

# Saudi EFL Students' Perception of the Quality of Teacher-Student Relationships and the Factors that Impact Their Self-Efficacy Beliefs

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## Abstract

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of English as Foreign Language (EFL) students in the Preparatory Year Program (PYP) at a Saudi university about emotional quality of teacher-student relationships and the factors that impact their self-efficacy beliefs in EFL classrooms. To accomplish this, an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach was implemented. Starting with a quantitative approach a questionnaire was distributed to 340 EFL students followed by a qualitative approach in terms of 8 semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the students' perceptions. The quantitative data were analyzed statistically using SPSS and the transcribed interviews were coded manually after which a thematic analysis was used to extract the emerging themes. The results demonstrated that students have a positive relationship with their teachers in EFL classrooms and they view

their English language teachers as reassuring, reliable, and trustworthy. Students also believe that their relationship with their teachers influences both their academic and personal growth. Finally, the outcomes of this study also showed that students believe that relationship with their significant others, teachers- peers- family members, and outcome expectancy impact their self-efficacy greatly in EFL classrooms. This research provides insight into the emotional quality of teacher-student relationships and students' self-efficacy in EFL classes, and the findings provide insights that can inform teaching strategies, curriculum development, organizations, and learner support systems.

**Keywords:** EFL, PYP, Teacher-student relationship, Self-efficacy, Students' perceptions, Saudi Arabia

## 1. Introduction

Relationships between students and instructors are crucial to their intellectual, social, behavioral, and emotional growth (McGrath & Van Bergen, 2015). According to the cross-case research conducted by Stronge et al. (2011), the teacher is the most influential factor in student accomplishment. Students with positive relationships with their teachers are more likely to act properly in class (Goodman, 2009). Multiple researchers have hypothesized that the developmental benefits of emotionally close and conflict-free interactions between instructors and students may be more apparent in upper elementary grades (e.g., Roorda et al., 2011; Zee et al., 2013). Throughout these years, high-quality student-teacher relationships may assist students in coping with academic transition stress, changes in peer relationships, and increasing cognitive and emotional demands, resulting in a higher level of academic adjustment (Goldstein et al., 2015; Roorda et al., 2011). According to Gehlbach et al. (2012), teachers' relationships with their students influence their students' views, values, attitudes, motivation, commitment to their studies, and academic performance. Similarly, negative teacher-student relationships diminish student motivation and performance. Therefore, this behaviour contributes to teachers' work satisfaction and can enhance the school's atmosphere.

Furthermore, a student's behaviour is influenced by self-efficacy or confidence in their capacity to achieve an objective (Bandura, 1977). Social interactions within the learner's surroundings foster the growth of self-efficacy. Students with a higher sense of self-efficacy urge themselves to achieve objectives that are less likely to be attained. In addition, they are confident in their abilities to regulate their motivation, behaviour, and social setting. These inner, cognitive self-evaluations impact all of their learning experiences, including their accomplishment of certain levels of behavioural performance and the amount of effort they exert to achieve their objectives (Wang et al., 2012). Students with low levels of self-efficacy, on the other hand, are unable to manage challenges in unexpected situations and, as a result, abandon learning when they feel unable to excel (Triantoro, 2013). This research study aims to explore students' perception of the emotional quality of teacher-student relationships and explore the factors that impact student's Self-efficacy in English language classrooms in one large university in Saudi Arabia. Consequently, this study is guided by two main research questions:

RQ1: How is the emotional quality of teacher-student relationship in English language classrooms?

RQ2: What are the factors that impact students' self-efficacy beliefs in English language classrooms?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Teacher-Student Relationship

Embarking upon the journey of educational exploration, the teacher-student relationship emerges as an essential central point, complicatedly interlacing through the domain of academic and social development within the educational environment. This relationship, characterized by a multi-dimensional bond, include a blend of instructional, emotional, and

social interactions and connections formed between teachers and students. Defined concisely, the teacher-student relationship is a multifaceted association that combine the emotional, social, and instructional interplay between educators and students, becoming a crucible within which academic and social-emotional development are forged and refined (Cornelius-White, 2007). This interdependent relationship does not merely persist as a mean for instructional interaction but evolves as a critical determinant shaping students' academic journey, social competencies, and emotional well-being (Roorda et al., 2017).

In recent years, a growing body of research has underscored the essential role of healthy, positive teacher-student relationships in fostering conducive learning environments, enhancing academic achievement, and strengthening students' mental health and socio-emotional skills (Wang et al., 2019). The dynamics of teacher-student interactions and the quality of their relationships have been illuminated as significant predictors of various educational outcomes, including students' academic performance, classroom engagement, and social adaptation (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

The following literature review seeks to peel back the layers of the teacher-student relationship, exploring its various dimensions, impacts, and the multifarious factors that influence its formation and quality. By integrating theoretical frameworks with empirical findings from recent research, this chapter seeks to highlight the complex narrative of teacher-student relationships, elucidating their role, significance, and impact within the educational context, and thereby, providing a foundational framework upon which the current study is constructed.

## *2.2 The Quality of Teacher-Student Relationship*

Numerous scholars have conducted research on the implications associated with a positive teacher-student relationship. Cornelius-White conducted a meta-analysis in 2007 on the correlation between student-teacher relationships and learning. The study revealed that relationships characterised by empathy and warmth exhibited a moderate to strong correlation with academic achievement. Previous research as well has reported modest effects of positive relationship on cognitive learning (Witt et al., 2004). However, there exists supporting proof that the quality of these relationships has a bearing on student attendance and absences (Rocca, 2004), as well as classroom incivilities. (Boice, 1996). According to Roeser et al. (2000), the evaluation of the quality of teacher-student relationships from adolescents was found to be a significant predictor of their academic performance, as measured by their grade point average (GPA). Additionally, this evaluation was also found to be associated with their self-efficacy, motivation, and emotional well-being, even after accounting for prior measures of adjustment. (e.g., poor academic motivation, delinquency). Moreover, according to research conducted by Klem and Connell (2004), students who perceive their teachers as supportive, compassionate, and invested in their learning exhibit a higher likelihood of reporting ongoing engagement in school and displaying more positive reactions to school-related challenges. These factors, in turn, are linked to higher attendance and test scores.

Additionally, Chhuon and Wallace (2014) emphasized the advantages of teachers

transitioning from instances of “just teach” behavior, which are marked by low levels of enthusiasm for their profession and minimal concern for their students, to interactions that foster a sense of familiarity with students. This shift has been shown to enhance students’ feelings of connectedness to their school and personal sense of belonging. Vincent et al (2017) conducted a study utilizing qualitative methods to investigate adolescent perceptions of the teacher-student relationships, the authors identified two factors that characterize a positive teacher-student relationship according to the students’ perceptions: teacher noticing and teacher investment. The study conducted by the researchers revealed that positive teacher-student relationships played a significant role in fostering emotions of intimacy, admiration, and trust. Moreover, the respondents reported additional advantages, including a boost in their academic aptitude resulting from their relationships with their teachers, particularly through the different interactions, they were able to apply the knowledge and skills acquired from their teachers to aid them in the college application process, leading to an improved sense of well-being, higher self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Vincent et al., 2017).

The teacher-student relationship quality has the potential to impact multiple aspects within the classroom, including students’ pursuit and acceptance of mental health services, as well as the development of help-seeking tendencies (Eliot et al., 2010; Mariu et al., 2012). Halladay et al. (2020) conducted a study to investigate the correlations between the quality of teacher-student relationships inside and outside the classroom and the tendency and willingness of students to seek help. The findings indicated that there exists a positive correlation between the quality of the teacher-student relationship in a school and the degree of responsiveness exhibited by teachers towards students’ emotional concerns within a classroom. Furthermore, both of these factors were found to be independently associated with an increased likelihood of students deciding to seek for support at school for mental health issues. Additionally, it was observed that teachers’ responsiveness to students’ emotional concerns within a classroom was independently linked to an increased likelihood of utilizing mental health-related services (Halladyet et al., 2020).

Currently, a significant amount of scholarly research has been conducted on the topic of student-teacher relationships within the field of education. (Creasey et al., 2009; Cress, 2008; Dobransky & Frymier, 2004; Docan-Morgan, 2011; Docan-Morgan & Manusov, 2009; Ei & Bowen, 2002; Hagenauer et al., 2016; Schwartz & Holloway, 2012; Urso, 2012). In the past, these relationships were commonly absorbed based on apparent behaviors of communication, including measures of appropriate eye contact, vocal expressiveness, forward leaning, and straight posture. The focus on comprehending the impact of emotional quality on learning in relationships shifted after the emotional revolution (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003) in the fields of psychology, neuroscience, and sociology during the 1990s. However, the investigation of these relationships in higher education is still an area that has not been extensively researched. (Walker & Gleaves, 2016; Karpouza & Emvalotis, 2019).

### *2.3 Self-Efficacy*

This research additionally focuses on exploring the factors that impact students’ self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual’s subjective evaluation of their capability to successfully

execute tasks and achieve goals (Majer, 2009). According to Bandura's (1994), self-efficacy refers to an individual's personal beliefs regarding their capabilities, which in turn influence their performance levels and effectiveness in various aspects of their life. As per the researcher's findings, self-efficacy beliefs play a crucial role in shaping individuals' emotions, cognitions, motivations, and actions. The quality of an individual's functioning is impacted by their self-efficacy beliefs, which influence various cognitive, motivational, emotional, and decision-making mechanisms (Panc et al., 2012).

In academic contexts, students who exhibit low levels of academic self-efficacy encounter challenges in achieving academic success, leading to difficulties in maintaining persistence and achieving positive academic outcomes. Scholars have emphasized that an individual's perceived self-efficacy in conquering challenging tasks can significantly impact their motivation and perseverance when confronted with obstacles (Bandura et al., 1996). Students who feel a greater sense of achievement have the potential to achieve higher levels of success (Baker, 2013; Brown, 2001; Gnebola, 2015). Self-efficacy plays a crucial role in determining an individual's level of motivation and their ability to withstand challenges and setbacks. Self-efficacy, or the firm belief in one's ability to effectively manage setbacks and challenges, plays a crucial role in an individual's self-regulation. Individuals who possess low self-efficacy beliefs may be more vulnerable to perceiving their efforts as pointless when faced with challenges and barriers, ultimately leading to a higher likelihood of abandoning their pursuits. Conversely, individuals possessing a strong sense of self-efficacy are resistant to obstacles and instead attempt to overcome them (Bandura, 2011).

The study conducted by Ferguson (2021) employed a mixed-method approach to investigate the potential impact of student-teacher and student-staff relationships on student self-efficacy within a college campus setting. The findings suggest that insufficient support from teachers and administrators may hinder students' sense of accomplishment, thereby diminishing their self-efficacy. This is particularly relevant given that students are in a vulnerable state when seeking help, which may cause the students to fall victim to imposter syndrome. Imposter syndrome is an issue that can affect students, in which they may perceive themselves as lacking competence or self-worth, leading to feelings of fear of failure, self-doubt, and a lower sense of self-efficacy (Craddock et al., 2011). When a student possesses a sense of confidence in their ability to communicate effectively with individuals within their academic environment, including faculty, staff, and peers, it is likely that their level of inquiry and monitoring will be increased. As a result, the student's level of self-efficacy and achievement is expected to reach an optimal level (Brown et al., 2001). In the case that academic teachers and staff promote positive educational settings for students, wherein they are at ease with asking questions and seeking help, it is plausible that not only would academic stress be reduced, but students may also develop a more optimistic perception of their self-efficacy and exhibit greater levels of motivation (Zimmerman, 2000).

Another study by Reilly et al. (2021) investigated the possibility of an association between students' success throughout the year and their level of self-efficacy at the beginning of the year. The results indicate that students who possess a strong sense of self-efficacy exhibit an increased tendency to acknowledge and embrace feedback provided by their instructors, as

well as demonstrate a willingness to seek assistance when necessary. This, in turn, is associated with higher academic achievement, as evidenced by superior grade point averages and enhanced performance during the initial year of study. Students who possess low self-efficacy have a tendency to avoid teacher feedback, which can have a negative effect on their academic performance. In addition, Seifert (2004) observes that students exhibiting higher levels of self-efficacy demonstrate a greater capacity to regulate any anxiety associated with their studies, thereby resulting in an enhancement of their academic achievements.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

#### 3.1 Tormey's TSR Multidimensional Framework

The emotional response of individuals can vary depending on their cognitive appraisal of a given situation or event (Moors et al., 2013; Scherer et al., 2001). Thus, in order to comprehensively conceptualize student-teacher relationships within the context of higher education, it is necessary to adopt a multidimensional approach that encompasses key pedagogical aspects of the relationship while also acknowledging the social dynamics of power and identity that shape these interactions. Tormey (2021) has proposed a multidimensional framework to conceptualize the emotional quality of student-teacher relationships. This framework draws on the findings of emotion psychologists Jenkins and Oatley (Oatley, 2004; Oatley et al., 2006). Tormey (2021) presented a theoretical framework based on cognitive appraisal for examining the emotional quality of teacher-student relationships in the educational setting. This framework focuses on the antecedents of discrete emotions that students report experiencing, with different appraisals serving a key role in this process.

The present model posits that emotions and feelings serve as a source of information regarding the quality of our interpersonal relationships. The proposed model sets that it is advantageous to conceptualize our relationships with others through three distinct dimensions, namely affiliation (or warmth), attachment (or security), and assertion. (or status).

The **affiliation dimension** is distinguished by emotions such as fondness, cordiality, affinity, belonging, or adoration. The dimension in question serves as a fundamental basis for social experiences, as individuals naturally seek out social interaction when there is a shared feeling of affection or warmth. In the setting of higher education, there's a growing body of evidence that highlights the significance of collaboration in facilitating active and interactive learning (Johnson et al., 2014; Menekse et al., 2013; Freeman et al., 2014; Prince, 2004). As collaboration fosters a sense of community and belonging among students, which has been linked to positive academic and psychological outcomes, including enhanced motivation, persistence, and academic resilience (Prince, 2004). Since in its essence collaborative learning is not only beneficial for the cognitive and academic development of students but also plays a crucial role in honing interpersonal skills and fostering a supportive, interactive learning community within the higher education setting (Johnson et al., 2014; Menekse et al., 2013; Freeman et al., 2014).



In this regard, it can be argued that experiencing feelings of warmth or attachment towards a class or group is a crucial factor in fostering engagement and promoting effective learning. The emotional states of safety and security are often associated with **attachment**. There exists a substantial corpus of evidence indicating that emotions such as fear, and anxiety have a detrimental impact on the learning process of students. This phenomenon has been extensively studied in the field of education. According to Pekrun et al. (2002), a comprehensive review of 1,200 studies conducted on academic anxiety from the 1950s to the 1990s revealed that test anxiety has the potential to diminish working memory resources, thereby hindering performance on complex or challenging tasks that rely on these resources. As a result, there is a negative correlation between test anxiety and academic achievement in both school and university settings. The phenomenon of teacher-student interaction is comparable to that observed in learning research. Although it is conceivable that teachers who express fondness for their students can engender a sense of security, it is also plausible that teachers who exhibit warmth (i.e., high affiliation) may still be viewed as untrustworthy by their students. (low attachment) (Tormey, 2021).

The dimension of **assertion** differs from the two preceding dimensions in that it originates not from a psychological discourse on caring relationships, but from a sociological discourse on power dynamics within relationships (e.g., Kemper & Collins, 1990). The concept of power in social relationships is often perceived as most apparent during instances of conflict in popular beliefs, whereas sociologists have demonstrated a sustained interest in scenarios where power imbalances are tacitly accepted or deemed inherent in the ability to establish goals or influence the perspectives of others (e.g., Lukes, 2005). Anger is commonly regarded as the archetypal emotion associated with status, as it is typically experienced in response to a perceived slight or insult directed toward one's social status. There exist instances in the context of education, both in the context of teaching and learning, where teachers and students feel anger and contempt. Nevertheless, the non-conflictual emotions of statues are still significant. The experience of feeling a profound sense of admiration or awe can be related to the statue of an individual capable of leaving a lasting impression. This can be viewed as a manifestation of the desirable cultural capital possessed by teachers (Tormey et al., 2023). Although it is important to focus simply on teacher-student relationship however understanding the social and organizational context is essential especially for the assertion dimension as it arises from the sociological literature. It is not only the behavior of the teacher is being appraised but also the social and organizational constructed beliefs about gender, age, social groups and such (Fiske et al., 2007).

Tormey (2021) states that the three-dimensional conceptualization of student-teacher relationships represents a valuable advancement in comprehending the dynamics of higher education classrooms (see figure 1). Compared to previous research on immediacy that focused primarily on teacher behavior, this model has the potential to be more cross-culturally applicable. This is both practically and conceptually significant, particularly given the current trend of increased international student mobility. Additionally, these studies shift the focus towards the emotional aspect of students' experiences, which is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in comprehending higher education teaching (Quinlan, 2016).



The potential of the three-dimensional model lies in its ability to focus the attention of teachers and researchers on significant aspects of relationships, such as status and security that have been either downplayed or incorporated into prior research that prioritized valence and immediacy/distance (Tormey, 2021).

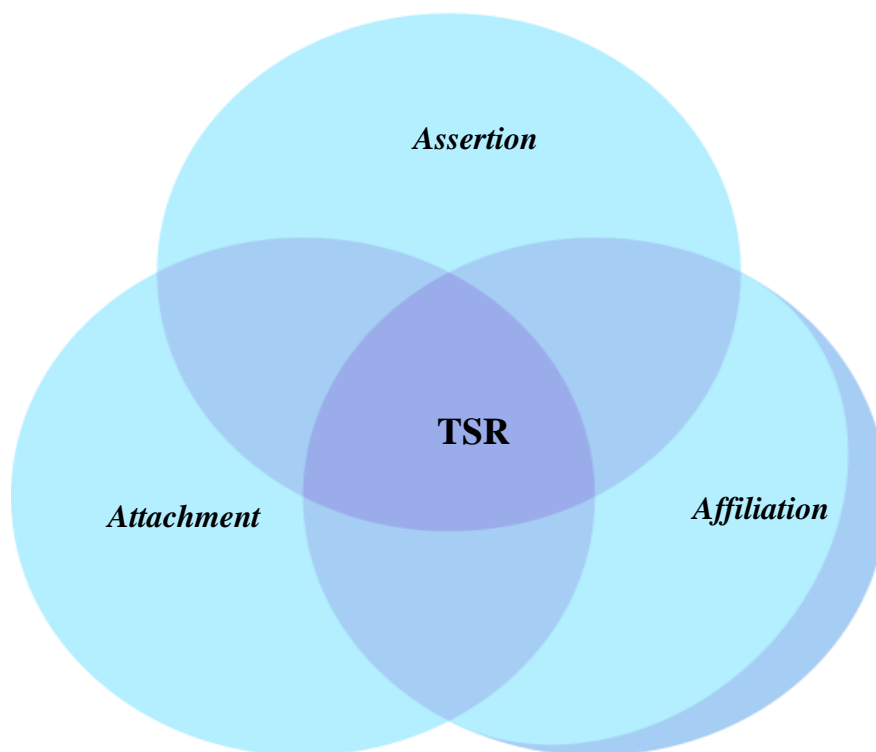


Figure 1. Multidimensional Framework for Emotional Quality in Student-Teacher Relationships

#### **4. Research Methodology**

The pursuit of understanding the complex dynamics of educational settings, particularly those involving teacher-student relationships and student self-efficacy, necessitates a thorough and systematic methodological approach. The methodology section explicates the research design, data collection methods, and analytical strategies employed to explore and interpret the phenomena under study. The essence of this section is to provide a roadmap of the research journey, offering clarity on the pathways chosen to navigate through the complexities of the research questions posed. This section thereby ensures the transparency, replicability, and credibility of the study, safeguarding the integrity of the findings that emerge.

##### *4.1 Research Design*

To answer the research question, the researcher employed a mixed methods approach, which is defined by Johnson et al. (2007) as:

“Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, and inference

techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. (p. 123)”

In the intricate landscape of exploring the emotional quality of teacher-student relationships and unravelling the factors that influence students’ self-efficacy, especially within the foundational year, a mixed-methods approach, which seamlessly intertwines qualitative and quantitative research modalities, emerges as particularly pertinent (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The decision to employ this methodology is substantively grounded in the desire to navigate through the complex, multifaceted, and layered nuances of the educational phenomena being explored, providing a pathway to a comprehensive and deeply contextualized understanding. The necessity to balance the empirical rigor provided by quantitative data with the depth and context afforded by qualitative data becomes paramount, especially considering the multifaceted variables and diverse experiences inherent in educational settings (Johnson et al., 2007).

The mixed-methods approach, in its pragmatic essence, permits the research to transcend beyond mere statistical analyses and delve into the rich, experiential, and contextual narratives that underpin the numbers, offering a holistic lens through which to view and understand the phenomena under investigation (Bazeley, 2018). Particularly, it facilitates a balanced insight into the dynamics at play within teacher-student relationships and the varied factors that potentially impact students’ self-efficacy, allowing for an exploration that is both broad and deep, ensuring that findings are not only statistically valid but also contextually relevant and authentic. This approach allows for data triangulation, wherein the quantitative and qualitative data sets serve to validate and enrich each other, enhancing both the reliability and validity of the research findings and providing a robust framework through which nuanced insights can be gleaned (Carter et al., 2014).

#### *4.2 Participants and Sampling Strategy*

This study was conducted at a prominent higher-education institution in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Following the acquisition of ethical approval from the university, data for this study were collected over a span of four months. The data consisted of students’ responses to the questionnaire, while the sample for the semi-structured interview comprised eight students who willingly volunteered to partake in the study from the same group of participants. The questionnaire was circulated via the snowball sampling technique, whereby respondents were requested to provide referrals for further potential participants. The utilization of this approach facilitated the inclusion of a diverse population into the research, as respondents had the opportunity to nominate persons from their social circle, such as friends, family members, or acquaintances, whom they deemed suitable and willing to partake in the study. Snowball sampling was employed to augment the sample size by utilizing the community of participants. Each initially recruited participant was subsequently requested to suggest more persons, therefore establishing a cascading chain of referrals. The utilization of this technique permitted the broad distribution of the questionnaire to a diverse range of individuals, hence augmenting the inclusion of multiple viewpoints within the study (Etikan et al., 2016). The participants of the study were 340 male and female Saudi students in their third academic semester of foundation year. All students are enrolled in English

language classes.

### *4.3 Instruments*

#### 4.3.1 Questionnaire

To collect the qualitative data, the researcher designed a questionnaire based on Tormey's (2021) theoretical framework to investigate the emotional quality of the teacher-student relationship and assess the factors that affect the students' self-efficacy at a large university in Saudi Arabia. The questionnaire included open-ended and closed-ended questions to capture a wide range of responses from the participants. Additionally, the questionnaire was distributed to a diverse sample of students, including both males and females, from the first year of different departments to ensure a representative and comprehensive understanding of the emotional quality of the teacher-student relationship in Saudi Arabia. Overall, the design of the questionnaire was intended to provide valuable insights into the emotional quality of the teacher-student relationship in English language classrooms within the university setting and the factors that impact students' self-efficacy.

The questionnaire comprised three separate sections. The initial section focused on gathering demographic information from the participants. The second section was divided into three parts, each corresponding to one of the themes Tormey (2021) outlined in the theoretical framework. The first part explored the concepts of assertion and status, the second part inspected affiliation and warmth, and the third part delved into attachment and safety. Each part consisted of five Likert-scale items that assessed the emotional quality associated with the respective theme. The final section of the questionnaire featured an open-ended question that aimed to explore the factors that impact students' self-efficacy supported by the literature. Participants were encouraged to explain detailed factors that could influence their self-efficacy in English-language classrooms.

Following the completion of the questionnaire design process, it was subsequently subjected to translation into the Arabic language with the valuable input and guidance of two proficient translation specialists. Upon completion of the translation process, the author altered the questionnaire and piloted the questionnaire to 20 students. After receiving their responses and comments, the researcher proceeded to administer the questionnaire to other students.

#### 4.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

The researcher analysed the quantitative data, and drafted the interview guide, later contacted the students who volunteered to participate in the interview. A pilot interview was held with an acquaintance who closely resembles the target audience. This helped identify the issues with the interview guide, such as a confusing question that needed further exploration. After that, the researcher contacted participants who volunteered to participate in the questionnaire and scheduled the interviews. The participants recommended conducting the interviews through Zoom, which was a mutually convenient platform. The participants were informed about the interview's purpose approximate duration, and that the interview was being recorded by the researcher. The participants signed the consent forms, which were in Arabic. The researcher started the interview by building a rapport with the participant. Explained the

purpose of the interview and ensured they understood their rights, including the option to withdraw at any time, and emphasized confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. At the end of the interviews, the researcher summarized the key points discussed during the interview and asked if there were anything else the participants would like to add. Finally, the researcher thanked the participants. Immediately transcribed the interview recordings, and organized the notes after the interview while the information was still fresh. Later, the interviews were analysed to identify patterns, themes, and insights relevant to the teacher-student relationship and students' self-efficacy. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to expound upon their perspectives and emotions, offering researchers significant and detailed insights. The utilization of this subsequent methodology further fostered a perception of engagement and affiliation amongst the researcher and participants, resulting in a more cooperative and intellectually stimulating research.

#### 4.3.3 Ethical Considerations

In conducting research on the emotional quality of teacher-student relationships, particularly when utilizing questionnaires and semi-structured interviews from the student perspective, ethical considerations play a pivotal role in safeguarding students' well-being while upholding the research process's integrity to ensure that the researcher provides the students with comprehensive information about the research's purpose, potential risks and benefits, rights, and the confidentiality of their responses. The consent form was clearly outlined in the questionnaire introduction in Google Forms, and the consent form the students signed before conducting the interview. Additionally, the consent form emphasized that participation was voluntary and that students had the right to withdraw at any time without facing any consequences. It was important to ensure that students understood the importance of their informed consent and the significance of their contribution to the research. By providing transparent information and obtaining their agreement, the researcher moved confidently forward with the research, knowing that the student's well-being and confidentiality were prioritized. Also, the researcher kept the students' responses in a file protected with a password to ensure the utmost security and privacy. This measure was taken to prevent unauthorized access to the data and maintain trust between the researcher and the participants. Additionally, the researcher assured the students that their personal information would be kept strictly confidential and not disclosed to third parties. The password-protected file not only safeguarded the students' responses but also ensured the integrity of the study.

#### 4.3.4 Reliability Statistics

The reliability analysis for Dimension 1, Attachment, yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .879, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the items. The Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items remains consistent at .879. This dimension comprises a total of 5 items, contributing to the overall reliability assessment. The robust alpha coefficient suggests a reliable measure of attachment within the assessed items. The reliability analysis conducted for Dimension 2, Affiliation, demonstrated a high level of internal consistency among the items, as evidenced by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .897. This result is further substantiated by Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items, which remains

consistent at .898. Dimension 2 comprises also a total of 5 items, contributing to the overall reliability assessment. The reliability analysis for Dimension 3, Assertion, revealed a strong internal consistency among the items, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .892. This reliability is further supported by Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items, which remains consistent at .892. Dimension 3 consists of a total of 5 items, contributing to the overall reliability assessment.

Table 1. Reliability statistics

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
<b>Attachment</b>	.879	.879	5
<b>Affiliation</b>	.897	.898	5
<b>Assertion</b>	.892	.892	5

In concluding the methodology chapter, we have outlined the detailed approach of our study, including the design, data collection techniques, and analysis plan. This thorough methodology underpins the integrity of our research, ensuring that the findings are both valid and reliable. As we move to the analysis chapter, we will delve into the data, applying the established methods to extract meaningful insights. This critical phase will allow us to interpret our findings in the context of our research objectives, effectively linking theoretical concepts with empirical evidence.

## 5. Data Analysis & Results

### 5.1 Descriptive Statistics on Emotional Quality

The descriptive statistics provide insights into the emotional quality of teacher-student relationships in the English language classroom based on Tormey's (2021) research that assess the emotional quality in the classroom between the teacher and the students using a multidimensional framework that explore the relationship from assertion dimension, affiliation dimension, and attachment dimension. **Assertion** a dimension which arise from the sociological literature on power in relationships often characterized by emotions such as awe and impressiveness. **Affiliation** is a dimension often characterized by emotions such as affection, warmth, liking, or belonging. The third dimension which is **attachment** reflects feelings of security and safety (refer to Table 2). The data is based on responses from 340 participants, and each item is rated on a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The first dimension that the emotional quality of it was assessed from the students' perception was the **Attachment** dimension. Trustworthiness: The mean score is 1.98, indicating a moderate level of perceived trustworthiness in teachers. Well-Intended: Teachers are perceived as well-intended with a mean score of 1.91. Reliability: The mean score is 2.02, suggesting that teachers are generally perceived as reliable. Reassuring: Teachers are seen as reassuring, with a mean score of 2.08. Inspire Confidence: The mean score is 1.93, indicating a moderate level of confidence-inspiring qualities in teachers. The second dimension that was

assessed was the **Affiliation** dimension. Friendliness: Teachers are perceived as friendly, with a mean score of 1.97. Welcoming: The mean score is 2.10, suggesting that teachers are generally seen as welcoming. Compassion: Teachers are perceived as compassionate, with a mean score of 2.07. Positivity: The mean score is 2.04, indicating a moderate level of perceived positivity in teachers. Caring: Teachers are seen as caring, with a mean score of 2.04. The third dimension that was assessed was the **Assertion** dimension. Admirable: The mean score is 2.06, suggesting that teachers are generally perceived as admirable. Influence: Teachers are perceived as influential, with a mean score of 2.04. Security: The mean score is 2.13, indicating a moderate level of perceived security provided by teachers. Excitement: Teachers are seen as exciting, with a mean score of 2.07. Inspiration: The mean score is 2.01, suggesting that teachers are perceived as moderately inspiring.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of emotional quality of teacher-student relationships

Item	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
I think my teacher is Trustworthy	340	4	1	5	1.98	1.217	1.481
I think my teacher is Well-Intended	340	4	1	5	1.91	1.141	1.302
I think my teacher is Reliable	340	4	1	5	2.02	1.197	1.432
I think my teacher is Reassuring	340	4	1	5	2.08	1.301	1.693
I think my teacher Inspire-confidence	340	4	1	5	1.93	1.206	1.455
I think my teacher is Friendly	340	4	1	5	1.97	1.196	1.431
I think my teacher is welcoming	340	4	1	5	2.10	1.298	1.686
I think my teacher is Compassionate	340	4	1	5	2.07	1.213	1.472
I think my teacher is Positive	340	4	1	5	2.04	1.254	1.574
I think my teacher is Caring	340	4	1	5	2.04	1.249	1.559
I think my teacher is Admirable	340	4	1	5	2.06	1.272	1.618
I think my teacher is Influential	340	4	1	5	2.04	1.246	1.553
My teacher makes me feel Secure	340	4	1	5	2.13	1.259	1.586
I think my teacher is Exciting	340	4	1	5	2.07	1.328	1.762
I think my teacher is Inspiring	340	4	1	5	2.01	1.231	1.516
Valid N (listwise)	340						



Overall, the descriptive statistics paint a picture of generally positive teacher-student relationships in English language classrooms, with moderate to high scores across various emotional qualities. The perceived emotional quality is characterized by an equal significance of assertion, affiliation, and attachment dimensions. The most prominent qualities are reassurance, reliability, compassion, welcoming, admiration and a sense of security provided by teachers.

*5.2 Demographic Data: Gender*

In this study, the gender distribution among 340 participants reveals 137 males (40.3%) and 203 females (59.7%), as detailed in Table 3. This demographic detail is crucial for understanding the sample’s composition, potentially influencing the research findings. Figure 2 visually represents this distribution, with blue and red segments denoting male and female participants, respectively, highlighting the female majority within the sample. Such a gender composition provides a diverse perspective, particularly relevant to exploring gender-related nuances in teacher-student relationships within English language classrooms.

Table 3. What is Your Gender?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	137	40.3	40.3	40.3
	Female	203	59.7	59.7	100.0
	Total	340	100.0	100.0	

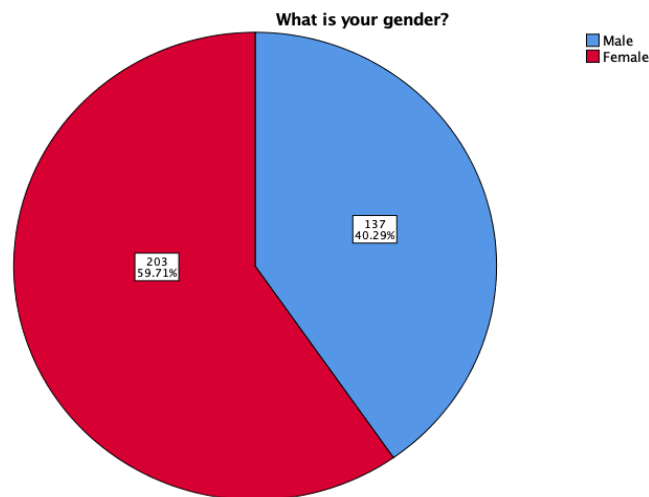


Figure 2. Distribution of Sample based on Gender

*5.2.1 Independent Sample T-Test Based on Gender*

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine potential gender differences in the attachment dimension scores. Descriptive statistics presented in table 4.3 indicate that males

( $M = 2.039$ ,  $SD = 0.9415$ ,  $SEM = 0.0804$ ) and females ( $M = 1.944$ ,  $SD = 1.0315$ ,  $SEM = 0.0724$ ) have slightly different mean scores. Females had a slightly lower mean; this indicates a small distinction in how each gender experiences the different emotional qualities in the attachment dimension such as finding the teacher trustworthy or reliable in English language classrooms.

Table 4. Group statistics

	What is your gender?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attachment	Male	137	2.039	.9415	.0804
	Female	203	1.944	1.0315	.0724

Levene's test for equality of variances showed no significant difference in variances between male and female groups ( $F(1,338) = 2.848$ ,  $p = .092$ ). The assumption of equal variances was not violated. The t-test for equality of means revealed no significant difference in the attachment dimension scores between males and females, assuming equal variances ( $t(338) = .868$ ,  $p = .386$ , 95% CI [-0.1211, 0.3122]). The lack of significant difference in the attachment dimension scores with emotional qualities such as trustworthiness and reliability between genders suggests that gender may not play a substantial role in shaping the attachment dimension within this educational context.

Table 5. Independent samples test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Attachment	Equal variances assumed	2.848	.092	.868	338	.386	.0956	.1102	-.1211	.3122
	Equal variances not assumed			.883	309.047	.378	.0956	.1082	-.1174	.3085

An independent samples t-test was conducted to explore potential gender differences in affiliation scores. Descriptive statistics in table 4.5 revealed that males ( $M = 2.1372$ ,  $SD = 0.98988$ ,  $SEM = 0.08457$ ) and females ( $M = 1.9835$ ,  $SD = 1.07907$ ,  $SEM = 0.07574$ ) exhibit slightly different mean scores. This suggests a subtle differences in the affiliation dimension scores between genders. With females presenting a slightly lower mean than male

participants, this slight divergence hints at subtle gender-specific emotional qualities regarding the affiliation dimension such as friendliness and caring.

Table 6. Group statistics

	What is your gender?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Affiliation	Male	137	2.1372	.98988	.08457
	Female	203	1.9835	1.07907	.07574

Levene's test for equality of variances indicated no significant difference in variances between male and female groups in the affiliation dimension ( $F(1,338) = 2.283, p = .132$ ), suggesting the assumption of equal variances is met, reinforcing the reliability of the t-test results. In addition, the t-test for equality of means showed no significant difference in the affiliation dimension scores between males and female participants, assuming equal variances ( $t(338) = 1.332, p = .184, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.07335, 0.38081]$ ) as detailed in table 4.6. This outcome suggests that, while there are minor variations, gender does not significantly impact the emotional quality such as kindness and care in the affiliation dimension perceptions within this sample in English language classrooms.

Table 7. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Affiliation	Equal variances assumed	2.283	.132	1.33	338	.184	.153	.115	-.073	.381
	Equal variances not assumed			1.35	308.16	.177	.153	.113	-.069	.377

Further exploration into gender differences concerning the assertion dimension was conducted through an independent samples t-test. Descriptive statistics revealed that males ( $M = 2.120, SD = 0.9682, SEM = 0.0827$ ) and females ( $M = 2.020, SD = 1.1180, SEM = 0.0785$ ) exhibit slightly different mean scores. This suggests that while there are gender differences in assertion scores, these differences are relatively modest, suggesting that these students' perceptions in the assertion dimension such as admiration towards their English language teacher are relatively similar across genders.

Table 8. Group statistics

	What is your gender?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Assertion	Male	137	2.120	.9682	.0827
	Female	203	2.020	1.1180	.0785

Levene's test for equality of variances indicated no significant difference in variances between male and female groups ( $F(1,338) = 2.283, p = .077$ ), suggesting the assumption of equal variances is met. The t-test for equality of means showed no significant difference in the assertion dimension scores between males and females, assuming equal variances ( $t(338) = 0.853, p = .394, 95\% \text{ CI} [-0.130, 0.33]$ ). Despite the minor variations in how the assertion dimension is perceived by different genders, these differences do not significantly impact the overall perception of awe and admiration in the assertion dimension among the study participants.

Table 9. Independent samples test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Assertion	Equal variances assumed	3.148	.077	.853	338	.394	.100	.117	-.130	.33
	Equal variances not assumed			.877	317.69	.381	.100	.114	-.124	.324

### 5.3 English Proficiency Level

Table 9 illustrates the distribution of English proficiency levels among a total of 340 respondents. As delineated in the above table, the participants are stratified into three distinct English course levels: 101, 102, and 103. Specifically, 32.6% of participants are enrolled in level 101, indicating foundational proficiency. Level 102 comprises 32.1% of the sample, denoting intermediate language skills, while level 103, representing advanced proficiency, accounts for 35.3% of participants.

Table 10. What level of English Language courses are you currently on?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	101	111	32.6	32.6	32.6
	102	109	32.1	32.1	64.7
	103	120	35.3	35.3	100.0
	Total	340	100.0	100.0	

### 5.3.1 ANOVA Test Based on Level of English

In examining the influence of English language proficiency levels on the dimensions of attachment, affiliation, and assertion within the English language classrooms of preparatory year students, a series of one-way ANOVAs were conducted. The analyses aimed to discern any statistically significant variations across different proficiency levels in these key dimensions of the teacher-student dynamic.

For the attachment dimension the analysis revealed that the between-groups effect was not statistically significant ( $F(2, 337) = 0.973, p = .379$ ). The sum of squares between groups was 1.931, with 2 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 0.965. The within-groups sum of squares was 334.284, with 337 degrees of freedom, yielding a mean square of 0.992. There is no statistically significant difference in the attachment dimension scores across different English language levels ( $F(2, 337) = 0.973, p = .379$ ). This outcome suggests that the motivational qualities of the attachment dimension do not significantly differ by the students' English language proficiency level.

Similarly, the investigation into the affiliation dimension revealed a lack of statistically significant differences across proficiency levels ( $F(2, 337) = 0.778, p = .460$ ). The sum of squares between groups was 1.703, with 2 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 0.851. The within-groups sum of squares was 368.698, with 337 degrees of freedom, yielding a mean square of 1.094. Overall, there is no statistically significant difference in the affiliation dimension scores across different English language proficiency levels ( $F(2, 337) = 0.778, p = .460$ ). This indicates that the sense of belonging, and connectedness students feel in the classroom is consistent across varying levels of English proficiency.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore potential differences in the assertion dimension scores across different English language proficiency levels. The analysis revealed that the between-groups effect was not statistically significant ( $F(2, 337) = 2.156, p = .117$ ). The sum of squares between groups was 4.811, with 2 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 2.405. The within-groups sum of squares was 375.965, with 337 degrees of freedom, yielding a mean square of 1.116. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the assertion scores across different English language levels ( $F(2, 337) = 2.156, p = .117$ ). This result underscores that students' perceived assertiveness and confidence in the classroom remain unaffected by their English language proficiency.

Table 11. ANOVA test based on English Language Proficiency level: Assertion, Attachment, and Affiliation

ANOVA					
Assertion					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.811	2	2.405	2.156	.117
Within Groups	375.965	337	1.116		
Total	380.776	339			
Attachment					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.931	2	.965	.973	.379
Within Groups	334.284	337	.992		
Total	336.214	339			
Affiliation					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.703	2	.851	.778	.460
Within Groups	368.698	337	1.094		
Total	370.400	339			

Overall, these findings highlight that in English language classrooms, the dimensions of attachment, affiliation, and assertion in teacher-student relationships are not significantly influenced by students' English language proficiency levels. This consistency across proficiency levels provides valuable insights into the universal aspects of teacher-student relationship, underscoring the importance of fostering positive relationships regardless of students' proficiency level.

#### 5.4 Self-Efficacy

The statistical portrayal in the illustrated table below (Table 11) and the corresponding bar chart 4.2 showed the spectrum of factors influencing self-efficacy, as perceived by the study's participants. **Motivation**, notably the most prominent factor, was acknowledged by 64.71% of respondents, underscoring its pivotal role in shaping self-efficacy. **Performance expectancy**, conversely, was identified by a mere 27.65% of participants, marking it as the least influential factor in this context. **Social influence** and **students' connectedness** also emerged as significant, with 44.41% and 50.88% of respondents, respectively, recognizing their impact on self-efficacy. The **teacher-student relationship**, cited by 62.65% of participants, further highlights the critical nature of interpersonal dynamics in educational settings. The minimal reference to "The importance of school to the students" (0.29%) illustrates its perceived marginal effect on self-efficacy. This detailed analysis offers a nuanced understanding of the diverse factors that participants believe contribute to self-efficacy, providing valuable insights into the complexities of educational psychology.

Table 12. Factors Impacting Students' Self-efficacy



Factors that impact self-efficacy	Frequency	Percentage
(Motivation)	220	64.71%
(Performance Expectancy)	94	27.65%
(Social Influence)	151	44.41%
(Students' Connectedness)	173	50.88%
(Teacher-student Relationship)	213	62.65%
The importance of school to the students	1	0.29%

This visual representation provides a quick overview of the perceived importance of different factors in impacting self-efficacy among the participants.

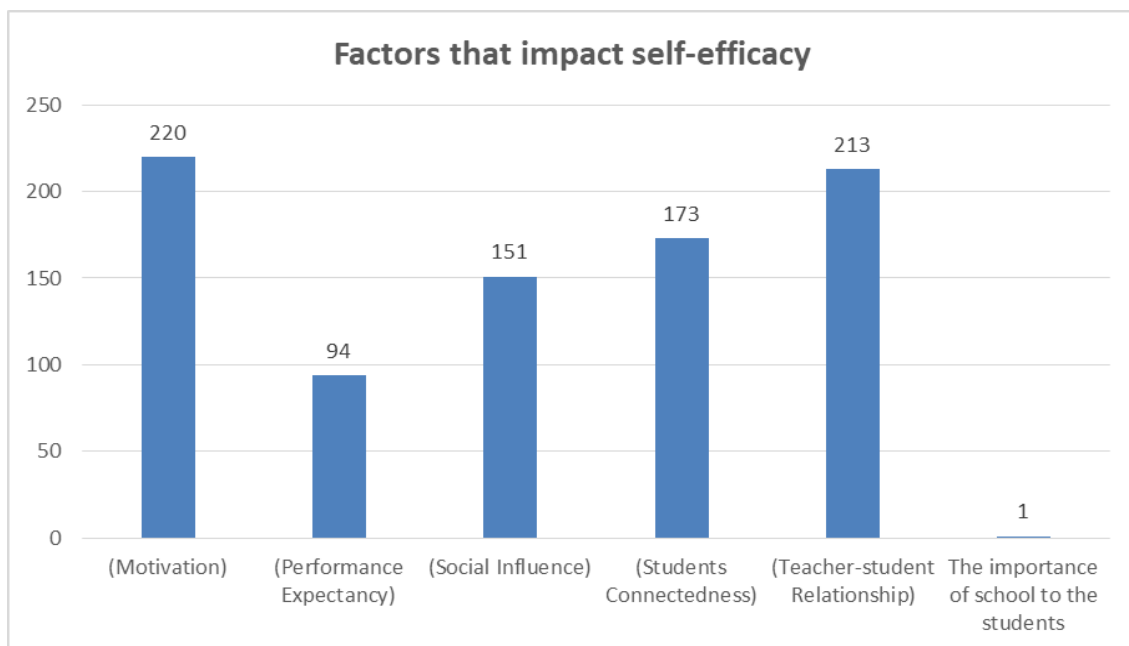


Figure 3. Factors Impacting Students' Self-efficacy

## 5.5 Qualitative Data

### 5.5.1 The Findings

Based on the quantitative analysis the semi-structured interview guide was constructed following Tormey's (2021) model. The interviews were conducted virtually as per the students' preference, to gain a deeper insight into the students' perception and experience. The interviews were conducted with eight students who were assigned pseudonyms in reporting the data, female students were numbered from 1-4 and male students were numbered from 5-8. The analysis of the interviews revealed five major themes:

#### 1) The Importance of Having a Positive Teacher-student Relationship

One of the major themes that emerged from the data is the significance of having a positive relationship with the teacher. This is a point the students widely discussed in the interview.

The majority of students stated that the relationship between teachers and students in English language classrooms is a cornerstone of the educational process “[...] especially the teacher-student relationship if the relationship is positive there is nothing the student can’t achieve” (Student1). This statement reflects a widespread belief among students interviewed that the teacher-student relationship is not merely a peripheral aspect of their education but the very bedrock upon which their academic journey is built. Student stated that the essence of this positive relationship lies not only in the pedagogical strategies employed but also in the deeper, interpersonal connections that foster an environment conducive to learning and personal growth “When I have a positive relationship with the teacher, I feel like I own the whole world that might sound a bit exaggerated, but it is really true” (student2). This hyperbolic expression underscores the profound impact that positive teacher-student interactions can have on students’ self-efficacy and confidence. The majority of students stated that their relationship with their teachers affects many aspects of the educational environment such as students’ academic achievements, absence, self-efficacy, and motivation, as one student stated when asked about the aspect that might affect the student’s educational journey:

*“The relationship with the teacher will affect students’ grades, his absence, his confidence in the class and his motivation and self-efficacy, if that relationship is negative, it will flip the student’s academic life entirely”* (Student 8).

Another student emphasized the psychological state of preparatory year students and how delicate this phase is for students, as one student put it:

*“[...] because preparatory years student spend more than 4 hours a day with EFL teacher, not to mention it is as well a very delicate period for a university student because they are facing a new environment and a huge amount of pressure so the positive teacher-student relationship is a must”* (Student8)

The transition into the preparatory year represents a significant adjustment period for students as mentioned, marked by a shift in academic expectations, social dynamics, and learning environments. This statement underscores the heightened state of stress that students encounter during this critical juncture. And emphasize that in light of these challenges, the importance of a supportive and positive teacher-student relationship to the students cannot be overstated.

## **2) The Multi-dimensional Emotional Quality**

The qualitative phase was guided by Tormey’s (2021) framework that implements three dimensions to assess the emotional quality between the teacher and the students which is based on the work of psychologists of emotion Jennifer Jenkins Keith Qately. The model assessed the social relationship and teacher-student relationship in English language classrooms in the context of this research, in terms of three dimensions: Assertion, affiliation, and attachment. The analysis indicates no difference in those three dimensions among male and female students nor students with different English language proficiency level as the interviews were conducted with four female students and four male students, four of them

were taking 102, three were taking 101 and one was taking 103.

### **(1) Assertion**

The majority of students described their teacher as exciting, someone who always makes sure the class is interesting and engaging as one student put it “[...] *the classes are extremely exciting and interesting thanks to the teacher which is very engaging I do not feel bored at all*” (Student1). Some students stated that they view their English language teacher as a role model “*I consider her as my role model*” (Student4). Students admire their English language teacher, and they view them as impressive and influential “*The way he leads us and communicates with us is very admirable*” (Student6) When asked about the most apparent characteristics in their teachers’ students often cited how knowledgeable and educated their teachers are as one student stated:

*“I like the teaching style of my teacher where he shares Tips, his experiences, his point of view and stories that most of the time relate to the topic I greatly enjoy them, and it benefits me a lot”* (Student5)

When talking about the environment in an English language classroom majority of the students mentioned how hardworking their English language teachers are in making sure the classroom is beneficial for the students “[...] *especially that our teacher is putting a huge amount of effort into the classes*” (Student6). One student, however, when asked about it stated that she often finds her English language teacher to be occasionally distracted in the classroom when asked if her distraction affected the teacher-student relationship the student answered:

*“Not really because her being distracted mostly affects the way she presents the content of the class however whenever I personally or one of the students ask her something or want to talk about something she will put so much effort into helping us and answer our questions”* (Student3).

### **(2) Affiliation**

From the students’ perspective, the affiliation dimension emerged as the most prominent aspect of the teacher-student dynamic within the English language classroom environment. All students described their English language teacher as friendly, kind, and caring “*Our teacher is really nice and friendly and always care for us*” (Student3). The other characteristics that emerged heavily from the students’ answers were the English language teacher being receptive, attentive, and cooperative to students as the majority of the students highlighted, “*Our teacher may Allah bless him he cares for our opinion and would always discuss things with us*” (Student7). And as another student stated “[...] *she would give us her full attention and we can tell from her body language her words her eyes contact it is a clear sign of you get my full attention*” (Student3). Contrarily, one student described a less collaborative experience with an English language teacher who taught her at an earlier level of English in the preparatory year, which affected her relationship with the teacher negatively “*She was too strict with us and did not discuss with us anything that concerns us and would take the decision on her own regarding everything*” (Student2). This narrative introduces a

nuanced contrast to the predominantly positive affiliations described by other participants, highlighting a scenario where a less collaborative teaching approach adversely impacted the student-teacher relationship. This particular account diverges from the general findings of the questionnaire, where the majority of responses depicted a landscape of supportive and engaging teacher-student interactions. This discrepancy underscores the complexity of educational dynamics, suggesting that while positive affiliations are prevalent, there exist instances that challenge this norm, necessitating a deeper exploration of varied teaching styles and their implications on student engagement. However, the same student, alongside others, emphasized on how compassionate, humorous, and motivating their current teachers are *“She always motivates us, and always encourages us”* (Student4), highlighting the diverse nature of teacher-student relationships. This dichotomy adds a layer of complexity to the predominantly positive affiliations observed, underscoring the variability in educational interactions and their profound impact on the student experience.

### **(3) Attachment**

Attachment was the least mentioned dimension by the students. However, the most apparent characteristic the majority of students emphasized was their English language teachers being reassuring and comforting as one student highlighted:

*“[...] the teacher does which when she talks to us to calm us down and to tell us things are going to be easy and make us feel reassured it helps me a lot”* (Student1)

Another characteristic the majority of the students reported is their English language teachers being reliable *“[...] a mutual respect, flexibility, also I can always count on my teacher to help me regarding dealing with different matters”* (Student6). Almost all student stated that their teacher is respectful toward them, and their environment is constituted of mutual respect. Other students noted that they find their English language teacher trustworthy and consider the English language classroom as a safe environment to learn, as one student stated:

*“[...] he is different from many teachers I encountered he always makes sure that we know there is no shame in trying and making mistakes regarding pronunciation or accent because personally those are things that I lack in the most and I fear being ridiculed in front of the whole class”* (Student7)

As another student highlighted *“I can always participate comfortably because the teacher taught us that even if we make mistakes what matters is trying”* (Student8). Another quality that relates directly to this is inspiring confidence in the student which some students stated in the interviews *“She always inspires us to have the confidence to discuss things in class”* (Student1).

### **3) Cultural and Religious Beliefs Shape Students’ Perception of TSR**

Cultural and religious beliefs significantly influence the quality of teacher-student relationships. This is particularly evident in Saudi context where cultural norms and religious doctrines emphasize respect and deference towards educators. Such cultural imperatives foster an environment where students inherently value and uphold the dignity of their

teachers, as highlighted by Student (3)'s reflection on the importance of showing respect. "[...] *Showing respect to the teacher is a must, especially for us because of our religion, our society and our culture always urge us to do so*". This respect is not merely a personal choice, but a societal expectation deeply ingrained through cultural and religious teachings, shaping interactions within the educational environment.

#### **4) Factors That Impact Students' Self-efficacy**

According to social cognitive theory, there are four main sources of information that create students' self-efficacy: mastery experiences, observational experiences, social persuasions and physiological and emotional states (Bandura, 1997). Students' mastery experiences are the interpretation of their performances on tasks and assessments. If they perceived those outcomes as positive, students' confidence in their abilities will rise and that will strengthen their self-efficacy beliefs. Contrarily, when the students perceive their outcomes as negative it lower their confidence and therefore weaken self-efficacy beliefs. Observational experiences are when students doubt their abilities, or have no experience in a certain domain, their beliefs may be influenced by the outcomes other students achieve performing similar or the same tasks. As a result, self-efficacy beliefs depend on the amount to which students see similarities between themselves and the other students they observe. Social persuasions according to Bandura (1997), can also impact students' self-efficacy beliefs. Students often collect information that encourages and persuades them that they are capable of performing a task and achieving certain outcomes. These information are often received by the students from significant others. Significant others refer to individuals who play a crucial role in influencing students' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours towards learning and personal development. These individuals can include teachers, family members, peers, and mentors, who provide support, guidance, and serve as role models (Bandura, 1997). If significant others communicate their confidence in student's capacities that will help strengthen the students' self-efficacy and contrarily if they express doubts that will weaken their self-efficacy according to Bandura (1997). Lastly, students' mood, emotions, expectations and physiological state can influence their perception of their own abilities, a positive mood and emotions can enhance one's confidence in their skills and capacities, thereby reinforcing self-efficacy. Conversely, a negative or dejected mood might lead to doubts about one's abilities, reducing self-efficacy. The data collected from the semi- structured interviews were examined by the researcher to determine the factors that were listed by most students as influencing on their self-efficacy in English language classrooms. In this section the data will be presented in terms of the factors students ranked as the most influential on their self-efficacy.

##### **(1) Significant Others**

The majority of students highlighted that they have a high self-efficacy in English language classrooms if they have a positive relationship with significant others. The significant others that students highlighted repeatedly in the interview are teachers, peers, and family members. Significant others according to Bandura (1997) are those viewed by students as knowledgeable and reliable. For example, when some students were asked about what could

impact their self-efficacy, they made a general statement which does not only include classmates but friends as well. When those friends are working on achieving higher self-efficacy and be more confident in themselves it also influences other students around them as one student stated *“I’m a person who get affected greatly by those around me those who are confident and motivated. I also become like them and the other way around as well”* (Student7). In addition, most of the students mentioned that student-student connectedness and relationship is one of the factors that affect their self-efficacy greatly, as one student reported:

*“I would say peers’ relationship in the classroom, if you have a negative relationship with your peers that lack kindness and cooperation it will demolish your self-efficacy and the opposite will improve yourself-efficacy”* (Student 8)

Some students also highlighted family relationship as an important factor that impacts their self-efficacy as one student stated as when that relationship is supportive it will affect the student’s self-efficacy positively *“[...] family as well when your home environment lacks the support you need, it affects my self-efficacy negatively as well”* (Student4). In addition, students value their family expectation and striving to achieve those expectations greatly affect students’ self-efficacy as another student put it *“my family expectation for me and the way they motivate me affect my self-efficacy, especially my sister her guidance and support always push me forward”* (Student3).

## **(2) Outcome Expectancy**

Another factor that student mentioned as an extremely influencing factor was the expectations students’ have of their performance. Outcome expectancy is the beliefs that certain behaviors or wants, such as hard work will lead to desired outcomes such as studying hard will lead to success in acquiring the English language. According to majority of the students’ responses those beliefs were cited repeatedly as a significant factor that effect their self-efficacy as one student directly stated that *“First and most importantly my expectations for myself this is the factor that affect my self-efficacy the most”* (Student3). Furthermore, another student made a more general statement linking those expectations not only to the performance in English language classroom but also to the future afterwards *“For me what affect my self-efficacy the most is my expectations from myself and for my future”* (Student2). When those outcomes expectations are met it increase students’ self-efficacy. However, when they are not achieved student self-efficacy demolish as one student stated:

*“Once we received our midterms grades before the finals after seeing my result it affected my self-efficacy a lot because I had really high expectations for myself and that end up affecting my performance in the finals”* (Student6)

To sum up, the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews analysis offered valuable insights into the potential gender differences in attachment, affiliation, and assertion and the factors that impact student’s self-efficacy. The majority of respondents are in the 18-20 age range, with a significant representation of females in the survey responses and an equal representation of female and male students in the interviews conducted with the students.



English language course distribution shows a balanced enrolment across different levels. The descriptive statistics and the interviews emphasized on the significance of positive relationship between teachers and students in the English language classroom. These findings highlight the potential impact of teacher-student relationships on creating a supportive and engaging educational experience. Students perceive their teachers as welcoming, reassuring, reliable, compassionate, admirable and provide the students with a sense of security. Gender-based t-tests reveal no significant differences in these dimensions. Similarly, English level-based ANOVA test show no substantial variations in scores among the three dimensions. Regarding factors impacting self-efficacy according to the survey responses, motivation emerges as the most prevalent factor, followed by teacher-student relationships. The visual representation (Figure 4.2) provides a clear overview of these factors, with motivation being the most prominent contributor. However, after thematically analyzing the interviews with the students' relationship with significant others such as teacher, peers and family members emerged as the factor that impact the students' self-efficacy greatly followed by the students physiological and emotional state such as motivation and the expected outcomes they have of their performance. Overall, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the sample characteristics and potential influences on self-efficacy.

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This research was undertaken to explore the emotional quality of teacher-student relationship in English language classrooms with respect to Tormey's (2021) multidimensional framework. This research domain is significant for enhancing the educational experience in English language classrooms, as students' growth, engagement, motivation, academic achievement, and behavior are all affected by teacher-student relationships (Tormey et al., 2023). The researcher explored the emotional quality of the teacher-student relationship from the affiliation dimension, assertion dimension, and attachment dimension using both qualitative and quantitative approaches to triangulate the findings of this research. Both the questionnaire and the interviews showed that students perceive their relationship with their English language teachers as positive. Students believe that their relationship with their teacher is important and influence many aspects in their personal and educational environment. Both male and female students from various levels of English language proficiency find their English language teachers reassuring, reliable, and trustworthy which are emotional qualities from within the attachment dimension. Also, from within the affiliation dimension students believe their teachers are compassionate, friendly and caring. Furthermore, in the assertion dimension students view their teachers as admirable, knowledgeable, and provide the students with a sense of security. In addition, this research sought to discover the factors that impact students' self-efficacy from Saudi students' perspective. Significant others such as teachers, peers and family members and outcome expectancy emerged as the two prominent factors that can hinder or enhance students' self-efficacy in English language classrooms. By integrating the insights from our quantitative and qualitative analyses, this chapter seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play in English language classrooms. It is through this lens that we dive into the implications of our findings for educational practice, policy-making, and

future research. The goal is to contribute to the ongoing discourse in the field of English language teaching, providing evidence-based insights that can inform teaching strategies, curriculum development, and learner support systems.

## **7. Implications of the Research**

This study on teacher-student relationships in English language classrooms and the factors influencing students' self-efficacy yields several implications that are significant for educational practice, policy making in the field of language learning and education psychology. For educational practice the findings highlight the importance of nurturing positive, supportive, and empathetic relationships between teachers and students. The use of the three dimensions model is beneficial for all teachers especially novice teachers as according to Tormey et al. (2023), novice teacher can be attentive to their authority in the classroom at the beginning of their career and overlook all the different aspect in their relationship with the students which might affect it negatively. Evaluating the teacher-student emotional quality in the classroom can structure teachers' thinking about how their pedagogical actions influence students, their relationship with their students and how they can quickly attend to specific aspects to establish a positive classroom climate that can meets teachers and students' needs. Which help foster an inclusive and engaging classroom environment where students feel valued, understood, and supported. This involves active listening, personalized feedback, and creating opportunities for meaningful interactions. In addition, by exploring these three dimensions and fostering a strong relationship between the teacher and the students this can help in encouraging the preparatory year students to accept the change in their new educational environment. The three dimensions questionnaire can help teachers address a problematic situation in the English language course. It as well can be used as an important tool for teachers and faculty developer to reflect on teaching practices, instructional strategies, and policies enforced on students in English language classrooms.

## **8. Limitations of the Research**

In conducting this study on teacher-student relationships in English language classrooms and the factors impacting students' self-efficacy, several limitations were encountered, which are important to acknowledge for a comprehensive understanding of the research context and its findings:

- 1) The research was conducted within a particular educational context, focusing on Saudi preparatory year students within English language classrooms. This limitation restricts the generalizability of the findings to broader populations and diverse educational settings.
- 2) The research employed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to gather comprehensive data. However, the reliance on self-reported data, may introduce a degree of subjectivity and potential bias in the responses.
- 3) The interviews were conducted online using Zoom website as per the students' reference and the researcher could not videotape those interviews. Only audio recordings were permitted by the students, which did not allow for the capture of non-verbal messages

such as body language and face expressions.

- 4) Being an insider researcher might have affected the students' responses. As some students might have feared the possibility of certain consequences despite the researcher reassurance, which was apparent to the researcher after the withdrawal of two students from participating in the interviews.

## 9. Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should explore teacher-student relationships and self-efficacy in various cultural and educational settings to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Research in diverse contexts can offer insights into how cultural norms and educational systems influence these dynamics. Also, to better understand the long-term effects of teacher-student relationships on student and the factors that impact students' self-efficacy, longitudinal research is needed. Such studies can track changes over time, providing a deeper understanding of how these relationships evolve and their lasting impact on students' learning experience.

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