

Gender Differences in Saudi EFL Undergraduate Students' Perceptions toward the Impact of Collaborative Writing

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ABSTRACT

Given the importance of collaborative writing, it has been generally investigated and discussed in different educational aspects. Gender difference is a factor that could contribute to the impact of collaborative writing. Therefore, the current study tried to illuminate the perceptions of gender differences among Saudi EFL undergraduate students regarding the effect of collaborative writing on written and social skills. Therefore, the study utilized an online survey adapted from previous studies and modified to fix the statements to the study's aims. The survey was distributed online on Telegram via different channels, and (N = 74 Saudi undergraduate students) attending different universities in Saudi Arabia, with an equal number of 37 females and males, took part in the study. Furthermore, the independent sample t-test was used to analyze the data, and the results showed no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of both genders toward the impact of collaborative writing on both written and social development. These findings suggest further studies in this regard by employing more than one instrument to gain more in-depth data about how gender differences and cultural and educational background might impact the perceptions of students toward collaborative writing.

Keywords: *collaborative writing; EFL learners; perceptions; Saudi undergraduate students*

INTRODUCTION

Writing has become an increasingly important means of communication, information sharing, learning, and entertainment in recent years. Writing is an essential skill for students as it enables them to identify, analyze, and find solutions to problems and provide their opinions on various issues. Therefore, educators have attempted to provide an appropriate environment and method for learners to develop their skills to facilitate effective writing. Therefore, one method that has gained attention in recent years is collaborative writing. Collaborative writing involves writers or learners sharing ideas, discussing, and developing their writing with other group members. According to Storch (2013), collaborative writing is co-authoring a text by two or more writers.

Moreover, as collaborative writing gains popularity, it is essential to investigate its effectiveness and impact on students' written and social skills development. Numerous studies have been conducted on collaborative writing as a teaching method (Boud et al., 1999; Mulligan & Garofalo, 2011; Zulfikar & Aulia, 2020). These studies have highlighted the importance and effectiveness of collaborative writing in enhancing learners' writing skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, and social skills. This method effectively improves students' writing skills in various contexts. Nevertheless, investigating gender as a factor affecting the collaborative writing method has not been investigated directly or indirectly.

Writing task collaboration can be affected by the group itself, whether it is mixed or single-sex. Generally, the culture of the educational system of every country plays a crucial role in facilitating or hindering the effectiveness of collaborative writing. The educational system of Saudi Arabia emphasizes gender segregation, which leads to single-sex schools. Therefore, it is significant to investigate how this can influence the experiences of both males and females and reveal their perceptions of the impact of collaborative writing on their social and written skills.

Collaboration, as a broad term, can be defined as the collective engagement of a group that aims to reach a certain common goal (Nokes-Malach et al., 2015). This definition can be applied to anything in society involving working in a group. However, the focus here is on collaboration in the academic world and what it is like to learn collaboratively. Collaborative learning is what Smith and MacGregor (1992) described as "an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving a joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together" (p. 69). According to the definition, any form of academic activity involving group use would be considered collaborative learning. As an example of such activity, we have group discussions, role plays, information exchange, etc. This learning method is applied across multiple fields of education besides language learning. Not only does this type of learning develop the way students absorb knowledge, but it also helps learners advance their social skills since they interact with each other during group work time (Smith & MacGregor, 1992). It also creates a shift in the classroom, making it student-centered instead of teacher-centered.

Although this method is simple and does not require a whole lot of work and equipment, there are still some misconceptions surrounding it. To clear these misconceptions, people have to understand that CL does not mean putting a pair of learners together so that they can complete a specific assignment individually. It also certainly does not mean that whoever finishes first in a group has to help the others or do all the work for them (Klemm, 1994). Johnson and Johnson (1986) believe that collaborative learning helps students engage in thoughtful discussions with other group members as well as become more responsible about their role in the group since they all have to rely on each other to reach an academic goal.

Collaborative writing can be defined as the process in which two or more people are joined to produce a piece of writing that they had come up with collectively (Storch, 2005). This style of writing became more common in the 1970s since the

communicative language teaching approach was introduced back then. English language teachers decided it was best for students to learn the language in groups so that they could learn the language from each other and hopefully produce better writing. In academic writing classes, teachers use the collaborative learning method so that students can help each other brainstorm ideas and thoughts around the writing project and create an outline before writing (Pham, 2021). As Bueno-Alasuey, Vasseur, and Elola (2021) see it, collaborative writing expands the notion of learning from just the product of one individual's efforts to a social act that is connected to the surroundings, tools, and the overall context in which the learning takes place.

"Writing is a complicated process through which ideas are created and expressed. Learning to write in a foreign language is even harder, and it takes a considerable amount of time and effort to write skillfully (Biria & Jafari, 2013, p. 164). This claim is supported by a lot of EFL teachers when they complain about the writing level of students in the classroom. Many reasons could be behind these problems when it comes to EFL learners and their poor English language writing skills. However, studies have found that the teaching style and the approach used in writing lessons play a huge part in the outcome and performance of these learners. Al-Ahmad's (2003, as cited in Anshu and Yesuf, 2022) study shows that "the use of collaborative writing does not only improve the aspects of writing accuracy such as grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation, but it also helps the students to establish a favorable learning social atmosphere which can create a fertile opportunity to solving students' problems by themselves within the group." (p, 37).

Many researchers are interested in finding out which method of writing is more effective and suitable for EFL learners. They conducted studies comparing the collaborative writing method and the individual writing method in order to find out which one is better. Storch (1999) conducted a study regarding the differences in completing multiple exercises collaboratively as well as individually. It was done on ESL learners with varying levels of English proficiency. In the study, she included three types of exercises that all mainly focused on grammar proficiency. The exercises consisted of a cloze, text reconstruction, and a short composition, each of which had a similar version so they could be done collaboratively and individually. After comparing the two types of methods, besides a few particular grammatical items, it is suggested that there is a slightly higher degree of accuracy and a positive effect that comes with working in collaboration. The findings show that cloze and text reconstruction, in particular, gave more accurate results when done collaboratively than when they were done individually. Moreover, in the case of compositions, the results show that they received a lower score in terms of complexity and in the number of errors found in clauses in the case of collaborative writing (Storch, 1999, as cited in Jafari & Ansari, 2012).

Similarly, Franken and Haslett (2002) conducted a study comparing the two writing methods, but in their study, they concentrated on the effect of interactions in the case of second-language writing. Their study intends to specifically experiment and explore the effect of interaction in summary and argumentative writing. The study

involves twenty-two high school students who come from different backgrounds in order to find out whether collaborative interaction with a group could lead to a higher level of quality and accuracy or if writing individually gave better results. Essentially, these students were given the choice of which method they wanted to use in completing this writing activity. They can either pick the collaborative writing method or the individual writing method. The results of the study revealed that working in collaboration and interacting with peers had a specific effect on the text produced. In addition to this, the results show that students who chose to write a summary individually got scores that are noticeably higher in the aspect of linguistic accuracy as well as complexity. The findings also suggest that interaction between peers has more of a positive effect on argumentative writing since the learners get to exchange their knowledge with one another and hear each other's points of view regarding the topic given to them. As a result, the learners can produce clear and organized ideas (Franken & Haslett, 2002, as cited in Jafari & Ansari, 2012).

The collaborative writing method has a plethora of advantages. Some of these are development in social skills, stress reduction, time-saving, motivation, and much more (Sukirman, 2016). Hadjerrouit (2016) also points out that not only does collaborative writing have a massive impact on students' literature and academic knowledge, but it also has a positive effect on their interaction with each other inside the group. Furthermore, he mentions that as students work collaboratively, they reflect on each other, exchange information, and their critical thinking is stimulated. In addition to all of this, collaborative writing seems to give students a boost of confidence and a push toward more adventurous choices. Students may sometimes feel like they are under a lot of pressure. Especially when facing obstacles during work, but Rosales et al. (2020) point out that "students learn from their peers' strengths and weaknesses in writing as they collaborate and contribute with their knowledge and share experiences and strategies in the writing process while providing support in the difficult aspects of writing" (p. 312). As Mulligan and Garofalo (2011) note, "the process of peer writing and editing can be effective in raising students' awareness of important organizational and syntactical elements that they otherwise might not notice on their own" (p. 5). A study regarding this method of teaching shows that there has been a noticeable improvement when it comes to grammatical proficiency in writing assignments. EFL Students are able to locate mistakes and edit papers more efficiently when working with other students in the classroom (Mulligan & Garofalo, 2011).

As mentioned above, the collaborative writing method seems to help in reducing students' anxiety as well as putting their minds at ease with group work. This method is student-centered; this aspect helps introverted students feel more comfortable in class. Although they work in a group with other students, they are all at about the same level of knowledge. Not to mention the fact that when put in groups, they are working among their friends, so they feel more confident, which helps them produce a better outcome. Self-conscious learners might feel intimidated by the teacher in class and not ask for help with assignments even when they are in need of assistance. With group

work, though, it is easier for them to interact and learn since they are surrounded by their peers (Zulfikar & Aulia, 2020).

Multiple studies shed light on the benefits of collaborative learning for grading and assessing projects and tasks for classes containing a large number of students. Teachers are obviously going to struggle with grading papers if there are too many of them, so collaborative learning is going to save them a lot of time and help facilitate this for teachers using the collaborative learning method. (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 1999). Teachers can also apply peer assessment and have the students be in charge of grading each other's work. They can work in pairs and exchange papers so each of them can grade the others. After grading, students can discuss the final grade given and listen to their partner's feedback regarding their work. To ensure validity in the case of peer assessment, teachers can set multiple grading criteria for students to follow when grading papers (Kollar & Fischer, 2010).

Moreover, what is great about the collaborative writing method is that thanks to today's technology, EFL students now have the opportunity to write collaboratively via online web tools such as Google Docs and Wiki (Woodrich & Fan, 2017). So, if a group of students happens to be scattered all over the world, they can still work together in order to complete a specific writing assignment. Suwantarathip and Wichadee (2014) define Google Docs as "a free web-based version of Microsoft Word, offers collaborative features which can be used to facilitate collaborative writing in a foreign language classroom" (p. 148). Wikis makes it feasible for students to work together and create a piece of writing, which allows them to practice and comprehend collaborative writing. (Hadjerrouit, 2011). Wang (2015, as cited in Jiang & Eslami, 2022) conducted a study regarding EFL collaborative writing, and in the study, he stated that "using wiki-mediated CW can yield better learning outcomes in writing content, structure, and grammatical accuracy" (p. 2704).

Regardless of all the great things collaborative writing does for the education of EFL learners, it has many drawbacks and limitations. One of the more obvious and common challenges that many individuals have claimed to face when dealing with collaborative writing is the complexity of how it works, that is, if you are trying it out for the first time. Collaborative writing projects and tasks need to be thought of and planned out carefully. Otherwise, they can end up causing serious problems and have poor consequences. One problem that may arise with the use of this collaborative method is students could get easily distracted, misbehave, or make loud noises in class because they are in groups (Carless, 2002). According to Malmqvist (2005, as cited in Alvarez Sanvicens, 2020) "not all groups work efficiently together. If learners are reluctant to make contributions and are not receptive to their peers' suggestions, this can affect the product in a very negative way, as the feedback exchanged will not be as effective as it should" (p.13). Students may sometimes feel hesitant to work in teams and show this type of reluctant behavior as a result of a negative past experience that happened during group work (Watanabe, 2008).

Another drawback that EFL learners face in collaborative writing is the pressure of using English in group discussions. According to McDonough, Crawford, and De

Vleeschauwer (2016, as cited in Services, 2020) "many students only use the L1 to interact with one another, while using the L2 only to produce their final text. This may be justified by the lack of confidence which learners may feel when using their L2, and so they prefer to feel confident during the discussion and take no risks when it comes to being assessed afterward" (p. 14). In addition to this, a lot of problems could arise if the group is made up of EFL students only. They may be skeptical and have doubts about the feedback and editing of their peers since they are all non-native speakers of the language, and they prefer their papers to be edited by the instructor (Gousseva-Goodwin, 2000). Furthermore, when it comes to online collaboration, and especially when using Google Docs, Sa'diyah and Nabhan (2021) point out that "Despite the fact that Google Docs is a free service, it requires an internet connection to use. Students can't open or type text in Google Docs if they do not have access to the internet" (p. 164).

It is essential to investigate collaborative writing in terms of gender due to the potential impact of gender dynamics on the effectiveness of collaborative writing activities. However, few studies have been conducted, especially in the Saudi context. For instance, A study aimed to investigate Palestinian English majors' attitudes toward enhancing their writing skills through collaborative learning. A survey was used to assess the attitudes of 95 students toward collaborative learning, and the researcher analyzed whether there were significant differences based on gender, proficiency, academic level, and learning style. The results indicated that the students had positive attitudes towards collaborative learning, with female students more than male and less advanced learners showing a stronger preference for collaborative activities (Farrah, 2011).

Furthermore, Jafari and Ansari (2012) found in their study of the effect of collaborative writing on the writing accuracy of Iranian learners that the results showed that the students in the collaborative group outperformed those in the control group, and females in the collaborative group outperformed males in the same group. These findings suggest that collaboration plays a significant role in L2 writing, and gender can also impact collaborative writing among Iranian EFL learners. Therefore, it highlights the need for more research on this topic to better understand the impact of collaborative writing on gender variations, specifically of Saudi EFL learners.

While there have been numerous studies on the effectiveness of collaborative writing in general, there is a dearth of research on the influence of such a method on gender variations, particularly in the Saudi context, and factors such as gender might affect the perceptions of the impact of collaborative writing on the written and social development. Thus, this study aimed to identify gender differences in Saudi EFL undergraduate students' perceptions of the impact of the collaborative writing method on written and social skills development. Two research questions were formulated to guide the study in addressing them:

1. Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL undergraduate students toward the impact of collaborative writing on written skills development?

2. Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL undergraduate students toward the impact of collaborative writing on social skills development?

Based on the two research questions and the knowledge granted from the extensive readings in this regard. The study hypothesized that:

The null hypothesis (H0):

1. There is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL undergraduate students toward the impact of collaborative writing on written skills development.
2. There is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL undergraduate students toward the impact of collaborative writing on social skills development.

The alternative hypothesis (H1):

1. There is a significant difference in the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL undergraduate students toward the impact of collaborative writing on written skills development.
2. There is a significant difference in the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL undergraduate students toward the impact of collaborative writing on social skills development.

METHOD

This study used a survey to gather data on the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL undergraduate students regarding the impact of collaborative writing on their written and social skills development. It involved administering a survey to a sample of Saudi undergraduate students majoring in English from various universities in Saudi Arabia. The researcher tried to ensure the inclusion of both male and female participants in the study by joining Telegram groups created by the students at the English language and translation departments in different Saudi universities and inviting both genders to contribute to the study. However, due to limited access to male students, the researcher sought assistance from a professor within the department. The professor was requested to share the survey with his class, ensuring a balanced representation of male and female participants. The researcher kept track of the survey's progress until it reached the same number of participants from both male and female groups. Thus, the total number of participants is 74 Saudi EFL undergraduate students, divided into 37 females and 37 males.

The study used one research tool to collect the perceptions of participants, which is an online Survey adapted from Alkhalaf (2020), Al-Besher (2012), Farrah (2011), and Trinidad, L, & Cabigan (2022). However, the researcher edited some of the statements to meet the purpose of this paper. The survey required participants to mark their gender since the main objective of this paper is to identify whether there are any statistical differences between them in terms of their perceptions. They were asked

them to mark their responses using a five-point scale starting from strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, strongly agree, and agree with specific statements related to the impact of collaborative writing in developing their written and social skills. Furthermore, the survey consists of 10 statements divided into two equal sections in which each section measures their perceptions of written skills development and their perceptions toward social skills development. (See Appendix A).

Regarding validity and reliability, the researcher consulted two experts in the field to obtain their insights on the statements included in the instrument. They gave their insightful remarks on the statements before the publication of the survey. Further, the survey was also taken by professional colleagues initially, where they gave their insights and assured the survey was direct and clear for the participants. Data for this study was collected online in the middle of the third semester of the academic year 2023. Since the survey is an online Google Form document, the link was disseminated via social media to reach as many undergraduate students as possible. The researcher monitored the data collection process to ensure that the responses were collected accurately and efficiently. Participants were not allowed to change their responses or retake the survey more than once to ensure the accuracy of the results.

Data were analyzed using statistical methods. SPSS statistical software was used since the data needed to be analyzed statistically. Thus, a parametric test, precisely an independent sample T-test, was used to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL undergraduate students. The t-test was run twice on the same sample. The researcher identified the mean score of the two sections separately, which computed all ten statements into two variables. Therefore, two new variables were named: the first computed variable, perceptions toward written development, and the second one, perceptions toward social development. Thus, to avoid the Type I error, the researcher adopted the Bonferroni adjustment, which, for this study, a p-value of less than 0.025 was considered to be statistically significant, and the CI was 97%. The study used a test of normality, which is the Kolmogorov-Smirnova test.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to identify whether there are statistically significant differences in perceptions of female and male Saudi EFL undergraduate students toward the impact of collaborative writing on written and social skills development. Since there were two categories, the researcher collected all the responses and computed all the variables of the two categories into two variables. Participants were ($n = 74$) Saudi EFL undergraduate students. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the first section, which was female and male Saudi EFL undergraduate students' perceptions toward written skills where the number of female undergraduate students was ($n = 37$), In which undergraduate female students had a quite lower mean score and slightly lower standard variation ($M = 3.27$, $SD = .81$) than the mean score and standard deviation of male undergraduate students ($M = 3.48$, $SD = .88$) who were also ($n = 37$).

Table1. Descriptive Statistics of the precipitations toward written skills development

	Gender	Statistic	Bias	Std. Error	Bootstrap ^a		
					Lower	Upper	
Perceptions toward written skills development	F	N	37				
		Mean	3.1838	.0069	.1335	2.8889	3.4879
		Std. Deviation	.81429	-.01548	.08993	.62703	.97003
		Std. Error mean	.13387				
	M	N	37				
		Mean	3.3946	-.0023	.1299	3.0861	3.6723
		Std. Deviation	.79790	-.01121	.09154	.59927	.95695
	Std. Error mean	.13117					

Thus, this view is that the scores of male participants are more spread out around their mean score than the females' scores, which are slightly close to the mean. Additionally, the mean scores and standard deviations of both female and male undergraduate students appeared to be slightly different, which is considered insignificant. The true statistic or mean score of females lied between [2.97 - 3.57]. Additionally, the true standard deviation of the female lied between [.63 - .97]. On the other hand, the true mean score of males lied between [3.08 – 3.76], and their true standard deviation lied between [.68 - .95]. As a result, in this interval range, we can assume that the CI of the female mean score was slightly shorter than the CI of the male since it's narrower.

The researcher ran the independent samples test as shown in Table 2; according to Levene's test, the P-value is ($p = .925$). Thus, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis of the homogeneity of variance, which means there is no statistical difference in the variances of the two groups. Furthermore, there was no statistical difference in the perceptions between the two groups toward the impact of collaborative writing on written skills development. Thus, the researcher failed to reject the first null hypothesis, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Larson-hall (2016) mentioned that in the context of research related to second language acquisition, it is the norm to employ a significance level of 0.05 as the cutoff point for deciding whether null hypotheses should be rejected. However, since the researcher ran two t-tests on the same sample, the p-value has been reduced to 0.025.

Table 2. Independent sample test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		Bootstrap ^a					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	BCa 97% Confidence Interval	
						One-sided	two-sided			Lower	Upper
						P	P				
Perceptions toward written skills development	Equal variances assumed	.009	.925	-1.125	72	.132	.264	-.21081	.18742	-.62575	.20413
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.125	71.970	.132	.264	-.21081	.18742	-.62576	.20414

Therefore, $t(72) = -1.125, p = .264$ indicates no statically significant difference in the perceptions of the two groups, and the mean difference between females and males was (-.21081), which is considered to be small. In addition, the CI showed no statistically significant

difference in the perceptions of the two groups. We can assume that the true mean difference between the two groups lied between $[-.62575, .20413]$. Accordingly, the researcher failed to reject the first null hypothesis of the study, so the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The effect size was (Cohen's $d = -.262$), which is considered a small effect here. Additionally, the data had no outliers, which was confirmed through a visual inspection of the boxplot. Furthermore, the assumption of the test, which is the normality of the data, was assessed, and the Kolmogorov-Smirnova test was used since the number of participants is more than 50, as shown in Table 3. It showed no significant deviation from the normal distribution of the female group ($p = .200$). Thus, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis of normality that says the female group's data is normally distributed. However, the male group had a significant deviation from the normal distribution, so the researcher rejected the null hypothesis that data from the male group is normally distributed ($p = <.001$). Nevertheless, the study used a robust method, which is bootstrap.

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
Gender		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Perceptions toward written skills development	Female	.104	37	.200*	.980	37	.729
	Male	.196	37	<.001	.951	37	.106

Table 3. Test of normality

On the other hand, in the second section, female and male Saudi undergraduate students' perceptions were of social skills development. Therefore, Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for the number of female undergraduate students ($n = 37$). The female undergraduate students had a slightly lower mean score and larger standard variation ($M = 3.71$, $SD = .96$). While the mean score of male undergraduate students who were also ($n = 37$) was higher, and their standard deviation was lower ($M = 3.88$, $SD = .78$). This indicates that scores of female participants are more spread out around their mean score compared to the male's scores which are slightly clustered around the mean. Nevertheless, the mean score of both groups appeared to be different, which means that it was not that significant. As shown, the true mean score of the female group lied between $[3.45 - 4.01]$, and their true standard deviation lied between $[.60 - 1.17]$. Following, the true mean score of males lied between $[3.51 - 4.12]$, and their true standard deviation is not lower than .47 and higher than .88. Therefore, we can say that the CI of the male mean score is slightly shorter than the CI of female since it's narrower.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the precipitations toward social skills development

		Gender		Statistic	Bias	Std. Error	Bootstrap ^a	
							BCa 97%	
							Confidence Interval	
							Lower	Upper
Perceptions toward social skills development	Female	N		37				
		Mean		3.7135	-.0035	.1453	3.3632	4.0118
		Std. Deviation		.86992	-.02112	.13323	.60173	1.08528
		Std. Error mean		.14301				
	Male	N		37	-.0005	.1150		
		Mean		3.7838			3.5066	4.0322
		Std. Deviation		.69182	-.01583	.10771	.47050	.87979
		Std. Error mean		.11373				

The researcher ran the independent samples test, as shown in Table 5, which shows the perceptions of females and males toward social skills development. According to Levene's test, the P-value is ($p = .247$); thus, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis of the homogeneity of variances, in which there is no statistical difference in the variances of the two groups. Furthermore, there is no statistically significant difference between groups since $t(72) = -.385$, $p = .702$ is larger than 0.025. Therefore, the researcher rejected the second null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the two groups. The mean difference between female and male undergraduate students is (-.07027), which was relatively small.

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Moreover, the true mean difference score occurs between [-.47481 - .33427]. Additionally, there was no statistically significant difference since CI contains zero. The effect size was (Cohen's $d = -.089$), which is considered medium. Furthermore, one outlier was detected in each group through a boxplot inspection.

			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		Bootstrap ^a					
			F	Sig.	t	df	One-sided P	two-sided P	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Perceptions toward Social development	skills	Equal variances assumed	1.365	.247	-.385	72	.351	.702	-.07027	.18273	-.47481	.33427
		Equal variances not assumed			-.385	86.526	.351	.702	-.07027	.18273	-.47523	.33469

Table 5. Independent Samples Test

The normality of the data was examined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnova test see Table 6, and both the female and male groups showed a significant deviation from the normal distribution ($p = <.001$, $p = .014$). Therefore, the null hypothesis of normality was rejected for both groups. However, as was mentioned before, the study utilized a robust method, namely bootstrap

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
Gender		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Perceptions toward social skills development	female	.197	37	<.001	.894	37	.002
	Male	.163	37	.014	.914	37	.007

Table 6. Test of Normality

Based on the statistical results presented above, we can extract a number of conclusions that allow us to address the two research questions. First, the researcher had two research questions that the study aimed to address. Therefore, the first question is: Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL undergraduate students toward the impact of collaborative writing on written skills development?

Findings addressed this question by demonstrating no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL undergraduate students toward the impact of collaborative writing on written skills development. As a response to this, the researcher failed to reject the first null hypothesis of the study, which led to the rejection of the second alternative one, which hypothesized that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL undergraduate students toward the impact of collaborative writing in written skills development. Surprisingly, this contradicts what Jafari and Ansari (2012) found that in the experimental group (wrote collaboratively) outperformed the control group specifically, females outperformed males within the experimental group.

Furthermore, moving to address the second research question since the researcher ran the second statistical test to address the second research question: Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL undergraduate students toward the impact of collaborative writing in social skills development?

Findings from the independent sample t-test showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL undergraduate students toward the impact of collaborative writing on social skills development. In other words, the study failed to reject the second null hypothesis, which means that the second alternative hypothesis was rejected based on the statistical analysis of the data. Nevertheless, these results contrast some other studies in the literature. For instance, a Farrah (2011) observed that female students preferred collaborative writing more than male students in a study of 95 Palestinian English majors regarding using collaborative learning to improve their writing skills.

CONCLUSION

The study's findings underscore the importance of investigating the role of gender on the perceptions of the L2 students toward the effect of collaborative writing

on written and social skills. It is proven that collaborative writing is an effective beneficial method to be implemented in the education context. However, being aware of the students' perceptions toward it and toward its effects can enhance tutor's way of teaching. Finally, the failure to reject the null hypothesis might be attributed to some limitations that the paper has. Thus, In the future, it would be insightful to replicate the study with a larger and more diverse sample population to increase the generalizability of the findings. To have a wider picture of the role of gender on the students' perceptions multiple instruments to collect data, such as interviews or observations, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the participant's perceptions of the impact of collaborative writing on written and social skills. Additionally, Future research could explore how cultural and educational background may impact the perceptions of Saudi EFL undergraduate students toward collaborative writing to better understand the role of these factors in language learning.

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Appendix A: Online survey

The Impact of Collaborative Writing on Gender Variations of Saudi EFL Undergraduate Students.

Hi there,

This survey seeks to investigate whether there is any significant difference in the perceptions of male and female Saudi EFL undergraduate students toward collaborative writing. Please help me by completing this 1-2 minute survey

Thank you for your collaboration!

Perception toward written skills development

- 1- Editing my writing in a group rather than individually results in a more refined final piece of writing.
- 2- Collaborative writing is an effective strategy that results in more complex essays.
- 3- Collaborative writing helps me learn how to organize essays more effectively.
- 4- Collaborative writing helps me to be more focused on writing.
- 5- Collaborative writing enhances creativity in my writing.

Perception toward social skills development:

1. Writing in groups has developed my social skills.
2. Expressing my ideas to the group improves my negotiation skills.
3. Collaborative writing encourages me to share opinions.
4. Collaborative writing stimulates critical thinking skills (through commenting on others' ideas).
5. The activity of writing collaboratively helps me to develop my ability to work within a group.