

MALE AND FEMALE IN SELF-CONFIDENCE: ARE THEY DIFFERENT?

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the differences in self-confidence levels between male and female students in English language learning at SMA Islam Nusantara Malang, Indonesia. Utilizing a mixed-method approach, the researcher aimed to comprehensively understand the differences in self-confidence levels between male and female students in learning English. This approach combined quantitative analysis, utilizing statistical tools such as linear regression and the T-test, with qualitative exploration through descriptive analysis and thematic/content analysis. Through this approach, significant differences in self-confidence were identified, with female students exhibiting higher levels compared to males. Quantitative analysis, supported by qualitative insights, highlighted the influence of factors such as vocabulary knowledge and sustained interest on confidence levels. The findings underscore the importance of tailored teaching strategies to address gender-based confidence gaps and advocate for further research to explore additional variables impacting language learning outcomes. These insights contribute to a nuanced understanding of self-confidence dynamics in language education, advocating for inclusive approaches to foster confidence among all students.

Keywords: *Self-confidence, Gender Differences, English Language Learning, Education.*

INTRODUCTION

Learning is the process of acquiring information and experience through study, practice, or training (Sultra & Baharudin, 2020). It involves changing behavior and interactions between people and their environment to achieve learning objectives. Students who are unmotivated or do not study can find it difficult to adapt to advancements in science and technology. Factors such as students' belief in information and learning are all connected to learning something. Motivation plays a crucial role in learning, as students who lack motivation may struggle to engage in the learning process effectively.

In learning activities, English is one of the most crucial foreign languages

for communication and is spoken not only in their home country but also abroad and as a second language (Fandiño, 2019). In Indonesia, learning English is still relatively poor, and learning strategies, especially English, are still needed (Ismiatun, 2018). However, the English ability of senior high school students is still very low due to low interest in learning English (Ainia, 2020). English proficiency is increasingly important in today's globalized world, as it facilitates communication and collaboration across cultures. Despite the importance of English, many students in Indonesia face challenges in mastering the language, highlighting the need for effective learning strategies and support systems.

The ability to communicate effectively is often a critical determinant of success, with a diverse vocabulary playing a key role in enabling individuals to express their ideas convincingly and engage in meaningful discussions (Muryani and Yunus, 2024). The mastery of vocabulary enables individuals to articulate their thoughts precisely, capturing nuances and complexities in language that contribute to effective communication. With a diverse vocabulary, individuals can choose the most appropriate words to convey their message. Moreover, a broad vocabulary facilitates comprehension and interpretation, enabling individuals to engage more deeply with various forms of communication, including written text, speeches, and conversations.

Building upon the foundation of effective communication, self-confidence emerges as another crucial aspect influencing individuals' interactions and learning outcomes (Selerang, 2023). Research by Trimayati et al. (2023) found differences in self-confidence between male and female students, which can help them bring out their abilities and carry out various learning activities successfully. Understanding the differences in self-confidence between male and female students can help educators tailor their teaching methods to better support both genders.

Male and female are generally considered to have the same position in everyday life, but they have different positions due to biological and psychological influences. Males often attribute their lack of enthusiasm for language learning to difficulty, boredom, or lack of ability, while females tend to feel anxious and study harder (Huang, 2023). Differences between male and female roles, including how men and women move, speak, think, and make

decisions, cannot be ignored. These differences in self-confidence may stem from societal norms and expectations placed on each gender from a young age.

Differences in self-confidence can also be seen in learning activities. Many studies show that female students show higher academic achievement than males, as they appear enthusiastic and master the material presented by the teacher during the learning process (Volchok, 2018). However, most male students seem less interested and do not fully master the material. Female students tend to make higher academic social comparisons and lower academic comparisons than male students, and gender has a substantial impact on academic learning outcomes when male students outperform female pupils in terms of success scores.

Research has shown that a small proportion of adolescents have high levels of self-confidence, with males often using more direct language and females using many connotative speech patterns. Males are considered rational, logical, and tend to speak for longer periods and interrupt more often than females (Apriyanto, 2019). This study aims to investigate the difference in self-confidence between male and female students in learning English at SMA Islam Nusantara Malang, which may provide benefits and relevance in an academic context. This research can contribute to theoretical and practical understanding of the importance of self-confidence in learning English and help develop strategies that are more effective in increasing students' self-confidence in educational environments.

Several previous studies have investigated the topic of self-confidence in learning English. The first study by Arafah (2021) investigated differences in self-confidence between male and female students at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, using quantitative research with comparative methods. However, the researchers found no significant difference in self-confidence in terms of gender among students at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, as the average scores of male and female students were not much different. The second study by Trimayati et al (2023) investigated differences in self-confidence between male and female students at SMAN 1 Cerme, using quantitative research and accidental sampling. The researchers found that there were significant differences in self-confidence between male and female students, which affects their learning

achievement.

The researcher aims to examine the comparison of self-confidence between male and female students in learning English at SMA Islam Nusantara Malang, focusing on the factors that influence self-confidence levels contextually. The research problem is to investigate the correlation between self-confidence and self-confidence in learning English, as well as the extent to which male and female students differ in terms of self-confidence.

METHOD

The method employed in this study encompassed various elements including research design, subject selection, data collection instruments, and data analysis techniques. Utilizing a mixed-method approach, the researcher aimed to comprehensively understand the differences in self-confidence levels between male and female students in learning English. This approach combined quantitative analysis, utilizing statistical tools such as linear regression and the T-test, with qualitative exploration through descriptive analysis and thematic/content analysis. By triangulating findings from both quantitative and qualitative methods, the study aimed to provide a robust answer to the research questions, allowing for a deeper understanding of the complexities underlying self-confidence in English language learning.

The subject consisted of 25 students from SMA Islam Nusantara Malang, selected through total sampling due to the relatively small population size. Data collection techniques included questionnaires, documentation, and interviews, each serving to gather precise data on students' self-confidence when learning English. The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale and underwent validation and reliability testing using SPSS software. Interviews were self-constructed, focusing on understanding students' confidence levels and learning experiences in the classroom. Subsequent data analysis involved both quantitative methods such as linear regression and T-tests to test hypotheses regarding the differences in self-confidence between genders, as well as qualitative techniques to explore underlying themes and patterns in students' self-confidence narratives. Through this comprehensive approach, the study aimed to shed light on the nuanced aspects of self-confidence in English language learning among male and female

students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings from Chapter IV offer a comprehensive analysis of self-confidence levels among male and female students in English language learning. Firstly, the validity and reliability tests conducted using SPSS 25.0 ensured the robustness of the research instrument.

The validity test, comparing the correlation coefficient of questionnaire items against the significance level of 5%, affirmed the validity of all items. This indicates the questionnaire effectively captured the intended constructs related to self-confidence. Similarly, the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.861$), exceeding the required threshold and confirming the reliability of the instrument. The results of the reliability test using the SPSS 25.0 for Windows program was shown as follows:

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.861	20

Based on the results above, it showed that Cronbach's alpha had a value of 0.861, which was more than the R-value of 0.396. The item can be said to be reliable and can be said to have met the standard, or in short, $0.861 > 0.396$. Moving forward, the descriptive analysis provided insights into the self-confidence levels of female and male students separately.

Table 2. Total Value of Female Students' Self-Confidence

No	Interval	Category	Value	Percentage
1.	74 – 84	Very High	1	8.3%
2.	63 – 73	High	9	58.4%
3.	52 – 62	Average	2	25%
4.	41 – 51	Low	1	8.3%

Table 3. Total value of male students' self-confidence

No	Interval	Category	Value	Percentage
1.	74 – 84	Very High	0	0%
2.	63 – 73	High	1	8.3%
3.	52 – 62	Average	10	83.4%
4.	41 – 51	Low	1	8.3%

Based on table 2 and 3, it showed that female students exhibited a higher average self-confidence score (69.31) categorized as 'high,' while male students scored lower (57.00) falling into the 'average' category. These findings indicate a gender disparity in self-confidence levels, which was further corroborated by the results of the independent t-test analysis.

Table 4. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Self-confidence	Equal variances assumed	.445	.034	.817	25	.022	-1.244	1.522	-4.393	1.906
	Equal variances not assumed			.814	22.348	.022	-1.244	1.528	-4.409	1.922

The significant difference (Sig. < 0.05) in self-confidence between male and female learners underscores the importance of considering gender dynamics in understanding self-confidence in language learning contexts.

Moreover, qualitative insights gleaned from interviews with four

respondents shed light on the factors influencing self-confidence among students. High-confidence individuals, irrespective of gender, attributed their self-assurance to factors such as vocabulary knowledge, sustained interest, and perceived language proficiency. In contrast, low-confidence respondents expressed hesitancy and reluctance, citing reasons such as a lack of confidence, inability to speak English fluently, and fear of making mistakes. These qualitative findings provided nuanced perspectives on the interplay between individual factors and self-confidence levels, enriching the understanding derived from quantitative analysis.

The discussion of self-confidence among English learners at SMA Islam Nusantara Malang yielded insightful findings through both quantitative analysis using SPSS and qualitative exploration via in-depth interviews. The study aimed to compare self-confidence levels between male and female students and discern the extent of the gender disparity in self-confidence. Quantitative analysis uncovered significant differences in self-confidence levels between genders, corroborating previous research and highlighting the intricate relationship between gender and self-confidence in language learning. These findings align with Wahyuni's (2013) emphasis on individual factors contributing to self-confidence development, underlining the multifaceted nature of self-confidence within language learning contexts.

Qualitative insights from interviews further elucidated the nuanced dynamics of self-confidence in language learning. High-confidence individuals attributed their confidence to factors such as vocabulary, sustained interest, and perceived proficiency, while low-confidence respondents exhibited broader inhibitions in expression. These qualitative findings resonate with Unger's (2020) perspective on intellectual differences between genders and emphasize the importance of tailored teaching strategies. Educators are urged to adopt diverse approaches that cater to individual needs, promote interactive learning activities, and offer targeted support to address the complexities associated with gender and self-confidence in language education, aligning with Wahyuni's (2013) recommendations regarding the consideration of individual factors in fostering self-confidence among language learners.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study conducted at SMA Islam Nusantara Malang, it was observed that male and female students exhibited varying levels of confidence in learning English. Notably, the research concluded that female students tended to display higher levels of self-confidence compared to their male counterparts, particularly within the moderate group. This discrepancy was evident in their willingness to engage in English learning activities, such as confidently attempting to pronounce vocabulary in class, even if incorrectly. Therefore, it is imperative for educators to address this gender-based confidence gap by employing diverse teaching methodologies that cater to the specific needs and learning styles of both male and female students, with the aim of fostering increased confidence levels among male students in learning English.

Furthermore, the study suggests that future research endeavors in this area should encompass a broader spectrum of factors beyond just self-confidence. By examining additional variables, such as teaching strategies, classroom dynamics, and socio-cultural influences, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics impacting English language learning among male and female students. This multifaceted approach will not only yield more accurate insights but also pave the way for more targeted interventions aimed at enhancing overall learning outcomes and narrowing the gender gap in English language proficiency at SMA Islam Nusantara Malang and similar educational settings.

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