RESEARCH ARTICLE

A research on academic self-perception and academic achievement of secondary school students

Şenay Bozdağ[1]

Sümer Aktan[2]

[1] Yeniköy Secondary School, Türkiye / Contact: senaybozdag10@gmail.com

[2] Balıkesir University, Türkiye / Contact: saktanus@gmail.com

Abstract

The aim of the present study is to investigate the connection between academic self-perception and academic achievement of seventh-grade secondary school students in English courses. Additionally, the study aims to explore the relationship between various demographic factors and academic achievement in English. A predictive correlational research design and causal comparison methods were employed. The sample consisted of 906 volunteer seventh-grade students from public secondary schools in Altıeylül and Karesi, Balıkesir Province. The 19-item, 4-point Likert-type "Academic Self-Perception Scale," developed by Liu, Wang, and Parkins (2005), was adapted into Turkish by the researchers for this study. An original measurement tool was also utilized to assess achievement in English language courses. Demographic variables were analyzed using t-tests, ANOVA, and structural equation modeling. Pearson correlation analysis, simple linear regression analysis, and stepwise multiple hierarchical regression analysis were applied to determine the relationship between academic self-perception and achievement in English language courses. Results indicated a significant, positive, and moderate relationship between academic self-perception and achievement in English language courses. Regression analysis revealed that academic self-perception significantly predicts achievement in English language courses. Furthermore, achievement in English language courses varied significantly based on the variables of having a study room and the father's level of education.

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Keywords

Academic Self-Perception, Achievement in English Language Courses, Secondary School Students

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Introduction

Learning a foreign language is a crucial process that involves the development of individuals' skills in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing the target language. Mastering these skills allows individuals to communicate effectively and facilitates both emotional growth and cultural understanding. Foreign language learning not only

increases self-confidence but also helps individuals appreciate different cultural perspectives, contributing to the idea of global citizenship (English Proficiency Index [EPI], 2023; Luo et al., 2022; Patel & Jain, 2008; Weatherford, 1986).

The importance of English in global communication has been shaped by historical processes and has become the common language used widely throughout the world (Demirel, 1993; Dornyei & Csizer, 2002; Yaman, 2018). This prominence is historically linked to the Industrial Revolution, which began in the 18th and 19th centuries; and has become evident in the use of English in international communication and diplomacy (Demirel, 1993; Demirpolat, 2015; Yaman, 2018). However, statistics on English proficiency in Türkiye and results from national exams indicate that students are performing at a basic skill level (EPI, 2023). According to the EF English Proficiency Index (EPI, 2023), Türkiye ranks 66th among 113 countries and 33rd among 34 countries in Europe. In examining the 2023 LGS (High School Entrance Examination) results, the average English score for 8th-grade students was only 4.91 out of 10 questions. These results suggest that students in Türkiye are not achieving the desired level of English proficiency at national and international levels (Altan, 2017; British Council & TEPAV, 2013; Yaman, 2018).

In this context, it is evident that numerous factors affect students' success in learning English (Burns, 1982; Işık, 2008). Student-related difficulties may arise from issues such as a lack of regular study habits and motivation, while teachers' communication skills, the quality of teaching materials, and the inadequacies of educational programs are also significant factors (Acat, 2002; Alptekin, 2012; Aybek, 2019; Bayraktaroğlu, 2012). A crucial factor that has the potential to influence learning processes is students' perceptions of their academic abilities. Academic self-perception encompasses students’ evaluations of their academic abilities, achievement, and learning process, as well as their view of themselves as learners (Bridges & Hayek, 2006; Giofrè et al., 2017; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley et al., 2006; Kurtz-Costes & Schneider, 1994). Research shows that students with high academic self-perception adopt a more positive approach to learning processes and exhibit greater motivation (Marsh et al., 2001).

To enhance the language learning process and increase student achievement, it is essential to consider the effects of academic self-perception on English language learning (Aran & Yılmaz, 2021; Guay et al., 2003; İncirci, 2021; Lawrence, 2006; Liu et al., 2023; Kenç & Oktay, 2002; Marsh et al., 2001; Parvez & Shakir, 2014; Rosenberg, 1979).

Additionally, various demographic variables are expected to impact students' achievement in English language courses. These variables include gender, possession of a study room, attendance at kindergarten or preschool, and parental education level. This study aims to examine the relationship between the achievement level of secondary school students (seventh grade) in English and their academic self-perception, along with these demographic variables. The sub-objectives of the research are organized as follows:

1. What is the level of academic self-perception among students?
2. What is the level of students' academic achievement in English course?
3. Is there a significant difference in students' achievement according to:
    - Gender,
    - Possession of a study room,
    - Attendance at kindergarten/preschool?
4. Does the academic achievement of students in English course differ significantly according to the level of parental education?
5. What is the level of relationship between academic self-perception and academic achievement of students?
6. What is the predictive power of students' academic self-perception level on their academic achievement in English?

Academic Self-Perception and Academic Achievement

Academic self-perception refers to how students evaluate their academic abilities, skills, and achievements, forming beliefs about themselves based on these evaluations. This perception encompasses students' attitudes toward their performance, expectations of

success, and assessments of their academic skills. It plays a crucial role in shaping students' approaches to learning by influencing their participation in the educational process, motivation, and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Marsh & Yeung, 1997; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990).

This concept is multidimensional, comprising both cognitive and affective components that interact with the learning experiences, successes, and failures students encounter throughout their education. As a result of these interactions, students may develop either positive or negative self-evaluations (Ramos-Sánchez & Nichols, 2007; Yeager & Dweck, 2012). Strong self-awareness is crucial for emotional intelligence and personal development.

Academic achievement is typically defined by indicators such as grades, test scores, and overall performance (Marsh & Martin, 2011; Rosenberg, 1979; Sibanda et al., 2015). Objective measures, including standardized test scores and projects, provide tangible assessments of academic achievement (Marsh, 1990; Steinmayr et al., 2014). Additionally, the concept of academic achievement is associated with various competencies, such as communication skills, mathematics, and science, highlighting the multifaceted effects of education (Genesee et al., 2006; Kan’an, 2018).

Academic self-perception significantly influences students' evaluations, beliefs, and perceptions about their roles in the educational process. It plays a crucial role in shaping how students assess their abilities and potential, set their expectations for success, and define their educational goals (Lawrence, 2006; Marsh & Parker, 1984; Shavelson & Bolus, 1982). Moreover, the level of academic self-perception can have a significant impact on a student's academic performance (Jennings, 2015; Rechtschaffen, 2016; Schoeberlein et al., 2009).

Research by Marsh and Martin (2011) explores the relationship between academic self-perception and academic achievement through the "Reciprocal Effects" Model. This model highlights the direct and indirect effects of academic self-perception on academic achievement. The study provides a multidimensional perspective by focusing on specific components of self-perception; however, the limited sample size and the young age group raise questions about the generalizability of its findings.

Another study by İşmar and Şehitoğlu (2021) examines the relationship between academic self-perception and academic achievement among 50 middle school students. In this research, academic self-perception is viewed as an abstract and emotional personality trait, while academic achievement is considered a concrete outcome. The narrow sample size limits the applicability of the findings for practitioners.

Barker, Dowson, and McInerney (2005) conducted a study to explain academic achievement by establishing a relationship between self-perception and motivational goal theories. They longitudinally examined the connections between goal theory, academic self-perception, and achievement among high school students. Their findings revealed moderate to strong correlations between academic self-perception and academic achievement; however, these correlations were only valid for specific courses, suggesting the need for a broader perspective. Furthermore, the low correlations between matched and unmatched domains indicate that academic self-perception may be a valid indicator primarily for certain disciplines.

In a longitudinal study by Marsh et al. (2001), it was observed that students who perceived themselves as competent and capable in English actively participated in class. Conversely, students with a negative academic self-perception in English exhibited low levels of performance and achievement.

Another study by Kenç and Oktay (2002) investigated the impact of high school students' self-perception on their academic achievement. The results indicated a positive and significant relationship between the two variables, highlighting that self-perception, self-esteem, parental attitudes, and relationships significantly influence academic achievement. While the findings showed a positive but low-level relationship between academic self-perception scores and academic grades, the authors suggested that further studies should be conducted in diverse samples and contexts.

Academic Self-Perception and English Language Teaching

Language skills encompass comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar in a student's first language (Chomsky, 1957; Patel et al., 2023; Pinker, 2007). These skills are essential for understanding oral and written communication and expressing thoughts and feelings effectively. A student's desire to enhance their

language abilities and communicate is closely linked to their social interactions and academic success (EF English Proficiency Index, 2023; Patel & Jain, 2008).

Learning a foreign language learning, particularly English, has become vital in a globalized world. Proficiency in English opens up career opportunities and facilitates participation in international platforms (Göksu, 2018). English serves as a medium of instruction across various fields, enabling access to diverse knowledge (British Council, 2013; Dornyei & Csizér, 2002). Teaching English from an early age helps students develop essential skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar, thereby reinforcing their communication skills and self-perception (Srisopha, 2022; Yaman, 2018; Council of Europe [CoE], 2001; Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2018).

Students' attitudes, motivation, and achievement in English shape their perceptions of academic competence (Adi Badiozaman et al., 2019; Aran & Yılmaz, 2021; Marsh & Yeung, 1997). Consequently, English classes significantly influence both language acquisition and students' overall academic self-perception. Their academic self-perception in English impacts their general academic identity (Genesee et al., 2006).

This reciprocal relationship highlights the interaction between English performance and academic self-perception (Barker et al., 2005; Meshkat & Hosseini, 2015). Research indicates that academic self-perception is shaped by contextual factors and positively correlates with performance in English courses (Aran & Yılmaz, 2021; Byrne, 1990; Calero, 2012; Kuh et al., 2006; Saracaloğlu & Varol, 2007). Therefore, fostering a positive academic self-perception by considering individual differences is crucial.

Calero's (2012) doctoral dissertation focuses on 5th-grade students learning English as a second language. The study examines how academic self-perception affects these students' academic achievement and second language acquisition. It argues that a positive academic self-perception can lead to better academic performance and motivation to learn. The study also investigates the effects of variables such as teacher-student relationships, self-regulation skills, parental academic support, and students' first language proficiency on academic achievement. However, while this research

focused on 5th-grade students and measured the effects of attitudes toward academic self-perception, it did not provide specific suggestions for improving these attitudes.

The research conducted by Parvez and Shakir (2014) defined academic self-perception as how students perceive their abilities, competencies, and values in an academic environment, suggesting that academic self-perception plays a role in English language course success. The authors noted a positive relationship between academic self-perception and performance in language learning courses, positing that these perceptions can potentially improve when students are placed in high-achieving groups. However, the study did not detail which specific contextual variables influenced academic self-perception, potentially limiting the generalizability of its findings.

Overall, studies on the relationship between academic self-perception and achievement in English language courses provide important insights, but limitations and shortcomings in these studies should be considered. In particular, examining the experiences of students across different age groups may contribute to obtaining more comprehensive and generalizable results. The gaps in this area present important research opportunities for future studies.

Achievement in English in Relation to Demographic Variables

Several demographic variables play an essential role in determining success in English courses. One of the primary variables is gender, which has been examined in numerous studies. Aydın (2006) found that female students tend to perform better in learning English than their male counterparts. This finding suggests that gender may influence the effectiveness of language acquisition strategies or motivation levels in learning environments. Similarly, Martin and Hoover (1987) reported that gender creates distinct patterns of academic achievement, with female students scoring higher on English achievement tests compared to male students. Conversely, Hyde (2005), in her study on the "Gender Similarity Hypothesis," found that gender did not significantly affect success in many psychological variables. Additionally, research by DordiNejad and Porghoveh (2014) examined the gender of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers and its relationship with students' perceived achievement. Their findings indicated that factors other than gender were more influential in determining teacher success.

Another demographic variable that can impact students' academic achievement is the presence of a dedicated study room. Numerous studies have concluded that having a study room positively affects academic achievement and motivation (Badie, 2023; Ekmekyermezoğlu, 2010; Fatmawaty & Anam, 2022; Savaž & Grel, 2014; Yelkpieri et al., 2017).

In addition to gender and study space, preschool or kindergarten attendance is another variable that may influence English language achievement. Many studies indicate that early educational experiences significantly shape children's language acquisition and overall academic performance (Eweniyi, 2012; Bani et al., 2022). However, some research suggests that preschool or kindergarten experiences may not have a significant impact on academic achievement (Milligan, 2012).

The level of parental education is also a critical variable. Numerous studies suggest that a high level of parental education correlates positively with student achievement (Butler, 2014; Frome & Eccles, 1998; Leibovitz, 1977; Marzulina et al., 2018; Pishghadam & Zabihi, 2011). Conversely, some studies indicate that parental education may not significantly affect student achievement (Glaesser & Cooper, 2012).

In conclusion, it can be said that the concepts of academic self-perception and academic achievement are closely interrelated. Academic self-perception plays a critical role in shaping students' academic outcomes by influencing their motivation, goal-setting, and overall academic performance. In addition, it is predicted that some demographic factors emphasized are also linked to academic achievement. The reviewed studies emphasize the importance of self-concept in driving academic success, yet the limited generalizability of some findings—due to small sample sizes and contextual differences—suggests the need for further research involving more diverse populations and educational contexts.

This study aims to fill these gaps by exploring the multifaceted nature of academic self-concept, some demographic variables, and their role in fostering achievement across different disciplines. By examining how academic self-perception and some demographic variables influence student performance in various contexts, this research can offer valuable insights into how educators might create more effective learning environments and improve academic outcomes. Ultimately, this research will

contribute to the expanding body of literature and provide practical recommendations for educators seeking to enhance student achievement.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design employed in this study is a predictive correlational design, which falls under the category of quantitative research. Additionally, a causal-comparison method was used to investigate the effects of demographic variables. In causal-comparison studies, the goal is to identify the causes or consequences of existing differences between variables (Fraenkel et al., 2011). Predictive correlational research is defined as the process of predicting the unknown value of one variable based on the known value of one or more other variables by examining the relationships among them (Büyüköztürk et al., 2013).

Participants

The study population consists of 4,673 seventh-grade students from middle schools in Balıkesir Province during the 2022–2023 academic year. The selection of seventh-grade students was intentional, as this age group is able to recognize and reflect on their individual characteristics, which facilitates the development of awareness regarding their academic self-perception.

A cluster sampling method was employed to determine the study sample. In the first stage, ten middle schools were randomly selected from a total of 25 schools. In the second stage, 906 volunteer seventh-grade students were randomly chosen from the selected schools.

Data Collection Tools

A demographic information form was developed to gather data on students' gender, parental education levels, preschool or kindergarten attendance, and the availability of a dedicated study room. The form included categories for parental education levels: "primary school," "secondary school," "high school," and "university."

To assess students' academic self-perception, the researchers adapted the 19-item, 4-point Likert-type "Academic Self-Perception Scale," originally developed by Liu et al. (2005). This scale was translated into Turkish and specifically tailored for the English course. During the adaptation process, the item "I often think about dropping out of school" was removed to avoid introducing negative suggestions to students, resulting in an 18-item final version. The scale includes two factors: "Confidence," with nine items, and "Effort," with nine items.

To evaluate students' academic achievement, a 20-question multiple-choice test was created. This test was aligned with the first three units of the seventh-grade English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum of the Ministry of National Education.

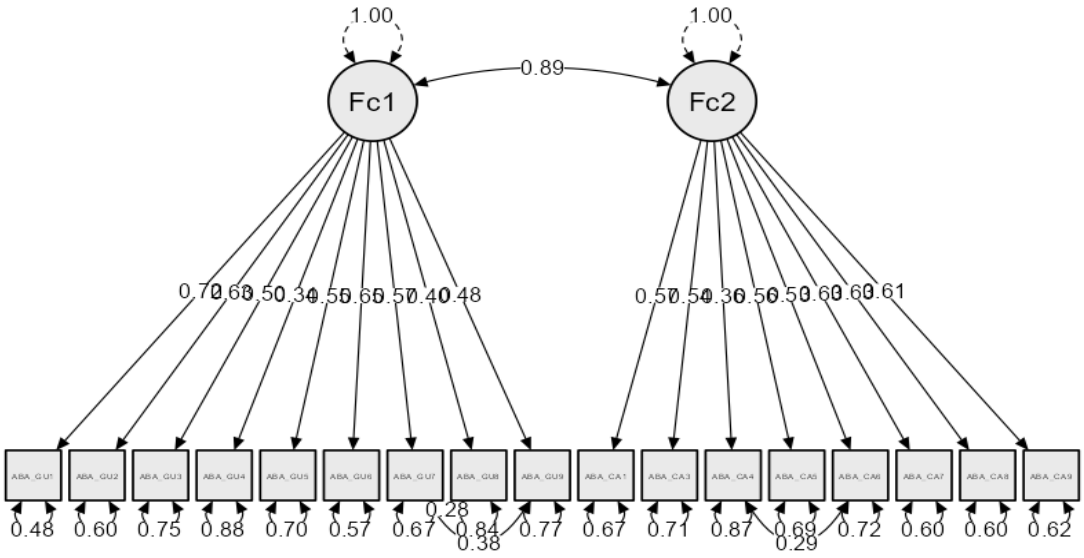
Development of Data Collection Tools

Academic Self-Perception Scale Development

The scale was completed by 906 secondary school students (458 girls and 448 boys) to confirm the factorial structure of the Academic Self-Perception Scale. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using the Diagonal Weighted Least Squares (DWLS) method was applied to the data collected from the participants. The results of the analysis are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Path Diagram of Academic Self-Perception Scale



Three modifications were made during the analysis to achieve an acceptable fit for the chi-squared value relative to the degrees of freedom (df). These adjustments were necessary to improve the model fit and ensure the interpretability of the results. The model-data fit values presented in the table reflect the third modification of the CFA, which confirmed the two-factor, 18-item structure of the scale. The chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio was calculated as 4.1 (475.726 - 115 = 4.1), indicating an acceptable fit. Additionally, the other fit indices fell within the excellent fit category, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Academic Self-Perception Scale CFA 3rd Modification

CFA Fit Index		Study Findings	Goodness of Fit Indices	
			Excellent fit	Acceptable Fit
Chi-square degrees of freedom	X^2 / sd	475.726/115=4.1	≤ 2	≤ 5
Fit Index	GFI	0.97	≥ .95	≥ .90
Comparative Fit Index	CFI	0.96	≥ .95	≥ .90
Non-Normed Fit Index	NNFI	0.95	≥ .95	≥ .90
Normed Fit Index	NFI	0.94	≥ .95	≥ .90
Incremental Fit Index	IFI	0.96	≥ .95	≥ .90
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual	SRMR	0.065	≤ .05	≤ .08
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	RMSEA	0.059	≤ .05	≤ .08

Scale Reliability

The reliability of the scale was assessed using two metrics. The overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was .854, indicating a good level of internal consistency, while the Omega value was .860, further supporting the reliability of the scale. For the sub-dimensions of the Academic Self-Perception Scale, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for "Confidence" was .796, and the Omega value was .797. For the "Effort" sub-dimension, the Alpha coefficient was .747, and the Omega value was .761. These results collectively demonstrate that the scale exhibits strong reliability.

Achievement Test Development

The development of the academic achievement test for 7th-grade students in the English language course followed several important steps to ensure its validity and reliability. Initially, the curriculum objectives from the Ministry of National Education's 7th-grade English Language Teaching Program were reviewed, and a total of 7 learning outcomes were selected from the first three units. A specification table was prepared to match the selected outcomes with test items. Based on this, 20 questions were created, with seven items from the first two units and six items from the third unit, focusing on knowledge and comprehension levels.

To ensure the items' appropriateness for the students' level, the questions were reviewed by two English teachers. Additionally, the questions were read aloud to students to assess their clarity and comprehensibility. Following these steps, a pilot study was conducted with a group of 109 students to assess the test's validity and reliability. Based on Şencan (2005), the sample size was deemed sufficient for item analysis as it met the requirement of being five times the number of items in the test.

The academic achievement test was then evaluated using several statistical measures. The arithmetic mean score was 12.826, with a standard deviation of 6.52, indicating the variability of the test scores. The variance was calculated at 42.510. The Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR-20) value was .942, reflecting high reliability for the test items. The difficulty index was .641, indicating medium difficulty, while the discrimination index was .710, suggesting that the test effectively differentiates between high and low achievers. Additionally, the biserial correlation coefficient was .688, further supporting the test's validity. The details regarding item discrimination index, item difficulty index and biserial correlation for each test item are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Index and Test Statistics for Achievement Test

Item Number	Item discrimination index	Item difficulty index	Biserial correlation
1	.40	.83	.72
2	.69	.69	.88
3	.84	.61	.91
4	.83	.60	1.0

5	.83	.56	.97
6	.64	.69	.82
7	.83	.66	1.0
8	.74	.72	.92
9	.69	.65	.91
10	.80	.64	.96
11	.68	.58	.75
12	.66	.70	.88

Table continued

13	.77	.65	.92
14	.81	.59	.95
15	.66	.65	.90
16	.65	.40	.74
17	.86	.61	1.0
18	.66	.58	.85
19	.44	.75	.69
20	.74	.67	.92

K	$\bar{X}$	SS	SS^2
20	12.826	6.52	42.510

Overall, the analysis reveals that the academic achievement test is reliable, moderately difficult, and possesses good discriminatory power, making it a valid assessment tool.

Procedure

The demographic information form, academic self-perception scale, and academic achievement test were administered to 906 volunteer seventh-grade middle school students during the 2022–2023 academic year, following the acquisition of legal and Ethics Committee approval. Throughout the data collection process, the researchers acted as supervisors and informed students that participation was voluntary and that their scores would not affect their school grades. Additionally, a brief information sheet was provided, explaining the scale, the achievement test, the scope of the information to be completed, and the overall purpose of the study. The information sheet also stated that the data collected would be used for scientific research purposes and would be kept confidential.

Data Analysis

The participants' data were prepared for analysis using the MS Excel program. After removing the data with incorrect and incomplete coding, the remaining 906 data were examined for their suitability for analysis. Then, normality, skewness, and kurtosis values were analyzed using the SPSS Program. Since the data showed normal distribution, parametric statistics were used.

Results

Students' levels of academic self-perception

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Academic Self-Perception Scale Sub-Dimensions

Sub-Dimension	Min.	Max.	Average	Sd	Skewness	Kurtosis
Trust	1.11	4.00	2.90	.587	-.102	-.589
Effort	1.00	4.00	2.93	.527	-.336	-.126
ASPS	1.39	4.00	2.92	.501	-.166	-.511

The scale showed normal distribution characteristics since the skewness and kurtosis coefficients were within the ±1 range. The mean values of both sub-dimensions were very close to each other.

Students' academic achievement levels in English courses

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for the Academic Achievement Test for the English Course

	Min.	Max.	Average	Sd	Skewness	Kurtosis
Academic Achievement Test for English Course	2.00	20.00	12.82	6.52	-.127	-1.758

The lowest score is two correct answers, and the highest score is twenty correct answers. The mean (M = 12.82) and standard deviation (SD = 6.52) of the test were calculated. Regarding the normality assumption of the test, the skewness and kurtosis coefficients are within the range of ±2, indicating that the test is normally distributed.

Students' gender

Table 5

Independent Sample t-Test Results Regarding Achievement in English Language Courses and Gender

	Gender	N	Average	Sd	t	df	p
Academic Achievement Test for English Course	Male	448	13.37	5.91	.513	904	.608*
	Female	458	13.16	6.07			

** p> .05*

Before the analysis, *Levene's test* was performed to determine whether the variances of the data set were identical (F = .752, $p > .05$). In the analysis conducted to assess the difference in seventh-grade students' academic achievement levels in the English course based on gender, no significant difference was found (t(df) = .513, $p > .05$).

Possession of a study room for students

Table 6

Independent Sample t-Test Results Regarding Academic Achievement Scores According to the Variable of Possession of a Study Room

	Availability of a study room	N	Average	Sd	t	df	p
Academic Achievement Test for English Course	Available	834	13.41	6.02	2.46	904	.014*
	Unavailable	72	11.60	5.46			

** p< .05*

Before the analysis, *Levene's Test* (F = .431, $p > .05$) was performed to find that the variances were homogeneously distributed. A significant difference (t = 2.46, $p < .05$) was determined in favor of the students who had a study room.

Students' attendance at kindergarten and/or nursery school

Table 7

Independent Sample t-Test Results Regarding Academic Achievement Scores According to the Variable of Attending Kindergarten/Preschool

	Kindergarten- preschool attendance	N	Average	Sd	t	df	p
Academic Achievement Test for English Course	Yes	834	13.23	5.96	-.616	904	.538*
	No	72	13.68	6.35			

** p> .05*

Levene's test (F = .548, p > .05) was used to determine whether the variances were identical in the data set. There was no statistically significant difference (t = -0.616, p > .05).

Parental education levels of students

Table 8

ANOVA Results of English Academic Achievement Test Scores According to Parents' Education Level

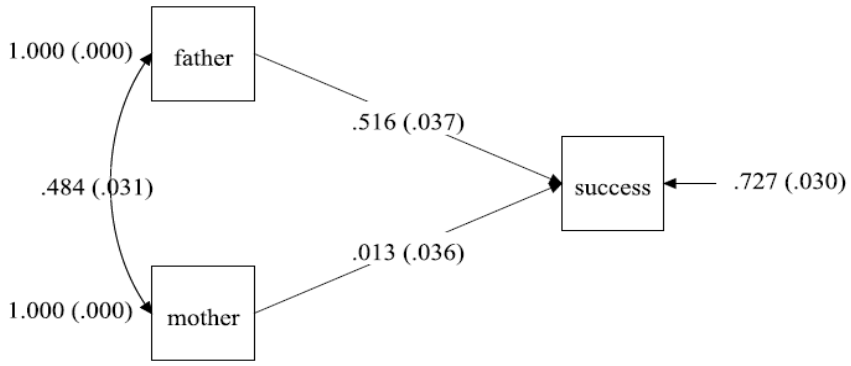
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p
Mother's level of education	Between Groups	60.735	3	20.245	.562	.640*
	Within Groups	32486.744	902	36.016		
	Total	32547.479	905			
Father's level of education	Between Groups	68.065	3	22.688	.630	.596*
	Within Groups	32479.414	902	36.008		
	Total	32547.479	905			

** p> .05*

The variances related to the mother's (F = .646, p > .05) and the father's education level (F = .577, p > .05) are the same. According to ANOVA analysis, there was no significant difference between the average education levels of the parents. However, many studies in the literature contradict this, so further analysis was conducted to address this variable in more depth.

Figure 2

Structural Equation Model Path Diagram of Academic Achievement Test for English Course According to Parents' Education Level



Since the parental education level variable is categorical, a structural equation model analysis was conducted to examine its relationship with academic achievement level. Accordingly, *STDYX Standardization* results indicate that there is a significant relationship between fathers' level of education and students' achievement in English language courses, and that the relationship between mothers' and fathers' level of education is positive and significant. However, it was found that there was no significant relationship between the mother's education level and academic achievement.

Table 9

STDYX Standardization Results

STDYX Standardization	Est.	S.E.	Est/S.E.	p
Success on Father Ed. Level	0.516	0.037	14.07	.000***
Success on Mother Ed. Level	0.013	0.036	0.36	0.71
Mother Ed. Level with Father Ed. Level	0.484	0.031	15.71	.000***
Father Ed. Level Means	2.812	0.078	35.94	.000***
Mother Ed. Level Means	2.724	0.075	36.41	.000***
Success R^2	0.273	0.030	9.06	.000***

**** p<.001*

CFI (Comparative Fit Index) and *TLI* (Tucker-Lewis Index) are important indices used to assess the fit of structural equation models. While *CFI* assesses the fit of

the model by comparing it to an independent model, TLI assesses the fit by taking model complexity into account. Generally, values of 0.90 and above are considered acceptable fit, and values of 0.95 and above are considered good fit. In this study, the fit of the proposed model was evaluated using CFI and TLI indices (CFI = 1.000; TLI = 1.000). It shows that the model provides an excellent fit with the data. These fit values are considered as a positive sign in terms of the theoretical validity and overall structural integrity of the model.

The relation between academic achievement and academic self-perception

Table 10

Pearson Correlation Analysis Results of the Relationship between Academic Achievement in English Course and Academic Self-Perception

	Academic Self-Perception
Academic Achievement Test for English Course	.466*

** *p*< .01*

There is a significant (p < .01; r = .466) relationship between academic achievement and academic self-perception. Therefore, as the participants' academic self-perception levels increase, their academic achievement in the English course increases.

The results of the correlation analysis showing the relationship between the sub-dimensions of confidence and effort and academic achievement in the English course are given in Table 8.

Table 11

Pearson Correlation Analysis Results of the Relationship between Academic Achievement in English Course and Academic Self-Perception Sub-Dimensions

	Academic Achievement Test for English Course	Trust	Effort
Academic Achievement Test for English Course			
Trust	.479**		
Effort	.352**	.618**	

** *p*< .01*

There is a significant (p< .01), positive, and moderate (r=.479, r=.352) relationship between academic achievement in English course and the sub-dimensions of academic self-perception, confidence, and effort. In addition, there is a significant, moderate, and positive relationship between the sub-dimensions of academic self-perception.

The power of academic self-perception levels to predict academic achievement

Before the analysis, it was determined that the variables were normally distributed. In addition, it was checked whether the autocorrelation value, which is the other assumption of simple linear regression analysis, was between 1-3, and the Durbin-Watson value (DW= 1.887) was found. After determining that the prerequisites were met, the ANOVA table was analyzed. It is concluded that the independent variable is a significant predictor (F=250.257, p=.00).

Table 12

The Predictive Power of Academic Self-Perception Level on Academic Achievement in English Course Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Model	R	R^2	Corrected R^2	Beta	Sr^2	t	p
Model 1	.466	.217	.216				
Academic Self-Perception				.466	.466	15.820	.000*

* p< .05

The level of academic self-perception explains 21.7% of the total variance of students' academic achievement in English language courses (R = .466, R^2 = .217).

Before the regression analysis, it was determined whether the necessary conditions were met. The first of these conditions is the absence of multicollinearity. For this, the results in the correlation table were checked, and it was determined that these results were below the upper limit of .850. For autocorrelation, the Durbin-Watson value was examined, and it was determined that it was between 1-3 (DW = 1.871). Based on the values, the data set was found to be suitable for multiple hierarchical regression. In the regression analysis, multiple hierarchical regression analysis was determined as a stepwise method.

Table 13

Multiple Regression Analysis Results of Academic Self-Perception Sub-Dimensions Predicting Academic Achievement in English Lesson

Model	R	R^2	Corrected R^2	Beta	Sr^2	t	p
Model 1	.479	.229	.228				
Trust				.479	.479	16.400	.000*
Model 2	.484	.234	.233				
Trust				.423	.355	11.410	.000*
Effort				.091	.082	2.461	.014*

* $p < .05$

Multiple hierarchical regression analysis was applied in 3 stages. In Model 1, the Trust sub-dimension was applied as the first stage. Accordingly, the Trust sub-dimension explained 22.9% of the total variance in students' academic achievement in English language courses (R = .479, R^2 = .229). Beta value (β = .479) and t value (t = 16.400; p < .05) are significant. Step 2 is shown in Model 2. According to this model, the Effort sub-dimension explains 23.4% of the variance related to students' academic achievement level (R = .484, R^2 = .234). When these results are analyzed, the Effort sub-dimension contributed 0.5% to the model. Beta values of the variables were calculated as (Trust β = .423, Effort β = 0.91). The t values of the variables were statistically significant (t = 11.410; t = 2.461; p < .05).

Conclusion and Discussion

Students' gender

There was no significant difference (t = .513, p > .05) in the achievement test based on the gender variable. While some studies suggest that English achievement differs between genders (Aydın, 2006; Martin & Hoover, 1987), many others indicate that gender does not have a significant effect on achievement in English courses (Hyde, 2005; DordiNejad & Porghoveh, 2014).

The lack of a significant difference in this study may be attributed to language skills and their relationship with individual characteristics, learning strategies, and motivation. It can be inferred that potential differences between girls and boys are likely

influenced not only by gender itself but also by indirect factors such as social expectations, motivation levels, socialization experiences, educational methods, and learning environments.

Possession of a study room for students

A total of 834 students reported having a study room. The mean score of students with a study room on the English achievement test was significantly higher than that of students without a study room ($t = 2.46$, $p = .014$). These findings align with similar studies in the literature, suggesting that having an individual study space positively impacts academic performance in English lessons. Such spaces are crucial for enhancing attention and concentration, as well as providing emotional and physical comfort tailored to students' individual learning needs (Ekmekyermezoğlu, 2010). A dedicated study room can help students minimize the negative effects of external distractions, create an organized and motivating study environment, and support effective study routines and time management (Fatmawaty & Anam, 2022; Savaž & Grel, 2014; Yelkpieri et al., 2017).

Students' attendance at kindergarten and/or nursery school

A total of 834 students reported that they had attended kindergarten or preschool ($t = -.616$, $p > .05$). No statistically significant difference was found between the groups. Contrary to these findings, research suggests that early childhood education can enhance overall academic achievement by supporting cognitive, social, and emotional development. It is predicted that students who attend preschool will develop a positive attitude towards learning and gain experience in foundational academic skills (Bani et al., 2022; Daniels, 1995; Eweniyi, 2012). One of the few studies supporting the research findings was conducted by Milligan (2012), which indicates that students' preschool or kindergarten experience does not significantly affect their academic achievement in English. Achievement in English can often vary based on individual differences, program designs, teacher qualifications, continuity of practice, and family factors. Additionally, there is a need for long-term follow-up studies and research with larger sample sizes. Therefore, while attending kindergarten or nursery school may provide short-term advantages for seventh-grade secondary school students, its long-term

impact can vary and is influenced by numerous factors, complicating the evaluation of its effects.

Parental education levels of students

According to the ANOVA results, the variances related to mothers' ($F = .646$, $p > .05$) and fathers' education levels ($F = .577$, $p > .05$) were found to be identical, with no significant difference between the averages. A review of the literature revealed that many studies have indicated a correlation between the educational levels of parents and students' achievements in English language courses, with both increasing or decreasing in the same direction (Butler, 2014; Leibovitz, 1977; Marzulina et al., 2018; Pishghadam & Zabihi, 2011). It has been emphasized that children's vocabulary, reading habits, attitudes towards learning, and social skills can improve when parents possess a high level of education (Frome & Eccles, 1998).

For this reason, structural equation modeling was applied in further analysis, revealing a positive relationship between fathers' education levels and students' achievement, as well as a positive correlation between the educational levels of both mothers and fathers. The influence of fathers' education may stem from the structure of the sample; in the seventh-grade age group, fathers might play a more significant role in the educational process and serve as role models for their children, inspiring them regarding education and career aspirations. Additionally, the evolving roles of fathers in modern society may shift family support dynamics, strengthen emotional attachments, and enhance children's motivation. Changing societal perceptions may also lead to increased contributions from fathers in education, positively impacting children's academic achievement.

The relation between academic achievement and academic self-perception

According to the academic self-perception scale, the mean scores of the students were 2.90 in the confidence sub-dimension and 2.93 in the effort sub-dimension. The overall average for the scale was 2.92. This indicates that the students' academic self-perception related to the English course is at a medium level. Since the participants were selected from volunteer students, it can be interpreted that those with positive feelings and thoughts towards foreign language lessons may have been more willing to participate in

the study. Therefore, the moderate level of academic self-perception may be explained by the causal and correlational relationships of the relevant variables with academic self-perception.

The difficulty index of the English achievement test was calculated as .641, and the discrimination index was .710, indicating that the test is of medium difficulty and discriminative. The minimum score was two correct answers, while the maximum was 20 correct answers. The arithmetic mean of the achievement test scores was calculated as 12.82. Considering the standard deviation of 6.52 and the variance of 42.510, it can be inferred that students' achievement in the English course is generally at an intermediate level. The distribution shows a wide spread around the mean, implying a diverse range of achievement among students. The similar moderate levels of academic self-perception further indicate a mutual interaction between academic achievement and academic self-perception, suggesting these concepts may increase and decrease in direct proportion.

According to the results of the Pearson correlation analysis, a significant ($p < .01$), positive, and moderate ($r = .466$) relationship was found between the variables. Thus, as the level of academic self-perception increases, academic achievement in the English course also increases. Additionally, a significant ($p < .01$) and moderate ($r = .479$, $r = .352$) relationship was observed between the level of academic achievement and the sub-dimensions of academic self-perception.

The results of the regression analysis revealed that the level of academic self-perception explained 21.7% of the total variance in students' academic achievement in English. This indicates that some of the students' achievement levels in English can be attributed to their academic self-perceptions. In this context, students' beliefs, confidence, and efforts regarding their abilities and academic skills play a crucial role in enhancing their English skills. A positive academic self-perception in the English language learning process can be considered one of the key factors for improving language skills and increasing achievement. The confidence sub-dimension explained 22.9% of the total variance in students' academic achievement in the English course. In comparison, the effort sub-dimension explained 23.4% of the variance, thereby predicting achievement in English courses. Students' confidence in their abilities may

lead to more effort and thus positively affect their achievement in English courses. Moreover, increased confidence and effort levels among students may significantly contribute to improving language skills and enhancing academic achievement.

Numerous studies in Turkey and abroad support the findings of this research. According to Byrne (1990), academic self-perception is influenced by absolute academic achievement levels and how students perceive themselves in social comparison groups. Consequently, a positive academic self-perception may contribute to higher levels of academic achievement, while a negative self-perception may hinder performance. Barker (2005) emphasized that academic self-perception significantly impacts academic achievement by affecting students' motivation, effort, and engagement in academic pursuits. In general, a positive academic self-perception enhances English language course achievement by motivating students, encouraging them to exert effort, and increasing their belief in success, whereas a negative academic self-perception diminishes academic achievement due to low motivation, lack of self-confidence, and reduced willingness to put in effort (Kenç & Oktay, 2002; Marsh, 2001; Marsh & Martin, 2011; Saracaloğlu & Varol, 2007; Shavelson & Bolus, 1982; Sibanda et al., 2015; Steinmayr et al., 2014).

Research shows that academic self-perception is a crucial predictor of academic achievement and that students with a high academic self-perception tend to perform better academically (Burger & Naudé, 2019; Calero, 2012; Choi, 2005; Harter & Leahy, 2001; İşmar & Şehitoğlu, 2021; Joseph & Newman, 2010; Maehr & Braskamp, 1986; Marsh & Craven, 2006; Marsh & Hau, 2004; Parvez & Shakir, 2014; Sanchez & Sanchez-Roda, 2003). Therefore, improving academic self-perception is of critical importance for educational systems.

In conclusion, this analysis highlights the essential interaction between academic self-perception and performance in English language classes. The results emphasize the importance of foreign language teachers and educators focusing on strategies to strengthen language skills and students' academic self-perception.

Implications and Suggestions

The results indicate that as students' academic self-perception increases, their academic achievement in English also rises. Therefore, there is a pressing need to develop strategies aimed at strengthening students' academic self-perception. Educational institutions and teachers can enhance students' academic achievement by employing teaching methods that cultivate a positive academic self-perception during the English learning process.

Establishing incentive mechanisms, such as providing regular feedback and creating a supportive learning environment, can help accurately reflect students' strengths and weaknesses while offering opportunities for improvement. By fostering students' belief in their own abilities, they are more likely to approach English lessons with greater motivation, confidence, and a willingness to improve their academic performance.

The availability of an individual study space can also significantly impact students' academic achievement. Collaboration with parents and family members is essential in creating a positive environment that supports students' English language learning and overall success.

Concrete examples of activities to enhance students' academic self-perception include:

1. **Workshops**: Organizing sessions that guide students in setting short- and long-term academic goals, including strategies for achieving these goals.
2. **Mentoring Programs**: Pairing younger students with upper-level students or teachers to boost their academic confidence.
3. **Inspirational Events**: Hosting gatherings where students share success stories to motivate their peers and strengthen academic self-perception.
4. **Project-Based Activities**: Encouraging students to pursue projects in their areas of interest, fostering collaboration and problem-solving skills while enhancing their feelings about their academic abilities.

5. **Competitions and Fairs**: Organizing academic quiz competitions, science fairs, creative activities, and collaborative study groups to showcase students' talents and boost engagement.
6. **Emotional Intelligence Workshops**: Sessions that help students better understand themselves and evaluate their learning processes.
7. **Informative Seminars**: Engaging families in the educational process to inform them about supporting their children's academic success and improving their perspectives.

Given the relationship between academic self-perception and achievement in English courses, more customized and individualized assessment strategies can be beneficial. Personalized feedback will support students' development and help identify any factors that may hinder their academic self-perception.

Additionally, incorporating technology and multimedia tools, such as virtual reality and online platforms, into English lessons can create interactive and engaging learning environments that contribute to the development of both academic self-perception and achievement.

Ethics Committee Permission Information

This research study was conducted with the approval of the Research Ethics Committee of Balıkesir University (Approval No: 2022/05, dated October 11, 2022).

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