

Gender-Based Differences in Self-Confidence: Implications for Career Counseling Among Male and Female University Students

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the gender-based differences in self-confidence among psychology students at Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang as they prepare to enter the workforce. In a rapidly evolving job market, self-confidence is critical for students transitioning from academia to professional environments. The study utilized a quantitative approach with a causal-comparative design, involving a sample of 130 students from the 2020 cohort. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and an Independent Sample T-Test to examine the differences in self-confidence between male and female students. The results reveal that male students exhibited significantly higher self-confidence levels than female students, with 74% of all participants displaying strong confidence in their abilities. The study identifies key factors contributing to these disparities, including societal and cultural norms that influence gender roles and expectations. These findings highlight the need for targeted guidance and counseling interventions that address these gender differences, focusing on enhancing self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and resilience. The study further recommends the implementation of mentorship programs and growth mindset strategies to support students in their career development. Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of creating an inclusive educational environment that equips all students, regardless of gender, with the confidence and skills necessary to succeed in their professional lives.

Keywords: self-confidence, gender differences, psychology students, career preparation, guidance and counseling, mentorship, growth mindset



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INTRODUCTION

Today's life is filled with various challenges that must be faced, requiring solutions that can lead to better outcomes. One of these solutions lies in the vital role of education (Alam, 2016). According to Ghufroon and Risnawati (as cited in Ika et al., 2023), the role of education is closely tied to human resources (HR). Education should ideally produce human resources capable of addressing modern problems and challenges while possessing balanced personal integrity and academic abilities. University students represent a significant output of the educational system, typically in the early adulthood stage of development, which ranges between 18-25 years old (Umma, 2016). During this stage, students often begin contemplating their future and increasingly assume greater responsibility for themselves. Considering future employment is a primary concern frequently experienced by students (Nurhayati, 2011).

Finding a job is not an easy task, especially in Indonesia, where the job market demands highly competitive and rapidly evolving human resources. The increasing quality standards for human resources each year lead to greater competition for employment, often resulting in a lack of self-confidence among students (Rizqi & Ediati, 2020). Self-confidence plays a crucial role in entering the job market, particularly for psychology students preparing to transition from academia to the professional world. Self-confidence influences how students adapt to work environments, interact with colleagues, and tackle challenges and opportunities. A confident individual is more likely to strive to achieve their goals (Adawiyah, 2022). Confidence helps individuals face uncertainties, view challenges as opportunities, take calculated risks, and make sound decisions (Davies as cited in Sri Wahyuni, 2013). According to Lauster (as cited in Alamsyah & Hakim, 2021), self-confidence is an attitude or belief in oneself, enabling individuals to act without excessive anxiety, freely pursue their desires, take responsibility for their actions, interact politely with others, have achievement motivation, and recognize their strengths and weaknesses. Taylor (as cited in Dwi et al., 2021) describes self-confidence as a belief in one's ability to perform specific behaviors or achieve particular goals. Confidence helps individuals face uncertainties, view challenges as opportunities, take calculated risks, and make sound decisions, making self-confidence essential when entering the workforce. Lauster (as cited in Ghufron & Risnawati, 2017) identifies five key aspects of self-confidence: self-ability, optimism, objectivity, responsibility, and rationality. Yusuf et al. (2018) note that factors influencing self-confidence include self-esteem, self-concept, experience, education, parenting, gender, and appearance.

Having self-confidence supports individuals in interacting with their environment and enhances skills such as communication, assertiveness, self-presentation, and emotional control. The characteristics of inner self-confidence lead individuals to feel good about their personality, with inner beliefs manifesting through natural abilities like self-love, self-understanding, positive goals, and positive thinking (Ajeng, 2022). The level of self-confidence, whether positive or negative, can significantly impact various aspects of a person's life. Therefore, it is crucial to build self-confidence to strengthen one's ability to adapt to their environment. With strong self-confidence, individuals can overcome obstacles effectively, leading to a sense of comfort and security (Zulfan, 2017).

Based on a pre-research questionnaire distributed in November 2023 at Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang, 89.5% of psychology students felt ready to enter the workforce, 57.9% of psychology students were confident when applying for jobs against more qualified candidates, 76.3% of psychology students believed they could quickly adapt to new environments, 84.2% of psychology students were confident they could complete job tasks or responsibilities, 84.2% of psychology students believed that confidence could help them face challenges in the workplace, 76.3% of psychology students felt assured when given challenging responsibilities, and 78% of psychology students were confident in their abilities. Regarding gender, 64% of male students felt prepared to face the job market compared to only 36% of female students, and 53% of male students were confident they could complete job tasks or responsibilities compared to 47% of female students. From these pre-research results, it can be concluded that psychology students at Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang generally have a good level of self-confidence when facing the job market. However, male students exhibit higher self-confidence levels compared to female students. According to Halim (2021), gender is one of the factors that influence an individual's self-confidence, partly due to the cultural

environment in which they are raised. In Indonesia, traditional values still emphasize that men should have a good career to be capable leaders who can adequately support their families. For male students with the opportunity to pursue higher education, this cultural expectation may foster greater ambition (Halim, 2021). Given the observed phenomena, this study aims to explore the differences in self-confidence levels between male and female students facing the job market at the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang. The purpose of this research is to determine the differences in self-confidence between male and female students at the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang, as they prepare to enter the workforce. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge and serve as a reference for future research.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is a quantitative approach, with data analysis techniques based on descriptive statistical analysis. Data collection in this research utilized non-probability sampling, specifically accidental sampling. The research design employed is causal-comparative, which not only seeks to find cause-and-effect relationships but also aims to compare different groups. The study uses a single variable, with the population consisting of students from the Faculty of Psychology at Universitas Buana Perjuangan from the 2020 cohort. According to data from the Faculty of Psychology's Administrative Department, the 2020 cohort comprises 187 students. The sample size was determined using the Issac and Michael table with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a sample size of 126 active students from the 2020 cohort at the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang.

The self-confidence questionnaire was developed based on Lauster's theory (as cited in Ghufon & Risnawati, 2017), which includes five aspects: self-assurance, optimism, objectivity, responsibility, and rationality. These five aspects were translated into five indicators, with example indicators such as: "viewing problems according to their actual truth" and "being able and willing to bear the consequences of one's actions." These indicators were then further refined into 16 items constructed by the researcher. Validity tests showed that the lowest value was found in item 11, with a value of 0.307, which reads: "I worry that people around me underestimate me," while the highest validity value was in item 7, with a value of 0.753, which reads: "I am pleased when my friends ask about the job I am interested in." The reliability test yielded a value of 0.720, which, according to Guilford's criteria, indicates high reliability. Additional studies support the reliability and validity of self-confidence measurement tools, emphasizing the importance of rigorous item construction and statistical validation in psychological assessments (Johnson & Christensen, 2020; Smith et al., 2018; Brown, 2019; Patel & Thompson, 2021; Taylor, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participant Summary

This study involved a sample of 130 respondents, comprising 53 males and 77 females. The majority of respondents were aged between 21 and 30 years, with 79 respondents (60.8%), while the least represented age group was over 30 years, with only 10 respondents (7.7%). The demographic data of the participants in this study are as follows.

Table 1. Participant Summary

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage	Total Percentage
Gender			
Male	53	40.8%	100%
Female	77	59.2%	
Age			
18 - 21	41	31.5%	
21 - 30	79	60.8%	100%
> 30	10	7.7%	

Normality Test

Sugiyono (2018) asserts that a normality test is a statistical method used to analyze whether data from each variable are normally distributed. A normality test was conducted on the self-confidence scale constructed by the researchers, yielding the following results.

**Table 2. Normality Test Data
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test**

		KEPERCAYAAN DIRI
N		130
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	44.89
	Std. Deviation	9.639
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.114
	Positive	.114
	Negative	-.103
Test Statistic		.114
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000 ^c
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)		.061
Point Probability		.000

The exact result of the normality test showed an exact Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.061. In normality testing, data are considered normally distributed if the P-value > 0.05. In this study, the P-value was 0.061, indicating that the data are normally distributed. Normality tests are critical in ensuring that the assumptions for parametric statistical tests are met (Field, 2018). The use of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests is common in social sciences to verify data normality (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). The normal distribution of data in this study allows for the use of further parametric tests, ensuring that the findings are robust and reliable (Kim, 2013).

Categorization Test

Categorization aims to place individuals into separate groups hierarchically according to a continuum based on the measured attributes (Azwar, 2014). The following are the results of the categorization test in this study:

**Table 3. Categorization Test
Kat_KepercayaanDiri**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rendah	40	30,7	30,7	30,7
	Tinggi	90	69,3	69,3	100,0
	Total	130	100,0	100,0	

The categorization test results for the self-confidence scale in this study showed that 30.7% of students (40 students) were in the low category, while 69.3% (90 students) were in the high category. Thus, it can be said that the majority of students in the Faculty of Psychology at Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang have high levels of self-confidence. Categorization is a widely used method in psychological research to understand the distribution of traits within a population (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). This method allows for the identification of specific groups that may require targeted interventions or support (Cohen, 2013). In this study, the high self-confidence levels among students suggest a positive trend that could be leveraged in career counseling and professional development programs (Zhou & Brown, 2015).

Independent Sample T-Test

The Independent Sample T-Test is a statistical test used to compare the means of two independent groups. Data are considered to differ significantly between two groups if the Sig. (2-tailed) value is < 0.05. In this study, data were processed to compare the differences in self-confidence between male and female students. The results are as follows:

**Table 4. First Independent Sample T-Test
Group Statistics**

	JENIS KELAMIN	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
KEPERCAYAAN_DIRI	LAKI-LAKI	53	51.62	6.206	.852
	PEREMPUAN	77	40.26	8.832	1.007

Based on the output above, the mean value for males was 51.62, and for females, it was 40.26. Descriptive statistics suggest a significant difference in self-confidence levels between male and female students at the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang.

**Table 5. Second Independent Sample T-Test
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
KEPERCAYAAN_DIRI	Equal variances assumed	11.741	.001	8.088	128	.000	11.363	1.405
	Equal variances not assumed			8.615	127.931	.000	11.363	1.319

The results above indicate that the Sig. value from Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was 0.001, which is less than 0.05, suggesting that the data are not homogeneous. When the data are not homogeneous, the interpretation should be based on the Sig. (2-tailed) value in the "equal variances not assumed" column. In this study, the Sig. (2-tailed) value in the "equal variances not assumed" column was 0.000, or $P < 0.05$, indicating a significant difference in self-confidence levels between male and female students at the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang.

These findings are consistent with previous research by Yusuf et al. (2018), which examined gender differences in self-confidence among students participating in leadership activities. The study found that male students exhibited higher self-confidence levels than their female counterparts, particularly in leadership roles. This gender-based difference in self-confidence may be attributed to societal expectations and cultural norms that position men as strong, independent, and capable, while women are often seen as needing protection and support (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Eagly & Wood, 2016). Adawiyah (2020) also highlighted that gender influences self-confidence, with men typically showing higher confidence levels than women. This difference is partly due to women's greater emphasis on physical appearance and the tendency to compare themselves to others (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). However, Wahyuni's (2014) research presented conflicting results, finding no significant gender differences in self-confidence. This discrepancy may be due to variations in sample characteristics, including cultural background and environmental factors (Hyde, 2014; Spence & Buckner, 2000). Overall, the differences in self-confidence between men and women are not only limited to self-confidence but also extend to emotional, biological, and intellectual factors, reflecting the unique nature of human beings (Wahyuni, 2014). According to Halim (2021), gender influences self-confidence, partly because of cultural values instilled during upbringing. In Indonesia, men are still expected to have successful careers to become leaders capable of providing for their families. For male students with the opportunity to pursue higher education, this expectation can foster greater ambition (Halim, 2021; Ridgeway, 2011).

In this study, overall, students at the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang, exhibited high levels of self-confidence in facing the job market. Regarding self-assurance and abilities, 74% of psychology students demonstrated strong confidence in their capabilities. Second, 64% showed optimism by continuing to pursue opportunities even after previous failures. Third, 87% of students were objective, understanding that competition would intensify, and recognizing the need to continually improve their skills to remain competitive. Fourth, 93% of respondents chose to remain responsible for completing academic or professional tasks. Finally, 79% of students acknowledged the importance of being motivated and optimistic in the evolving job market. From a gender perspective, male students demonstrated higher self-confidence levels than female students. Self-confidence is crucial in facing the job market, as it supports individuals in interacting with their surroundings, enhancing skills such as communication, assertiveness, self-presentation, and emotional regulation (Ajeng, 2022). Low self-confidence when entering the workforce can lead to anxiety, which may hinder progress, as anxiety often brings fear and

worry about potential outcomes. Therefore, self-confidence is essential when entering the job market (Azhari & Mirza, 2016; Bandura, 1997).

Implications for Guidance and Counseling

The findings of this study underscore the critical role that guidance and counseling must play in addressing gender disparities in self-confidence, particularly as students prepare to transition into the workforce. The observed differences in self-confidence levels between male and female students indicate that counseling interventions must be nuanced and multifaceted, recognizing the complex interplay of societal, cultural, and psychological factors that contribute to these disparities. First, female students, who typically exhibit lower self-confidence, require targeted interventions that not only enhance self-esteem and self-efficacy but also challenge the deep-rooted societal and cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequities. These norms, which often emphasize physical appearance and foster a propensity for social comparison among women, can severely undermine self-confidence (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Counseling programs should therefore incorporate feminist and empowerment-based approaches, which aim to dismantle these harmful norms and encourage women to redefine their self-worth independently of societal expectations (Moradi & Huang, 2008). Interventions could include cognitive-behavioral strategies that help female students recognize and challenge negative self-beliefs, as well as mindfulness practices that promote self-acceptance and resilience (Baer, 2003). In addition to addressing the specific needs of female students, counseling programs must also support male students in navigating the societal pressures that shape their self-confidence. While male students in this study exhibited higher levels of self-confidence, it is essential to recognize that this confidence is often built on societal expectations of masculinity, which may discourage emotional vulnerability and lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms (Mahalik et al., 2003). Counseling interventions for male students should thus include components that foster emotional intelligence, helping them to develop a more balanced and authentic sense of self-confidence that integrates emotional awareness with traditional markers of success (Goleman, 1995).

Career counseling services, in particular, must be tailored to foster resilience and adaptability in both male and female students, given that self-confidence is crucial for effective communication, assertiveness, and emotional regulation in professional settings (Ajeng, 2022). These services should include workshops and training sessions that not only build these skills but also provide students with practical tools for managing workplace stress and conflict. For instance, role-playing exercises that simulate job interviews, negotiation scenarios, and team collaborations can help students practice and refine these essential skills in a supportive environment (Zhou & Brown, 2015). Moreover, the study's findings highlight the need for a more nuanced understanding of how cultural and environmental factors influence self-confidence. Guidance counselors must be equipped to identify and address these factors, creating a counseling environment that is inclusive and sensitive to the diverse backgrounds of students. This might involve integrating culturally responsive counseling practices that acknowledge and respect students' cultural identities while providing strategies to navigate the unique challenges they may face in professional contexts (Sue et al., 2009). Furthermore, the

implications of this study extend to the broader educational policies that govern professional preparedness programs. Educational institutions should prioritize the development of mentorship programs that connect students with alumni who can serve as role models and provide guidance through the often challenging transition from academia to the workforce (Hyde, 2014). Such programs are particularly beneficial for female students, who may benefit from seeing women in leadership positions and understanding the diverse pathways to career success (Ragins & Kram, 2007). Mentorship can also play a crucial role in building social capital, which has been shown to be a significant predictor of career success (Burt, 1998).

Finally, it is essential that guidance and counseling programs emphasize the importance of fostering a growth mindset among all students. By incorporating self-reflection and goal-setting exercises into counseling sessions, counselors can help students identify their strengths and areas for development, fostering a mindset that views challenges as opportunities for growth rather than threats to self-worth (Dweck, 2006). This approach not only enhances self-confidence but also prepares students to navigate the inevitable setbacks and failures that are part of any career journey. In summary, the findings of this study highlight the critical need for gender-sensitive counseling interventions that address the unique challenges faced by male and female students as they prepare to enter the workforce. By promoting self-confidence through tailored interventions, career counseling, mentorship programs, and a focus on growth mindset, guidance and counseling programs can play a pivotal role in ensuring that all students are equipped with the tools they need to succeed in their careers and beyond.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals significant gender-based differences in self-confidence among students at the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang, with male students displaying higher self-confidence levels compared to their female counterparts. The findings indicate that 74% of students possess strong confidence in their abilities, while a majority exhibit optimism, objectivity, responsibility, and motivation in preparing for the job market. These differences in self-confidence are influenced by societal and cultural norms that shape expectations for men and women differently, leading to varying levels of confidence in navigating professional environments. The results underscore the importance of addressing these disparities through targeted interventions that bolster self-confidence, particularly among female students, to better equip them for the challenges of the workforce. Additionally, the study highlights the need for continued research to explore the underlying factors contributing to these gender differences in self-confidence, considering the complex interplay of emotional, biological, and intellectual factors. Ultimately, fostering a balanced and supportive environment is crucial in ensuring all students, regardless of gender, can confidently and effectively transition into their professional careers.

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