Social Intelligence and General Self-Efficacy as Predictors of Public Speaking Skills among University Students

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore social intelligence and general self-efficacy as predictors of public speaking skills among university students. The study sample consisted of 403 participants (216 male and 187 female) randomly selected from Isra University and the University of Jordan. The results showed a higher influence of self-efficacy on students' public speaking skills than social intelligence. General self-efficacy and social intelligence showed a moderately significant association. Additionally, the findings revealed a positive but weak connection between general self-efficacy and public speaking skills. Also, the Pearson test detected a weak positive link between social intelligence and public speaking ability. Social intelligence and general self-efficacy were considered positive indicators of their public speaking skills. Finally, a statistically significant gender difference was detected among the participants' public speaking proficiency, though it was in favor of the male participants.

Keywords: social intelligence, self-efficacy, speaking skill, university students

1. Introduction

Long-standing issues with understanding human behavior in "face-to-face contacts," "empathy," "person perception," and "social sensitivity," as well as issues with influencing or managing other people's behavior, have been acknowledged, but little systematic research has been done on the fundamental understanding of those phenomena. As opposed to tangible and abstract intelligence, social intelligence is a personality trait that can be identified, according to Thorndike (1920). Guilford (1958) suggested that social intelligence might be considered the fourth type of knowledge. The Structure of Intelligence theory suggests that social intelligence involves 30 abilities, six of which are used to deal with various information products in each of the five operation categories (Kaukiainen, et.al, 1999).

Too frequently, traditional conceptions of social intelligence have emphasized high-road skills like social knowledge, or the ability to identify the rules, protocols, and conventions that govern appropriate behavior in a particular social context. In several of these early research, social competence was described, defined, and evaluated (Frankovský, Lajčin, and Slávikov á, 2012). Researchers started to focus less on characterizing and rating social intelligence and more on comprehending interpersonal behavior's function, and contribution to adaptive adaptability (Zirkel, 2000).

It is believed that general self-efficacy and social intelligence, as aspects of a personality's cognitive and social entity, are key to success in speaking proficiency (Awwad & Alkhutaba, 2021). General self-efficacy beliefs and social intelligence, which are important determinants of students' aptitude and success, are anticipated to interact to support speaking to stay committed and motivated to attain higher proficiency levels in terms of speaking language competence (Hashemi & Ghanizadeh, 2011). It is believed that general proficiency is predicted through the intelligence and personal skills of students (Harmer, 2015). Speaking and writing are productive language skills, whereas listening and reading are receptive skills. Literature reviews have argued that students' attitudes toward what and how they learn, and their affective components are crucial for successful students' performance and increased competence (Bar-On, 2010). As a result, acquiring the speaking students' abilities depends on their general self-efficacy and social intelligence (Sato, 2019).

Researchers focused their intensive studies efforts on examining students' perceptions of language tasks, their abilities, and beliefs about completing tasks successfully, awareness of their sub-skills, mindset, and satisfaction, and students' attitudes to determine why some students achieve higher proficiency and master language skills more successfully (Bandura, 1997., Goleman, 2006., Harrison, 2021). Further research is still required to carefully examine the interaction and overlap between the psychological variables, considering the relationship between several psychological elements such as social intelligence and general self-efficacy and its acquisition. It is also necessary to conduct more research to determine whether the students' psychological characteristics may be used as accurate indicators of success in developing university-level speaking proficiency.

It has been argued that students' assessments of their social emotions, competencies, and beliefs may have an impact on their academic achievement (Scrivener, 2010). General self-efficacy and social intelligence have been presented as cognitive socio-personality attributes that are anticipated to have favourable effects on students' scholastic advancement and prosperity (Bar-On, 2010). The association between general self-efficacy beliefs, social intelligence, and speaking skill competency has been the subject of conflicting results in this

area of research, though. This study intends to investigate how students' general self-efficacy and social intelligence interact and impact their ability to speak.

2. General Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a psychological and personality attribute that can be characterized as the belief in one's ability to plan and carry out the actions necessary to achieve specified goals (Bandura, 1997). Another definition of self-efficacy is "an individual's assessments of his or her skill to carry out specific acts (Schunk, 1991, p.207). Early psychological studies concluded that one's expectations of oneself, judgments of oneself, and beliefs in oneself influence and predict one's behaviour as well as effort, motivation, persistence, and competence (Weiner, 1985). It is believed that students with high self-belief perform better than those with low self-belief (Schunk, 1991). In addition, regardless of the student's ability, high self-efficacy can provide them a high sense of drive that can help them completely participate in learning tasks and succeed better than those with low self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

It can be inferred that students or task performers who feel optimistic are more likely to work harder and persevere longer even when they encounter challenges or obstacles, resulting in enhanced performance and outcome, as opposed to those who underestimate their abilities and skills, resulting in poor performance and outcome. According to Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1997), people can get data to assess and estimate their efficacy from a variety of sources. People who complete jobs or learn new skills rely on their performance accomplishments, vicarious or self-modelling experiences, verbal encouragement, or praise, as well as their physiological and emotional states, and actual student performances, which offer a reliable guide for assessing a learner's effectiveness. Successful endeavours strengthen efficacy, whereas unsuccessful endeavours erode it. Consequently, the impact of failure on students will be much lessened when a high sense of effectiveness is formed (Bandura, 1986).

Bandura (1986) posits that people have five abilities that can help them control their performances, because of the interplay between the components. That represents preparation, self-control, the ability to assume another person's perspective, and self-reflection. Self-reflection is regarded as the ability that has the greatest impact on how people behave, react, and act among some of the abilities. Therefore, it is expected that the ability to reflect on oneself will enable language learners to infer, assess, and control their ideas, motivation, behaviour, and performance during or after language exercises. Therefore, self-efficacy has been identified in earlier research as a trustworthy mediator of self-reflection, which can be seen as a strong predictor of effective academic accomplishment and language learning (Bandura, 1986).

3. Public Speaking Skills

Speaking is known as an interactive process of creating meaning that includes information production, reception, and processing. Its structure and meaning are influenced by the audience, the speakers, and the conversation's goals (Burns & Joyce, 1997). Speaking is characterized as a two-way procedure including the genuine transmission of ideas, facts, or sentiments by Eckard & Kearny (1981), Florez (1999), and Howarth (2001). According to this top-down perspective, spoken texts are the result of cooperation between two or more interactants during a shared period and in a common physical setting. Speaking can serve transactional or interactive purposes, it was asserted. It appears that the spoken language utilized in both transactional and interactional conversation has certain peculiarities. Language is mostly utilized in transactional dialogue to convey information.

This kind of language is message-oriented rather than listener-oriented (Nunan, 1995). Accurate and consistent conveyance of the information is essential in this type of contact, as is verification that the message has been understood. News broadcasts, descriptions, narrations, and directions are a few examples of language that is predominantly employed for transactional purposes (Richards, 1990). Speaking turns for this purpose are frequently lengthy, entail some content organization beforehand, and make use of language cues to indicate the organization or nature of the information that will be provided (Boonkit, 2010). However, some conversations are interactive to develop or preserve a relationship. Interpersonal language use is another name for this latter category. It is crucial for society's well-being. Despite the differences between the two, interactional and transactional language are typically blended in everyday situations. Maintaining positive social relationships with others serves to make the transactional chores easier to do. Or, to put it another way, we can say that speakers act one way while acting another. Thus, it is possible to think of both goals as two dimensions of spoken contact (Howarth, 2010).

4. Social Intelligence

The capacity to read people and comprehend their goals and motivations is referred to as social intelligence. Those that possess this intelligence are typically aware of the discrepancies between what others say and what they truly intend. As a result, people with social intelligence may occasionally be accused of reading minds. Successful users of this kind of intellect are often expert conversationalists. This might result from good listening skills and the capacity to engage others in meaningful conversation. People with social intelligence typically can make others feel at ease. They also like interacting with a wide range of people (Bhat and Khandai, 2016).

The development of students' social intelligence is crucial for their educational success. It provides the ability to understand oneself and others. It is as much a part of the human condition as the ability to understand things or noises, and it merits just as much research as these other "less charged" forms. According to social scientists, social intelligence is a combined indicator of self-and social awareness, social evolution in beliefs and attitudes, and the capacity and desire to handle challenging social change. According to psychologists, social intelligence, not numerical intelligence, determines who we are as people (Goleman, 2006). According to experts, social intelligence has

four important factors:

Communication Capabilities: include the capacity for attentive listening, comprehension of the words and emotional meaning of what is heard, effective interpersonal communication, clear expression of thoughts and emotions, and tact in interpersonal interactions.

Rules and Social Roles: entail being aware of the numerous, frequently unwritten laws of various interactions and circumstances as well as understanding how to play an appropriate role in a range of interactions. In a board meeting, you wouldn't typically behave the same way that you would while you were hanging out with buddies watching a football game (Ahlborn, 1999).

Recognizing others' motivations: reading the subtext of a conversation and comprehending the motivations behind a speaker's statements or behavior. Think of someone who tells you everything is all right while having tears running down their face. While this circumstance is straightforward to understand, great social intelligence can assist in understanding even the most complex ones (Frankovský, Lajčin, and Sláviková, 2012).

Impression Control: understanding how other people will respond to us requires this talent, as does acting in a way that will appear as though we want something (Zirkel, 2000).

5. Literature Review

Tosun, Gündoğdu, and Ergin (2022) intend to assess the self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and stress-coping mechanisms of nursing students and examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and these factors. It was a descriptive relational type of study. 322 students who were recruited from a nursing faculty and a health sciences faculty provided the data. The mean emotional intelligence score for nursing students was high. Emotional intelligence was significantly predicted by social intelligence, self-efficacy, and a self-assured coping style.

Awwad and Alkhutaba (2021) investigated the link between self-efficacy beliefs, English language skills, and emotional intelligence in L2 learners. The study also looks at how academic achievement, gender, academic level, and L2 learners' academic status relate to students' levels of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. In this study, 205 participants (94 male and 111 female) were chosen using a descriptive correlational study method. The results showed a strong relationship between general self-efficacy, English language skills, and Emotional intelligence. The results also showed a link between participants' academic success and their English language proficiency. Finally, it was discovered that self-efficacy and Emotional intelligence could account for the diversity in English language skills.

Hashem (2021) aimed to gauge the degree of self-efficacy and social intelligence among students in the College of Education at Prince Sattam University. It also sought to shed light on the connection between the two and the viability of social intelligence prediction through self-control. The College of Education at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University provided the sample for this study, which included 204 female students. Two scales of self-efficacy and social intelligence developed by the researchers were utilized as measuring tools, and statistical analyses were performed using the SPSS program. Results showed that female students at the College of Education at Prince Sattam University had high levels of social intelligence and self-efficacy and that there is a statistically significant positive association between these two measures within the study population. Additionally, it was discovered that self-regulation can be used to predict social intelligence.

Ebrahimi, Khoshsima, Behtash, and Heydarnejad (2018) investigated how emotional intelligence (EI) affects speaking proficiency. 43 university students studying intermediate English as a foreign language participated in this one-year course on speaking and EI. IELTS tests were used to assess the student's speaking ability before and after the experiment, and the Emotional Quotient (EQ) questionnaire was used to assess the students' EI twice. The results showed a significant and favorable correlation between EI and the proficiency of L2 speaking ability.

It can be concluded that many of the earlier studies covered here found a connection between self-efficacy, social intelligence, and language proficiency among university students. Studies that examined the connection between self-efficacy beliefs, and social intelligence in using the language are still few and far between. Additionally, most earlier studies haven't thoroughly examined how self-efficacy, social intelligence, and students' personality factors relate to one another.

6. Significance of the Study

On how social intelligence and self-efficacy affect personality, theories diverge. Some psychologists rigidly define social intelligence as one type, as per Howard Gardner's idea of various bits of intelligence, which has been condensed into Karl Albrecht's six dimensions of intelligence, abbreviated as (A.S.P.E.A.K.), where each letter denotes a different type of intelligence. Other theorists, however, believe that social interaction and self-efficacy reflect an individual personality since it makes use of many cognitive processes crucial to personality development, including perception, memory, and problem-solving abilities. The cognitive perspective of personality, which holds that perception, memory, and problem-solving cognitive processes make up personality, tends to explain personality variations as diverse sets of knowledge and skill that are most readily apparent when individuals interact with one another.

The importance of this study comes from the necessity to further investigate the intricate relationship between social intelligence, self-efficacy, and students' personalities. Also, the study is to address the calls for research into the validity of social intelligence and self-efficacy as trustworthy indicators of speaking skill learning and acquisition in students. Our study is intended to examine the impact of students' psychological and affective variables, i.e., self-efficacy and social intelligence, on their speaking proficiency as reflected by

students' command of speaking skills. This study is motivated by the varied findings of previous related studies concerning the relationship between social intelligence, self-efficacy, and speaking proficiency.

7. Aims of the Study

The current study looks to: -

- Investigate the levels of social intelligence, general self-efficacy, and public speaking skills among university students.
- Find out the relationship between social intelligence, general self-efficacy, and public speaking skills among university students.
- Examine the differences in levels of social intelligence, general self-efficacy, and public speaking skills among university students based on their gender and socioeconomic class variables.
- Explore whether public speaking skills can be predicted by social intelligence and general self-efficacy.

8. Questions of the Study

- What are the levels of social intelligence, general self-efficacy, and public speaking skills among university students?
- What is the relationship between social intelligence, general self-efficacy, and public speaking skills among university students?
- Do gender and socioeconomic class variables affect levels of social intelligence, general self-efficacy, and public speaking skills among university students?
- To what extent can public speaking skills be predicted by social intelligence and general self-efficacy?

9. Method

9.1 Participants

For data collection, 403 students (216 male and 187 female) were selected from Isra University and the University of Jordan. All the participants are fluent in both English and Arabic language. Moreover, they are belonging to various Jordanian cities and towns, since social class inequalities are similar in age, ranging from 18 to 25 years. The participants almost perfectly represent all the socioeconomic classes that are currently present in the nation, including the low, medium, and high classes, and regarding nationality and native language.

9.2 Tools

To examine the relationship between the variables under exploration, the researcher adopted the general self-efficacy scale "(Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M., 1995)" includes (10) items. The public speaking scale (Yamashiro, A. D, 2002) consists of (11) items, and the social intelligence scale "(Silvera, Martinussen, & Dahl, 2001)" consists of (21) items, divided into three dimensions "social information processing, items (7), social skills, (7) items, and social awareness (7) items.

The three scale items are positively directed, each item on the scale has five possible responses. A team of professionals in the domains of psychology and linguistics examined and checked the tools' validity. The suggestions and criticisms of the experts were considered. The experts concurred that the tool was easy to understand and appropriate for the study's objectives. A Cronbach's alpha correlation was used to assess the tool's reliability, results find out that the general self-efficacy scale was 0.86, the public speaking scale was 0.80, and the social intelligence scale was 0.87.

10. Results

Question one: What are the levels of social intelligence, general self-efficacy, and public speaking skills among university students? using a one-sample t-test, the research question was answered according to table 1.

Table 3. One-sample t-test

Scales	Mean	St.d	t	Sig
Public speaking skills	3.44	1.23	0.40	0.03*
General self-efficacy	4.03	1.69	0.31	0.04*
Social intelligence	3.98	2.19	0.59	0.00*

* Sig at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

Results of the one-sample t-test in table (1) showed statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in scores of means of public speaking skill, self-efficacy, and social intelligence, (mean= 3.44, sig =0.03, mean=4.03, sig = 0.04 and mean= 3.98, sig = 0.00) respectively.

Question two: What is the relationship between social intelligence, general self-efficacy, and public speaking skills among university students?

To determine the statistical relationship between social intelligence, general self-efficacy, and public speaking skills among university students. Pearson correlation coefficient was utilized in table 2 below.

Table 2. Pearson Correlation coefficient test

Scales	General self-efficacy	Social intelligence	Public speaking skills
General self-efficacy	1	0.437*	0.281*
Social intelligence	0.437*	1	0.203*
Public speaking skills	0.281*	0.203*	1

* Sig at ($\alpha \leq 0.01$)

General self-efficacy and social intelligence showed a moderately positive statistically significant association (r = 0.437). Additionally, the findings revealed a weak positive connection between general self-efficacy and public speaking skills (r = 0.281). The Pearson test also detected a weak positive connection between social intelligence and public speaking skills (r = 0.203).

Question three: Do gender and socioeconomic class variables affect levels of social intelligence, general self-efficacy, and public speaking skills among university students? Independent sample t-tests were applied to find out whether there is a gender statistically significant effect level of social intelligence, general self-efficacy, and public speaking skills as presented in table 3.

Table 3. Independent sample t-test based on participants' gender

Scales	Category	N	Mean	St.d	t	Sig
Social intelligence	Male	216	3.60	1.19	0.42	0.30
	Female	187	3.47	1.25		
General self-efficacy	Male	216	3.77	1.29	0.54	0.41
	Female	187	3.61	1.16		
Public speaking skills	Male	216	4.07	1.91	0.83	0.02*
	Female	187	3.81	1.82		

* Sig at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

Table (3) showed no gender statistically significant difference at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in participants levels of social intelligence and general self-efficacy (t = 0.42, sig = 0.30 and t = 0.54, sig = 0.41) respectively. Furthermore, the results detected a gender statistically significant difference at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in participants' level of public speaking skills in favor of male participants.

As shown in table 4, ONE WAY ANOVA was run to detect whether there is a socioeconomic class statistically significant effect level of social intelligence, general self-efficacy, and public speaking.

Table 4. ANOVA for socioeconomic class variable

Scale	Variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F	Sig
Social intelligence	between group	0.33	3	0.14	0.72	0.58
	within group	29.10	399	0.17		
	total	29.43	402			
General self-efficacy	between group	2.23	3	0.74	1.59	0.24
	within group	90.06	399	0.43		
	total	92.29	402			
Public speaking skills	between group	0.29	3	0.08	0.83	0.47
	within group	11.81	399	0.09		
	total	12.10	402			

* Sig at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

Findings in a table (4) showed no socioeconomic class statistically significant effect at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on participants' levels of social intelligence, general self-efficacy, and public speaking levels.

Question four: To what extent can social intelligence and general self-efficacy predict public speaking skills? In table (5) below, Multiple Linear Regression analyses were used to find out whether public speaking skills can be predicted by social intelligence and general self-efficacy.

Table 5. Multiple Linear Regression

independent variables	dependent variable	constant	F	R	R2	Beta	t	Sig
General self-efficacy	Public speaking skills	0.47	19.51	0.33	0.43	0.58	3.91	0.00*
Social intelligence						0.14	0.97	0.00*

* Sig at ($\alpha \leq 0.01$)

The findings of the multiple linear regression provided a collective significant effect between general self-efficacy and social intelligence, (F = 19.51, sig =0.00, R2 = 0.43) explaining 43% of the variation in public speaking skills. The individual predictors were investigated further and indicated that general self-efficacy (t = 3.91, p = 0.00) and social intelligence (t = 0.97, p = 0.00) were significant predictors of public speaking skills. So, the predictive equation can be shown as:

Public speaking skills = (0.47 + 0.58 × General self-efficacy) + (0.14 × social intelligence)

11. Discussion

The results showed a higher influence of self-efficacy on students' public speaking skills than social intelligence. General self-efficacy and social intelligence showed a moderately significant association. Additionally, the findings revealed a positive but weak connection between general self-efficacy and public speaking skills. Also, the Pearson test detected a weak positive link between social intelligence and public speaking ability. Social intelligence and general self-efficacy were considered positive indicators of their public speaking skills. Finally, a statistically significant gender difference was detected among the participants' public speaking proficiency, though it was in favor of the male participants.

This finding would indicate that a student's optimistic outlook on life is thought to be closely correlated with their high level of social intelligence. The results of our study also revealed that students with high levels of social intelligence and positive general self-efficacy views are likely to have favourable self-efficacy beliefs about their public speaking skills. This stresses the relevance of assessing students' life expectations and talents as well as their social intelligence in developing public speaking skills. This can lead us to the conclusion that differences in the participants' levels of public speaking skills can be linked to their gender. However, there was no evidence of a significant relationship between the socioeconomic class level of participants, general self-efficacy, and social intelligence. This would show that the participants' self-efficacy and social intelligence are not affected by their gender in any way.

The results of this study can be understood in light of Bandura's (2007) self-efficacy and social intelligence theories (Petrides, 2011). The current study's findings support the widely held belief that social intelligence and self-efficacy are conceptually and practically related. According to Bandura (1997), students' actual performances provide trustworthy direction and indicators for evaluating and assessing their self-efficacy beliefs. Therefore, the positive correlation between social intelligence and self-efficacy found in this study can be viewed as empirical evidence in favor of the ideas Bandura put forth in his theory of self-efficacy. The results also lend credence to Petrides' (2011) hypothesis that social intelligence is a solid predictor of public speaking abilities.

The results of the current study can be further interpreted in light of earlier investigations into the connections between social intelligence, self-efficacy, and the performance and competence of students' skills. Our findings on the beneficial relationship between social intelligence and self-efficacy were consistent with those of Ebrahimi et al. (2018), who discovered a strong and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and the effectiveness of students' speaking abilities. Awwad and Alkhutaba's findings (2021), which indicated a substantial correlation between general self-efficacy, English language proficiency, and emotional intelligence, were similarly consistent with this outcome. This finding was in line with those of Tosun, Gündodu, and Ergin (2022), who found that social intelligence, self-efficacy, and a self-assured coping style substantially predicted emotional intelligence.

12. Implications and Limitations of the Study

The results of this study have several pedagogical ramifications for a wide range of stakeholders. The connection between social intelligence, self-efficacy, and public speaking abilities supports the three elements as a recipe for effective language acquisition. Thus, to improve students' speaking abilities, it is important to take into account and teach them about the dimensions and metrics of social intelligence. It is also recommended that teachers keep an eye on their pupils' self-efficacy beliefs and help them feel more capable when dealing with challenging language activities. The results of this study further confirmed the importance of general self-efficacy beliefs as a crucial determinant of language learning success. To maintain high academic accomplishment and language proficiency, pupils must be made aware of the need for life skills in addition to academic skills. The results suggest that language education sponsors should provide curricula, training programs, counseling, and awareness sessions emphasizing the strategic importance of high social intelligence and a belief in one's ability to control language learning abilities.

Only the data collection and analysis portions of the study used quantitative methodologies. It is advised that future studies triangulate their data collecting by using qualitative techniques including case studies, interviews, and observations. To help researchers better grasp the relationship between social intelligence and public speaking skills, it is also advised to examine the variation in students' self-efficacy views over an extended period. Finally, more investigation is required to determine the causal connections between social intelligence and self-efficacy in both instructors and students.

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