., 2015; Ayenalem et al., 2022). Ayenalem et al. (2022) reported that both the government and many other organizations are pushing for collaboration in the education sector to make academics collaborate on instructions, research, and outreach services. Unfortunately, they argued that the extent to which academics collaborate in academic institutions for research, teaching, and outreach services is very rarely interrogated by researchers. They further observed that the level to which academics collaborate in information exchange and material sharing appears too weak and informal forms of collaboration that fall in the independence continuum.

Another major weakness and issue of concern that required the attention of this study is that of scope and area of coverage. For example, apart from the fact that much of the study on e-collaboration and performance is observed to be Western-based, it is clear that many of the studies are tailored toward one direction. It is observed that more of the studies focused on industries, supply chain performance, firms, organizational performances, and student perceptions rather than the performance of the academics (University's Teachers-Lecturers) in the universities. For example, Rosenzweig (2009) and Shannak (2013) only related e-collaboration and performance to manufacturing firms. In other words, the performance of the employees who were mainly working in the manufacturing firms was measured. Similarly, Cassivi et al. (2004) limited their study to e-collaboration tools and firm performance with no reference to the academic performance of the university's teachers. Iyer (2014) examined the operational impact of collaboration and resource specificity within the technological context, and this has no directional relationship with the present study.

Razmerita and Kirchner (2015) related e-collaboration to student group performance without consideration of the academic performance of the teachers who are considered very important and relevant to the education system. In Jordan, it appears that only Habes et al. (2018) attempted to explore e-collaboration but only related collaborative education to social media among students in selected Jordanian universities, thus limiting the scope and coverage of the study. The present study deviates from this direction by examining e-collaboration and academic performance of lecturers in Jordanian University with particular reference to Jordanian University. Thus, the major objective of this study is to examine the relationship between e-collaboration and the academic performance of university teachers at Jordanian University, Jordan.