

Exploration of Students' Boredom in English Learning Reviewed from A Gender Perspective

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Abstract	Article Info
Academic boredom in second language acquisition is increasingly recognized as a significant affective barrier that impairs student attention, engagement, and communicative performance. However, empirical investigations examining how L2 boredom manifests across different psychological dimensions and gender groups in non-metropolitan secondary education remain limited. To address this gap, this study investigated the overall levels, dominant dimensions, and gender-based disparities of academic boredom among EFL senior high school students in Sungai Penuh, Jambi, Indonesia. Grounded in Pekrun's Control-Value Theory, a quantitative exploratory survey design was employed involving 237 students (113 males, 124 females) across Grades 10 to 12. Data were collected using the translated and psychometrically validated Academic Boredom Survey Instrument (ABSI), measuring Boredom Proneness (trait), Class-Related (state), and Study-Related (state). Descriptive analyses revealed a high overall level of composite academic boredom (Mean = 3.42, SD = 0.61), with Class-Related emerging as the primary catalyst of disengagement (Mean = 3.68), followed by Study-Related (Mean = 3.35) and Boredom Proneness (Mean = 3.23). Inferential independent samples t-tests demonstrated that male students experienced significantly higher levels of overall, class-related, and study-related state boredom than female students ($p < 0.05$, $d = 0.492$), whereas no statistically significant gender difference was observed in dispositional trait boredom proneness ($p = 0.054$). These findings indicate that L2 boredom in regional high schools is predominantly a context-dependent state driven by uninspiring instructional routines rather than an innate learner trait, highlighting the urgent need for gender-responsive, interactive, and emotion-aware pedagogical practices.	Article History <i>Received :</i> 10-07,-2025 <i>Revised :</i> 11-12-2025 <i>Accepted :</i> 12-30-2025 Keywords: <i>Exploration of Students' Boredom, English Learning, Gender Perspective</i>

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INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language is not just about mastering grammar rules or memorizing vocabulary, it is also an emotional journey. In Second Language Acquisition (SLA), emotions play a powerful role in determining how well students learn. For many years, researchers focused heavily on positive emotions, such as motivation, or well-known negative emotions, like language anxiety (Gregersen, 2023; Ozer & Altay, 2021). However, recent studies in educational psychology show that another silent emotion often goes unnoticed, it was academic boredom (Agail & El-Dabee, 2020; Schickel & Ringeisen, 2025). Far from being a simple state of "having nothing to do," boredom in the classroom is a complex psychological response that can lower students' attention, reduce their effort, and ultimately lead to poor academic performance.

In the context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), boredom presents a unique challenge. Unlike native language classes, learning a foreign language requires high mental effort, active participation, and continuous risk-taking, such as speaking in front of peers. When students feel bored, their willingness to communicate drops (M. Liu & Mi, 2025), and they become passive listeners rather than active learners (Liu & Xiao, 2026). Despite its critical impact, boredom was long treated as a secondary issue. Only recently have scholars recognized it as a distinct emotional state that requires

serious investigation, especially to understand what triggers it and how different groups of students experience it.

One crucial factor that shapes how students experience emotions in school is gender. Male and female students often adapt differently to classroom environments, adopt different learning strategies, and express their emotional states in distinct ways. For instance, some studies suggest that male students may express boredom through overt behaviors, such as off-task actions (Ijeoma & Oladipo, 2019) or disruption (Baños, 2020). In contrast, Feuchter and Preckel (2023) found that female students might internalize their boredom, remaining quiet yet mentally disengaged. However, empirical findings on gender differences regarding EFL boredom remain inconsistent. More importantly, most existing studies have been conducted in Western countries or major urban centers, leaving a gap in our understanding of how gender dynamics affect language learning boredom in non-metropolitan or developing regions.

Indonesia provides an important context for investigating this issue. In Indonesian senior high schools, English is a compulsory subject required for national academic progression. However, in smaller cities like Sungai Penuh, Jambi, schools often face unique pedagogical challenges. These include a reliance on traditional teacher-centered instruction, limited access to interactive English-speaking environments outside of school, and rigid curriculum demands. These classroom conditions can easily create an environment where boredom thrives. Furthermore, Kolluri (2023) stated that local cultural expectations in regional areas may influence how young men and women perceive their academic roles and handle classroom monotony. Exploring boredom in this setting allows us to see how localized educational environments and gender identities interact to influence students' emotional experiences in language learning.

To address these gaps, this study examines the extent and nature of academic boredom among senior high school students in English classes, viewed specifically through a gender perspective. By employing the Academic Boredom Survey Instrument (ABSI), a validated tool developed by Sharp et al. (2021) that breaks boredom down into specific psychological dimensions, this research answers two central questions:

- 1) What are the overall levels and dominant dimensions of academic boredom experienced by senior high school students during English learning?
- 2) Are there statistically significant differences in the levels and dimensions of academic boredom between male and female students?

This research contributes to the literature in two important ways. Theoretically, it tests the applicability of the ABSI framework in a Southeast Asian high school context, expanding our understanding of L2 boredom beyond Western contexts. Practically, the findings provide concrete evidence for teachers, school leaders, and curriculum developers in Indonesia. By understanding how male and female students experience boredom differently, educators can design more balanced, engaging, and gender-responsive teaching strategies to create a more effective English learning environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Control-Value Theory of Achievement Emotions

To systematically analyze the nature of academic boredom within an educational setting, this study grounds its theoretical foundation in the Control-Value Theory (CVT) of achievement emotions developed by Pekrun (2006). CVT posits that students' emotional experiences in academic contexts are predominantly shaped by two proximal cognitive appraisals, perceived control and perceived value. Perceived control refers to an individual's subjective judgment regarding their ability to initiate, execute, and master academic tasks successfully. On the other hand, perceived value relates to the intrinsic interest, practical utility, or personal importance that a student assigns to a specific learning activity or its outcomes. Within this theoretical paradigm, academic boredom is classified as a negative, deactivating emotion that arises when there is a critical breakdown in either or both of these cognitive appraisals.

Specifically, CVT explains that boredom occurs under two distinct psychological conditions related to control and value. First, when students perceive high control over a learning task that carries low perceived value, the task is rendered meaningless, leading to cognitive detachment and monotony (Struk et al., 2021). Second, Pekrun and Goetz (2024) define boredom can stem from a mismatch in perceived control, occurring either when learning demands are far below a student's competence (under-challenge) or when the task demands significantly exceed their capacity without adequate scaffolding (over-challenge). In both scenarios, the lack of meaningful cognitive stimulation causes the student's attentional resources to drift away from the instructional material. Consequently, Tam et al. (2020) found that academic boredom acts as an emotional barrier that dampens intrinsic motivation, reduces cognitive engagement, and ultimately leads to passive or disruptive classroom behaviors. By applying CVT to this study, student boredom in English classrooms can be understood not merely as an isolated behavioral

issue, but as a complex emotional outcome driven by students' cognitive evaluations of their learning environment.

Academic Boredom in Foreign Language Acquisition

For several decades, research in SLA primarily prioritized the investigation of language anxiety as the primary negative affect impacting foreign language learners. However, contemporary scholarship has increasingly recognized that academic boredom, often conceptualized as foreign language learning boredom or L2 boredom, is a distinct (Pawlak et al., 2020), highly prevalent (Goetz et al., 2024), and destructive emotional phenomenon in language classrooms (Xie et al., 2026; Zhao & Wang, 2025). Unlike general academic subjects where passive absorption of information might suffice, acquiring a second or foreign language demands sustained cognitive effort (Mehta et al., 2025), active communicative risk-taking (Jašková, 2024), and continuous interaction in an unfamiliar linguistic code (Shabani-Jadidi, 2025). When language instruction fails to foster an interactive and dynamic environment, students are particularly vulnerable to feeling bored.

The occurrence of L2 boredom is deeply tied to pedagogical practices and classroom dynamics. When English instruction relies heavily on teacher-centered lectures, repetitive grammar-translation methods, continuous mechanical drills, and uninspiring textbook exercises, Yuvaraj et al. (2025) believe the instructional environment quickly triggers cognitive under-stimulation. Research demonstrates that prolonged L2 boredom leads to severe learning consequences, including a marked decline in students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) by Zhang et al. (2024), frequent mind-wandering (Yang et al., 2025), and diminished learner autonomy (Derakhshan et al., 2024; Fathi et al., 2026). Rather than actively experimenting with the language, bored learners tend to mentally withdraw from the lesson, treating the target language as a set of abstract rules to be memorized rather than a living tool for communication. Understanding L2 boredom is therefore essential for foreign language educators, as mitigating this negative emotion is crucial for sustaining student engagement and facilitating successful language acquisition.

Gender Perspectives in Language Learning and Academic Emotions

Gender has long been recognized as a pivotal socio-demographic variable influencing language learning trajectories, learning strategies, and emotional responses in academic settings. Historically, SLA literature has often documented a persistent gender advantage favoring female students, who frequently demonstrate higher levels of language learning motivation (Ahât, 2013; Montero-SaizAja, 2021), more positive attitudes toward foreign languages (Li et al., 2025), and superior verbal achievement compared to their male counterparts (Lange & Zaretsky, 2021; Wallentin & Trecca, 2023). However, when examining how male and female students experience negative academic emotions, particularly boredom, the empirical landscape becomes significantly more nuanced and complex.

The manifestation of academic boredom often differs markedly between genders due to varying socialized coping mechanisms and psychological responses. Empirical studies suggest that male students are more likely to express boredom through overt, externalized behaviors, such as off-task interactions, physical restlessness, or visible apathy, often as a strategy to generate stimulation in an uninteresting environment (Feuchter & Preckel, 2023). Conversely, female students frequently tend to internalize their boredom, maintaining a compliant and quiet exterior while experiencing internal cognitive disengagement, anxiety, or mind-wandering (Adesola et al., 2019; Tam et al., 2021). Furthermore, in many non-Western regional contexts, Hu and Chen (2024) and Gntař Iřık et al. (2024) stated that male high school students may perceive humanities and foreign language subjects as less aligned with their future career pathways compared to STEM disciplines, leading to lower perceived task value and higher susceptibility to boredom under the CVT framework. Given the conflicting findings in existing literature regarding whether males or females experience greater intensity of L2 boredom, investigating this phenomenon through a gender lens in non-metropolitan high schools provides vital localized insights into how gender dynamics interact with language learning emotions.

The Academic Boredom Survey Instrument (ABSI)

To accurately measure and diagnose the multifaceted nature of academic boredom, educational research has shifted from unidimensional scales toward comprehensive, psychometrically validated instruments. A significant contribution in this domain is the ABSI, developed and validated by Sharp et al. (2021). Grounded in educational psychology principles and the Control-Value Theory framework, the ABSI was specifically designed to capture academic boredom not merely as a uniform experience, but as a complex psychological construct that operates across both enduring personal tendencies and situation-specific states.

The operational framework of the ABSI measures academic boredom through three core dimensions, which serve as the primary analytical indicators in this study:

Table 1. Structural Indicators of the ABSI

Dimensions/Indicators	Operational Definition	Focus Area
Boredom Proneness (Trait)	Individual dispositional vulnerability and general cognitive susceptibility to experiencing boredom.	General psychological tendency
Class-Related Boredom (State)	Situational boredom experienced directly during active classroom instruction and teacher-led activities.	In-class pedagogy & environment
Study-Related Boredom (State)	Situational boredom occurring during self-directed learning, homework, and independent study tasks.	Out-of-class study & autonomy

By differentiating between the stable trait aspect of boredom proneness and the situational state expressions of class-related and study-related boredom, the ABSI provides a fine-grained diagnostic framework. Applying these dimensions to an Indonesian high school school context allows for a detailed comparative evaluation between male and female students, shedding light on whether observed gender disparities in L2 boredom stem from underlying personal dispositions or specific instructional and study environments.

METHOD

This study adopted a quantitative exploratory survey design to investigate the levels, dimensions, and gender-based differences in academic boredom among senior high school students in an EFL context. A survey design is particularly suited for this investigation as it enables the systematic collection of standardized self-reported data from a representative sample, allowing for both descriptive profiling and inferential comparisons across sub-groups (Creswell, 2022). Grounded in a post-positivist paradigm, this approach ensures empirical objectivity when evaluating psychological constructs such as L2 boredom through validated psychometric measures

The study was conducted at a public senior high school located in Sungai Penuh, Jambi Province, Indonesia. Sungai Penuh represents a regional, non-metropolitan educational setting where exposure to English outside formal schooling is relatively limited, making classroom-based emotional dynamics particularly influential in language acquisition. The target population comprised high school students enrolled in compulsory English courses during the academic year.

Using a convenience sampling technique (Ahmed, 2024) dictated by institutional access and voluntary participation, a final sample of $N = 237$ senior high school students was successfully recruited for this study. The participants ranged across grades 10 to 12, providing a representative cross-section of the senior high school population in terms of language exposure and academic maturity. Participation was entirely voluntary, and strict ethical protocols were maintained throughout the study. Institutional approval was granted by the school administration, and informed consent was obtained from all participants, as well as their parents or legal guardians for underage students, prior to data administration, ensuring full anonymity, confidentiality, and data privacy. The table below describes the demographics of participants.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Demographic Variable	Sub-category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	113	47.68
	Female	124	53.32
Grade Level	Grade 10 (Class X)	78	32.91
	Grade 11 (Class XI)	82	34.60
	Grade 12 (Class XII)	77	32.49
School Context	Public Senior High School	237	100

As presented in Table 2, the final sample for this study comprised $N = 237$ senior high school students from a public high school in Sungai Penuh, Jambi. The gender distribution was relatively balanced, consisting of 113 male students (47.68%) and 124 female students (52.32%). Furthermore, the participants represented a balanced cross-section across all high school educational levels, with 78 students from Grade 10 (32.91%), 82 students from Grade 11 (34.60%), and 77 students from Grade 12 (32.49%).

Data were collected using ABSI originally developed and validated by Sharp et al. (2021). The ABSI is a multidimensional psychometric questionnaire specifically designed to diagnose academic boredom in educational contexts across three indicators. First, the researchers looked at Boredom Proneness (trait), which comprises 10 items (P1-P10). The second section concentrates on Class-related (state), which consists of 10 items (C1-C10). The third section concentrates on Study-related (state), which consists of 11 items (S1 - S11).

To ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence within the Indonesian high school context, the original English ABSI was subjected to a rigorous forward-and-back translation procedure (Behr, 2017). First, the items were translated into Bahasa Indonesia by two independent bilingual experts in SLA. Subsequently, a third independent translator back-translated the draft into English to verify that the original construct meanings were preserved.

The finalized Indonesian version of the ABSI retained a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), where higher composite scores reflect greater intensity of academic boredom. According to Ossiannilsson (2023), each question item from the results of the questionnaire is grouped in intervals: 1.00–1.80 (very low), 1.81–2.60 (low), 2.61–3.40 (moderate), 3.41–4.20 (high), 4.21–5.00 (very high).

Prior to primary data analysis, the instrument underwent pilot testing to evaluate its localized psychometric properties. Construct validity was assessed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), and internal consistency reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha (α), yielding coefficient values exceeding the standard 0.70 threshold across all sub-scales, thereby confirming the instrument's high reliability for this cohort.

Data collection took place during the mid-semester period of the academic year. The questionnaire was administered paper-and-pencil style during regularly scheduled English classes with the cooperation of classroom teachers. To minimize response bias and social desirability effects, the researchers personally introduced the survey, explicitly reassuring students that their responses would have no bearing on their academic grades or evaluations. Students were given approximately 15 to 30 minutes to complete the survey independently. Upon completion, all questionnaire sheets were collected immediately, screened for completeness, and coded digitally for statistical analysis. Out of the distributed questionnaires, 237 completed scripts met the criteria for full data processing, yielding a 100% usable response rate for the target sample size.

The quantitative data collected from the questionnaires were digitally coded, screened for completeness, and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26.0) by Čaplová and Šváblová (2020) guidelines. The statistical analytical procedures were conducted sequentially to address the two research questions through both descriptive and inferential parametric methods. To answer the first research question regarding the overall levels and dominant dimensions of academic boredom, descriptive statistics were calculated for both the composite ABSI score and its four underlying sub-scales. Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) were computed to evaluate the empirical distribution of student boredom, with overall mean scores evaluated against benchmark severity ranges to categorize boredom levels into low, moderate, or high classifications.

To address the second research question concerning potential gender differences, inferential analyses were performed to compare the responses between male ($n = 113$) and female ($n = 124$) students. Preliminary diagnostic tests confirmed that the data satisfied the assumptions of parametric statistics, as normal distribution was established via Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests ($p > .05$), and homogeneity of variances was confirmed using Levene's test. Consequently, an Independent Samples t -test was conducted to determine whether statistically significant differences existed between male and female students across the total ABSI scores as well as each specific indicator (Boredom Proneness (trait), Class-related (state), Study-related (state)). Statistical significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. To evaluate the practical magnitude of any identified gender disparities, effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's d , with values interpreted according to standard thresholds (0.2 for small, 0.5 for medium, and 0.8 for large effect size).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are organized into four primary subsections, it includes Item-Level Response Distributions, preliminary diagnostic assessments of data normality, descriptive evaluations of student academic boredom levels (RQ1), and parametric inferential analyses examining gender-based differences across the ABSI dimensions (RQ2).

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of ABSI Responses for Male (M) and Female (F) Students

Statements	Percentage (%)
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	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Boredom Proneness (Trait)										
P1. I find myself at a loose end not really knowing what to do next	2.7	3.2	15.9	19.4	40.7	41.9	33.6	30.6	7.1	4.8
P2. I find myself trapped in situations having to do really meaningless things	1.8	2.4	15.0	17.7	37.2	40.3	36.3	33.1	9.7	6.5
P3. I find that the things we have to do are really repetitive and monotonous	1.8	2.4	13.3	16.1	35.4	38.7	38.1	34.7	11.5	8.1
P4. I need a lot more stimulation to get me going than most other people I know	2.7	3.2	14.2	18.5	36.3	43.5	36.3	29.0	10.6	5.6
P5. I find it difficult to get really excited about my work	2.7	3.2	16.8	20.2	41.6	43.5	32.7	29.0	6.2	4.0
P6. I find myself just sitting around on my own doing little of any real value	3.5	4.0	18.6	21.0	42.5	44.4	26.3	26.6	7.1	4.0
P7. I find I struggle to occupy my time or to use it really productively	2.7	3.2	17.7	18.5	41.6	43.5	31.0	29.8	7.1	4.8
P8. I get quite restless or even frustrated unless I'm fully engaged	2.7	2.4	15.0	17.7	38.1	38.7	34.5	33.9	9.7	7.3
P9. We seem to do the same things over and over again, it's a really familiar and tiresome routine	1.8	2.4	14.2	16.9	36.3	38.7	37.2	33.9	10.6	8.1
P10. I find most of what we do really tedious, I'd rather be doing something far more useful somewhere else instead	2.7	3.2	15.9	19.4	39.8	41.9	33.6	30.6	8.0	4.8
Class-Related (State)										
C1. Because time just drags on by, I find myself clock-watching more and more	0	0.8	7.1	10.5	19.5	27.4	47.8	46.8	25.7	14.5
C2. I have real problems staying focused and alert, particularly if there's no way to make a contribution	0.9	1.6	7.1	11.3	21.2	30.6	48.7	44.4	22.1	12.1
C3. I get really tired and sleepy or start yawning all the time	0	0.8	5.3	9.7	19.5	28.2	50.4	46.8	24.8	14.5
C4. I start to really slump or sink into my chair	0.9	1.6	8.8	13.7	25.7	35.5	42.5	38.7	22.1	10.5

C5. My mind begins to really wander on to other things	0	0.8	6.2	10.5	21.2	29.8	50.4	45.2	22.1	13.7
C6. I think about what else I'd rather be doing instead of just sitting here in class	0	0.8	6.2	9.7	20.4	29.8	50.4	45.2	23.0	14.5
C7. I start to really lose my concentration	0.9	1.6	7.1	11.3	23.0	31.5	48.7	43.5	20.4	12.1
C8. My brain just 'switches off'	1.8	2.4	9.7	14.5	24.8	33.9	42.5	37.9	21.2	11.3
C9. I feel stuck in the room and unable to escape.	1.8	2.4	10.6	14.5	24.8	34.7	42.5	37.9	20.4	10.5
C10. As time goes by, I get more and more irritable and frustrated, particularly if I can't get involved	0.9	1.6	7.1	11.3	23.0	33.1	47.8	42.7	21.2	11.4

Study-Related (State)

S1. When I feel like this, I have no real desire or motivation to learn	1.8	3.2	13.3	16.9	31.0	36.3	38.9	34.7	15.0	8.9
S2. I'd rather put the work off until later and do something completely different instead	1.8	2.4	11.5	16.1	30.1	35.5	39.8	35.5	16.8	10.5
S3. I get really fed up just sitting at my desk working all the time	1.8	2.4	12.4	17.7	33.6	36.3	38.9	35.5	13.3	8.1
S4. I really struggle to stop my mind wandering on to other things	1.8	2.4	13.3	17.7	34.5	37.9	38.1	34.7	12.4	7.3
S5. I get more and more moody and down	2.7	4.0	15.9	20.2	36.3	37.9	34.5	31.5	10.6	6.5
S6. Time just seems to slow down to a complete standstill	1.8	3.2	13.3	17.7	32.7	37.1	39.8	34.7	12.4	7.3
S7. I get really tired and start drifting off to sleep	1.8	2.4	11.5	15.3	31.9	37.1	39.8	35.5	15.0	9.7
S8. I get more and more impatient and irritable	2.7	3.2	14.2	18.5	37.2	38.7	35.4	33.1	10.6	6.5
S9. I find it really hard to concentrate and get easily distracted as a result	1.8	2.4	13.3	16.9	35.4	37.9	38.1	34.7	11.5	8.1
S10. I get really fed up because the work is too challenging, I don't understand it or know what to do	1.8	3.2	14.2	18.5	34.5	37.9	37.2	33.9	12.4	6.5
S11. I feel really isolated and cut off from everyone else	3.5	4.0	15.0	21.0	38.1	38.7	32.7	30.6	10.6	5.6

Based on the distribution of responses across the 31 ABSI items in Table 3, patterns of agreement across the 5-point Likert scale revealed clear operational differences between male (n = 113) and female (n = 124) students. On the Boredom Proneness (Trait) indicator, responses from both genders were strongly clustered around the Neutral (3) and Agree (4) scale points. Students of both genders reported similar levels of routine boredom when learning activities were repetitive, particularly on Item P3 and P9,

where total agreement (Agree + Strongly Agree) reached nearly 50% for males and 43% for females. This alignment suggests that both genders have comparable underlying trait susceptibilities to learning monotony.

A noticeable difference emerged in the Class-Related (State) indicator, where the intensity of responses among male students shifted significantly toward the highest scale point (Strongly Agree = 5). Up to 75.2% of male students agreed or strongly agreed that they experienced severe physical fatigue and frequently yawned in class (Item C3), 73.5% admitted to constantly looking at the clock because time seemed to pass slowly (Item C1), and 73.4% actively wished they were doing something else instead of sitting in class (Item C6). In contrast, female students showed significantly lower support for the same items, with a maximum total agreement of 61.3% for physical fatigue (C3) and temporal frustration (C1), and a significantly lower proportion selecting Strongly Agree.

Similarly, in the Study-Related Boredom (State) indicator, male students showed higher levels of overall agreement (43.3%–56.6%) than female students (36.2%–46.0%). Males reported a stronger tendency toward academic procrastination on Item S2 (“prefer to put off work until later” with a 56.6% agreement rate), study fatigue on Item S7 (“fall asleep” with a 54.8% agreement rate), and low learning motivation on Item S1 (53.9%), compared to females’ agreement rates of 46.0% (S2) and 45.2% (S7). Overall, this distribution of responses confirms that although male and female high school students have similar underlying susceptibility to routine, male students experience significantly higher levels of acute physical fatigue, attention shifts, and behavioral procrastination during both direct and independent English learning.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Academic Boredom

Indicator	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Level
Boredom Proneness (Trait)	237	1.60	4.80	3.23	0.64	Moderate
Class-Related (State)	237	1.83	5.00	3.68	0.68	High
Study-Related (State)	237	1.50	5.00	3.35	0.72	Moderate
Overall ABSI Score	237	1.88	4.85	3.42	0.61	High

The empirical results summarized in Table 4 reveal that senior high school students in Sungai Penuh experience an overall composite academic boredom score of Mean = 3.42 (SD = 0.61), which falls squarely into a high severity classification. A granular examination across the specific sub-dimensions demonstrates a distinct hierarchy in how boredom manifests among these language learners. Boredom Proneness (Trait) registered the lowest mean score among the three sub-scales (Mean = 3.23, SD = 0.64), which also sits in the Moderate category. Conversely, Class-Related (State) emerged as the primary catalyst of affective disengagement, recording the highest mean score (Mean = 3.68, SD = 0.68) and standing as the only dimension categorized within the High severity range. This was followed by Study-Related (State), which logged a Mean = 3.35 (SD = 0.72), placing it within the Moderate severity tier. This descriptive pattern highlights that foreign language boredom in this high school context is predominantly a malleable, context-dependent state triggered during live classroom delivery rather than an unchangeable personality trait inherent to the students.

Table 5. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality

Indicator	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Boredom Proneness (Trait)	0.052	237	0.200
Class-Related Boredom (State)	0.055	237	0.173
Study-Related Boredom (State)	0.048	237	0.200
Overall ABSI Score	0.042	237	0.186

As presented in Table 5, the diagnostic outputs demonstrated that the significance values (*p*-values) for all evaluated variables consistently exceeded the standard alpha threshold ($\alpha = .05$). Specifically, the test statistic produced a significance value of $p = 0.200$ across Boredom Proneness and Study-Related Boredom, and the composite ABSI score. Class-Related Boredom got a p -value = 0.173. Overall ABSI achieved a p -value = 0.186. Because none of the empirical distributions deviated significantly from a theoretical normal curve, the assumption of normality was fully maintained. This diagnostic confirmation provided a statistically sound rationale for utilizing the Independent Samples *t*-test for gender comparisons.

Table 6. Group Statistics by Gender

Indicator	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Boredom Proneness (Trait)	Male	113	3.31	0.62	.058
	Female	124	3.15	0.65	.058
Class-Related (State)	Male	113	3.84	0.63	.059
	Female	124	3.53	0.69	.062
Study-Related (State)	Male	113	3.48	0.70	.066
	Female	124	3.23	0.72	.065
Overall ABSI Score	Male	113	3.54	0.58	.055
	Female	124	3.30	0.61	.055

As detailed in Table 6, male students (n = 113) consistently demonstrated higher descriptive boredom profiles than female students (n = 124) across all measured domains. Specifically, male scores exceeded female scores in overall academic boredom (Mean = 3.54 vs. Mean = 3.30), in-class state (Mean = 3.84 vs. Mean = 3.53), out-of-class study (Mean = 3.48 vs. Mean = 3.23), and trait boredom proneness (Mean = 3.31 vs. Mean = 3.15), establishing a uniform directional pattern before inferential testing.

Table 7. Independent Samples t-Test Output Comparing Male and Female Students

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
Variable		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval (Lower/Upper)
Boredom Proneness (Trait)	Equal variances assumed	0.284	0.595	1.936	235	0.054	0.160	0.083	-0.003/0.323
	Equal variances not assumed			1.942	234.61	0.053	0.160	0.082	0.002/0.322
Class-Related Boredom (State)	Equal variances assumed	1.102	0.295	3.778	235	<0.001	0.310	0.082	0.148/0.472
	Equal variances not assumed			3.801	234.82	<0.001	0.310	0.082	0.149/0.471
Study-Related Boredom (State)	Equal variances assumed	0.125	0.724	2.822	235	0.005	0.250	0.089	0.075/0.425
	Equal variances not assumed			2.827	233.89	0.005	0.250	0.088	0.076/0.424
Overall ABSI Score	Equal variances assumed	0.412	0.522	3.124	235	0.002	0.240	0.077	0.089/0.391
	Equal variances not assumed			3.132	234.15	0.002	0.240	0.077	0.089/0.391

Table 7 presents the outcomes of the Independent Samples t-test conducted to determine whether statistically significant gender differences exist across composite and sub-scale ABSI measures. Before

evaluating mean differences, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances confirmed that variance homogeneity was maintained across all variables ($p > 0.05$), justifying the interpretation of standard "Equal variances assumed" parameters.

The statistical output revealed a statistically significant difference in overall academic boredom between genders ($t(235) = 3.124, p = 0.002$), with male students experiencing significantly higher overall boredom than female students (Mean Difference = 0.240, 95% CI [0.089, 0.391]). When examining individual dimensions, the gender disparity was most pronounced in Class-Related (State) ($t(235) = 3.778, p < 0.001$), displaying a mean difference of 0.310 (95% CI [0.148, 0.472]). A statistically significant difference was also established for Study-Related (State) ($t(235) = 2.822, p = 0.005$, Mean Difference = 0.250, 95% CI [0.075, 0.425]). In contrast, dispositional Boredom Proneness (Trait) did not reach statistical significance at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level ($t(235) = 1.936, p = .054$, Mean Difference = 0.160, 95% CI [-0.003, 0.323]).

Table 8. Independent Samples Effect Sizes

Indicator		Standardizera	Point Estimate (Cohen's d)	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Boredom Proneness (Trait)	Cohen's d	0.636	0.252	-0.004	0.507
Class-Related (State)	Cohen's d	0.662	0.492	0.234	0.749
Study-Related (State)	Cohen's d	0.710	0.368	0.111	0.624
Overall ABSI Score	Cohen's d	0.596	0.407	0.149	0.664

The effect size metrics presented in Table 8 confirm that the observed gender disparities carry notable practical importance within the classroom setting. Class-Related Boredom exhibited the largest effect size ($d = 0.492$, 95% CI [0.234, 0.749]), representing a medium practical effect and indicating that instructional activities impact male and female students markedly differently. Furthermore, both the Overall ABSI Score ($d = 0.407$, 95% CI [0.149, 0.664]) and Study-Related Boredom ($d = 0.368$, 95% CI [0.111, 0.624]) demonstrated small-to-medium practical effect sizes. In contrast, Boredom Proneness recorded a small effect size ($d = 0.252$, 95% CI [-0.004, 0.507]), mirroring its non-significant p -value ($p = 0.054$). Taken together, these empirical findings demonstrate that while male and female high school students share a comparable trait-level vulnerability to boredom, male students experience significantly higher situational state boredom when interacting with English language instruction.

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this empirical study was to investigate the magnitude, sub-dimensions, and gender-based disparities of academic boredom among Indonesian EFL senior high school students in a non-metropolitan educational setting using the ABSI framework. Overall, the descriptive results demonstrate that high school students experience a high level of composite academic boredom during English language learning (Mean = 3.42, SD = 0.61). A granular inspection of the underlying sub-dimensions reveals a distinct structural hierarchy: Class-Related (State) registered as the dominant driver of student affective disengagement (Mean = 3.68, SD = 0.68), followed by Study-Related (State) (Mean = 3.35, SD = 0.72), and Boredom Proneness (Trait) (Mean = 3.23, SD = 0.64). Furthermore, inferential parametric testing established statistically significant gender differences in total boredom, class-related state, and study-related state, with male students consistently exhibiting higher boredom scores and effect sizes than female students, whereas no statistically significant difference was observed regarding dispositional trait boredom proneness.

The finding that Class-Related constitutes the highest severity tier directly aligns with and extends the theoretical tenets of Pekrun (2006) Control-Value Theory (CVT) of achievement emotions. According to CVT, academic boredom operates as a negative, deactivating emotion triggered by subjective cognitive appraisals of low perceived task value coupled with imbalances in perceived control (under-challenge or over-challenge). In the context of high school EFL instruction in regional Indonesia (e.g., Sungai Penuh), classroom routines are predominantly characterized by teacher-centered delivery, heavy reliance on textbook exercises, mechanical grammar-translation drills, and limited opportunities for authentic communicative interaction. Under such instructional conditions, students perceive low intrinsic enjoyment and low practical utility in language tasks, inducing acute cognitive under-stimulation and attentional detachment. This mechanical dynamic is vividly reflected in the item-level response

distributions, where over 70% of students reported intense physical fatigue, yawning, temporal frustration, and frequent clock-watching during live English classes (e.g., Items C1, C3, and C6).

These empirical patterns corroborate recent SLA scholarship emphasizing that L2 boredom is primarily a situation-specific, context-dependent state caused by uninspiring pedagogy rather than an immutable learner characteristic (Pawlak et al., 2020; Yuvaraj et al., 2025). Rather than stemming from internal cognitive deficits, classroom boredom serves as a silent psychological signal indicating that traditional, non-interactive language teaching fails to sustain student engagement or Willingness to Communicate (WTC) (Liu & Mi, 2025; Zhang et al., 2024).

The inferential comparison between male and female students provides crucial socio-cognitive insights into how gender dynamics shape emotional experiences in foreign language classrooms. The data revealed that male students experienced significantly higher levels of Class-Related (Mean = 3.84) and Study-Related (Mean = 3.48) compared to female students (Mean = 3.53 and Mean = 3.23, respectively), producing a medium practical effect size for in-class state boredom ($d = 0.492$). These disparities can be illuminated through the dual lenses of task-value appraisal and gendered coping mechanisms. From a CVT standpoint, male high school students in non-metropolitan regions often perceive humanities and foreign language subjects as less instrumental to their future career trajectories compared to STEM fields, leading to lower perceived task value and higher vulnerability to classroom monotony (Güntaş Işık et al., 2024; Hu & Chen, 2024). Furthermore, in terms of emotional expression, male students are more likely to externalize their boredom through physical restlessness, behavioral procrastination, and active cognitive withdrawal as a strategy to seek external stimulation in an unexciting environment (Feuchter & Preckel, 2023; Ijeoma & Oladipo, 2019). Conversely, female students frequently exhibit higher academic compliance, stronger intrinsic motivation, and more adaptive self-regulatory strategies in language learning (Ahât, 2013; Li et al., 2025). While female students also experience boredom, they tend to internalize their affective disengagement, maintaining quiet classroom behavior despite underlying cognitive mind-wandering (Adesola et al., 2019; Tam et al., 2021).

Crucially, the absence of a statistically significant difference between male (Mean = 3.31) and female (Mean = 3.15) students on the Boredom Proneness (Trait) sub-scale ($p = .054$, $d = 0.252$) provides a key analytical breakthrough. This non-significant trait result demonstrates that male and female high school students possess a fundamentally equivalent baseline psychological vulnerability to boredom.

Therefore, the observed gender gap in overall academic boredom is not caused by an inherent or biological tendency among male students to be bored, but is instead generated entirely by the situational demands of the instructional and home-study environments. When language lessons lack interactive problem-solving, active communicative risk-taking, or personalized learning relevance, male students undergo a sharper drop in situational control and value appraisals, triggering significantly higher state boredom (Raccanello et al., 2022; Skarpaas, 2024). This critical divergence between stable traits and dynamic states aligns with the foundational validation of the ABSI by Sharp et al. (2021), confirming that academic boredom must be analyzed as a multi-layered construct rather than a single global trait. Because male students' heightened boredom is state-bound rather than dispositional, instructional interventions do not require fundamentally distinct curricula for different genders. Instead, embedding active task-based activities (TBLT) and digital/mobile tools (MALL) into standard lessons can naturally reduce state boredom for male learners without disadvantaging female peers.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the intensity, sub-dimensions, and gender-based differences of academic boredom among Indonesian secondary EFL learners using the Academic Boredom Survey Instrument (ABSI). The findings demonstrate that students experience a high overall level of academic boredom, with Class-Related (State) serving as the primary catalyst of disengagement, followed by Study-Related (State) and Boredom Proneness (Trait). This structural hierarchy indicates that L2 boredom is predominantly a situational response triggered by live classroom delivery rather than an unchangeable learner trait. Furthermore, while male students exhibited significantly higher levels of class-related and study-related state boredom than female students, no significant gender disparity was found in dispositional trait boredom proneness. This confirms that male and female learners share a similar baseline vulnerability to boredom, but male students are more sensitive to teacher-centered, repetitive instructional routines. Theoretically, this research validates the multidimensional utility of the ABSI framework in a Southeast Asian secondary context, offering empirical support for Control-Value Theory in SLA.

In practical terms, the results underscore the need for gender-responsive and emotion-aware pedagogical reform. Educators and curriculum developers should adopt interactive, learner-centered methodologies, such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and MALL, to enhance task value, student autonomy, and active communicative engagement.

Despite its contributions, several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, the quantitative survey design relied exclusively on self-reported questionnaire data, which may be susceptible to social desirability bias or subjective response variations. Second, the sample was confined to secondary students from a single public high school in Sungai Penuh, Jambi, using a convenience sampling approach, which may limit the direct generalizability of the findings to broader metropolitan or private school contexts. Third, while the ABSI effectively differentiated between trait and state boredom dimensions, the cross-sectional nature of the data prevented the observation of longitudinal fluctuations in L2 boredom across different instructional topics or academic terms. Future research should employ mixed-methods or longitudinal approaches across broader geographic contexts to capture qualitative boredom triggers, real-time coping strategies, and dynamic emotional shifts over time.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

DF, NA, DS, DN, and AT conceptualized and designed the study. NA, DN, and AT were responsible for data collection and curation in the field. DF and DS performed the statistical data analysis and interpreted the empirical findings. DF drafted the main manuscript, while NA, DS, DN, and AT reviewed, edited, and approved the final manuscript.

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