



## DOES SELF-ESTEEM INFLUENCE STUDENT ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST SCORES?

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### Abstract

As one of Indonesia's most prominent foreign languages, English is essential in education. The importance of English is reflected in the fact that it is taught from elementary school through university and is even used as a requirement for graduation or employment. Passing the campus-provided English Proficiency Test is a graduation requirement for Teknokrat University students. As a result, learning and mastering English is an important step for students. When it comes to teaching English in the classroom, there are various factors to consider. Every student has their own individuality. Different personalities result in varying levels of comprehension. Students' personalities vary enormously, yet self-esteem is important in influencing individuals. In short, students' personalities can differ based on their self-esteem. As a result, students' personalities are greatly influenced by their sense of self, affecting their learning. This study aimed to see if there is a relationship between undergraduate students' self-esteem and their English Language proficiency test at Teknokrat University. The computation results show that the correlation coefficient was .454. This study revealed a moderately positive relationship between students' self-esteem and their EPT scores. Thus, the greater their self-esteem, the better their EPT score.

**Keywords:** *English Learning, English Proficiency Test and Self-esteem*

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### INTRODUCTION

English is used in so many areas; many people acquire it in order to keep up with global progress, notably in education, research, and technology. (Simanjuntak, 2019; Septiyana, Safitri, Aminatun, & Mulyah, 2021). As an international language, English is spoken by millions of people (Mandasari, 2017) and is recognized as a bridge for global communication and information (Amelia, Abidin, Permata, & Aguss, 2022; Novanti & Suprayogi, 2021). English is crucial to education because it is one of Indonesia's most widely spoken foreign languages. The fact that English is taught as a compulsory subject from elementary school through university and is also included in national examinations demonstrates the importance of English in Indonesia (Ayu & Inderawati, 2018; Awaliyah & Malihah, 2021; Amin & Wahyudin, 2022; Simamora, Wahyudin, & Utam, 2022). Moreover, as Oktaviani and Mandasari (2020) mention, learning English in this era could help students master negotiation skills, communicate with anyone, and provide them with a greater qualifications when looking for a job.

Students will master the four fundamentals of English throughout that school year: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Even if they have known English since elementary school, some students still struggle with utilizing it, particularly in daily life. Students who are learning English as a second or foreign language confront various challenges that make it hard for them to become proficient in the language like a native speaker (Setyawan, 2018). Despite their challenges in learning English, they nevertheless require it in their lives because they must pass an English Proficiency Test in order to graduate from university or apply for a job. Language proficiency (EPT) is a test that uses to measure someone's ability in language use (Gustanti & Ayu, 2021; Ariastuti & Wahyudin, 2022). TOEFL, TOEIC, and other English competency tests are commonly used to assess English language

proficiency. These tests are used to assess the English-language ability of persons who do not speak English as their first language and intend to enroll as undergraduate or graduate students in colleges and institutions. Several educational institutions, particularly in Indonesia, have begun to adopt TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) (Phillips, 2003). English proficiency is in high demand in the industry because it is linked with practically every aspect of life, from daily activities to professional industries. (Nuryasin, 2018). Many national companies include English language abilities as one of the qualifications that an applicant must meet (Damayanti & Gafur, 2020). The TOEFL assesses three skills: listening, structure and writing expression, and reading comprehension.

Passing the campus-provided English Proficiency Test is a graduation requirement for Teknokrat University students. Hence, learning and mastering English is a crucial step for students. There are several aspects to consider when teaching English in the classroom, as every student has a distinct personality. Varying personalities produce different levels of understanding. Students' personalities vary greatly, yet self-esteem is an important factor in influencing individuals. Harmer (2007) mentions that students' characters reflect their level of self-esteem, how they feel about their situation, and how much self-confidence they have. This is similar to Gustaman (2015), who stated that self-esteem is engaged with emotions and that students believe they can do something successfully. Previous experiences, such as success and failure, might help students determine how much they value themselves. In short, students' personalities can be varied depending on their self-esteem. Hence, self-esteem plays a significant part in influencing students' personalities, and it also plays a role in students' learning process.

Students with high self-esteem have a higher possibility of achieving higher scores in education as they usually set higher goals for themselves. Students with solid self-esteem tend to place more significant objectives for themselves and are more likely to persevere in the face of failure. Moreover, strong self-esteem may provide pupils the courage to confront challenging situations while also feeling satisfied with their growth and achievement (Murk, 2006; Satriani, 2014). On the other hand, those with poor self-esteem tend to score lower since they do not believe in their abilities.

Satriani (2014) asserts that when students are confident, they will demonstrate their competence or positive element in taking English proficiency, such as TOEFL, IELTS, or English assessments. Thus, students' test scores are affected by their sense of self-worth. Several academics have undertaken studies on English proficiency and self-esteem. Satriani (2014) found that her research found that students' self-esteem had a substantial, significant solid correlation with their language competency. However, another study by Dev and Qiqieh (2017) found a negative link between English language proficiency and self-esteem. As a result, the researcher wishes to discover whether there is a link between undergraduate students' self-esteem and their English Language competency test at Teknokrat University.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study used quantitative research to collect and analyze data using statistical procedures (Cresswell, 2009). Besides that, a correlation study was carried out to ascertain the degree of relationship between two variables, namely students' self-esteem and English proficiency level. This study used 40 undergraduate students from Teknokrat University's English Education Program as samples.

Two instruments were used to study the relationship between self-esteem and English language proficiency. The first is a self-esteem questionnaire consisting of 15 statements, and the second is an EPT score. Linkert scale was used in the questionnaire with the options 1= **never-true**, 2= **rarely-true**, 3= **sometimes-true**, 4= **often-true** and 5= **always-true**.

The Cronbach alpha of the questionnaire was found to be .820, which was considered reliable. EPT scores used were the most recent EPT score of each student. EPT results have been validated. It was supported by students' statements that they obtained their EPT score after taking EPT in Teknokrat. After all the data was gathered, the questionnaire results were analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The questionnaire was completed by forty students. However, the researcher only used 38 of them because two respondents were invalid as they did not provide their EPT scores. According to the data below, the highest EPT score was 553, while the lowest was 317.

**Table 1.1 Descriptive Statistics of Students' EPT Scores**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EPTSCORES	38	317	553	449.00	52.071
Valid N (listwise)	38				

As the table below shows, all statements receive a mean score above 3, meaning most students agree with the statements. This implied that most students have medium to high self-esteem.

**Table 1.2 Descriptive Statistics of Students' Self-Esteem**

	Statements	N	Mean
1	My teachers believe that I learn and achieve high levels of excellence in school.	38	3,34
2	My teachers really believe in me	38	3,37
3	My teachers constantly support and encourage me	38	3,71
4	I often feel that I can do the work that my teachers assign me	38	3,24
5	My teachers help me understand what I might be able to accomplish in my life	38	3,53
6	I feel a positive connection with one or more adults in my school	38	3,68
7	My teachers remind me that success in school does not depend on how smart you are but how hard you are willing to work.	38	3,82
8	I have important responsibilities for helping out in my school.	38	3,68
9	I have important responsibilities for helping out in my community.	38	3,58
10	I have a major responsibility in preparing and presenting a report on my schoolwork during parent conferences.	38	3,47
11	I have a major responsibility in preparing and presenting a report on my schoolwork during parent conferences.	38	3,37
12	My teachers and counselors encourage me to think about what I want to do with my life and help me make plans to accomplish what I would like to do	38	3,58
13	My school has organized students into small groups, which provide the attention and support I need to be successful.	38	3,37
14	I feel that I know my fellow students and that we all help one another succeed	38	3,79
15	I feel a sense of pride about my work in school and know that I can do anything I set my mind to	38	3,63
	Valid N (listwise)	38	3,54

Statement 4 had the lowest mean score (3,24); with the statement, I often feel that I can do the work *my teachers assign me*. Seven students chose *rarely-true* for this statement, suggesting that they did not believe they could finish their teacher's homework. Meanwhile, 18 students responded *sometimes true*, while the remaining students answered *often true*. The highest mean score was gained by statement number 4 (3,82) with the statement *My teachers remind me that success in school does not depend on how smart you are but how hard you are willing to work*. Eight students selected

*always-true*, ten selected *true*, ten selected *sometimes-true*, and two selected *rarely-true* and *never-true*. This means that the majority of students agreed that their teacher encouraged them to recognise the worth of their efforts.

The researcher examined the link between students' EPT scores and their self-esteem after assessing the descriptive results of the study. The data was analysed using IBM SPSS 21. The following graph depicts the relationship between students' self-esteem and their EPT score:

**Table 1.2 Correlations of Students' Self-Esteem and Their EPT Score**

		EPTSCORES	SELF-ESTEEM
EPTSCORES	Pearson Correlation	1	.454**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	38	38
SELFESTEEM	Pearson Correlation	.454**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	38	38

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The calculation results show that the coefficient of correlation was .454. This result implies that there is a moderate positive correlation between students' self-esteem and their EPT scores. Thus, the higher their self-esteem, the higher their EPT score. This finding was consistent with the previous study from Satriani (2014), which found a strong relationship between students' self-esteem and their EPT score.

Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that students with strong self-esteem have a greater ability to learn a foreign language. Guban-Caisido (2020) supports the claim; in her research, she argues that self-esteem has a strong, positive relationship with second/foreign language proficiency. Students that have higher self-esteem are more engaged in their learning and activities in the language classroom. Likewise, Schunk (2000) and Hisken (2011) stated that students or individuals with high self-esteem might effectively complete given academic challenges, but those with low self-esteem tend to give up when faced with the challenges. Students with higher self-esteem have a better chance of resolving challenging situations and achieving satisfying results. This was consistent with Murk (2006), who stated that having high self-esteem can assist students in possessing the confidence to face challenging situations and find satisfaction in their progress and accomplishment.

## CONCLUSION

Self-esteem was revealed to be an important factor influencing students' performance when learning a language. This study discovered a moderate link between the two factors, demonstrating that students' self-esteem did influence their English Proficiency Test. Students with higher self-esteem have a better chance of getting higher grades since they will believe in themselves when answering questions. Teachers, on the other hand, should consider students' self-esteem when teaching English, as this might boost students' English proficiency results. There are still several concerns with this study because it did not include a significant number of people. As a result, future researchers are encouraged to undertake a variety of studies in large populations or in relation to specific English skills.

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