

**Academic Performance and its Relationship to Self-Transcendence of
EFL Educational Colleges' Students**

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ABSTRACT

EFL educational college students need high personality features in order to bear difficulties and do their best to be successful teachers and ready for future responsibility. The current study aims to find out first, EFL educational colleges' students' academic performance and self-transcendence, and second, identify the relationship between EFL educational college students' academic performance and self-transcendence. The study is correlational one in which the sample consists of (158) students from different EFL Educational Colleges in Baghdad city during the academic year (2022/2023). Reed's (1986) questionnaire has been adopted to find out students' self-transcendence as a study instrument and academic performance is represented by their final graduation scores. The findings have revealed that students have a high level of self-transcendence and a moderate level of academic performance. Furthermore, the participants' self-transcendence is positively correlated with their academic performance. Thus, several recommendations and suggestions have been put forward.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Self-Transcendence, EFL Educational Colleges' Students, Teacher Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic performance is described as students who have good grades, test scores, and levels of perseverance (all of these characteristics compose what the authors refer to as academic resilience (i.e., academic success) (York et al., 2015). Kumar et al. (2021), defined it as “a student's measurable and visible conduct during a certain period and is an



accumulation of scores obtained by a scholar in different assessments such as class exams, mid and end semester examinations, and so on” (p. 3094).

York et al. (2015), add that academic performance may be characterized in terms of students' persistence, which can be interpreted as academic advancement of students to degree completion, independent of institution-related circumstances and concerns.

Self-transcendence is the capacity to transcend one's own goals and desires to connect with others and their surroundings (Reed & Kuwanda, 2008). Runquist and Reed (2007), emphasizes that self-transcendence gives people the ability to go beyond a self-centered existence and discover significance in their past and present, have meaningful relationships with others, learn how to serve others and receive support, and be open to learning about the outside world.

This research provides insights for teachers to promote EFL students' academic performance and self-transcendence to develop them. However, the problem of the current research is that not all teachers can influence their students' academic performance. Many Iraqi studies deal with the problems related to the relationship between psychological variables and student-teacher professional performance (Saalh, 2014; Saalh, 2020; Saalh & Salim, 2020; Saalh & Esmaeel, 2022) but in this research, the problem is the student-teacher academic performance. This research focuses on the linguistic aspects of EFL teacher education which is one of the main two aspects of teacher education, the linguistic aspect and the professional one (Gebhard, 2006). Like other professions, EFL instructors in Iraq today encounter several social and academic obstacles that need more than just language proficiency and professional experience. For this fantastic work, they need to possess strong psychological traits that allow them to go over these challenges and give it their all.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Academic Performance (AP)

Everywhere you go, people are concerned about the educational performance of their students (Romerhausen, 2013). Academic performance is the degree to which an educator, student, or institution has met their short- or long-term learning objectives, as determined by cumulative grade point average (CGPA) or continuous assessment (Talib, 2012). Narad and Abdullah (2016) stated that the primary characteristic and one of the major goals of education is academic performance.

According to Eyong et al. (2014), it is stated that efforts to enhance educational standards and investments in human and educational resources lead to a nation's growth. Improving students' academic performance is one of the primary objectives of educational planning. Through their academic achievement, students can fully exhibit their skills and abilities in line with their educational aspirations. Interestingly, one of the most important markers of a top-notch education is academic achievement. It follows that everyone involved—students, instructors, parents, school administrators, and the community at large—is quite concerned about academic achievement right now. Researchers have made many efforts to address the issues underlying academic performance.

Adeyemo (2001) defines academic performance as the information that a student has learned and that a teacher assesses using grades and/or learning objectives that students and instructors establish and have to be met over a certain amount of time. Academic institutions' main objective is to help students attain academic excellence by assisting them in demonstrating improved academic performance.



Hijazi and Naqvi (2006), assert that factors such as age, gender, and housing location have little effect on academic achievement, but they also assert that those who live near a university may do noticeably better than those who do not. It is also said that weak kids who are grouped with strong students will do better academically and have a higher chance of graduating on schedule.

According to Arshad et al. (2015), academic performance indicates how well students have fulfilled their educational goals and is the final result of education. Academic performance is an essential factor in students' ability to effectively acquire academic information and skills throughout primary, secondary, and postsecondary education (Mascolo et al., 2014). The academic performance of female university students is associated with their anxiety levels (Gao et al., 2020).

Students' academic performance is significant because it influences a country's social and economic development. Student academic success raises the chances of producing qualified workers that will support the nation's social and economic development (Ali et al., 2009).

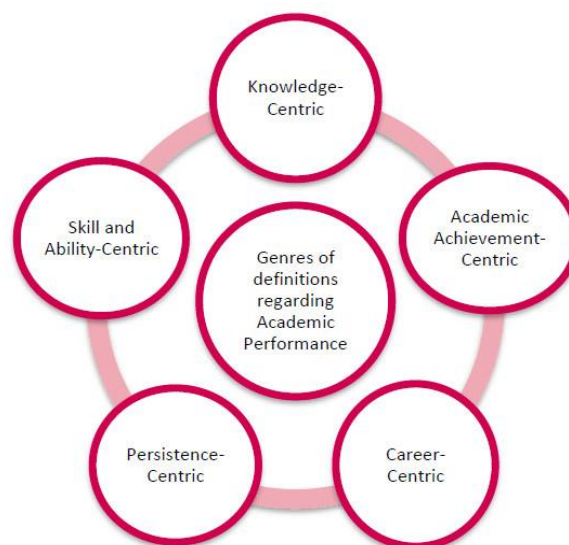
Academic performance is seen to be a sign of intellectual competence. Various points of view exist about the reasons behind the academic success of some pupils and the underachievement of others. Because of this, lots of psychologists have been working nonstop to pinpoint the primary factors that influence each student's academic success. Exam performance is the result of several variables interacting, including learning. Learning has a big influence on the lives of students (Mangal & Mangal, 2009). According to Rueda (2011), achieving academic success enhances self-control, topic mastery, and active learning, all of which help students become active participants in society.

Bell (2017), states that finding, evaluating, tracking, and supporting students' development in schools takes a lot of time, even when there are other methods to success in the job than education. Parents are worried about their children's academic achievement because they want to expand their career alternatives and job security. Schools also spend in promoting strong academic habits for the same purpose. They tend to impact things like worries about the school's standing and the likelihood of getting government funding, which shows how well the institution is doing academically overall.

As a result, the various interpretations of students' academic performance may be classified into the following types:

Figure 2.2

Genres of Definitions Regarding Academic Performance



To put it another way, achieving excellent marks and other equivalent academic accomplishments, finding a desirable career, and intending and persevering toward education are all examples of what is meant to be considered academic success. Furthermore, academic accomplishment ranks highest when statistics on students' performance in

the classroom are searched for, followed by information obtained and finally skills and talents acquired (York et al., 2015).

2.1.2 Factors Contributing to High Academic Performance

High levels of student learning are seen to be achievable when the factors that follow are taken into consideration, with the expectation that students will pick up essential concepts, abilities, and information needed for success.

1. Instructional Leadership

One of the primary fields of attention in education in the early 21st century has been an ongoing desire for more responsibility for the improvement of student performance. To fulfill local, regional, and national standards, universities and other institutions need to ensure that every student is proficient in the curriculum. Because of this, administrators at competent institutions put a high value on teaching and learning, especially when it comes to visible student improvement, whereas administrators at ineffective institutions give little thought to methods for improving students' academic performance. Creating a vision for their educational establishments, giving teachers leadership responsibilities, and assisting schools in becoming learning communities would be the main priorities of instructional leaders (Chileya, 2016).

Lezotte (2010) highlights instructional leadership as a sign of a successful institution. Proactive in their approach, effective instructional leaders seek out help in developing a culture that fosters learning and personal growth as well as team leadership. Schools need capable administrators to plan the teaching and learning process in order to fulfill their objectives. Lezotte (2010) claims that the instructional leader's main duty is to guarantee that the stated purpose is accomplished by creating a

supportive learning environment in the classroom. Wilson (2005), adds that an institution with successful instructional leaders would have higher academic achievement, teacher morale and satisfaction, teacher self-efficacy, school and organizational culture, instructor effectiveness and time on task, and enhanced academic performance.

2. Safety and Orderliness of the Institution Environment

Effective institutions have a culture that is injury-free, businesslike, peaceful, and focused. The school has a welcoming atmosphere that promotes teaching and learning. In addition to removing undesirable activities, he stresses the need for educational institutions to teach pupils the appropriate behaviors that maintain the school safe and orderly. Desirable traits include an awareness of democratic principles, tolerance for human variety, and cooperative team learning. Teachers need to provide an example of this desirable conduct as well (Lezotte, 2010).

3. High Expectations for Success

High expectations are a characteristics of each successful effort because they provide the challenge and inspiration needed for an individual to reach their maximum potential. Although there are other elements that contribute to success, such the environment, individual work habits and attitudes, general and particular skills, and even chance, the most important component is having high expectations. It is important to establish high standards for oneself since action plans are usually created once objectives have been defined. Other people's expectations are significant since individuals usually go above and beyond to meet these expectations. People in both circumstances eventually veer toward mediocrity or even failure when they don't have high expectations (Nyagosia et al., 2013).



4. Opportunity to Learn/Student Time on Task

Having suitable content and sufficient time to present it is essential for effective education. Administrators and instructors must strike a balance between the time provided for teaching and the expanding demands of the curriculum. In a good school, teachers spend a lot of time in the classroom teaching the core courses. Purposeful teaching, which requires efficient organization, purposefulness, planned lessons, and adaptive practice, is necessary in educational institutions (Lezotte, 2010). Erling (2007), stated that many scholars believe that improving the quality of the time students spend participating in concentrated learning activities should get greater attention than just expanding the number of learning days available to them.

2.1.4 Measuring Academic Performance

Dill and Soo (2004), state that performance evaluation is crucial in all companies, especially academic ones where stakeholders and the government are paying more attention to how well higher education institutions throughout the globe are doing. Some universities have been experimenting with market-type methods to help their institutions compete for research funding and fees, as well as students.

Exams and continuous assessments are commonly used to evaluate academic achievement; however, opinions differ on the best way to assess academic performance and whether declarative information such as facts or procedural knowledge such as skills should be prioritized (Bhagat, 2013).

2.2 Self-Transcendence (ST)

Self-transcendence, as defined by Cloninger et al. (1993), is a characteristic associated with spiritual ideas and experiences, such as the

pursuit of something greater and more noble than oneself. Runquist and Reed (2007), state that self-transcendence encourages individuals to move beyond a self-centered life, find meaning in both the past and the present, have meaningful connections with others, learn how to help others and accept assistance, and remain receptive to new information.

Self-transcendence is an essential component of knowledge that develops over a person's lifetime of growth and development. According to Garcia-Romeu (2010), it seems to be gaining traction in a variety of domains, such as developmental psychology, personality theory, gerontology, positive psychology, and psychiatric genetics. Based on Wong (2016), self-transcendence can be seen as a psychological state, with parts of it including motivation, value orientation, developmental stage, personality trait, and worldview.

Yaden et al. (2017), confirms that a popular definition of self-transcendence is an increase in social and emotional ties and a decrease in self-saliency. Self-transcendence is the “phenomenon of experiencing one's self as expanding both backward and forward in time; a feeling of connectedness to all of humanity, the earth, and the cosmos; and a turn toward existential concerns such as the meaning of life and future death” (Reischer et al., 2020, p. 1).

This phenomenon makes one feel associated with other people, the natural world, and the universe as a whole, which allows the ego to become focused on existential issues rather than the banality of life (Reischer et al., 2021).

2.2.1 Three Steps to Self-Transcendence



Wong has shown self-transcendence, relying on the work of Viktor Frankl. Wong (2016) asserts that self-transcendence and the search for meaning are fundamental components of our spiritual character, which influences our health and recuperation. He believes that the more we "forget ourselves" when we commit to a cause, a service, or a love, the more we really actualize who we truly are as people and the more human we become. Wong dismisses "self-actualization" as a separate idea, seeing it as only a "side effect" of self-transcendence.

Three stages are mentioned by Worth and Smith (2021, p. 3) that provide a systematic, growing focus on the implications of this for those of us who are pursuing self-transcendence:

1. Seeking situational meaning: this involves looking for values—which might be spiritual—beyond our particular or situational constraints. One would need to retain a mindset of "openness, curiosity, and compassion" in addition to awareness of the present moment in both the inner and outside experiences to achieve this.

2. Seeking our calling: searching for, pursuing, and engaging in a higher purpose, career, or activity that is connected to or furthers the greater good are all part of this. This might resemble a concrete goal or objective in life that directly helps other people. Wong contends that one calling is influenced by both the profession or field of work and the way one responds to life's obstacles. Based on the temperaments and experiences, that would express or respond to this calling.

3. Looking for the ultimate meaning: this includes putting a domain that transcends time, space, physical limitations, and the current state of affairs. Wong describes "ideas of goodness, truth, and beauty" that atheists can

find appealing. This level of transcendence will make one's assumptions, views, worldview, and philosophy clear.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Population and Sampling

The sample consists of 158 EFL students from Al-Iraqia University (College of Education for Women) and University of Baghdad (Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences and the College of Education for Women). There are 473 fourth-year students throughout the departments represented. The features of the larger group are reflected in the sample. See table (1.1)

Table (1.1)
Population and sample

College	Population	Sample	Percentage
College of Education for Women- University of Baghdad	219	73	33.33%
College of Education for Women- Al- Iraqia University	125	42	33.33%
College of Education for Humanities- Ibn Rushd	129	43	33.33%
Total	473	158	33.34%

3.2 Description of The Study Instruments

To achieve the aims of the current study, two sources of data gathering have been used. They are the scores of academic performance and the Self-transcendence questionnaire.



3.2.1 Academic Performance (AP)

The sample's academic performance was gathered focusing on the cumulative rates of fourth-stage students from the 1st to 4th year.

3.2.2 Self-Transcendence Questionnaire (STQ)

The study uses Reed's (1986) questionnaire to assess students' Self-Transcendence. The questionnaire consists of 15 items. Each item is answered on a four-point Likert scale, with the highest score being 60 and the lowest being 15.

3.3 Validity and Reliability

The instruments have been exposed to a jury of fourteen university instructors who are experts in the field of ELT. The jurors are asked to decide the face validity of the study instruments. They agree on the scoring scheme and the whole items, except for some linguistic modifications that have been taken into consideration. Furthermore, they change item No. 11 (accepting death as part of life) into (accepting fate as part of life) to fit the research sample.

The reliability of STQ is estimated by using the internal consistency method, Cronbach Alpha. The reliability coefficient (0.738) is acceptable.

4. RESULTS

From the first through the fourth year, the study gathered cumulative rates of fourth-stage students. With a standard deviation of 6.701, the arithmetic mean score was 75.658. The statistical significance of the range between the arithmetic mean and the hypothetical mean was evaluated using a one-sample t-test. At a significance level of (0.05) and a degree of freedom of (157), the calculated t-value was significantly higher than the tabulated t-value of (1.98), demonstrating a good level of academic performance in the sample, see table (1.2).

Table (1.2)

Statistical Findings of AP

Variable	N	M	SD	hypothetical M	df	t-test		Sign. (0.05)
						Cal.	Tab.	
AP	158	75.658	6.702	50	157	48.123	1.96	Sign.

The STQ has been given to the sample to "find out the self-transcendence of the study sample." The questionnaire's arithmetic mean score is (50.088), and its standard deviation is (6.597). It has been determined that the hypothetical mean is (37.5). The statistical significance of the difference between the arithmetic mean and the hypothetical mean has been determined using a one-sample t-test. The results showed that, at a significance level of (0.05) and a degree of freedom of (157), the calculated t-value of (23.99) is found to be significantly higher than the tabulated t-value of (1.98). This implies the study's sample exhibits a high degree of self-transcendence, see table (1.3).

Table (1.3)

Statistical Findings of ST

Variable	N	M	SD	hypothetical M	df	t-test		Sign. (0.05)
						Cal.	Tab.	
ST	158	50.088	6.597	37.500	157	23.99	1.96	Sign.

The Pearson correlation coefficient is used to analyze student responses on the AP and STQ to fulfill the study's goal, which is to "find out the correlational relationship between the study sample academic performance and self-transcendence." The results show that the correlation coefficient is (0.263). The results of the t-test, which is used to determine the significance of the correlation, show that the calculated t-value of (3.40) is higher than the tabulated t-value (1.98) with a degree of freedom of (156) at the significance level (0.05). This suggests that AP and ST have a statistically significant positive correlation, see table (1.4).

Table (1.4)

The Relationship Between AP and ST

N	r-value	t-test		Sign. (0.05)
		Cal.	Tab.	
158	0.263	3.40	1.96	Sign.

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Concerning the presented study, the findings reveal that EFL Educational college students have a high level of ST. This indicates that the students know well how to have fun with hobbies, accept growth and fate as a part of life, get involved with other people or the community when possible, adjust their current life situation, share their experiences with others, enjoy their pace of life, help others in some way, let go of past regrets and many more. On the part of AP, it is found that the students have a good level of AP. Moreover, the students' ST is statistically correlated with their AP.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In light of the preceding results and discussions related to the aims of the study, it is concluded that EFL Educational college students have a high level of ST with a good level of AP. Furthermore, the study findings reveal that there is a positive relationship between ST of EFL Educational college students and their AP.

7. Recommendations

In the light of the conclusions drawn, a number of recommendations are forwarded:

- 1- Foster a student-centered approach: Encourage student participation, engagement, and active learning in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, which can enhance academic performance and self-transcendence.
- 2- Use differentiated instruction techniques: Tailor instructional methods and materials to accommodate the diverse learning needs and preferences of EFL educational college students, promoting their academic success and self-transcendence.
- 3- Promote self-regulated learning: Teach students self-monitoring, goal-setting, and reflection techniques to enhance their metacognitive skills, self-management, and academic achievement.
- 4- Provide timely and constructive feedback: Regularly assess students' performance and provide specific feedback that highlights their strengths and areas for improvement, helping them develop a growth mindset and enhance their academic performance.



5- Cultivate a sense of self-transcendence: Provide opportunities for students to explore and reflect on their personal values, goals, and aspirations, fostering a sense of purpose and self-transcendence beyond academic achievements.

6- Support students' socio-emotional well-being: Recognize the impact of emotional and social factors on students' academic performance and self-transcendence. Offer counseling services, mentorship programs, and extracurricular activities that address their holistic development.

8. Suggestions

In the light of the findings of this study, the line of studies could be expanded to the following topics:

1. Explore the role of self-regulation techniques in enhancing academic performance and self-transcendence among EFL educational college students.
2. Explore the role of technology-based instructional tools in improving academic performance and self-transcendence among EFL educational college students.

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