

EFL Students' Attitude toward Learning the English language based on Teacher's Gender: A Case study in Cambodia Context

Meng Kimleang¹, Safnil Arsyad²

^{1,2} English Education Postgraduate Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Bengkulu, Bengkulu 38371, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Gender is defined as all of the social and cultural habits, roles, conditions, and responsibilities regardless of one's biological gender, that are necessary for a society. This study aims to explore EFL students' attitudes toward learning the English Language base on teachers' gender. When teachers assess pupils with high levels of problem conduct for special education referral, cross break analysis finds that male teachers are substantially more likely than female teachers to decide not to recommend. The impact of teacher gender on this scenario has been investigated, but the results have been equivocal. Furthermore, while teacher expectations have influenced student academic achievements and student gender stereotypes have molded such expectations, the gender of the teacher has been overlooked in this context. The descriptive quality method was used in this research with the students from the National University of Battambang who currently studying for master's degrees. The questionnaires were given along with the individual interviews. The result showed that female teachers were the most selected due to the attitude of the students when they were studying with female teachers. Keywords: Behavioral Aspect of Attitude, Cognitive Aspect of Attitude, Emotional Aspect of Attitude, Teacher gender.

Corresponding Author:

Meng Kimleang,

Email: mengkimleang07@gmail.com

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language, particularly English, is an important tool in a variety of sectors, involving scientific communication, economic, cultural exchanges, and political issues. It is widely acknowledged that being able to communicate well in English is essential for success in life (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). As a result of the modern period, it is now taught in elementary schools and, on occasion, kindergartens. Many people believe that English is a necessary language to learn. They also believe that knowing English plays an important role in leading a better life (Herwiana & Laili, 2021). Learning a second language is a challenging and momentous endeavor. Your entire body is altered when you seek to move beyond the boundaries of your native tongue and into a new language, culture, and way of thinking, feeling, and doing. Sending and receiving signals in a second language necessitates complete commitment, comprehensive participation, and a direct physical, mental, and emotional response. Moreover, the education system is facilitated by enthusiasm, attitude, anxiety, learning accomplishments, aptitudes, IQ, age, and personality. The most essential aspect that determines vocabulary development is the learners' attitudes.

Fakeye (2010) stated that the learner's attitude is often regarded as one of the most important factors impacting learning languages. This study investigates the issue of attitude as one of the major affective elements for success in learning a foreign language. It studies Cambodian students' attitudes toward learning English as a second language, taking into account the three aspects of attitude: emotional, cognitive, and behavioral. It also seeks to figure out how students' demographic characteristics, such as gender, year of study,

and major, influence their views toward learning English. Academic achievement has long been thought to be influenced by one's attitude. The concept of attitude is just as fundamental as cognitive processes. A long-term collection of ideas about an object or a circumstance that predisposes an individual to take the right steps is referred to as an attitude. Because an attitude is taught and unlearned, it has a long-term effect. Even though it has been learned, it can be taught. An additional study found that favorable teacher attitudes influence students' motivation, attitudes toward school and academics, self-confidence, and, as a result, personality development (Borja, 2016). On the other hand, Gender matching's effects on student learning are expected to differ by subject. As a result, it's critical to investigate if the relationships between student-teacher gender matching and student accomplishment vary by school level and subject.

"A psychological tendency that is indicated by judging a particular entity with some degree of favor or dislike." This definition appears to be centered on the attitude indicator. The attitude is malleable and influenced by one's beliefs, feelings, and values. The attitude as a pattern of perception formed as a result of one's response to the environment. Attitudes are propositional representations that, unlike associations, specify relational information and have a truth value, according to emerging theories (De Houwer et al., 2021). Additionally, motivation, anxiousness, learning accomplishments, aptitudes, IQ, age, and personalities, all have an impact on the learning process yet the attitudes toward learning are the most important factor that influences language learning.

The motivation theory of attitude refers to how people act and react in certain situations. In actuality, good language acquisition allows students to identify with native speakers of the target language group and acquire or adopt several behaviors that are common among members of the target language group. "Positive attitudes lead to the exhibition of positive behaviors toward courses of study, with participants absorbing themselves in courses and striving to learn more. Such students are also observed to be more eager to solve problems, to acquire the information and skills useful for daily life, and to engage themselves emotionally," stated Kara (2009).

English learners' ideas about the knowledge they receive and their perception of it during the language learning process are referred to as this component of attitude. Linking current knowledge with new knowledge, producing new knowledge, testing new knowledge, and applying new knowledge in a variety of circumstances are the four steps of the cognitive attitude. Learners can use attitude to express whether they like or dislike objects or situations around them. It is widely acknowledged that FL learners' inner sentiments and emotions influence their perspectives and attitudes about the target language. Feng and Chen (2009) stated, "Learning process is an emotional process. It is affected by different emotional factors. The teacher and his students engage in various emotional activities in it and varied fruits of emotions are yielded." Zeyneloğlu (2008) defined gender as all of the social and cultural habits, roles, conditions, and responsibilities that are necessary for society, regardless of one's biological sex. Gender is simply a way of emphasizing the societal foundation of men's and women's subjective roles (Scott, 2007). Furthermore, gender refers to how others see an individual or the social role the society assigns to them based on their biological traits.

According to one study, gender matching between students and teachers is linked to better educational outcomes for both male and female pupils (Dee, 2007). Besides, to investigate many more linkages between student-teacher gender matching and student achievement at various school rates and disciplines to acquire a better understanding of the impact of teacher gender on student learning. Depending on the situation, the effect of teacher gender on student learning is likely to differ (Cho, 2012). However, it is unclear whether the effect of teacher gender on student accomplishment varies depending on the developmental stage of the children. The researcher discovered that female teachers are better at raising both male and female students' accomplishments than their male colleagues in elementary and secondary schools. Female math teachers had a significant positive impact on female pupils' arithmetic achievement, but there is no evidence of a beneficial gender matching effect in English language arts (Hwang & Fitzpatrick, 2021). In addition, Despite popular opinion, boys do not perform better academically when they are allocated to male teachers. According to the research, the effects of teacher gender on student learning vary by subject and gender, but the effect sizes are negligible. Alshebl (2021) demonstrated that neither gender cared about the teacher's gender. However, in the interviews, all of the females stated that it was no problem for them, regardless of the teacher's gender, but that students felt more at ease with a teacher of the same gender. All of the male participants, on the other hand, preferred a teacher of the opposite gender.

This demonstrates completely opposing viewpoints on both sides, raising the question of whether it is a matter of gender preference or of female teachers' competence. The questionnaire's reliability test indicated a Cronbach's Alpha grade of 0.947 as a result of the pilot study, showing the instrument's results are satisfactory. The outcomes of the research demonstrated that teachers' gender had an impact on how they managed their classrooms. Female teachers outperformed male teachers on four of the six classroom management criteria. Classroom management is a demanding and complex task that requires the knowledge and skills of teachers.

Teacher education, taking into consideration gender disparities, is offered as a possible aid to this attempt (Ahmed et al., 2018). Using social role and role congruency theories, the effects of gendered traits and teacher gender on perceptions of elementary educators were explored. When choosing a teacher for their child, parents chose neutral or community instructors over agentic teachers. Furthermore, men were perceived to be much less hireable than women, implying a pushback against men seeking work in traditionally feminine sectors. (Kim & Weseley, 2017). The male pupils had a competitive mentality toward their same-gender teachers, which could be the source of misunderstandings between them. This attitude toward the male teacher was not shared by female students.

Cambodia EFL students' attitudes toward learning the English language are based on the teacher's gender the goal of this discussion is to link the concept of attitude to what is systematically known as behavior theory. This is accomplished by providing a behavioral definition of attitude, drawing attention to the factors that must be understood to conduct a thorough analysis of attitudes, and conducting a critical examination of illustrative research using the concept of attitude in terms of these factors. Because it is not desirable to exclude the notion of attitude from social science, the author proposes that it be strengthened on a more fundamental level. The gender of educators correspondingly responded to the student attitude toward their learning. In terms of the gender variable, researchers found a link between attitude and English achievement among 400 senior secondary students chosen at random from five different schools. There was a substantial link between attitude and achievement, according to the data. Furthermore, it was discovered that students' attitudes are not gender-based. As a result, there was no statistically relevant difference between male and female students' attitudes. 1. What is the frequency of students preferring learning with male or female teachers? Why and why not? 2. What are the significant differences in students' attitudes toward teachers' gender?

2. METHOD

This investigation has a descriptive and exploratory design. As a result, a customized questionnaire was used as a measurement tool. The participants were required to honestly answer all of the questions on the questionnaire, including their perceptions of their attitudes toward learning English in terms of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects, as well as their demographic profile, which included gender, year, and field of study. A questionnaire focused on attitudes about learning English was utilized as the measurement instrument. It also wanted to see if there were any disparities in the attitudes of the participants based on their demographics. The participants were 10 students randomly chosen from National University in Battambang province. On the whole, there were 5 items concerning language attitudes in terms of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects of attitude and 2 questions about the gender of lecturers.

3. RESULT(S) AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to discuss the attitude of EFL students in Cambodia toward learning the English language base on the teacher's gender in the Cambodian context. The answers finding were designed in Google form by creating the questionnaires. 10 participants from the master's degree class at the university of Battambang participated by giving their answers to the questions that provided their own opinions about which genders of teachers they prefer and the reason why they choose male or female teachers.

Table 1. Results

Male teacher	Female teacher
40%	60%
Total	100%

1. Response of students why they chose female teachers:

Participant 1,

"- Most female teachers seem to care both about students academically and mentally

- Male and female students can talk to female teachers but female students would never talk to their male teachers about some personal problems"

- Most female teachers are empathetic"

Participant 2,

"sweet voice, the friendly, good technique of teaching."

"Because female teacher may understand us more than a male teacher, can be close to us more than a male teacher, and might be easy to approach and share our concerns with."

Participant 3,

"Because the teacher has a thorough teaching method and techniques to make students understand the lesson quickly."

Participant 4,

"More fun"

"Helpful"

Participant 5,

"1. Easy to talk to

2. Quickly know how to help student

3. Kindness toward the student"

Participant 6,

"- She can give specific details about trending, everyday life, hardship, history, and so on.

- She can give good advice, not only for education but in daily life also.

- She pays close attention to her students on knowledge and emotions.

- She would be patient and explain more details if her students struggled with the question or problems."

Participant 7,

"Because they are helpful and friendly, and I feel confident communicating with them."

Participant 8,

"I seldom care about the gender of my teachers. Whether my teacher is male or female, it doesn't matter. I chose Female Teacher because I usually see female teachers are not always strict like male teachers who are always strict to the students."

Participant 9,

"More comfortable to study with

She cares more about students' emotions"

Participant 10,

"Good strategies

Soft voice"

2. Response of the students why they preferred male teachers:**Participant 1,**

"1. Easy to talk to

2. Quickly know how to help student

3. Kindness toward the student"

Participant 2,

"- He is most gentle to his students.

- He can give specific details about sports, hot news, history, and so on.

- He can give a straightforward answers to the students.

- He can give other perspectives to the problems."

Participant 3,

"Because they are straightforward to the point, opened, and they have more available time to contact compared to female teachers."

Participant 4,

"none"

Participant 5,

"1. Look serious

2. Strong personality

3. Explain clearly

4. Good at controlling the class."

Participant 6,

"I prefer a female to male teachers (without comparing their knowledge)."

Participant 7,

"Sharing knowledge, strong(physics), good memories, high responsibilities, brave."

Participant 8,

"none"

Participant 9,

"Because the teacher has a thorough teaching method and techniques to make students understand the lesson quickly."

Participant 10,

"More serious

Easygoing

Comfortable".

Female teachers were chosen more than male teachers, according to the study's findings. The study by Gong, Lu, & Song, (2018) revealed that in comparison to boys, having a female instructor enhances girls' test performance, mental health, and social acclimatization. There is evidence that female teachers give girls and boys different feedback, and that having a female teacher changes girls' perceptions of gender stereotypes and boosts their desire to study. There is scant evidence that there is a link between instructor gender and student achievement. However, both internationally and in Cambodia, a strong emphasis has been made on hiring more female instructors. In light of this, the purpose of this paper is to look at the link between student education outcomes and the presence of female teachers in Cambodian classrooms.

According to the findings, male and female teachers have differences in their classroom management strategies and their belief in their students' ability to learn. It also demonstrates that being in a classroom with a female teacher is good for 12 learners, but that teacher gender did not affect mathematics learning, bolstering the case for more female teachers. With a sample of 1,430 practicing teachers, the researchers used factor analysis, item response modeling, systems of equations, and a structural equation model to investigate the relationships between years of professional experience, teacher characteristics (gender and teaching level), three domains of self-efficacy (instructional strategies, class participation, and student engagement), two types

of job stress (workload and classroom stress), and job satisfaction. All three self-efficacy variables revealed a nonlinear relationship with teachers' years of experience, which increased from early to mid-career and subsequently decreased. Female teachers reported more task stress, more classroom pressure from student behavior, and lower self-efficacy in classroom management than male instructors. Teachers who were under more workload stress had stronger self-efficacy in classroom management, but teachers who were under more classroom stress had lower self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Teachers of young children (kindergarten and elementary school) have higher levels of self-efficacy for instruction and student engagement than teachers of older children. Finally, instructors with higher job satisfaction had stronger self-efficacy in classroom management and instructional methods.

4. CONCLUSION

Many new experiments are being conducted that have the potential to have a range of gender-related implications, such as increasing women's participation in society and public roles. Many other research projects could be aimed at improving people's understanding of social issues and raising cultural awareness. For the groups of individuals, they must also support, the opportunity to designate a role for both genders in providing education is extremely valuable. Because the respondents had such a negative opinion about English, probably, they don't comprehend the importance of learning it as a compulsory subject. In a nutshell, the attitude idea is an important part of language learning. As a result, the canopy of language learning should be a positive mindset. Before considering students' cognitive ability, EFL teachers should respect and consider their sentiments, opinions, and behaviors. To foster good attitudes about English, the English curriculum and classroom activities should include affective goals tailored to the student's needs and individual variations. It is impossible to stress the importance of understanding student characteristics. EFL students can achieve good cognitive performance if they have a positive attitude and love learning the target language. As a result, in language studies, the emotive perspective, particularly attitude, should be included.

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