Examining Writing Self-Efficacy in Arabic and English and Its Impact on Students' L2 English-Writing Achievement

Muhammad A. AL-Roomy [a]* iD

[a] Department of English, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, King Abdullah International Medical Research Center (KAIMRC), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
Email: roomym@ksau-hs.edu.sa

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Abstract
Writing is an increasingly important area in the process of teaching and learning. Teaching writing plays a very significant role in the field of non-native language (L2) instruction, so it is important that teachers pay special attention to continuous writing instruction. However, writing has been considered a demanding and tedious process for both students and teachers because it requires much time and effort compared to other academic skills. The current study investigated students' writing self-efficacy in Arabic and English and its impact on the academic-English-writing performance of health sciences students in the context of Saudi Arabia. This study deployed a quantitative, more specifically, a correlational research design. Self-Efficacy for Writing Scale (SEWS) questionnaire was implemented for data collection. The students' responses for their Arabic and English writing self-efficacy along with their grades in an English academic writing course were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The relationships between students' responses for their Arabic and English SEWS questionnaires were also measured. The English SEWS data and students' academic writing were measured using a correlation coefficient test. The results showed that students reported a higher level of writing self-efficacy in Arabic than in English. Although the highest-rated dimension in Arabic was ideation, the highest-rated dimension in English was conventions. Additionally, the lowest-rated dimension in both Arabic and English was self-regulation. Overall, the relationship between students' self-efficacy of writing in Arabic and English was positive among study participants based on their Arabic and English SEWS questionnaires. Findings showed that there was a significant positive relationship between study participants' overall scores on all dimensions of the English SEWS questionnaire and their grades in an academic writing course. Finally, the findings offered several implications for further studies.

Keywords: Writing, Self-Efficacy, L1, L2, Academic Performance.

Introduction

Writing is an increasingly important area in the process of teaching and learning. Teaching writing plays a very significant role in the field of non-native language (L2) instruction, so it is important that teachers pay special attention to continuous writing instruction (Hyland, 2003). However, writing has been considered a demanding and tedious process for both students and teachers because it requires much time and effort compared to other academic skills (Harmer, 2015). Indeed, writing is often difficult for both L2 and native-

language (L1) writers. For this reason, teachers need to look for factors that may motivate students when performing writing tasks. According to Bong (2006), higher self-efficacy, along with other factors such as having clear goals and implementing different learning strategies, correlates with multiple positive outcomes, especially when students are engaged in demanding and less naturally engaging writing tasks. Similarly, Iland (2013) noted that self-efficacy is related to success in general because it boosts one's motivation to act when accomplishing certain tasks. Pajares & Johnson (1994), too, reported that self-efficacy has often been found to be a strong predictor among all the motivational constructs. Relatedly, writing self-efficacy and writing strategies have a crucial role in students' writing-related tasks because they will either motivate or discourage them to accomplish such tasks (Bruning et al., 2013; Sun & Wang, 2020). That is to say, their contributions would affect how students respond and act in different learning situations to achieve specific goals.

Zhang (2024) observes that a self-regulated strategy positively affects students' creativity and self-efficacy, leading to improved witting abilities. Huang et al. (2024) assert that writing self-efficacy can be influenced by writing anxiety. To tackle this, teachers have to vary among their writing strategies to improve writing skills. In the same vein, writing self-efficacy has its own positive or negative impact on reading abilities and text quality both in L1 and L2 (Sehlström, Waldmann, & Levlin, 2023). In a Saudi context, a study carried out by Al Mohazie (2018) mentioned the role of overall academic self-efficacy on students' drop-out rates at the university level. Findings showed that the percentage of university students who dropped out was quite high (roughly 30%), so the author suggested examining academic self-efficacy to solve this problem, which might be a useful tool to predict students' later performance later.

In general, research on writing is scarcer compared to that in other language skills such as listening, speaking, and reading. This difference may be due to the priority given to oral communications or the notion that writing is an overall skill students have already achieved (Macaro, 2005). In this study, writing self-efficacy was evidenced in studies that investigated its impact on writing performance with L1 English writers, such as studies by Bruning et al. (2013) and Zumbrunn et al. (2020); with L2 English writers, such as studies by Sun et al. (2021) and Campbell & Batista (2023); with Arabic writers, such as studies by Mills & Belnap (2017) and Daud, Ghazuddin, & Mustapha (2016); or with writing self-efficacy with other motivational constructs such as anxiety (Sabti et al., 2019) and motivation (Pajares, 2003). According to Sun et al. (2021), abundant research has been conducted to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and writing achievement in different languages where English is the mother tongue or a foreign language as well as with different languages other than English. They found that higher levels of writing self-efficacy resulted in positive effects on students' writing performance.

Sturm & Rankin-Erickson (2002) noted that due to the nature of the writing process, students were more likely to encounter both cognitive and metacognitive writing problems that required teachers to divide the writing process into basic and more advanced skills and then introduce them to students more explicitly. Cognitive writing skills were described by Anastasiou & Michail (2013) as "low-level skills such as spelling, capitalization, punctuation and other conventions" (p. 53). On the other hand, Qin & Zhang (2019) noted that metacognitive awareness of the writing process included three stages: planning, monitoring, and evaluating. They posited that in order for teachers to improve their students' writing performance, they needed to equip them with metacognitive strategy knowledge.

However, the literature review revealed that little research has been conducted on writing self-efficacy in a Saudi context and its relation to students' academic achievement. Moreover, no single study investigated the correlation between students' writing self-efficacy in English and students' writing self-efficacy in their mother tongue, i.e., Arabic, prior to the current study. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the relationships between Saudi health sciences students' self-efficacy of writing in L1 and L2 on one hand and the relationships between Saudi health sciences students' writing self-efficacy in L2 and their academic writing performance in English on the other hand. This study addressed the following four research questions: (1) What are Saudi health sciences students' perceptions of their Arabic-writing self-efficacy? (2) What are Saudi health sciences students' perceptions of their English-writing self-efficacy? (3) What is the correlation between Saudi health sciences students' self-efficacy of writing in L1 and L2? (4) What is the correlation between Saudi health sciences students' writing self-efficacy in L2 and their academic writing performance in English?

Literature Review

Self-efficacy was defined by Bandura (1986) as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance" (p. 94). This definition implies that self-efficacy is about perceptions of abilities to plan and perform things, implying that self-efficacy is about self-perception of competence, not actual level. Bandura (1986) elaborated that the abilities have nothing to do with skills that one has, but instead with one's ability to benefit from skills. Greene (2017) defined self-efficacy by comparing it with self-esteem because, although self-esteem represents the highest level of generality, self-efficacy denotes the most specific level limited to a specific context. Greene (2017) added that what is regarded as a predictor of academic achievement is self-efficacy, not self-esteem. On the other hand, Pajares, Hartley, & Valiante (2001) provided a straightforward definition of writing self-efficacy

as "students' judgments of their confidence that they possessed the various composition, grammar, usage, and mechanical skills appropriate to their academic level" (p. 369). It is clear from these definitions that although it is important for students to be aware of the process of writing in which they are involved in order to improve their writing, they also need to be aware of their beliefs about their writing. In short, self-efficacy denotes a strong and positive predictor of individuals' success in performing a task leading to successful learning.

Considerable research has been conducted on the relationship between writing self-efficacy and students' writing achievement. For example, Bruning et al. (2013) showed that writing the ideation and self-regulation dimensions of self-efficacy were more significantly associated with enjoying writing than was the conventions dimension but were less related to writing performance. However, the three dimensions of self-efficacy had moderate positive correlations with writing performance. Also, the study revealed that more advanced students in English/language arts deployed higher levels for all three dimensions of writing self-efficacy. In another important study, Zumbrunn et al. (2020) investigated the role of writing self-efficacy on students' writing self-regulation as indicated by both teachers and students' writing outcomes. The results revealed that self-efficacy for writing conventions was statistically related to students' writing grades for both elementary and high school students and to teacher-reported students' writing self-regulation. However, the other two factors, self-efficacy for ideation and self-efficacy for regulation, were found to have no significant effects. Sun et al. (2021) also conducted a meta-analysis regression study to examine the relationship between second-language writing self-efficacy and achievement for L1 and L2 writers. Their findings revealed a medium effect size for the relationship between both L1 and L2 writers' self-efficacy and their achievement. They also found that writing in English as both L1 and L2 was associated with a relationship between writing and self-efficacy. On the other hand, Sabti et al. (2019) examined the impact of self-efficacy on other factors and found that anxiety negatively affected self-efficacy; in other words, the higher the anxiety level, the poorer the writing performance. In addition, their findings showed that self-efficacy was positively associated with writing motivation, thus leading to better performance (Greene, 2017).

Researchers have also examined the relationship between writing self-efficacy and learning-strategy use. For instance, Campbell & Batista (2023) investigated the self-efficacy in L2 writing of university students while practicing peer editing and concluded that results for both the control and experimental groups were improved, but not statistically significantly. However, the qualitative data showed that peer-editing might have improved students' writing by enhancing the social aspect of learning when students shared and received constructive feedback from their peers. Sun & Wang (2020), too, investigated the impacts of writing self-efficacy and writing self-regulated learning strategies on writing performance among college students who studied English as a foreign language. Their results showed that students reported a moderate level of self-efficacy and infrequent use of self-regulated learning strategies. However, writing self-efficacy and writing self-regulated learning strategies were found to be positive predictors of students' writing proficiency. Finally, researchers have investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and writing achievement in different languages such as Arabic. Daud et al. (2016), too, examined the impact of self-efficacy on Arabic writing but with Malaysian students who were studying Arabic as a foreign language and found a correlation between gender and students' proficiency levels. Specifically, advanced male students had higher self-efficacy compared to low-achieving female students. Moreover, Mills & Belnap (2017), investigating ways to boost self-efficacy, observed that Arabic language programs should consider proper task-engagement variables such as goal-setting, strategy instruction, performance feedback, and models in the classroom.

Methodology

Research design

This study deployed a quantitative, more specifically, a correlational research design. This technique is specifically suitable for testing self-efficacy in L2 situation. This research design is also useful in interpreting relationships between variables when a questionnaire is used as a tool for data collection. The English SEWS questionnaire data and students' academic writing were therefore measured using a correlation coefficient test.

Sampling

A total of 100 male students chosen randomly from one Saudi university participated in this study. The recruitment period started from 23/8/2023 to 22/11/2023, for three months. All students were in their first or second years in university and were studying health sciences. These students belonged to the colleges of medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, applied medical sciences, nursing, public health and health informatics and sciences and health professions. All participants took, as mandatory, academic writing as well as several English courses such as reading, grammar, and communication skills courses.

Instrument

To collect data about writing self-efficacy, a Self-Efficacy for Writing Scale (SEWS), developed by Bruning et al. (2013), was adapted for this study. This questionnaire consisted of 16 items related to students' writing

experiences. It is a multifaceted scale that gauged the writing self-efficacy of students based on Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy and involves three writing dimensions: ideation, conventions, and self-regulation. The first dimension, ideation, comprises five items and deals with students' beliefs about generating ideas. The second dimension, conventions, also comprises five items, but these items deal with students' language standards to express their ideas such as spelling and capitalization. The final dimension, self-regulation, includes six items and gauges students' abilities to manage and direct their writing, enabling them to make decisions about multiple writing tasks. To check the external validity of the SEWS questionnaire, a random pilot study was conducted with a sample of 35 students. For questionnaire reliability, Cronbach's alpha was run on a small sample. In addition, students' overall writing achievement grades in English in their final exams was obtained in order to compare those scores with their writing self-efficacy.

Data Analysis

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 25.0) was used to analyze the data. The descriptive analysis methods included means, standard deviations, percentages, and frequency counts, according to the research questions, to investigate study participants' perceptions of their Arabic and English writing self-efficacy. Correlation coefficients were used to study the relationship between Arabic and English writing self-efficacy and to show the relationship between English writing self-efficacy and students' academic writing performance. A correlation coefficient was considered significant at $p < .05$. the SEWS questionnaires' reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha. The results indicated strong reliability of the overall SEWS Arabic and English questionnaires with Cronbach's alphas of 0.935 and 0.943, respectively. In addition, the results showed strong reliability in all the dimensions of the SEWS questionnaires, with Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.826 to 0.879 for the SEWS Arabic questionnaire and from 0.884 to 0.885 for the SEWS English questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

Perceptions of Saudi Health Sciences Students of Their Arabic-Writing Self-Efficacy

This section discusses results for the first research question: What are Saudi health sciences students' perceptions of their Arabic-writing self-efficacy? To answer this question, the responses of study participants on the Arabic SEWS questionnaire were analyzed. The results showed a mean (±SD) of 3.91±0.72 for the overall Arabic SEWS score, which indicates a high level of Arabic writing self-efficacy among Saudi health sciences students. The following subsections will investigate study participants' responses to the three Arabic-writing self-efficacy dimensions, namely ideation, conventions, and self-regulation.

Arabic-Writing Self-Efficacy for Ideation

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of study participants' responses for their Arabic-writing self-efficacy for ideation statements. The results indicated high levels of self-efficacy for ideation among study participants with a mean (±SD) of 4.00±0.78. The mean responses ranged from 3.78 to 4.16 with a standard deviation range from 0.83 to 0.96, indicating close agreement among study participants on all ideation statements. The highest mean response was for Statement 1 ("I can think of many ideas for my writing") with a mean (±SD) of 4.16±0.96 while the lowest mean response was for Statement 5 ("I know exactly where to place my ideas in my writing") with a mean (±SD) of 3.78±1.00.

Table 1: *Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Arabic Writing Self-Efficacy for Ideation Statements.*

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
1. I can think of many ideas for my writing.	2 2%	3 3%	17 17.2%	32 32.3%	45 45.5%	4.16	0.96
2. I can put my ideas into writing.	1 1%	2 2%	16 16.2%	43 43.4%	37 37.4%	4.14	0.83
3. I can think of many words to describe my ideas.	3 3%	9 9.1%	17 17.2%	29 29.3%	41 41.4%	3.97	1.11
4. I can think of a lot of original ideas.	1 1%	3 3%	25 25.3%	40 40.4%	30 30.3%	3.96	0.88
5. I know exactly where to place my ideas in my writing.	2 2%	7 7.1%	29 29.3%	34 34.3%	27 27.3%	3.78	1
Self-efficacy for ideation						**4**	**0.78**

Arabic-Writing Self-Efficacy for Conventions

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of study participants' responses for their Arabic-writing self-efficacy for conventions statements. The results indicated high levels of self-efficacy for conventions among study participants with a mean (±SD) of 3.88±0.78. The mean responses ranged from 3.74 to 4 with a standard deviation range from 0.94 to 1.16, indicating a general agreement among study participants on all statements

of conventions. The highest mean response was for Statement 6 ("I can spell my words correctly") with a mean (±SD) of 4±0.94 while the lowest mean response was for Statement 9 ("I can write grammatically correct sentences") with a mean (±SD) of 3.74±1.16.

Table 2: *Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Arabic-Writing Self-Efficacy for Conventions Statements*

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
6. I can spell my words correctly.	1 1%	5 5.1%	22 22.2%	36 36.4%	35 35.4%	4	0.94
7. I can write complete sentences.	2 2%	7 7.1%	23 23.2%	38 38.4%	29 29.3%	3.86	0.99
8. I can punctuate my sentences correctly.	2 2%	6 6.1%	27 27.3%	32 32.3%	32 32.3%	3.87	1.01
9. I can write grammatically correct sentences.	6 6.1%	7 7.1%	25 25.3%	30 30.3%	31 31.3%	3.74	1.16
10. I can begin my paragraphs in the right spots.	3 3%	3 3%	23 23.2%	37 37.4%	33 33.3%	3.95	0.98
Self-efficacy for conventions						**3.88**	**0.78**

Arabic-Writing Self-Efficacy for Self-Regulation

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of study participants' responses for their Arabic-writing self-efficacy for self-regulation statements. Once again, the results indicated high levels of self-efficacy for self-regulation among study participants with a mean (±SD) of 3.85±0.83. The mean responses ranged from 3.66 to 4.10 with a standard deviation range from 0.81 to 1.15, indicating general agreement among study participants on all self-regulation statements. The highest mean response was for Statement 15 ("I can think of my writing goals before I write") with a mean (±SD) of 4.1±0.81 while the lowest mean response was for Statement 12 ("I can avoid distractions while I write") with a mean (±SD) of 3.66±1.13.

Table 3: *Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Arabic-Writing Self-Efficacy for Self-Regulation Statements.*

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
11. I can focus on my writing for at least one hour.	2 2%	13 13.1%	17 17.2%	36 36.4%	31 31.3%	3.82	1.08
12. I can avoid distractions while I write.	3 3%	15 15.2%	22 22.2%	32 32.3%	27 27.3%	3.66	1.13
13. I can start writing assignments quickly.	4 4%	11 11.1%	21 21.2%	29 29.3%	34 34.3%	3.79	1.15
14. I can control my frustration when I write.	3 3%	7 7.1%	32 32.3%	25 25.3%	32 32.3%	3.77	1.08
15. I can think of my writing goals before I write.	1 1%	2 2%	16 16.2%	47 47.5%	33 33.3%	4.1	0.81
16. I can keep writing even when it's difficult.	3 3%	6 6.1%	20 20.2%	33 33.3%	37 37.4%	3.96	1.05
Self-efficacy for self-regulation						**3.85**	**0.83**

Perceptions of Saudi Health Sciences Students of Their English-Writing Self-Efficacy

The second research question was concerned with the English-writing self-efficacy of Saudi health sciences students. To answer this question, the responses of study participants on the English SEWS questionnaire were analyzed, and the results showed a mean (±SD) of 3.66±0.77 for the overall English SEWS score, which indicates a moderate level of English-writing self-efficacy among Saudi health sciences students. The following subsections present study participants' responses to the English-writing self-efficacy dimensions namely ideation, conventions, and self-regulation.

English-Writing Self-Efficacy for Ideation

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of study participants' responses for their English-writing self-efficacy for ideation statements. The results indicated high levels of self-efficacy for ideation among study participants with a mean (±SD) of 3.75±0.82. The mean responses ranged from 3.51 to 3.91 with a standard deviation range from 0.89 to 1.08, indicating general agreement among study participants on all ideation statements. The highest mean responses were for Statement 2 ("I can put my ideas into writing") with a mean (±SD) of 3.91±0.96 and Statement 4 ("I can think of a lot of original ideas") with a mean (±SD) of 3.91±0.89 while the lowest mean response was for Statement 3 ("I can think of many words to describe my ideas") with a mean (±SD) of 3.51±1.08.

Table 4: *Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Arabic Writing Self-Efficacy for Ideation Statements.*

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
1. I can think of many ideas for my writing.	3 3%	5 5.1%	30 30.3%	35 35.4%	26 26.3%	3.77	1
2. I can put my ideas into writing.	2 2%	6 6.1%	20 20.2%	42 42.4%	29 29.3%	3.91	0.96
3. I can think of many words to describe my ideas.	4 4%	14 14.1%	28 28.3%	34 34.3%	19 19.2%	3.51	1.08
4. I can think of a lot of original ideas.	1 1%	4 4%	26 26.3%	40 40.4%	28 28.3%	3.91	0.89
5. I know exactly where to place my ideas in my writing.	2 2%	11 11.1%	30 30.3%	33 33.3%	23 23.2%	3.65	1.02
Self-efficacy for ideation						**3.75**	**0.82**

Note. SD = standard deviation

English-Writing Self-Efficacy for Conventions

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics of study participants' responses for their English-writing self-efficacy for conventions statements. The results indicated high levels of self-efficacy for conventions among study participants with a mean (±SD) of 3.8±0.83. The mean responses ranged from 3.7 to 3.92 with a standard deviation range from 0.89 to 1.1, indicating general agreement among study participants on all statements for conventions. The highest mean response was for Statement 10 ("I can begin my paragraphs in the right spots") with a mean (±SD) of 3.92±0.97 while the lowest mean response was for Statement 7 ("I can write complete sentences") with a mean (±SD) of 3.7±1.03.

Table 5: *Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Arabic Writing Self-Efficacy for Conventions Statements.*

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
6. I can spell my words correctly.	1 1%	15 15.2%	17 17.2%	41 41.4%	25 25.3%	3.75	1.03
7. I can write complete sentences.	3 3%	9 9.1%	26 26.3%	38 38.4%	23 23.2%	3.7	1.03
8. I can punctuate my sentences correctly.	1 1%	8 8.1%	26 26.3%	46 46.5%	18 18.2%	3.73	0.89
9. I can write grammatically correct sentences.	4 4%	5 5.1%	25 25.3%	27 27.3%	38 38.4%	3.91	1.1
10. I can begin my paragraphs in the right spots.	2 2%	5 5.1%	23 23.2%	38 38.4%	31 31.3%	3.92	0.97
Self-efficacy for conventions						**3.8**	**0.83**

English-Writing Self-Efficacy for Self-Regulation

Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics of study participants' responses for their English-writing self-efficacy for self-regulation statements. The results indicated moderate levels of self-efficacy for self-regulation among study participants with a mean (±SD) of 3.47±0.9. The mean responses ranged from 3.18 to 3.79 with a standard deviation range from 0.99 to 1.24, indicating general agreement among study participants on all self-regulation statements. The highest mean response was for Statement 15 ("I can think of my writing goals before I write") with a mean (±SD) of 3.79±0.99 while the lowest mean response was for Statement 13 ("I can start writing assignments quickly") with a mean (±SD) of 3.18±1.24.

Table 6: *Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Arabic Writing Self-Efficacy for Self-Regulation Statements.*

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
11. I can focus on my writing for at least one hour.	6 6.1%	9 9.1%	29 29.3%	31 31.3%	24 24.2%	3.59	1.13
12. I can avoid distractions while I write.	5 5.1%	26 26.3%	25 25.3%	25 25.3%	18 18.2%	3.25	1.18
13. I can start writing assignments quickly.	11 11.1%	18 18.2%	29 29.3%	24 24.2%	17 17.2%	3.18	1.24
14. I can control my frustration when I write.	5 5.1%	15 15.2%	31 31.3%	32 32.3%	16 16.2%	3.39	1.09
15. I can think of my writing goals before I write.	2 2%	9 9.1%	22 22.2%	41 41.4%	25 25.3%	3.79	0.99
16. I can keep writing even when it's difficult.	6 6.1%	9 9.1%	25 25.3%	33 33.3%	26 26.3%	3.65	1.15
Self-efficacy for self-regulation						**3.47**	**0.9**

The Relationship Between Saudi Health Sciences Students' Self-Efficacy of Writing in Arabic and English

The third research question explored the relationship between self-efficacy of writing in Arabic and English. To answer this question, Pearson's correlation coefficient between study participants' overall scores on the Arabic SEWS questionnaire and its dimensions (ideation, conventions, and self-regulation) was calculated and their corresponding scores on the English SEWS questionnaire, and its dimensions were measured (see Table 7).

Table 7: *Correlation Between Self-Efficacy of Writing in Arabic and English.*

Dimensions	Correlation coefficient	*P* value
Ideation	0.480	< .01
Conventions	0.459	< .01
Self-regulation	0.413	< .01
Overall self-efficacy	0.552	< .01

The results in Table 7 show a significant positive relationship between study participants' overall scores on the Arabic and English SEWSs with a correlation coefficient of 0.552 and a corresponding *p* value < .01. In addition, the results indicated a significant moderate relationship between study participants' scores on all the dimensions of the Arabic and English SEWS questionnaires, with correlation coefficients from 0.413 for self-regulation to 0.480 for ideation and corresponding *p* values < .01.

Relationship Between Saudi Health Sciences Students' English-Writing Self-Efficacy and Academic Writing Performance

The last research question was related to the relationship between participants' English-writing self-efficacy and their academic writing performance. To answer this question, Spearman's correlation coefficient was calculated between study participants' overall scores on the English SEWS questionnaire and its dimensions (ideation, conventions, and self-regulation) and their grades in an academic writing course (see Table 8).

Table 8: *Correlation Between English-Writing Self-Efficacy and Academic Writing Performance.*

Dimensions	Correlation coefficient	*P* value
Ideation	0.578	< .01
Conventions	0.622	< .01
Self-regulation	0.574	< .01
Overall self-efficacy	0.652	< .01

The results in Table 8 show a significant positive relationship between study participants' overall scores on the English SEWS and their academic writing grades, with a correlation coefficient of 0.652 and a corresponding *p* value < .01. Moreover, the results indicated a significant relationship between study participants' scores on all the dimensions of the English SEWS questionnaire and their academic writing grades, with correlation coefficients from 0.574 for self-regulation to 0.622 for conventions and corresponding *p* values < .01.

In light of the above findings, self-efficacy seems to be a strong predictor of positive outcomes in L1 and L2, and more specifically L2, writing achievement, which supports past research (Bong, 2006; Bruning et al., 2013; Iland, 2013; Pajares & Johnson, 1994). Therefore, it is important to explore students' perceptions that underlie their attitudes and expectations about leaning when they accomplish specific tasks. Indeed, students bring their own beliefs to classrooms, which may or may not increase their motivation (Greene, 2017; Richards & Lockhart, 1994), and writing self-efficacy is one construct that connects with learners' beliefs.

This study also found that students reported a higher level of self-efficacy in Arabic than in English. This result was expected, however, because Arabic was the mother tongue of students in this sample, so they were more familiar with it than with English. Specifically, the highest of the three dimensions in Arabic was ideation, which means students were able to generate and express many ideas in Arabic, while the highest dimension in English was conventions or mechanical standards such as spelling, grammar, and punctuation. On the other hand, the lowest dimension in both Arabic and English was self-regulation. This result may indicate that students were more aware of cognitive skills and less aware of more sophisticated skills such as metacognitive skills (Anastasiou & Michail, 2013; Sturm & Rankin-Erickson, 2002). One possible impediment to metacognition, and more specifically self-regulation, may be teaching practices that are strictly controlled and do not allow students to take active roles and develop more learning strategies (Greene, 2017). If students were more aware of their learning by applying more metacognitive learning strategies, being more active, and realizing that both thinking and learning are inseparable processes, they may perform better academically (McGuire, 2023).

With respect to the relationship between students' self-efficacy of writing in Arabic and English, this study found a strong positive relationship between study participants' overall responses to the Arabic and English SEWS questionnaires. According to these results, a higher perception of writing self-efficacy in Arabic was associated with a higher perception of writing self-efficacy in English, and vice versa. This result supports

Bandura's (1986) notion of self-efficacy as "people's judgments of their capabilities" (p. 94). Additionally, there was a significant positive relationship between study participants' overall scores on the English SEWS questionnaire and their academic writing grades. This finding is consistent with past studies' findings that have supported the positive relationship between writing self-efficacy and writing achievement (Bruning et al., 2013; Campbell & Batista, 2023; Sun & Wang, 2020; Sun et al., 2021; Zumbrunn et al., 2020). According to these results, a higher (lower) perception of writing self-efficacy in English was associated with higher (lower) academic writing achievement.

However, although there was a strong positive association between writing self-efficacy and achievement in this study, the relationship between writing self-efficacy and achievement was only moderate in other studies (Bruning et al., 2013; Sun et al., 2021). This divergence might be attributable to the students' proficiency in English. In this study, students' English proficiency ranged from intermediate to upper-intermediate based on proficiency tests they completed before entering college. Therefore, the association between writing self-efficacy and achievement may have been higher for these students than for students with less English proficiency.

Conclusion

This study examined health sciences students' writing self-efficacy in Arabic and English and its impact on their academic English writing performance in a Saudi context. The results yielded several noteworthy findings. First, students had a higher level of writing self-efficacy in Arabic than in English. In terms of the self-efficacy dimensions, the highest dimension in Arabic was ideation while the highest in English was conventions. The lowest dimension in both Arabic and English was self-regulation. Secondly, there was a positive correlation between students' self-efficacy of writing in L1 (Arabic) and L2 (English). Finally, the findings showed that there was a significant positive relationship between study participants' overall scores on all dimensions of the English SEWS questionnaire and their grades in an academic writing course.

Despite these robust findings, there are some practical implications for further studies. Results showed that students reported a higher level of self-efficacy in Arabic than in English, which was expected as Arabic was the mother tongue of the learners. It would be beneficial for teachers to pay more attention to activities that present writing communicatively rather than focusing on spelling and grammatical norms. Teachers can benefit from L1 in the pre-writing stage to assist students in generating ideas about the topic under study. Another implication is that the findings revealed that the relationship between students' writing self-efficacy in Arabic and English was positive. Teachers should examine students' self-efficacy both in L1 and L2 because it has a direct influence on students' academic writing in L2. Teachers should examine students' self-efficacy both in L1 and L2 because its direct influence on students' academic writing in L2.

There were also some limitations that can be mitigated in future studies. For one, this study was limited to 100 male students and used a questionnaire for data collection, so the results are ungeneralizable. Thus, future research could involve larger samples and consider gender differences and students' mother tongues in order to explore how English-writing self-efficacy affects students' writing. Also, future studies could investigate the power of writing self-efficacy and its relationships with other potential factors such as anxiety, motivation, achievement in specific courses, learning-strategy use, and students' general proficiency.

Declaration. The author has no competing or conflict of interests to declare that are relevant to the content of the study. In addition, the author confirms that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the study. For ethical approval, the author adhered to the IRP proposal obtained from his university that tackled ethical concerns issues. Informed consent was also obtained from all participants prior the process of collecting data.

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