Available online at www.ejal.info
http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.903014

Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 9(3) (2023) 155-167

EJAL
Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics

Role of English Language Enjoyment and Cultural Intelligence to Improve English Language Self-Efficacy and Academic Performance of International Students

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Received 05 September 2023 | Received in revised form 05 December 2023 | Accepted 24 December 2023

APA Citation:
Muthuswamy, V. V., & Ramu, K. (2023). Role of English Language Enjoyment and Cultural Intelligence to Improve English Language Self- Efficacy and Academic Performance of International Students. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 9*(3), 155-167.
Doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.903014

Abstract
The primary objectives of this research were to investigate the impact of English language enjoyment, self-directed learning, and cultural intelligence on both English language self-efficacy and academic performance. Additionally, the study explored the mediating role of English language self-efficacy. Employing a cross-sectional research design with a quantitative approach, data were collected through self-administered questionnaires distributed to international students pursuing higher education in KSA, employing simple random sampling. The study achieved a usable response rate of 71.29%. Data analysis utilized Smart PLS 4. The findings indicated a positive influence of English language enjoyment, self-directed learning, and cultural intelligence on English language self-efficacy. Furthermore, English language self-efficacy demonstrated an impact on academic performance. The results also supported the mediating effect of English language self-efficacy. The implications and limitations of this study are discussed in detail.

Keywords: English Language Self-Efficacy, English Language Fun, Enjoyment, Self-Directed Learning, Self-Directed Learning, Academic Performance.

Introduction

Language assumes a paramount significance in the dynamics of both learning and instructional processes, serving as a pivotal factor in comprehending and mastering various subjects (Zamani & Ahangari, 2016). English serves as the primary global language, acting as the predominant medium of instruction in numerous educational institutions. Students relocating abroad can gain a deeper understanding of new cultures and academic content, thereby enhancing academic achievement. Improved academic performance fosters positive emotions, such as pride, hope, and enjoyment, among students. Consequently, deriving pleasure from English learning directly influences students' academic performance (ACP) (Zhao & Yang,

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DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.903014

2022). Elevated levels of enjoyment can augment the transient thought-action repertoires of students, exerting a positive influence on their language proficiency and academic engagement (Kang & Wu, 2022).

Self-directed learning (SDL), a prominent educational concept in higher education, offers advantages such as life preparation, motivation, independence, and trust. Acknowledging and understanding students' thought processes enhances the effectiveness of SDL, enabling them to meet learning needs in various educational or professional settings (Morris & Rohs, 2023). Students endowed with SDL exhibit a capacity for self-regulation in the learning process, fostering autonomy and independence—integral life skills. SDL signifies the individualized development of the student(Van Woezik, Reuzel, & Koksma, 2019). Students characterized by self-efficacy consistently exert additional effort in their academic pursuits (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2016). Highly self-efficacious students invest additional time in studying, especially when encountering challenges in new situations. Their primary emphasis is on comprehending and mastering the English language to facilitate subject understanding. Such students view problems as challenges, set and commit to goals, and prioritize acquiring educational skills to overcome setbacks. Research indicates that self-efficacy positively impacts both student achievement and well-being (Genc, Kulusakli, & Aydin, 2016).

Students undertaking international studies necessitate cultural adaptability, denoting the capacity to adjust to cultural shifts and assimilate into novel cultural settings (Newsome & Cooper, 2016). To cultivate knowledge and awareness, students must prioritize the cultivation of cultural intelligence. The development of cultural intelligence is imperative for effectively navigating global interactions and managing diverse groups of individuals (Rajaram, 2023). Universities should create academic content to boost students' cultural intelligence for academic advancement. The pivotal role of students' cultural intelligence in both individual and university progress underscores the need to evaluate its impact on self-efficacy development and academic performance improvement (Davidaviciene & Al Majzoub, 2022).

The ACP of students in universities holds significance for the advancement of the institutions. Elevated ACP serves as a solution to various societal issues, encompassing social problems, social mobility, unemployment, economic growth, and social inequality (Rahman et al., 2023). Academic accomplishment exhibits a direct correlation with the efficacy of learning and serves as a vital indicator of both student development and the effectiveness of the educational system and lecturers' pedagogical approaches. The fundamental objective of the academic system is to equip individuals with the capability to navigate societal inequality (Ozcan, 2021). Numerous studies have historically concentrated on identifying factors conducive to enhancing the academic performance of students, particularly those of international origin. Among the challenges encountered by international students, language barriers emerge as a prominent obstacle upon their relocation. The inadequacy in English proficiency often poses impediments for these students (Almaiah et al., 2021). Language challenges adversely impact the self-efficacy of these students, a crucial determinant of ACP. Various studies highlight distinctions in the characteristics of international students compared to their domestic counterparts (Manzano-Sanchez et al., 2018). International students studying abroad must exhibit cultural intelligence. This study examines the influence of English language enjoyment (ELENJ), SDL, and cultural intelligence on ACP, mediated by ELSE. The research is focused on international students in the KSA.

Literature Review

English Language Self-Efficacy (ELSE) and Academic Performance (ACP)

Academic achievement is commonly defined as the enhancement of students' overall performance during the course of their education. Scholars posit that academic achievement is contingent upon apt behaviour, skills, attitude, values, and knowledge (Zheng & Mustappha, 2022) Academic scholars contend that ACP encompasses the advancement of literacy, proficiency, and knowledge (Cao et al., 2022). Several factors possess the potential to influence the ACP of international students, with ELSE being one such factor.

ELSE is the students' belief in their capacity to proficiently utilize, comprehend, and acquire English language skills across various contexts. ELSE is grounded in students' confidence levels in English writing, reading, listening, and speaking (Lestari et al., 2020). In broad terms, researchers define self-efficacy as a student's belief in their ability to perform effectively at the higher education level, encompassing the capacity to plan and execute actions to attain academic goals (Iheanyichukwu, Ademiji, & Omonuwai, 2017). To appraise self-efficacy, students gather information that influences their performance. Prior studies indicate that students' self-efficacy significantly influences their achievements, learning outcomes, academic motivation, resilience, persistence, effort, and task preferences. Moreover, the self-efficacy of students plays a substantial role in shaping their career success (Vidergor, 2023). Language self-efficacy enhances students' performance, with those possessing high levels attributing language learning setbacks to insufficient effort rather than diminished abilities (Xu et al., 2022). Hence, students' self-efficacy influences their selection of tasks to attain academic goals. Conversely, individuals with lower self-efficacy tend to evade language-related tasks. Previous research has established a correlation between students' achievements and their self-efficacy levels (Bui et al., 2017).

In contrast, students with high self-efficacy consistently trust in their capabilities for learning English. They autonomously address language learning challenges with patience. Consequently, self-efficacy is identified as a crucial predictor of ACP and overall student success. Meng & Zhang (2023) reported that ACP of the students in English language can be improved through self-efficacy. The studies of Hayat et al. (2020) and Iheanyichukwu et al. (2017) documented positive influence of self-efficacy on students' ACP.

Thus, we hypothesised that;

H1: *English language Self-efficacy (ELSE) has positive effect on Academic performance (ACP).*

English Language Enjoyment (ELENJ) and English Language Self Efficacy

In scholarly literature, enjoyment is characterized as a positively oriented individual response, reflecting overarching emotions such as fun, delight, and liking, stemming from the specific activity in which an individual is involved (Kawabata & Mallett, 2022). The concept of language enjoyment is pivotal in the realm of students' ACP. Rooted in positive emotions, it is shaped by individual actions and thoughts to cultivate personal resources, emphasizing a sense of accomplishment and novelty. Language enjoyment, thus, significantly contributes to long-term well-being and personal development (Hernik & Jaworska, 2018). An individual who derives enjoyment from language learning heightens environmental awareness, fortifies language input capacity, mitigates the impact of adverse external factors, enhances psychological resilience, fosters the development of social networks, and augments overall well-being (Li, Jiang, & Dewaele, 2018).

In the context of language learning, enjoyment can be delineated as the extent to which a student experiences a sense of fun, joy, and pleasure as a fundamental element derived from the educational setting. Enjoyment represents affective and intrinsic motivation, frequently leading to engaged learning and subsequent behavioural modifications (Manninen et al., 2022). Self-efficacy reflects students' internal motivation, and emotional arousal serves as a crucial factor in its development. Negative emotions like anxiety and stress can impede creative abilities, while enjoying tasks and finding them joyful or interesting can foster confidence in accomplishing them (An et al., 2021; Liao et al., 2022).

The individual's self-efficacy beliefs are influenced by emotional arousal, emotional state, physical condition, social persuasion, and past experiences, establishing these elements as significant contributors to the formation of self-efficacy (Hung, 2020). Scholars have indicated that experiencing enjoyment may significantly contribute to the cultivation of confidence in individuals regarding their ability to successfully perform tasks. Additionally, it aids in the execution of actions to accomplish tasks and resolve problems. Thus, Hung (2020) and Pan & Yuan (2023) reported that enjoyment have significant positive effect on the self-efficacy.

Building upon this rationale, we formulated the hypothesis that;

H2: *English Language Enjoyment (ELENJ) has positive effect on English Language Self efficacy.*

Self-Directed Learning (SDL) and English Language Self-Efficacy (ELSE)

SDL stands out as a potent learning capability and method, acknowledged as an effective means to enhance the quality of learning. Scholars have also classified SDL as the bedrock of sustained, long-term learning (Brandt, 2020). SDL constitutes the active process of comprehending knowledge. Bhandari, Chopra, & Singh (2020) Research has scrutinized the efficacy of SDL, identifying it as a highly effective approach for lifelong learning. Successful implementation of SDL hinges on individual regulation, entailing qualities like hard work, self-motivation, self-control, and self-management. The reported advantages of SDL encompass lifelong skill development, motivation, independence, self-confidence, improved learning ability, and enhanced long-term retention of activities (Dogham et al., 2022).

The capacity for independent learning in students is observed to positively influence self-efficacy. Scholars have underscored the significance of self-efficacy in gauging learners' preparedness. Research indicates a correlation between high self-directed learning ability and elevated levels of self-efficacy. Moreover, investigations exploring the impact of SDL emphasize its role in fostering self-efficacy development among students. Findings reveal that students exhibiting SDL within a classroom setting tend to manifest higher levels of self-efficacy (Chen et al., 2023). Hence, students studying abroad should enhance their self-learning and adaptive skills, positively impacting their self-efficacy in coping with complex environments. Improving professional quality enhances competitiveness and yields long-term societal benefits. Academic achievements are positively influenced by SDL, emphasizing the need for a proficient level of SDL to bolster self-efficacy. Meng et al. (2019) and Qian et al. (2023) reported positive effect of SDL on self-efficacy of the students.

Thus, we hypothesised that;

H3: *Self-Directed Learning (SDL) has positive effect on English Language self-efficacy (ELSE)*

Cultural Intelligence and English Language Self-efficacy (ELSE)

International students encounter various challenges when studying abroad, with culture being a significant aspect. In previous research, cultural intelligence has been characterized as the capability of students to operate efficiently within an environment characterized by cultural diversity (Idrus, 2021). Cultural diversity encompasses distinctions among cultures and nationalities, including variations in religions, occupations, ages, professions, and subcultures. Active engagement in a new culture is crucial for students to enhance their ACP. Possessing cultural intelligence provides students with a competitive advantage. Scholars have asserted that cultural intelligence can be gauged by an individual's academic performance and their integration with peers from diverse backgrounds (Nguyen, Jefferies, & Rojas, 2018). International universities have a crucial role in fostering cultural intelligence among students. This entails emphasizing extracurricular activities and academic courses designed to facilitate students' engagement with new cultures. Furthermore, promoting diversity, cultural exchange programs, and study abroad initiatives are integral strategies for successfully cultivating cultural intelligence among students (Wawrosz & Jurásek, 2021).

The fundamental component of cultural intelligence involves acquiring knowledge concerning various cultural elements, encompassing the practices, values, and norms of the new culture. Additionally, it extends to aspects such as social systems, legal systems, and economic systems. Lam & Liaw (2017) emphasize that a motivational factor in cultural intelligence is directing energy towards understanding new cultures to function effectively in diverse environments. Students studying abroad frequently encounter challenges in comprehending a foreign language. In this context, cultural intelligence assumes a critical role in cultivating self-efficacy, enabling them to concentrate on their academic pursuits. Nguyen et al. (2018) revealed that cultural intelligence among students having diverse background played important role to develop self-efficacy. Similar results were documented by AlMazrouei & Zacca (2021), highlighting the affirmative impact of cultural intelligence on the formation of self-efficacy. Students with elevated cultural intelligence adeptly navigate the adaptation process in a new country, effectively addressing transitional challenges and managing cultural conflicts. These individuals proficiently cultivate interpersonal skills and foster social affiliation. Mastery in the experience of cultural intelligence positively influences their self-efficacy (Wawrosz & Jurásek, 2023).

Students with elevated cultural intelligence exhibit greater cooperativeness, approachability, and agreeableness compared to their counterparts with lower cultural intelligence. These traits contribute to the development of interpersonal skills and relationships, fostering success in academic pursuits. Researchers have indicated that higher cultural intelligence correlates with improved self-efficacy among students. Hu, Gu, & Zhang (2017) and Hu, Liu, & Gu (2018) revealed that cultural intelligence have positive influence on self-efficacy of the students.

Therefore, we hypothesised that;

H4: *Cultural Intelligence has positive effect on English Language Self-efficacy (ELSE)*
H5: *ELSE mediates the relationship between ELENJ and ACP.*
H6: *ELSE mediates the relationship between SDL and ACP.*
H7: *ELSE mediates the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and ACP.*

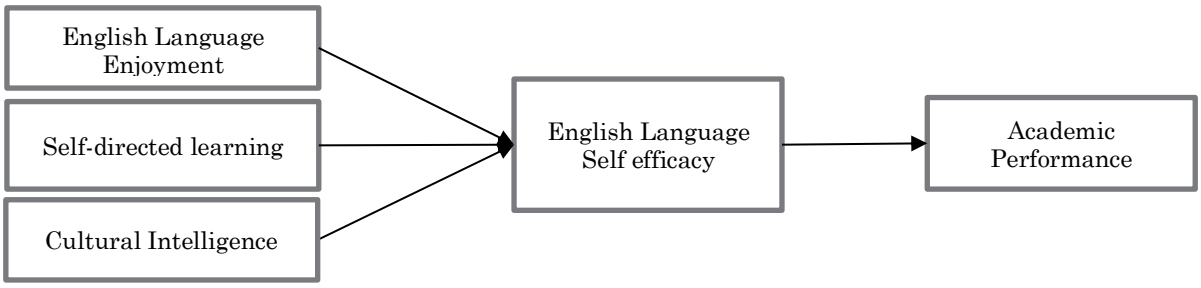

Figure 1: *Research Framework.*

Method

In this research, a self-administered questionnaire was employed to gather data, aligning with a quantitative methodology. The study framework encompasses three independent variables (IVs), one mediator, and one dependent variable. The questionnaire comprises two sections: the first addresses respondents' demographic information, while the second pertains to the data related to the study items. The

second section's questionnaire was formulated through an extensive literature review of prior studies. These instruments are designed on a Likert 5-point scale, where 1 denotes "strongly disagree" and 5 represents "strongly agree.". The items of ACP were adapted from Goh et al. (2019), items of English self-efficacy were adapted from Lu, Cheng, & Chahine (2022), items of cultural intelligence were adapted from Wawrosz & Jurásek (2021), items of self-integrated learning were adapted from Ariffin et al. (2020), and items of ELENJ was adapted from Li et al. (2018). The questionnaire was distributed among 310 international students enrolled in universities in KSA, employing a simple random sampling technique for data collection. The study garnered 221 usable questionnaires in response, indicating a response rate of 71.29%.

To analyse the data from section A, SPSS was employed, while PLS-SEM served as the statistical tool for the analysis of data from part B. The utilization of PLS-SEM in this study is justified by the research objective, which aims to scrutinize the factors influencing ACP & ELSE. Based on the recommendation of Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt (2011), employing PLS-SEM is advisable when the goal is to explore factors as main drivers. Another notable advantage, as indicated by Kock & Hadaya (2018), is the capability of PLS-SEM to accommodate both very large and very small sample sizes. Given the sample size exceeding 300 in this study, the preference for using Smart PLS is substantiated.

Results

The first section of the questionnaire pertained to the demographic details of the participants, encompassing characteristics such as gender, age, and marital status. Analysis of the received data revealed a predominance of male participants (53.12%), with females comprising 46.88% of the respondents. The majority of participants were unmarried (56.27%), while the remainder were married. Examining the age distribution, 27.11% of students fell within the 18 to 25 years age bracket, 29.27% were aged between 26 to 35 years, and the remaining participants were above 35 years old. This delineates the culmination of our analysis conducted through SPSS.

Table 1: *Factor Loading.*

	ACP	CULI	ELSE	ENGLENJ	SDL
AP1	0.956				
AP2	0.858				
AP3	0.850				
AP4	0.863				
CULI1		0.796			
CULI2		0.854			
CULI3		0.836			
CULI4		0.858			
CULI5		0.850			
ELSE1			0.969		
ELSE2			0.891		
ELSE3			0.880		
ELSE4			0.892		
ELSE5			0.803		
ELSE6			0.816		
ELSE7			0.876		
ELSE8			0.615		
ENGLENJ1				0.762	
ENGLENJ2				0.613	
ENGLENJ3				0.653	
ENGLENJ3				0.820	
ENGLENJ4				0.792	
ENGLENJ5				0.654	
ENGLENJ6				0.655	
ENGLENJ7				0.804	
ENGLENJ8				0.742	
SDL1					0.665
SDL2					0.690
SDL3					0.653
SDL4					0.747
SDL5					0.784
SDL6					0.777
SDL7					0.782

Note: ENGLENJ= English Language Enjoyment; CULI= Cultural Intelligence; SDL= Self-Directed Learning; ELSE=English Language Self-Efficacy; ACP= Academic Performance.

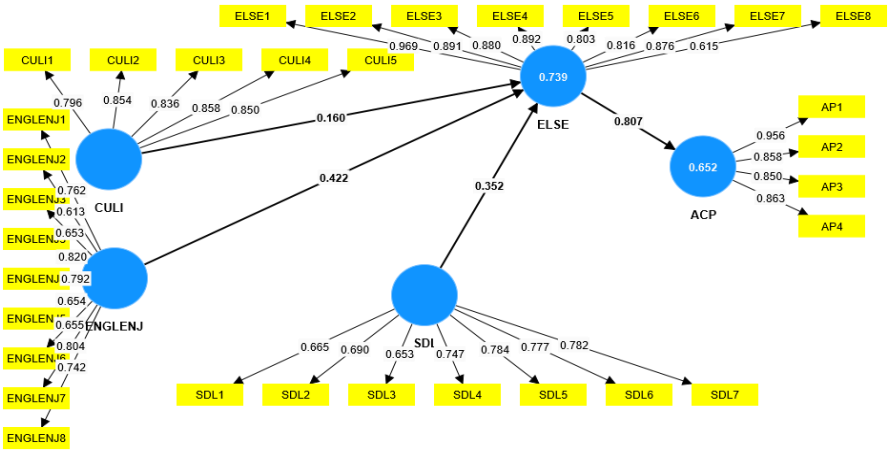

Figure 2: *Measurement Model.*
Not: ENGLENJ= English Language Enjoyment; CULI= Cultural Intelligence; SDL= Self-Directed Learning; ELSE=English Language Self-Efficacy; ACP= Academic Performance.

The scrutiny of data through PLS-SEM commences with the analysis of the measurement model, aligning with the recommendation of Hair et al. (2019a). This involves evaluating the measurement model for satisfactory values, considered acceptable if exceeding 0.60. Factor loadings below 0.60, in accordance with Hair et al. (2011), were eliminated in this study. The values presented in Table 1 indicate that all retained items exhibited loadings surpassing 0.60. Subsequently, the assessment of internal consistency was conducted through Cronbach Alpha (α) and composite reliability tests. As advised by Hair, Sarstedt, & Ringle (2019b), values of composite reliability (CR) should exceed 0.60, while the recommended threshold for Cronbach Alpha is above 0.70 (Taber, 2018). This study adheres to these criteria, with both CR and Cronbach Alpha values surpassing 0.60 and 0.70, respectively, for their respective tests.

In the case of reflective measurement evaluation, the third phase involves assessing convergent validity through AVE analysis. The recommended threshold for AVE is greater than 0.50. Table 2 illustrates that the AVE value surpasses 0.50, meeting the stipulated criteria.

Table 2: *Reliability and Validity.*

	A	Comp ReL	AVE
ACP	0.905	0.934	0.780
CULI	0.895	0.922	0.704
ELSE	0.942	0.953	0.720
ENGLENJ	0.885	0.908	0.526
SDL	0.853	0.888	0.533

Note: ENGLENJ= English Language Enjoyment; CULI= Cultural Intelligence; SDL= Self-Directed Learning; ELSE=English Language Self-Efficacy; ACP= Academic Performance.

In the fourth phase of the measurement model evaluation, discriminant validity is assessed, following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019a). Two tests were employed for this purpose, starting with the Fornell & Larcker (1981) method. This method dictates that the values of constructs should exceed the variance of other variables in the proposed model. In Table 3, this criterion is met, as all values along the diagonal surpass the remaining values.

Moreover, the HTMT method, recommended by Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt (2015), was also conducted. According to Voorhees et al. (2016), the HTMT test is crucial to affirm the distinctiveness of study constructs. It is preferable for the HTMT ratio to be below 0.90, ensuring discriminant validity is not compromised (Henseler et al., 2015). The statistical values in Table 4 indicate no issue with discriminant validity, as all HTMT values are below 0.90.

Table 3: *Fornell & Larcker (1981).*

	ACP	CULI	ELSE	ENGLENJ	SDL
ACP	**0.883**				
CULI	0.685	**0.839**			
ELSE	0.807	0.741	**0.848**		
ENGLENJ	0.813	0.749	0.809	**0.725**	
SDL	0.711	0.754	0.793	0.761	**0.730**

Note: ENGLENJ= English Language Enjoyment; CULI= Cultural Intelligence; SDL= Self-Directed Learning; ELSE=English Language Self-Efficacy; ACP= Academic Performance.

Table 4: *HTMT.*

	ACP	CULI	ELSE	ENGLENJ	SDL
ACP					
CULI	0.762				
ELSE	0.873	0.806			
ENGLENJ	0.897	0.834	0.878		
SDL	0.810	0.862	0.884	0.862	

Note: ENGLENJ= English Language Enjoyment; CULI= Cultural Intelligence; SDL= Self-Directed Learning; ELSE=English Language Self-Efficacy; ACP= Academic Performance.

The evaluation of the measurement model also encompasses the examination of multicollinearity through VIF assessment. The values of VIF, depicted in Table 5, being below 5 indicate the absence of collinearity issues in the study. Additionally, the assessment of R square gauges the impact of predictor variables on the outcome variables. The R square values for academic performance and self-efficacy, presented in Table 6, are characterized as moderate (Hair et al., 2019a).

Table 5: *VIF.*

	ACP	ELSE
CULI		2.790
ELSE	1.000	
ENGLENJ		2.861
SDL		2.904

Note: ENGLENJ= English Language Enjoyment; CULI= Cultural Intelligence; SDL= Self-Directed Learning; ELSE=English Language Self-Efficacy; ACP= Academic Performance.

Table 6: *R Square.*

	R2
ACP	0.652
ELSE	0.739

Note: ENGLENJ= English Language Enjoyment; CULI= Cultural Intelligence; SDL= Self-Directed Learning; ELSE=English Language Self-Efficacy; ACP= Academic Performance.

The evaluation of the structural model, conducted subsequent to the measurement model, aimed to scrutinize the significance of the pre-hypothesized relationships. In this regard, a bootstrapping procedure was employed, adhering to the minimum recommended sample size of 5000 (Hair et al., 2011). Based on the obtained results, cultural intelligence exhibits a positive effect on ELSE (B=0.160, t=2.179). Additionally, ELSE demonstrates a significantly positive impact on ACP (B=0.807, t=28.903). ENGLENJ is affirmed to have a substantial effect on ELSE (B=0.422, t=6.080). Furthermore, the findings confirm that SDL exerts a positive effect on ELSE (B=0.352, t=5.068).

Table 7: *Direct Findings.*

	B	σ	T Value	P Values
CULI -> ELSE	0.160	0.073	2.179	0.029
ELSE -> ACP	0.807	0.028	28.903	0.000
ENGLENJ -> ELSE	0.422	0.069	6.080	0.000
SDL -> ELSE	0.352	0.069	5.068	0.000

Note: ENGLENJ= English Language Enjoyment; CULI= Cultural Intelligence; SDL= Self-Directed Learning; ELSE=English Language Self-Efficacy; ACP= Academic Performance.

The mediation results presented in Table 8 reveal that ELSE serves as a mediator in the relationship between CULI & ACP (B=0.129, t=2.177). The findings further substantiate the mediating effect of ELSE among ENGLENJ and ACP (B=0.341, t=5.679). In conclusion, the statistical results indicate that ELSE mediates the relationship between SDL & ACP (B= 0.284, t=5.130).

Table 8: *Mediating Findings.*

	B	σ	T Value	P Values
CULI -> ELSE -> ACP	0.129	0.048	2.177	0.030
ENGLENJ -> ELSE -> ACP	0.341	0.060	5.679	0.000
SDL -> ELSE -> ACP	0.284	0.055	5.130	0.000

Note: ENGLENJ= English Language Enjoyment; CULI= Cultural Intelligence; SDL= Self-Directed Learning; ELSE=English Language Self-Efficacy; ACP= Academic Performance.

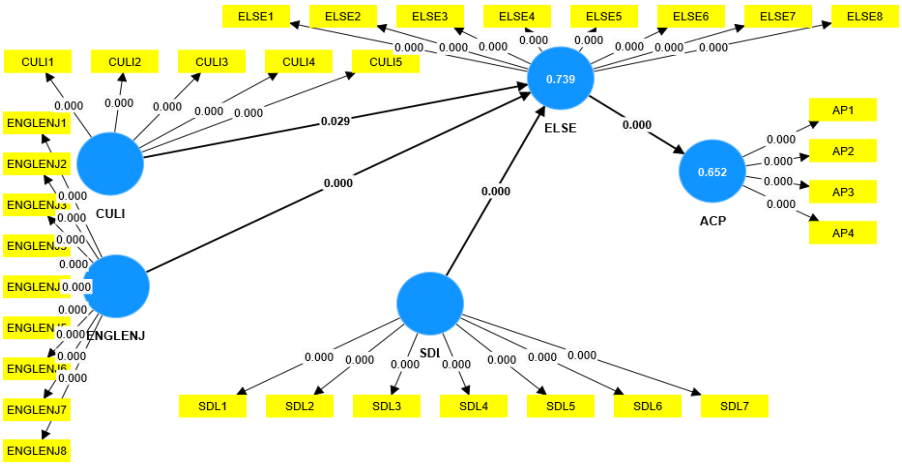

Figure 3: *Structural Model.*
Note: ENGLENJ= English Language Enjoyment; CULI= Cultural Intelligence; SDL= Self-Directed Learning; ELSE=English Language Self-Efficacy; ACP= Academic Performance.

Discussion

International students frequently encounter various challenges upon relocating abroad, hindering their successful integration into a new cultural milieu. Language proficiency is identified as a key factor influencing the self-efficacy and ACP of these students. This research was formulated to investigate the determinants affecting ELSE and ACP. The statistical outcomes of the study indicate a positive impact of ELENJ on ELSE. These findings align with the outcomes of Hung (2020) and Pan & Yuan (2023). Several plausible explanations may account for the observed outcomes in the study. One potential reason could be the participants' perception of enjoyment during English language learning abroad. These students express a lack of boredom in foreign language classes, attributing it to the engaging nature of the content and interesting learning experiences that contribute to the attainment of their academic objectives. Additionally, these international students take pride in their achievements within language classes and perceive the class environment as positive. Their positive view extends to the teachers, whom they consider instrumental in fostering their self-efficacy. The teachers exhibit an encouraging attitude, maintaining a friendly demeanour, and willingly aiding beyond regular expectations. Overall, the supportive role of teachers, coupled with the aforementioned factors, contributes to the development of ELSE. This foundational development is instrumental in fostering the students' confidence in their academic pursuits.

The study outcomes posit that SDL exerts a positive influence on ELSE. These findings align with the results of previous research of Qian et al. (2023). The plausible rationale behind this outcome may stem from the participants' eagerness to continually acquire new knowledge within the English language class. These students emphasize the significance of sustained study efforts, particularly in the context of their relocation abroad, underscoring the importance they place on continuous learning of the English language. Furthermore, these individuals embrace the challenge inherent in learning the English language, finding it intellectually stimulating. Some participants express a preference for independent English language study, enjoying the critical evaluation of novel ideas and placing value on critical thinking. Additionally, these students prioritize the acquisition of valid information pertinent to their core studies within the language. They exhibit openness to new ideas in language learning and engage in self-assessment of their academic endeavours. Importantly, the participants demonstrate a capacity for learning from mistakes, actively investigating the reasons behind errors to rectify and avoid similar issues in subsequent endeavours.

The study findings also revealed that cultural intelligence exerts a positive impact on ELSE. The underlying rationale for these findings may lie in the inclination of students relocating abroad to demonstrate respect for the religious beliefs and cultural values of the host country for their studies, thereby valuing and embracing diversity. Acknowledging the significance of cultural differences, these students prioritize linguistic aspects, diligently seeking to understand the grammar, vocabulary, and cultural nuances of both the local and international languages. A heightened awareness of cultural knowledge is maintained during interactions with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly when engaging with the local populace. The study participants emphasize the meticulous verification of language-related knowledge accuracy, recognizing the nuanced meanings associated with different words. Furthermore, respondents advocate for adaptability in tone and behaviour when interacting with individuals of varying backgrounds, underscoring the importance of adjusting accents and nonverbal behaviour to align with the specific context and situation. The outcomes of this study align with the conclusions drawn by Wawrosz & Jurásek (2023) in their prior research, which asserted the significant impact of cultural intelligence on ELSE.

The study findings reveal a significant positive impact of ELSE on students' ACP. Proficiency in English, being the international language, is crucial for enhancing ACP across diverse domains. The participants' belief in their language capabilities is deemed essential for success in their respective careers. Respondents express confidence in obtaining high grades in their English language class, understanding complex materials, and grasping basic concepts. Even when presented with challenging content by the English language instructor, participants maintain confidence in their ability to comprehend it. During examinations and when tasked with assignments, these students exhibit high performance. Collectively, they express confidence in their overall performance in the class. Respondents are assured that they can refine the skills taught in class and anticipate success, considering the course content and its level of difficulty. These outcomes align with the findings of Hayat et al. (2020) in previous studies.

Implications, Limitations, and Recommendations

This study shares common limitations with other empirical research endeavours. Its cross-sectional design limits the depth of data collection, suggesting the potential benefit of employing a longitudinal research design in future studies. The use of English language self-efficacy as a mediator prompts consideration of exploring it as the outcome variable in subsequent research. Additionally, while this study incorporated a mediator into the proposed model, introducing a moderating variable related to technology could enhance the framework. Conducted within the context of universities in KSA, a similar model could be tested in Malaysian universities, given the significant number of students pursuing higher education in that region.

This research contributes to both theoretical and managerial domains. Theoretical implications of this study emphasize the pivotal mediating role of language self-efficacy in enhancing the ACP of students. It underscores the significance of self-directed learning as a crucial factor shaping the attitudes of international students pursuing higher education abroad. Furthermore, the research delves into the influence of cultural factors in cultivating self-efficacy among students, particularly in the context of the English language. By integrating ELSE, ELENJ, cultural intelligence, and SDL within a unified framework, this study addresses a notable gap in existing literature. It contributes to the limited body of research exploring language-related variables in mitigating ACP challenges, particularly within the context of KSA.

In terms of managerial implications, decision-makers in the higher education sector of KSA can leverage these findings to enhance their engagement with students and other stakeholders. Strengthening students' ACP will contribute to elevating the competitive standing of KSA-based universities in the international higher education arena. This improvement in ACP can serve as a strategic advantage, attracting a greater number of international students in the long term. Moreover, a targeted focus on the identified factors has the potential to enhance both short-term and long-term revenue and profitability for the higher education sector. Academicians may find value in these findings for future research endeavours, as the established framework offers guidance on language-related factors that can aid universities in enhancing their students' ACP.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported through the Ambitious Funding track by the Deanship of Scientific Research, Vice Presidency for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia [Grant 5808]

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Appendix

S.No	Variable	Items	Reference
1	English Language Enjoyment	1.I don't get bored. 2. I enjoy it. 3. I've learnt interesting things. 4. In class, I feel proud of my accomplishments. 5. It's a positive environment. 6. It's fun. 7. The teacher is encouraging. 8. The teacher is friendly. 9. The teacher is supportive. 10 There is a good atmosphere. 11. We form a tight group.	Li et al. (2018)
2	English language self efficacy	1. I believe I will receive an excellent grade in this class 2. I'm certain I can understand the most difficult material presented in the readings for this course. 3. I'm confident I can understand the basic concepts taught in this course 4. I'm confident I can understand the most complex material presented by the instructor in this course. 5. I'm confident I can do an excellent job on the assignments and tests in this course 6. I expect to do well in this class 7. I'm certain I can master the skills being taught in this class 8. Considering the difficulty of this course, the teacher, and my skills, I think I will do well in this class	Lu et al. (2022)
3	Self directed Learning	1. I want to learn something new 2. I find it very important to keep studying 3. I really like the challenge of learning 4. I like to study by myself 5. I'm very critical of evaluating new ideas 6. I like to get valid information before making a decision 7. I like to judge something I do 8. I'm very open to new ideas 9. I learned through past mistakes 10. I need to know why something happened	Ariffin et al. (2020)
4	Academic Performance	1. I am confident I have adequate academic skills and abilities 0 2. I feel competent conducting my course assignment 3. I have learnt how to do my coursework in an efficient manner 4. I have performed academically as I anticipated I would	Goh et al. (2019)
5	Cultural Intelligence	1. I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures. 2. I know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages. 3. I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds. 4. I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures. 5. I change my verbal behaviour (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it. 6. I change my non-verbal behaviour when a cross-cultural situation requires it.	Wawrosz & Jurásek (2021)