Investigating The Relationship Between University Students’ Perceptions of Themselves as Writers and Their Writing Performance

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Abstract

This study was aimed at investigating the relationship between EFL students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing performances in an EFL setting with particular reference to first-year undergraduate students at Dire Dawa University, Ethiopian. To the researcher’s best knowledge, how EFL students perceive themselves as writers when writing in English and its relationship and influence on their writing performance was an undiscovered area in the Ethiopian tertiary level contexts. The study used a mixed method research approach of correlational design. As a result, data for the study were collected using questionnaires, writing tests, and interviews, and were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings of the study revealed that there is a positive relationship between students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing performances though there is no statistically significant relationship between these two variables. The research results also revealed that students had average perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing performance was found low. Moreover, the results of the study show that students writing performance is influenced by their general progress and physiological state. Generally, it was understood that students’ perceptions of themselves as writers have a positive relationship, and influence on their writing performance levels.

Keywords: EFL Students as Writers, Writing Performance, Writing Self-Perception, Writing Skill

INTRODUCTION

These days, the English language is a central means of communication globally. As Mohamadsaid and Rasheed (2019, p. ii) said, “it is utilized as a tool of communication, empowerment, and unification of people in the global community.” The utilization of English as a second or foreign language and the language of education gave rapid access to modern development in science, technology, media, and social media. Because of all these benefits, English is the most commonly studied language as a second or foreign around the world.
Similarly, it plays a very important role in the Ethiopian educational system. It is the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education in the country (Ethiopian Education & Training Policy, 1994). Hailom (1993) also added that Ethiopia is one of those developing countries that depend on the English language for different purposes such as, education, international relations, and business.

Consequently, when the question of students’ academic performance is argued, it is expected that the part that English language skills, in general and writing skills, in particular play matters more. For instance, Mesfin (2013) claims that the more students are competent in their written skills, the better they perform academically. Hence, it is anticipated that the English language ability of Ethiopian higher education students is sound as they have learned the language for more than 12 years. Nevertheless, scholars in the field argue that most of these students cannot write effectively in English using the adequate basic structures of the language they have learnt. For example, Animaw (2011, p. 2) states that, “It is not uncommon to hear instructors at Addis Ababa University extremely complain about the low level of English of their students across fields or departments.” In addition, scholars in the area have often complained that students at the Ethiopian tertiary level are incompetent at expressing themselves in a clear and comprehensible way in English writing. For instance, Alamirew (2005) explains that the failure of students’ ability to use English at different educational levels in Ethiopia is of interest to teachers and researchers. This problem is especially clear in the students’ inability to express themselves in English writing. Similarly, the current researcher’s experience in teaching writing courses at higher institutions and the informal discussions that he held with English language instructors have revealed that EFL students have been found to have an inadequate proficiency in English writing.

Mekki (2012) and Mirlohi et al. (2012) also state that writing in a foreign language is one of the most challenging and complex skills for language learners. Richards and Renandya (2002) added that writing is one of the most challenging and difficult skills for EFL learners to master. It challenges students as they are involved in producing and organizing ideas in the process. In addition, students are also expected to develop these ideas into readable texts. Besides the difficulty of generating one’s thoughts and changing those thoughts into text, writing can pose a bigger challenge when one does not see him/herself as ‘writer’ (Calkins, 1994, as cited in Moser, 2014, p. 7). Moreover, Moser (2014) explains that writing involves one having to transfer their thoughts into prose, which can be challenging. Even more challenging for some is viewing themselves as writers and believing in their writing abilities.

Although many studies in the English language have focused on the problems of students’ writing, very few have reported on the identity of students themselves (who am I as a writer?) regarding their writing performances. In this case, the current researcher did not find an empirical study that clearly shows whether students’ writing performance is related to and influenced by their perceptions of themselves as writers, especially in Ethiopian higher education contexts. According to Bandura (1989), and Klassen (2002), as cited in Barone et al. (2014), self-perception is the association between one’s understanding of the ability to accomplish a specific task, the amount of effort individuals use to perform a task, and the influence one’s mindset has on the involvement and actual completion of the activity. Thus, Chai (2012); Moser (2014) and Rushidi (2012) argue that self-perception gives students commitment in the writing classroom. It also provides a purposeful and motivating context for the situation of writing. Additionally, Chai (2012, p. 10) added that the way students perceive themselves as writers are also important for their success as writers. Similarly, Moser (2014, p. 30) states “When students believe in
themselves as writers, their writing has endless possibilities.” Also, Bottomley et al. (1997/98, p. 287) suggest that students consider five basic factors when appraising their writing ability: general progress, specific progress, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states. However, the degree of students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and the nature of relationships and influences on their writing performances is unclear, particularly in the Ethiopian higher education. Therefore, the main aim of this study was, to investigate the relationship between EFL students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing performances in an EFL setting at Dire Dawa University, found in Dire Dawa City Administration, East of Ethiopia.

As of the researchers’ personal observation, one of the major weaknesses that Ethiopian students manifest at different educational levels, in general and at tertiary level, in particular is writing in the English language. Therefore, this study examines the students’ writing problems by seeking to investigate how tertiary level students perceive themselves as writers and to what extent their self-perception as writers relates to and influences their writing performances. To the researcher’s best knowledge, how EFL students perceive themselves as writers when writing in English and its relationship and influence on their writing performance was an undiscovered area in the Ethiopian tertiary level contexts. The current study is, therefore, motivated by the researcher’s personal observations about EFL students’ deficiency in English writing skills and the researcher’s deep interest in becoming a well-informed practitioner in the teaching and learning writing skills.

As far as the researcher’s reading is concerned, the present study differs from the following related local and international studies. First, it differs from Geremew’s (1999) study that focused on investigating the academic writing requirements in four selected departments of Addis Ababa University and found that student problems in writing were manifested both in terms of information content and the form in which content is expressed. Second, the current study differs from Alamirew’s (2005) study in that he conducted his research on preparatory teachers’ and students’ perceptions of writing, writing instruction and students’ writing performance and found out that both teachers and students have average efficacy towards the teaching and learning of writing skills. Third, it goes in contrast with Bekele’s (2011) study in that Bekele conducted his study on promoting self-regulated learning in writing classes and its effects on self-beliefs and performances and found out that promoting self-regulated learning in writing classes significantly influences students’ performances and self-beliefs. Fourth, it also differs from Chai’s (2012) study that focused on exploring the relationship between the writing self-perceptions of adolescent girls and their engagement and motivation in the writing classroom, and she found that reluctant writers generally have low writing self-perception and lack motivation and engagement.

Therefore, the objectives of the current study differ from the objectives and purposes of the aforementioned studies. Based on this evidence, it was thought that there was a gap that had not been studied. Accordingly, the researchers thought that the findings of this study help to expand the boundaries of knowledge in English writing research. In particular, EFL students, English language teachers, and researchers in the field will benefit from the results of this study. In line with the objectives of the study, it was sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do EFL students perceive themselves as writers?
2. Is there any statistically significant relationship between students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing performances?
3. Are factors of the writer self-perception scale (general progress, specific progress, observational comparison, social feedback or physiological state) significant predictors of students writing performances?

The Concept of Writing

Carroll (1990, p. 1) states that “Writing is the most important invention in human history, and it provides a relatively permanent record of information.” It enables us to share our communication with future generations as well as our contemporaries. Furthermore, Daly and Miller (1975, p. 244) state that, “This time demands competence in writing and naming an occupation where writing is not a requirement is difficult.” They added that although it may not be a composition or essay that is required, most individuals must daily face the demand for writing competency. It can be said that the ability to express one’s thoughts in writing is an essential part of being educated (Haregewain, 2008). In addition, Hanane (2015) demonstrates that writing is a creative process of transmitting and communicating ideas that demands many factors in order to be successfully accomplished. It is regarded as a challenging activity, whether it is in one’s native language or in a second language. It is especially difficult for second language learners because they are expected to create written products that demonstrate mastery of the elements needed for writing in a foreign language (Haregewain, 2008). Moreover, Huy (2015, p. 53) suggests that for students, being good at writing will bring many advantages. For example, it helps them to increase their ability to use language, participate in information exchange during this technology era, and it is also an essential tool to support other skills. Besides, Driscoll (2012), as cited in Zeleke (2018, p. 44) states that writing demands a great deal of skills and conventions such as writing readiness, organization of ideas, a high degree of accuracy in choosing the right words and also the right use of complex grammatical rules to become a proficient and effective writer.

English Language Teaching in the Ethiopian Context

English language has been taught in Ethiopia for different purposes like it has also been taught for various purposes in the world. As Haregewain (2008) states, many people in Ethiopia need to learn English as it is being used for different purposes, especially it plays a prominent role in the field of education. Therefore, in order to succeed in higher education, students need to master English language skills, in general and writing skills, in particular. However, in Ethiopia, poor English language proficiency and communication skills have been reported repeatedly. According to Alamirew (2005), the decline of students’ ability to use English at both high school and higher levels of learning in Ethiopian education is a concern for both teachers and researchers. Additionally, Haregewain (2008) claims that in Ethiopia classroom is the only environment where students practice English by learning it as a subject and/or by using it as the medium of instruction. In Ethiopia, although English is taught as a medium of instruction starting from secondary level and continuing till tertiary level, different studies show that after twelve years of schooling, most students cannot write correctly and they have low writing ability in relation to what is expected of them (Geremew, 1999; Zewdu, 2012).

Writing skills serve many purposes in the ELT classroom. However, Hailemariam (2012), as cited in Zeleke (2018, p. 45) claims that it is a common phenomenon that the level of Ethiopian students’ language skills in general is very low after they have learnt the language from grade one to university level. Their writing skills are often found to be below expectations. Furthermore, Solomon (2001), as cited in Abiy (2013, p. 51) states that one of the major weaknesses that Ethiopian students exhibit at different levels is writing in English. It has also
been observed that English language teachers in Ethiopian high schools often ignore the existing writing activities in ELT textbooks and do not pay attention to teaching the skill (Alamirew, 2005; Haregewain, 2008). In addition, Alamirew (2005) argues that writing is not effectively taught in high schools. The teachers do not give attention to the teaching of writing.

For students, in order to succeed in higher education, they need to master English language skills in general (Tewodros, 2016). Sileshi and Tamene (2022, p. 102) also reported that at university, all language skills are very important for students so as to succeed academically; especially most students prioritize writing and speaking for their academic achievements. Nevertheless, studies in Ethiopia indicate that English as well as other subject teachers have been heard complaining about the university students’ inability to use English for their academic purposes. Moreover, in Ethiopia, there are different studies which confirm the low standard of most tertiary level students’ writing skills. For instance, Niguse (2013) argued that although attention has been given to English and an attempt has been made to make both high school and university students proficient in English language, students lack the expected ability of the language almost in all skills. In addition, regarding the declining of English proficiency of tertiary level students in Ethiopia, Zewdu (2012, p. 5) claims that university instructors complain that students join university without the required level of English language proficiency to start with.

The Meaning and Concept of Writing Self-Perception

The thought of self-perception was developed by social psychologist, Bem. According to Bem (1972), feelings and other internal conditions form the basis of one’s self-perception. This form of self-perception to effectively perform a literacy activity, for instance a written task, may relate in a positive or negative way affecting one’s productive skills and language practice. Besides, Barone et al. (2014, p. 160), citing Klassen (2002), noted that “self-perception is the relation between one’s understanding of the ability to accomplish a specific activity and the influence one’s mindset has on the involvement and completion of the task.” In addition, Moser (2014) states that writing requires one to transfer their thoughts into prose, which can be challenging. Even more challenging for some is viewing themselves as writers and believing in their writing abilities. Bottomley et al. (1997/98) also state that students who have confidence in their writing ability are more likely to quest access for writing, spend more struggle on writing, and show greater diligence in pursuing writing proficiency. Nevertheless, students who consider themselves as unable writers are less willing to involve fully in writing activities. Thus, studies show that students’ ability to express their thoughts effectively in their writing is related to how they perceive their confidence in their writing ability (Erkan & Saban, 2011; Hetthong & Teo, 2013).

Scholars argue that though academic failure can be attributed to a multitude of external factors, there is no doubt about the importance of internal factors in shaping academic achievement. Bandura (1989), for instance, states that the concept of self-perception is strongly linked to the amount of effort individuals use to perform a task and achieve their goals. Furthermore, Bottomley et al. (1997/98, p. 287) suggest that students consider five basic factors when appraising their writing ability: general progress, specific progress, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states. General and specific progress items require students to compare their past and present performances. In the observational comparison, students think about how their writing ability compares to the abilities of their classmates. Social feedback includes the direct and indirect input that students receive from...
teachers, peers, and family members. And physiological states represent the internal feelings that students experience while writing.

As to Moser (2014), having an increased interest as well as inspiration in writing is very beneficial for all writers because the writer can bring his/her identity into the piece, which will enhance their passion for writing. And when students believe in themselves as writers, their writing has endless possibilities. Kim and Lorsbach (2005) and Maguire et al. (2013), also explain that if students’ belief in themselves as writers, it has a direct influence on how they approach and engage in their writing. In contrast, students who do not see themselves as writers will not enjoy writing and will not spend time on their writing. On the other hand, students who have a positive self-perception of themselves as writers will be stronger writers because they will engage in various writing opportunities, spend quality time on their writing, and display persistence when writing (Bottomley et al., 1997/98). Furthermore, Moser (2014, p. 24) explains that “as one gets stronger when writing, one’s self-confidence will increase.” The increase in one’s self-confidence increases one’s self-perception. When one has a positive self-perception as a writer, writing becomes a powerful tool to express oneself, share thoughts and ideas, and inform others.

METHOD

As the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between EFL students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing performances, mixed methods was used to provide adequate information. A mixed method of research involves the collection and integration of both quantitative and qualitative data in a study (Creswell, 2014) and it is often chosen for its influential methodological triangulation (Dornyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005). In addition, Creswell (2012, p. 293) states that research design generally includes specific procedures employed in the processes of data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation. Therefore, a correlational research design was employed in this study mainly for two purposes: to describe the relationship between students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing performance; and to examine the degree of influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

The target population of this study is first-year undergraduate EFL students from Dire Dawa University, Ethiopia. The university was selected purposively due to the researcher’s experience of teaching at the university, and it was thought that this may help the researcher to get support from the university’s community during data collection. Besides, no one conducted research relating to the writing problems of students by taking into account the current study’s issue in that setting. The participants were selected purposively from the College of Social Science and Humanities, particularly from Psychology, English, and Political Science and International Relations departments. The selection of the college and departments was also purposive. Accordingly, 90 students (whose ages ranged between 18 and 25 years) were selected.

Instruments of Data Collection

This study’s data was gathered using three instruments accordingly: questionnaire, interview, and writing test. The data collection was held on May, 2021. The writing test and questionnaire were administered to all of the selected students while an interview was conducted with five of them (who were purposively selected from the sample participant students). These different ways of gathering information can support each other and hence boost the validity and dependability of the data (Zohrabi, 2013).
Questionnaire

The Writer Self-Perception Scale Questionnaire, adapted from Bottomley et al. (1997/98) was used in this study. It contains 38 items and is designed to assess students’ perceptions of themselves as writers. It is scored on a 5-Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” (5) to “strongly disagree” (1). In order to achieve validity, the researcher’s PhD supervisor and colleagues were asked to comment on the adapted questionnaire, and their comments were duly addressed. This instrument is useful to clearly indicate how far students feel confident in their writing abilities. It provides meaningful information and helps the researcher assess the students’ self-perceptions since it can classify groups of students as high, average, or low self-perceivers. Cronbach’s alpha was computed on SPSS version 21 to examine the reliability of the questionnaire. Thus, in the current study, the reliability coefficient for the instrument was measured 0.87. Cohen et al. (2007) and Muijs (2004), clearly state that a reliability above 0.7 is usually considered to offer reasonable reliability for research purposes. In the current study, the main reasons for using the writer self-perception scale standardized questionnaire for data collection are: based on the literature review, the researcher was convinced that the instrument is helpful to measure the perceptions students have of oneself as writers, and its reliability coefficient (as has been measured in the current study) shows that the instrument is reliable.

Interview

Semi-structured interviews were prepared and conducted with five EFL students to support the quantitative data. In order to achieve the interview’s validity, the researcher got critical comments from his PhD supervisor and from some of his fellow PhD candidates regarding content, language structure, and organization, and their comments were duly incorporated. Accordingly, seven interview questions were prepared and conducted with the respondents. The main purpose of the interview was to obtain detailed information from students about how they personally perceive themselves as writers and how they evaluate their own level of writing performance. During the interview sessions, the interviewer (the researcher) recorded the respondents’ responses by using a digital camera for future analysis. Each interview lasted about 25-31 minutes. The interviews were audio taped and then transcribed by the researcher. The interviewees were given code numbers from 01-05 by Student Key Informant (SKI 01-05). Transcribing audio data, looking for themes and coding, categorizing themes of similar content, and writing a summary and interpretation were the major steps in analyzing the interview data.

Paragraph Writing Test

In this study, a paragraph writing test was given to students to examine their actual writing performance. The test was prepared by the researcher in consultation with the researcher’s PhD supervisor. Therefore, students’ tests were used to check whether there were gaps between what students scored on their actual writing performances and how they perceive themselves as writers. The duration of the writing test was one hour, with a word limit of 300 words. The researcher corrected all the writing test papers, and each paper was also corrected by a second rater (a co-rater, a PhD classmate in ELT from Addis Ababa University). The writing test papers were marked by using analytic marking criteria such as content, organization, language usage, vocabulary, and mechanics, which were also used by different scholars (like Bekele, 2011; Jacobs et al., 1981; Klimova, 2011). Finally, the cumulative average of both validators was taken for further analysis.
Data Analysis Methods

In this research, data was analyzed in accordance with the principles of both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. Thus, the data collected by the questionnaire and the writing test were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and multiple regression) using SPSS version 21. In examining whether there is a significant relationship or not between students’ perceptions of students as writers and their writing performance, Pearson correlation coefficient from SPSS was conducted. Next, regression analysis was applied to find out the influence/prediction of writing perception to writing performance. For the qualitative data, the researcher coded the data first and conducted the analysis by content analysis. As, Weber (1990: 15), as cited in Cohen et al. (2007, p. 475) defines, “Content analysis is the process of summarizing and reporting written data.” Accordingly, the results of the study are summarized in the following sections.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The main focus of the first research question is to identify how EFL students perceive themselves as writers when writing in English. Thus, to identify whether or not students’ perceptions of themselves as writers are high, average, or low, the writer self-perception scale questionnaire results were calculated by the scale set by Bottomley et al. (1997/98). As the result shows, students had average perceptions of themselves as writers. As illustrated in table 1 below, students’ perceptions of themselves as writers is average (i.e., their GPR=29.7/40, which is low; SPR=30.06/35, which is average; OC=31.21/45, which is average; SF=24.86/35, which is average and PS=22.04/30, which is average also). Additionally, when a student’s questionnaire was computed by SPSS, the aggregated perceptions of students revealed 3.62, which is also an average (since the highest Likert scale point is 5).

Table 1. Students Score of their Perceptions of Themselves as Writers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>General Progress(GPR) Average</th>
<th>Specific Progress(SPR) Average</th>
<th>Observational Comparison (OC)</th>
<th>Social Feedback(SF) Average</th>
<th>Physiological States (PS) Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.733</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.755</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.744</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.855</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.388</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.822</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.833</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.655</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.855</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.044</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.766</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.677</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.766</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.566</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3.355</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.344</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The table format: adapted from Bottomley et al. (1997/98))

Thus, the results were summarized as follows:
Similarly, the results obtained from students’ paragraph writing test revealed that students have shown low writing performances. The results obtained from students test confirmed this since majority of the respondents (68.88%) showed low writing performance (they scored below 50%). Even those students who scored ≥ 50% did not write a powerful paragraph. Their texts are full of errors. Therefore, tertiary level students who completed the given writing test demonstrated only partial mastery of the writing skills and knowledge needed at the given level. In the same way, significant students (33.3%) responded that they have not identified their writing ability yet when compared to the other students in their class, and about 31.1% of them did not know their level of English ability. However, 44.49% of the students replied that their writing ability has improved now than before, but practically it was seen (while correcting their tests) that they are unable to write an effective meaningful sentence. On the other hand, 51.1% of the respondents are still not sure in the order of their English sentences whether it makes better sense or not when writing in English.

The main focus of the second research question is to identify if there is any statistical significant relationship between students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing performances. Hence, the data obtained from students’ writer self-perception scale questionnaire and writing test supported with their interviews were analyzed and interpreted. In order to see the relationships, Pearson’s correlation was calculated. The result is indicated in table 2 below.

Table 2. Pearson Correlations of Students’ Perceptions of Themselves as Writers and Writing Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Aggregated Perception</th>
<th>performance that is expressed by test result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggregated Perception</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td>.910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*correlation is significant at p<0.05.

As can be seen from correlation coefficient (r=.010) in table 2 above, there is a positive relationship between students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing
performances with weak effect size. However, the correlation is insignificant for p-value reveals (0.929) which is greater than 0.05.

In line with the above results, the interviewed students replied that they did not have confidence in their writing ability. For example, SKI 01 and 05 suggested that they were not good at writing and they were at a lower level of writing. In addition, SKI 02 justified that writing self-perception contributes to their writing performances. This respondent further argued that if someone thinks of him/herself as a writer, he/she will feel free to write whatever he/she wants; if students believe that they are writers, they become the writers they want to be. Similarly, SKI 03 and 04, revealed that they sometimes commit errors though they are good at writing. This implies that students’ perception of themselves as writers is not high, and that they had deficiencies in English writing. Furthermore, a significant number of students responded that writing is a challenging activity for them.

Another very important point that the researcher has deduced from students’ responses was that they have a problem in managing their own learning of English writing skills. The reason is that the results obtained from students writing tests showed that they had deficiencies in English writing, and their self-perceptions as writers were also found an average. In contrary to this, a significant number of students (40%) agreed that they are good writers and about 56.7% also responded that their writing is better now than before, but practically it was seen that they have serious problems of writing and by their own voice they also responded that they are not good at writing. Therefore, this kind of mismatch responses shows the researcher that students have a serious problem in managing their own learning English writing skills.

The main focus of the third research question is to identify which factors of writer self-perception scale have strong influence and/or significant predictor on students’ writing performances. In order to see the influence, regression was calculated. The result is indicated in table 3 below.

**Table 3. Influence of Writer Self-Perception Scale Factors on Students Writing Performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficientsa</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficient</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>37.139</td>
<td>10.736</td>
<td>3.459</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational comparison</td>
<td>-1.936</td>
<td>3.719</td>
<td>-.091</td>
<td>-.520</td>
<td>.604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiological state</td>
<td>-5.849</td>
<td>2.683</td>
<td>-.311</td>
<td>-2.180</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Progress</td>
<td>7.180</td>
<td>3.589</td>
<td>.290</td>
<td>2.001</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Feedback</td>
<td>1.965</td>
<td>4.714</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>.417</td>
<td>.678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Progress</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>3.174</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.199</td>
<td>.842</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: performance that is expressed by test result

A regression analysis was performed to see how well the student's overall writing self-perception predicted their overall writing performances. As indicated in the table 3 above, physiological state (P=0.032) and general progress (P=0.049) of students influence their
writing performance level than the other writing ability factors.

As it is presented in table 4 below, the correlation between the predictors and writing performance (the predicted) R Square was 0.082. It indicated that the predictor variables (writing self-perceptions) can be positively predicted from the overall writing performance. This indicates that students’ perceptions of themselves as writers predict their writing performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.287a</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>15.052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Specific Progress, Observational comparison, Physiological state, General Progress, Social Feedback

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between EFL students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing performances. When looking at the results of the first research question: How do EFL students perceive themselves as writers? We find out that students had an average perception of themselves as writers, and their writing performance level was found to be low. This finding supported the claims of several language teachers regarding a student’s English writing deficiency. Thus, it is similar to the research findings of (Alamirew, 2005; Animaw, 2011; Chai, 2012; Geremew, 1999; Haregewain, 2008; Zewdu, 2012) who also concluded that most students are incapable of coping with the academic challenges due to their low proficiency of the English language, in general and writing skills, in particular. The result of the study is particularly supported by the research findings of Geremew (1999) and Zewdu (2012), which state that students have low writing ability in relation to what is expected of them. This low writing performance and average perceptions of themselves as writers by EFL students in the area of writing may show that students are not developing the writing skills at a tertiary level that are necessary for them to succeed academically.

The second research question sought to reveal if there is any statistical significant relationship between students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing performances. As the results of the study showed, there is a positive relationship (r=0.010) between students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing performances. However, the correlation is insignificant for p-value reveals (0.929) which is greater than 0.05. Furthermore, the interviewed students responded that they did not have confidence in their writing ability. They also added that they are not good at writing and they are in a lower level of writing. They hold negative views about themselves as writers (poor writing self-concept). This finding agrees with the findings of previous studies of Chai (2012) and Slater (2013). They state that reluctant writers manifested average to low writing self-perception, and students appeared to view themselves as not proficient in the skill. In addition, Hughes (2011) states that positive self-perceptions might help to make an individual more motivated, which in turn might help them to learn better and try harder on tests or examinations. This confirms that there is a relationship
between one’s self-perceptions as writer and its influences on the writing performances. The third research question wanted to search out whether or not factors of writer self-perception scale have an influence and significant predictor on their writing performances. The regression analysis indicated that students’ perceptions of themselves as writers can predict their writing performance, specifically physiological state (P=0.032) and general progress of their writing ability (P=0.049) have strong influence on their writing performance than the other factors.

CONCLUSION

English writing skills are a very important skill for university students since they are expected to do their overall academic work in it. Therefore, it is necessary to help them improve their writing skills and deal with their writing problems from different angles. This study, therefore, was conducted to investigate the relationship between EFL students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing performances in an EFL setting, and to examine the influences of writing self-perception over writing performances. Accordingly, based on the data analysis and discussions, the following conclusions are drawn. Firstly, the university students’ perceptions of themselves as writers are found to be average; they perceived themselves that they are not good at writing. Secondly, though there is no statistically significant relationship between students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing performances, a positive relationship exists between these variables. Thirdly, EFL students writing performance level was found low; majority of them performed poorly. They have a problem in managing their own learning of English writing skills. Generally, it was realized that students’ perceptions of themselves as writers have a relationship with and an influence on their writing performances.

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