The Impact of Self-Efficacy, Learning Preferential, Learning Motivation and Academic Achievement on EFL Students in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the effect of self-efficacy moderated by e-learning preferential on the academic achievement through the mediation of learning motivation. A survey approach was used. 264 EFL students were randomly selected from three different universities in central Saudi Arabia during the academic year of 2020/2021. A 5- likert scale questionnaire was applied with two instruments (for self-efficacy and for learning motivation), in addition to a section for the demographic variables that included sex, age, study level, learning preferential, and grade point average (GPA). IBM SPSS AMOS (23) was employed, where structural equation modeling, SEM (CB-SEM), was applied as well as Macro Process Hayes Plug-In. The analysis used both the measurement and structural model. Reliability was tested with alpha Chronbach coefficient and the model fitness was evaluated using several criteria including regression weight, goodness of fit indices (GFI). The finding showed that student in the scored high level of self-efficacy and learning motivation, though the former is higher. In addition, there was a significant direct effect on GPA for self-efficacy and learning motivation. However, a new significant direct effect of the self-efficacy on the GPA through the learning motivation, there appear to be another moderated mediated effect which is the indirect effect of the interaction between self-efficacy and the learning preferential on the GPA through the mediation of the learning motivation.

Keywords: self-efficacy, learning preferential, motivation, achievement, EFL students

1. Introduction

Educators and researchers have focused on studying the level of academic achievement, particularly the low level, because it is an educational issue that leads to the waste of effective manpower, which is hard to replace for society. As a result, academic achievement has occupied a prominent place in the thinking and efforts of educators and psychologists. It is also considered one of the topics that draw the attention of parents in order to secure the future of their children, particularly in societies that place the utmost emphasis on academic achievement and access to excellence (success), on which the future of scientific students depends and determines their profession in life (Ali, 2019).

Nonetheless, one of the factors influencing students' success in achieving maximum learning outcomes is learning motivation. Students who are highly motivated to learn will perform better in class, and their attitudes toward learning will improve (Azman et al., 2020). Self-efficacy, on the other hand, is thought to have a significant impact on students' lives because it represents their ability to master university courses and benefit from successful tactics in cognitive education, time management, self-regulation, and academic effort (Ayiku, 2005).

Over the last decade, e-learning has become an important part of higher education as one of the preferred methods of learning. However, blended learning styles have emerged as a popular course delivery format, in Saudi Arabia, combining e-learning with direct face-to-face contact with instructors. In fact, such a blended learning format seeks to maximize the benefits of both online and face-to-face course offerings (Alghofaili, 2022). Nonetheless, though blended learning have proved its benefit and impact on the learning process, according to many studies, it is still not well known to tell how and when it works, especially in the presence of other factors, such as self efficacy and learning motivation. Therefore, as self-efficacy and e-learning preferential have been shown to have an impact on academic achievement, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of self-efficacy, moderated by e-learning preferential, on academic achievement via the mediation of learning motivation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 E-Learning

E-learning can be defined as a kind of learning that relies on using modern communication devices from a computer and its networks, as well as "multimedia such as sound and image, graphics, search mechanisms, electronic libraries, internet portals in information exchange,

receiving information, acquiring new skills, and interaction between the student and the teacher, and possibly between the student and the school. This type of education does not necessitate the presence of school facilities or classrooms; rather, it eliminates all physical components of education" (Al-Desouki, 2012). E-learning is distinguished by interaction and ease of communication between students themselves, and between teachers and students through various platforms such as, e-mails, and discussion boards. This type of learning presents equality, because it permits the students to gain what is best for them and what they require, and on equal basis for all. Because the trainees can now send their inquiries to instructors via e-mail, e-learning has managed to ease the way in which students can reach teachers in a timely fashion outside their official working hours. For instance, some social networking sites such as, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and LinkedIn can be immensely valuable in assisting students in learning by providing access to information that can be used to enhance the learning process (Bin-Hady & Al-Tamimi, 2021; Gaytan, 2013; Abdalgane, 2022).

2.2 Learning Motivation

Learning motivation is the proclivity to seek out a meaningful educational activity while exerting maximum effort to benefit from it (Ghobari & Abu Sharia, 2010). It is the student's efforts and desires to achieve a certain level of success and educational goals (Hamdan, 2007). Nonetheless, basic factors that influence human behavior influence the learning process. These factors are classified as follows: (1) Factors that affect the efficiency of learning that could be attributed to genetic or innate factors that are born with human birth and are inherited by children from their parents, and include factors of maturity, growth, intelligence, physical features, and other factors. (2) Factors that cause a change in human behavior and necessitate that the person be characterized by continuity, which is the experience and practice that the individual gains from the surroundings—which plays the most important role in shaping human behavior—and training that is intended to exercise the performance of specific behavior that is intended to be done. (3) Interacting with the surroundings. In this case, the individual's behavior is formed as a result of the clear and measurable influence on the surrounded environment. Internal motives, feelings, emotions, material, and moral needs are all examples of internal factors. (4) The teacher, where the educational process achieves its goals; if the teacher is highly skilled in motivating students to learn, increasing academic achievement, and achieving school social interaction both inside and outside of the classroom (Abdullah, 2012).

As a matter of fact, motivation in learning serves many functions, including the release of emotional energy in the students, which stimulates their activities, causes them to respond to a specific situation while ignoring others, and causes them, also, to direct their activities toward a specific destination in order to satisfy their needs, relieve tension, and achieve, ultimately, their goal (Al-Tal, 2009). However, many educators are highly concerned in integrating social media into their classroom, as it can increase students' engagement and motivation (Mihailidis, 2014; Tambunan, Setia, & Rasmitadila, 2022).

2.3 Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a way of thinking about students' beliefs, competencies and confidence in their ability to achieve an academic goal or a specific outcome in a specific academic task. Also, to contribute to self-regulated learning, which influences self-regulation through the use of metacognitive strategies associated with success (Drago et al., 2018). The sense of self-efficacy serves as a bridge between the students' belief in their abilities and potential on the one hand, and their academic abilities on the other. Indeed, it has been proposed that the students' assessments of their social emotions, competencies, and beliefs may influence their academic performance (Scrivener, 2010; Alkhutaba, 2022)

2.4 Academic Achievement

Academic achievement refers to the extent to which a student has met educational objectives as a result of studying a subject. It is also defined as an individual's degree of acquisition, or the level of success that the student achieves or reaches in a specific academic subject, educational field, or training (Younis, 2020). It is also defined as the overall result obtained by the student at the end of the academic year, which includes all of the results obtained on any given day, month, semester, and year (Ali, 2019). According to Wilson and Komba (2012), academic achievement is limited to the outcome of a student's academic work and is defined as the ability to demonstrate what one has learned in the classroom through speaking or writing. However, as stated by Umar (2017), most researchers agree that the physical environment of the classroom makes a noticeable impact on students' achievement. Indeed this is very important base for our study as different learning preferential creates may reshape classroom differently.

However, the different types of academic achievement include good academic achievement, in which the student's performance is higher than the average performance of the other students, and the learner uses all of his/her potential and ability, so becomes superior to his/her colleagues in the same field and age. In terms of average achievement, the student's degree represents half of his/her capabilities, his/her performance is average, and his/her level of information retention and benefit is medium. Low academic achievement is defined as a type of performance with poor academic achievement in which the student's performance is lower than the normal level when compared to the rest (Hadda, 2013). Nonetheless, academic achievement is a complex process involving many factors, including those related to intelligence, achievement motivation, exam anxiety, and control, as well as external factors represented in the learner's economic, social, and cultural levels (Fatiryani, 2020).

Eventually, numerous researchers investigated the various relationships between the study variables, but none of them dug deeply into the moderated mediation model that is the focus of the current study. For example, Alhawari (2021) sought to investigate the impact of distance learning in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic on students' motivation to learn from the perspective of teachers and parents in the Directorate of Kasbah Irbid, Jordan. Teachers and students interacted the most through available educational platforms, with an

average of 69.2 and 2.58%, followed by student engagement with the "Darsak" platform, with an average of 56.2 and 97.47%, and the availability of a private internet network at home to communicate with an average of 94.2 and 63.56%. Furthermore, Umar (2017) investigated the effects of the classroom environment on the learning of English as a foreign language by a group of first-year students at secondary schools in Gezira State, Sudan. The findings show that there are significant differences in English achievement between the experimental and control groups, with the experimental group benefiting from better classroom conditions.

In light of the Corona pandemic, Alasasfa (2021) aimed to increase the amount of predictive ability of academic self-efficacy among a sample of high school students through distance learning. According to the study's findings, there is an average level of academic self-efficacy and memorization skills, a positive relationship between academic self-efficacy and memorization skills, and academic self-efficacy predicts memorization skills at a rate of (60%). Moreover, Al-Kabi and El Hajjar (2020) sought to determine the impact of introducing academic games, such as Jeopardy games, in the classroom during review sessions on academic self-efficacy, achievement, and students' attitudes toward mathematics exams. (1) The use of educational electronic games (jeopardy games) in mathematics exam revision classes contributes to the increase of students' academic self-efficacy in this subject. (2) The use of educational electronic games (jeopardy games) in mathematics exam revision classes affects students' attitudes toward the exam. (3) The use of educational electronic games (jeopardy) in mathematics exam revision classes contributes to students' academic achievement in this subject. The findings revealed that these games were effective in improving students' academic achievement and academic self-efficacy, as well as their attitude toward exams. Furthermore, Al-Kandari (2013) investigated the impact of including electronic activities in a blended learning environment on students' achievement and motivation. The results showed that there are significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the achievement test, favoring the experimental group, while there were no significant differences in students' motivation as a result of using e-activities. More importantly, Al-Zahrani (2019) assessed the impact of using mobile learning via the NEARPOD application on the academic achievement of students at the Princess Norah Bint Abdul Rahman University's College of Education. In the post achievement test, the research assumes that there is no statistically significant difference (0.05) between the average grades of female students, who study the Google educational applications unit through a mobile e-learning environment (NEARPOD application), and the average scores of the control group taught in the traditional way using lectures and presentations. The study discovered that students in the experimental group outperformed students in the control group on the achievement test, indicating the effectiveness of using a mobile e-learning environment on student academic achievement.

However, in mentioning moderating impact, Alghofaili (2022) investigated how much foreign language anxiety and self-motivation exist among EFL students, as well as whether learning preferences interact with self-motivation to reduce FLA, i.e., moderate this relationship. Internal and extrinsic goal orientation, control over learning beliefs, self-efficacy, task value, social engagement, instructor support, and anxiety related to learning a foreign language were all found to be moderate. Furthermore, no demographic factors were found to have a statistically significant impact on self-motivation or anxiety related to learning a foreign language. Blended learning was found to have a greater negative impact on foreign language classroom anxiety than face-to-face learning and e-learning, indicating that it has a greater impact on increasing self-motivation to reduce classroom anxiety.

3. Method

The population of this study is composed of three different universities in central Saudi Arabia, which are Qassim University, Majmaah University and Shaqra University. In a survey approach, 264 EFL students were randomly selected during the academic year of 2020/2021. All students have been informed with the objectives of this study while signing a consent letter to participate voluntarily. A 5- likert scale questionnaire was applied with two instruments, in addition to a section for the demographic variables that included sex, age, study level, learning preferential and grade point average (GPA). The first instrument is with 10 items, which was developed by (Moneva et al., 2020) to measure the learning motivation, while the second instrument is with 33 items, which is adopted from (Abdelhafez & Zaki, 2016) to measure self-efficacy. The questionnaire was validated by a group of specialists from the three universities. For reliability issues, a pilot study was carried out with a sample of 30 participants to check the reliability, where the alpha Chronbach coefficients for both instruments were 0.71 for self-efficacy and 0.76 for leaning motivation. Model fit was tested using goodness of fit indices (GFI). The questionnaire was then distributed by electronics measure, where data collected was then input into IBM SPSS AMOS (23) as well as Macro Process Hayes Plug-In for analysis, where structural equation modeling, SEM (CB-SEM), was employed, using both the measurement and structural model.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

Gender, age, study level, learning preferential and grade point average (GPA) were considered in this study as the demographic variables. The sample contained of 264 participants, but after data screening of missing values, univariates and multivariate outliers, the cases valid for analysis ended up in 258 cases. As shown in table (1), among the participants, 72.09% were male and 27.91% were female. Students of age less than 20 years dominated the sample, with 176 (68.22%). Study level varied as 1^{st} year students counted for 84 (%32.56), followed by 4^{th} year students who counted for 67(25.97%), then the 2^{nd} year students (83.72%) followed by e-learning with 28 students (%10.85) then face-to-face classroom with 14 students (%5.43). Grade point average (GPA) varied as 148 (%57.36) students scored 3.1-4. 47 (%18.22) students scored three and less, whereas 63 (24.42%) students scored 4.1-5.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Value Label	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Condor	Male	186	72.09%
Gender	Female	72	27.91%
	Less than 20 years	176	68.22%
Age	20-25 years	63	24.42%
	More than 25 years	19	7.36%
	1st year	84	32.56%
Study Level	2nd year	55	21.32%
Study Level	3rd year	52	20.16%
	4th year	67	25.97%
	Face-to-face classroom	14	5.43%
Learning Preferential	E-learning	28	10.85%
C C	Blended	216	83.72%
	Three and less	47	18.22%
Grade Point Average GPA	3.1-4	148	57.36%
	4.1-5	63	24.42%

4.2 Summary of the Respondent s' Answers

Table (2) shows the means and standard Deviation of the answers of the 258 participants. Respondents' answers show high level of self-efficacy with a mean of 3.7 and a standard deviation of 0.96556. However, the respondents scored higher in learning motivation level, as the mean was 4.1 with a higher a standard deviation of 1.02854. With regards to normality which refers to the distribution of the data for a particular variable, the distribution of the variables seems to be fine as the statistics of both Skewness and Kurtosis are between (1) and (-1).

Table 2. means	, standard	Deviation,	Skewness	and K	urtosis	of fata
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Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	S	kewness	Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Self efficacy	3.7	0.96556	309	.101	039	.207
Learning motivation	4.3	1.02854	510	.101	1.519	.207

4.3 Measurement Model

In the current study, 43 items were used to measure self-efficacy and learning motivation. First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used in the measurement model to assess model fit and data validity and reliability. The initial CFA model revealed two items with regression weights less than 0.5 in the learning motivation construct and six items with regression weights less than 0.5 in the self-efficacy construct. The initial standardized loadings or regression weights of the rest of the items are reported in table (3).

Table 3. Standardized Regression Weights

Items	constructs	Estimate
LM1	LM	.827
LM2	LM	.778
LM4	LM	.552
LM5	LM	.569
LM6	LM	.506
LM8	LM	.533
LM9	LM	.676
LM10	LM	.577
SE1	SE	.606
SE2	SE	.630
SE3	SE	.582
SE4	SE	.552
SE5	SE	.569
SE6	SE	.563
SE7	SE	.753
SE9	SE	.556
SE10	SE	.675
SE11	SE	.679
SE12	SE	.683
SE14	SE	.827
SE15	SE	.828
SE16	SE	.865

Items	constructs	Estimate	
SE17	SE	.820	
SE18	SE	.696	
SE19	SE	.778	
SE20	SE	.637	
SE22	SE	.696	
SE23	SE	.696	
SE24	SE	.665	
SE26	SE	.559	
SE27	SE	.721	
SE28	SE	.661	
SE30	SE	.782	
SE32	SE	.550	
SE33	SE	.519	

The model fitness for the 43 items was evaluated using several criteria, with the first regression path in each measurement component fixed at (1) for model identification purposes. The initial measurements without any modification were: GFI = .829, AGFI = .818, CFI = .823, TLI = .816, CFI = .823, RMSEA = .035. Indeed, these values are not as recommended according to the cut-off values. To improve the fitness of this model, 8 items were eliminated using item loadings with a cut-off of 0.5 weight, the error variance estimate and items cross-load on more than one component factor, ending up with 35 item for both constructs. The modified measurements were GFI = .901, AGFI = .891, CFI = .975, TLI = .974, RMSEA = .016. which satisfies the requirements for the analysis. Reliability for self-efficacy and learning motivation increased to 0.81 and .79 respectively.

4.4 Structural Model (Path Analysis)

This method can be used to estimate the magnitude and significance of causal relationships between variables. Fig (1) shows the results of the path analysis with the standardized regression weight labeling the paths.



Figure 1. structural model showing path analysis results

However, Table (4) presents the unstandardized results of path coefficients, which shows regression weights, standard errors (S.E.), critical values (C.R.) and the significance values (P) for all the direct effect among the variables in the structural model:

Table 4. Unstandardized Regression Weights or Path Coefficients

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	Р	Label
LM <	SE	.020	.162	-2.868	.004	
LM <	LP	.037	.050	.542	.588	
LM <	Int_1	.122	.020	1.904	.057	
GPA <	Int_1	.001	.017	.045	.964	
GPA <	LM	.820	.052	15.773	***	
GPA <	SE	.014	.137	315	.753	
GPA <	LP	092	.041	-2.233	.026	

According to this table, SE significantly affects LM, while Int_1 and LP do not affect LM significantly. In addition, LM does affect significantly GPA, where Int_1 and SE dose not. However, LP affects the GPA significantly. While, the standardized regression weights are reported in table (5) as the direct effects.

4.4.1 Direct Effect on GPA

Table (5) shows the direct effect between all variables with standardized regression weight. In fact, the number labeled on the path in fig (1) is the regression weight between the variables or the direct effect itself. Theses weights are summarized in table (5)

Table 5. Standardized Direct Effects

	Int_1	LP	SE	LM
LM	.119	.033	.011	.000
GPA	.002	098	.014	.705

Table (6) shows the two-tailed significance of the direct effect between all variables. As we can see, all variables impact GPA significantly, as P value is less 0.005, but LP as the P value is 0.051

Table 6. Standardized Direct Effects - Two Tailed Significance

	Int_1	LP	SE	LM
LM	.151	.555	.014	
GPA	.048	.051	.041	.021

4.4.2 Indirect Effect

Table (7) shows the indirect effect of (1) SE, (2) LP and (3) Int_1 on GPA through the mediation of LM. In fact, Int_1 is the interaction of both SE and LP; i.e. the moderated impact. To compute the indirect effect between every two variable through the mediation of LP, the two paths here should be multiplied by each other.

Table 7. Standardized Indirect Effects

	Int_1	LP	SE	LM
LM	.000	.000	.000	.000
GPA	.001	.023	.007	.000

Table (8) shows the two-tailed significance for the Standardized Indirect Effects. As we see, it is only Int_1 and self-efficacy that impact GPA significantly as P value is 0.029 and 0.015 respectively.

Table 8. Standardized Indirect Effects - Two Tailed Significance

	Int_1	LP	SE	LM
LM				
GPA	.029	.606	.015	

4.4.3. Total Effect

Table (9) shows the total effect of (1) SE, (2) LP and (3) Int_1 individually on GPA. In fact, the total effect for each variable is the total sum of its direct and indirect effect.

Table 9. Standardized Total Effects

	Int_1	LP	SE	LM
LM	.119	.033	.011	.000
GPA	.145	075	.021	.705

Table (10) shows the two-tailed significance for Standardized Total Effects and Two Tailed. As shown, all total effects are significant but that of learning preferential (LP), as it is P value is 0.87 which is greater than 0.05.

Table 10. Standardized Total Effects - Two Tailed Significance

	Int_1	LP	SE	LM
LM	.151	.555	.014	
GPA	.041	.187	.006	.021

Using Macro Process Hayes developed by Hayes (2013); the difference in preferential learning is in favor of blended learning, as it is shown in Fig (2). Where, as we see, that in general the slope appears to become increasingly positive as we move from e-learning to blended learning, which means that blended learning has greater impact on the moderation process than that of face to face which is greater than e-learning in the learning preferential.



5. Discussion

Students in the three universities scored high in the level of their self-efficacy and learning motivation level, though the former is higher. However, data used was consistent and valid as it shows good normality, reliability and good fit using several criteria, even though after removing some items from SE and LM. As for direct effect, there was a significant direct effect on GPA for all the variables except for LP. However, a new direct effect appeared because of the interaction between SE and LP. In fact, these effects on GPA were very small compared to the indirect effects or the mediated effects caused by the interaction of SE and LP and SE itself through LM. Indeed, though SE has significant direct and indirect effects on GPA, there are some extra direct and indirect effects exerted by SE. This extra effect comes through its interaction with LP. Eventually this is reflected on the total effect, as the overall effect of Self-efficacy on GPA can be supported by many studies, such as that of (Drago eta al., 2018 and Al-Zahrani, 2019 and, Al-Kabi & El Hajjar, 2020). In addition, the results related to learning motivation are in line with the findings of (Hadda, 2013; Alhawari, 2021 and Al-Kandari, 2013). However, though there was no single study that investigated the moderated mediation effect of self-efficacy, the results of the current study are in line with Alghofaili (2022) who found that blended learning has a greater impact than face-to-face learning and e-learning, on increasing self-motivation.

6. Conclusion

It can be concluded from the results above that self-efficacy directly and indirectly affects GPA and that there is also additional effects that results from its interaction with other factors, as its interaction with the learning preferential (LP) that we have seen in our research led to a noticeable effect. In fact, blended learning was found to have the greatest effect in moderating self-efficacy, followed by face-to-face learning, where e-learning was found to have the lowest effect in moderating self-efficacy and therefore resulted in the lowest academic achievement. Indeed, this requires reviewing and reevaluating the impact of self-efficacy on academic achievement in different context. The impact in the presences of self-efficacy on the academic achievement could be more or less than being estimated in the previous studies, as it is vulnerable to moderation, as we saw with the learning preferential. On the other hand, this result confirms that it is possible to control the degree of the influence of self-efficacy on GPA by involving some other moderators and mediators.

7. Recommendations and Future Studies

Based on the results of this study, the researcher suggests to conduct more studies on the impact of self-efficacy on GPA while considering other moderators and mediators, and to extend such moderated mediation effect to investigate any factors that influence EFL students' GPA.

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