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Self Confidence in Chess Players: The Role of Gender, Residence and Family Type

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ABSTRACT

Self-confidence plays a crucial role in competitive and cognitive activities, particularly in chess, where strategic thinking and decision-making are essential. This study investigates the influence of gender, residence (urban/rural), and family type (joint/nuclear) on self-confidence levels among young chess players. A sample of 100 students who regularly play chess (ages 13–15) from the Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar schools were assessed using the Self-Confidence Scale (SCS-GMLB, 2018). The results indicate that the majority of participants demonstrated average self-confidence. Gender differences were observed, with male participants exhibiting greater variation in confidence levels, while female participants reported predominantly average to above-average confidence. However, no statistically significant differences were found in self-confidence based on residence or family type. These findings suggest that while gender may influence self-confidence in chess players, environmental and familial factors may not have a substantial impact. The study contributes to understanding psychological determinants of self-confidence in chess and offers practical insights for educators, coaches, and psychologists seeking to foster confidence in young players.

Keywords: Self Confidence, Chess, Gender, Residence, Family type, students

Introduction

Self-confidence plays a crucial role in cognitive and competitive activities, particularly in chess, where strategic thinking and decision-making are key determinants of success. Chess players must not only rely on their technical skills but also on their confidence to make bold

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moves and execute strategies effectively. Psychological research suggests that self-confidence influences performance by reducing anxiety, enhancing concentration, and fostering resilience under pressure. Self-confidence is defined as an individual's belief in their ability to succeed (Mehta & Panchal, 2020). In chess, confidence affects a player's decision-making, willingness to take risks, and ability to handle pressure, all of which contribute to overall performance (Malhotra, Kumari, & Faiyaz, 2022). Research suggests that self-confidence is shaped by multiple factors, including gender, place of residence, and family type, which impact a player's belief in their abilities and competitive success.

Gender differences in self-confidence have been widely studied, with some research indicating that male players tend to exhibit higher self-confidence levels compared to female players (Vyas & Gunthey, 2017). This is often attributed to societal expectations, early socialization, and gender norms that promote competitiveness among males (Greenacre, Tung, & Chapman, 2014). However, other studies challenge this assumption, suggesting that when experience and training are controlled, confidence levels between male and female players become comparable (Kleitman & Moscrop, 2010).

The environment in which a chess player resides significantly influences their self-confidence. Urban players generally have better access to professional coaching, structured tournaments, and peer competition, which enhances their confidence and skill development (Malhotra et al., 2022). In contrast, rural players may face limited access to chess training and competitive exposure, potentially affecting their self-efficacy and motivation (Kumar & Kumari, 2016). Studies have consistently shown that regular exposure to competitive environments strengthens self-confidence and performance in chess players (Valle et al., 2021).

Family structure and parental support play a significant role in developing self-confidence among chess players. Children from nuclear families, where parental guidance and attention are more focused, often exhibit higher self-confidence due to consistent encouragement and structured learning environments (Sarkowi, Widat, & Wadifah, 2023). Conversely, children from extended families may experience varying levels of confidence based on the availability of support and reinforcement from family members (Kleitman & Moscrop, 2010). Research suggests that positive reinforcement from parents and siblings fosters resilience and motivation in competitive settings (Mehta & Panchal, 2020).

Significance of the Study

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Despite the established importance of self-confidence in sports and academic performance, limited research has specifically examined its role in chess players concerning **gender, residence, and family background.** This study aims to address this gap by exploring how these factors influence self-confidence in chess players. The findings will offer valuable insights for coaches, educators, and psychologists in developing strategies to enhance confidence among chess players from diverse backgrounds.

Objectives

1. To assess the self confidence level among the chess players.
2. To determine whether there is a significant association between gender (male/female) and self-confidence levels.
3. To analyze if self-confidence levels associated based on residence (urban/rural).
4. To investigate whether family type (joint/nuclear) influences self-confidence levels among chess players.

Methods

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between self-confidence levels and three independent variables: gender, residence (urban/rural), and family type (joint/nuclear) among chess-playing students. The research is based on a descriptive and inferential statistical approach, utilizing the Chi-Square Test for Independence to assess significant associations between categorical variables.

Sample

The sample of the present study comprised of 100 students in the age range of 13-15 year were conveniently selected from the Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar Districts

Non Probability, convenient Sampling method was used to collect the sample for the present study. Sample comprise of 100 school students including boys and girls who play chess regularly from Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar schools, where out of total 122 collected data, 22 incomplete and ineligible data was eliminated and total 100 data was finalized.

Tools

Self-Confidence Scale (SCS-GMLB, 2018) developed by Dr. Madhu Gupta and Ms. Bindiya Lakhani, was used. This scale comprises 48 items distributed across five dimensions: decisiveness, self-concept, self-control, interpersonal relations, and parental support. It employs a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'Always' to 'Never' and is designed for secondary and senior secondary school students. The scale has demonstrated a reliability coefficient of

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0.840, indicating high internal consistency. Inter-correlations among the different dimensions range from 0.264 to 0.439, suggesting good construct validity.

Results & Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to evaluate the self-confidence of students who played chess and associate the self-confidence levels of these students according to their gender, residence, and family type. Below is detailed discussion of the findings.

Table 1: To assess the self-confidence of Chess-Playing Students

S. No.	Level of self-confidence	N=100	
		F	%
1	**High**	3	3.0%
2	**Above Average**	17	17.0%
3	**Average**	41	41.0%
4	**Below Average**	23	23.0%
5	**Low**	16	16.0%
	Total	**100**	**100**

Note – F – frequency %- Percentage

The distribution of self-confidence levels among students, as presented in Table 1, indicates that the majority fall within the "Average" category (41%). This suggests that most students perceive themselves as moderately confident, neither overly self-assured nor significantly lacking in confidence. Previous studies have shown that self-confidence tends to cluster around moderate levels, as students often experience fluctuations in self-perception depending on situational factors such as academic challenges and social influences (Mehta & Panchal, 2020).

The second-largest group, categorized as "Below Average" (23%), highlights a considerable portion of students who may struggle with self-confidence. Research suggests that lower self-confidence can negatively impact academic performance and engagement, potentially leading to increased anxiety and reluctance to take on new challenges (Malhotra, Kumari, & Faiyaz, 2022). Interventions such as mentorship programs and confidence-building exercises could be beneficial in addressing this issue.

Conversely, "Above Average" self-confidence (17%) indicates a subset of students who exhibit higher-than-average assurance in their abilities. Studies suggest that students with above-average confidence are more likely to take risks, persist through challenges, and perform better academically (Kleitman & Moscrop, 2010). However, overconfidence, if not

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accompanied by actual competence, can lead to misjudgments and underperformance (Greenacre, Tung, & Chapman, 2014).

The "Low" confidence category (16%) further underscores the challenges faced by a significant minority of students. Low self-confidence has been linked to poor academic outcomes, lack of motivation, and avoidance of competitive or high-pressure situations (Valle et al., 2021). Addressing this issue through targeted interventions such as self-efficacy training and structured peer support systems could help improve students' confidence levels.

The least represented category is "High" self-confidence, accounting for only 3% of the responses. This aligns with existing literature, which suggests that truly high self-confidence is relatively rare, as students often experience self-doubt, especially in competitive or high-stakes environments (Vyas & Gunthey, 2017). While high self-confidence is generally linked to positive outcomes such as leadership potential and resilience, it is crucial to ensure that it is accompanied by competence and realistic self-assessment (Kumar & Kumari, 2016).

Table 2: Association between Gender and their level of self confidence

S. No.	Level of Self Confidence	Gender (100)		Statistical Inference
		Girls	Boys	
1	High	2	1	
2	Above Average	5	12	$\chi 2=15.77$*
3	Average	20	21	p=0.0075
4	Below Average	2	21	df: 5
5	Low	2	14	
	Total	31	69	

*Significant=.05

The present study examined the relationship between gender and confidence levels using a Chi-Square test of independence. The results revealed a statistically significant association between these variables, $\chi^2(5, N = 100) = 15.77$, $p = .007$, indicating that confidence levels differ across genders.

The observed frequencies suggest that males and females distribute differently across confidence levels. Notably, females were more likely to report "Average" or "Above Average" confidence levels, whereas males exhibited a wider variation, including a higher proportion in "Below Average" and "Low" confidence levels. These findings suggest potential gender-based differences in self-perception or societal expectations regarding confidence.

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These results align with prior research indicating gender differences in confidence and self-efficacy. Previous studies have found that **males often overestimate their abilities,** while **females tend to underestimate theirs,** despite comparable performance levels (Dunning et al., 2003; Ehrlinger & Dunning, 2003). Additionally, research on **imposter syndrome** suggests that women may report lower confidence levels even in high-achieving environments (Clance & Imes, 1978).

However, some studies suggest that confidence disparities may be **context-dependent.** For instance, men may express higher confidence in competitive or high-stakes situations (Niederle & Vesterlund, 2007), whereas women might demonstrate greater confidence in collaborative settings. The current findings contribute to this debate by highlighting gender differences in general confidence levels.

Several explanations could account for these results. **Socialization processes** may play a role, as cultural norms often encourage **assertiveness in males** and **modesty in females**, shaping confidence perceptions over time (Bem, 1981). Furthermore, **stereotype threat**—the fear of confirming negative stereotypes—may contribute to **lower reported confidence levels among females** in traditionally male-dominated fields (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

These findings have important implications for education and professional development. Programs aimed at **boosting confidence and self-efficacy**, particularly among underrepresented groups, could help mitigate these disparities. Future research should explore whether interventions, such as **mentorship programs or confidence-building workshops**, can reduce gender differences in self-assessed confidence.

Table 3: Association between Residence and their level of self confidence

S. No.	Level of Self Confidence	Residence (100)		Statistical Inference
		Urban	Rural	
1	**High**	1	2	
2	**Above Average**	13	4	**$\chi 2=4.87$***
3	**Average**	26	15	p=0.433
4	**Below Average**	18	5	df: 5
5	**Low**	13	3	
	Total	71	29	

*Not Significant

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Table 3 presents association of self-confidence between students from urban and rural families. The results were not statistically significant, **$\chi^2(5, N = 100) = 4.87, p = .433$**, indicating that confidence levels were similar across the two groups.

The observed and expected frequencies suggest that individuals from urban and rural backgrounds did not differ significantly in their reported confidence levels. Unlike gender-based confidence differences observed in previous studies, these findings indicate that **geographical location (urban vs. rural) may not be a strong determinant of confidence levels.** These findings contrast with some previous research suggesting that **urban residents tend to have higher self-efficacy and confidence** due to increased exposure to competitive environments, better educational opportunities, and greater access to resources (Bandura, 1997). However, other studies suggest that **rural populations often develop resilience and confidence through strong community support and self-reliance**, potentially balancing out the advantages seen in urban populations (Pajares, 2002). The non-significant results in the current study may reflect these compensatory factors, leading to similar confidence levels between urban and rural groups.

Table 4: Association between family type and their level of self confidence

S. No.	Level of Self Confidence	Family Type (100)		Statistical Inference
		Joint	Nuclear	
1	High	3	0	
2	Above Average	12	5	$\chi 2=5.12$*
3	Average	28	13	p=0.401
4	Below Average	11	12	df: 5
5	Low	11	5	
	Total	65	35	

*Not Significant

Table 4 shows whether confidence levels differed significantly between individuals from joint and nuclear families. he results were not statistically significant, **$\chi^2(5, N = 100) = 5.12, p = .401$,** indicating that confidence levels were similar across family structures.

The findings suggest that **family type does not significantly impact confidence levels.** Individuals from both joint and nuclear families reported similar distributions of confidence, implying that confidence development may be influenced by other factors beyond family structure, such as **personal experiences, education, and social interactions**. Prior research has suggested that individuals from **joint families may benefit from collective decision-**

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making, emotional support, and guidance from multiple family members, which could foster **higher self-efficacy and confidence** (Singh & Misra, 2020). Conversely, nuclear family environments are often associated with **greater independence, self-reliance, and decision-making autonomy**, which could also contribute to confidence development (Kapoor, 2018). The present study's **non-significant findings** suggest that these potential advantages may balance each other out, leading to **no major difference in confidence levels between family types.**

Conclusion

Self-confidence plays a vital role in shaping the performance of chess players by influencing their decision-making, risk-taking abilities, and resilience under pressure. This study examined the impact of gender, residence, and family type on self-confidence levels among young chess players. The findings indicate that gender significantly affects confidence levels, with male players displaying greater variation, while no significant differences were observed based on residence or family type. The majority of participants exhibited average self-confidence, though a notable percentage reported below-average or low confidence, highlighting the need for targeted interventions. These results suggest that societal and cultural influences may contribute to gender differences in self-confidence, while access to competitive environments and positive reinforcement can help mitigate these disparities. To enhance self-confidence in young chess players, structured training programs, mentorship, and psychological support should be prioritized. Future research should explore additional factors such as coaching quality, peer influence, and competitive experience to further understand the determinants of self-confidence in chess. By addressing confidence-related challenges, educators, coaches, and psychologists can create a more supportive environment that enables young players to maximize their potential and improve their performance.

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