Research Article

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Strengths of English Self-Efficacy Beliefs among Arabic-Native-Speaker University Students whose Language of Instruction is English

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Abstract: Worldwide, the concept of self-efficacy beliefs has been investigated abundantly and found to positively affect the outcomes of university students in most subject areas including English. The existing literature yet suggests that the self-efficacy beliefs of Saudi university students to pursue their higher education using the English language in Saudi Arabia have not been investigated. The present study aimed to assess the strengths of students' self-efficacy beliefs to complete their higher education in English, to assess the degree of relationship between self-efficacy beliefs for writing, listening, and speaking English, and to compare male students and their female counterparts on the listed variables. Descriptive, t-test, and multiple linear regression analyses were utilized to inspect the data and answer the research questions. The self-efficacy beliefs of participants were deemed strong. The correlation between general self-efficacy beliefs and writing self-efficacy was significant. The correlation between general self-efficacy and self-efficacy for listening was also significant. The multiple regression analyses showed a statistically significant effect of self-efficacy beliefs for writing and self-efficacy beliefs for listening on general self-efficacy beliefs. Results of the independent sample t-test suggested one statistically significant difference between male and female students on the self-efficacy beliefs for writing. Limitations were stated, and recommendations were made for future replications of the study.

Keywords: English self-efficacy beliefs, Gender differences, Arabic-native-speaker, University students, Saudi Arabia

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INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy beliefs, from a theoretical perspective, refer to people's confidence in their capacity to carry out a task successfully (Bandura, 1995). Self-efficacy beliefs can be characterized at the operational phase as how confident learners are about planning and implementing strategies into actions to achieve goals, as well as how they see their skills to adapt to various conditions. Their self-assurance in their potential to learn is what drives them. Self-efficacy, as described by Snyder and Lopez (2007), is the belief that one can succeed with their skills in a variety of situations. As a result, it controls achievement, tenacity, effort, and ambition (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007).

Also, self-efficacy beliefs serve as a conduit for interactions between individuals, their behaviors, and their environments during the learning journey. According to Bandura (1997), the self-efficacy beliefs variable are a multi-dimensional concept based on: 1) magnitude, which reflects how challenging people perceive their assigned tasks to be; 2) durability, which refers to people's confidence in their abilities to successfully complete the various components of a task; and 3) generality, which reflects the degree to which self-efficacy on one task positively correlates with other tasks or domains. In theory, according to Waaktaar and Torgersen (2013), people can increase their self-efficacy beliefs by witnessing their accomplishments, getting praise and awards, and achieving mastery in a particular task. In other words, Self-efficacy beliefs are mostly a product of prior experiences, according to Bandura (1977). These mastery encounters are particularly pertinent to the growth of self-efficacy beliefs, which is increased when

experiences are viewed as positive. In the contrary, it is decreased when experiences are interpreted as negative (Bandura, 1997). Students also develop their self-efficacy beliefs by witnessing others do a task and then assessing their own likelihood of success with that same task. This is referred to as vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1997). It is in this light that it was argued that significant persons can also verbally persuade and provide feedback on a person's self-efficacy views (Cassé, Oosterman, & Schuengel, 2015; Gale et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Bandura (1997) identifies self-efficacy beliefs as either domain-specific or the perceived ability to perform concrete actions in order to achieve specific outcomes in most areas of life. In the domain of human health, self-efficacy beliefs have proven to be effective boosters of recovery and disease prevention. In a study, for example, self-efficacy hurdles and non-traditional educational approaches to self-efficacy promotion for chronic disease patients were studied. Self-management programs, telehealth, mobile applications, gaming, and social media were found to be four major techniques to boost self-efficacy beliefs. According to the findings, individuals with chronic diseases can increase their self-efficacy beliefs with innovative treatments (Farley, 2020). Aside from patients' self-efficacy beliefs, health professionals' levels of self-efficacy beliefs have also been investigated. A study found and provided communication skills training programs to support changes in attitude and behavior or self-efficacy beliefs of health professionals. In the trained groups, improvements in performance and self-efficacy of communication skills were reported (Mata, de Azevedo, Braga et al., 2021). In the areas of education, the levels of self-efficacy beliefs, its relations with many other variables, and its predictive values have been investigated.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Strengths and Correlations of English Self-efficacy Beliefs Studies

Recent years have witnessed an increasing number of studies in the domain of education, and more specifically in the area of English self-efficacy beliefs. In Saudi Arabia, English major students were the subjects of research that investigated their sense of self-efficacy during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study aimed at figuring out how Blackboard affected Saudi learners' self-efficacy beliefs, identifying characteristics that affected those views in an online setting, and understanding how self-efficacy beliefs related to academic performance (Amri & Alasmari, 2021). Another study developed interest in the impact of students' self-efficacy beliefs on their ability to learn English in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. The study sought to determine whether there was a connection between Saudi students' perceived self-efficacy and their success in learning English. Saleem, Ali, and Ab Rashid (2018) showed a link between general and English self-efficacy and success in learning the English language. The connection between Saudi English language learners' (EFL) academic success and their sense of self-efficacy about learning English was further investigated. The results showed that EFL participants' overall self-efficacy perceptions about learning the English language were quite low. Additionally, students were found to struggle with learning English in general. Findings suggested a positive correlation between students' English self-efficacy beliefs and their language proficiency, indicating that students' perspectives on language learning have an impact on their language performance (Alrabai, 2018).

In the same vein, reading self-efficacy beliefs were used as a mediating variable in a study to determine the relationship between Bandura's (1997) four predicted self-efficacy sources and reading comprehension. Results confirmed the suggested conceptual framework by showing a substantial relationship between reading self-efficacy beliefs and all four sources of self-efficacy. Additionally, reading comprehension was significantly correlated with reading self-efficacy beliefs. Finally, reading self-efficacy beliefs mediated the relationship between reading comprehension and self-efficacy sources (Shehzad, Alghorbany, Lashari, & Lashari, 2019). Past studies also were interested in investigating group differences regarding the self-efficacy concept.

2.2. Differences of English Self-Efficacy across Gender Studies

Comparative studies on the self-efficacy variable have also been conducted abundantly. No studies that compared male university students and their female counterparts on the English self-efficacy beliefs in Saudi Arabia were found. In many other countries, however, controversial results were yielded. In a study conducted by Kim, Wang, Ahn, et al. (2015), the outcomes exposed three self-efficacy belief outlines, labelled as low, medium, and high, which characterized university students who were more dedicated to learn English. The findings suggested that the number of female students who were in the high profile excessively dominated the number of male students who were basically found to be in the low self-efficacy outline. In another study, university female students reported stronger English self-efficacy beliefs, yet obtained inferior marks on English language examinations in both China and Germany (Wang, Schwab, Fenn, et al.2013).

In the same light, Khatib and Maarof (2015) conducted a study whose aim was to investigate the discrepancies in speaking English self-efficacy across student genders. Participants were enrolled in a technical college who were studying English as a second language. The investigators utilized a survey questionnaire that they modified from past studies. Student ability, activity perception, and aspiration were used to assess their perceived self-efficacy beliefs to speak English. Overall, the results suggested that female students held higher levels of self-efficacy beliefs when compared to their male counterparts. In a study conducted in Vietnam, the investigators did not find any statistically significant differences between male and female students in which the English self-efficacy variable was compared across genders (Truong & Wang, 2019). Although in a few instances, no differences were revealed between male and female university students, in general, female students elsewhere were found to possess higher self-efficacy beliefs to use English as a non-native language.

The Current Study

To our knowledge, the current literature reveals a scarcity not to say a nonexistence of studies that showed interest in the investigation of correlations between university students' general English self-efficacy beliefs, writing self-efficacy, listening self-efficacy, and speaking self-efficacy alongside student age, and grade point average (Gpa) in Saudi Arabia. More importantly, most past and recent studies have shed light on learners' self-efficacy beliefs solely in the English learning area and have not investigated the effect of English self-efficacy beliefs on other university subjects. No study has investigated university students' self-efficacy to use English as their unique language of instruction in higher education in Saudi Arabia. This study aimed at gauging the strengths of self-efficacy beliefs among native speakers of the Arabic language who are university students in Saudi Arabia. The first objective was to assess the levels of English self-efficacy beliefs universities whose language of instruction is English in a Saudi Arabia's context. The second objective was to assess the relationship between general English self-efficacy beliefs, self-efficacy for writing, listening, and speaking in English. The third objective was to compare the strengths of English self-efficacy beliefs between male and female students. The study attempted to answer the following questions:

(1) What are university students' levels of self-efficacy beliefs to pursue their higher education using the English language in Saudi Arabia?

(2) What are the degrees of relationship between general English self-efficacy beliefs, student age, Gpa, and specific English self-efficacy beliefs for writing, listening, and speaking?

(3) To what extent are male university students' levels of self-efficacy beliefs different from their female counterparts'?

3. METHODS

3.1 Participants

This survey design research included descriptive, correlational, and comparative analyses designated to measure university students' degrees of self-efficacy beliefs to use English, a second language as an only tool of instruction. Participants in the current study were 310 college students whose native language was Arabic but who were enrolled in a private university whose language of instruction was exclusively English. The sample size included 221 males representing 71% and 86 females, representing 27.7% of all participants. Three students did not provide information regarding their genders. Ages range from 18 to 30 with a mean of 20.39 (2.23SD). A convenient sampling method was utilized to enroll participants on a voluntary basis. Data were collected through a paper and pencil questionnaire and through an online survey form. A response rate of 60% (Fincham, 2008) was acquired as the investigators first printed 400 paper surveys and obtained 245 returned questionnaires. They then sent out an online version of the questionnaire to include more participants. Overall, 310 students were enrolled. Green (1991) proposed a rule of thumb to estimate sample size in which $N \geq 50 + 8$ K when testing R2, in which K is the number of used variables. Since all participants were at least 18 years old, they only needed to sign a consent form. Participants who turned in their questionnaires with multiple missing data were not included in the final simple size. Considering the number of variables, the researchers deemed the sample size sufficient to run multiple regression analyses alongside other assessments.

3.2 Procedure

Once the university's Institutional Review Board approved the research and delivered an authorization letter, the investigators printed and distributed the survey questionnaires alongside the consent form to students on campus after explaining to them the goal of the survey and the voluntary nature of the participation. On a Likert scale that ranged from 1 to 5, 1 being strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 undecided, 4 agree, and 5 being strongly agree, the investigators required students to evaluate their own strengths of self-efficacy beliefs, for general English, writing, listening, and for speaking in English by circling or checking the number that best describes those beliefs. Prior to rating those beliefs, students provided demographic information about their genders, ages, areas of study and current Gpa.

3.3 Measures

A developed demographic questionnaire meant to collect data about participants' ages, genders, areas of study, and current Gpa was used. Four other instruments were included that measured specific areas of the English language self-efficacy beliefs. The first self-efficacy beliefs instrument was the Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE) intended to be utilized as a measurement of student general self-efficacy beliefs to pursue their academic courses in English and as a dependent variable in the regression analysis. The QESE was created with 32 items (Wang, Schwab, Fenn, & Chang, 2013). Each question encourages students to evaluate their skills in the areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing to complete specific activities in English. In order to fit into the cultural contexts of language learning in China, Germany, Korea, and the United States, the QESE has undergone adaptation. The QESE can be used as a valid measure in a variety of cultural situations, according to recent studies on its psychometric features (Wang, Kim, Bai, & Hu, 2014; Wang, Schwab, Fenn, & Chang, 2013). With Cronbach's $\alpha = .97$, the instrument is said to have a high internal consistency reliability.

The second instrument was the Self-Efficacy for Writing Scale (SEWS). It was included to measure students' self-efficacy beliefs to write any course in English. The instrument also served as a variable of comparison and one of the independent variables in the regression analysis. The SEWS encompassed 16 items reflecting the three suggested types of writing that are ideation, conventions, and self-regulation (Bruning, Dempsey, Kauffman et al. (2013). Reliability was computed and results showed that Alphas for

the writing ideation, conventions, and self-regulation self-efficacy subscales were high with 0.923, 0.858, and 0.874, respectively.

The third subscale measured self-efficacy for listening and the fourth one measured self-efficacy for speaking. Both subscales were meant to be used as comparison variables and independent variables in the multiple regression analysis. The two tools were drawn from the English self-efficacy scale developed by Yanar and Bümen (2012). The whole tool consists of 34 items with a reliability estimation of .97. Using the data in the present study, reliability estimates were computed for the four subscales and alpha was equal to α = .98 for general self-efficacy, α = .95 for writing self-efficacy, α= .76 for self-efficacy for listening, and α = .88 for self-efficacy for speaking. The different reliability estimates were deemed satisfactory and acceptable to carry on with the study.

3.4 Statistical analysis

Using descriptive analysis, the researcher computed the number of participants, gender, average age, and average GPA of participants. See Table 1 for detailed information regarding demographics. Next, for each of the subscales, they calculated total scores to answer the question relative to the strengths or levels of different self-efficacy beliefs. See Table 2 for details. Furthermore, correlational analyses were conducted that included all four subscales to gauge the degree of association between the included variables. To answer the question relative to which variables contribute significantly to predicting general English self-efficacy beliefs, multiple linear regression analysis was utilized.

Table 1. Participants' demographics (1)

Variables	***N***	***%***
Participants	310	100
Males	221	79.29
Females	86	27.74
Average age	20.40	
Average GPA	2.96	
Areas of study		
Accounting	8	2.58
Architecture	7	2.26
Aviation management	3	.96

Business administration	2	.65
Civil engineering	6	1.94
Computer sciences	50	16.12
Cyber Security	2	.65
Finance	50	16.12
Home Design	10	3.22
Industrial Engineering	3	.96
Information systems	35	11.29
Law	54	17.42
Linguistics	1	0.32

It was argued that assumptions that are included in all multiple linear regression analyses should be verified first. According to Creswell (2009), there is a risk to the validity of statistical inferences when an analysis's assumptions are incorrect due to a lack of statistical power or a violation of statistical expectations. The most thoroughly tested hypotheses are those relating to linearity, measurement accuracy, homoscedasticity, and normality.

Table 1. Participants' demographics (continued)

Areas of study	***N***	***%***

Marketing	19	6.13
Medical school	1	.32
Preparatory year program	7	2.26
Product & Manufacturing Engineering	4	1.29
Software engineering	37	11.94
Translation	2	.65
Unknown	9	2.90

In the present study, the researchers tested the validity of assumptions 1 and 2, which stipulate that the dependent variables must be evaluated on a continuous scale and that at least two independent variables, which can be either continuous or categorical, must also be included. Simple visualizations were used to test the latter hypotheses. The predictions were accurate. The linearity, measurement reliability, homoscedasticity, and normalcy assumptions, as well as other assumptions, were tested using IBM SPSS software version 29, IBM Corp. (2013). The findings of the multiple regression analyses were interpreted by the researchers because all the assumptions were satisfied, and none of them were violated.

Table 2. Benchmark table for assessing the strengths of Self-efficacy beliefs

	Strongly (1) disagree	Disagree (2)	Undecided (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
General S.E	32	64	96	128	160
S.E for writing	16	32	48	64	80
S.E for listening	4	8	12	16	20
S.E for speaking	7	14	21	28	35

Finally, an independent sample t-test was run to determine whether male and female students differed on each of the self-efficacy subscales. The results were then interpreted after being confirmed against the four assumptions of independence, normality, homogeneity of variances, and random sampling. By noting how the two sample sizes varied from one another, the researchers tested for independence. Both samples were normally distributed in terms of normality. The two samples showed roughly identical variances in terms of the homogeneity of variances. And finally, in terms of random sampling, the two samples were collected using this method. All the assumptions' requirements were satisfied. Bearing this in mind, the independent sample t-test was then evaluated by the researchers.

4. RESULTS

The researchers first computed the ranges, total scores, averages, and standard deviations for each of the four self-efficacy subscales. They then interpreted students' evaluations of their personal beliefs about their capabilities based on a five-point Likert scale. The five-point of the Likert scale were the following: Strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), undecided (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). Each point of the Likert scale was multiplied by the number of items on each instrument to obtain its numerical value or maximum total score on that level of the scale. A comparison table was then created which served as a benchmark to appraise students' personal assessments. See table 2. For example, regarding general self-efficacy beliefs, the average of students' total score that was 134.43, was above *agree* (128), but matched better with *agree than strongly agree* (160) given its closer proximity. The average score for self-efficacy beliefs for writing was 62.15, was closer to *agree* (64) than *undecided* (48). The average score for self-efficacy for listening (16.6) matched with *agree* (16) and the average score for self-efficacy for speaking (27.29) was also closer to *agree* (28) than *undecided* (21). Overall student participants believed that they could successfully complete university courses in English. The levels of their self-efficacy beliefs were deemed strong. See table 3.

Table 3 Strength of Self-efficacy beliefs

	S.E Instrument Range		**Result Ranges**		**Averages**	**SD**	**Interpretations**
	Lowest	**Highest**	**Mini.**	**Maxi.**			
General S. E	32 to	160	32 to	160	134.43	27.16	Agree
S.E for writing	16 to	80	16 to	80	62.15	13.51	Closer to agree (64) than undecided (48)
S.E for listening	4 to	20	4 to	20	16.60	3.38	Agree
S.E for speaking	7 to	35	7 to	28.79	27.29	6.14	Closer to agree (28) than undecided (21)

Next, correlation analyses that included the four self-efficacy subscales and variables such as student age and GPA were conducted. The correlation of general self-efficacy beliefs and writing self-efficacy was significant ($r = .756$, $p < .001$). The correlation of general self-efficacy and self-efficacy for listening was also significant ($r = .728$, $P < .001$. Many other correlations analyses were found to be statistically significant. See table 4 for other results.

Furthermore, advanced correlations were conducted that included multiple linear regression analyses. General English self-efficacy belief was used as the dependent variable. Five independent variables were involved that were self-efficacy belief for writing, self-efficacy belief for listening, self-efficacy belief for speaking, student age, and student Gpa.

Table 4. Correlations

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
General S. E						
	1					
S.E for writing	.756**	1				
	<.001					
S.E for listening	.728**	.632**	1			
	<.001	<.001				
S.E for speaking	.611**	.615**	.730**	1		
	<.001	<.001	<.001			
Student age	-.004	-.011	-.055	.010	1	
	.941	.848	.332	.857		
Student Gpa	.170**	.193**	.138*	.099	-.285**	1
	.006	.002	.026	.113	<.001	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The results of the multiple linear regression analyses showed a statistically significant effect of Self-efficacy for writing and self-efficacy for listening on general self-efficacy (F (5, 252) = 93.699), p < .001 with Adjusted R2 = .643, suggesting that 64% of the variance is predicted by the listed factors. Variable *Self-efficacy for writing* was found to be a better predictor of *general self-efficacy* (p = .001), followed by variable *self-efficacy for listening* (p = .001). See table 5 for additional details. None of the other independent variables (Self-efficacy for speaking, student age and student Gpa) contributed significantly to the model.

Table 5. Multiple regression analysis results

			95%				
Variables	**Beta**	**SE**	**LL**	**UL**	**β**	**t**	**P**
S.E for writing	1.004	.099	.809	1.199	.494	10.16	.001
S.E for	3.153	.446	2.274	4.03	.386	7.062	.001

listening							
S.E for speaking	.102	.237	-.363	.569	.023	.432	.666
Student age	.276	.456	-.622	1.174	.024	.606	.545
Student Gpa	.919	1.424	-1.885	3.724	.026	.646	.519

* Dependent variable: General self-efficacy beliefs
*P < .001.

Finally, the results of the independent sample *t*-test suggested only one statistically significant difference between male students (M = 63.03, 13.01SD) and their female counterparts (M = 60.1, 14.42SD) on self-efficacy beliefs for writing. There was no difference between male (M = 135.21, 25.50SD) and female (M = 133.17, 30.70SD) on general self-efficacy beliefs. No differences were observed in the score of males' self-efficacy belief for listening (M = 16.61, 2.20SD) and females' (M= 16.77, 3.60SD). No differences were observed in the score of males' self-efficacy for speaking (M = 27.35, 5.82SD) and females' (M= 27.31, 6.66SD). See table 6 for more details on the comparisons.

Table 6. Differences between male and female students on levels of self-efficacy beliefs

	Males		**Females**					
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**df**	**t**	**P**	**Cohen's d**
General S. E	135.21	25.50	133.17	30.70	305	.594	.276	.075
S.E for writing	63.03	13.01	60.1	14.42	305	1.720	.043	.219
S.E for listening	16.61	2.20	16.77	3.60	305	-.383	.351	-.049
S.E for speaking	27.35	5.82	27.31	6.66	305	.046	.482	.006

* Levene's test indicated that the homogeneity of variance assumption was met.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to gauge the strengths of English self-efficacy beliefs among native speakers of the Arabic language who use English as their exclusive language of instruction in Saudi Arabia. The primary objective was to assess the strengths of English self-efficacy beliefs. The second objective was to assess the relationship between general English self-efficacy beliefs, self-efficacy for writing, listening, and speaking in English. The last objective was to compare the strengths of English self-efficacy beliefs across student genders. Regarding students' levels of self-efficacy beliefs, overall, self-efficacy beliefs were strong across all four subscales, indicating that participants had high beliefs in their capabilities to complete academic tasks successfully in English as a second and exclusive language of instruction.

Recent studies in Saudi's different universities suggested contradictory results regarding the strengths of college students' self-efficacy. These results showed that Saudi students were neither confident in their skills to execute assignments as perfectly as feasible nor well-equipped with the necessary instruments to carry out their academic duties (Amri & Alasmari, 2021). This particular result was obtained

in the context of switching from face-to-face class to online type of course delivery during the COVID pandemic. The study was meant to measure students' self-efficacy beliefs to use Blackboard, an online course delivery that was then new to them in a public university. In another study (Alrabai, 2018), the results showed that EFL participants' overall self-efficacy perceptions about learning the English language were quite low. Additionally, they struggled with learning English in general. General self-efficacy beliefs were however found to be moderate across university students who were majoring in medical, scientific, and administrative streams (Saleem, Ali, & Ab Rashid, 2018). The discrepancies between studies can be accounted for by the fact that universities other than the one the present study was conducted have used Arabic as their first language of instruction to this date and students only interact with English as a subject, not as a tool for studying university subjects.

Regarding the outcomes of correlational analyses, results suggested positive associations between general self-efficacy, self-efficacy for writing, self-efficacy for listening, and self-efficacy for speaking alongside student Gpa. No significant correlation was found between general self-efficacy and student age. Student age did not correlate with any of the other variables. Further correlational analysis was conducted that attempted to find out variables that would contribute significantly to predicting general self-efficacy beliefs. Only self-efficacy for writing and self-efficacy for listening predicted significantly general English self-efficacy beliefs.

Past studies yet corroborate the correlation results. Results in earlier studies (Saleem, Ali, and Ab Rashid, 2018) revealed a satisfactory association between general and English self-efficacy and success in learning the English language. Findings confirmed that reading self-efficacy beliefs were substantially linked with all four sources of self-efficacy. Additionally, there was a significant correlation between metacognitive reading techniques and reading self-efficacy beliefs (Shehzad et al. 2020). The findings showed that perceived self-efficacy and academic achievement have a positive, substantial association. The conclusions offered implications and pedagogical suggestions based on the findings (Amri & Alasmari, 2021). There exists further evidence that learners' beliefs about their capabilities for language acquisition have an impact on their language performance, implying a positive correlation between students' English self-efficacy beliefs and their language proficiency. The study's conclusions shed light on the significant relationship between Saudi EFL learners' opinions about their own efficacy and their linguistic proficiency. It is believed that these results will offer recommendations for the many parties engaged in language learning and instruction in the nation (Alrabai, 2018). Outside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a substantial correlation between students' academic performance and their self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and learning practices was also found (Weda, Abdul Samad, et al. 2018).

Regarding the predictive nature of self-efficacy beliefs, the results of the multiple linear regression analyses showed a statistically significant effect of Self-efficacy for writing and self-efficacy for listening on general self-efficacy beliefs. Self-efficacy for writing was found to be a better predictor of general English self-efficacy, followed by self-efficacy for listening. In the same vein, past investigations indicated that there were strong relationships between the school disciplines such as Arabic, English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies and all three subscales of the Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (MJSES). These relationships were all statistically significant (P=.01). A multiple regression coefficient (R) of 0.574 and a multiple correlation square of 0.571 were obtained, demonstrating that self-efficacy accounts for 57.1% of the overall variation in academic achievement of the study participants (Al Demerdash, 2020). Findings in another study demonstrated that self-efficacy for learning technology was significantly predicted by educational status, field of study, and learning satisfaction (P = 0.001). According to Aldhahi, MBaattaiah, and Alqahtani (2002), self-efficacy beliefs for time management were predicted by gender, academic achievement, and learning satisfaction (P = 0.001).

Furthermore, a correlational study confirmed the associations between all English Language Self-Efficacy (ELSE) and online self-regulated English Learning (OSEL) scales. Regression analysis also showed that self-evaluation was the most effective predictor for elucidating participants' variation in self-efficacy in English speaking, listening, and reading (Su et al. 2018). Using analysis of variance, results

indicated substantial self-efficacy beliefs for English public speaking and speech performance growth in university students in China throughout a four-month period. Path analysis results provided evidence regarding hypothesized relationships among variables (Zhang, Ardasheva, & Austin, 2020). It is in this light that it was argued that self-efficacy beliefs may have an impact on individuals' actions, ideas, and feelings. Students who have excellent self-efficiency beliefs typically have good learning autonomy (Chen, 2020).

Regarding comparations across student genders, the analyses revealed that there were no differences between male and female students on general English self-efficacy, self-efficacy for listening, and self-efficacy for speaking. A statistically significant difference was found only for English self-efficacy beliefs for writing in which male students' beliefs in their capabilities to write successfully in English was stronger. Gender based levels of English self-efficacy beliefs was nonexistent in the literature in Saudi Arabia.

Earlier studies conducted elsewhere, yet showed that in various fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), female students exhibit lower levels of self-efficacy beliefs than male students (Marshman, Kalender, Nokes-Malach, et al. 2018). It was argued that the self-efficacy gap is one of the factors contributing to the low representation of female students in STEM. The relationship between male and female students' self-efficacy was investigated to build inclusive and equitable learning environments. On most of the factors, there were statistically significant gender disparities favoring male students (Kalender, Marshman, Schunn, et al. (2020)). To determine if gender differences in self-efficacy remain across various instructors and course formats, the study compared the self-efficacy of male and female students who performed similarly in basic physics courses. Before physics 1, before physics 2, and at the conclusion of physics 2, students responded to a self-efficacy in physics survey. Research-based conceptual physics exams and course grades were used to gauge students' progress. The pedagogy employed in the physics classes, which were taught by a number of different teachers, varied, with some utilizing a "flipped" structure and others using a more conventional, lecture-based format. At all performance levels in physics 1 and physics 2, it was found that that female students' self-efficacy beliefs were lower than male students'. Throughout the introductory physics course series, the self-efficacy gaps widened regardless of the instructor or course structures that were either traditional or flipped. According to the research, female students' experiences in basic physics courses had a detrimental impact on their self-efficacy beliefs, and this conclusion held true across different instructors and course formats (Marshman, Kalender, Nokes-Malach, et al. 2018). The resulting discussion suggested a desire for comparing students' self-efficacy beliefs not only in STEM, but also in social sciences and humanities across student genders.

Indeed, non-STEM studies were undertaken that compared university male and female students on the concept of English self-efficacy beliefs in which university female students were found to possess higher English learning self-efficacy beliefs than their male counterparts. Those female students in China and Germany paradoxically earned considerably lower English grades than male students (Wang, Schwab, Fenn, et al.2013). Studies conducted earlier also revealed that female students engaged in high levels of motivational behaviors to learn a non-native language and were more predisposed to studying a new language than their male counterparts (Bacon & Finnemann, 1992). Finally, Truong & Wang (2019) did not find any substantial dissimilarities between male and female university students. They argued that the lack of differences should be considered while designing English courses for both genders.

This study adds to the knowledge base regarding Saudi students' levels of English self-efficacy beliefs, the predictive value of the construct, and finally the disparity between male and female students. The participants in the present study demonstrated strong self-efficacy beliefs across all four subscales, showing their confidence in their abilities to carry out their academic tasks efficiently in English as a second language. Overall self-efficacy, self-efficacy for writing, self-efficacy for listening, and self-efficacy for speaking all showed positive correlations with student GPA. There was no significant relationship between student age and general self-efficacy. None of the other variables were correlated with student age. Additional correlational analysis was carried out in an effort to identify characteristics that would

considerably aid in the prediction of general self-efficacy beliefs. Only writing and listening self-efficacy strongly influenced general self-efficacy beliefs. Comparative analyses showed that, except for self-efficacy for writing, there were no differences in general English self-efficacy beliefs, self-efficacy for listening, or self-efficacy for speaking between male and female students. The investigators believe that differences in the results from the present and past studies relate to the natures of the institutions of higher education from which participants were enrolled, but also to the nature of their elementary and secondary school backgrounds. Self-efficacy beliefs are built over the years. Arabic-native speakers who have evolved in an international school context whose language of instruction is English are more likely to have developed higher level of self-efficacy beliefs to use English when compared to students who have always utilized the Arabic language throughout with some English courses as school subjects. A few limitations were found in the study.

Limitations and Implications

As with any survey design research, investigators have to rely on participants' accurate accounts of their beliefs about their abilities to achieve some tasks successfully, which report can be biased by many factors such as the participants' emotion or location at the moment of the data collection. The present results could have been affected by student participants' academic backgrounds. As a private university, many students have been enrolled from international high schools whose language of instruction has been English. Compared to other public universities whose language of instruction is Arabic, in which students perceive English as a subject, participants in the present study had multiple opportunities to build their self-efficacy beliefs and confidence as they faced difficulties and successes to receive instruction in English. Finally, it is important to note that most participants come from one private university, suggesting that the findings of the present study can only be generalize to that particular university. More studies are encouraged to investigate college students' self-efficacy beliefs to pursue their studies in universities in Saudi Arabia whose language of instruction is English. Such studies have not been found in the existing literature. Most studies that gauged college students' strengths of self-efficacy beliefs did it in an attempt to find out the effect of self-efficacy beliefs on English as a university subject or on the use of some new platforms of instruction.

STATEMENT OF RESEARCHERS' CONTRIBUTION RATE

Authors' contribution rates to the study are equal regarding the data collection. The first author screened, analyzed the data, and wrote the reports whereas the second author wrote the literature review and verified the analysis, errors, and mistakes.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

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