



Investigating Anxiety Levels and Factors Between Gender in English Language Learning Among Diploma in English

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates anxiety levels among male and female students enrolled in a Diploma in English program at the tertiary level, focusing on three key factors which are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. The study employs both qualitative and quantitative methods, collecting data through questionnaires and interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The findings reveal that both genders experience anxiety to a similar extent. Male and female students experience anxiety from all three factors. Interview data further clarify similarities and differences in the aspects of these factors that cause anxiety. Implications for educators include the necessity of creating supportive, non-judgmental learning environments and implementing targeted interventions, such as additional grammar support for male students and stress management activities for female students. Future research should consider larger, more diverse samples and explore the impact of different teaching methods and technological tools on reducing language learning anxiety. This study contributes to the field by highlighting the importance of addressing anxiety to enhance ESL learners' academic success and overall well-being.

Keywords: Anxiety, ESL, Gender, Communication, Evaluation, Assessment

1. Introduction

In the last few years, teaching has shifted from teacher to student-centred. This change focuses on getting students more involved in their learning. Alhaisoni (2012) note that education has gradually moved towards this student-centred approach over time. This shift highlights the importance of empowering students in their learning process. Language learners vary in their abilities, motivation, and effort, but a significant distinction lies in their proficiency and utilisation of learning strategies. Language learning is a complex process influenced by various psychological, social, and individual factors.

Language learning strategies are crucial, as training students in these strategies can help them become successful language learners (Alhaisoni, 2012). Similarly, Ansarin and Zeynali (2012) emphasises the importance of these strategies, noting that they can lead to higher achievement, increased self-confidence, and greater learner autonomy.



Hence, language learning strategies should be the focal points of language-related research, as they not only reflect the shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred approaches but also align with the primary goal of the teaching-learning process, which is successful learning.

However, anxiety in language learning has been identified as a significant obstacle to successful language acquisition. English language anxiety can impact students' performance, motivation, and overall learning experience. Despite extensive research on language anxiety, there is still a need to investigate how this issue interacts with demographic variables such as gender, especially among specific student populations. This study aims to fill this gap by examining whether gender differences influence anxiety levels in English language learners enrolled in a Diploma in English program.

As second language learners, students, especially at the tertiary level, may experience anxiety in the process of learning English. In the ESL environment, learners are required to be proficient and fluent in using the language. In English, learners must be adept at four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Heng et. al. (2012) stated that second language learners at a beginner's level may have a lower proficiency level, which can cause them a high level of anxiety. Sabbah (2018) revealed that the discrepancy between teaching methods and techniques used in secondary school compared to college is a major reason for anxiety among ESL learners at the tertiary stage. The syllabus taught in secondary school differs significantly from what students encounter at the tertiary level.

Halimi et al. (2019) conducted a study on classroom anxiety among students according to their majors, revealing unexpected findings of high anxiety scores among English major students. This suggests that ESL learners, despite their exposure to the language, experience significant anxiety, especially in the context of preparing for advanced studies and professional careers. Heng et al. (2012) further highlight that male students generally exhibit better coping mechanisms for test-related anxiety compared to females, likely due to their ability to manage stress in such situations. However, research exploring the relationship between anxiety and gender in this context remains limited. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate how gender differences influence anxiety levels among students majoring in English.

Various aspects of language learning and proficiency can be influenced by gender. Additionally, research has shown differences in motivation, anxiety levels, and language learning strategies between male and female learners (Halimi et al., 2019). Failure to address these differences in educational institutions may lead to inadequate support for those who require it the most, potentially resulting in disparities in learning outcomes and gender-related academic and professional opportunities. Therefore, this study aims to provide additional insights and better understand how anxiety and gender interact in the context of English language learning among Diploma in English students. Further investigation and solutions are necessary, as these factors have negatively impacted ESL learners.

The research objectives are as follows:



1. To determine if there is a significant difference in anxiety levels between male and female students enrolled in the Diploma in English program when learning English.
2. To identify the most influential factor among communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety on male and female students in the Diploma in English program when learning English.

Based on the research objectives, several research questions were devised to be answered at the end of this study. The research questions are:

1. Is there a significant difference in anxiety levels between male and female students enrolled in the Diploma in English program when learning English?
2. Which factor among communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety is the most influential on the overall anxiety levels among male and female students in the Diploma in English program when learning English?

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

The research design uses both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. This design is chosen because it allows for the collection of detailed information on the levels of English language anxiety among Diploma in English students, as well as a deeper understanding of the factors that influence these anxiety levels. The quantitative approach helps facilitate the collection of quantifiable data that can be analysed to identify patterns, significant differences and trends within the population.

This study uses a quantitative approach, utilising standardised questionnaires to gather participant data. This method ensures that the data collected are objective, reliable, and can be easily subjected to statistical analysis. As mentioned, the questionnaires include items that measure three concepts of language anxiety by Horwitz (1986), such as communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. Additionally, demographic questions are included to capture background information about the participants such as gender.

A qualitative approach was also used through interview sessions to explore further the factors that influence the participants' anxiety levels when learning English and to triangulate data collected using the questionnaire.

2.2. Sampling

The sample size is 146 students from Diploma in English students at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI). This sample was selected using the purposive sampling approach, which ensures that specific criteria are met, including higher education students, English major students, students of both genders, and high proficiency in English.

2.3. Data collection methods

The research uses a quantitative approach to exploring the levels of anxiety when learning English among the Diploma in English students through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz Horwitz and Cope (1986). It consists of 33 items using a 5-point Likert Scale that focuses on the English language. Significantly, Horwitz Horwitz and Cope (1986) used the term ‘foreign language’ in the original FLCAS.

However, similar to the study conducted in Latif (2015), this study was also conducted in a learning English as a second language learning context. Hence, taking into account this context, the term ‘foreign language’ was replaced with ‘English Language’, which changed the FLCAS to English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (ELCAS). The questionnaire has two parts (Part A and Part B). Part A was constructed to gather respondents’ demographic information, including gender, whereas 33 items were taken from Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope’s (1986) FLCAS questionnaire. The thirty-three items can be grouped into three categories:

1. communication apprehension (CA)
2. fear of negative evaluation (FNE)
3. test anxiety (TA)

Additionally, the research implements a qualitative approach to analyse further on the factors that influence the students’ anxiety when learning English by using semi - structured group interviews. The interview sessions were conducted in two sessions The first session was conducted with four female students and the second session was conducted with four male students which were selected at random. The interview sessions were conducted online using Google Meet and were recorded.

The data collection process was completed over four weeks in June 2024. Before the questionnaires and interviews were conducted among the students, ethical considerations were addressed. The students were first informed about the study and what they needed to do. Consent was also obtained, and the students were made aware that their identities would be protected and their responses would remain anonymous.

2.3. Data analysis procedures

The data was analysed within four weeks. The objective of the analysis was to examine the different levels of anxiety that students might experience while learning English. Before further analysis, Cronbach's alpha was used to check the reliability of the data, resulting in a score of 0.895, as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Cronbach’ Alpha Results for Questionnaire Items

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.895	33

The sets of questions, which address the three factors of fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety, were also tested for reliability using Cronbach’s alpha. The results were as follows:

Table 2: Cronbach’ Alpha Results for Each Factor

Reliability Statistics		
Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Fear of negative evaluation	.678	9
Communication apprehension	.837	8
Test anxiety	.597	6

Based on the Cronbach’s Alpha values above, all values exceed the ‘not satisfactory’ value of .4, with .597 considered satisfactory, .678 reasonable, .837 robust, and .895 reliable according to Taber (2018). Hence, the Cronbach's Alpha values indicate that the reliability of the measurements is generally acceptable, supporting the validity of the instrument used in this study.

The level of anxiety was categorised into three groups, which are high, moderate and low. High levels of anxiety would range from 1.00 to 2.50 by mean values. Moderate levels of anxiety were represented by mean values from 2.51 to 3.50. Low levels of anxiety, on the other hand, were identified by mean values from 3.51 to 5.00. The anxiety levels and corresponding mean value ranges are detailed in Table – below:

Table 3: Mean Value for Anxiety Level

Anxiety Level	Mean Value (Range)
High	From 1.00 to 2.50
Moderate	From 2.51 to 3.50
Low	From 3.51 to 5.00

The collected data was statistically analysed using SPSS version 29 and presented as descriptive statistics, including the percentages and means. The analysis looked at the students’ levels of language anxiety and how these levels relate to their gender. The researcher also examined which of the three factors identified by Horwitz et al. (1986) which are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety was most influential. Responses of the five-point Likert scale were converted to numerical values with scores reversed for negatively worded items. Since the data showed non-normal distribution, non-parametric tests were conducted.

The analysis used descriptive statistics to look at how many male and female students experienced high, moderate and low anxiety levels. Mann-Whitney U test was used to identify the significant difference between male and female students and anxiety levels. Moreover, the Kruskal-Wallis’s test was used to examine the significant difference between male and female students for the three specified factors.

Additionally, the data collected from the interview sessions was recorded and transcribed. Important excerpts mentioned by the participants were extracted and categorised into themes to support the factors that influence anxiety when learning English.

3. Findings and Discussion

This section highlights the findings of the research based on the two objectives: 1) the significant differences between gender and language anxiety, and 2) which of the three factors (FNE, CA, TA) influence language anxiety among male and female students the most.

3.1. Level of Anxiety according to Gender

Table 4: Level of Anxiety according to Gender

Gender	Level		
	Low	Moderate	High
Male	4 7.41.22%	40 74.07%	10 18.52%
Female	13 14.13%	58 63.04%	21 22.83%

Based on Table 1, the distribution of anxiety levels is somewhat similar between males and females, with the majority of students experiencing moderate anxiety. The distribution of participants who are experiencing high levels of anxiety is also quite similar between genders with females of 22.83% and males of 18.52%.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics and Mann-Whitney U Test Results for Anxiety Scores by Gender

Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	54	71.60	3866.50		
Female	92	74.61	6864.50		
Total	146			2381.500	0.678

The descriptive statistics in Table 4 indicate that, on average, female students tend to have slightly higher anxiety scores (mean rank of 74.61) compared to male students (mean rank of 71.60). However, the Mann-Whitney U test results in Table 5 show no statistically significant difference in anxiety levels between genders, as the p-value is greater than 0.05 (p-value = 0.678). This suggests that while female students may show slightly higher anxiety scores on average, this difference is not significant enough to conclude that gender alone significantly influences anxiety levels among the students.

This finding suggests that both male and female students experience similar levels of anxiety when learning English, as there is no significant difference. This aligns with previous research by Latif (2015) and Niazi, Ahmed and Khanc (2023), which also found no significant differences between gender and anxiety levels. This consistency is also reflected in Table 3, where the highest percentage for both genders falls under the moderate category, followed by high and then low anxiety levels.

3.2. Language Anxiety among Female and Male Students According to the Factors (Fear of Negative Evaluation, Communication Apprehension and Test Anxiety)

Table 6 Kruskal-Wallis Test Results for Gender Differences in Anxiety Factors

Factor	Gender	Mean Rank	Kruskal-Wallis H	dif	Asymp. Sig.
Fear of Negative Evaluation	Male	70.21	0.536	1	0.464
	Female	75.43			
Communication Apprehension	Male	71.21	0.292	1	0.589
	Female	74.84			
Test Anxiety	Male	71.61	0.176	1	0.674
	Female	74.61			

The mean ranks suggest that female students have slightly higher scores than males on all three factors (Fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety). However, the Kruskal-Wallis tests show that these differences are not statistically significant, as the p-value for each factor is greater than 0.05, meaning that the observed differences in mean ranks could be due to random chance rather than an actual difference in anxiety levels between genders. Based on the Kruskal-Wallis test results and the mean ranks, we can conclude that there are no statistically significant differences in anxiety levels between males and females for the three factors (CA, TA, and FNE). Therefore, gender does not significantly influence anxiety levels in this context.

According to Table 6, both male and female students in the Diploma in English program may experience anxiety related to fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety. The data suggests that neither gender is significantly more or less anxious than the other across these factors. Therefore, regardless of whether they are male or female, students in this program tend to report similar levels of anxiety from these specific factors. The analysis indicates that both genders experience anxiety from the three factors to a similar extent, as there are no statistically significant differences observed between male and female students in these aspects of anxiety. The findings are further triangulated through the data retrieved from interviews

with the students. Based on the interview session, all three factors (CA, TA, and FNE) were present among male and female students during the interview sessions.

3.3. Fear of Negative Evaluation

Data from the interview session shows that fear of negative evaluation is the primary factor that impacts anxiety among female students. When they were asked whether they felt anxious due to the judgment of peers and teachers, they felt more affected by the judgment of peers, as shown in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 1

Researcher	:	Do you feel anxious from being judged by your peers or teachers when you speak in English?
All	:	Yes.
Participant 3	:	I don't really mind about the teachers but about the <i>peers</i> ? Yes.
Participant 4	:	Yes, that is actually my main factor because I feel like if I were to be judged by a teacher, they would like to correct me but if <i>I were to be judged by my peers</i> , they wouldn't even tell me where I'm wrong.
Participant 1	:	I would agree with Participant 4 if it's teachers, they would like, take it easy because they are our tutors and we learn from them <i>but from peers I don't find that good enough. It makes me lose my self-confidence in the first place to talk in public.</i>
Participant 3	:	When <i>peers correct us they tend to laugh</i> first and then later on, they correct us. So when my friends correct me I actually feel anxious

Excerpt 1 indicates how feedback from peers is perceived by female students. The data shows that feedback from peers, especially when accompanied by laughter or mockery, tends to cause anxiety, and a significant loss of self-confidence. Participant 3 mentions being more concerned about peer judgement, while Participant 4 and Participant 1 discuss how peer judgement is less constructive and more damaging to their confidence. In addition, Female students feel that teachers who correct them with the intention of helping them to improve are generally accepted and appreciated because they are seen as constructive feedback and are considered as part of the learning process.

Moreover, excerpt 2 indicates that female students express their feelings about making mistakes during English classes. Their responses provide insights into how mistakes impact their confidence and participation in class. As a result, this causes them to feel anxious due to the fear of judgement when they make mistakes.

Excerpt 2

Researcher	:	How do you feel when you make a mistake during English classes?
Participant 2	:	For me personally, when I make mistakes I feel like beating myself up, especially when I stutter, because it makes me feel like I'm not confident enough to stand there and talk. I'm scared that people are gonna judge me.
Researcher	:	Does this impact how you would participate in the class?
Participant 4	:	For me yes I would feel like if I were to make a mistake I would be like oh this has ruined my mood and then I would feel tense and anxious.

Participant 2 reveals feeling deeply self-critical, particularly when stuttering, which causes the feeling of anxiousness. This makes them doubt their ability to speak confidently. Participant 4 also highlighted how mistakes negatively impact their mood, indicating a strong emotional reaction to errors. These responses show that the fear of negative evaluation causes students to feel anxious, leading to loss of confidence, disrupts their emotional state, and impacts their participation in the classroom.

In addition, male students present similar fears of negative evaluation. Below is the excerpt:

Excerpt 3

Researcher	:	Do you feel anxious from being judged by your peers or teachers when you speak in English?
Participant 1	:	Yes, I think I actually feel anxious and scared of being judged by my peers when I speak in English because even though I feel comfortable with speaking English I think like some people judge me or anyone that is speaking English because of my accent or maybe because of my fluency.

In Excerpt 3, Participant 1 expresses a fear of being judged by peers when speaking English, despite feeling comfortable with their language skills. This anxiety comes from concerns about being evaluated based on their accent and fluency. The participant's worry indicates an awareness of social biases and stereotypes that often affect non-native speakers. Accents and minor fluency issues can become sources of self-consciousness, leading to fear of negative judgment. This fear highlights that the impact of peer evaluation, whether real or perceived, can significantly influence a student's confidence and eventually their willingness to participate. Even with proficiency, the apprehension of judgement can inhibit speaking, reducing class engagement and participation. Participant 1's experience portrays that language anxiety is not just about linguistic ability but also involves the fear of social perception.

Next, in Excerpt 4, Participant 2 reveals that their anxiety when speaking English comes from differences in educational backgrounds among students. They feel particularly anxious because they perceive that others who attended better schools

might judge them. This feeling of not being good enough and fear of judgement is heightened by the belief that these peers are more proficient in English due to their superior education. This highlights how differences in educational background can cause language anxiety, making students from less privileged backgrounds feel less confident and more self-conscious.

Excerpt 4

Participant 2 : Sometimes when I speak English, I feel anxious because of the **level of Education**. We all came from a different school so this always affects my anxiousness. I'm worried about getting judged by other students that come from better education levels. I feel like they are better than me so they might judge me.

3.4. Communication Apprehension

Based on the data collected, the next factor that was identified is communication apprehension. It can be observed that male students are significantly impacted by the communication apprehension.

Excerpt 5

Researcher : Are there any aspects of speaking English that make you anxious?

Participant 2 : For me uh definitely when I'm giving out uh **impromptu speech** or public speaking because I have trouble uh making out sentences uh informational sentences so it's hard for me to build a sentence when I'm speaking it out

Participant 1 : As for me, sometimes when we have to **present in class**, I actually prepare myself. I would have a script and I plan what I need to talk in class but when the time has come to present sometimes, I forgot what I want to say in class

Participant 4 : As for me something that leads to me feeling anxious is I am easily forgetful and I forget things easily, so **during class presentation or giving a speech** if I'm not reading something I forget what I memorised and this triggers my anxiety

The excerpt highlights various aspects of communication apprehension among the male students when speaking English. Participant 2 feels anxious during impromptu speeches and public speaking due to difficulties in forming sentences on the spot. Participant 1 experiences anxiety during class presentations despite thorough preparation and scripting, as they sometimes forget their planned content at the moment of presenting. Participant 4 also feels anxious during class presentations or speeches because of their tendency to forget what they have memorised, particularly when they do not have a script to read from. These responses portray the impact of communication apprehension on their anxiety levels.



Excerpt 6

Researcher	:	Are there any aspects of listening to English that makes you anxious?
Participant 3	:	Sometimes it's the accent of the speaker, it's the accent that interrupts my understanding towards the speaker like if I meet a native speaker something like that, it definitely makes me feel anxious because they have a different accent than the Malays so it's definitely hard for me to understand what they are saying.

In Excerpt 6, Participant 3 discusses an aspect of communication apprehension related to listening to English. They express anxiety when listening to speakers with different accents, particularly native English speakers. The different accent interrupts their understanding, making it challenging for them to comprehend what is being said. This difficulty in understanding due to accent differences contributes to their feelings of anxiety.

Excerpt 7

Researcher	:	Do you feel anxious when you need to communicate in English with your teacher or with your friends in the classroom?
Participant 2	:	Yes, I do feel anxious about when I speak English because I'm worried if the teacher or my friends do not understand the word I'm saying. I'm not anxious at first when I speak, but when people don't understand what I said, then I feel anxious.

In Excerpt 7, Participant 2 describes experiencing communication apprehension when speaking English with teachers or friends in the classroom. Initially, they do not feel anxious when they start to speak. However, their anxiety arises if their teacher or peers do not understand the words they are saying. This worry about being misunderstood increases their anxiety during communication in English.

In addition, female students exhibit similar patterns of communication apprehension, specifically experiencing nervousness during impromptu speeches and class presentations.

Excerpt 8

Researcher	:	Do you feel anxious when you have to speak in English during class?
Participant 2	:	Yes, especially if it is impromptu speech , we tend to get nervous
Participant 1	:	Yes, especially class presentations too

According to Excerpt 8, Participant 2 acknowledges feeling nervous during impromptu speeches, suggesting discomfort with unprepared communication. Participant 1 further emphasises anxiety related to class presentations. These responses highlight how both spontaneous speaking tasks and presentations in English classes contribute to heightened anxiety among female students, revealing a broader context of oral communication apprehension.

Excerpt 9

Researcher	:	Are there any aspects of listening to English that makes you feel anxious?
Participant 1	:	I would say when it comes to listening it's actually the accent . I find it difficult to understand native accents because the way we talk in Malaysia is different.
Participant 2	:	Yes, very different.
Participant 1	:	And then when it comes to, like, the audio with British accent it's like, very difficult for us to catch because some of them talk very fast.
Researcher	:	Oh, so you are very anxious when suddenly the audio that we play in the classroom is from a native speaker?
Participant 4	:	Yes, because they talk so fast and their vocabulary is like, very different from ours.

The data from Excerpt 9 reveals anxiety among female students regarding listening comprehension in English. Participant 1 identifies accents, particularly native accents, as a major source of anxiety. This is due to the fact that there are differences between Malaysian speech patterns and those of native speakers. Participant 2 agrees, emphasising the difficulty in understanding native accents. Both participants express struggles with audio featuring British accents due to speed and vocabulary differences. This indicates apprehension when faced with linguistic differences, such as different accents. Therefore, students feel anxious when they experience communication apprehension, especially when listening to native accents.

Excerpt 10

Researcher	:	What other points make you feel nervous when communicating using English?
Participant 4	:	I would say um talking to native speakers because like back in my high school it's like a you know like my school is literally right under KL Tower so there's like a lot of native people uh people there and then they would ask you for direction I feel like I'm so confident to talk but when I talk, I'll be like that oh. And then I would: stutter and start speaking in Malay to them and then when I go back home, I would think why did I say it like that I could have done better.



Researcher	:	Oh, can you give me a real-life example of this happening?
Participant 4	:	So, there was this, one-time I think they are from Germany and then they were lost so they asked for directions and instead of saying to the right I said you need to go left two times I was like why did I say that.
Researcher	:	Did they manage to understand your instructions?
Researcher	:	No, I think they ask someone else.

The data from Excerpt 10 illustrates that Participant 4 expresses nervousness when conversing with native speakers. Despite being near native speakers in her high school, she recounts instances of lacking confidence, stuttering, and occasionally switching to Malay during interactions. This self-criticism was still evident even after the interaction, reflecting on missed opportunities to communicate effectively. The anecdote of giving incorrect directions to German tourists highlights the impact of anxiety on communication accuracy and the subsequent frustration over not performing as desired in English-speaking scenarios. Hence, these responses show that the students feel anxious when required to communicate in English, particularly with native speakers, leading to lack of fluency during such interactions.

3.1. Test Anxiety

Excerpt 11

Researcher	:	How do you feel when you have to take a test or exam in English?
Participant	:	For me it would depend on the subject. If the subject is hard, I would feel a little bit anxious.
Researcher	:	Can you give me an example?
Participant	:	For example, last time the subject writing for me was hard because writing is not my strong point in English.
Participant	:	As for me, I do feel anxious during my examination especially grammar paper I because I tend to lose confidence and always forget the grammar rules, so if the subject requires a lot of memorisation and rules I become anxious and tend to forget.
Participant	:	Yes, as I tend to forget.
Participant	:	I agree with Participant 2. When answering exams in English what affects us is actually the subjects that we are taking for the exam. That's the one that's making us anxious in English exams. Actually, I think exams have become a norm for us since we are Diploma in English students and we are in sem three already.

In Excerpt 11, male students discuss their feelings towards English tests or exams, highlighting varying levels of anxiety linked to specific subjects. One participant mentions feeling anxious when encountering difficult subjects, particularly struggling with writing tasks due to perceived weaknesses in English proficiency. Another participant mentioned anxiety during grammar exams, noting challenges in recalling rules. This emphasises that the complexity and memorisation demands of certain subjects contribute significantly to their exam-related anxiety.

As for female students, Excerpt 12 reveals quite a similar response in their attitudes towards taking tests or exams in English compared to their male counterparts.

Excerpt 12

Researcher	:	How do you feel when you have to take a test or exam in English?
Participant 2	:	I think I'm okay with tests, but I do feel nervous yeah
Participant 3	:	When it comes to test, I have worries and I do feel nervous because I feel that we're diploma in English students so we need to do well in our test.

Excerpt 12 reveals that both Participant 2 and Participant 3 are anxious about English examinations. Participant 2 claims they are fine with tests, but they do get nervous, whereas Participant 3 admits to worrying and being nervous as well. This implies that anxiousness is present among female Diploma in English students during exams, suggesting how they feel pressured to perform well in their studies.

4. Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the levels of anxiety among Diploma in English students, focusing on the differences between male and female learners. The results indicate that both male and female students experience significant levels of anxiety due to the three factors of fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension and test anxiety. The data indicate that both female and male students experience anxiety to a similar extent. For fear of negative evaluation, male students reported that due to their accent and fluency, they are afraid of being judged by their peers. They had also felt that other students who come from better educational backgrounds are better than they are, which eventually led to anxiety. Female students are more affected by negative evaluation when their peers make fun of them or laugh at them when they make mistakes, which can lead to emotional disruption, causing them to feel anxious.

For communication apprehension, both male and female students mentioned feeling anxious when asked to give impromptu speeches and in-class presentations. They also mentioned that they feel nervous when they need to talk to native speakers, as they mind not comprehending what the native speakers are talking about when communicating with them.



Moreover, for test anxiety, male students mentioned being anxious about difficult subjects, writing tasks, and grammar exams. Female students, on the other hand, reported having lower anxiety in test anxiety, potentially due to social expectations and their chosen field of study, which pressures them to perform well despite their nervousness.

In comparing these findings with prior research, it becomes evident that they are consistent with existing literature on language learning anxiety. Previous studies have consistently shown that communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety are prevalent among ESL learners (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016; Mustapha, Ismail, Singh, & Alias, 2010; Rafek, Abd Karim, & Awaludin, 2013; Aydin, Akkaş, Türnük, Beydilli, & Saydam, 2020). The current study reinforces these findings, highlighting that both male and female students experience anxiety.

The implications of these findings are significant for educators. Understanding that both genders experience anxiety, in all three factors, can help provide support and interventions more effectively. There are a few differences in the aspect that male and female feel anxious to, and this could help educators to focus more on. For example, providing additional grammar support for male students and offering stress management and confidence-building activities for female students could mitigate the impact of anxiety on language learning. Moreover, creating a supportive and non-judgmental classroom environment can reduce fear of negative evaluation and encourage more active participation from all students.

However, the study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. The limitations include the timeframe of the data collection process, as the researcher had limited time to collect data, as the students were having a short semester during the data collection period, leading to time constraints. Another limitation of the sample is the diversity, future research should consider larger and more diverse samples. For example, future research can make comparisons between a group of students under the Diploma in English and another group of students who are from other programs to see the differences in anxiety level, as core English program students are already motivated and proficient in English in comparison with students who are not taking English as their program.

Suggestions for future research include exploring the impact of different teaching methods on anxiety levels in ESL learners. Investigating the role of technology, such as language learning applications and online platforms, in reducing anxiety could provide valuable insights. Additionally, studies that focus on tracking changes in students' anxiety levels over time and in response to specific interventions would be beneficial. Future research should also consider various other factors when measuring students' anxiety as well. In summary, this study highlights the levels of anxiety experienced by both male and female Diploma in English students, as well as the factors that influence them to feel anxious.

The study contributes to the field by providing more insights into how males and females are more prone to have similarities related to anxiousness in ESL learners. It highlights the importance of creating supportive and non-judgmental learning

environments and adapting interventions to address the three factors of anxiety for Diploma in English students. This research can inform educators in designing more effective strategies to support ESL learners and reduce the impact of anxiety on their language learning outcomes. In conclusion, addressing the anxiety experienced by ESL learners is crucial for their academic success and overall well-being, and this study provides valuable insights for achieving this goal.

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