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The Relationship Between Iraqi EFL Preparatory School Students' Self-Esteem and Writing Performance

Akram Jabar Najim Nasser, Asst Prof Dr Bushra Saadoon Mohammed Ph. D.

University of Bagdad, Iraq

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out The Relationship Between Iraqi EFL Preparatory School Students' Self-Esteem And Writing Performance. To achieve this aim, the researcher used the self-esteem scale prepared by (Bruce R. Hare, 1985). It has been translated into Arabic (Al-Hamidi Muhammad Al-Adhidan, 2003). The scale consists of 30 items, and the written performance scale of (Alaa, 2018), which consists of three questions. After applying the scales to the research sample of 200 students from preparatory school students in Wasit governorate center, and after processing the data statistically using the SPSS statistical package, the results showed the following:

- The preparatory school students recorded a good level of self-esteem.

-The Preparatory school students scored an average level in writing performance.

-There is a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and writing performance.

-There are no differences in the relationship between self-esteem and writing performance according to the gender variable, male, female. Based on these results, the researcher reached a set of conclusions and made a number of recommendations and suggestions.

المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة العلاقة بين احترام الذات لدى طلاب المدرسة الإعدادية للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وأداء الكتابة. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف استخدمت الباحثة مقياس تقدير الذات لـ .... والمكون من ثلاثين فقرة ، ومقياس الأداء الكتابي لـ (علاء ، 2018) والمكون من ثلاثة أسئلة. بعد تطبيق المقاييس على عينة البحث المكونة من 200 طالب وطالبة من طلاب المرحلة الإعدادية في مركز محافظة واسط ، وبعد معالجة البيانات إحصائياً باستخدام الحزمة الإحصائية SPSS ، أظهرت النتائج ما يلي:

1- سجل طلاب المرحلة الإعدادية مستوى جيداً من الثقة بالنفس.
2- سجل طلاب المرحلة الإعدادية مستوى متوسط في الكتابة
3- توجد علاقة ارتباطية موجبة معنوية بين تقدير الذات والأداء الكتابي.
4- لا توجد فروق في العلاقة بين تقدير الذات والأداء الكتابي حسب متغير الجنس ذكر ، أنثى. وبناءً على هذه النتائج توصل الباحث إلى مجموعة من الاستنتاجات وقدم عددًا من التوصيات والمقترحات.

INTRODUCTION

There are four language skills namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. They are always quoted in the same order. The last one in the sequence is writing skill. It is considered to be the most advanced skill. One cannot develop writing skill without gaining some degree of mastery over the first three skills. Since it is the most advanced skill, it is also the most difficult skill. Listening and reading are receptive skills, speaking and writing are expressive or productive skills. Self-esteem is a psychological state, which in turn depends upon the socio-economic background of students. "When sociocultural factors interact with cognition, group differences tend to emerge, as knowledge telling provides few opportunities for disadvantaged groups to overcome barriers linked to differences in prior knowledge, fluency, attention management, or motivation (Paul Deane, 2018, p 280). Maslow (1954) hypothesized for the first time that self-esteem is one of the five sets of human needs. Self-esteem starts developing at an early stage. It is a positive trait. Hence, there can be a relation between writing performance and self-esteem. With this assumption the researcher decided to carry out this study, which investigates the relationship between self-esteem and writing performance, as one of the possible factors that leads to successful writing performance.

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

English is one of the main languages of international communication. In Iraq, English as an obligatory foreign language has been integrated into the school curriculum starting from elementary school until university. The teaching process make emphasis on the four essential language skills listening, speaking, reading and writing. In Iraq where English is treated as a foreign language, it seems difficult for the learners since there is no use of English language in real- life situation. Writing in a foreign language is not simple task for Iraqi students, as most of them are facing plenty of problems while writing, they cannot express ideas clearly. They cannot write down a good topic sentence as an lead-in point in their paragraph. They additionally don't recognize the relevant words to the content of their writing. What is more, they have difficulties in laying their ideas into the right order to form their writing and most of them have problems in grammar including using the appropriate tenses.

The psychological aspects also affect writing performance. Hence, it would not be wrong to assume that writing performance is affected by self-esteem. This study attempts to investigate whether there is any relation between the two, to what extent, and in case there is a relationship, what can be done to raise the self-esteem of learners. Once any relationship is firmly established, teachers who teach English as a second or foreign language will be able to set strategies to improve the self-esteem of learners and adopt a suitable pedagogy.

The topic has its significance in Iraq because very few studies on the topic have been conducted so far. The study presents a clear understanding of students and their needs, and thus supports and helps them in developing their writing performance. It provides a scientific reference in relation to students' self-esteem and performance. It is important for supervisors, school managers, educational authorities and for training courses designers. It is important to teachers who are spending long times in classrooms dealing with their students.

AIMS

The current study aims at finding out

1- Iraqi EFL Preparatory School Students' Self-Esteem .
2- Iraqi EFL Preparatory School Students' Writing Performance.
3- The Relationship between Iraqi EFL Preparatory School Students' Self-Esteem and Writing Performance.

LIMIT OF THE STUDY:

The current study is limited to 5th Preparatory grade students (Preparatory schools in Wassit Governorate) for morning and evening studies during the academic year 2020–2021.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Self-Esteem :

First: (Holly 1997, p1)

Self-Esteem is the judgement that we make about our own worth and the feelings associated with that judgement. It is an important aspect of self-development (Holly, 1997, p1).

Second: (Aronson, 2002)

He described as a self-feeling that depends totally on what one believes himself to be and do.

Third: (Schwalbe and Staples (1991).

They defined self-esteem as the feelings an individual has about himself that affect the way he views himself.

The researcher adopted the definition of Schwalbe and Staples (1991) as a theoretical definition of the concept of self-esteem in his study.

PROCEDURAL DEFINITION

It is the total score obtained by the student after answering the self-esteem scale

Writing Skill:

First: Archibald (2001)

He defines writing as a multidimensional skill requiring knowledge and proficiency in a number of areas.

Second: (Leki, 1996; Silva, 1993, 1997)

Writing is a complex activity requiring proficiency in a number of different .

Third: Ala'a (2018. p.64)

He define writing as a process of using symbols, alphabetical letters to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form and it a means of communication which used words for communication, supported by non-verbal cues like facial expressions, gestures, postures, eye contact and so on.

The researcher adopted the definition of Archibald (2000) as a theoretical definition of the concept of Writing skill in his study

PROCEDURAL DEFINITION

It is the total score obtained by the student after answering the test of Writing skill .

Fifth preparatory class

It is the second stage of the preparatory school, which follows the intermediate school, and the duration of study is three years. **(**Republic of Iraq / 1981 : page 4**).**

SECTION TWO: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Human beings have certain needs both physical and mental. For optimal performance in any regard, the basic needs must be fulfilled. One cannot perform difficult mental tasks like statistical calculations on a hungry stomach. Individuals are required to perform a variety of tasks in life, both physical, mental or a combination of both. In order to do one's best, a fit and balanced physique and mind are necessary. Besides physical and mental needs, there are other factors like motivation, anxiety, attitude and self-esteem. These factors are crucial in deciding the overall performance of individuals in every respect. They also affect performance in language skills in general and second language skills in particular.

These factors help students to develop confidence in language skills. For example, a negative attitude towards English will hamper the acquisition of English as a second language by a student. It is thus necessary to investigate the relationship between basic needs and

personality factors and second language acquisition of skills. In recent, years, these affective factors have been of interest regarding their connection with second language acquisition. Speaking and writing are expressive or productive skills, in which the person conveying the message has to formulate it correctly, simply and unambiguously, failing which there is possibility of miscommunication. Hence, the fulfilment of balanced personality traits and factors need to be fulfilled for improved performance in speaking and writing. "Writing is one personal activity that serves a public purpose", (Amutha A., 2010, p 37).

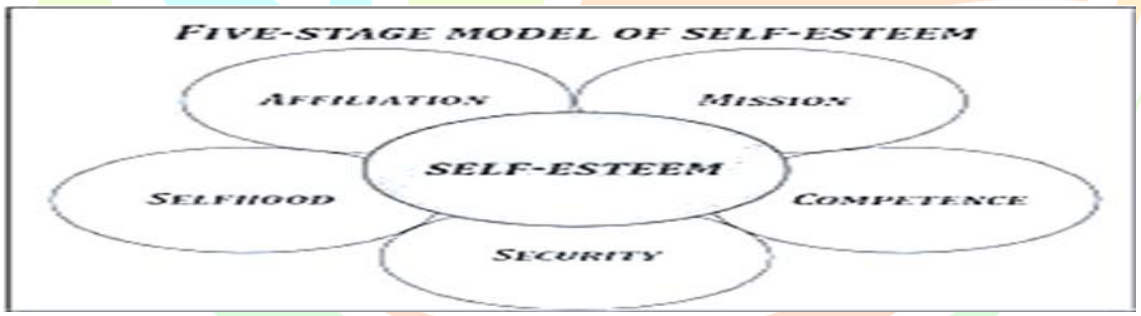
Self-Estee:

In psychology, the term self-esteem is used to describe a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. That means how much you appreciate and like yourself. Schwalbe and Staples (1991) defined self-esteem as the feelings an individual has about himself that affect the way he views himself. Also, Self-Esteem can be defined as an individual's judgment of his or her self-worth (Rosenberg 1965). Self-esteem considered representation of the self which includes cognitive and behavioural aspects as well as evaluative and affective ones (Tomaka & Blascovich, 1991). It is also widely assumed that self-esteem functions as a trait, that is, it is stable across time within individuals. Self-Esteem is a precious psychological factor which is highly positive. Self-esteem is one of the most commonly research concepts in social psychology and it is a precious psychological factor which is highly positive. So, many early theories suggested that self-esteem is a basic human need or motivation (Santrock, 2011). Teachers, administrators and parents are commonly concerned about student's self-esteem. Another thing, Self-Esteem is also associated with depression, anxiety, motivation and general satisfaction with one's life (Harter, 1986; Rosenberg, 1986). Self-esteem can be defined as an individual's attitude about him, involving self-evaluation along a positive and negative dimension (Santrock, 2011; Rosenberg, Carmi, & Carrie, 1995). It is composed of two distinct dimensions, competence and worth. The competence dimension (Efficacy Based Self-Esteem) refers to the degree to which people see themselves as capable and efficacious. The worth dimension (Worth Based Self-Esteems) refers to the degree to which individuals feel they are the persons to be valued. Self-esteem often seen as a personality trait, which means that it tends to be stable and enduring. But what exactly is self-esteem? The APA dictionary of psychology has defined self-esteem in the following words:

"The degree to which the qualities and characteristics contained in one's self-concept are perceived to be positive. It reflects a person's physical self-image, view of his or her accomplishments and capabilities, and values and perceived success in living up to them, as well as the ways in which others view and respond to that person. The more positive the cumulative perception of these qualities and characteristics, the higher one's Self-Esteem. A reasonably high degree of self-esteem is considered an important ingredient of mental health, whereas low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness are common depressive symptoms." (American Psychological Association. 2020). Affiliation, Mission, Selfhood, Competence and Security.

According to (Gillian Shotton, Sheila Burton, Adele Agar. 2018), Low self-esteem may manifest itself in many ways. Michele Borba identifies five building blocks of Self-Esteem, security, selfhood, affiliation, mission and competence. Their goals are either too high, too low or non-existent and they may have a tendency to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. Figure (1), is showing the five-stage model of self-esteem:

Figure (1). The five-stage model of self-esteem



1- A sense of Security

The feeling of trust or safety is most critical feeling of self-esteem since all other feelings generally build from this first component. That means knowing what is expected, being able to depend on others, and comprehending rules and limits (eg.), Safe space (home, school). Protection. Basic needs (food, clothing, etc.). Friendships and Community. Trust, love etc. (Michele Borba. 2012).

2- A Sense of Selfhood.

Which refers to the feeling of individuality and acquiring self-knowledge, which includes an accurate and realistic self-description sources of influence on the self. It provides opportunities to discover major sources in terms of roles, attributes,

and physical characteristics, and enhance ability to identify and express emotions. It builds an awareness of unique qualities and reinforce more accurate self-descriptions.

3- A sense of Affiliation.

A feeling of belonging, acceptance, or relatedness, particularly in relationships that are considered important. Feeling approved of, appreciated and respected by others. Family unit is the greatest source of belonging for children.

4- A sense of Mission .

It refers to the feeling of purpose and responsibility in life. Self- empowerment through setting realistic and achievable goals and being willing to take responsibility for the consequences of one's decisions. In this case, we should teach them the importance of self-praise for accomplishments and provide opportunities to increase awareness of individual competencies and strengths.

5. A sense of Competence.

It is important for them to have a feeling of power and control over their live. That refers to the feeling of accomplishment and successful regarded as important or valuable. We need to help them recognize their unique strengths and competencies. "Self-esteem is a central construct in clinical, developmental, personality, and social psychology (Ahmed M. Khalek, 2016, p 1). Personality, age, health, thoughts, experiences, and social circumstances are some factors that influence self-esteem.

Theories of Self-Esteem

Many early theories suggested that self-esteem is a basic human need or motivation. American psychologist Abraham Maslow included self-esteem in his hierarchy of human needs. He described two different forms of "esteem": the need for respect from others in the form of recognition, success, and admiration, and the need for self-respect in the form of self-love, self-confidence, skill, or aptitude (Maslow, 1987). Maslow also states that the healthiest expression of self-esteem "is the one which manifests in the respect we deserve for others, more than renown, fame, and flattery". Modern theories of self-esteem explore the reasons humans are motivated to maintain a high regard for themselves. Sociometer theory maintains that self-esteem evolved to check one's level of status and acceptance in ones' social group. According to Terror Management Theory, self-esteem serves a protective function and reduces anxiety about life and death (Greenberg, 2008). The modern theories of self-esteem that we will explain it in the following:

Stanley Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Theory:

In this theory, Stanley Coopersmith introduced the idea that self-esteem begins early in life if the individual is raised with love and security throughout childhood and into our adult lives, our self-esteem builds or falls from that early-childhood baseline through positive and negative experiences. Stanley Coopersmith's (1967 as cited in Seligman, 1996, p.32) self-evaluation scale measured self-esteem in children, and then assessed the parent's child rearing practices for those children with high self-esteem and concluded that the origins of higher self-esteem lay in clear rules and limits enforced by the parents.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT):

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) represents a broad framework for the study of human motivation and personality figure (3). This theory states that man is born with an intrinsic motivation to explore, absorb and master his surroundings and that true high self-esteem (Deci & Ryan, 1995 as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2004) is reported when the basic psychological nutrients, or needs, of life (relatedness, competency and autonomy) are in balance (Ryan & Deci, 2004; Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000 as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2004).

This theory proposes that the degree to which any of these psychological needs is unsupported or thwarted within a social context will have a robust detrimental impact on wellness in that setting. When social conditions provide support and opportunity to fulfil these basic needs, personal growth, vitality and well-being are enhanced (Chirkou, Ryan, Kim, & Kaplan, 2003; La Guardia, Ryan, Couchman, & Deci, 2000 as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2004). Relatedness was an addition to the original theory to account for people's inherent ability to make meaning and connect with others through the internalisation of cultural practices and values (Ryan & Deci, 2004).

Terror Management Theory:

This theory proposes that individuals are motivated to develop close relationships within their own cultural group in order to convince themselves that they will somehow live on, and the primary function of self-esteem is to buffer anxiety of humans. (Becker 1973) proposes that all human anxiety is ultimately a manifestation of the fear of death, which "haunts the human animal like nothing else". High self-esteem promotes positive affect and personal growth, psychological well-being and coping as a buffer against anxiety in the knowledge of our eventual certain death, and reduces defensive anxiety related behaviour. Some

researchers propose an integration of Attachment Theory and Terror Management Theory (Mikulincer, Florian, & Hirschberger, 2003 as cited in Pyszczynski et al., 2004). This internalisation of cultural values is also a key factor in Terror Management Theory (TMT) in which self-esteem is seen as a culturally based construction derived from integrating specific contingencies valued by society into ones' own 'worldview'.

Sociometer Theory:

(ST) is a theory of self-esteem from an evolutionary psychological perspective which proposes that self-esteem is a sociometer of interpersonal relationships. This theoretical perspective introduced by Mark Leary and colleagues in 1995 and later expanded on by Kirkpatrick and Ellis (Kirkpatrick, Ellis, 2001). The ability to efficiently determine others' reactions affecting an individual's status aids the creation and maintenance of a small number of meaningful relationships. To be excluded from a worthwhile relationship affects self-esteem more negatively than the positive impact of being included in increasing numbers of less meaningful relationships and inclusion is preferred to being just viewed positively (Leary, 1990; Leary & Downs, 1995 as cited in Leary et al., 1995). In this theory, self-esteem is a measure of effectiveness in social relations and interactions that monitors acceptance and rejection from others.

Writing Skill

Writing is important because it not only serves the purpose of written communication, but it is also a means of learning. English as a medium of instruction is being introduced in all parts of the world because English is a library language. Writing helps to overcome the limitations of speech, namely time and space. Archibald (2001) defines writing as a multidimensional skill requiring knowledge and proficiency in a number of areas. When students learn in English, they are expected to answer questions in English while writing examinations. Writing skills seem to be the least popular and most difficult to acquire in the second language (Klimova B. F, 2013, p 9). This is not possible if they have not mastered adequate writing skills. Writing is part of informal communication as well as daily communication at the workplace. This is a purposive objective of writing skill, besides creative writing. So, among the expressive skills, second language learners prefer the oral culture and look upon writing as a painful activity (Iftani Erna, 2016, p1).

Written communication is used generally when information is lengthy and complex, which cannot be easily explained verbally. Writing is part of informal

communication as well as daily communication at the workplace. “Writing is defined as an art of a writer” (Khansir 2012, p 281). This is a purposive objective of writing skill, besides creative writing. The latter is even more difficult and challenging for EFL students. Writing involves physical and cognitive processes; hence it takes time and effort to develop the skill. A mere ability to write is not enough. One must have the readiness and self-motivation. There is a psychological dimension to writing skill. Writing is an integral part of language learning process in an EFL classroom (Khansir, p 282). Activities like self-planning, self-monitoring, self-regulation, which are also part of metacognitive writing strategy.

Sub Skills of Writing

Al- Noori B. (2019) in her study Teaching English Through Humor And Jokes. She refers to teach English by humor and joke. That means we can use it to teach English. Humor in the language of classroom has very significant role in language proficiency. Writing requires employing a variety of strategies and activities. Hedge (2000:124, 302) stated the different activities involved in the writing process, "It involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating ideas, organising information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing. Writing is a complex process which is neither easy nor spontaneous for many second language writers'. The more challenging part of writing is organization. The information about any topic must be organized, divided into sub-sections and arranged systematically.

Reflective writing is an analytical practice in which the writer describes an event, interaction, passing thought, and the writer revisits the scene to note details and emotions, reflect on meaning, examine what went well or revealed a need for additional learning (Helyer, Ruth 2015). Creative writing goes a step further and is the most advanced type of writing that demands mastery in the language in order to use it figuratively, metaphorically and genuinely (Bushra and Rajiha, p.366) . Jacob et al (1981:90) and Hosseinpour (2014:4) states There are some principles that should be followed in writing, content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics:

1- Content:

Content is important to know the quality of the writing. It refers to the material existed in the composition such as topic, explanation, discussion, and the core of the main topic discussed. It is the actual information that is transmitted through writing. Rich content is a sign of good writing. The main idea of paragraph can be

seen in the topic sentences that usually in beginner paragraph first sentences, in the middle of paragraph or in the end paragraph.

2- Organization:

The content must be systematically organized point by point in such a way that the reader can understand it easily. The sentences must be linked by using the linking words like so, hence, because, etc. These words help to establish a relationship between ideas and connect them to each other. The content can be divided into paragraphs and each paragraph must contain a single topic. The unity of a paragraph can be maintained by making sure that all the sentences in the paragraph are related to the topic sentence, which is generally the first sentence in the paragraph. Organization is concerned with the composition of structure and flow of ideas within and between paragraphs(Quellmaz and Burry,1983:14).

3- Vocabulary:

Vocabulary is choice of words which are appropriate for the main ideas. According to Nurhayati (2019: 19) vocabulary helps the students' in arranging the sentences to communicate and it can make the language more variety. Also, the choice of words express the ideas are meaning full. To write the text also uses idioms that can make the text clearly. It supported by Hosseinpour (2014:4) vocabulary is the clearly of using the idiom, words and transmission.

4- Grammar:

Language use is all about the construction, structure as well as the components of the language employed in the written text such as grammar and complexity of the sentence. The using of Language refers to the use of correct grammatical and syntactic pattern or the way in which ideas are grouped, separated and combined in words phrases, clauses and sentences to present logical relationship in paragraph.

5- Mechanics:

Mechanics includes capitalization, punctuation marks, indentation, paragraphs, spacing between words and all graphical elements of writing. According to Allen and Huan (2003), the effective writing requires a sound understanding of mechanics of writing. "A useful analogy in thinking about the mechanics of writing is that of driving a car. Punctuation is what is needed to keep the car moving along, stopping and starting in the right places, and pausing whenever it is necessary" (Naeem, M. A. R. 2007, p 10).

Theories of Writing:

Following are the 4 theories of writing:

1. Cognitive Process Theory of Writing

In (1981) Flower and Hayes developed the most popular writing cognitive process model. They believe that writing is "best

understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing" (p. 366). Their model focuses on the cognitive activities that writers do when they write. It is a popular than other writing theories as it has many benefits. According to Flower and Hayes, (1981, p 366) "Writers have to go through a process of thinking before writing, a higher-order organizational structure takes place during these procedures, composing involves setting objectives, and authors generate macro and micro objectives to finish the writing task." This theory focuses exclusively on the mental writing process.

2. ***Sociocultural theory of Writing***

Sociocultural theory was created by Lev Vygotsky as a response to Behaviorism. Vygotsky (1981, pg. 141) stated that humans "master themselves from the outside through psychological tools". The main idea of the theory is that the ways people interact with others and the culture they live in shape their mental abilities. He considered human learning as a social process. Vygotsky believes that human intelligence is fostered in a society and culture. According to this theory, writing is learnt better as a group activity rather than an individual activity. Students discuss with each other, brainstorm, share ideas and help each other. In sociocultural theory, learning is viewed as a social event happening as a result of interaction between the learner and the context (Lantolf and Thorne, 2007,pp. 693–701).

3. ***Ecological Theory of Writing***

This theory was proposed by Cooper (1986, p.368) who stated that "an ecology of writing encompasses much more than the individual writer and the immediate context." All the students in the entire class together crate a system. they regulate others and are regulated by others. Hence, the individual pieces of writing that are produced are influenced by ideas of all the students in the system. it is a flexible system. it evolves in course of time.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Research Methodology:

The researcher adopted the descriptive research in his study according to the objectives and nature of the study.

Population and Sample

Population is any set of items, individuals, etc., that have some common and observable characteristics from which a sample can be selected (Richards et.al, 1992:282). The population of this study includes the students at the 5th Preparatory grade students (Preparatory schools in Wassit Governorate) for morning and evening studies during the academic year 2020–2021 Table (1). It includes (886)

students, (519) male and (367) female who are distributed into (21) schools. In light of the foregoing, and after consulting a number of specialists in measurement and evaluation, the researcher chose the research sample consisting of (200 male and female students), (118 male and 82 female)who have randomly been selected from the population of this study. The reason for selecting the sample of this study is these students have already completed about 5th years of studying English at their schools. At this stage, students also should be mature enough to respond accurately to the self-esteem scale and familiar enough with the four language skills to take the writing proficiency test. Tabular Table (1) illustrates this.

Table (1), Sample of the Study according to gender and percentage

Gender	Numbers		percentage
	Population	Sample	
Male	519	118	59%
Female	367	82	41%
Total	886	200	100%

Instruments

First: Self-esteem Scale

In this study, the researcher adopted self-esteem scale prepared by (Bruce R. Hare, 1985). It has been translated into Arabic (Al-Hamidi Muhammad Al-Adhidan, 2003). The scale consists of 30 items. The response alternatives on the scale were according to Likert method with a five-step gradation (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree) and grades were given from (1 -5) for positive paragraphs and (5-1) for negative paragraphs. and the written performance scale of (Alaa, 2018), which consists of three questions.

Items Validity

The scale was presented in its initial form, Annex (4) to (10) an arbitrator specialized in English language teaching methods to identify their observations and express their opinions to judge the validity of the scale's paragraphs and the appropriateness of the answer alternatives. Their opinions agreed on the validity of the paragraphs in

measuring the concept, with their suggestion.

Experience clarity of instructions:

In order to verify the clarity of the paragraphs and instructions of the scale and to determine the time required to answer the scale, the researcher applied the scale to a random sample of (20) male and female students who were chosen from the research community. The average time taken to answer the scale was (15) minutes

Statistical analysis of the items of the Self-Esteem Scale:

Distinguishing the scale Items:-

The distinction of the item is an important aspect in the statistical analysis of the items, and there should be a feature of discrimination that shows the extent to which individual differences can be measured by the vocabulary of this scale (Allam, 2000: 277), in addition to making sure that the items of this scale are sufficient and true to express the characteristic Measured, and to achieve this the researcher took the following steps:

- The researcher applied the scale on the analysis sample of (200) male and female students.
- Correcting the respondents' responses and calculating the total score for each questionnaire.
- The grades are arranged in descending order, starting with the highest grade and ending with the lowest grade.
- Selecting the highest percentage (27%) from the forms obtaining the highest scores, and it was called the highest group (54 forms), and choosing the lowest percentage (27%) from the forms obtaining the lowest scores, and it was called the lowest group (54 forms as well).

After extracting the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for both the upper and lower groups, the researcher applied the T test (t-test) for two independent samples to test the significance of the differences between the two groups, because the calculated T value is an indicator of the discriminatory strength of the item. (Myers, 1990: 35).

The calculated T value was considered a distinction for each paragraph by comparing it with the tabular value of (1.96) and the degree of freedom (106) and at the level of significance (0.05).... Through this step, the results showed that all the items are statistically significant and their calculated T-value is greater than the T-value.

Internal consistency:

Therefore, the researcher used the Pearson Correlation coefficient to extract the relationship between the score of each

paragraph of the scale and the total scores of (200) male and female students, which are the same data that were subjected to the analysis of the items of the two extremes. Comparing it with the critical value of the correlation coefficient of (0,139) and the degree of freedom (198) and at a level of significance (0.05).

Standard Characteristics (psychometric) of the Self-Esteem Scale:

The scale should have the basic psychometric characteristics, the most important of which is its validity and reliability of degrees, (Alam, 2000: 184) because the measurement process requires the availability of many conditions in building the instrument. So, this is why the Metrologists emphasize the need to verify the validity and reliability of the scale. The true scale is the one that measures what was put to measure it or that achieves the purpose for measuring it, and the fixed scale is the measure that measures a fixed degree of accuracy. (Odeh, 2005: 335), the validity and reliability of the scale were achieved as follows:

First – Validity

The reliability of the scale is the important characteristic of the characteristics of the good scale, and the scale is true if it measures what it was set to measure and it has achieved the purpose for which it was designed, and the scale is true whenever its indicators (i.e. its items) express it, and accurately reflect the concepts that the scale was set for in order to measure it. (Omar et al., 2010: 189) In this regard, the researcher extracted several indicators of honesty, namely:

A- Face Validity

The best way to extract the Face validity is to show the scale to the Jury Members specialized in educational and psychological sciences and methods of teaching the English language to assess the extent to which the paragraphs and positions of the scale represent the characteristic to be measured (Al-Zamili, et al. 2009: 242), and this validity has been achieved in the current scale when it showed it's items to a number of referees or specialists in the field of educational and psychological sciences and methods of teaching the English language. As mentioned earlier.

B- Construct Validity

The methods of statistical analysis of items are the most important indicators of this type of validity (Majeed, 2010: 57). This kind of validity is achieved when we have a standard on the basis of which we decide that the scale measures a specific theoretical construct. This type of validity has been provided in the measure of self-esteem through the following indicators.

Second – Reliability

The concept of Reliability is one of the basic concepts in psychological and

educational measurement that must be available in the scale, which refers to the truth of the degree that expresses the opinions of the individual and his performance on the scale, and the meaning of the reliability of the individual's score on the scale is that the testers gets it every time, in which by the same test, or equivalent to it, it measures the same property (Faraj, 295: 2007), and reliability means accuracy and consistency in the performance of individuals and reliability in results over time. If he applied the same tool and under the same conditions. (Murad and Solayman, 2002: 359). Accordingly, the researcher extracted the reliability coefficient in two ways:-

A- The method of External Consistency (Test-Retest method)

The researcher applied the self-esteem scale to extract consistency in this way on a sample of (30) male and female students. Two weeks after the first application of the scale, the researcher re-applied the same scale again on the same sample, and after using the Person Correlation Coefficient to identify the nature of the relationship between the degrees of the first and second application. To calculate the reliability in this way for the scale, it appeared that the value of the reliability coefficient of the scale (0,83), and this value is considered an indication of the reliability of individuals' responses on the scale of self-esteem, that the reliability coefficient that can be relied upon, according to Likert, is from (0.62). - 0.93), and the coefficient of reliability according to Likert is from (0.62 - 0.93). while Cronbach refers to the correlation coefficient for the first and second applications is (0.70) or more, which is a good indicator of the reliability test. (Back, 2005: 58).

B- Internal Reliability (Alpha Cronbach Coefficient):

The aim of finding the consistency coefficient in this way is to ensure the consistency of the individual's performance on the scale from one item to another, as it indicates the overall homogeneity of the scale items and the stability of individuals' responses. The more homogeneous the content of the scale, the stability of the internal consistency will be high. (Al-Zamili and others, 2009: 276). To calculate the stability, the researcher used the Alpha Cronbach equation for the scale as a whole on the statistical analysis sample of (200) male and female students, as the reliability coefficient reached (0.81), which is an acceptable value and has high stability.

SECOND: WRITING PERFORMANCE TEST

The researcher adopted the writing performance scale for (Ala'a AH, 2018),

which consists of three questions, essay writing, composition and emails.

Statistical Procedures for Analyzing the items of the Writing Performance Test (Statistical Analysis of the Items).

The researcher conducted the statistical analysis of the writing performance test items from the results of the statistical analysis sample. After correcting the students' answers, their scores were arranged in descending order, then 27% of the upper answers and 27% of the lower answers were taken as the best ratio for the balance between two disparate groups from the total group, as a number of students in the two groups in the statistical analysis sample was (108) students, by (54) An individual in both the upper and lower groups. In following it is an explanation of the statistical analysis procedures for the test items : -

The level of Difficulty of the Items:

The difficulty factor means “the ratio of students who did not answer the item to the total number of students participating in the examination” (Soliman & Raja'a, 2010: 313). The researcher calculated a difficulty coefficient for each item of the writing performance test by the equation of the difficulty of the essay items, as he found them confined to between (0.34) and (0.53), as the test items are considered acceptable if their difficulty rate is between (0,20 and 0,80) (Al-Fakih, 2014: 198). This means that all the test items are acceptable and valid.

Discriminatory Powers of Items:-

The researcher calculated the discriminatory strength for each of the test items using the discrimination equation for the essay paragraphs and found that their value ranges between (0.30 - 0.35), table (7), and thus the test items are considered good and their differentiation factor is acceptable, as the specialists prepare the acceptable item if the discrimination coefficient was (0,20) or more. So, the test items are considered acceptable in terms of their discriminatory ability, and therefore none of them were omitted (Al-Kubaisi, 2010: 289).

The Relationship of the Item's Score to the Overall Score of the Writing Performance Test:

The researcher calculated the correlation relationship between the score on each item and the total score of the test by using the Pearson correlation coefficient to calculate the correlation between the total score of the test and the contact (continuous) score for the essay items, by depending on the scores of the sample which consist of (200) forms. So, it became clear that the correlation coefficients are all statistically significant when Balancing it at the critical value of (0,139) at the level of significance (0.05) and with a degree of freedom (198).

The researcher used this method to find out the correlation coefficient between the score of each item and the total scores of the domain which belongs to it for the purpose of verifying the veracity of the items of the writing performance scale in each domain. So, the total score was approved as an internal test domain. By the coefficient of Pearson's correlation coefficient for the items of the paragraph, it became clear that all the correlation coefficients are statistically significant when compared to the critical value of (0,139) at a level of significance (0.05) and with a degree of freedom (198).)

Internal Correlation Matrix:

To achieve this, it depended of the statistical analysis sample which consists of (200) male and female students was relied upon. The results indicated that all correlation coefficients for each domain with other domains and the overall scores are statistically significant, and this indicates that all three domains measure one thing which is the performance of writing. That refers to the calculated correlation coefficients were higher than the critical value of (0.139) at the level of significance (0.05) with a degree of freedom (198) and this is a good indicator of the validity of the scale construction.

Psychometric Properties of Writing Performance Test

The test cannot be a valid instrument for measurement unless it fulfills certain conditions. These conditions are the goals that the designer of the test tries to achieve it at the moment of designing the test. The most important of these conditions are the validity of the test which followed by the reliability of the test, it have been verified as follows:-

First. Test Validity:-

To verify the validity of the test and its ability to achieve the goals set for it, the researcher used the following:-

A - Logical Validity:-

The researcher presented the items of the writing performance test to a Jury members and specialists in the field of methods of teaching the English language, in order to know their views on the validity of the test paragraphs and the safety of their wording. They approved of the writing performance test and did not delete any item of it.

B. Construct Validity:-

This type of validity has been achieved as follows:

1. By finding the discriminatory strength, difficulty factor, and ease of the scale items by the method of the upper and lower groups, where it was found that all test items are within the acceptable range of difficulty and discrimination.

2. This validity achieved by finding the relationship between the score of each of the test items and the total score of the test using the (Pearson) correlation coefficient .
3. Also , this validity achieved by finding the relationship between the score of each of the test items and the total score of the domain using the (Pearson) correlation coefficient.
4. the relation of internal correlations between domains with each other and the total score of the test.

Second: Reliability

A- The method of External Consistency (Test-Retest Method):

The researcher applied the Writing Performance test to extract consistency in this way on a sample of (30) male and female students. Two weeks after the first application of the scale, the researcher re-applied the same scale again on the same sample, and after using { the Person Correlation Coefficient } to identify the nature of the relationship between the degrees of the first and second application. To calculate the reliability in this way for the scale, it appeared that the value of the reliability coefficient of the scale (0,80), and this value is considered an indication of the reliability of individuals' responses on the scale which is a good indicator of the reliability test.

B- The Alpha Cronbach Equation (Internal Consistency):

To find the reliability of the writing performance test, the researcher relied on the Alpha Cronbach as the following:-

This method is known as the alpha coefficient, It is used to verify the reliability of the test. It is used to obtain the internal consistency among the items of the test. On the base of the previous facts, this equation was used to extract the alpha stability factor to test the performance of writing, and the value of the reliability coefficient was (0.85) and this gives good evidence of the consistency and homogeneity of the paragraphs (Anastasi, 1976) , p.126).

Description of The Test in its Final Form:-

The writing performance test in the current research consists in its final form of three areas:

1- **The Essay**: (includes (5) essay items, the highest score for item (6) and the lowest score (1) according to the type of answer).
2- **Composition:** (It includes (5) essay items, the highest score for item (8) and the lowest score (1) according to the type of answer).
3- **Email**: (includes (5) essay items, the highest score for item (6) and the lowest score (1) according to the type of answer).

An overall score for the test is calculated by adding the scores obtained by the respondent for each item of the test. Therefore, the highest score that a respondent can obtain is (100), which represents the highest score, and the lowest score that he obtains is (15), which represents the lowest overall score for the test. Thus, the theoretical average for the test is (57.5) degrees.

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Introductory Note

the goals that have been identified, the interpretation of these results and their discussion according to the theoretical framework and previous studies and the characteristics of the society that studied in the current research. It also contains conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies. the results can be presented as follows:

Results Related to The First Aim:

- **Finding out Iraqi EFL Preparatory School Students' Self-Esteem**

To achieve this aim, the researcher applied the self-esteem measure on the research sample which consists of (200) male and female students. The results of the research showed that the arithmetic mean of the scores of this sample on the scale reached (97,000) degrees and a standard deviation of (9,556) degrees. Statistically significant at a level of significance (0.05), as the calculated T- value reached (10,359), which is greater than the tabular T value of (1.96), and with a degree of freedom (199). This means that the research sample possesses high self-esteem at a high level.

Results Related to The Second Aim:

Finding out Iraqi EFL Preparatory School Students' Writing Performance.

To achieve this goal, the researcher applied a written performance test on the research sample consisting of (200) male and female students. The results of the research showed that the arithmetic mean of the scores of this sample on the test reached (57,800) degrees and a standard deviation of (9,926) degrees. The difference is not statistically significant at the level of significance (0.05), as the calculated T-value reached (0.427), which is smaller than the tabular T value of (1.96), and with a degree of freedom (199). This means that the research sample is their written performance at a medium level,

Results Related to the Third Aim:

Finding out The Relationship Between Iraqi EFL Preparatory School Students' Self-Esteem and Writing Performance.

To verify this aim, the researcher took the answers of the research sample on the self-

esteem scale and their answers of the writing performance test, then the researcher used the Pearson correlation coefficient.

It is evident from the above results that the value of the correlation coefficient between self-esteem and written performance reached (0.268). To know the significance of the relationship, the researcher used the T-test for the significance of the correlation coefficient and the calculated T-value was (3,941). It is greater than the tabular value of (1.96), when the level of significance (0.05) and the degree of freedom (198). It means that the relationship between self-esteem and written performance is a statistically significant direct relationship. That means, the higher the self-esteem of the research sample, the higher the level of their writing performance.

Results Related to the Fourth Aim:

Identify the Significance of the Differences in the Relationship between Self-Esteem and Writing performance of preparatory school students for English as a Foreign Language According to the Gender Variable (Male - Female).

To find out the significance of the differences in the relationship between self-esteem and written performance among preparatory school students and according to the gender variable, the researcher used the Z-test to indicate the difference between the correlation coefficients between the scores of the sample.

It is evident from the above table, there are no differences in the relationship between self-esteem and written performance according to gender (males - females) because the computed Z-value of (1,088) is smaller than the tabular Z-value of (1.96).

CONCLUSIONS

The current study included some conclusions which summarized in following:-

Firstly, EFL preparatory students' in the fifth grade face difficulties in the area of writing. Results revealed that students' face difficulties at writing a composition or an essay, and writing an email. Most students lack knowledge in vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. So, they fail to express their ideas correctly. Other students lack of confidence in their mechanical skills and they are miss checking the words.

Second, The findings reveal that the Iraqi preparatory EFL students are deficient linguistically (including command over grammar, vocabulary and punctuation, writing anxiety, lack of ideas, reliance on L1 and weak structure organization. These challenges are influenced by various

factors involving ineffective of the methods of teaching, examination system, lack of reading and writing practice, low motivation and the lack of ideas.

Third, Students face difficulties in the organization of their ideas because there is lack of sufficient knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Also ,they commit careless mistakes or produce incomplete work. They haven't enough time to arrange their ideas or to reflect on their writing process, and consequently they face difficulties in the organization of their ideas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the obtained results and stated conclusions, the following points are recommended:-

1. Determining the level of students' in writing performance is a positive step towards the treatment of this issue. So, the teachers of Preparatory schools and other teachers should take their students' into consideration by emphasizing of the writing skill.
2. Teachers must allow their students to write less than the perfect sentences or paragraphs, and motivate them through relaxing, courage them, etc. from these methods which courage them .
3. Teachers should help and courage their students' overcome their poor English writing by adopting a comprehensive approach to teaching writing that can meet their psychological and linguistic needs.
4. Teachers should teach writing as for the sake of writing-not for the sake of exams or evaluation. Their comments should be positive thereby minimizing negative comments on their students' writings.

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