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The correlation between English language proficiency and perceived career opportunities'. Empirical Analysis

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the perspectives of employees' on need for English language proficiency, and skills for employment purpose. This paper demonstrates how ELP is related to PCO in Asian overseas market. Moreover, study employed survey data from employees' working in Middle-East countries. Findings explained that individual's English language skills can affect their prospects in various ways. The importance of employment, especially in ensuring "secure" employment. Getting "better" jobs. Educational policy planners may benefit from the research findings, optimizing English for teachers, employers, and career advisers, also, English language programs that support increased employability through language learning.

Keywords: English language, Perceived career opportunities, Middle-East.

Introduction

Effective communication skills are essential in a competitive job environment. In the context of globalization, English proficiency has become more important for job opportunities worldwide. This has been highlighted in several studies such as (Mae O, 2021; Asio, & Quijano, 2023). Proficiency in English frequently plays a crucial role in securing job prospects that provide high level salaries (Doan & Hamid, 2019) and specially in such organizations striving for increased productivity. In contrast, those people having lack of proficiency in the English language encounter challenges while seeking employment, particularly in high-paying positions (Akther, 2022). The inability of speaking English leads to financial losses like unemployment (Chea & Lo,

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2022). Proficiency in English is essential for individuals to progress in both local and international firms and being proficient in English can enhance their technical knowledge and abilities. It establishes a basis for development of "processing skills" that are essential to swiftly evolving the global work world, in which English language proficiency is becoming increasingly vital throughout the world.

The present day phenomenon of globalization exerts a significant influence on the labor market through facilitation and movement of highly skilled workers across different locations, countries, and regions of the world. The phenomenon of "globalization of human capital" refers to the widespread movement of individuals from impoverished nations to industrialized one's through international migration (Zainuddin et al., 2019). Moreover, there is a profound correlation between globalization and the English language. Globalization and the English language are mutually reinforcing elements that have significant effects on employment (Tran, 2012).

Both are also linked to significant transformations in the labor market (Jawing & Kamlun, 2022). The combination of globalization and the English language has facilitated the integration of local participants into global networks (Liu & Buckingham, 2023). For instance, a migrant from non-English background is employed in an English-speaking environment, where his local English proficiency is utilized on a worldwide scale. The level of worker's English skills significantly influence the career path in the global society.

However, current study investigates association among ELP and employment prospects for Pakistani students in Asian market. This article examines the impact of the English language competency of Pakistani university graduates on their employment prospects in the Asian labor market, taking into account the context of a globalized 21st century. The analysis will primarily examine the extent to which proficiency in English may be attributed to students achievements and setbacks in job achievement. This study adds to the existing literature by examining the impact of English language proficiency motivational factors on PCO academic success.

Literature Review

ELP (English Language Proficiency)

ELP is considered as a dominant element for employer (Liu & Buckingham, 2023). Hence, English-proficiency refers to "the different degree of fluency in the English language". English language proficiency is assessed using the four language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Terzioğlu & Kurt, 2022). Being able to communicate well in English is super important for getting the most out of working across different countries. It's also really important for understanding and using knowledge effectively (Wang et al., 2023). On the other hand, English speaking and listening skills are often seen as significant hurdles for international graduates in today's interconnected world.

In certain Asian countries, English instruction tends to focus less on conversational skills, and students have limited chances to practicing the English beyond the classroom (Nghia et al., 2023). Lots of international students don't really get enough practice of speaking English, even though

universities have those language proficiency requirements. Some students might be a bit nervous or unsure about speaking up in class or joining class discussions, and this can have a negative impact on their learning (Nguyen et al., 2023). English was the second language for students with the lowest average GPA. In a study conducted by Querol-Julián (2023), it was discovered, that there is a noteworthy, moderate, and positive correlation between the proficiency in the English language and the GPA of students in their preparatory year. This correlation was observed among students who were pursuing a major in business including two other non-business-related courses. Querol-Julián (2023) also points out that when students improve their English language skills, it has a positive impact on their academic performance in English and related degree courses, as well as good chances for perceived professional opportunities.

Perceived professional opportunity

Perceived professional (Career) opportunity (PCO) refers that employees' view work assignments and employment possibilities offered by their current company in relation to their career interests and ambitions (Rasheed et al., 2020). Research has demonstrated that employees' working for any businesses may be influenced by their perception of professional progression chances (Altuna et al., 2021). Inoue, et al. (2021) suggested that employee's perceptions exerts more significant influence on their attitude and conduct compared to the tangible human resource management policies and procedures implemented in a firm. Hence, maintaining a favorable view regarding the existence of career prospects inside one's firm is crucial for employee retention.

The significance of PCO has grown significantly in the era of professions without boundaries. Considering the current trend of careers involving multiple employers and the fact that employees' have more control over their career management than employers do (Inoue, et al., 2021), individuals will change organizations if they believe that their current organization does not offer the opportunities that support with desired career interest (Altuna et al., 2021). Safavi & Karatepe, (2019) proposed that offering career opportunities is crucial high-performance work practice in different industry. This is because perceived career opportunities assist frontline employees in acquiring new skills, enhancing their performance, and preparing for future career progression within the current organization. According to Altuna et al., (2021). It has been suggested that firms offers prioritize the creation and maintenance of a conducive work environment that offers substantial career advancement prospects in order to retain their personnel. Also, empirical research driven by prospect of progress and promotion, and that such prospects have positive correlation with English language proficiency (Jindapitak et al., 2022).

English language proficiency and perceived career opportunities'

Labor market performance is contingent upon a multitude of indicators. According to Zhang, Z. (2022), employers in the Asian job market prioritize graduates' profession-specific abilities over their 'well-roundedness', which includes personal qualities and assets such as English language ability. The study conducted by Altay et al. (2022) revealed that a high level of English language competence is a requirement for the majority of job positions in Australia. Additional research has demonstrated that proficiency in the English language is crucial for securing employment and

achieving success in the work market. According to Yuksel et al., (2023) correlation between proficiency in English and increased rates of job involvement. Sahan & Şahan (2021) also found that migrants who have higher levels of credentials and proficiency in the English language get more favorable results in terms of employment, incomes, and occupational position compared to migrants with lower levels of these human capital traits (Sapan & Mede, 2022). Sapan & Mede, (2022) utilized data to examine employment outcomes of migrants based on their birthplace, distinguishing between English speaking and non-English speaking individuals. It has been determined that migrants from English speaking backgrounds outperform migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds in terms of employment outcomes. This includes factors such as employment and unemployment rates, occupational status, and utilization of qualifications. Studies have found that immigrants with poorer proficiency in the English language have difficulties in achieving success in the labor market (Rasheed et al., 2020), and this can occasionally result in job loss (Babapour Chafi et al., 2021). Recognizing the strong connection between English language skills and employability, the Pakistan government has implemented projects like AMES to enhance the English language proficiency of job seeker (Orfan & Seraj, 2022) abroad.

Hypothesis1: English language proficiency positively related to PCO

Research Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative approach and included a total of seven participants from Pakistan, consisting of 156 individuals who were working overseas. This article commences with an examination of empirical research conducted on correlation among English language proficiency and perceived professional opportunity. Subsequently, followed by an examination of significance of English language skills in the Middle-East labor market. The data have been analyzed and categorized based on participants' perspectives on the Middle-East employees. To accomplish required response rate, researcher contacted individuals working as overseas employees' via utilized various social media platforms. Researcher picked sample size based on the general guidelines suggested by Zhang (2022). To make sure researcher have enough data for analysis, so need to take certain steps to manage and to gather a total of 195 responses. After going through the validation process and making some necessary adjustments, ends up with the final sample size of 145.

Table 1 demographics

		Total (145)	%
gender	Male	102	
	Female	48	
Age	15-20	24	16.55
	21-25	46	31.73
	26-30	44	30.34
	>30	31	21.38

Measurement Scale

ELP Scale

The ELP, developed by Al-Mahrooqi & Tuzlukova, (2014), was utilized to evaluate the level of proficiency. The instrument used in the study had seven different sections, with six questions each, to assess English proficiency in various areas such as professional, academic, and general communication skills.

Researchers often use a Likert scale ranging from one to five to gauge agreement, with one indicating "Strongly Disagree" and five indicating "Strongly Agree."

PCO Scale

Researchers utilized three-item perceived career opportunities (PCO) scale developed by Kraimer et al. (2011). Sample are: "This organization provides numerous job prospects that align with my professional aspirations," "I am interested in pursuing career opportunities within this organization," and

"This organization offers numerous job prospects that are appealing to me." On a 5-point Likert scale, participants were requested to indicate the degree of agreement they had with the given statements. The scale read: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly concur). In our investigation, the coefficient alpha for this scale was 0.80.

Items	Indicator	F.L	β	C.R	(AVE)
English language Proficiency (ELP)	ELP -1	.78	.80	0.80	0.89
	ELP -2	.79			
	ELP -3	.79			
	ELP -4	.79			
	ELP -5	.83			
perceived career opportunities (PCO)	PCO1	0.81	0.92	0.79	0.88
	PCO 2	0.87			
	PCO 3	0.83			

Statistical analysis

The data was characterized and the first research issue was addressed using descriptive statistics produced with SPSS 22.0; the second research question was investigated utilizing the partial least square.

Table2

Model	GFI	CMIN/DF	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	AGFI
ELP	.84	1.36	.95	.93	.07	.86
PCO	.91	1.67	.95	.93	.07	.86
Model fit	.92	1.76	.94	.94	.06	.85
Suggestion	>.90	<3	>.90	>.90	>.08	>.80

(PLS) approach. Tenenhaus (2008) describes the PLS methodology as a type of component-based structural equation modeling that offers an alternate method for testing causal models. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was carried out using AMOS 28.0, and the PLS was computed using SmartPLS 3.

Results

Author used exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to find any variables in the data-set that might be causing issues. Researchers got rid of items with a factor loading below .50, and ended up with a final model that had 8 items - 5 PCO items and 3 ELP items. Researchers conducted CFA for PCO and ELP to determine the model fit indices. You can refer to Table 2 for more details. Just wanted to mention that the PCO construct was analyzed using the second-order CFA model because ELP includes causal relationships and observations of multiple variables. The indices generally indicated a good fit for both models, although the fit for PCO was slightly below .90, which is the recommended threshold. There were no issues with the validity of the constructs. You can find all the information about reliability and validity in Table 3. The descriptive statistics show that ELP had the highest mean score of 5.76 among the ELP variables, while PCO had a mean score of 5.30. Moving on to the second research question, the analysis of the structural relationships between TPACK and TAM's variables. The PLS analysis showed that ELP had a significant impact on both PCO ($\beta=.25$). The R2 values for PCO were .06, respectively.

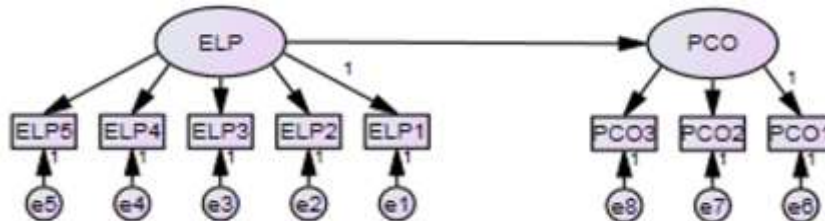


Figure 1 Conceptual-($\beta=.25$, $R^2=.06$)

Discussion

This study set out to investigate the possible relationship between English proficiency and perceived career opportunities' in Asian overseas employees. The significant finding that English language proficiency was the strongest predictor of perceived career opportunities Finding demonstrates that employees' acceptance of English language proficiency vocabulary is related to PCO and this aligns with some studies done previously (Raza et al., 2021).

This study used quantitative evidence to compliment PLS analysis and research hypotheses. The study findings could have significant implications for Asian overseas employees. If a strong positive relationship between English proficiency and perceived career opportunities is found, it would emphasize the importance of English language skills in advancing one's career prospects.

This could lead to increased emphasis on language training and proficiency testing for employees seeking to work overseas. Furthermore, it could also prompt employers to prioritize hiring candidates with strong English language skills, potentially creating a more competitive job market for Asian overseas employees. Additionally, the study findings may encourage individuals to invest more time and effort into improving their English proficiency, recognizing it as a crucial factor in enhancing their career prospects in an international work environment (Jawing & Kamlun, 2022). Raza et al. (2021) highlighted specific career opportunities that may be impacted by relationship between English proficiency and perceived career opportunities include international job postings, promotions to higher positions with global responsibilities, and opportunities to work in multinational companies or organizations. These opportunities often require strong English language skills to effectively communicate, collaborate, and navigate cross-cultural work environments. Having strong English language skills can open doors to a wide range of career advancement opportunities. It enables individuals to effectively communicate and collaborate in cross-cultural work environments, increasing their chances of securing international job postings, promotions to higher positions with global responsibilities, and opportunities to work in multinational companies or organizations (Leadbeatter et al., 2023).

English proficiency is therefore a crucial factor in enhancing career prospects in an international work environment. Effective communication is essential in global business environments, and language skills play a crucial role in achieving this. Proficiency in English, as the lingua franca of international business, enables individuals to effectively communicate and collaborate with colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds. It not only enhances career prospects in terms of international job postings and promotions to higher positions but also opens doors to opportunities in multinational companies or organizations where strong English language skills are highly valued. Furthermore, strong language skills also foster stronger relationships with clients and customers, as well as a deeper understanding of their needs and preferences. This can lead to better customer satisfaction and increased business success. Additionally, language proficiency allows individuals to easily navigate through globalized business world, where interactions with suppliers, partners, and competitors from different countries are common. Overall, mastering the English language is a valuable asset in today's globalized and interconnected business landscape.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has illuminated pivotal role that English language proficiency plays in shaping career opportunities and success within professional sphere (Sasan& Rabillas, 2022). The investigation centered on scrutinizing how language proficiency influences job performance and career advancement. The outcomes underscore notion that individuals endowed with robust English language skills are better positioned to excel in the globalized workplace, presenting them with enhanced prospects for growth and success. Nevertheless, it's crucial to recognize that language proficiency is just one facet of the complex mosaic determining career success, with factors like skills, experience, and cultural competence also wielding substantial influence (Serafini et al., 2022).

Looking ahead, organizations should grasp significance of fostering their employees' English language skills. By instituting language development programs and creating avenues for practical application, both individual and organizational advancement can be achieved. Simultaneously, individuals ought to proactively seek opportunities for language refinement, be it through enrollment in language courses, engagement in language exchange initiatives, or leveraging online resources for self-directed learning.

While this study has undeniably contributed valuable insights into importance of English language proficiency, the terrain remains ripe for further exploration. Future research should delve into the nuanced aspects of language proficiency, unraveling its implications for both individuals and organizations. This may involve a granular examination of the specific language skills paramount to various professions and industries, an exploration into the impact of bilingualism or multilingualism on career opportunities, or an investigation into the intersection of cultural competence and language proficiency. Through an ongoing commitment to expanding our comprehension of language proficiency and its intricate relationship with career success, so individuals can better be prepared and organizations for the dynamic challenges and opportunities of the globalized workplace.

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