

The role of learning climate on self-efficacy beliefs and self-perceived communication competences of EFL learners in higher education

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to explore the role of learning climate on self-efficacy beliefs and self-perceived communication competences of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in higher education. The study used a cross-sectional survey design. The data were collected with a questionnaire and two scales involving Likert-type items from 137 higher education students. Several statistical techniques were employed to analyze the quantitative data. Results showed that EFL students' learning climate perceptions, self-efficacy beliefs, and self-perceived communication competence levels were moderate. There was no significant difference among students' learning climate, self-efficacy, and self-perceived communication points in terms of their sex. There was a difference between 1st year and 2nd year students for learning climate, and there was no significant difference among students' self-efficacy and self-perceived communication points in terms of their year. A positive significant relationship among students' learning climate and self-efficacy and self-perceived communication competence was found. Self-efficacy and self-perceived communication competence were found to be stronger predictors of each other.

Key words: learning climate, self-efficacy, self-perceived communication competence, EFL, higher education

El papel del clima de aprendizaje en las creencias de autoeficacia y las competencias comunicativas autopercibidas por los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera en educación superior

RESUMEN: Este estudio tiene como objetivo explorar el papel del clima de aprendizaje en las creencias de autoeficacia y las competencias comunicativas autopercibidas por los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera en la educación superior. El estudio utilizó un diseño de encuesta transversal. Los datos fueron recogidos a través de un cuestionario y dos escalas con ítems tipo Likert de 137 estudiantes de educación superior. Se emplearon varias técnicas estadísticas para analizar los datos cuantitativos. Los resultados mostraron que las percepciones del clima de aprendizaje, las creencias de autoeficacia y los niveles de competencia comunicativa autopercibidos por los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera eran moderados. No hubo diferencia significativa entre el clima de aprendizaje de los estudiantes, la autoeficacia y los elementos comunicativos en cuanto a sexo. Hubo diferencia entre los estudiantes de 1° y 2° año en cuanto al clima de aprendizaje, y no hubo diferencia significativa entre la autoeficacia de los estudiantes y

los elementos comunicativos entre cursos. Se halló una relación significativa positiva entre el clima de aprendizaje de los estudiantes y la autoeficacia y la competencia comunicativa autopercibida. Se encontró que la autoeficacia y la competencia comunicativa autopercibida son los predictores más fuertes entre sí.

Palabras clave: clima de aprendizaje, autoeficacia, competencia comunicativa autopercibida, inglés como lengua extranjera, educación superior

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning climate, self-efficacy, and self-perceived communication competence are among the preliminary inquiry topics which have gained importance among professionals in educational contexts, especially in foreign language learning, over the last five decades. Foreign language learning climate can either foster or hinder the abilities of foreign language learners, and literature suggests creating a foreign learning environment in which learners respect each other, express their thoughts, and feelings without any hesitation, and autonomous learning is supported (Bucholz & Sheffler, 2009; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987; Meyer & Turner, 2006).

Self-Determination Theory asserts that intrinsic self-determined motivation is necessary for individuals' positive functioning, and social environments that enhance autonomy help self-determined motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Presenting different options for learners, respecting learners' needs and viewpoints, setting rational classroom rules, showing confidence in learners' performances, accepting learners without prejudices, encouraging learners to further questions, and creating a trustful environment in which learners can easily express and discuss their ideas without any hesitation are among the features of positive educational settings where autonomy is supported, and, a learning climate in which autonomy is supported helps self-determined motivation and other innumerable positive results (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Reeve & Jang, 2006; Yu, Chen, et al., 2018; Yu, Traynor et al., 2018). Autonomy and competence can be sequenced among the experiences regulated by the individuals' social environments, and autonomy support is a crucial social factor in developing intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1991; Núñez et al., 2012; Ryan et al., 2009). The literature reported an increase in academic performance, perceived competence, and creativity in classrooms where autonomy was encouraged (Deci et al., 1981; Flink et al., 1990; Koestner et al., 1984; Williams et al., 1994). Accordingly, the literature indicated that there is a positive correlation between learner autonomy and self-efficacy (Mojoudi & Tabatabaei, 2014; Ozkal, 2014; Tilfarlioglu & Ciftci, 2011), and highly self-efficient students are more willing to devote effort and engage in learning activities to get better performances (e.g., Liem et al., 2008; Lau & Roeser, 2002). Bandura (1997) states that self-efficacy is the basic construct of self-control, and self-efficacy can be cultivated in schools.

These three constructs and their relations with different variables have been systematically studied at different language education contexts, and it was revealed that learning climate affects students' academic achievements (Barksdale et al., 2019; Bennett, 2001; Ekpo et al., 2009; Peters, 2012; Zysberg & Schwabsky, 2020) and self-efficacy (Krummell, 2020; Leone, 2009; Peters, 2012; Zysberg & Schwabsky, 2020); self-efficacy affects students' attribution (Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008), anxiety (Fallah, 2017; Woodrow, 2011), writing performance and writing affect (Hetthong &

Teo, 2013; Woodrow, 2011), reading strategies (Li & Wang, 2010), vocabulary learning strategies (Anam & Stracke, 2016; Mizumoto, 2011), language learning strategies (Nosratinia et al., 2014; Yang & Wang, 2015), self-regulation (Ghonsooly & Ghanizadeh, 2013), academic listening (Graham, 2011), metacognitive awareness (Nosratinia et al., 2014), motivation (García, 2007; Fatemi & Vahidnia, 2013), and strategy use in writing (Mastan & Maarof, 2014); and self-perceived communication competence interacts with students' oral communication use (Ghani & Azhar, 2017), classroom anxiety (Asmalı, 2019), communication apprehension (Subekti, 2020), strategy use (Liu, 2013; Khabiri & Azaminejad, 2009), and willingness to communicate (Albooni & Ishag, 2020; Bahadori & Hashemizadeh, 2018). Considering these three constructs together and understanding their relations with each other in foreign language education contexts may contribute to the efficiency of foreign language education contexts. To this end, this paper aims to investigate primarily the role of foreign language learning climate on self-efficacy beliefs and self-perceived communication competences of English as a foreign language (EFL) higher education students.

1.1. Learning Climate: Autonomy Support

Self-Determination Theory focuses on the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness with others by asserting that these factors play a crucial role for individuals in accomplishing their basic needs by fostering their motivation, psychological development, and conducting tasks at a moderate level, and restraining these factors in an environment lead to undesired results (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Ševkušić et al., 2014). Autonomy provides learners with the ability to take responsibility for their learning (Holec, 1981; Little, 1991), and it develops through focused interactions with teachers and peers in formal education settings (Little, 2001). Teachers can support learners' competences by providing them with appropriate learning tools and feedback to enhance their success and efficacy (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). Individuals are apt to internalize those values and experiences to which they feel related, and relatedness facilitates the internalization process (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). Based on these assumptions, learning climate can be regarded as a set of features in a learning environment perceived by its participants (Hodgetts & Altman, 1979), and it is a delicate spirit of an institution that can be recognized by experienced professionals (Chamberline, 1971). In this study, learning climate refers to the autonomy support of lecturers in higher education. The learners' experiences with their lecturers in educational contexts form their learning climate perceptions in general. Providing choices for learners, learners' being understood by their lecturers, learners' being open with their lecturers, lecturers' trust in their students' abilities, lecturers' acceptance by their learners, lecturers' encouraging students to ask further questions, learners' trust in their lecturers, lecturers' answering students' questions carefully and thoroughly, lecturers' knowledge on students' preferences, lecturers' handling students' emotions carefully, lecturers' showing care to their students as individuals, lecturers' rapport with their students on solving problems, learners' sharing their feelings and thoughts with their lecturers, etc. are among the features of a positive learning climate in which learners' autonomy is supported by their lecturers at higher education.

1.2. Self-Efficacy

Social Cognitive Theory asserts that there are interrelated interactions among environment, behavior, and individual factors affecting and shaping human beings' behaviors (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy, one of these individual factors, affects learners' behaviors profoundly in educational contexts. Self-efficacy can be defined as individuals' beliefs about their capabilities to organize and perform actions to operate in possible circumstances, and it involves four interrelated processes as cognitive, motivational, affective, and selective during the continuing regulation of human performance (Bandura, 1995). Self-efficacy encourages learners to be involved in activities helping their competences in educational settings, which contribute to their motivations and achievements (Zimmerman, 1995). For example, learners with high self-efficacy show more effort during threatening activities to eliminate barriers, while learners with low self-efficacy avoid participating in these activities and show defensive behaviors (Bandura & Adams, 1977).

1.3. Self-Perceived Communication Competence

Self-perceived communication competence addresses individuals' perceptions about themselves concerning their competences of conveying or giving information either orally or in a written way on something (McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988). When we consider foreign language learning contexts specifically, self-perceived communication competence refers to learners' perceptions on to what extent they have the potential to communicate in the target language. Self-perceived communication competence helps language learners be aware of their peculiar strengths and weaknesses that promote their language learning processes and their applications during communication with others (Pintrich, 2002).

McCroskey and McCroskey (1988) stated that most people tend to make crucial decisions concerning their self-perceived communication competences rather than their actual competences, and knowing individuals' beliefs about their perceptions of what they can accomplish is more important than knowing their actual competences. Self-perceived communication competence, as a frame, focuses on individuals' perceptions of themselves in interpersonal communication with others regardless of the size of interlocutors. Based on this notion, individuals who think of themselves as communicatively competent are supposed to be more eager and open to take part in communication with others (Samvati & Golaghaei, 2017).

1.4. The Rationale behind the Study and Research Questions

Learning climate, self-efficacy, and self-perceived communication competence are among the preliminary inquiry topics that have recently gained importance among educational contexts professionals. These three constructs were investigated separately in terms of their relations with other variables in various educational contexts. For example, Dağgöl (2019) found a significant relationship between learning climate and self-efficacy among high school students. Asmalı (2019) revealed low self-perceived communication competences among EFL learners. Çengel and Türkoğlu (2015) tried to develop a classroom climate scale. Topkaya (2010) investigated pre-service EFL teachers' computer self-efficacy and general self-efficacy, and a moderate positive correlation was found between these constructs. Kırmızı and Kırmızı

(2015) reported a negative correlation between self-efficacy and anxiety regarding the writing skills of Turkish EFL learners. Ersanlı (2015) found a low-level negative correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and EFL learning motivations of primary school students. Kızıllhan (2016) investigated the influence of classroom climate on learners' success and reported that many variants affected classroom climates.

However, to our knowledge, their interrelations with each other have not been considered beforehand. Various variables, from interactions between learners and teachers to the quality and quantity of these interactions, can affect the efficiency of a foreign language learning environment (Moos, 1979; Allodi, 2002). Literature has reported that self-efficacy has profound impacts on learning outcomes in education contexts as individuals with solid self-efficacy achieve higher academic scores by exerting greater behaviorally, cognitively, and motivationally efforts in the face of challenges (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Mills et al., 2006; Pajares, 2002). Furthermore, learners' self-perceived communication competences have an indispensable part in deciding whether or not to take part in actual communication, whatever their real competences are (Clément et al., 2003). Revealing the relations among these three constructs may contribute to classroom implementations and provide pedagogical insights for educational contexts in tertiary education. The present study addresses the role of foreign language learning climate on self-efficacy and self-perceived communication competence among EFL students in higher education, and it also intends to fill a gap in the literature by investigating the relationships of these three constructs with each other within a higher education context. The research questions of the study are as follows:

1. What are the students' foreign language learning climate, self-efficacy, and self-perceived communication competence levels?
2. Are there year or sex differences in the students' foreign language learning climate, self-efficacy, and self-perceived communication competence means?
3. Are there any relationships between foreign language learning climate, self-efficacy, and self-perceived communication competence?
4. Do students' foreign language learning climate levels predict their self-efficacy levels and self-perceived communication competence levels?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

The current study adopted a survey method, specifically a cross-sectional research design, using quantitative research instruments for data collection. A cross-sectional research design enables data collection at one point in time (Creswell, 2002). The data were collected through a questionnaire and two scales involving Likert-type items. In addition, the quantitative data were analyzed by employing several statistical techniques.

2.2. Participants

The current study was carried out in an EFL teacher education program of an education faculty at a public university in Turkey. The setting in which the study was conducted was

a conventional one where students and instructors performed lessons on a face-to-face basis in a classroom environment, and instructors were the primary figures in planning course content and delivering lessons actively while students were participating in the processes planned for them. Year and sex were chosen as variables in this study as previous research studies indicated the effect of being male or female and academic experience on individuals' behaviors and preferences (Abramo et al., 2018; Rhoten, 2004). There were 106 female EFL students (77.4%) and 31 male EFL students (22.6), a total of 137 EFL students, who voluntarily participated in the study. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 36 ($M=21.84$, $SD=2.66$). There were 53 participants (38.7%) from the 1st year, 28 participants (20.4%) from the 2nd year, 30 participants (21.9%) from the 3rd year, and 26 participants (19%) from the 4th year in the study.

2.3. Measurement Tools

Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ): The LCQ adapted from the Health-Care Climate Questionnaire by Williams and Deci (1996) was used in the study. The LCQ has 15 statements with 7-point Likert-type items ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7), and the higher total mean of the questionnaire indicates a more positive learning climate. The statements in the questionnaire reflect students' perceptions of their instructors regarding learner autonomy support (CSDT, 2020). For this study, Cronbach's alpha value was calculated as .93.

Self-Efficacy Beliefs Scale (SEBS): The tool, based on the existing instruments by Horwitz (1988) and Nezami et al. (1996), developed by Rahemi (2007), was used to learn about the self-efficacy beliefs of the students. The questionnaire has 10 statements with 5-point Likert-type items ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1), and the higher total mean score indicates a higher self-efficacy. For this study, Cronbach's alpha value was found as .71.

Self-Perceived Communication Competence Scale (SPCC): The SPCC developed by McCroskey and McCroskey (1988) was used to gather data about the participants' perceived competence. It was developed to get information regarding how communicatively competent people feel in various contexts. The scale involved 12 items that require participants to rate themselves between 0 (Completely Incompetent) and 100 (Completely Competent), and while the scores above 87 show a higher self-perceived communication competence, the scores below 59 show a lower self-perceived communicative competence. For this study, Cronbach's alpha value was calculated as .96 for the total score.

2.4. Data Collection and Analysis

Descriptive statistics (means, percentages, and frequencies) were employed to reveal participants' perceived levels concerning LCQ, SEBS, and SPCC. The normality of data was calculated through the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, and the homogeneity of the variances was calculated through Levene's test. Parametric test assumptions were determined, and parametric tests were applied in the analyses as Kurtosis and Skewness values of the data that were not suitable for normal distribution were between +2 and -2 (George & Mallery, 2010). Independent Samples t-Test was used in comparing two groups, and One-way ANOVA

and Bonferroni's correction tests were performed in comparisons of multiple groups. Simple linear regression, multiple regression, and Pearson correlation analyses were performed to reveal correlations between the variables.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Students' Foreign Language LCQ, SEBS, and SPCC Means

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for each measure. Mean values of LCQ, SEBS, and SPCC are shown in the table (Table 1). The mean values were found as 4.86 for LCQ, 3.81 for SEBS, and 74.63 for SPCC.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics for LCQ, SEBS, and SPCC*

	N	\bar{X}	SD.	Min	Max
LCQ	137	4.86	1.05	1.73	7.00
SEBS	137	3.81	0.49	2.50	5.00
SPCC	137	74.63	16.35	15.00	100.00

3.2. Sex and Year Differences in Students' Foreign Language LCQ, SEBS, and SPCC Means

Variance analysis was performed to investigate sex and year differences in students' foreign LCQ, SEBS, and SPCC means, see Table 2 and Table 3. According to Table 2, the mean values of female students were found as 4.89 for LCQ, 3.78 for SEBS, and 73.98 for SPCC; the mean values of male students were found as 4.75 for LCQ, 3.92 for SEBS, and 76.84 for SPCC. There was not a significant difference between the mean values of female and male students ($P > 0.05$).

Table 2. *Students' FL LCQ, SEBS, and SPCC means in terms of sex*

		N	\bar{X}	SD.	P
LCQ	Female	136	4.89	1.03	.51
	Male	31	4,75	1,14	
SEBS	Female	136	3.78	.46	.16
	Male	31	3,92	.56	
SPCC	Female	136	73.98	16.57	.39
	Male	31	76.84	15.60	

*Independent Samples t-Test

According to Table 3, 1st year students' mean values were found as 5.26 for LCQ, 3.90 for SEBS, and 75 for SPCC; 2nd year students' mean values were found as 4.40 for LCQ, 3.73 for SEBS, and 70.06 for SPCC; 3rd year students' mean values were found as 4.80 for LCQ, 3.80 for SEBS, and 72.12 for SPCC; and, 4th year students' means values were found as 4.64 for LCQ, 3.75 for SEBS, and 78.22 for SPCC. There were significant differences among the mean values of EFL students in terms of their years ($P < 0.05$).

Table 3. *Students' FL LCQ, SEBS, and SPCC means in terms of year*

	YEAR	N	\bar{X}	SD.	P
LCQ	1	53	5.26	.77	.002 ⁽¹⁻²⁾
	2	28	4.40	1.27	
	3	30	4.80	1.22	
	4	26	4.64	.86	
SEBS	1	53	3.90	.43	.421
	2	28	3.73	.53	
	3	30	3.80	.51	
	4	26	3.75	.53	
SPCC	1	53	75.01	16.43	.324
	2	28	70.06	17.14	
	3	30	72.12	13.68	
	4	26	78.22	17.89	

Note: One-way ANOVA and Bonferroni correction

3.3. The Correlations among Students' Foreign Language LCQ, SEBS, and SPCC

A meaningful correlation was determined for all correlation analyses (full sample), and SPCC was correlated more with SEBS. According to the results, a positive meaningful correlation was observed between LCQ and SEBS ($R = 0.173$; $P < 0.05$), LCQ and SPCC ($R = 0.170$; $P < 0.05$), and SEBS and SPCC ($R = 0.621$; $P < 0.001$). Table 4 summarizes the results.

Table 4. Students' FL LCQ, SEBS, and SPCC correlations

		LCQ	SEBS	SPCC
LCQ	r	1		
	p			
SEBS	r	.173*	1	
	p	.043		
SPCC	r	.170*	.621**	1
	p	.047	.000	

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note: Pearson Correlation Analysis

3.4. The Regressions among Students' Foreign Language LCQ, SEBS, and SPCC

Table 5 summarizes the regression analysis results. Firstly, when Table 5 was analyzed, the effect of LCQ on students' SEBS levels was found to be meaningful ($F=4,165$; $P<0.05$). It was revealed that EFL students' LCQ points affect their SEBS points significantly in a positive way ($\beta= .173$; $T=2.041$; $P<0.05$). LCQ explains approximately 2.3% of the total variance in the SEBS levels. Secondly, the effect of LCQ on students' SPCC levels was found to be meaningful ($F=4.026$; $P<0.05$). It was found that EFL students' LCQ points affect their SPCC points significantly in a positive way ($\beta= .170$; $T=2.006$; $P<0.05$). LCQ explains approximately 2.2% of the total variance in the SPCC levels. Thirdly, it was determined that SEBS and SPCC mutually affect each other. The effect of SEBS on students' SPCC levels was found to be meaningful ($F=84.548$; $P<0.001$). It was found that EFL students' SEBS points affect their SPCC points significantly in a positive way ($\beta= .621$; $T=9.195$; $P<0.001$). SEBS explains approximately 38.1% of the total variance in the SPCC levels. Lastly, the effect of SPCC on SEBS was found to be highly significant ($F=84.548$; $P<0.001$). It was found that EFL students' SPCC points affect their SEBS points significantly in a positive way ($\beta= .621$; $T=9.195$; $P<0.001$). SPCC explains approximately 38.1% of the total variance in the SEBS levels.

Table 5. Regression analysis results

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	DEPENDENT VARIABLE	B	STD. ERROR	β	T	R	R ²	F	P
LCQ	SEBS	.081	.040	.173	2.041	.173	.023	4.165	.043
LCQ	SPCC	2.626	1.309	.170	2.006	.170	.022	4.026	.047
SEBS	SPCC	20.520	2.232	.621	9.195	.621	.381	84.548	<.001
SPCC	SEBS	.019	.002	.621	9.195	.621	.381	84.548	<.001

4. DISCUSSION

The first objective was to define the students' foreign language learning climate, self-efficacy, and self-perceived communication competence levels. The results revealed that the students reported moderate levels of foreign language learning climate, self-efficacy, and self-perceived communication competence. These findings are partially consistent with the previous studies. The finding regarding the correlation between learning climate and self-efficacy supported the literature, as several studies indicated a positive correlation between these two constructs (Dağgöl, 2019; Kim et al., 2015; Sun & Wang, 2020; Wang et al., 2012; Zhang & Guo, 2012). However, the finding regarding self-perceived communication competence contradicted the literature, as self-perceived communication competence was found low among Turkish EFL learners previously (Asmalı, 2019).

The second objective was to reveal whether there were year or sex differences in the students' foreign language learning climate, self-efficacy, and self-perceived communication competence means. The results showed that there were not any significant differences among the participants in terms of their sex. There were meaningful differences between 1st year and 2nd year students for LCQ, while there were no meaningful differences for the other scales among the participants in terms of year. 1st year and 2nd year were included as variables in the study, as it was thought that early adjustments may affect the students' perceptions of themselves and their surroundings (Ponitz et al., 2009). The results were consistent with the literature. For example, Sun and Wang (2020) and Villalón et al. (2013) found no sex differences between the participants in terms of self-efficacy regarding their writing skills, and the results also contributed to the literature by indicating no differences, except for 1st year and 2nd year for LCQ, among years.

The third objective was to reveal whether there are correlations among these variables. The results indicated positive correlations between learning climate and self-efficacy, learning climate and self-perceived communication competence, and self-efficacy and self-perceived communication competence. Previously, the literature indicated that there were positive relations between learning climate and self-efficacy in different contexts (Krummell, 2020; Peters, 2012). The findings reached in this study not only echoed the previous findings regarding learning climate and self-efficacy, but also widened and contributed to the literature by involving the self-perceived communication competence dimension in the Turkish EFL context. Moreover, self-efficacy was found to be positively correlated with many variables such as attribution, anxiety, performance, strategy use, self-regulation, motivation, academic listening, and metacognitive awareness (Anam & Stracke, 2016; Fallah, 2017; Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Hetthong & Teo, 2013; Fatemi & Vahidnia, 2013; García, 2007; Ghonsooly & Ghanizadeh, 2013; Graham, 2011; Li & Wang, 2010; Mastan & Maarof, 2014; Mizumoto, 2011; Nosratinia et al., 2014; Woodrow, 2011; Yang & Wang, 2015) in the previous literature. The findings of this study further revealed a positive correlation between self-efficacy and self-perceived communication competence. Furthermore, the literature previously showed that self-perceived communication competence affects many variables such as oral communication, classroom anxiety, communication apprehension, strategy use, and willingness to communicate (Albooni & Ishag, 2020; Asmalı, 2019; Bahadori & Hashemizadeh, 2018; Ghani & Azhar, 2017; Khabiri & Azaminejad, 2009; Liu, 2013; Subekti, 2020). This study contributed to the literature by revealing that self-perceived communication competence may positively affect self-efficacy.

The last objective was to show whether students' foreign language learning climate levels predict their self-efficacy levels and self-perceived communication competence levels. The results indicated that EFL students' learning climate perceptions affect both their self-efficacy beliefs and self-perceived communication competences significantly in a positive way. Additionally, self-efficacy beliefs and self-perceived competences positively interact with each other. These findings supported the previous studies which explored the effect of these three constructs on other variables in the literature. For example, Leone (2009) reported that classroom climate variables such as teacher effectiveness could affect students' achievements. Bandura and Adams (1977) asserted that self-efficacy highly predicts behavioral change after desensitization treatments. Similarly, Raoofi et al. (2012) stated that learners' performances in various tasks and language skills are strongly predicted by their self-efficacy levels. Hetthong and Teo (2013) revealed a significant positive correlation between writing self-efficacy and writing performance. Likewise, Donovan and MacIntyre (2004) found that self-perceived communication competence can significantly predict willingness to communicate among men of all age groups. Also, Asmalı (2019) reported that self-perceived communication competence and ambiguity tolerance are strong predictors of foreign language classroom anxiety in Turkish EFL learners. This study contributed to the previous literature by revealing the effects of these three constructs on each other.

5. CONCLUSION

The role of foreign language learning climate on self-efficacy beliefs and self-perceived communication competences of EFL students in Turkey was investigated in the current study. The learning climate perceptions, self-efficacy beliefs, and self-perceived communication competence levels of EFL students were found to be moderate in the study. There was not a significant difference among students' learning climate, self-efficacy, and self-perceived communication points in terms of their sex. There was a difference between 1st year and 2nd year students for learning climate, and there was not a significant difference among students' self-efficacy and self-perceived communication points in terms of their year. A significant relationship among students' foreign language learning climate perceptions and self-efficacy beliefs and self-perceived communication competences in a positive way was found. While foreign language learning climate was found to be a lower predictor of self-efficacy and self-perceived communication competence, self-efficacy, and self-perceived communication competence were found to be stronger predictors of each other.

6. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Several implications for teachers can be suggested based on these results. First, learning environment perceptions of the learners may show differences in terms of their years. 1st year learners may have negative perceptions regarding their learning environments for various reasons as they are at the beginning of their faculty education. Lecturers can handle this problem by supporting their students academically. Lecturers can create positive foreign language learning environments for students, which in turn contribute to their success, by

knowing students, understanding their expectations from university education, addressing their educational needs, etc. Next, creating a positive foreign language learning environment may help learners promote their efficacy beliefs and communication competences. The learners with higher self-efficacy beliefs and communication competences may become more autonomous in handling their educational needs, and this may contribute to their self-actualization and academic success in their future careers. Lecturers can help students enhance their self-efficacy beliefs and communication competences by supporting positive learning environments. Last, self-efficacy and self-perceived communication were found to be predictors of each other in this study, and this may suggest that supporting one of these constructs in foreign language learning environments can positively influence the other one. Lecturers can design and plan foreign language learning activities by keeping in mind the positive effects of these constructs on learners. Additionally, lecturers can arrange group projects involving small numbers of students to know them more personally and create a better learning climate.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study can be replicated with a larger sample size to reveal the relationships among these three constructs in a more detailed way. The data of the current study were obtained only from quantitative instruments. Research studies based on both qualitative and quantitative instruments can be designed in the future to reveal more clear results regarding the relationships among these constructs. Although foreign language learning climate was not found to be a strong predictor of EFL students' self-efficacy beliefs and self-perceived communication competences, a positive foreign language learning climate may help EFL students express themselves better and enhance their communication competences.

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