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**Investigating the Effects of Self-Efficacy on Academic
Achievements in EFL Contexts**

Case study of 1st year English students of Mohamed Kheider university

A dissertation submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in partial requirement for
the fulfillment for the degree of Master in Sciences of Language

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved aunt, Dounia, who has been supporting me throughout my life and especially throughout this crucial year and gave me the strength and motivation to work on this research. Your kindness is deeply appreciated and will always be remembered.

Acknowledgments

I would like to extend my sincerest thanks and appreciation to **Dr. Bashar**, my supervisor, for his editing skills and patience with me during the completion of this research. I consider myself lucky that you were appointed as my supervisor. My sincerest thanks go to the kind jury members as well, **Dr.Rabehi Salima** and **Mrs.Hassina Nachoua**, who helped a lot with their constructive criticism. This dissertation surely would have not been done without your support.

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of self-efficacy beliefs on Mohamed Kheider university English students. The study used a descriptive interpretive approach to assess self-efficacy beliefs, to determine the congruence of self-efficacy to academic performance, to identify the types of experiences that shaped self-efficacy beliefs, and to suggest instructional implications. The sample consisted of 34 first year English student from Mohamed Kheider university. Self-efficacy beliefs were measured using the SELF-A (An inventory to measure the level of self-efficacy beliefs). Congruence of self-efficacy beliefs to academic performance was determined by comparing scores on the SELF-A to self-reported overall grade of first semester. The sources of self-efficacy beliefs were explored through interviews conducted with 5 students from the original sample. The findings indicated that positive self-efficacy beliefs existed among the sample. The findings were mixed with regard to the level of congruence between self-efficacy beliefs and academic performance. The four sources of self-efficacy identified in past research (Mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion and physiological state) applied to the self-efficacy beliefs of the students in the sample, but in ways that differed from what past research had suggested with other student populations. Additional sources of self-efficacy that were equally influential were identified. The findings of the study are used to propose effective practices and programs intended to improve the academic outcomes of English students of Mohamed Kheider university.

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General Introduction

First described by Stanford psychologist Albert Bandura (1977), self-efficacy refers to one's perceived ability to perform the necessary tasks to achieve a goal. Since Bandura first introduced the term, the topic of self-efficacy has received considerable interest in research pertaining to the field of education. Self-efficacy's relationship to academic outcomes has been investigated in a variety of student populations and past research suggests that self-efficacy strongly predicts outcomes (Gore, 2006; Grigorenko et al., 2009; Kitsantas & Zimmerman, 2009; Thomas, Iventosch, & Rohwer, 1987). Students who express higher levels of confidence are more likely to achieve their goals.

1. Background to the Study

There is a considerable body of research on individual differences in the area of foreign language learning (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Sawyer & Ranta, 2001). Individual differences encompass a wide scope of domains including, personality traits, learning styles, learners' beliefs, strategies, aptitude, age, motivation. Research indicates that individual differences predict success in language learning. Individuals learning a foreign language have a lot of differences in their rate of learning and the ways they follow to develop their skills. In order to understand why some learners learn language more successfully than others, with almost the same aptitude and capabilities, researchers have focused their attention on the learners' perceptions of the task, learners' beliefs in their abilities to perform a task (Bandura, 1997) and other individual differences such as learning strategies (Cohen, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990) and motivation (Dörnyei, 2001,

2005). Although learning process is multifaceted and complicated as it involves different variables such as relevant knowledge, skills, intelligence and cognitive abilities, researchers are increasingly directing their research efforts towards the important role of learners' thoughts and beliefs in learning and education (Schunk, 2003). Self-efficacy as individuals' beliefs in their abilities to perform a task (Bandura, 1986) proves to be a principal variable in predicting learners' performance. self-efficacy appears to play a vital role in predicting learners' performance in educational contexts and it can predict performance even better than actual abilities (Bandura, 1997), or aptitude (Schunk, 1991). Apart from influencing students' learning, self-efficacy also affects motivation as it has been substantiated by a solid body of research (Pajares, 1996; Schunk, 2003).

2. Statement of the Problem

Research results from several areas indicate that self-efficacy is a key factor that affects learners' interest, persistence, extent of effort students invest in learning, the goals they choose to pursue and their use of self-regulated strategies in performing a task (Carmichael & Taylor, 2005; Lane, Lane, & Kyprianou, 2004; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Pajares, 1996, 2003; Schunk, 2003). In foreign language learning contexts, research studies have examined self-efficacy in relation to a limited number of variables namely learning strategies, performance, causal attributions, and language anxiety. Still not many research studies have been directed towards the development of self-efficacy in these contexts. Moreover, most of the studies have investigated the correlational relationship between learners' self-efficacy beliefs and these variables, and only a few studies have focused on the casual relationship between self-efficacy and mentioned variables. Research indicates that self-efficacy in the second language

context influences learners' motivation and learning. Self-efficacy, as a central element of human agency, mediates between learners' aptitude, past achievements and subsequent performances (Bandura, 2006).

Among the different findings, the most consistent one is that learners' self-efficacy for foreign language affects performance in different language domains (Abedini & Rahimi 2009; Wang, Spencer, & Xing, 2009). Considering the critical role of beliefs and thoughts, it is necessary to do much research on learners' self-efficacy and how to develop it in educational settings such as schools and universities.

3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess self-efficacy beliefs held by Mohamed Kheider university English students, determine how congruent self-efficacy beliefs were with actual academic performance, identify the types of experiences that shape self-efficacy beliefs, and to suggest instructional implications.

4. Significance of the Study

With reference to the interaction among the three forces (personal, environmental and behavioral), individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to perform a task (e.g. self-efficacy) determine the efforts and engagement they exert for the task (Bandura, 1999, Schunk 2003).

Given significant role of self-efficacy, it seems relevant to do a research on the role of self-efficacy in learning a foreign language to gain a clear understanding of the development of self-efficacy in learning a foreign language, the ways in which self-efficacy affects language learning; and how language teachers can help the learners to create positive beliefs about their abilities to learn a foreign language.

5. Research Questions

The specific research questions addressed by this study included the following:

1. What is self-efficacy?
2. What is the level of self-efficacy beliefs among Mohamed Kheider university English students?
3. Are self-efficacy beliefs congruent with the academic performance ?
4. What are the sources that shape self-efficacy beliefs of Mohamed Kheider university English students?
5. What are the instructional implications of self-efficacy in classroom?

6. Hypothesis

1. Depending on literature review, self-efficacy is a predictor to academic outcomes.
2. If students of Mohamed Kheider university have decent marks, their self-efficacy level is medium.
3. Depending on students confident level that is congruent with self-efficacy beliefs, there is a positive relation between the two.
4. Depending on literature review, mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological state are the major components of the self-efficacy.
5. If self-efficacy is an important factor in academic settings, there are many instructional implication that can be concluded.

7. Limitations to the Study

There are several limitations inherent in the proposed study. The first limitation is the result of the tension between level of specificity in the measures used. As noted previously, self-efficacy is a domain-specific construct. As Pajares (1996a, 1996b) have pointed out, a self-efficacy measure that is too global in breadth may miss important dimensions of learner beliefs. For example, the reliability and validity of a measure that asks students about beliefs of their academic ability in general may suffer if the student references her math ability rather than her ability to construct sentence diagrams. And yet, if measures are too specific then any ability to generalize may be lost. Another significant limitation is that this study is limited by the number of populations in the sample. Language-learning is a highly contextualized type of learning, and the motivational variables salient in one context may be non-factors in others (Clément, 1980). Thus, results should be interpreted with caution before generalizing to other settings.

8. Research Methodology

The theme of the study is the effects of self-efficacy beliefs on achievement in EFL contexts. This topic prompted descriptive interpretive methods and two main tools will be used to obtain data: Questionnaire (SELF-A Inventory) and semi-structured interview.

9. Research Structure

The present dissertation consists of three main chapters. The first two chapters are in the form of literature review; chapter one is divided into two sections. Section one is for defining self-efficacy and its orientation. Section two is about self-efficacy in EFL contexts. Chapter two navigates through Definitions and conceptualization of

academic performance. Finally, the third chapter is the field work in which we reveal the used methodology and instruments in section one, in addition to the analysis and discussion of gathered data in section two.

Literature Review

Chapter 1

Section One: Self-Efficacy Definition and Orientation

1. Introduction

In this section we define the term self-efficacy and investigate its origin, differ self-efficacy distinctions, determine its components, and explore the application of it.

2. Defining Self-Efficacy

The construct of self-efficacy was introduced by Bandura (1977) with the publication of the article *Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change*, and the book *Social Learning Theory*. Social learning theory views human action or behavior as being determined by interplay of the situation, the person's behavior, his cognitions and emotions. One of Bandura's interests is concerned with ways in which individuals regulate their own motivation, thought patterns, affective states and behavior through beliefs of personal and collective efficacy.

Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as referring to self-perceptions or beliefs of capability to learn or perform tasks at designated levels. The other authors have attempted to define self-efficacy, but they all paraphrase to refer to Bandura's definition. McCombs (2001) cites Bandura (1991), explaining self-efficacy judgments in reference to the learner's judgment of his or her competency for successful task completion. Schunk (2001) acknowledged that self-efficacy is a construct in Bandura's theory of human functioning and defined it as "beliefs about one's capabilities to learn or perform behaviors at designated levels" (p. 126).

Pintrich and Schunk (1996) quote another of Bandura's (1986) definitions that self-efficacy refers to "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (p. 88). Huang and Shanmao (1996)

define self-efficacy expectations as “the beliefs about one’s ability to perform a given task or behavior successfully” (p. 3).

3. Social Cognitive Theory

Social learning theory and the idea in which child can learn through observation made Bandura well known. After years, Bandura developed his theory by adding elements such as motivation and self-regulation and in the bottom line changing its name to Social Cognitive Theory. Self-efficacy theory is one aspect of social cognitive theory. The latter is an approach to understanding human cognition, action, motivation, and emotion. In 1986, Bandura added the self-efficacy component to his theory, which holds that people possess a “self system” that enables them to exercise control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions. This self system consisted of cognitive and affective elements including the ability to represent, learn from others, create options, adjust one’s own behavior, and engage in self-reflection.

4. Self-Efficacy Distinction

There are some constructs that have unclear boundaries with self-efficacy. One such construct is self-esteem. Maddux (1995) stated self-esteem as a personal trait while the self-efficacy is not. This is the distinction between self-esteem and self-efficacy. One of the applications of Self-efficacy is the possibility of applying to specific fields or even subfields of human behavior. For example, a person can have low self-esteem, but have high levels of self-efficacy in a field such as drawing, sports, or learning languages. He or she can also have high self-esteem and feel inefficacious in math and science. Epstein and Morling (1995) believed that the main difference between self-efficacy and self-esteem is that the former is the assessment of capability and the latter is the assessment of self-worth. What a person thinks he is capable of accomplishing is different from what he thinks he is worth. Bandura (1997) wrote that “individuals may judge themselves hopelessly inefficacious in a given

activity without suffering any loss of self-esteem whatsoever, because they do not invest their self-worth in that activity” (p. 11).

Another construct which put self-efficacy in unclear boundaries is confidence. Bandura (1997, p. 382) explains that confidence is “anondscript term that refers to strength of belief but does not necessarily specify what the certainty is about”. A person can be confident that he will fail or succeed in science. Self-efficacy is the belief in one’s power to achieve certain levels of performance. Confidence does not involve the person’s power or ability to perform at a certain level.

5. Self-Efficacy Components

Mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological state are the major components of the self-efficacy (Bandura 1986). The most influential is mastery experience which refers to the student’s subjective evaluation of his or her past experience with regard to a particular task or skill.

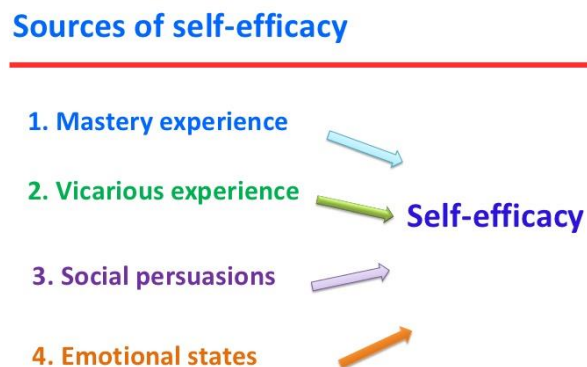


Figure 1 : Sources of Self-efficacy (Bandura 1986)

The second type of experience affecting self-efficacy beliefs is vicarious experience, or it’s known the observing of others performing a task. According to Bandura (1986) “...observing that others perceived to be similarly competent fail despite high effort lowers observers’ judgments of their own capabilities and undermines their efforts” (p.99).

Although, the effect of this type of experience is not as strong as the mastery experience, it can be a useful educational tool.

Verbal persuasions or verbal judgments are comments by significant others that develop beliefs in self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Alderman, 1999). Bandura believed that verbal persuasion “can contribute to successful performance if the heightened appraisal is within realistic bounds” (p. 400). According to Bandura (1994) “Seeing people similar to oneself succeed by sustained effort raises observers' beliefs that they too possess the capabilities master comparable activities to succeed”. Alderman, (1999) stated that negative comments are more effective in lowering self-efficacy than positive comments are in increasing self-efficacy. It is said that, positive feedback is a stimulus the learner's curiosity and creativity of students to accomplish the task.

One of the important factors which play a significant role in self-efficacy is our own responses and emotional reactions to situations. “Moods, emotional states, physical reactions, and stress levels can all impact how a person feels about their personal abilities in a particular situation”. A learner's physiological state can also affect self-efficacy; for example, anxiety, fear, fatigue, or pain can all affect self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). Anxiety in particular can interfere with self-efficacy, ultimately interfering with a student's performance.

A person who becomes extremely nervous before speaking in public may develop a weak sense of self-efficacy in these situations. However, Bandura also notes "it is not the sheer intensity of emotional and physical reactions that is important but rather how they are perceived and interpreted" (1994). By learning how to minimize stress and elevate mood when facing difficulties or challenging tasks, people can improve their sense of self-efficacy.

6. Self-Efficacy and its Dimensions

Before Bandura (1977) introduced self-efficacy as a key component in social cognitive theory, he discussed human motivation primarily in terms of outcome expectations.

However, during the treatment of phobic individuals with mastery modeling techniques, individual differences in generalization were found regardless of the fact that all subjects could successfully interact with the target of their fear without adverse consequences at the end of therapy.

In spite of the fact that, self-efficacy and outcome expectations were both hypothesized to affect motivation, Bandura (1986) proposed that self-efficacy would play a significant role because “the types of outcomes people anticipate depend largely on their judgments of how well they will be able to perform in given situations” (p. 392). Self-efficacy expectancies vary along three dimensions: magnitude, or level (Bandura, 1997) generality, and strength.

Magnitude or level of self-efficacy is defined as the number of steps of increasing difficulty that an individual feels he/she is capable of doing task. Bandura (1997) explains that the perceived personal efficacy may consist of accomplishing simple tasks, develop to moderately difficult tasks, or include totally hard tasks. The perceived capability for a given person is measured against levels or magnitudes of task demands that represent different degrees of challenge or obstacles to successful performance.

7. Application of Self-efficacy

Many fields of human action, especially those that require a certain amount of personal control and mastery, self-efficacy plays a key role. Maddux and Meier (1995) asserted that low self-efficacy expectancies are an important feature of depression, anxiety and specific fears. It is believed that self-regulation as the most important cognitive capacity in human adaptation has intensive use in various treatments or counseling programs (ibid). Individuals who feel efficacious in a domain are capable of setting challenging goals, planning, and self-regulating in the pursuit of those goals.

Human functioning is influenced in several ways by human actions namely, perceived self-efficacy, or one's beliefs in one's capabilities according to the Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997). They visualize successful results and do not dwell on personal deficiencies or on what might go wrong. At the cognitive level, people with high self-efficacy have high aspirations, set challenging goals for themselves, and commit themselves to achieving them.

Bandura (1997, p. 1) asserted that "Self-efficacy beliefs determine the goals people set for themselves, how much effort they expend, how long they persevere, and how resilient they are in the face of failures and setbacks". At the affective level, self-efficacy beliefs adjust emotional states. Those who have high self-efficacy know they can manage difficulties when they are encounter with them, whereas people who lack self-efficacy are likely to magnify risks or threats.

Another domain in which self-efficacy beliefs play an important role is thought control. Bandura (1997) explains that the role of self-efficacy in thought control settles performance. People in order to successfully complete any difficult skill and situations must eliminate all distractions and negative thinking, and try to completely concentrate and motivate on the activity that they are working on it. Individuals with low self-efficacy may doubt themselves at this stage and perform poorly.

According to foregoing facts about the advantages of self-efficacy in a variety of disciplines Mosier (1997) also proposed some essential factors for improving patients' self-efficacy, these suggestions can be useful not only in health, but also in education:

- (1) breaking complex tasks into smaller manageable components,
- (2) arranging tasks into an ascending series with easier tasks first,
- (3) providing continuous encouragement,

- (4) crediting success to the subjects' own work and ability,
- (5) charting progress over the course of the change process,
- (6) treating lapses as opportunities to look at the reasons for the lapses, and
- (7) providing experience through modeling.

Pajares and Miller (1994) conducted a research on Role of Self-Efficacy and Self-Concept Beliefs in Mathematical Problem Solving: A Path Analysis. They in order to test the predictive and mediational role of self-efficacy beliefs in mathematical problem solving used Path analysis. Their findings revealed that math self-efficacy was more predictive of problem solving than was math self-concept, perceived usefulness of mathematics, prior experience with mathematics, or gender. Self-efficacy also mediated the effect of gender and prior experience on self-concept, perceived usefulness, and problem solving. Gender and prior experience influenced self-concept, perceived usefulness, and problem solving largely through the mediational role of self-efficacy. Men had higher performance, self-efficacy, and self-concept and lower anxiety, but these differences were due largely to the influence of "self-efficacy, for gender had a direct effect only on self-efficacy and a prior experience variable" (p.1). Their results support the hypothesized role of self-efficacy in Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory.

Tierney and Farmer (2002) studied creative self-efficacy: its potential antecedents and relationship to creative performance. They gathered data from two different firms. Their study tested a new construct, creative self-efficacy, tapping employees' beliefs that they can be creative in their work roles. Their finding supported the discriminant validity of the construct and indicated that job tenure, job self-efficacy, supervisor behavior, and job complexity contribute to creative efficacy beliefs. Creative self-efficacy also predicted creative performance beyond the predictive effects of job self-efficacy.

8. Conclusion

There is suggestion that the learners self-efficacy attributes to their success. Bandura suggested that this could be true in any academic setting (Bandura, 1996); therefore we seek to discover if it is specific to the language learners experiences and the learners perceived self-efficacy. The effects of self-efficacy beliefs in EFL contexts are the concern of this research.

Section Two: Self-Efficacy in Foreign Language Learning contexts

1. Introduction

After navigating self-efficacy definitions and orientation in chapter one and dealing with the term on general, this chapter we get more specific and focus on self-efficacy in EFL learning contexts.

2. Self-efficacy and Learning

The importance of Bandura's self-efficacy concept for education is clear. The judgments a person may make about his or her abilities can lead a person to decide which activities to try or not to try, how much effort to give, or how persistent he or she will be when challenged. Student with high self-efficacy tries to set higher purposes, tries hard to achieve his / her purpose, improves his/her current level of efficacy as he/she makes progress, uses critical thinking skills and strategies, decision making, and does not give up easily (Bandura and Schunk, 1981; Bouffard-Bouchard, 1990; Lent, Brown and Larkin, 1984; Pajares, 1996; Schunk and Hanson, 1985). Thus, the highly efficacious student is more likely to succeed.

Recent studies have shown great interest in the implication of self-efficacy in educational domain (Pintrich and Schunk, 1996). The importance of having high level of self-efficacy when encountered with the new and challenging skills has been confirmed by the findings of the research on self-efficacy (Bandura and Schunk, 1981; Schunk and Hanson, 1985). For example, Bouffard- Bouchard, Parent, and Larivee (1991) found that students with high self-efficacy engaged in more effective self-regulatory strategies.

Schulze and Schulze (2003) researched on *Believing is Achieving*: They investigated the implications of self-efficacy research for family and consumer sciences education. The research findings supported Pajares (1996) that the effects of feelings of self-efficacy confirm the notion that high self-efficacy increase student learning. Students who have a higher level of self-

efficacy should be better able to learn new skills and concepts needed to succeed. Students must have the confidence necessary to cope and problem solve in the classroom and in all other aspects of life. Factors such as goal-setting, feedback, modeling, rewards, and self-efficacy assessments, family and consumer sciences can enable students to become lifelong learners and prepare them for the future professional life. With regards to self-efficacy influencing students' learning, self-efficacy also affects motivation as it has been proved by a well documented research (Pajares, 1996; Schunk, 2003).

Rimm-Kaufman and Sawyer (2004) examined the ways in which experience with a relational approach to education, the Responsive Classroom (RC) Approach, related to teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and teaching priorities. They found that "teachers who reported using more RC practices reported greater self-efficacy beliefs and teaching practice priorities that were consistent with those of the RC approach".

Cheung and Lee (2007) sought to explain members' intention to continue sharing knowledge in a virtual community in terms of knowledge self-efficacy and satisfaction. The research model was tested with the current users of a virtual professional community (Hong Kong Education City) and was accounted for 32% of the variance.

The findings of research reveal that both knowledge self-efficacy and satisfaction play an important role in explaining members' intention to continue sharing knowledge.

3. Factors Effecting Self-Efficacy

Many studies have been conducted to find the relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance in mathematics (Hackett and Betz, 1989), reading and writing tasks (Shell, Colvin and Bruning, 1995) and the use self-regulatory strategies (Bandura, 1989). Other examined self-efficacy in academic settings include evaluations of students' expected performance in a given subject (Meece, Wigfield, and Eccles, 1990) and whether students believe that they are good at a given academic subject (Marsh 1990).

If one accepts that students' self-efficacy is related to their academic performance, then the question remains: What educational practices enhance students' self-efficacy? Alderman (1999) considered some factors that forming students' self-efficacy towards learning. These factors are modeling, goal setting, information processing, encouragement and feedback and rewards, are known to affect self-efficacy and potentially increase it.

Modeling is the way in which a novice can learn how to master new skills. Modeling is effective and play vital role in increasing self-efficacy, according to Schunk (1989, 1991) because it can provide explicit information about how to acquire a skill and can raise the student's expectation that he can master the skill. Learners may acquire self-efficacy from observing peers. Similar peers offer a good basis for comparison and observing them successfully perform a task raises efficacy. On the other hand, watching a peer fail will lower it. Observing peer models increases efficacy to a greater extent than teacher models or persuasion (Schunk, 1995).

According to Bandura (1997) self-modeling, which occurs when individuals watch replays of themselves performing tasks at their best, raises beliefs of personal efficacy and potentially improves performance. On the other hand, self-modeling of deficiencies has no gain for the individuals involved.

An important cognitive process which is affecting achievement outcomes is Goal setting. Schunk (1995) believed that students who have a goal may feel a sense of efficacy to attain that goal and work hard to achieve it. He also mentioned that the advantages of setting a goal depend on three factors:

1. The proximity of the goal.
2. Its specificity.
3. Its difficulty.

Information processing: According to Schunk (1995) learners with great difficulty in understanding the academic materials are likely to have low self-efficacy for learning that materials, whereas, those who feel capable of understanding the materials have a high sense of

efficacy. Students with high self-efficacy beliefs work harder on tasks that they believe produce learning, and in so doing, they get information on how well they are doing. Knowing that they are processing the information very well enhances their self-efficacy and motivation.

Encouragement and feedback: In this case the role of teachers and parents to encouraging and persuading students are important, that they can do it or offer them positive feedback after performance of a task increase the students' self-efficacy levels (Schunk, 1996). During feedback, linking success to the students' efforts sustains motivation and increases self-efficacy. Teachers should always make an effort to give students clearly defined assignments and clearly articulated constructive feedback (Schraw, Dunkle and Bendixen, and Roedel, (1995). Schraw and Brooks (2001) believed that one of the most significant factors that an instructor can utilize is giving the student clear and constructive feedback.

Instructor may use reward to increase student's self-efficacy and this method has been used. Alderman (1999) indicated that, as cited by Schulze and Schulze (2003, p. 109), it should be cautioned, however, that this method of raising students' self-efficacy is considered to be the least effective. Allowing the students to take home something that they have created to share with friends and family is a reward for the students and shows appreciation for their hard work. Rewards can also involve praise or enjoyable in-class assignments. Rewards are best used on a group basis, rather than on an individual basis. Rewarding students as a group will help to ensure a more cooperative atmosphere, which is essential if peers are to serve as effective models.

4. Self-Efficacy and Foreign Language Learning

A few numbers of studies have been done regarding Self-efficacy theory applied in the field of second language acquisition, and foreign language learning. It was only recently in the late 1990's that a small number of studies were conducted. For example Huang and Shanmao (1996) studied four ESL students from a seventh-level reading and writing class in a university

Intensive English Program. They pointed out that a significant relationship between the students' self-efficacy ratings and their scores on the reading and writing sections of their TOEFL.

Anstrom (2000) conducted a research, in which she wanted to know whether there is any relationship between the use of language learning strategies and self-efficacy rating. Her subjects were 135 high school students enrolled in various foreign languages in Australia. The results obtained from the questionnaires revealed that there was a positive and significant correlation between strategy use and self-efficacy.

Another study conducted by Mahyuddin, Elias, Cheong, Muhamad, Noordin and Abdullah (2006) aimed to find out the relationship between students' self-efficacy and their English language achievement in Malaysia. They found that 51 percent of students had high self-efficacy while 48 percent showed low self-efficacy. Correlational analysis showed positive correlations between several dimensions of self-efficacy that is, academic achievement efficacy, other expectancy beliefs and self-assertiveness with academic performance in English language. They conclude that achievement in English language will improve when students have high self-efficacy in the language.

Wang, Chuang (2007) conducted a single case study and from the interpretive paradigm described a first-grade student's self-efficacy beliefs about learning English in various English language learning tasks and across school-based and home-based contexts. The student came from China and had been living in a Chinese community in the United States for one year when this study started. The investigator found learner's self-efficacy beliefs malleable and task-specific and higher self-efficacy to complete listening and speaking language activities than reading and writing activities. Finally, the investigator concluded that the learner's self-efficacy beliefs were associated with his familiarity with the content area, self-perceptions of English proficiency level, the task difficulty level, interests, attitude toward the English language and the English speaking community, and the social and cultural context.

Gahungu (2007) conducted a research study which is investigated in "The Relationships Among Strategy Use, Self-Efficacy, and Language Ability in Foreign Language Learners." The author found out that there was a positive and significant relationships among the three variables, also the majority of the participants did not have a clear rationale for studying French, but had undertaken its study to fulfill programmatic requirements, which affected their strategic behavior.

Magogwe and Oliver (2007) sought the relationship between preferred language strategies, age, proficiency, and self-efficacy beliefs. Their research was undertaken in Botswana between 2002 and 2005. They used adapted versions of the Oxford (Oxford, R., 1990). Language learning strategies: what every teacher should know. Newbury House, New York] Strategies Inventory for Language Learning (strategies) and the Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (Jinks, J.L., Morgan, V.L., 1999). Their results indicated that "Botswana students do use a number of language learning strategies, but that they show distinct preferences for particular types of strategies". Their findings also revealed a dynamic relationship between use of language learning strategies and proficiency, level of schooling and self-efficacy beliefs. They believe that because learning English is essential in their country therefore their results may be used in the future to inform pedagogy.

Yilmaz (2010) examined the relationship between language learning strategies, gender, proficiency and self-efficacy beliefs: a study of ELT learners in Turkey. The results showed that the highest rank (79.4%) was for Compensation Strategies while the lowest (63.8%) was for Affective Strategies. Also, findings pointed to significant differences for the strategies in favor of good learners. Research findings suggest that learners' self-efficacy beliefs were strongly related to their use of all types of learning.

Due to the fact that, self-efficacy theory is not widely researched as it applies to second and foreign language learning, the few studies published and the results of them seem to agree

that high self-efficacy corresponds to high achievement in foreign and second language learning. This statement implies that teaching self-efficacy can raise students' achievement in EFL and ESL contexts.

5. Measuring self-efficacy: Domain specificity

An important aspect of self-efficacy is its domain specificity. That is, people judge their capability depending on the particular domain of functioning (Bandura, 2006). Personal efficacy, then, is not a general disposition void of context, but rather a self-judgment that is specific to the activity domain. As such, high self-efficacy in one domain does not necessarily mean high efficacy in another. For example, a medical student may have high efficacy for taking a history or conducting a physical exam, but that same student may have low self-efficacy for understanding biochemistry. Therefore, to achieve predictive power, measures of perceived self-efficacy should be "tailored to domains of functioning and must represent gradations of task demands within those domains" (Bandura, 1997, p. 42).

In educational research, perceived self-efficacy is often measured using self-report surveys that ask participants to rate the strength of their belief in their ability to execute the requisite activities (Bandura, 2006). In many cases, however, educational researchers have mis-measured self-efficacy due, in large part, to their misunderstanding of the construct (Bandura, 1997, 2006; Pajares, 1996). As Pajares (1996) pointed out, "Because judgments of self-efficacy are task and domain specific, global or inappropriately defined self-efficacy assessments weaken effects" (p. 547). Therefore, a researcher attempting to predict or explain an academic outcome, for instance, is more likely to find a strong relationship between self-efficacy and the outcome of interest if the efficacy scale follows two theoretical guidelines: (a) it assesses specific aspects of the task and (b) the specificity corresponds to the characteristics of the task being assessed and the domain of functioning being analyzed (Bandura, 1997). In Bandura's (1997) words, "this requires clear definition of the activity domain of interest and a good conceptual analysis of its

different facets, the types of capabilities it calls upon, and the range of situations in which these capabilities might be applied” (p. 42). Thus “omnibus measures” of general, context less dispositions have relatively weak predictive power; whereas domain-linked measures of perceived efficacy have been shown empirically to be good predictors of numerous outcomes, including such diverse criteria as academic performance, pain tolerance, proneness to anxiety, and political participation.

Although it is clear that task and domain-specific measures of perceived efficacy have greater predictive power than global measures of the construct, Bandura (1997) warned that it is incorrect to believe that self-efficacy is concerned solely with “specific behaviors in specific situations.” In his words “domain particularity does not necessarily mean behavioral specificity” (Bandura, 1997, p. 49). In fact, Bandura (1997) distinguished among three levels of generality of assessment. The most specific level measures self-efficacy for a particular accomplishment under a narrowly defined set of conditions. The next level measures perceived efficacy for a class of performances within the same domain and under similar conditions. Finally, the most general level “measures belief in personal efficacy without specifying the activities or the conditions sharing common properties” (Bandura, 1997, p. 49). As discussed before, however, undifferentiated, context less measures of perceived self-efficacy have meager predictive power. Thus, Bandura (1997) advised, “the optimal level of generality at which self-efficacy is assessed varies depending on what one seeks to predict and the degree of foreknowledge of the situational demands” (p. 49).

6. Conclusion

Although Bandura’s social cognitive theory of reciprocal determinism and the topic of self-efficacy have drawn the attention of researchers and educators, zero research has focused on the Mohamed Kheider university English students. The ability to generalize the existing self-efficacy research is questionable. In order to develop effective intervention programs that will

improve the academic outcomes for English students of Mohamed Kheider university, it is essential to first determine what self-efficacy beliefs are for this group as well as the sources of those beliefs. Thus, this study provides data to determine the self-efficacy beliefs of those students, to assess if those self-efficacy beliefs match academic performance, and to identify the types of experiences that have shaped those beliefs.

Chapter 2

Academic Performance

In this chapter, the construct academic performance is defined and conceptualized. Furthermore, the factors that contribute to academic performance are discussed in depth. Additionally, academic performance in relation to gender and generational status is highlighted.

2.1 Definitions and conceptualization of academic performance

Academic performance can be operationalised in various ways (Adelman, 2006). Stemler (2012) defines academic performance as a student's ability to apply the acquired academic knowledge successfully and argues that being in possession of academic knowledge does not guarantee successful application and use of the knowledge. Therefore, academic performance constitutes acquiring knowledge and using specific skills to implement the acquired knowledge (Stemler, 2012). According to Ayan and Garcia (2008), a traditional approach followed in most educational settings is to define academic performance in terms of grades. The results one produces in relation to a specific goal that was set in a particular context (i.e., school, college, and university) define academic performance (Steinmayr, Meibner, Weidinger, & Wirthwein, 2014). At university level, academic performance entails the results a student obtains in the respective modules for which he or she is enrolled. Results can be simplified as the marks that one can obtain after completing a specific academic task. Amongst other things, these tasks or goals may include critical thinking or understanding and applying the acquired knowledge practically. Steinmayr et al. (2014) provide different criteria that are used to measure academic performance, namely procedural knowledge, declarative knowledge, curricular-based indicators (grades and performance in tests and examinations) and cumulative indicators (educational degrees, diplomas, and certificates). Multiple techniques can be used to measure academic

performance. However, there is no consensus regarding the best technique to utilise when measuring academic performance.

One method that is used to indicate academic performance is the use of academic credits. This method is used mostly at institutions of higher learning. A student has to attain a number of academic credits to advance in his or her programme (Nurmi, Aunola, Salmela-Aro, & Lindroos, 2003). Each module is assigned a certain number of credits, and passing the module means the student obtains the academic credits allocated to the module. Marks are not the main aspect considered; however, passing the module and accumulating the academic credit value of the module is crucial. The academic credits accumulated are used to promote the student to advance in the program (Nurmi et al., 2003). Other approaches used to measure academic performance include formative assessment, summative assessments, and an average of all modules in a particular semester or year. A formative assessment entails the use of tests that are written throughout the semester to monitor and track the academic progress of students. Kuncel, Hezlett and Ones (2001) advised that formative assessments like tests should be used because tests are a measure of academic progress that is more objective than summative assessments are. A summative assessment is the use of a final mark per module to measure academic performance. In spite of the above-mentioned approaches, some institutions of higher learning argue that considering an average of all modules in a particular semester or year is more valid. The reasoning is that an average of all modules can be used as a predictor of university persistence and enrolment in certain program (Conard, 2006). To overcome the shortfall of either using a formative assessment or an average of all modules, Burton and Ramist (2001) advise that the use of both measures of academic performance is a better alternative. For this particular study, academic performance is defined as the success acquired by meeting the academic criteria set for the specific modules. The criteria can include critical thinking and understanding and applying

the acquired knowledge practically. In this study, academic performance was measured by calculating an average of the students' first-year module marks in all their core modules.

2.2 Factors that affect academic performance

Identifying factors that affect academic performance is of paramount importance, as academic success is fundamental in education settings. Factors that affect academic performance have always been at the forefront in the research domain dedicated to higher education. The key factors that affect academic performance are not limited to intellectual factors only. Non-intellectual traits such as individual characteristics, self-discipline (Cassidy, 2012), and creativity (Naderi, Abdullah, Aizan, Sharir, & Kumar, 2009) have been identified as affecting academic performance. Additional factors include socio-economic status, generational status, quality of school education, and psychosocial factors (i.e., motivation, self-efficacy, goal orientation etc.) (Cassidy, 2012; Klomegah, 2007). In the next section, the various factors that affect academic performance are discussed in depth, by referring to cognition-related factors, demographic factors, and individual psychosocial characteristics.

2.2.1 Cognition-related factors

Cognition refers to the intellectual process in which knowledge is acquired and subsequently utilized to solve problems (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Cognitive aspects that assist in cognitive processes include perception, concentration, memory and reasoning (Louw, Van Ede, & Louw, 1998). The above-mentioned attributes of cognition are all crucial to academic performance. Although a variety of cognition-related factors have been researched in relation to academic performance, this section focuses on the role of intelligence, high school achievement, and language proficiency. Intelligence has been identified as a strong predictor of academic performance (Cassidy, 2012). Piaget's definition of intelligence states that intelligence is a basic life function that helps an organism adapt to its environment (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Generally, in an education environment, intelligence can be described as the skill to learn

independently (Fraser & Killen, 2005) and to apply acquired knowledge effectively in order to produce the desired effects (academic success) (Steinmayr et al., 2014). A study conducted by Dickerson Mayes, Calhoun, Bixler, & Zimmerman (2008) confirmed that intelligence quotient (IQ) was the most crucial factor implicated in academic performance. Consequently, a higher IQ was a predictor of good academic performance. Duckworth and Seligman (2005) also confirmed the above. However, they found that students fail to live up to their intellectual potential due to a lack of self-discipline. Therefore, one may conclude that intelligence is the main factor that affects academic performance, but other factors may affect whether students live up to their intellectual potential.

High school achievement has been identified as a strong predictor of academic performance in higher education. Knowledge and experience acquired at high school can be regarded as the foundation on which subsequent knowledge and success is built (Martin, Wilson, Liem, & Ginns, 2013). According to Smith and Naylor (2001), school performance affects how a student performs at university. Academic performance is better for a student who has been performing well since high school (Smith & Naylor, 2001). Dobson and Skuja (2005) also support the former argument, stating that high school achievement is a valid predictor of academic performance because students are selected into university program by considering their high school achievement record with the hope that they will be able to produce the same academic results. Thus, there is an assumption that students who achieve good grades at high school, are also better equipped to cope and succeed with academic demands at university. Another influential factor in academic performance is language proficiency (Van Eeden, De Beer, & Coetzee, 2001). The medium of instruction for teaching, learning, and assessment is an essential aspect of academic success (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2010). The importance of language is highlighted in the 2010 report of the Council on Higher Education (CHE). Language is among the six identified elements of practice that should be given special attention to improve the

academic performance of students at South African universities (CHE, 2010). Fakeye (2014) studied English proficiency as a predictor of academic performance and showed that language proficiency had a significant positive correlation with overall academic achievement. Thus, it was recommended that efforts should be made to assist learners in becoming more proficient in English for better academic performance. Another study by Stephen, Welman, and Jordaan (2004) conducted at South African higher education institutions confirmed the effect of English proficiency on academic performance. Possible explanations for poor academic performance for students who were not proficient in English were that English was a second language and the students had literacy skills problems. Thus, students had to decode English into their mother tongue and later reinterpret and express their thoughts in English, making room for misinterpretation. Additionally, students were unable to express their thoughts in written form. Literacy skills promote better academic performance and they are all connected to language proficiency.

2.2.2 Demographic factors

Demographic factors refer to the data of a certain population group. Demographic factors may include age, gender, income level, occupation, and race. However, the demographic factors that are of central attention in this section include socioeconomic status (self-efficacy) and parents' education level. With certainty, one can make the assumption that an individual's background can affect his or her choices in life. Self-efficacy is linked positively with academic performance. Students with a lower self-efficacy have greater chances of dropping out of university (Vignoles & Powdthavee, 2009) because they are unable to afford the important resources (textbooks, information technology resources) required in academic settings (Martin et al., 2013). Students with a high self-efficacy view their learning and education as crucial, they rate their academic ability as high, have high academic averages and high academic aspirations, and experienced education as positive. Conversely, students with a lower self-efficacy have poor

academic self-concepts and confidence and minimal interest in education (James, 2002). The lack of interest in pursuing academic dreams is due to their pressing financial status. Rather, their focus is on earning an income after completing high school (James, 2002) to improve their self-efficacy. Having parents who have university qualifications has some benefits when it comes to academic success. Students who have university graduate parents have the opportunity to be guided and equipped with skills to bring about a smooth transition to university and better adjustment (Ramos-Sánchez & Nichols, 2007). Parents who have graduated from university tend to have higher academic ambitions for their children and provide continuous support to ensure their children do well at university (Ramos-Sánchez & Nichols, 2007). This will be discussed in greater depth in sections to follow.

2.2.3 Individual psychosocial characteristics

Individual psychosocial characteristics refer to psychological and social aspects that may include drives, principles, morals, and behaviour that individuals display (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). Conard (2006) argues the use of individual psychosocial characteristics as factors that contribute to academic performance as a means of complimenting the traditional use of cognitive measures that affect academic performance. Individual psychosocial characteristics that will be discussed in this section include self-concept, learning styles and attitude, being conscientious, and emotional intelligence. It has been argued that self-concept affects academic performance positively. Rosenberg (1979) describes self-concept as “the totality of the individual’s thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object” (p.7). Self-concept is individuals’ views of themselves and their capabilities, which is influenced by their thoughts and feelings. Academic self-concept is individuals’ views of their academic ability and potential for achievement. Therefore a deduction can be made that a good academic self-concept would imply better academic performance. A positive academic self-concept would suggest that a student believes in his or her abilities and is motivated to pursue academic challenges and tasks because he or she

believes he or she will succeed (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). It has been found that learning strategy and style and study skills affect academic performance. Study skills, habits, and attitudes are tools required in education settings to succeed. The study skills, habits, and attitudes that contribute to academic success, include the ability to manage time and resources, having a study routine, and having a positive attitude towards academic work. Spending more time on academic related activities also increases success rates (Liu & Cavanaugh, 2012). Poor study skills or habits tend to lead to difficulties adjusting to academic demands at university and, inevitably, students with poor study habits withdraw from university as they are unable to meet the demands of their program. Researchers (Conard, 2006; O'Connor & Paunonen, 2007) found that conscientiousness was a personality trait frequently associated with academic performance. Conscientiousness manifests as behavior, for example, class attendance and active participation in class, which correlate well with academic performance while controlling for academic ability. In addition, openness to experience correlated positively with academic achievement (O'Connor & Paunonen, 2007).

Other individual psychosocial characteristics that correlated positively with academic performance and success include emotional intelligence, which is the ability to deal with academic and life stress by employing effective and adaptive coping skills (Malefo, 2000). Additionally, a high level of discipline, self-efficacy (Pajares & Schunk, 2001), and motivation have been correlated positively with academic performance. The scope of the study primarily focused on self-efficacy and academic motivation due to the high correlation with academic performance and success. From the above-mentioned, it is evident that factors that affect academic performance include intellectual and non-intellectual factors. Intellectual and non-intellectual factors interact to provide a holistic view of academic performance.

2.3 Academic performance and gender

Another factor that is associated with academic performance and academic success is gender. Previous research findings regarding the effects of gender on academic performance have been contradictory (Ayan & Garcia, 2008). In a study conducted by Harrison et al. (2009) to assess university athletes' academic performance, males achieved better academic results on difficult test items in comparison with their female counterparts. Pajares and Schunk (2001) also report that males tend to do better academically in comparison with females, especially in mathematics, science, and technology. Richardson and Woodley (2003) provide evidence in support of women doing academically better than men do. They highlight that women are more likely to obtain better results than men. Additional studies support the notion that females, in comparison with males, perform better academically (Conley, 2001; Roberts, Clifton & Etcheverry, 2001; Sheard, 2009). In contrast with the above-mentioned findings, Naderi, Abdullah, Hamid, Aizan, and Sharir (2008) argue that gender has no moderating or influential effect on marks. Clifton, Perry, Stubbs, and Roberts (2004) also found no influence of gender on academic performance.

The difference in academic performance by males and females can be attributed to learning strategies. Males and females utilise different learning strategies that result in different levels of academic performance (Lundeberg & Moch, 1995; Martínez, 1997). In a study conducted by Clifton et al. (2004), males had high self-esteem and females had better coping strategies that positively affected academic performance. According to Gordon-Rouse and Austin (2002), males perform poorly in academics compared to females possibly because males are more recognized and judged for achievement in areas other than education, for example, sports. According to Sheard (2009), females performed better than males because of commitment, which positively correlated with academic achievement. Further evidence of reasons explaining why females performed better in academics is provided by Conley (2001) and

Roberts et al. (2001) who attribute academic success of females to positive psychosocial characteristics (i.e., self-esteem, perceived academic control, and coping strategies). More research is needed to understand the differences in academic performance in terms of gender.

2.4 Academic performance and generational status

Many individuals, including those who have been less privileged not to attend institutions of higher learning, are pursuing higher education. Billson and Terry (1982), as well as Vuong et al. (2010), describe first-generation students as students who are the first in their families to attend university; neither of their parents has obtained a university qualification. Students whose parents have a university qualification are referred to as non-first generation students. First-generation students encounter distinct barriers at higher education institutions, such as gaining access to higher education, staying enrolled, and obtaining a degree (Horn & Nunez, 2000). First-generation students not only encounter problems while enrolled at institutions of higher education, but they also experience difficulties prior to being enrolled. Once they are enrolled at a university, they experience problems adjusting to the academic demands of university, which subsequently translate into poor academic performance (Ramos-Sánchez & Nichols, 2007). Ishitani (2003) found that first-generation students were likely to drop out of university in comparison with non-first-generation students.

First-generation students identified themselves as less prepared (academically) for the transition to institutions of higher learning (Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001), and more concerned about their financial problems in comparison with non-first-generation students. In addition, Olenchak and Hebert (2002) found that the following reasons may account for the higher attrition rates in first-generation students: problems adjusting to university, feelings of isolation, and unclear purpose for being at university.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, academic performance was addressed with specific attention to the conceptualization of academic performance, as well as the predictors of academic performance. Finally, academic performance was discussed in relation to gender and generational status.

Field Work

Chapter 3

Field Work

1. Introduction

This chapter provides a description and rationale for the methods and instrumentation used to investigate self-efficacy beliefs in a sample of Mohamed Kheider university English students in section one, in addition to results and discussion in section two.

2. Objective of the Study

The goals of this study were to assess the self-efficacy beliefs held by Mohamed Kheider university English students, determine how congruent self-efficacy beliefs are with actual academic performance, and identify the types of experiences that shape self-efficacy beliefs. Finally, suggest instructional implications of self-efficacy in classroom.

Section One: Methodology

1. Methods and Design

The topic and specific research questions prompted the use of a mixed methods approach which implemented both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Moreover, content analysis including the descriptive and interpretive methods. Quantitative methods served as the primary method of inquiry while qualitative methods were used in a supplementary fashion. Quantitative methods are traditionally associated with a greater degree of objectivity and are useful in exploring topics such as this study. Quantitative analysis was appropriate as one of the primary goals was to assess the self-efficacy beliefs of Mohamed Kheider university English students. To adequately do this, the inventory used in this study quantified self-

efficacy beliefs and yielded a numerical self-efficacy score to compare with self reported academic performance.

Qualitative methods also were used in the study as they have been shown to be a powerful tool when exploring a topic where little empirical research exists (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The processes by which self-efficacy beliefs are developed thus lent themselves well to additional exploration via a qualitative design. Qualitative research methods were used in the form of semi-structured interviews. This format invites participants to elaborate on those experiences that have been most salient to them over time. The interviews allowed the participants to go beyond the information elicited by the items in the inventory and describe other factors that shaped self-efficacy beliefs that were not addressed on the survey.

2. Participants

Participants in this study are first year English student of Mohamed Kheider university. Due the nature of the theme, the sample is the most relevant. This sample is representative in the sense that they chose English as a major, consequently the effects of Self-efficacy in EFL contexts can be observed and measured to some extent the least.

3. Instruments

3.1. Questionnaire

Although a small number of other inventories existed, the abridged version of the 57 item Self-Efficacy for Learning Form (SELF) was used to measure self-efficacy beliefs in the sample. The abridged version of the SELF was developed to assess self-efficacy beliefs in a more efficient and less time consuming manner, but

without a subsequent loss of validity. It was developed in response to the trend that most past inventories assessing self-efficacy were focused upon certain academic sub-domains (e.g. math and English).

The abridged version, known as the SELF-A, consisted of 19 of the original 57 items. The 19 items focused on three specific academic tasks: studying, test-preparation and note-taking. Six of the 19 items assessed self-efficacy beliefs regarding studying, six assessed beliefs about note-taking skills, and seven assessed confidence in test preparation skills. Items dealing with reading and writing included in the unabridged version were not included in the abridged version as “they were viewed as more limited in scope of application than other processes” (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2007, p .159)

The SELF-A was chosen to assess self-efficacy beliefs over other inventories for a number of reasons. The SELF-A attempted to address specific conditional learning situations when personal or emotional barriers may have impeded the achievement of academic outcomes (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2007).. Second, the assessment used a 0 to 100 point scale, which was believed to be more powerful in detecting actual difference in self-efficacy beliefs compared to inventories that used a smaller Likert scale.

Students also self-reported on the questionnaire information regarding past academic performance. These measures of past academic performance were used as a measure of the actual academic performance.

3.2. Interviews

The semi-structured interview protocol, was utilized with the expectation to understand what factors that formulate students’ beliefs influence their successful or

failure performances in learning English to further address the fourth research question regarding the types of experiences that shaped the self-efficacy beliefs of Mohamed Kheider university English students and to better explain the processes by which self-efficacy beliefs were formed.

4. Data Collection

Data were collected from 34 participants from 1st year English students of Mohamed Kheider university. We offered some recommendations that included allowing the students to take the questionnaire home after the first class meeting and return it the next class meeting. The survey was completely voluntary and students were given the contact information should they be interested in the results of the study. We ensured students that confidentiality would be maintained and that no identifying information was being requested unless the students chose to leave their contact information if they were interested in participating in the interviews. Most of the surveys were administered directly by the researcher during the scheduled class. Surveys were later personally delivered to the researcher. Data from the surveys were first entered into an Excel spreadsheet and later imported into an SPSS 20.0 spreadsheet to be analyzed. The database was then used for the statistical analyses needed to address the research questions.

Recruitment of students for participation in the interviews was made via email requests or telephone calls to the students who indicated on the survey that would be interested in participating in an interview and had left their contact information. Interviews were scheduled over a period of two weeks and were conducted at various times throughout the day the library of university. The five Students who responded to the email or telephone call were asked about times when they were available to

participate in an interview and were scheduled. Interviews were scheduled for a period of one hour. Upon arrival, students were provided a list of questions to review that were to be used for the semi-structured interviews. Students were interviewed and asked a series of six questions designed to determine the types of experiences that shaped their self-efficacy beliefs. It was conducted either with individual students or with pairs of students. Transcripts were made of the interviews and then hand-coded and participant responses were placed into categories that encompassed the sources of their self-efficacy beliefs.

5. Data Analysis

A descriptive analysis has been used to analyze the data from the SELF-A inventory to address 2nd the research question regarding the level of self-efficacy beliefs held among English students in Mohamed Kheider university. Quantitative analyses were used to determine the relation of self-efficacy beliefs as measured by the SELF-A to actual academic performance as measured by self-reported, past academic performance. One-way ANOVA sought to determine if differences in self-efficacy beliefs as measured by SELF-A scores existed among students who self-reported they had received “00-05”, “06-09”, “10-13”, “14-17” and “18-20” in the 1st semester to address the 3rd question regarding the relation between self-efficacy and academic performance. Semi-Structured interviews were conducted to investigate the types of experiences that shape the self-efficacy beliefs of Mohamed Kheider university English students. A sample of 05 students self-selected for interviews. They were asked to respond to a series of questions designed to assess how the four major sources of self-efficacy beliefs identified by previous research applied to their

self-efficacy beliefs and to identify other types of influential experiences. Transcripts of students' responses were created from the 16 student interviews.

6. Limitations

A few threats to internal validity existed in the study. First, all data collected in the study relied upon self-report. Students may not have been inclined to provide accurate information with regard to certain types of data such as the reporting of past academic performances. The use of self-reported, past academic performance to determine the level of academic skill possessed by the student additionally may have posed a threat to the internal validity of the study.

Section Two: Results and Discussion

1. Findings of Research Questions

The findings from three of research questions are provided in the following sections. With regard the second research question, self-efficacy beliefs were found to be relatively high among the sample. Results of the data analyses for the third research question revealed that differences in self-efficacy beliefs existed across various level of academic performance and thus suggested a certain degree of congruence. Finally results for the fourth research question suggested that the four main sources of self-efficacy beliefs applied to the sample of students; additional sources of self-efficacy beliefs also were identified. A detailed description of the results for each of the research questions is provided.

2. Research Question #2 Level of Self-efficacy Beliefs

To address the first research question regarding the levels of self-efficacy beliefs of Mohamed Kheider university English students, a number of statistical

analysis have been performed. Results of the statistical analyses revealed that self-efficacy beliefs were high among the sample. A mean score was computed across the 19 individual items on the SELF-A inventory for each student. The resulting SELF-A scores for the participants ranged between 25.79 and 100 with a mean of 73.24 (N=425; M=73.24; SD=11.75) as summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1 : Descriptive Statistics for SELF-A Scores

	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation
SELF-A scores	73.24	74.21	11.74

A score of 70 on the survey scale corresponded to the “probably can do it” descriptor on the SELF-A. The mean SELF-A score across all students in the study of 74.21 indicated a significant amount of confidence to complete the academic task described by the survey items.

Confidence levels to complete the academic tasks described on the inventory were strong among the sample of students as reflected by a mean score of 73.24 of the SELF-A inventory. This mean score on the inventory was higher than the “probably could do it” descriptor above a score of 70. Mean scores on the 19 individual items on the SELF-A reinforced the finding that students had a high degree of confidence to complete a majority of the academic tasks described by the individual survey items.

3. Research Question #3 Self-Efficacy Belief and Academic Performance

To address the third research question regarding the relationship of self-efficacy beliefs to actual academic performance as measured by self-reported past

academic performance, several statistical analyses were conducted. The results of these analyses have been mixed but generally suggested a positive relationship existed between self-efficacy beliefs and past academic performance. The use of first semester grades as indicator of actual academic performance suggested congruence between self-efficacy beliefs and academic performance. One-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if congruence existed between self-efficacy beliefs and actual academic performance as measured by self-reported first semester overall grade who were split and recoded between those who received “00-05”, “06-09”, “10-13”, “14-17” and “18-20”. There was a significant between subjects effect [$F(4, 385) = 5.533$, $p < .01$] indicating difference existed in self-efficacy beliefs between the groups. Students who earned “14-17” in first semester had higher SELF-A scores than students who earned “06-09” ($p < .01$). Students who earned “10-13” had higher SELF-A scores than students who earned “06-09” ($p < .05$). The existence of higher self-efficacy beliefs among the groups with higher academic performance suggested congruence between self-efficacy and present level of academic skills. Means for the groups are shown in Table 2 and illustrate the degree of difference of SELF-A scores between the various levels of academic performance as measured by self-reported first semester overall grades.

If self-efficacy beliefs are the same between students who self reported more academic success and those who self-reported less academic success, incongruence between self-efficacy beliefs and academic performance would have been suggested. Differences were found and thus suggested a positive relationship between the confidence to complete academic tasks and the skills possessed to complete academic tasks and achieve academic goals.

Table 2 : Mean SELF-A Scores by Levels of Self Reported Overall Grades

	N	Mean	SD
18-20	2	76.64	9.82
14-17	6	73.17	11.86
10-13	15	70.86	15.49
06-09	8	55.92	16.61
00-05	2	76.84	11.16

4. Research Question #4 Sources of Self-efficacy Beliefs

Content Analysis of Interview Questions

The analyses of the responses obtained from the student interviews substantiated the findings previously described from literature with regard to the sources of self-efficacy beliefs. Namely, the four identified sources of self-efficacy beliefs as suggested by Bandura (1986) (mastery experiences, social encouragements, vicarious experiences, and physiological states) did pertain to the self-efficacy beliefs of the sample of English students. Positive social encouragements were more powerful an influence than negative social encouragements. Mastery experiences were generalized from non-academic fields. Finally, vicarious learning occurred from models outside of the field to which the self-efficacy beliefs were being generalized.

Source #1 Mastery Experience

Mastery experiences were highly influential of self-efficacy beliefs. All five of the students interviewed were able to describe how past academic successes and failures had influenced confidence levels to complete academic tasks. Academic accomplishments were positively associated with higher self-efficacy beliefs while academic failures were associated with lower self-efficacy beliefs.

All five students were able to describe ways in which past successes positively increased self-efficacy beliefs. Numerous quotes from the students exemplified the manner by which past academic successes positively influenced confidence levels. The following quotes are typical of the sentiments expressed in the interviews with regard to the role of mastery experiences. One participant described how performance in a single class provided reassurance that he could succeed academically.

“I just know I can finish things. I just got to put my head in it.. I ended up getting a pretty good grade in first semester so it’s just like a testament in that I know what I can do.”

Recent mastery experiences that had occurred in university seemed to be most influential of self-efficacy beliefs. Quotes from the interviews demonstrated the strong influence of university academic successes on self-efficacy. A participant who reported receiving 17.53 as an overall grade in first semester, described how success in her first semester in university boosted her initially low confidence levels.

“My first semester, I was really nervous. I didn’t know if I was going to do so well because everyone was saying college is harder. Honestly, I knew that university was going to be harder and I was scared my first semester but honestly after I started getting those grades ...that, honestly is what has helped me.”

On other hand, One student described how earlier experiences in elementary school influenced present levels of self-efficacy beliefs.

“I definitely think it starts in elementary school. Once you do well in elementary school...it kind of determines whether you will do well in middle school and that will determine whether you’ll do well in high school...I think had I not done well in elementary school, I would have been discouraged and not done well in middle school or high school. I may not have gone to university if I had not been successful in the different levels of education.”

He also described how his confidence stemmed from her ability to generalize his later successes in high school classes to university classes.

“I was definitely nervous, but I think having done well in high school, it gave me more confidence going forward into university. Since I did well in high school, I would probably do well in university. Once you kind of get into the flow of things, then the anxiety goes away a little bit, then you can concentrate on the task at hand.”

Statements such as these were representative of many that demonstrated the role that mastery experiences via pre-university academic successes had on present self-efficacy beliefs.

Source #2-Social Encouragements

Social encouragements were found to have a profound effect on self-efficacy beliefs. Receiving positive encouragements from others was strongly associated with higher self-efficacy beliefs. All students who were interviewed agreed that words of praise boosted confidence levels and many were able to describe experiences where positive social encouragements elevated their self-efficacy beliefs.

Words of encouragements came from a variety of sources and included friends, family, and teachers. No difference in the amount of influence from the various sources seemed to exist. Numerous quotes taken from the student interviews illustrated the positive relationship of social encouragements on self-efficacy beliefs.

One participant described how her parent's consistent encouragement to persist and do better had resulted in her current levels of confidence.

“Well my mom is always kind. My dad is the one who pushes me and he's always pressured me. When I was younger, if I got bad mark and just decent, I would get my phone taken away from me... now I see why and it kind of made me develop this confidence I've got about myself... it would kind of put that seed in my head. I can do better. I know I could do better. He kind of put that in me.... My dad was like the coach...it makes me feel like I can do something because he has always told me I could.”

Another student described how praise and positive feedback from teachers elevated her confidence levels.

“I think definitely it reinforces how well you're doing, it makes you more confident. It makes you think that you can accomplish tasks. If teachers never say, “Oh you're doing a good job”, you don't really know how you're doing...I think definitely that boosts confidence when the teacher tells you you're doing a good job.”

It's the same case with a participant who described how words of encouragement from teachers as provided through feedback on assignments boosted confidence levels.

“I know this is so elementary school but they (teachers) write really nice comments on my assignments, that actually makes me feel like, “Oh yeah!” So I think that’s one of the main things.”

Another participant remembered and described a specific experience prior to university that resulted in elevated self-efficacy beliefs. She recalled a high school teacher who provided social encouragement and told her she could do better than she currently was doing.

“Some teachers they kind of cheer me on and say come on,...I know you can do it. Why are you getting your grades down?. You’ve got to do better.Probably the main teachers are two teachers back in high school. I lived across the street and they would tell me to come back. We could talk. They still ask me, “Oh, how are you doing?” Even my elementary school teachers ask me that, like “how are you doing?”...There were teachers that were cheering me on and they did help me out.

These responses described by students in which words of encouragement increased self-efficacy beliefs. They illustrated the powerful and lasting effect intervention can have on a student’s level of self-efficacy.

Source #3-Vicarious Experiences

Observing the success of others positively influenced self-efficacy. Observing the failures of others had a minimal negative influence. Conversely, observing the failures of others also bolstered students’ confidence levels, much like negative feedback and words of criticism elevated self-efficacy beliefs. The positive effect of observing success was especially strong when the individual achieving success was one with whom the observer could identify.

A student, who most likely had numerous opportunities to observe others achieve academic success through her previously earned bachelor's degree, described it as follows:

“I guess if a role model encourages you and helps you if you're stuck in a rut, and you don't know that you can do it, they can push you to try harder. They can give you examples like, “Well I went through a similar thing, and I did this, and I got through it. So you can get through it too.”

A similar sentiment was expressed by another participant who recalled how seeing one of his friends earn a bachelor's degree increased his own level of confidence. The effect was especially strong because it was someone with whom he strongly identified.

“...he does the same thing we do. We're involved in pretty much the same environmental factors. We're involved with the same way of thinking, same results, and same confidence levels.

One participant recalled how seeing her friends display positive study behavior made her believe that she could do it too.

“It's crazy because it's true what they say, “you are who you hang out with.”... I found out the friends who are into school like me are the ones that think about their future and want better things in life. They didn't want to be stuck being with their parents forever. I found that those were the people that actually motivated me more because I would see them making an amazing career plans. I thought I would do the same. I don't want to stay home and watch TV.”

One student reaffirmed the positive role of parents when he described how his father receiving a doctorate degree served as model and helped him to continue pursuing his own education.

“Yes, my sister, my dad and my mom. My dad has a Ph.D. That’s why I kept going too because he went to university and I went to middle school. I was doing my bachelor and he was doing his Ph.D....so I would see him do that and... I would say I want to do this”

Source #4-Physiological States

Three of the five students recalled how physiological states such as anxiety, discomfort, or fear while engaged in academic tasks negatively influenced self-efficacy beliefs. One student, described how being nervous when first starting university negatively affected her confidence levels.

“My first semester, I was really nervous. I didn’t know if I was going to do so well because everyone was saying university is harder. Honestly, I knew that university was going to be harder and I was scared my first semester.”

Another participant reaffirmed how feelings of uncertainty and anxiety influenced her level of confidence to accomplish academic tasks. The effect was especially prevalent at the beginning semester. She described how feelings of anxiety were stronger in some academic subjects compared to others.

“Overall, I guess I’m really hesitant on taking any courses because I feel I’m going to fail them. I get really nervous and I have different confidence levels, I guess depending on what class I’m taking and what it’s for.”

In similar case, A student described how being nervous while studying for exams influenced confidence levels, but he also described how being able to overcome these negative emotional states boosted his confidence.

“There are times when I’m studying for exams and I’m freaking out and pulling all-nighters. I’m just like “I don’t get this material.” You see I get nervous and I’ll do bad on my exams. So I’ll try to calm myself down and I’ll actually study better and I’ll do a lot better. That’s what I do now. That’s what I’ve learned. Being nervous compared to just taking it head on....just break through your fears. That can be with anything and know that you’re going to do better because your confidence is going to be high.”

Overall, negative physiological states were shown to influence self-efficacy beliefs in a variety of ways. The frequency and extent of influence of this source was less than that of the other three sources. Fewer specific experiences were described by the students and the magnitude of the effect on self-efficacy beliefs was less compared to the other sources.

Other Major Influences on Self-efficacy Beliefs

Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that other sources of self-efficacy beliefs existed among the sample in addition to the four focused upon in the survey as prompted by findings from past research. These other sources included “financial obstacles”, “overcoming adversity”, “social support”, and “needs of others”. Lack of financial resources reduced self-efficacy beliefs while overcoming personal adversity increased self-efficacy. Stronger social support was associated with greater confidence. Finally, the greater the needs of others who were dependent upon

the student for a better future, the greater the influence on self-efficacy beliefs. The influence of each of these sources is described in the following sections.

Source #5-Financial Obstacles

Lack of financial resources was frequently mentioned as lowering the self-efficacy beliefs held by the students. Students described how lack of money not only served as an obstacle to achieve their academic goals, but how it also diminished their confidence to do so. The following quotes illustrated this common theme that emerged from the student interviews. At the end of the interview, when asked if there were any other factors that influenced his confidence to achieve his academic goals, A participant readily identified financial obstacles as affecting his confidence to complete academic tasks.

“I mean one of the external factors would be financially, if I run out of aid. My parents are doing poorly and I need to help them. In a way and that kind of detracts me from investing in my study.

This sentiment was reaffirmed by another student who described how lack of financial resources affected his confidence to pursue education at university.

“We didn’t have the money. That was another thing we had to keep in mind. I knew I had to really do my best to get the needed finance because I didn’t know how I would make it.”

Source #6-Overcoming Adversity

Another significant influence on self-efficacy beliefs that emerged from the interviews was the amount of adversity the students had overcome in their lives. Students who had overcome greater personal obstacles and social and emotional hardships seemed to report higher confidence to complete academic tasks and

accomplish their academic goals. A prevalent theme was that compared to the obstacles that students had already overcome in their lives, completion of academic tasks seemed relatively easy. They drew strength and confidence from overcoming these life challenges. The amount of adversity that the students had overcome also seemed to potentiate the effect of previous mastery experiences on self-efficacy beliefs. Mastery experiences that were achieved in the face of significant personal adversity were especially powerful in shaping self-efficacy beliefs. The effect was illustrated by the following comments made by a participant who described university success despite adversity as strongly influencing her confidence levels.

“I know that I can do it..... Knowing the fact that I’ve always been able to balance I guess...I’ve always done really well. I’ve been able to deal with things and situations and still focus on school and do well some way or another. I know I can still do it now.... I know I’m smart and I’m motivated”

Even relatively small successes in the face of significant life challenges served to positively

Source #7: Social Support

Responses from the interviews provided evidence that self-efficacy beliefs were positively influenced when students had strong social support systems. Social support was not the same as social encouragement described in a previous section of this study. Whereas social encouragement refers to verbal persuasions, social support was something qualitatively different and took a variety of forms. Family and friends sacrificed resources to enable the student to pursue their academic goals. Emotional support from family and friends strongly influenced self-efficacy beliefs. For many of the students, the existence of these types of support resulted in increased confidence

to achieve academic goals. A student described how emotional support provided from friends served to increase her confidence about her ability to succeed in her classes.

“My sister’s good friend, she has a good family and she has a wonderful husband and they have a good life. She was really there for me when it comes to like the personal kind of things. Not really having to do with school...With her though, life isn’t always about school. You have the drama, you have the problems when you are feeling down, all those things and she has always been there for help me in those areas, which takes some stress off of me if I want to do good in school. It kind of takes away some of the distractions a little bit, because I can go and vent to her if I want to. We can go have lunch and just talk. She’s always taken an interest in how I’m doing with myself...That helps because I have the support academically and then the support...personally also.”

The influence of strong social support contributing to elevated self-efficacy was echoed by, another student.

“My family, they give me a lot of support. They believe that I can do something and that I will do something great. They just keep pushing me and pushing me and whenever I feel I am struggling. I always know that I can go to them for help. They do help me out and they honestly are probably the only real support.”

Two students described how a loss of social support negatively influenced confidence levels. When a participant asked why his confidence levels had suddenly dropped, identified this exact reason.

“My support group kind of crashed. I guess my organization it just crashed. Before that I was really good”

Another participant referred to her lack of social support. She directly linked her low confidence levels to the lack of social support received from her family.

“I’m not confident at all. It was important in my family but it wasn’t like my family would sit down with me and help me out with my homework. I didn’t feel like I needed to do it. I just did it because everybody else would do it....They would support me and say it was important but then again, they wouldn’t sit down and help me out with it”

Source #8: Meeting the Needs of Others

A final major source of self-efficacy that emerged from the student interviews was increased confidence stemming from the needs of others. This was a particularly powerful and reoccurring theme that arose. Three of students reported that family members were dependent upon them to succeed. Because of the dire consequences of not succeeding, confidence levels were high due to the perception that failure simply was not an option. A student described his high level of confidence to succeed in university as stemming from the need to help his parents have a better life.

“Family is of course a huge factor...being that they grew up, they in a way sacrificed all they had in order to cross, in order for them to give their children, I mean that kind of gratitude towards my parents is of course automatically translated...I got to make my parents proud and not let them down. Give them the fruits of their labor so to speak in... And my parents aren’t doing so well, so of course it’s another factor that goes toward “I gotta get a good career”. If they expect this of me, of course, I’m going to deliver...I want to give them a comfortable living. They have suffered enough...I gotta do what I gotta do.”

One student described how her confidence to achieve academic success stemmed from the need to make her family proud. She specifically identified the need to be a positive role model for her little brother.

“Like I said, my parents have always pushed me to stay in school, to become a better person ...It pushes me to keep on going to school, to make me proud and my family proud...I aim to succeed to be an example to my brother. He’s two years younger than I am. I wanted to be a good example to him and now he’s in high school.”

When described, the theme of failure not being an option was powerful. When students described their confidence as arising from others being dependent upon them, the description was always given with a tone of great determination.

5. Research Question #5 Self-Efficacy in the Classroom: Instructional

Implications

From the literature review and research findings there is evidence supporting the positive links between students’ self-efficacy and their achievement. Specifically, the evidence has shown that students with high self-efficacy in academic domains choose to engage in tasks that foster the development of their skills and abilities in those areas; exert effort in the face of difficulty; and persist longer at challenging tasks when they have the requisite skills. Furthermore, besides the positive influence that self-efficacy appears to have on the quantity of effort, there is evidence that students high in self-efficacy differ in terms of the quality of their effort, using more deep cognitive and metacognitive processing strategies than their counterparts with weaker academic efficacy.

While educators are understandably concerned about teaching students skills, research findings have made it clear that simply possessing skills does not ensure that students will be motivated to apply them”. Instead, students need both the skill and the will to successfully function within different domains and under a variety of circumstances. In fact, much of the research suggests that students’ perceptions of competence may more accurately predict their motivation and future academic choices than actual competence. Therefore, Bandura (1997) and others have suggested that teachers would do well to implement instructional practices that foster both skill attainment and the development of the necessary accompanying confidence (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996). At the same time, efficacy experts caution that attempting to build positive efficacy beliefs through programs that overemphasize verbal persuasion methods is unlikely to be successful. Instead, teachers should focus their efforts primarily on providing students with authentic mastery experiences. Clearly, instructional strategies focused on providing students with opportunities for performance success align well with Bandura’s (1977, 1997) emphasis on enactive attainment as the most influential source of self-efficacy information. With a sound understanding of self-efficacy, teachers will be well positioned to develop and implement effective instructional strategies. Specific examples of how teachers can apply the tenets of self-efficacy into classroom practice are provided below:

1. Set clear and specific goals.

Research has shown that when students set a realistic goal, or are given a reasonable goal by a teacher, they are more motivated to perform than students who are given no goals or who are simply told to try their best). According to Bandura (1997), students who set a goal are likely to experience an initial sense of self-efficacy

for achieving the goal and also are apt to make a commitment to attempt it. As students work at the task, “they engage in activities that they believe will lead to goal attainment: attend to instruction, rehearse information to be remembered, expend effort, and persist” (Schunk, 1991, p. 213). Ultimately, students’ self-efficacy is validated as they observe goal progress and see that they are becoming more skillful.

2. Encourage the use of challenging and proximal goals

Goals should be challenging but not outside the range of students’ capabilities. Difficult but achievable goals give students the opportunity to put forth effort and obtain feedback as they make progress toward goal completion. Goals that are too far beyond students’ skill level will likely lead to frustration and may actually degrade efficacy beliefs. Moreover, research has shown that proximal goals tend to provide better efficacy information for students than do distant goals, because students can judge progress toward goal achievement with the former better than with the latter.

3. Provide honest, explicit feedback to increase students’ efficacy beliefs.

Honest feedback, in the form of verbal persuasion and/or rewards that are given contingent upon performance, provides efficacy information to learners and encourages their continued movement toward goal attainment. Praising students non-contingently can be detrimental in that students do not get useful feedback on the development of their actual skills. Without explicit feedback on the growth of genuine skills, students likely will have a difficult time trying to change or regulate their behavior. For example, praising students indiscriminately for performing a task, regardless of how well they perform, can lead students to think they are good at a task when really they are not.

4. Use models that build self-efficacy.

Next to experienced mastery, vicarious experiences have been shown to be powerful influences on efficacy beliefs. As Schunk (1991) described, “observing others succeed can convey to observers that they too are capable and can motivate them to attempt the task” (p. 216). From an instructional perspective, teachers can use other students as models to demonstrate how to successfully complete a learning task (e.g., by asking a student to solve a math problem on the board). However, teachers need to be aware that not all classroom models are equally effective. In general, models have a greater influence on observers’ self-efficacy when they are perceived as competent, similar, credible, and enthusiastic (Bandura, 1986). With these characteristics in mind, teachers can better enhance learner efficacy by (a) having models display skills correctly (competence); (b) using models of equal or slightly greater competence than observers (perceived similarity); (c) ensuring that models act consistent with behaviors they model (credibility); and (d) choosing models that show interest and enthusiasm, which also holds true for teachers who, themselves, can be informative models.

Conclusion

The data collected and analyzed in this study were used to address four research questions. This study attempted to assess self-efficacy beliefs of Mohamed Kheider university English students, to determine the relationship of those beliefs to academic performance, to investigate the sources of self-efficacy beliefs, and to suggest instructional implications. Positive self-efficacy beliefs were found amongst the sample of students. Findings were mixed with regard to the level of congruence between self-efficacy beliefs and academic performance. The sources of self-efficacy

beliefs suggested by prior research were found to shape the self-efficacy beliefs of students in the sample although in a different manner than has been suggested by past research. Additional types of experiences were identified that shaped the self-efficacy beliefs of the students in the sample. The results of this study provide a basis for the discussion of the results and implications for practice.

General Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of self-efficacy on academic performance in EFL contexts for Mohamed Kheider university English students. Self-efficacy refers to a student's perceived level of confidence to complete tasks. The previous chapters included an introduction to the study, literature review, and description of the methodology. Findings were provided from the statistical and non-statistical analyses performed on data collected via a survey and student interviews. Self-efficacy beliefs were investigated in a sample of 34 English students from Mohamed Kheider university. Self-efficacy beliefs were measured using an inventory known as the SELF-A. The inventory, previously used with other student populations, measured a type of self-efficacy known as the "ability to self-regulate learning". A survey was given that contained the SELF-A inventory, additional item asked students to report Overall grade of first semester which were later used to determine academic performance. The sources of students' self-efficacy beliefs were assessed via qualitative methods. 5 of the 34 students who completed the survey self selected for interviews. Semi-structured interviews allowed for the identification of the types of experiences that shaped self-efficacy beliefs. Interviews were conducted to determine how the sources of self-efficacy identified in previous research applied to the sample of students and to identify other types of experiences that shaped self-

efficacy beliefs. The use of both quantitative and qualitative methods allowed for a comprehensive picture to be constructed of self-efficacy beliefs of Mexican-American community college students and the types of experiences that shape them.

Confidence levels to complete the academic tasks described on the inventory were strong among the sample of students as reflected by a mean score of 73.24 of the SELF-A inventory which reflects positive self-efficacy beliefs. With regard to the level of congruence between self-efficacy beliefs and academic performance, the study found a positive relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and academic performance. Finally, the sources of self-efficacy identified by past research were applicable to the self-efficacy beliefs of students in the study and additional sources were identified. All findings of this study can be used to propose effective programs and practices to improve the academic performance of students in Mohamed Kheider university.

Suggestions for Future Research

Continuous research on self-efficacy and other motivational constructs, with regard to their relations to language achievement, is recommended. The current research is limited to English students in Mohamed Kheider university. Replications of this study by including different groups of EFL learners are needed to validate the present findings. In addition, a mixed method study investigating how EFL instruction corresponding to the students' self-efficacy and achievement may be one direction for future study. As evidence showed in the present study, teachers are a powerful influence of the students' self-appraisal. The correspondence between the teachers' instructional strategies, personal efficacy in teaching EFL, interaction with the students, especially on providing implicit/explicit feedback to the students'

performance, and the students' language efficacy and achievement merit investigation.

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Appendix A
Student Survey
Self-efficacy Inventory (SELF-A)

Choose a percentage to indicate your answer to the following questions.

Definitely	Probably	Maybe	Probably	Definitely						
Cannot Do It	Cannot	Can	Can	Do It						
0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

_____1. When you miss a class, can you find another student who can explain the lecture notes as clearly as your teacher did? (N)

_____2. When your teacher's lecture is very complex, can you write an effective summary of your original notes before the next class? (N)

_____3. When a lecture is especially boring, can you motivate yourself to keep good notes? (N)

_____4. When you had trouble understanding your instructor's lecture, can you clarify the confusion before the next class meeting by comparing notes with a classmate? (N)

_____5. When you have trouble studying your class notes because they are incomplete or confusing, can you revise and rewrite them clearly after every lecture? (N)

- _____6. When you are taking a course covering a huge amount of material, can you condense your notes down to just the essential facts? (N)
- _____7. When you are trying to understand a new topic, can you associate new concepts with old ones sufficiently well to remember them? (S)
- _____8. When another student asks you to study together for a course in which you are experiencing difficulty, can you be an effective study partner? (S)
- _____9. When problems with friends and peers conflict with schoolwork, can you keep up with your assignments? (S)
- _____10. When you feel moody or restless during studying, can you focus your attention well enough to finish your assigned work? (S)
- _____11. When you find yourself getting increasingly behind in a new course, can you increase your study time sufficiently to catch up? (S)
- _____12. When you discover that your homework assignments for the semester are much longer than expected, can you change your other priorities to have enough time for studying? (S)
- _____13. When you have trouble recalling an abstract concept, can you think of a good example that will help you remember it on the test? (T)
- _____14. When you have to take a test in a school subject you dislike, can you find a way to motivate yourself to earn a good grade? (T)
- _____15. When you are feeling depressed about a forthcoming test, can you find a way to motivate yourself to do well? (T)
- _____16. When your last test results were poor, can you figure out potential questions before the next test that will improve your score greatly? (T)
- _____17. When you are struggling to remember technical details of a concept for a

test, can you find a way to associate them together that will ensure recall? (T)

_____18. When you think you did poorly on a test you just finished, can you go back to your notes and locate all the information you had forgotten? (T)

_____19. When you find that you had to “cram” at the last minute for a test, can you begin your test preparation much earlier so you won’t need to cram the next time? (T)

Please write down your overall grade for this semester: (anonyms)

If you would like to participate in a group interview with other students about the sources of your self-efficacy beliefs, please write your name and contact information in the space provided below. We will contact you soon to provide you with more information about the group interview.

Name:

Email address:

Phone number:

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. How confident are you with regards to your ability to succeed in university? Why?
2. What past experiences have shaped your ability to do well in university?
Probe: How do your past school experiences shaped your beliefs about your ability to succeed in university?
3. How does your family influence your beliefs about your ability to succeed in university?
4. Can you describe how your friends have influence your beliefs about your ability to achieve your academic goals? Teachers?
5. What role models do you have? How do your role models shape your beliefs about your ability to succeed in university?
6. Tell me about anything else you think has shaped your beliefs about your ability to succeed in university.