

# Students' Perspectives on the Services Offered by a Writing Center to Improve English Language Writing among Students in Saudi Arabia

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## Abstract

The study aims to encourage universities in Saudi Arabia to develop their existing writing centers or establish a new writing center through understanding the English language writing needs of Saudi pharmaceutical university students. The study is conducted by involving a group of pharmaceutical students in a survey to highlight what they do to improve their English writing without having a writing center, which English linguistics writing issues they have, what benefits they will obtain if their English writing improves, and their expectations of writing centers. The study was administered through a survey that was distributed to male students in the second semester of the academic year 2023/2024. The survey included 23 closed ended questions, distributed to 71 participants in the survey. The results of this study show that owing to the dearth of writing centers, students find it difficult to find appropriate sources to help them with their writing. The study recommends that the writing center should be the appropriate place to accommodate the challenges the students encounter in their writing, and it emphasizes the importance of involving students in deciding upon the type of writing center consultation services that they expect to receive from a trained writing tutor who understands their specific major's requirements. The study also shows that when using a writing center services, the participants can feel more confident to continue studying their academic major and achieve their goals due to the improvement in their English writing.

**Keywords:** students' perspectives, writing centers, ESL writers, writing skills

## 1. Introduction

The writing center has always been a resource for students to improve their writing. It has increasingly become a writing practice hub for many students, especially university students. According to a study by Jesús José Salazar (2021), university students visiting the writing center display “greater writing performance compared to not using the WC” (p. 69). Writing centers can expand the horizons of university students and enable them to improve their writing so that they can excel throughout their study path. Therefore, universities should create their own writing centers or constantly improve their current ones to make sure that their students will be more effective writers. Each student is a different writer and each writer has his/her unique writing needs and challenges that should be accommodated by these universities. In other words, universities are largely responsible for helping their students overcome their writing issues. Stephen M. North (1984) stated that “in a writing center, the object is to make sure that writers, and not necessarily their texts, are what get changed by instruction” (p. 438). Ultimately, the object of writing centers is to effect a change in the writers themselves. However, any attempt to improve the quality of writing through appropriate instruction can also mean looking into the writers’ writing challenges and needs. Therefore, the goal of a writing center, is to go beyond just fixing issues in students’ papers. According to Neal Lerner (2016), “Writing centers are vital and complex places for literacy learning, as well as research on that learning” (p. 278). Moreover, according to Paul Kei Matsuda and Matthew J. Hammill (2014), the writing center can be seen as “an additional resource that can be incorporated into students’ repertoire of learning strategies” (p. 273). Therefore, it can be inferred from these studies that a writing center is a pivotal part of any university’s learning and research experiences, and it is a place where students can develop new writing methods to improve their writing and where research is conducted for the continuous improvements of writing centers.

This study will focus on examining university students’ writing challenges and needs, with a particular focus on those students whose majors require them to write papers in English as a second language, as well as a focus on what these students actually expect the writing center to provide in order to help them improve their English writing performance. The research will also explore some of the issues and conflicts that university students in Saudi Arabia might encounter during the process of writing their papers in English. Lucie Moussu (2013) stated that there are common issues among ESL students who are basically required to write in English as they are studying in an English-speaking country. Moussu (2013) argued that “ESL students possess a set of learning skills and expectations that are often at odds with academic writing and WC [Writing Center] philosophy” (p. 56). According to the study, ESL students might have to write in English for reasons different from those of the participants of the study. However, all ESL students share the same challenge of how they can improve their English writing, in addition to the ongoing challenge of how to develop writing centers to deliver optimum training to students to improve their writing and make those centers more attached with them and knowledgeable of their needs. The results from this study will help universities in Saudi Arabia fully comprehend the importance of making the decision to either establish new writing centers or improve their current writing center consultations based on their students’ needs and perspectives of a writing center.

In this study, I am seeking to explore students' writing needs as they write in English as a second language. These needs include writing assistance, such as finding out a writing tutor to work with them on improving their writing, and using online sources to improve their writing. Learning about these issues can raise universities' awareness of the importance of a writing center. Another area of exploration for this study is to investigate the particular writing skills that those students might need to improve, such as linguistic skills. The ultimate aim of such an exploration is to communicate these needs to their universities so that they can have perspectives of these needs to improve their students' writing skills through writing centers. The third focus of this study is to investigate students' attitudes when they write in English as a second language and the positive impact of their developed ability to overcome their writing challenges. Understanding their attitudes might provide their universities' writing centers with new methods to keep track of students' writing development and determine whether they could overcome these writing challenges after joining the writing center. Finally, this study will explore participants' preferences when using the services of a writing center services. These preferences are crucial for their universities to learn about so that they can facilitate the learning process in writing centers and the way they deliver their services to students. These preferences include whether those students like to have online or in-person writing consultations and the kind of tutors that they prefer to have consultations with. Ultimately, the main question of this study is how non-native students' English writing needs and challenges can encourage universities in Saudi Arabia to develop or create a writing center that bears students' perspectives in mind.

## 2. Literature Review

In his article, Jesús José Salazar (2021) examined 82 writing centers studies conducted between 1954 and 2019 to find out whether visiting the writing center by students has a positive impact on improving their college writing level. Out of the 82 studies that he reviewed, Salazar highlighted 71 outcomes found in 64 studies that included control groups. Salazar used the meta-analysis method to study the 71 student outcomes that are related to the improvement achieved by students visiting the writing center. After conducting his study, Salazar concluded that students who visited the writing center significantly improved their writing in comparison to their counterparts who did not. However, Salazar did not mention if the latter students had specific indicators of any potential effectiveness because of not visiting the writing centers. These indicators are very important from the students' perspectives, because they can help improve the services provided by the writing centers thereby increasing student attendance. The present study will ask students in Saudi Arabia about their expectations of writing centers. This will start a collaborative conversation between them and their university community as their answers can help foster the development of writing centers and the effective designing of writing consultations in their university. John Trimbur (2003) shed light on the importance of creating such a conversation that can expand the knowledge around all communities of interests. Trimbur (2003) stated that "This conversation takes place at a number of levels – first in small discussion groups, next among the groups in a class, then between the class and the teacher, and finally among the class, the teacher, and the wider community of knowledge" (p. 461).

The reason why researchers need to find out about the causes of students' reluctance to visit the writing center was examined in an analytical comparative study conducted by Lori Salem (2016) at Temple University in the US. The study found that of a total of 4204 students in the academic year of 2009, 78% of students did not visit the writing center at their university, compared to the other 22% who did. In her study, Salem showed these shocking numbers of students who did not use their writing center services because she wanted to raise awareness among those in charge of the writing center at Temple University of the importance of revising their writing center services and start working on the development of their writing center according to their students' needs. She said, "We should rethink writing center pedagogy to ensure that it meets the needs of students who visit" (p. 162). Consequently, the main reason why my research will focus on students' involvement is to explore their writing needs and their expectations of the services of the writing center. Therefore, the writing center facilitators in Saudi Arabia will need to consider these needs and expectations when creating or developing a writing center as a means of reinforcing students' writing in English as a second language.

A qualitative study conducted by Harry Denny, John Nordlof, and Lori Salem in 2018 discussed students' needs in the writing centers at their universities. The study investigated what some of those university students actually wanted the writing centers to provide. The authors interviewed 16 students from three different universities in the United States. The results of this study suggested that writing centers should provide writing consultants, who are experts in correcting grammar issues, with sufficient familiarity with what the professors of the visiting students want. Also, the authors suggested that writing consultants should provide more than one single interaction when working on students' papers, make multi-interactions and follow ups to check students' writing development, find different instruction modals throughout the sessions, and take into consideration any psychological or physical disabilities that students may have, which might require different writing consultations and treatment. However, the particular issue with this study is that it did not focus on non-native English university students in an Arabic-speaking country, or those who might have different needs, challenges and expectations from writing center services.

Moreover, a study conducted by Carol Severino, Deirdre Egan, and Shih-Ni Prim in 2020 focused on the experiences of second language writers using the writing center. The students surveyed by the study were international undergraduate students studying at the University of Iowa in the United States. The authors surveyed 142 participants from those international students, and the results indicated that students who visited the writing center showed more significant improvement in their writing performance, communicative skills, and linguistic skills than those who did not. However, the study found that those international students had less insignificant improvement in their writing confidence and that they wanted the writing center to pay more attention to this issue. However, the participants in the survey were required by the same university to finish two years of learning English before starting their college. In other words, they had already lived in the United States learning English for two years and, therefore, their experiences might be different from those of the participants in the current study. The participants in the current study live in a country where Arabic is the first language. Also, they are not required to go through an ESL program before starting college, and they are

required to write their papers in English. Therefore, these participants will probably have different needs, challenges and expectations from writing center services from those exhibited by the participants in the study by Severino, Egan, and Prim.

Furthermore, a study was conducted in 2018 by Shanthi Tiruchittampalam, Alistair Ross, Elizabeth Whitehouse and Tori Nicholson to examine the effectiveness of using a writing center by Arabic-speaking students to improve their English writing. The researchers conducted their study using a quantitative method to assess the L2 writing development of university students participating in the study. The participants were 65 female students studying at a university in the Gulf Region, where university education is in English. Those participants were divided into two groups: a control group of thirty students who did not visit the writing center and an experimental group of 35 students who took consultations in the writing center of the university. Based on the pre-test and post-test writing mean scores of both groups, the results revealed that all students in the experimental group exhibited English writing improvements after visiting the writing center for writing consultations. Although the participants in the current study have the same Arabic language background and requirement to write in English in their college as the participants in the study by Tiruchittampalam, Ross, Whitehouse and Nicholson have, the issue with the latter study is that the authors did not explore the perceptions of their participant students and what they actually wanted to improve in their writing. They mentioned what the students improved in their L2 writing, but the students did not have their voices heard in this study because they were not asked what they wanted to improve and what they expected from their writing center. Asking students and having their voices involved to collaborate in maintaining development or doing research that could result in any institutional improvements is highly important for improving the educational process. The reason for this can be explained by Kelly Ritter (2016) who stated the important role of university students noting that the educational process revolves around them. Ritter (2016) stated that “students are the reason you have a campus in the first place, and the reason teachers, and administrators, have jobs, and why, in general, universities and colleges exist” (p. 11).

### **3. Limitations and Future Research**

This research focuses on involving students in the research process as a means of enabling writing centers to develop their practices and processes based on their students’ needs in English writing. Although, universities in Saudi Arabia teach in both Arabic and English, and although writing centers can help both male and female students develop their writing in both languages, the focus of this research is restricted to developing the English writing needs of those male students who speak Arabic as their first language and are required by their majors to write in English. Developing these students’ English writing is crucial to reinforce their learning experiences and can largely contribute to their overall performance in their majors at college. One major limitation of this study is that it will not focus on male university students who might be required by their major to take general English language courses. Rather, it will focus on those male students whose majors do not require them to write some course assignments in English and, hence, the quality of their English writing has no or little effect on

their overall academic performance. In particular, this research emphasizes bringing out the importance of developing writing centers constantly in accordance with students' needs, which are supposed to be a first priority for these writing centers. According to John W Creswell (2012), the survey "examine current attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices" (p. 405). However, the findings from the survey in this study can highlight the frequency rates of the issues faced by pharmaceutical students so that the university administrators can examine their existing practices and, accordingly, make the appropriate decision to start working with the different parties involved in the development of the writing center. Future studies, especially qualitative ones, can benefit from the quantitative results of the current study to conduct interviews with decision makers at Saudi universities to determine the particular strategies they can follow to create or develop a writing center based on the results of the current study, and those strategies will typically be aimed at helping pharmaceutical students overcome the writing issues they face. Moreover, the results of this study will help develop experimental research to determine if these strategies will be effective for improving those students' writings.

#### 4. Methodology

The study was conducted through a survey sent out to male university students who were first-year students majoring in pharmacy. All the participants were Saudi students, whose first language is Arabic, and who were required by the college of pharmacy to study their major fully in English.

The participants were requested to complete an online survey that consisted of 23 closed-ended questions. Before the participants started answering the survey questionnaire, they were given a consent form that informed them of the study and their participation, and their consents were obtained.

There were 71 responses from the participants. The survey questions were divided into four categories, namely students' needs for a writing center, students' needs to develop linguistic aspects of their English writing, students' attitudes towards using a writing center for the purpose of improving their English writing, and students' preferences when using a writing center for the purpose of improving their English writing.

#### 5. Results

The findings below are presented according to the four categories listed above.

Table 1. Students' needs for a writing center

Questions		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often do you need help with your assignments in English?	n=	13	16	30	8	4
	%	18.3%	22.5%	42.2%	11.2%	5.6%
How often do you seek help from tutors to	n=	11	25	19	8	8

improve your English writing?	%	15.4%	35.2%	26.7%	11.2%	11.2%
How often do you seek help from internet websites for English writing improvement purposes?	n=	17	22	22	7	3
	%	23.9%	30.9%	30.9%	9.8%	4.2%
How often do you spend more than usual writing your assignments in English?	n=	17	18	23	7	6
	%	23.9%	25.3%	32.3%	9.8%	8.4%

As seen from the table above, most of the students mentioned that they sometimes need help with their writing assignments and often seek help from tutors. Also, 30.9% of students responded that they often use internet websites to improve their writing, whereas another 30.9% of students stated that they sometimes do so. Moreover, the majority of the respondents mentioned that they sometimes spend longer than expected when writing their assignments in English.

Table 2. Students' needs to develop linguistic aspects of their English writing

Statements		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I need help to use vocabulary appropriately in my writing.	n=	20	25	18	2	6
	%	28.1%	35.2%	25.3%	2.8%	8.4%
I need help to use expressions correctly.	n=	18	29	16	4	4
	%	25.3%	40.8%	22.5%	5.6%	5.6%
I need help with the organization of my paragraphs.	n=	15	24	13	8	11
	%	21.1%	33.8%	18.3%	11.2%	15.4%
I need help with the structure of my sentences.	n=	21	15	15	12	8
	%	29.5%	21.1%	21.1%	16.9%	11.2%
I need help with the organization of my research paper.	n=	15	19	14	17	6
	%	21.1%	26.7%	19.7%	23.9%	8.4%
I need help with grammar.	n=	15	24	17	10	5
	%	21.1%	33.8%	23.9%	14%	7%
I need help with the use of punctuations.	n=	7	19	18	11	16
	%	9.8%	26.7%	25.3%	15.4%	22.5%
I need help with understanding citation styles.	n=	13	15	21	13	9
	%	18.3%	21.1%	29.5%	18.3%	12.6%

As seen from the table above, 19-29 respondents stated that they often need help with the use of their vocabulary and expressions, organization of paragraphs, conducting research papers, and use of grammar and punctuation. Also, 29.5% of the students mentioned that they always need help with the structure of their sentences, whereas the same percentage of respondents stated that they sometimes needed help with understanding citations.

Table 3. Students' attitudes when using a writing center for English writing improvement purposes

Statements		Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
If my writing improves, I will be able to achieve the requirements of my assignments.	n=	44	19	2	1	5
	%	61.9%	26.7%	2.8%	1.4%	7%
If my writing improves, I will be able to improve my grades.	n=	44	16	6	3	2
	%	61.9%	22.5%	8.4%	4.2%	2.8%
If my writing improves, I will be able to improve my learning in my major.	n=	52	8	9	0	2
	%	73.2%	11.2%	12.6%	0%	2.8%
If my writing improves, I will have a positive attitude towards my learning.	n=	42	18	6	3	2
	%	59.1%	25.3%	8.4%	4.2%	2.8%
If my writing improves, I will be more confident about work after graduation.	n=	52	9	6	0	4
	%	73.2%	12.6%	8.4%	0%	5.6%

As seen from the table above, most of the respondents strongly agreed that if their English writing improves, they will be able to achieve their assignment requirements more effectively, improve their grades, reinforce their understanding in their major courses, develop a positive attitude towards their learning, and become more confident about their work after they graduate.

Table 4. Students' expectations from visiting a writing center for English writing purposes

Statements		Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
If I visit a writing center, I prefer to have in-person consultations.	n=	17	26	17	3	8
	%	23.9%	36.6%	23.9%	4.2%	11.2%
If I visit a writing center, I prefer to have online consultations.	n=	12	15	21	17	6
	%	16.9%	21.1%	29.5%	23.9%	8.4%
If I visit a writing center, I prefer to send my paper through an online platform and then receive it back with the proofreading feedback from the tutor.	n=	27	27	11	4	2
	%	38%	38%	15.4%	5.6%	2.8%
If I visit a writing center, I prefer to have a writing tutor who is familiar with my major assignments.	n=	33	24	7	5	2
	%	46.4%	33.8%	9.8%	7%	2.8%
If I visit a writing center, I prefer to have a writing tutor who can contact me for follow up.	n=	31	24	12	0	4
	%	43.6%	33.8%	16.9%	0%	5.6%
If I visit a writing center, I prefer to have a writing tutor who can understand my potential challenges.	n=	40	18	9	1	3
	%	56.3%	25.3%	12.6%	1.4%	4.2%

As seen from the table above, most of the participants' responses varied between strongly agree, agree, and uncertain regarding their preferences when they visit a writing center and have in-person or online consultations or just send and receive their papers through an online platform. Also, most of the respondents strongly agreed on what they expect from a writing tutor who can understand their concerns.



## 6. Discussion

The discussion of the results will be based on the constructs through which responses to the survey questions came out, which are a) students' needs for a writing center; b) students' needs to develop linguistic aspects of their English writing; c) students' attitudes towards using a writing center for the purpose of improving their English writing; and d) students' preferences when using a writing center for the purpose of improving their English writing

Looking at the students' needs for a writing center, it can be seen that the majority of the students believe that they need and seek help to improve the assignments written in English. Only 11.2 % or less of the students participating in the survey stated that they rarely or never need that help. It is clear that pharmacy students look for different options to improve the assignments they write in English, and that this writing process is time-demanding. Their responses are proof that universities that do not have a writing center need to establish one to help students improve their writing. 30.9% of the respondents stated that they often and sometimes seek help from the internet, while 23.9% of them mentioned that they always do so. The internet might not be a reliable source for many students. Their frequent use of the internet for improving their English writing may lead them to untrusted websites and plagiarism issues. It may also deprive them from obtaining constructive feedback from an experienced writing consultant. Furthermore, internet writing services can be unaffordable for many students. A writing center in a university is crucial to solve all these problems that those students may encounter when seeking help to improve their English writing.

The results from the survey highlight the importance of having universities in Saudi Arabia implement consultations that address the linguistics development needs of students who seek to improve their English writing. The results of this study highlight the linguistic aspects that the participating pharmacy students need to develop their English writing. In terms of their needs to develop the use of appropriate vocabulary, 20 students stated that they always need help in this aspect, whereas 25 students mentioned that they often do. Also, the findings show that 40.8 % of the participants mentioned that they often need help with the correct use of expressions in their writing. 33.8% of the participants stated that they often need help with the organization of their paragraphs so that they can be effectively developed and focused on. In terms of their needs to develop the structure of their written sentences, 21 students stated that they always need help, 15 others mentioned that they often do, and 15 students chose sometimes. Regarding their need to develop the organization of their research papers, 26.7% of the participants stated that they often have that need, whereas 23.9 % mentioned that they rarely do. Regarding their need to develop grammar use for writing improvement, 24 students mentioned that they often have that need, and 17 students mentioned that they sometimes do. Nineteen students stated that they often need to develop their use of punctuation, and 18 others mentioned that they sometimes do. Finally, 21 participants stated that they often need to develop their citation styles. The responses obtained from the participants for these particular aspects can help the current writing centers, or those to be established, at Saudi universities to offer more precise and effective services to students, particularly pharmaceutical students, to help them overcome their writing issues and improve the linguistic aspects of their English writing aspects.

Although the participants in this study did not have a writing center at their university, their answers regarding their attitudes towards using a writing center for the purpose of improving their English writing seem very close to the attitudes of students attending Salem State University in the United States. The study on students' attitudes towards writing centers was done by Frank Devlin in 1996. The students were regular visitors to the writing center at their university, and Devlin observed that "tutorial interaction can help students gain practical knowledge" (p. 155). He also stated that "for many students, tutoring clearly boosts their confidence" (p. 156). The Saudi participants of the current study who had never visited a writing center strongly indicated the need for one. 61.9 % of them strongly believe that improving their writing will help them achieve the requirements of their assignments and improve their grades. With a percentage of 73.2%, the participants strongly agreed that if their writing improves, they will be able to improve their learning in their major and will be more confident about working after they graduate. Moreover, 42 students strongly agreed that they will have positive attitudes towards their learning if their writing improves. Finally, most of the other participants, agreed on what they will feel and be able to become if their writing improves.

Furthermore, regarding their expectations of their visits to a writing center, students' responses varied as some wanted to have in-person consultations while others preferred online consultations. This means that universities need to think of different ways to facilitate a writing center that provides both in-person and online consultations to match their students' needs in order to help them develop their English language writing. It is also important that when a university's writing center provides online services platforms, it should allow students to send their papers to a tutor in the center so that they can receive online written feedback, and these were the expectations that were expressed by the participating pharmaceutical students regarding online writing center services. Based on their responses to the survey, 38% of the participants strongly agreed on these expectations, whereas another 38% of them agreed. Also, based on the participants' responses, most of the students either strongly agreed or agreed on preferring and expecting to have a writing tutor who is familiar with their major assignments, can provide them with a follow-up regarding their assignments, and can understand their challenges in order for their English writing to be perfectly developed.

## 7. Conclusion

The findings of this study show that a large number of pharmaceutical students actually seek help outside their own university to improve their English writing. Universities should be the first place where students can seek help for the purpose of improving their writing. Therefore, any university that does not have a writing center should start to develop its own writing center where students can go to improve their English writing. Students are always looking for support to overcome learning issues, and English writing is one of these issues, which can better be handled on campus. Also, the results of this study show that the participants have different writing development needs, such as vocabulary, grammar, organization and structure which need to be addressed. The participants are pharmaceutical Saudi students and their answers can be presented to a developed or underdeveloped writing center in a Saudi university to train

tutors to help students with language issues. This will be a two pronged strategy which will benefit both the tutors and the students.

Moreover, for universities in Saudi Arabia which might not have a writing center or want to establish one, they need to understand the participating pharmaceutical students' belief that if they get the opportunity to develop their English writing, they can improve their general learning experiences and be more confident working after graduation. The participants' responses are very supportive to the main goal of writing centers, which is to improve students' ability to learn more from their major and build trust for their future. Their responses also support establishing a new writing center for Saudi universities that might still be indecisive regarding developing one due to their skepticism about the effectiveness of a writing center in supporting students. Furthermore, in this study, the students' responses regarding what they expect from a writing center emphasizes the fact that training is key to a writing center. For example, the participating students revealed that they need a consultant who can understand their learning concerns and challenges. Consequently, writing centers should always train their writing tutors so that they can be qualified enough to help those students. An example of such training includes training tutors how to proofread and give feedback on different pharmaceutical papers written in English. Also, writing centers at universities should train their writing tutors on the optimal use of some online writing services so that they can help students in need to develop their writing. Meanwhile, universities should make sure that any online services provided for writing centers users are very reliable for both the tutor and the students.

Furthermore, the findings of this study show the importance of having a writing center in all Saudi universities. This will relieve the stress of looking for a writing center outside the campus. Students' writing needs are diverse, and their positive attitudes towards having a writing center to develop their English writing can positively affect learning outcomes in their major courses. The participants stated that having a trained writing center tutor who can understand their specific challenges can actually encourage them to visit a writing center. In turn, this should encourage writing centers to develop themselves and provide the visiting students with efficient services to improve their English writing and their overall learning.

Finally, the findings of this study open new horizons for the university administrators of two types of universities in Saudi Arabia. The first type includes universities which do not have a writing center. The administrators of these universities need to involve their students in the process before and while establishing their own writing centers through appropriate research studies on their students' needs. This is because writing centers provide direct services to help students perform different writing tasks and, accordingly, a writing center should take into consideration the perceptions of university students in order to reinforce the success of the writing centers of those universities. According to Olivia Buck (2018), "in order to understand the writing center, or "success" within it, we must pursue knowledge of the various viewpoints of those who use, and therefore define, it" (para. 4). The results of this study were found from data provided by one category of male university students (who are pharmaceutical students) to determine their writing needs. However, there are certainly other university students with different majors who have different voices and perspectives that need to be considered to examine their writing needs and to find what they expect from a writing center.

The second type includes universities that have writing centers. The directors of these universities should involve their students in the process of developing their writing centers. It is important to conduct a needs analysis regularly in terms of determining the attitudes of students towards writing centers, what aspects of language they have improved upon and what help they would like in the future. The directors of the writing centers have an important role to play in helping to improve the performance of the writing consultants and involving students through asking for their opinions about their consultations, since identifying these opinions can help the directors determine the choices they have to train the writing consultants and improve their tutoring methods. According to Muriel Harris (1985), “most students are bad writers, but the more serious the injuries, the more confusing the symptoms, the greater the need for diagnostic work” (p. 5). That is why the directors of the writing centers should understand their students’ perspectives of the writing centers and what they are lacking and, therefore, improve the training of the consultants accordingly and improve the overall services of the writing center.

In conclusion, this study has provided universities and writing center in Saudi Arabia with just a glimpse of one aspect of university students’ writing needs. However, it is still necessary to examine the other needs and emphasize the importance of the writing centers for students with different majors. The participants in this study have different writing needs and different challenges. However, there are still other students in different campuses who might or might not share the same writing challenges, and those students need to be involved in similar studies in Saudi Arabia for further development and the establishment of writing centers. The research on the importance of writing centers and how to improve their performance should continue, especially with all the emerging changes that are happening to the students, such as the experience of leaving high school and joining university and the continuous development of technologies that can bring new challenges to the students who may need to improve their writing.

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