

Investigating the Relationship Between College Students' Self-Perception and Actual Performance in Reading and in Writing

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Abstract

The present study was undertaken to determine the relationship between students' self-perception and actual performance in reading and in writing. Using self-report questionnaire, reading test, and essay writing test administered to sixty-two university freshman students enrolled in various courses, the study reveals that a positive strong relationship exists between self-perception and actual performance in writing; however, a weak relationship exists between self-perception and actual performance in reading. The outcome indicated an unexpected pattern as studies maintain that students express a higher level of difficulty in writing, hence, an expected lower self-perception. Moreover, though studies reveal a strong relationship between perceived self-efficacy for reading and writing and actual performance in reading and in writing tasks, the result of this study will encourage future researchers to explore other aspects that may have resulted in low correlation between the two variables measured, and elucidate the unexpected outcome of this investigation.

Keywords: self perception, reading performance, writing performance

Introduction

Literacy development begins as early as infancy stage and exponentially improves as individuals learn to communicate. Its highly encompassing nature allows various interpretations and definitions (Wagner & Kozma, 2003). But generally, it refers to learners' capacity to read, write, and count (Openjuru, 2003); hence, it comprises the two language macro skills—reading and writing (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991) which are deemed inseparable (Alderson

& Banerjee, 2002). As Gunning (2005) puts it, reading and writing are two sides of the same coin since both involve pre, during, and post activities. Besides, both are cognitive and similar processes of composing meaning that a training in one leads to the gain of the other.

As one major component of literacy, reading can be defined as a a complex “linguistic, socio-cultural, physical, and cognitive activity” (CPDD, 2010, p. 31) that involves getting meaning from and putting meaning to the printed text. In many instances, reading requires simultaneous application of skills and subprocesses such as identifying author’s mood and purpose, identifying main ideas, context clues, analysis, evaluation, recognizing and assigning meaning to words, constructing meanings at sentence and discourse levels, and relating such meanings to the readers’ already existing knowledge (Graves, Juel, & Graves, 1998). The multicomponential feature of reading dictates that it can be influenced by multiple factors such as readers’ interest (Bugel & Buunk, 1996), topic familiarity (Al-Issa, 2006; Hudson, 2007), cultural background (Chen & Donin, 1997; Barry & Lazarte, 1998), decoding skills (Al-Issa, 2006), linguistic knowledge (Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995; Vandergrift, 2006), and linguistic complexity (Barrot, 2012). Bolaños (2009) adds that interest, motivation, text structure, and comprehension startegies also contribute to the challenging nature of reading especially with less skilled readers. Furthermore, Vandergrift (2006) and Chun and Plass (1997) posited that L2 language proficiency and L1 reading skills are determinants of reading skills; however, of these two, L2 language proficiency appears to be a stronger predictor of L2 reading performance (Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995).

Similar to reading, writing is a complex process of putting ideas in text whether print or nonprint. It is a “non-linear, exploratory, and generative process” as writers discover ideas and reformulate them (Zamel, 1983, p. 165). As regards L1-L2 writing relationship, Kobayashi and Rinnert (2008) claim that transfer of writing skills happen in a bidirectional way, that is, from L1 to L2 and vice versa. They further conclude that writing competence can be transferred across languages. This may explain Krapels’s (1990) findings that even advanced L2 writers consider themselves stronger when composing using their native language, that is, an increased use

of L1 in writing correlates with better L2 writing especially if the topic is culture bound. On top of these, some other factors that may influence the writing performance are anxiety (Cheng, 2002), self-efficacy (Pajares, 2003), topic familiarity (Hidi & McLaren, 1991), motivation (Hidi & McLaren, 1991), and other affective and cognitive factors (Lee, 2005). Olness (2004) points out that classroom instruction also plays a crucial role in improving students' writing performance particularly instruction that involves reading as a way to acquire vocabulary and awareness of style for writing.

Reading, Writing, and Self-perception

Indisputably, reading skills are essential for one to become a proficient reader. However, developing such skills according to some studies (Marsh, Smith & Barnes, 1984; Hay, Ashman, & VanKraayenoord, 2006) is a product of positive self-concept or self-belief that progressively develops from pleasant experiences in school or from significant others for the first two years of his schooling. Thus, teachers and parents contribute much to students' perception of themselves as learners. It is therefore recommended that the school and the home provide positive experiences to the children to help them develop self-worth and positive self-concept. As Covington (1992) hypothesized, perceived self-worth strongly affects the degree to which the student becomes an effective learner in the instructional setting. In addition, Matthewson (cited in Ruddell & Unrau, 2002) mentioned that positive experiences contribute to the positive feeling that further builds up confidence and motivation of the learners to pursue reading even the more challenging texts. Furthermore, some studies (Rider & Colmar, 2006; Koons, 2008; Shaw, 2008; Klassen, 2012) prove a strong correlation between self-concept and reading achievement. In a blind study involving college students, Jackson (2002) looked into how self-efficacy and achievement influence each other. Involving 123 college freshman participants, the study sought to find out specifically if boosting students' self-efficacy in a form of praises from the professor would affect their performance in an exam. A number of students were chosen randomly to receive encouraging words through email that "emphasized past successes the student had in the class, pointing out that other students similar to him or her

had successfully completed the class in the past, and encouraged the student to work hard and stay focused” (p. 246). This study confirmed that those students who were given encouraging praises did better than those who were not. As Bandura (1997) notes, researchers have consistently found that students’ perceptions of their academic capabilities and their actual proficiency are strongly related.

Similarly, young writers need to develop beliefs both in the importance of writing and in their own ability to communicate effectively through this challenging medium. In the early adolescent years, writing becomes more complex and demanding, requiring more planning, revising, and self-regulation of the involved processes (Graham & Harris, 2000). Writing tasks begin to assume greater importance at around age ten, with students in the middle school years being asked to demonstrate their knowledge and creativity largely through writing (Hooper et al., 1993). Difficulties with written language become more common and apparent in this period. Hooper and his colleagues (1993) found more than half of some samples of middle-school children experiencing significant difficulties with writing. Learning to write is a daunting task, and a lack of confidence to carry out that task can inhibit academic success as in the case of some Malaysian students who hesitate to write and just leave their work half done for they perceive writing as difficult (Shah, Mahmud, Din, Yusof, & Pardi, 2011).

Two factors are often cited in explaining declines in motivation in the middle-school years: “organismic” (individual) and “contextual” (environmental) (Wigfield & Eccles, 1994). Organismic factors include the increasing realism of students’ self-evaluations as they progress through elementary school. Stipek (1998) relates that when asked, most kindergarten children claim to be among the brightest in their class; by early adolescence, external evaluations provide learners with more objective and realistic judgments of their own abilities. Perceptions of ability, too, change with age, with early adolescents viewing ability as a relatively stable trait (Licht & Kistner, 1986; Nicholls, 1984) whereas younger children typically intermingle ability, effort, and achievement with little understanding of the links between them (Schunk, 1991).

Arguably, self-evaluation has an indirect effect on achievement through self-efficacy (i.e., beliefs about one's ability to perform actions

that lead to desired ends). Self-efficacy is said to be “key to promoting students’ cognitive, behavioral, and motivational engagement which demonstrates the importance of its role in the development of writing competence” (Shah et al., 2011, p. 8). What is crucial is how a student evaluates a performance. Whereas positive self-evaluations encourage students to set higher goals and commit more personal resources to learning tasks (Bandura, 1997; Schunk, 1995), negative self-evaluations lead students to embrace goal orientations that conflict with learning, select personal goals that are unrealistic, adopt learning strategies which are ineffective, exert low effort and make excuses for performance (Stipek, et al., 1992). Higher self-efficacy translates into higher achievement (Pajares, 1996). Shah et al. (2011) agree that self-efficacy is a good predictor of success in any academic tasks including writing.

While some studies confirm the positive correlations that exist between perceived self-efficacy for reading and writing or beliefs in the capabilities to perform reading and writing tasks and the actual abilities (Koons, 2008; Klassen, 2012; Shaw, 2008), Corkett, Hatt, and Benevides (2011) reveal opposite findings in their study of Canadian children where they found “no correlation between the students’ reported self-efficacy for reading and writing and their actual abilities” (p. 25).

Given all the information, it can be surmised that no study, to the knowledge of the authors, has been explored to investigate the relationship between self-perception and actual performance of Filipino students in reading and in writing. The present study sought to investigate the relationship between self-perception and actual performance of Filipino students in reading and in writing. Specifically, this study aimed to determine the students’ reading and writing performance based on their self-perception and actual performance and to determine the relationship between students’ self-perception and actual performance in reading and in writing.

Methodology

Participants

Sixty-two ($n = 62$) heterogeneously mixed college freshmen from a top private university were included as participants in this quantitative study. They were all 16-18-year-old undergraduate Accountancy majors in the College of Business, taking up English Communication course. Since the focus of the study is ESL learners, foreign students and native speakers of English were excluded from the list of participants.

Instruments

To address the main objective of the study which is to investigate the relationship between self-perception and actual performance of Filipino students in reading and in writing, the researchers developed data-gathering instruments which were then validated by two language arts experts who both hold doctorate degrees in applied linguistics and have been teaching language and composition writing for almost two decades. The said instruments are the following: reading comprehension test, writing test, and self-report questionnaire on reading and writing skills.

Reading Comprehension Test. The reading comprehension test is a multiple choice test that contains six reading passages that are culturally neutral, within the participants' schema, and of their interest. The test consists of 35 items focusing on noting details, identifying word meaning (vocabulary) and making inferences. Ten (10) items are adapted from a sample practice reading test designed by English club.com and the rest of the items were designed by the researchers. Prior to inclusion to the test, the reading passages were subjected to Flesch-Kincaid Readability Test to determine whether their readability level is appropriate for college students. The results confirmed that the text difficulty of the selected passages is appropriate for the target participants as these articles have a difficulty level of 9 and above. Some examples of test items are the following: a) What does *compelled* as used in paragraph 3, sentence 2 mean? b) What can you infer from the writer's stand about the issue

on divorce? c) Which of the following is not an example of biological change? The reading test was subjected to reliability test using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded the alpha value of 0.52 which is within the acceptable range of reliability.

Table 1
Text Difficulty of Selected Reading Passages

Passage	Reading Text	Level	Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level
A	Three Paths to Change	Level 10	9.9
B	Deliver Us from Evil (excerpt)	Level 12	11.8
C	Sales Letter	Level 9	8.8
D	Seven Symptoms that Suggest You Have Kidney Damage	Level 10	9.5
E	Business Letter	Level 11	10.5
F	Long Live the <i>Pancit</i> (excerpt)	Level 10	10.3

Writing Test. The study used a student-prompt writing test. This test was administered to the same group of participants who took the reading test. The prompt used reads, "Write a 500-word double-spaced essay (around two pages) about a topic that is interesting to you and within your knowledge."

Self-report Questionnaire. To measure the participants' awareness of their writing and reading skills, a self-perception questionnaire was used. These items were all written in English and were developed into a Likert-type questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: Demographics, Reading Skills Section, and Writing Skills Section. The demographic profile includes the participant's name, year, course, degree, and age.

The second part, *Reading Skills Section*, focuses on determining the participants' perception of their reading skills in noting details, inferring, and identifying word meaning (vocabulary). Some sample items include the following: a) I can note details in any reading text; b) I can readily identify meaning of unfamiliar words through context clues. Self-perception section on reading skills obtained acceptable measure of reliability as indicated by Cronbach alpha of 0.64.

The final section, *Writing Skills Section*, includes self-perception of their skills in writing a good title, thesis statement, attention-grabber, introduction, supporting details, and organized and coherent ideas. The final section also measures the participants' perception of their skills in using effective writing style and sentence variation, and following a definite purpose when writing. Examples of items in this questionnaire are the following: a) I can write a good title for an essay. b) I can write a good thesis statement that represents the main idea of an essay. c) I can write a good outline with logically sequenced ideas from which to base an essay. This self-perception questionnaire on writing skills obtained a high value of Cronbach's alpha (0.90) that indicates good internal consistency of the items (George & Mallery, 2003 cited in Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

Procedure

After identifying the target participants of the study, the reading test, writing test, and self-report questionnaire were developed. These instruments underwent content validation by experts. The expert validation revealed some hitches that needed to be addressed. As for the reading test, it was suggested that options be adjusted to the target users and be made more plausible with one correct answer. As regards the writing test, prompt should be made more open-ended by allowing participants to choose their own topic which is within their knowledge and interest. For the self-report questionnaire, the validation revealed that verbal descriptions should be revised for clarity.

Following the validation phase was the pilot-testing of the instruments to a few selected college students in the same university. The pilot-testing was conducted to ensure that all instructions are clear and that participants are given enough time to complete the given task. The pilot-testing revealed no problems as to the writing prompt and only a minor issue (i.e., formatting for ease of reading) as regards the reading test. It is on the self-perception questionnaire that one substantial problem was raised, that is, the redundancies of some items that have to be fused.

During actual data gathering, the participants were asked to answer the two-part self-report questionnaire using a 5-point scale (5

- to a very great extent, 4 - to a great extent, 3 - to some extent, 2 - to a little extent, and 1 - to a very little extent). The participants were given 20 minutes to accomplish the task. During the same session, the reading comprehension test was administered. The participants were given one hour (duration is based on the pilot-testing conducted) to complete the test. The results of the test were then tabulated for analysis. In the succeeding session, the writing test was administered. Similar to the reading test, the participants were given one hour to write the draft and 30 minutes to polish their work. Using the criteria set in the self-report questionnaire, three raters evaluated the quality of the essay using a 5-point scale (5 - excellent, 4 - very good, 3 - good, 2 - fair, and 1 - poor). The scores were then tabulated for analysis. As for the interpretation of the reading test scores, the individual scores of the students were pro-rated to a 5-point scale (5 - excellent, 4 - very good, 3 - good, 2 - fair, and 1 - poor). In interpreting the mean scores in actual performance in reading and in writing, the following interval was used: 4.21-5 - excellent; 3.41-4.20 - very good, 2.61-3.40 - good, 1.81-2.60 - fair, and 1-1.80 - poor. The mean score for self-perception in reading and in writing was interpreted using the following scheme: 4.21-5 - to a very great extent; 3.41-4.20 - to a great extent, 2.61-3.40 - to a moderate extent, 1.81-2.60 - to a little extent, and 1-1.80 - to a very little extent.

Statistical Tools

Mean formula was used in treating the data. The mean was used to determine the general average of the participants' score in the writing test, reading test, and self-perception questionnaire. Pearson *r* was used to determine the relationship between the participants' self-perception and actual performance in writing and reading. Moreover, Fliess's Kappa was used to determine the agreement between and among the raters of essays.

Results

To determine students' actual performance and self-perception in reading and in writing, descriptive statistics was used particularly Mean and Standard Deviation in computing the data obtained from

reading test, self-report questionnaire on writing and reading skills, and students' essays rated by three language experts. Moreover, inferential statistics particularly Pearson r was used to determine whether a relationship exists between self-perception and actual performance in reading and in writing.

Table 2

Students' Actual Performance and Self-perception in Reading and in Writing

Skills	Actual Performance			Self-Report		
	\bar{x}	SD	I	\bar{x}	SD	I
Reading	3.87	0.49	very good	3.62	0.59	to a great extent
Writing	3.37	0.58	good	3.44	0.53	to a great extent

Table 2 shows that students' actual performance in reading is very good ($M=3.87$, $SD=0.49$) as measured quantitatively through the results of their multiple-choice types of tests covering skills such as noting details, identifying word meaning (vocabulary), and making inferences. Likewise, students' self-report shows that they practice effective reading skills to a great extent ($M=3.62$, $SD=0.59$). This implies that the respondents have mastered basic reading skills essential in text comprehension and this matches the group's positive perception of their reading performance. On the other hand, students' actual writing performance based on their entry essays was only good ($M=3.37$, $SD=0.58$) while their self-perception on their writing skills ($M=3.44$, $SD=0.53$) was to a great extent.

To determine the raters' agreement in assigning scores to the students' essays, Fleiss's Kappa was used. The results revealed that there was a fair agreement among raters in each of the criteria for scoring. The following table shows the level of agreement per criterion.

Table 3
Interrater Reliability

Criteria	Agreement Level
Title	0.266
Thesis Statement	0.252
Organization	0.251
Opening Grabber	0.257
Introduction	0.254
Supporting Details	0.265
Cohesive Devices	0.269
Clarity	0.267
Accuracy	0.249
Sentence Structure	0.256
Summarization	0.254
Conclusion	0.257
Purpose	0.253
Completeness	0.251

Table 4
Correlations Between Students' Actual Performance and Self-perception in Reading and in Writing

Skills	Correlation
Reading	*0.13
Writing	*0.95

Table 5
Comparison of Students' Actual Performance and Self-perception in Three Reading Skills

Reading Skills	Actual Performance		Self-perception		Pearson <i>r</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Noting Details	4.39	0.64	3.82	0.64	*0.16
Vocabulary	3.94	0.60	3.48	0.86	*0.09
Making Inferences	3.28	0.95	3.55	0.82	-0.10

Table 5 shows that students' actual performance in noting details is very good ($M=4.39$, $SD=0.64$). However, the students' performance in identifying word meaning or vocabulary ($M=3.94$, $SD=0.60$) and making inferences ($M=3.28$, $SD=0.95$) was good. In terms of self-perception of their reading skills, students perceived that they effectively practice noting details ($M=3.82$, $SD=0.64$), making inferences ($M=3.55$, $SD=0.82$), and understanding vocabulary ($M=3.48$, $SD=0.86$) to a great extent. Notably, the scores in both the actual performance and self-perception showed similar patterns. As regards the relationship between the mean scores in the actual performance and self-perception in reading, a low positive correlation (computed r of 0.13 at $p<0.05$) exists as indicated in Table 4.

Table 6

Mean Scores and Correlation of Students' Self-Perception and Actual Performance in Writing

Criteria	Self-perception		Actual Performance		Pearson <i>r</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Relevant title	4.33	0.81	3.37	0.61	*0.28
Thesis statement	3.35	0.83	3.34	0.61	*0.15
Organization	3.50	0.78	3.54	0.62	*0.03
Opening grabber	3.31	0.97	3.30	1.5	*0.16
Introduction	3.50	0.84	3.35	0.62	*0.22
Adequacy of supporting details	3.48	0.62	3.53	0.69	-0.005
Cohesiveness	3.39	0.61	3.31	0.63	*0.21
Clarity	3.48	0.76	3.29	0.60	*0.38
Grammar	3.52	0.76	3.36	0.68	*0.14
Sentence structure	3.50	0.76	3.37	0.64	*0.27
Summary of main points	3.60	0.78	3.39	0.58	-0.36
Strong conclusion	3.32	0.76	3.34	0.58	*.025
Purpose	3.60	0.76	3.44	0.61	*0.18
Provocative closing statement	3.18	0.69	3.36	0.60	*0.11

As indicated in Table 6, students had high positive self-perception in their skills in using relevant title ($M=4.33$, $SD=0.81$) but posted lowest in their perception about their skills in writing provocative closing statement ($M=3.18$, $SD=0.69$). In terms of their actual performance in writing, the students scored relatively higher in organizing ideas ($M=3.54$, $SD=0.62$), providing adequate details ($M=3.53$, $SD=0.69$), and expressing purpose ($M=3.44$, $SD=0.61$). However, students posted mean scores between 3.29 and 3.37 in a majority of the criteria in writing performance which is interpreted as good.

Furthermore, the findings showed that positive correlations exist in almost all writing indicators between students' self-perception and actual writing performance, but almost all of these relationships appeared to be weak. Only in *clarity of word usage* that a moderate correlation exists. It should be noted, as well, that there were negative correlations in *adequacy of supporting details* and *summary of main points*. As regards the relationship between the mean scores in the actual performance and self-perception, a very high positive correlation (computed r of 0.95 at $p<0.05$) exists.

Discussion

Three implications can be drawn from these results. First, the results from the comparison between actual performance and self-report in both reading and writing skills suggest the variable degree of difficulty associated with both skills. It appears that students consider writing to be more difficult than reading and that they do write less effectively than read efficiently. Reading is primarily a receptive skill and its nature as a cognitive activity involves getting meaning from the text and putting meaning back to it. On the other hand, writing as a productive skill involves the complex activity of discovering ideas and reformulating them (Zamel, 1983). The cognitive challenge of generating ideas to write about and developing them into an organized, coherent, grammatical and stylistic piece of discourse, such as the essay, in this case, is far more demanding than making meaning out of short reading passages that have a high degree of familiarity and interest to the participants. Hence, the

results make practical sense, in that students consider writing to be more difficult than reading, and that this belief is demonstrated in their actual reading and writing performance. Moreover, these findings can be explained by the receptive-productive continuum (Henriksen, 1996) which states that learners' receptive capacity for linguistic processing is always greater than their productive capacity. Several studies support such claim. For example, Ellis (2006) found that while learners successfully processed relative clauses receptively, they failed to so productively. The same is true in terms of vocabulary (Groot, 2000; Henriksen, 1999).

To cite an example showing a student's difficulty in writing is this thesis statement from a work titled *A New Beginning* by participant 16 (P16): *I am sure that there are a lot of similarities and differences between high school and college and I'm gonna discuss them. They are policies, standards, faculty qualifications, subjects, students, schedule, grading system, and others.* Note that while the student seems to be familiar with the topic she is writing about, it is quite obvious that her thesis statement is vague, a characteristic that violates the principles of clarity and unity (Plata, Mirador, Parina, Dayag & Chua, 2012). The number of topics seems so many such that the student may not cover all substantially, thus sacrificing focus. This causes her own difficulty in the actual writing of the paper.

Another example worth noting is the output of P28 concerning adequacy of supporting details. The second paragraph reads, *Traditonal schooling is better since it develops one's academic knowledge and more. Primarily, people educate themselves for knowledge and to learn more but there is a lot more that is being provided. It also develops social skills since a student will be part of a class.* Notice that the student failed to provide concrete enough support on how exactly traditional schooling is better than home schooling. Though there was a mention of two advantages such as development of academic and social skills, nothing was specifically mentioned about how traditional schooling would result in that. Plata et al. (2012) believed that for an academic writing to be effective, adequacy of support to any topic is needed.

Summarizing the main points is also a writing skill most students tend to neglect or intentionally not pay attention to as evident in the following thesis statement and concluding paragraph of P34. The thesis states *Italy is one of the most beautiful countries in the*

whole world. A lot of tourists go there because of wonderful places there which I also experienced and these are Venice, Rome, Vatican, Florence, and others. Let me share my experiences while I was in those places. The conclusion which was written as the last paragraph, on the other hand, says For our next travel, my family is beginning to consider The Holy Land. I do hope that we will also enjoy the places there. It can be observed in this output that the student failed to at least restate the thesis statement or summarize some key points that would bring readers to full circle (Hacker as cited in Plata et al., 2012). Instead, the writer told her readers where the next travel vacation will be as contrary to what is expected and that is summarizing the main points of her Italy experience. As understood, well-written compositions sum up the major points presented in the paper, thus bringing the whole paper to a close.

Second, the positive correlations between actual performance in reading and in writing and the self-reports suggest the close association between actual performance in the skill and self-evaluation. A very high positive correlation between writing performance and self-report in writing shows the likelihood of association between how well students actually write and how well they think they can write, at least for this group of participants. However, the positive correlation between actual reading performance and self-report suggests the degree of association (although weak) between how well they can read and how well they think they can read. These results confirm the findings of Koons (2008), Shaw (2008), and Klassen (2012) in that correlations exist between perceived self-efficacy for reading and writing, or beliefs in the capabilities to perform reading and writing tasks and actual abilities.

One possible explanation for the divergence between the two relationships (actual performance and self-report in reading; actual performance-self-report in writing) is that since writing processes and output are more observable than reading processes and output, students became more aware and conscious of their abilities; hence, their self-report is more accurate in writing than in their self-report in reading. Such supposition can be anchored on the Associative-Cognitive CREED (N. Ellis, 2006). This theory holds that learners can

better associate things (i.e., associative) when processes are more conscious and explicit.

This point calls to mind the potential power of self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) and Schunk (1995) theorize that positive self-evaluations encourage students to set higher goals and commit to tasks. Negative self-evaluations, on the other hand, allow students to make excuses for performance or set unrealistic goals in learning tasks (Stipek et al., 1992). As Pajares (1996) puts it, higher self-efficacy translates into higher achievement. Conversely, if students evaluate themselves low in writing, chances are their actual writing outputs will show poor proficiency. This proposition recalls Hooper et al.'s (1993) study involving middle-school children who were experiencing serious writing difficulties. Their lack of confidence to carry out a writing task hindered academic success. The pedagogical implication from this conclusion, therefore, is to foster a positive learning environment, both in the instructional setting and the home, and particularly in writing which students appear to have more serious difficulty with. A positive writing environment encourages positive self-worth, which may associate with effective writing. Equally important is the development of reading skills, which form the foundations of literacy. Positive reading experiences especially in the first two years of schooling results in positive self-worth or self-belief (Chapman & Tunmer, 2011; Marsh, Smith & Barnes, 1984; Hay, Ashman, & VanKraayenoord, 2006) that produces lasting beneficial consequences, such as reading achievement (Rider & Colmar, n.d.; Koons, 2008; Shaw, 2008, and Klassen, 2012) for the learner in the long run.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between self-perception and actual reading and writing proficiency of selected students in a private university. The results reveal that students perceived themselves to be good writers as shown by their mean score in self-perception questionnaire correlating moderately with their average performance in essay writing. However, a low correlation exists between students' self-perception and actual performance in reading. Considering the mean scores in both the reading test and self-report

questionnaire, results indicate that students scored higher in actual reading performance, yet they did not perceive themselves as effective readers.

Although studies reveal a strong relationship between perceived self-efficacy for reading and writing and actual performance in reading and in writing tasks such those of Koons (2008), Shaw (2008), and Klassen (2012), the result of this study will encourage future researchers to explore other aspects that may have resulted in low correlation between the two variables measured and elucidate the unexpected outcome of this investigation. This will encourage future researchers to expand the number of participants to establish significance in the results and to increase the number of items in the reading test and the chances of students' reading skills being comprehensively assessed.

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