

Examining the Sociodemographic Profiles of Foreign Language Learners: Implications for Sustainable Education

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of sociodemographic factors specifically age, gender, and year level on foreign language learning beliefs among Thai English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. By analyzing the relationships between these factors and learners' beliefs about language aptitude, learning difficulties, communication strategies, and motivation, the research reveals how personal and cultural factors shape language acquisition. Pearson's correlation analysis identifies weak to moderate relationships, with key findings including a moderate negative correlation between gender and perceptions of reading and writing difficulty ($r=-0.384$, $p=0.001$), and a moderate positive correlation between year level and beliefs about the benefits of speaking English well ($r=-0.398$, $p=0.000$). Additionally, gender shows a weak positive correlation with self-consciousness ($r=0.197$, $p=0.093$), while year level is negatively correlated with emphasis on grammar rules ($r=-0.251$, $p=0.031$). The results highlight the significant role of sociodemographic factors in shaping language learning beliefs, which offer insights for adapting educational practices to foster sustainability and inclusivity in a changing context of language learning.

Keywords: Socio-demographic, Foreign language, Sustainable education

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, there is no doubt that English is essential for communication. The ability to use the English language is regarded as a leverage for navigating the global economy. The government of Thailand in particular has made it clear that for university students to become contenders in the global market, students' language skills must be tested and meet the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages (Wacharonke 2023). CEFR is an international standard for language proficiency on a six-point scale, from A1 (for beginners), A2, B1, B2, and C1 up to C2 (highest English language proficiency). Fluency in the English language would benefit tourism, trade, investment, and research to name a few.

According to the Thai government spokesperson, Chai Wacharonke, "to pass the compulsory test, those pursuing a diploma must achieve a B1 level, while bachelor's degree students must have a minimum B2 level, and C1 level for postgraduate students,"

respectively. This country-wide testing was initiated by former Prime Minister Srettha Tavisin during his term in 2023 due to the criticism of Thai education's poor quality. Despite this pronouncement, Thai students still face significant challenges in achieving English language proficiency.

The observations of the former Thai Prime Minister reinforce the previous study of Phrappal (2001) that English teachers in Thailand must explore innovative methods to support students in achieving their goals. In Phrappal's view, Thai learners are expected to possess proficiency in English and an understanding of other cultures as global citizens. In 2015, the ASEAN Community was launched, and it allowed the 10 member nations to open their borders. This development requires that Thai citizens compete with candidates from other ASEAN countries in job markets that increasingly require English proficiency (Choomthong, 2014).

In higher education, Thai students should be capable of knowledge exchange, engage in interactive networking, and ability to collaborate on international research projects. Graduates are also expected to demonstrate strong communication skills in English. Saiyasombut and Voices' (2012) articles for the Asian Correspondent highlighted Thailand's failing education due to Thai students' being indoctrinated to be passive learners and as much, they seldom ask questions. This reluctance to speak up is reinforced by a fear of "losing face" in front of others when making mistakes in grammar or pronunciation.

Young (2021) pointed out that the concept of preserving "face" is deeply rooted in Thai culture and significantly impacts language learning. Students often prioritize maintaining their dignity and that of others, which can create challenges. Culture can serve as both an advantage and a hindrance for its members (Young, 2021). In Thai EFL classrooms, students are reluctant to try to even guess the answers and often leave test questions unanswered when they do not know the answer.

The implications of culture and language learning beliefs in low English language proficiency of Thai learners come into this context and necessitate further research from educators. As stated by Fahim et al. (2013), "It is the students' beliefs that will hold or sway over their motivations, attitudes, and learning process." That is why students' beliefs influence their learning much more than what teachers believe in.

1.1 Age and Language Learning

Krashen et al (1979) concluded that (1) adults are superior to children in rate of acquisition, and (2) older children learn more rapidly than younger children.

Ellis (1994) contradicted this theory by citing the hypothesis (critical period hypothesis) of Penfield and Roberts (1959) and acknowledged that young learners do better than older learners. Ellis (1994) also added that there is a fixed span of years during which language learning can take place naturally and effortlessly, and after which it is not possible to be completely successful.

Fasold and Connor-Linton (2014) also supported the theory that age plays a vital role in second language learning, but they argued that it is commonly thought that younger language learners are more successful. However, Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991) asserted that learners can do nothing about their age, but they may be able to change their learning styles. The general factors also vary according to the extent of the learner's control over them.

Ellis (1994) echoed Penfield and Roberts' (1959) findings that the optimum period for language acquisition falls within the first ten years of life when the brain retains its plasticity. This period was equated with the period taken for the lateralization of the language function to the left side of the brain to be completed.

Richards (2024) argued that while it is true that younger learners seem to have an advantage in certain aspects of language learning such as pronunciation, older learners particularly, often retain a "foreign accent" in their English when they start learning at an older age, unlike young learners. However, there are many factors beyond age-related abilities that contribute to why young children often seem to effortlessly acquire a new language (Richards, 2024).

Daif-Allah (2012) asserted that by identifying learners' beliefs and reflecting on their potential impact on language learning, there can be heightened awareness and possible adjustments of expectations.

This theory continues to be controversial because of the lack of consensus on the age issue which is undoubtedly the difficulty of comparing the results of studies that have employed very different methods (Ellis, 1994). What seems to be a clear effect of age on language learning will be taken into consideration in this study whether the age of Thai language learners is one of the factors of their foreign language acquisition or not.

1.3 Gender and Language Learning

Previous studies mainly concentrated on exploring gender differences among learners. Those studies aimed to establish whether there are disparities between male and female learners in various aspects, and there has been limited exploration into whether these relationships differ based on gender (Yashima et al. 2017). The results of indicated that indeed such differences exist.

Fasold and Connor-Linton (2014) consider gender as one of the most important factors of individual differences (IDs) that may impact the second language (L2) development of a learner. Fasold and Connor-Linton (2014) also asserted that females tend to use more language learning strategies than males, and they use them more frequently. Other studies also affirm that females usually have more positive attitudes toward learning an L2 and may be more motivated.

Gender may influence classroom dynamics and potentially affect the second language learning process as Fasold and Connor-Linton (2014) observed from the

research on interactions between non-native speakers. In their study, both males and females work harder to achieve mutual comprehension in mixed-gender pairings than in matched-gender pairings. The results also showed that males indicate non-understanding more often but when interacting with females, males tend to talk more and dominate the conversation.

In the study of Daif-Allah (2012), it was observed that both males and females generally share similar perspectives on the challenges and fundamental aspects of language learning. The findings also showed that Saudi university students hold optimistic views regarding various aspects of foreign language learning, including the nature of language acquisition, communication strategies, and motivations and expectations related to learning English as a foreign language.

These results further showed that gender is expressed differently across groups, but in Thai EFL students' case, the context is different. Thai males and females are more comfortable speaking the English language depending on their personality traits; therefore, more research is needed to explore why these differences exist, and how they impact language learning and foreign language acquisition. Since previous studies were confined to a specific context, further research is needed to comprehensively understand gender differences in this area.

Given these insights, it is evident that gender manifests differently across cultural contexts. In the case of Thai students, comfort in speaking a foreign language may be influenced by individual personality traits. Therefore, further research is necessary to explore why these differences exist among Thai males and females who are studying English as a foreign language in Thailand.

1.2 Year Level and Language Learning

In general, higher-level students tend to have better proficiency in English compared to lower-level students. This is because they had more time and practice to develop their language skills. Higher-level students usually have a stronger grasp of vocabulary, grammar, and complex sentence structures, as well as better reading comprehension and writing abilities. However, individual progress can vary based on factors like exposure to the language, personal effort, and the quality of instruction.

Collins and White (2011) explored how Grade 6 classes participating in two versions of a similar intensive English as a second language program had different acquisition of English among young French-speaking learners throughout a 10-month academic year. The results indicated significant progress for both groups over time, with no distinct advantage for either the concentrated or distributed instructional approach.

This review explored the factors that influenced EFL learners. Thailand, as one of the nations positioned in the "expanding circle," framed within Braj Kachru's concentric circle model, Thai students face significant hurdles in achieving English language proficiency despite policies aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference

(CEFR). Current research stresses a notable gap in language proficiency, largely worsened by limited opportunities and beliefs in English language learning brought by their unique culture.

Thai EFL learners' language learning beliefs (LLB) in particular remain largely unexplored within the researcher's workplace at Southeast Asia University, thus this study examined the language learning beliefs of students and ascertained their sociodemographic profile to find out their beliefs' implications in English language learning.

METHODS

Research design

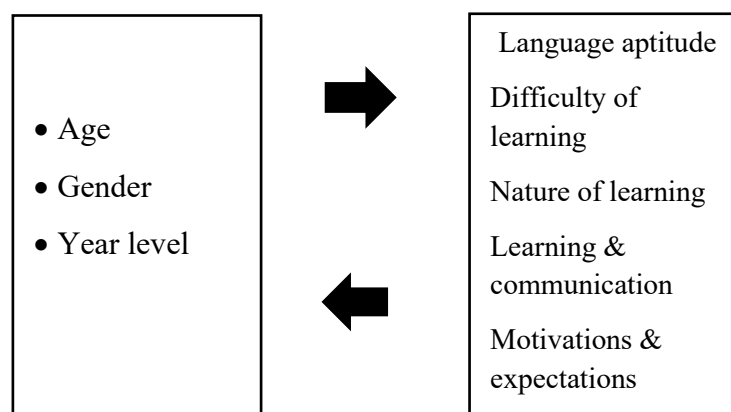
This study employed a quantitative research design particularly a correlational survey to describe the relationship between two or more variables (Creswell, 2012) and also to reveal relationships among variables (Creswel, 2012; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

In this particular study, the focus was on examining the language learning beliefs (LLB) of Thai EFL students and determining the association between the sociodemographic factors of the respondents and their beliefs about English language learning.

In studying Thai learners' language learning beliefs, the application of the quantitative method was appropriate in investigating the Thai EFL learners' LLB and the relationships between these beliefs to sociodemographic. The responses provided the basis of the study's data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

The five categories of Beliefs about Language Learning or BALLI (Horwitz, 1988) are assumed to play a significant role in Thai EFL learners' overall learning experiences. These form the theoretical framework of the correlation of sociodemographic profile and beliefs in the context of language learning through which the study seeks to understand.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of LLB



The conceptual framework (Fig. 1) incorporates several key components. Socio-demographic factors including age, gender, and year level, and beliefs about English language learning processes.

Participants and Sampling

In this study, purposive sampling was employed to gather data from respondents who were enrolled in the 700302 English for Communication. These Thai language learners were selected to ensure ethical standards and voluntary participation in the study. They were also the ideal respondents because they have already learned the basics of English and have been exposed to an EFL classroom since they started schooling. Another reason is their age ranged from 20 to 25 years old, which made them capable enough to understand the statements included in the survey.

Instrument

Horwitz's (1988) 31-item BALLI has always been the instrument of choice for teachers and researchers because BALLI can be modified to make it applicable to students. Kuntz (1997) regarded Horwitz's (1988) BALLI instrument as a suitable tool for conducting research on LLB in different socio-linguistic settings because of BALLI's ability to reflect students' perspectives on language learning and provide useful insights for language teaching pedagogy (Nikitina & Furuoka 2006). The BALLI's reliability in the study of the internal consistency test on the survey instruments conducted by Chen (2013) showed satisfactory results of a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .70. Generally, studies have shown that online administration of previously developed survey materials does not diminish its internal reliability (Zlomke, 2009).

Data collection

Participation in this study was voluntary and respondents were allowed to stop at any time of the survey. Electronic devices, such as Android and iOS smartphones, tablets, and other mobiles phones with scanner were allowed during the data collection for scanning of QR codes and responding to the survey. Only those in the 700302 English for Communication class on the day of the survey were allowed to participate. Multiple attempts by the same student after successfully responding were not possible since the setting of the forms was set to "one response" only.

The duration of the survey was 20 minutes and conducted before the end of 700302 English for Communication class to ensure higher participation. This also guaranteed that instructions were sufficiently given and understood before the implementation of the survey. The participants were encouraged to express their views without asking for help from their friends for the authenticity of the answers.

Data analysis

The descriptive statistics and Pearson r correlation tests were applied with the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 20.0 (SPSS 20.0) software to analyze the quantitative data, Thai EFL learners' overall beliefs, mean (M), and standard deviation (SD) on BALLI's five categories, respectively.

Descriptive frequency analysis was also used based on the Likert scale scores for each BALLI statement (strongly agree 1, disagree 2, undecided 3, agree 4, and strongly agree 5). This scale is applicable for survey questionnaires as they consist of individual items in the form of statements (BALLI statements) where respondents mark their level of agreement or disagreement (Likert, 1932).

To correlate Thai EFL students' beliefs about language learning and their sociodemographic, Pearson's r correlation analysis was conducted. A Pearson's (r) correlation describes the relationships between two variables. Correlation coefficients vary from -1 to +1: whereas -1 and +1 indicate perfect negative and perfect positive correlation coefficients, respectively.

A correlation coefficient of 0 implies no correlation (zero relationship). Correlation coefficients lower than 0.40 (whether negative or positive 0.40) are said to be low; between 0.40 and 0.60 are moderate; and above 0.60 are high (Obilor & Amadi, 2018).

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results derived from the research covering quantitative data, which includes sociodemographic, BALLI responses, a discussion of the findings, and summarization. A quantitative research framework was employed and specifically focused on the correlational survey to gather English language learning beliefs of Thai students in EFL classrooms using the BALLI questionnaire (Horwitz, 1988). Both the quantitative data and sociodemographic profiles were treated with importance throughout the data collection and analysis.

3.1 Socio-demographic Profiles of EFL Learners

A total of 74 students participated in the study, and all of them (100%) provided their individual responses to the online survey. This part exhibits the sociodemographic details of the participants, including their age, gender, year level, and academic programs.

The respondents in this study were Thai students enrolled at Southeast Asia University (SAU) during the Summer semester of 2024. There were 74 students and all of them responded, resulting in a response rate of 100%. All responses were complete and included for the analysis. The succeeding data exhibits the respondents in each demographic group. This included their age, gender, year level, and academic programs.

The respondents belonged to six academic departments at SAU under the following programs: Business English ($n=2$, 2.7%), Management ($n=10$, 13.5%), Engineering ($n=17$, 23%), Computer science ($n=2$, 2.7%), Business computer ($n=3$, 4.1%), and Digital media ($n=40$, 54.1%).

Those who were between the ages of 18-22 consisted of 70 students (94.6%); the age range of 23-26 had 3 (4.1%); and 27 above had 1 (1.4%). The majority of the participants in this study were in the age bracket of 18 to 22 years old range which consisted of 94.6% of the total respondents. Among the 74 respondents, 37 (50%) were male and 37 (50%) were female. None of them declared as “other.” Out of 74 students, 36 were first year, 31 were second year, and there were seven fourth year students.

3.2 Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD)

A scale with three ranges (high, medium, and low) were applied to identify Thai students’ language learning overall levels of beliefs. This scale is applicable to survey questionnaires as they consist of individual items in the form of statements instead of questions where respondents mark their level of agreement or disagreement (Likert 1932).

A mean score in the range above 3.5 on five categories of BALLI is considered to be strong language learning beliefs; 2.5 to 3.4 is considered moderate language learning beliefs; and below 2.4 represents weak language learning beliefs.

Table 1 presents the overall mean (M) of beliefs about foreign language learning of the respondents ($n=74$) on the BALLI survey. The Likert scale strongly agree (1), disagree (2), undecided (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5) were indicated.

Descriptive statistics was applied for various statements related to BALLI’s categories to find out the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the following: foreign language aptitude, difficulty of learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication, and motivations and expectations.

Table 1. Levels of Beliefs

Categories	M	SD
Language Aptitude	3.37	.46
Difficulty of Learning	3.58	.51
Nature of Language Learning	3.82	.45
Learning & Communication	3.58	.44
Motivations & Expectations	4.23	.46

Results in Table 1 show that the respondents indicate moderate or medium level of beliefs in foreign language aptitude (Mean = 3.37). It also shows that the respondents have a moderate belief in their ability to learn a foreign language. The standard deviation (SD=0.46) indicates that there is some disparity in how strongly students feel about their language aptitude.

The difficulty of learning indicates high agreement among respondents (Mean=3.58) and reveals a high level of agreement that learning a foreign language is difficult. The relatively higher standard deviation (SD=0.51) suggests a broader range of opinions on the difficulty.

In terms of the nature of language learning, which is also at a high level (Mean=3.82), Thai students have a strong belief in the inherent aspects of language learning. The lower standard deviation (SD=0.45) indicates that there is less variation in how people view the nature of language learning.

As for the learning and communication, the results show that motivations and expectations about learning and communications are high (M=3.58) and suggest a

balanced view ($SD=0.44$) on the importance of the beliefs but still with some differences in how they feel about learning and communication exist.

The motivations and expectations category has the highest belief level ($M=4.23$), which shows a strong consensus that Thai EFL students have on motivations and expectations. The low standard deviation ($SD=0.46$) suggests a consistent opinion among them.

Similar to the research conducted by Lee (2014), Diab (2000), Kim (2000), Park (1995), and Truitt (1995), the result of the study's findings revealed that the strongest belief held by Thai EFL students was related to motivation and expectations in English language learning.

3.3 Socio-demographic Profiles and LLB

The research objective of this study was to examine whether a relationship exists or not between Thai EFL students' beliefs about English language learning and their sociodemographic profile using SPSS version 20.0. The analyses of correlation coefficients across five categories (language aptitude, difficulty of learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication, and motivations and expectations) were aimed to determine if significant correlations among these factors (age, gender, year level) at the $p<.01$ level exist. A Pearson's (r) correlation describes the relationship between two variables.

Obilor and Amadi (2018) explained that the association or relationship between variables expresses the degree of association or relationship. Correlation coefficients vary from -1 to +1: whereas -1 and +1 indicate perfect negative and perfect positive correlation coefficients, respectively. A correlation coefficient of 0 implies no correlation (zero relationship). Correlation coefficients lower than 0.40 (whether negative or positive 0.40) are said to be low; between 0.40 and 0.60 are moderate; and above 0.60 are high.

Table 2. Correlations of language aptitude and sociodemographic

LANGUAGE APTITUDE									
	BALLI 1	BALLI 11	BALLI 16	BALLI 19	BALLI 22	BALLI 23	BALLI 26	BALLI 29	BALLI 31
Age	0.049	-0.095	-0.005	-0.007	-0.171	-0.212**	0.036	-0.064	0.091
Gender	0.048	-0.141	-0.043	-0.017	-0.314	-0.196	-0.017	-0.083	0.091
Year level	-0.014	0.012	-0.126	-0.054	0.168	-0.089	-0.166	-0.112	-0.166

Note. Correlations are significant at ** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$ (2-tailed, $n=74$)

Table 2 shows a slight correlation between sociodemographic and language aptitude BALLI statements. The correlation between BALLI_23 (I have a foreign language aptitude.) and age is weak and slightly significant ($r=-0.212$, $p= 0.070$). The

results show that age does not appear to have a strong influence on beliefs about language learning, with only a marginally significant correlation observed.

Most correlations between gender and the beliefs about language learning are weak and not statistically significant. This indicates that gender does not strongly influence most of the beliefs about language learning on this group of respondents.

The result is similar to the previous studies of Lee (2014) where she found that there was no statistically significant difference between gender and beliefs about language learning among international students.

Unlike Kuntz's (1997) study, more female Turkish students believed in self-efficacy, confidence, and social interaction. However, males believed that English was an easier language to learn than what females believed in. One possible reason for the difference in the findings of this current study is that the participants are Thai EFL students.

Overall correlations between year level and the other variables are weak and not statistically significant. This indicates that in this sample, year level does not have a substantial relationship with beliefs related to language learning. Lee (2014) found out that LLB impacts strategies, but it does not explicitly show the relationship between language learning beliefs and potential connections with year levels.

Sociodemographic and difficulty of learning

Table 3 shows the results of correlations between sociodemographic and difficulty of learning.

Table 3. Correlations of beliefs on difficulty of learning and sociodemographic

	DIFFICULTY OF LEARNING				
	BALLI 2	BALLI 8	BALLI 10	BALLI 15	BALLI 18
Age	-0.083	-0.034	-0.200	-0.086	-0.156
Gender	0.086	-0.191	-0.384**	-0.177	-0.042
Year level	-0.114	0.008	0.068	0.012	-0.089

Note

. Correlations are significant at ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$ (2-tailed, $n = 74$)

This shows that age has weak and non-significant correlations with all other variables and does not significantly affect beliefs about language learning ability. However, gender shows a moderate negative correlation with the relative ease of reading and writing in English ($r = -0.384$, $p = 0.001$). Age and BALLI_10 correlations is weak and close to significant ($r = .200$, $p = 0.087$), which appears to have a potential but not statistically significant relationship. Unlike Palabiyik (2016), it was emphasized that first and second-year students typically had more diversity and seemed less confident about their language learning abilities.

The results also indicate that year level does not have significant correlations with the different aspects of LLB. These findings are consistent with Rifkin (2000) who

emphasized that these beliefs cannot be assumed to be uniform across different languages, levels, and institutions. The reason behind this could be the importance of understanding that beliefs about language learning differ significantly across year levels and contexts of learning.

Although year level has no significance with the difficulty of learning a foreign language, it does show relationships related to the importance on grammar rules and the benefits of speaking English language well. Unlike Fazilatfar et al. (2014), it was found out that some students believe that it is possible to become fluent in second language in two years or less.

Sociodemographic and the nature of language learning

Table 4 shows the correlation analysis results between sociodemographic and the nature of language learning. The results show that age has weak correlations or does not have significant correlations with the various beliefs about English language learning and the importance of translating, vocabulary, grammar rules, cultural knowledge, or the benefits of learning English abroad at all.

Table 4. Correlations of the nature of language learning and sociodemographic

	THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING					
	BALLI 7	BALLI 9	BALLI1 7	BALLI 24	BALLI 25	BALLI 30
Age	-0.190	0.032	0.001	-0.085	-0.139	-0.114
Gender	0.032	0.106	-0.082	-0.135	0.000	-0.107
Year level	-0.065	-0.076	-0.251**	-0.049	-0.227**	-0.096

Note. Correlations are significant at ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$ (2-tailed, $n=74$)

Table 4 shows the correlation analysis results between sociodemographic and the nature of language learning. The results show that age has weak correlations or does not have significant correlations with the various beliefs about English language learning and the importance of translating, vocabulary, grammar rules, cultural knowledge, or the benefits of learning English abroad at all.

The results show that gender does not have significant correlations with any of the beliefs about language learning. It also does not influence translating, vocabulary, grammar, cultural knowledge, or the benefits of learning English abroad. There is a moderate negative correlation between year level and emphasis on grammar rules ($r = -0.251$, $p = 0.031$). It appears that as a student's year level increases, the LLB "learning a foreign language is mostly about learning grammar rules" (BALLI_17) tends to place less emphasis on grammar rules. A moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.227$, $p = 0.052$) between year level and the belief that learning English is different from other subjects (BALLI_25) also exists. Some factors can affect individual preferences in learning a language. According to Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005), personality traits and pedagogical approaches can play a significant role in shaping language learning beliefs, including learner's appreciation in a classroom where the language is being learned.

Sociodemographic and learning and communication

Table 5 represents the correlation analysis between learning and communication and sociodemographic.

Table 5. Correlations of learning and communication and sociodemographic

	LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION						
	BALLI 4	BALLI 6	BALLI 12	BALLI 14	BALLI 21	BALLI 27	BALLI 28
Age	0.097	-0.073	0.005	-0.095	-0.021	-0.073	-0.159
Gender	-0.071	-0.158	0.015	-0.038	-0.067	0.197**	-0.087
Year level	0.059	-0.038	-0.054	0.166	0.054	-0.082	0.071

Note. Correlations are significant at ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$ (2-tailed, $n = 74$)

The results show that age does not have significant correlations with any of the beliefs under the learning and communication category. There is a weak positive correlation, which is slightly significant ($r = 0.197$, $p = 0.093$) between gender and feelings of self-consciousness, but it is not strongly correlated. Year level shows very weak correlations with most beliefs, which indicates that students' year level in this particular survey does not significantly influence their beliefs about language learning.

Ahmadi et al. (2016) did not specifically emphasize in their study of EFL learners in Iran the relationship of sociodemographic with language and communication, but they suggested that there is a profound impact on learners' experiences and strategies. However, they also mentioned that language learning beliefs determine how individuals approach language learning which will ultimately lead to their success in communication and language acquisition.

Sociodemographic and motivations and expectations

Table 6 shows the correlation analysis between learning and communication and sociodemographic. The results showed a weak negative correlation ($r = -0.232$, $p = 0.093$).

Table 6. Correlations of motivations and expectations and sociodemographic

	MOTIVATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS			
	BALLI 3	BALLI 5	BALLI 13	BALLI 20
Age	0.120	-0.232**	0.086	0.137
Gender	-0.075	0.000	0.059	0.164
Year level	-0.090	-0.073	-0.080	0.398**

Note. Correlations are significant at ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$ (2-tailed, $n = 74$)

As demonstrated in Table 6, it shows that gender and sociodemographic results related to motivations and expectations indicate that gender does not significantly affect

beliefs about language learning or not significant. Regardless, Suwanwong et al. (2022) suggests that understanding a learner's gender differences is equally important for instructors when making decisions about setting learning objectives, designing lesson plans, and selecting instructional strategies. There is a moderate positive correlation that is statistically significant with year level ($r=-0.398$, $p=0.000$) about the belief in the opportunities from speaking the language well is strongly related (BALLI_5 I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better).

The results of the Pearson r correlation analysis on sociodemographic (age, gender, and year level) and each BALLI statement on five categories (language aptitude, difficulty of learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication, and motivations and expectations) demonstrated weak correlations with students' beliefs on language learning. Age has minimal correlations on language aptitude and difficulty of learning while gender shows a weak negative correlation in terms of the perceptions of the ease of reading and writing.

DISCUSSION

The correlation analysis of the relationship between Thai EFL students' sociodemographic profile and their beliefs about English language learning reveals several insights. Age, gender, and year level demonstrate weak correlations with students' beliefs about various aspects of language learning beliefs. Specifically, age has a minimal significance on beliefs about language aptitude and difficulty of learning. Gender shows a weak negative correlation with perceptions of the ease of reading and writing. Year level, although not significant on the beliefs about difficulty of learning and learning and communication, it does show relationships related to the emphasis on grammar rules and the apparent benefits of speaking English language well.

According to Johari et al (2017), to enhance language proficiency, educators can develop strategies that cater to learners of all ages, especially those who lack confidence or struggle with the language to help them transform their beliefs into more positive outcomes. Additionally, for a successful adult education experience, educators must be mindful of the expectations adult learners bring to their language lessons and the learning behaviors they may exhibit in the classroom.

These findings suggest that while sociodemographic factors such as age and gender have limited impact on Thai EFL students' overall beliefs about language learning, year level does play a more prominent role in shaping Thai learners' certain beliefs in EFL learning.

CONCLUSION

Language educators should consider that year level may affect students' English language learning beliefs towards different aspects of language learning, such as grammar. Educators need to modify instructional approaches to address expectations on class activities and lessons as they advance through their studies. This can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of language instructions.

Since gender and age have a limited impact on motivations and expectations, more personalized approaches are needed to foster motivation and engagement. Teaching based on what is interesting to learners and their individual goals will be more effective than those based solely on demographic characteristics.

The limited significance of sociodemographic factors based on correlation analyses suggests that other variables such as a more diverse group of students' year

levels and more participants with different ages, personal experiences, and other socio-cultural influences will result in stronger significance of relationships with English language learning beliefs. Future research should explore these additional sociodemographic factors to gain a deeper understanding of how to support and enhance EFL learning outcomes in the Thai context based on English language learning beliefs.

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