

## ASSESSING SELF-CONFIDENCE IN CAREER READINESS AMONG PROSPECTIVE ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM GRADUATES OF UKI TORAJA

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### ABSTRACT

This study addresses the issue of confidence among prospective graduates of the English Education Study Program at UKI Toraja as they prepare to enter the workforce. The research aims to find out the level of self-confidence in the career readiness of prospective English education study program graduates of UKI Toraja. The researcher employed a quantitative descriptive method in analyzing the data of this research. The subjects of this research were the seventh-semester students of the English education study program, UKI Toraja, who programmed the thesis. The data of this research was collected by questionnaire to gather data from 20 participants. The data obtained were analyzed using Likert scale techniques. The findings indicate that the overall level of self-confidence among these prospective graduates falls into the category of fair self-confidence, with an average score of 75.5% for the educator category, 68.8% for the entrepreneur category, and 68.1% for the tourism industry category. The implications of this study's results indicate that although students' self-confidence is in the fair category, there is still a need for improvement. Therefore, it is important for study programs to develop strategies that can increase student confidence so that they are better prepared for their readiness for a career.

**Keywords:** Assessing : Self-Confidence; Career; Readiness,

### INTRODUCTION

In today's comprehensive job market, career readiness is a crucial factor for prospective graduates. In higher education, career readiness is influenced not only by the academic knowledge gained but also by the development of interpersonal skills and self-confidence. Self-confidence plays a significant role in how individuals prepare to enter the workforce. Self-confidence refers to an individual's belief in their own abilities and judgment. Self-confidence is an attitude that allows someone to know what their capabilities and weaknesses of a person are (Jerald & Me, 2020). Self-confidence is a person's belief and attitude towards their abilities by accepting what they are, both positive and negative, which are formed and learned through the learning process with the aim of their happiness. According to Shrauger and Schohn (1995), self-confidence is described as "people's sense of competence and skill, their perceived capability to deal effectively with various situations" (Shrauger & Schohn, 1995). Stajkovic (2006), further elaborates that self-confidence can be viewed as "certainty in being able to handle something" (Stajkovic, 2006). Terms "self-confidence" refers to the belief in one's ability to succeed in a given activity, rather than a general attribute associated with performance optimism. Self-confidence is an essential factor for academic achievement

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but also a key determinant of success in their future careers. It influences their capacity to perform effectively in both educational and workforce settings. Self-confidence is an important factor in overall success, especially for university students. Moreover, there is self-efficacy, a concept closely related to self-confidence, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in specific situations. Research has shown that self-efficacy is positively correlated with academic achievement. According to Albert Bandura (1977), individuals with high self-efficacy are more motivated to achieve their academic goals.

Student's level of self-confidence is influenced by a complex of internal and external factors that shape their self-perception and willingness to engage in academic and social activities. Internal factors primarily stem from within the student, including self-esteem (Şar et al., 2010), motivation, mindset, and past experiences. Self-esteem is one of the internal factors that influence self-confidence. Stated self-esteem is "one's positive or negative toward oneself" (Petersen, 1965). It refers to a person's evaluation of their value (Hepper, 2023). Motivation also plays a critical role; (Maslow, 1943) intrinsically motivated students tend to exhibit greater confidence as they pursue their interests and goals passionately. Additionally, a growth mindset where students view challenges as opportunities for learning rather than threats can significantly enhance their confidence levels. Past experiences, particularly those related to academic performance or social interactions, further shape self-confidence; positive experiences can bolster confidence, while negative ones may lead to self-doubt and anxiety.

On the other hand, external factors encompass influences from the surrounding environment, including social interactions, educators' attitudes, and cultural norms. The social environment is crucial; supportive relationships with peers and educators can foster a sense of belonging and validation (Meierdirk, 2018), while negative interactions (Nadiah et al., 2019), such as ridicule or harsh criticism, can undermine confidence. Educators also play a pivotal role in feedback style, whether constructive or overly critical, which can either encourage students to express themselves or instil fear of judgment. Furthermore, (Meruyert et al., 2022) cultural norms regarding communication and success can influence how students perceive their abilities. Media representation also contributes to shaping self-image, it is exposure to idealized portrayals of success that can lead students to develop unrealistic expectations of themselves, impacting their confidence when they fail to meet such standards.

Additionally, this research explores how the self-confidence of prospective graduates impacts their career readiness. Career readiness refers to an individual's ability to transition from education to the workforce. It is an essential quality that prospective graduates should possess. According to Savickas (2005), career readiness involves mastering skills and knowledge relevant to one's desired field of work (Savickas et al., 2009). Career readiness also involves a clear understanding of one's interests, talents, values, and career goals. Lent (2005) stated that individuals with high self-awareness

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are more likely to make career decisions that are appropriate and satisfying (Lent, 2005). Furthermore, career readiness also encompasses an individual's interpersonal and communication skills, which are essential for effective collaboration in the workplace. Skills such as teamwork, leadership, and adaptability play a crucial role in achieving career readiness (Rojewski, 2002).

As prospective graduates approach the end of their studies, their ability to confidently apply their language skills in real-world situations. High self-confidence is often associated with stronger communication skills, leadership abilities, and a proactive and positive attitude. If students do not feel confident in their abilities, however, they may struggle to present themselves effectively in job interviews or pursue opportunities for career advancement (Edwards & Quinter, 2011). Therefore, this research examines the direct relationship between self-confidence and career readiness, providing insight into how students can better prepare for the transition from university to the workforce.

The English Education study program annually produces new graduates, and each of the graduates is ideally expected to enter the world of work immediately after graduation. The English study program has three profiles of graduates, including educators, tourism business people, and entrepreneurs. Each prospective graduate is expected to be able to enter one of the three mentioned fields of work. These profiles reflect the diverse career opportunities available to graduates, ensuring they pursue paths that align with their interests, strengths, and professional goals. There are always new graduates each year. This growth indicates a rising competition among graduates for the same job positions in the field. Consequently, many of these prospective graduates are often labelled as "prospective unemployed." This phenomenon remains a significant concern that needs to be addressed. Every English graduate is expected to effectively apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired during their studies. Universities expect these graduates to prepare themselves thoroughly to enter the workforce and to utilize their English knowledge and competencies effectively. Therefore, the research aims to measure the level of self-confidence in career readiness among prospective English Education Study Program graduates of UKI Toraja.

## METHODS

This research used a quantitative descriptive method to measure the level of self-confidence in career readiness among prospective graduates. The type of data in this research is primary data obtained through the distribution of questionnaires. This research was conducted at the Christian University of Indonesia Toraja (UKIT), located at Jl. Jendral Sudirman No. 9, Bombongan, Makale, Tana Toraja Regency, South Sulawesi. The study focuses on the prospective English Education Study Program graduates, specifically seventh-semester students at UKI Toraja for the academic year 2024/2025. A random sampling method was used to select

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Finding

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The purpose of the research is to describe the data that was taken from 20 students using a questionnaire. Then, the data that has been generated is defined into a table consisting of absolutely agree, agree, sometimes disagree, and absolutely disagree about the level of self-confidence of prospective graduates in career readiness. The data obtained is shown in the following table.

Table 1. Response of Items (Tenaga Pendidik)

Items	Frequency					Total
	AA	A	S	D	AD	
Positive Statement						
1	4	6	8	2		20
2	3	6	9	2		20
3	4	6	8	2		20
4	12	6	10	2		20
5	6	9	5			20
6	10	10				20
7	3	14	3			20
8	4	14	1	1		20
9	6	9	5			20
10	5	10	5			20

Table 2. Response of Items (Entrepreneur)

Items	Frequency					Total
	AA	A	S	D	AD	
Positive Statement						
1	1	4	12	3		20
2	1	2	11	6		20
3	3	5	9	3		20
4	3	7	5	4	1	20
5	3	7	8	2		20
6	2	7	7	4		20
7	2	6	11	1		20
8	3	9	4	3	1	20
9	4	10	5	1		20
10	5	11	2	2		20

Table 3. Response of Items (Pelaku Dunia Industri Pariwisata)

Items	Frequency					Total
	AA	A	S	D	AD	
Positive Statement						
1	1	6	12	1		20
2	1	5	13	1		20
3	2	9	6	3		20

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4	2	6	11	1		20
5	2	8	10			20
6	1	5	8	4	2	20
7	1	4	10	4	1	20
8	4	11	3	2		20
9	2	6	8	3	1	20
10	5	9	3	3		20

The data above provides details on the number of respondents who chose one of the provided answer options. The questionnaire that has been filled in consists of 30 statements. The data above is then processed using the formula described in Chapter 3, namely  $T \times P_n$ , where "T" is the total number of respondents who chose and "P<sub>n</sub>" is the choice of Likert score.

Table 4.4 Response and Index Score (Tenaga Pendidik)

Items	Score of Item (T x P <sub>n</sub> )					Total	Maximum Score	Percentage Index	Category
Positive	5	4	3	2	1				
1	20	24	24	4		72	100	72%	Agree
2	15	24	27	4		70	100	70%	Agree
3	20	24	24	4		72	100	72%	Agree
4	10	24	30	4		68	100	68%	Agree
5	30	36	15			81	100	81%	Absolutely Agree
6	50	40				90	100	90%	Absolutely Agree
7	15	56	9			60	100	60%	Agree
8	20	56	3	2		81	100	81%	Absolutely Agree
9	30	36	15			81	100	81%	Absolutely Agree
10	25	40	15			80	100	80%	Absolutely Agree
Total						755			

$$\text{Score Maximum} \times \text{Total Item} = 100 \times 10 = 1000$$

$$\text{Total Score} \times \text{Score Maximum} = 755 \times 100 = 75,5\%$$

$$1000$$

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Table 4.5 Response and Index Score (Entrepreneur)

Items	Score of Item (T x Pn)					Total	Maximum Score	Percentage	Index	Category
Positive										
1	5	4	3	2	1	63	100	63%	Agree	
2	4	8	33	12		57	100	57%	Sometimes	
3	15	20	27	6		68	100	68%	Agree	
4	15	28	15	8	1	67	100	67%	Agree	
5	15	28	24	4		71	100	71%	Agree	
6	10	28	21	8		67	100	67%	Agree	
7	10	24	33	2		69	100	69%	Agree	
8	15	36	12	6	1	70	100	70%	Agree	
9	20	40	15	2		77	100	77%	Agree	
10	25	44	6	4		79	100	79%	Agree	
Total						688				

Score Maximum $\times$ Total Item	100 $\times$ <b>10</b> = 1000
Total Score $\times$ Score Maximum 1000	$\frac{688 \times 100}{1000} = 68,8\%$

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Table 4.6 Response and Index Score (Pelaku Dunia Industri Pariwisata)

Items	Score of Item (T x Pn)					Total	Maximum Score	Percentage Index	Category
Positive 5 4 3 2 1									
1	5	24	36	2		67	100	67%	Agree
2	5	20	39	2		66	100	66%	Agree
3	10	36	18	6		70	100	70%	Agree
4	10	24	33	2		69	100	69%	Agree
5	10	32	30			72	100	72%	Agree
6	5	20	24	8	2	59	100	59%	Sometimes
7	5	16	30	8	1	60	100	60%	Agree
8	20	44	9	4		77	100	77%	Agree
9	10	24	24	6	1	65	100	65%	Agree
10	25	36	9	6		76	100	76%	Agree
Total						681			

$$\text{Score Maximum} \times \text{Total Item}$$

$$100 \times \mathbf{10} = 1000$$

$$\text{Total Score} \times \text{Score Maximum}$$

$$1000$$

$$681 \times 100$$

$$= 68,1\%$$

## Discussion

In this research, the researcher gathered data through a questionnaire to assess the level of self-confidence of prospective graduates of English Department UKI Toraja in career readiness. This assessment was based on The Lauster Self-Confidence Scale, which was developed by Dr. Jürgen Lauster in 1992. The scale categorizes self-confidence into three levels: low self-confidence, fair self-confidence, and high self-confidence (Bandura, 2010).

The findings of this research indicate that the level of self-confidence among prospective graduates of the English Education Study Program at UKI Toraja regarding their career readiness is categorized as fair. This conclusion is supported by the average scores obtained from questionnaire responses, which revealed an average score of 75.5% for the educator category, 68.8% for the entrepreneur category, and 68.1% for the tourism industry category. These results align with Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy, which posits that an individual's belief in their ability to perform specific tasks significantly influences their motivation and persistence in achieving goals (Bandura,

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1977). The fair self-confidence observed in the study suggests that while students have a reasonable belief in their capabilities, there remains room for improvement in their self-perception and readiness to face the challenges of the job market.

The findings also resonate with previous studies that have explored the relationship between self-confidence and career readiness. For instance, Ristiani and Farah Putri Wenang Lusianingrum (2022) found a positive correlation between self-confidence and job readiness among undergraduate students. This indicates that higher self-confidence is associated with greater job readiness (Page et al., 2022). Similarly, the current study's results suggest that while students feel moderately prepared for their future careers, enhancing their self-confidence could lead to improved job readiness. This is particularly relevant in the context of the English Education Study Program, where graduates are expected to effectively apply their language skills in various professional settings, including education, tourism, and entrepreneurship.

Moreover, the research highlights the importance of internal and external factors influencing self-confidence, as discussed in the literature review. Internal factors, such as self-esteem, motivation, and past experiences, play a crucial role in shaping students' self-confidence levels. The findings indicate that students' self-perception is influenced by their academic experiences and interactions with peers and educators. This aligns with the work of Sar et al. (2010), who emphasized that self-esteem and motivation are critical components of self-confidence (Sar et al., 2010). Supportive relationships with peers and constructive feedback from educators can foster a sense of belonging and validation, which are essential for enhancing self-confidence. Conversely, negative experiences or critical feedback can undermine students' confidence, leading to self-doubt and anxiety.

Additionally, the study's findings underscore the significance of developing effective teaching strategies that cater to the diverse needs of students. Educators can play a pivotal role in enhancing students' self-confidence by creating a supportive learning environment that encourages risk-taking and resilience. This is consistent with the recommendations from Edwards and Quinter (2011), who emphasized the need for educators to understand the factors influencing self-confidence to refine their teaching approaches (Edwards & Quinter, 2011). By identifying specific barriers to self-confidence, such as anxiety or the fear of making mistakes, educators can tailor their methods to foster a more encouraging atmosphere for students.

The study's findings underscore the self-confidence levels of prospective English Education graduates at UKI Toraja and their implications for career readiness. While the current level of self-confidence is categorized as fair, there is a clear need for continued support and development in this area. By addressing the factors that influence self-confidence and relating them to established theories, educational institutions can better prepare students for successful career transitions.

Responses to statements regarding educators were generally fair, with some receiving positive feedback. Most prospective English graduates indicate that they agree to become educators. According to Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory, individuals who believe in their capabilities are more likely to engage effectively in specific tasks. Many prospective English graduates have confidence in their abilities to become educators. However, several statements indicate a lack of confidence among these graduates. For instance, the first statement, "I am confident that I can use English

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fluently and accurately in a teaching context," followed by "I am confident that I have a deep understanding of English grammar," and "I am confident in teaching English reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills," reveal gaps in their self-assurance. These three statements suggest that prospective English graduates may be lacking in their language proficiency and English skills. While these competencies form the foundation of English competence, they align with Bandura's theory, which highlights the importance of mastery experiences in building self-efficacy. Therefore, the study program should enhance courses that promote language proficiency and core English skills. Additionally, lecturers need to adopt more effective teaching methods and create learning environments that encourage practical application and equip students with the competencies required as educators in the future.

Most responses to the statement indicate a moderate level of confidence among participants in the tourism sector. This suggests that many are hesitant to engage fully with tourism practices. For instance, the second statement, "I can use English in the tourism sector," followed by "I am able to communicate in English with tourists" and "I am able to explain tourism-related topics, especially in Toraja, using English." These three statements indicate that the student may not feel confident and competent with their English in tourism sectors. According to a study by Ristiani and Lusianingrum (2022), "Effective communication skills are essential for professionals in the tourism sector to convey information accurately and engage with clients." To improve this confidence, lecturers should assess and adapt their teaching methods and the course may focus on tourism-related vocabulary, phrases, and cultural nuances so the student can be familiar with tourism things and consider it as their job prospect. It is also essential for the study program to review and enhance the curriculum to better support the tourism course.

Responses to statements regarding entrepreneurs were generally fair, the result indicates that the prospective English graduates have confidence in their abilities to dive into the entrepreneur sector. However, several statements indicate a lack of confidence among these graduates. For instance, the first statement, "I am able to use English in the business world," followed by "I am able to explain my products and services in English," and "I believe I have the necessary skills to start and run my own business," reveal gaps in their self-confidence. These three statements suggest that prospective English graduates may be lacking in their language proficiency, English skills and entrepreneurial skills. A person is ready to enter the business world if their competencies and skills are adequate (Galamiton & Morre, 2024). This aligns with the theory of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which posits that confidence in one's ability to perform entrepreneurial tasks is crucial for success. Also, Gysbers and Henderson (2006) note that "entrepreneurial self-efficacy is a key predictor of entrepreneurial intentions and actions." Therefore, English education study programs should offer workshops focused on English. Additionally, lecturers need to adopt more effective teaching methods and focus on providing opportunities for practice and constructive feedback for students and equip students with the competencies required as entrepreneurs in the future. Also, lecturers can facilitate workshops focused on English business, etc.

## CONCLUSION

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Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher concludes that the data analysis indicates that the level of self-confidence among prospective English study program graduates regarding career readiness falls into the category of fair self-confidence. This conclusion is supported by the percentage obtained from the students' responses to the questionnaire, which revealed an average score of 75.5% for the tenaga pendidik category, 68.8% for the entrepreneur category, and 68.1% for the pelaku dunia industri pariwisata category. Each of these categories is classified as a fair level of self-confidence.

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