Investigating madrasa students' self-efficacy in English language learning: Survey research in a public madrasa in Bandung

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ABSTRACT

The researcher observed that most students at State Madrasa 2 Bandung lack confidence in learning English. This lack of confidence arises from anxiety about making mistakes when speaking English and concerns about failing to meet learning objectives. To address this issue, the present study evaluates the self-efficacy levels of a single class of twelfth graders at a State Madrasa in Bandung regarding English learning. The study adopted a quantitative approach, using descriptive surveys and a series of questionnaires as research instruments. The survey findings revealed that most students exhibited a moderate level of self-efficacy in learning English. According to the questionnaire responses, students' self-efficacy levels varied from high to low across different topics. Based on these findings, students with high self-efficacy are encouraged to sustain it, while those with moderate or low self-efficacy require teacher support and engagement to improve. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers adopt appropriate strategies and approaches, along with providing motivation, to enhance students' self-efficacy.

Keywords: *English learning; Madrasa students; Self-efficacy*

1. Introduction

Teachers teach English at all levels of school so that students may connect with individuals from other countries where English is primarily used as a *lingua franca*, as well as to suit the needs of the globalization era. According to Kim et al. (2019), educators

must be capable of producing individuals who can utilize English competently and actively participate in world issues. Meanwhile, as we all know, not all students are very motivated when studying English. Thus, the teacher must be able to motivate and encourage students to be enthusiastic in learning English.

English as a prominent subject in most Indonesian schools has brought one question to answer on how essential students' belief in the English learning process is, notably in madrasa. Madrasa is one of the Islamic education institutions that grows in society (Rahim, 2005 in Syarif, 2020). Madrasa is a place used as an equivalent of Sunday school type of religious instruction and is regarded as more accessible for children from poorer households, rural locations, and less educated parents (Moosa, 2015; Asadullah & Maliki, 2018). Initially, as stated by Moland (2015 in Syarif, 2020), madrasas were less concerned with science, skills, and technology education; however, currently, madrasas are on scale with public schools in terms of concern and application of science, skills, and technology.

Researcher's experience when teaching in one public madrasa yielded that several students found some difficulties and anxiety in learning English. The researcher found that the students were lacking confidence, shy to speak English, and afraid of making mistakes in expressing themselves in English. Many studies found that when students have learning difficulties, they are easily discouraged, not enthusiastic about learning, and do not accept challenges (Al-Nakhalah, 2016). Furthermore, Rahmatullah (2021) confirmed the fact that not many madrasas focused their programs on enriching students in terms of trust, courage, and mentality. Yet, the researcher found among English learning problems, students were eager to learn and able to overcome the difficulties. If students were given an exercise about the taught material, they eventually got a sufficient score as the standard of assessment. It means the students' beliefs lead them to successfully perform one particular task. However, when the teacher encourages meaningful activities, motivation, and feedback on them to learn English, they gradually have met the ability (Hamouda, 2013; Al-Nakhalah, 2016; Putri et al., 2020).

Some studies reveal that students' learning of the target language is better when they are motivated. According to Kim and Lorsbach (2005 in Wajid & Jami, 2020), when people are motivated, have strong beliefs, and overcome barriers or diversions, they perform better at the task given. The aforementioned statements imply that self-efficacy is critical to the success of learning a language so the researcher want to investigate the self-efficacy level in one class of public madrasa in Bandung and strive to promote self-efficacy in studying English so students can later learn English maximally. Therefore, the researcher carried out this study to examine the students' self-efficacy in learning English at one State Madrasa in Bandung.

2. Literature review

2.1. Self-efficacy

Psychological as well as cognitive factors may contribute to students' success in the learning process. One psychological trait that may encourage students to accomplish

their goal is self-efficacy. Students' success in finishing specific activities is believed to be influenced by their level of self-efficacy. This is consistent with Gale's (2021) assertion that self-efficacy may play a significant role in determining learning strategies as well as how people behave, understand the consequences of their actions, and react to their social environment.

Self-efficacy is described as personal assessments of one's ability to plan and carry out actions to achieve specific types of educational outcomes (Bandura, 2006; Izyan & Parilah, 2015; Genc & Aydin, 2016). Self-efficacy is a domain-specific belief, attributes, and thoughts in one's ability to complete a task that promotes task engagement and completion (Blumenthal, 2014 in Suryarini, 2022; Bryant, 2017). It means that a person with strong self-efficacy will be motivated and tend to do better in the tasks given.

A good language learner uses ways that are appropriate for his or her personality, age, gender, purpose, and learning setting, whereas poor language learners frequently adopt ineffective learning strategies, in other words, the beliefs and motivation levels of the students play prior roles (Ersanli, 2015).

Many things may influence the increase or decrease of someone's self-efficacy, as it is a dynamic. The development of self-efficacy is an important topic of research (Bandura, 1997 in Phan & Ngu, 2016), and its development may be influenced by four factors: mastery experience, social persuasion, vicarious experience, and physiological (Bandura, 2006 as quoted by Bryant, 2017).

The most important self-efficacy source, mastery experience, emerges gradually as students have both successes and setbacks. In general, success over challenges leads to favorable mastery experiences and enhanced efficaciousness. Strong feelings of efficacy are best created through mastery experiences or individual performance achievements. In madrasa, mastery of the English language is achieved through a continuous process in which students encounter problems in the classroom and may be able to overcome them by habitually memorizing vocabulary and sentence structures, and even following the rules for using English on certain days. Social persuasion, which is cultivated as students engage with others, is another source of self-efficacy. In this regard, interaction among students' and between students and teachers using English in Madrasa can raise student's self-efficacy. Moreover, the feedback that teachers give to students and the manner in which it is presented is a very important source of self-efficacy, even if it seems not significant at the time.

Furthermore, vicarious experiences occur as students view the successes and failures of others. A student's sense of self-efficacy is more positively impacted by others who experience success, if common characteristics are shared such as age, gender, and perceived similar abilities. In the context of a madrasa, students may encounter this feature when their teacher exposes them to role models who have succeeded in any field by employing their English language skills. Likewise physiological sources are complemented by factors such as students' emotional states and judgement skills.

Madrasas conduct activities that require its students to take on leadership roles in order to instill self-confidence in them.

The four self-efficacy sources mentioned above have a significant impact on students' self-efficacy since Bandura (1997 in Lestari, 2022) noted that the importance of social comparisons over self-comparisons in the classroom structure affects how self-efficacy develops.

2.2. Madrasa

In Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population, there are several public and private madrasas ranging from elementary school to high school. Madrasa Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary school), Madrasah Tsanawiyah (Islamic senior high school), and Madrasa Aliyah (Islamic High School) are three levels of madrasa. In Indonesia, pesantren and madrasa are a very significant part of Islamic education (Lukkens-Bull, 2019). In modern usage, madrasa is the name of an institution of learning where the Islamic sciences are taught (Pedersen, 2019). Implementatively, madrasas as Islamic educational institutions are responsible for providing quality education for the Muslim generation from an elementary age (Hilmi, 2020). This is in line with the nature of education as a school characterized by Islam. Two forces were pushing for the establishment of madrasas. The first was Ministerial Decree 3 of 1975, which created madrasas as Islamic educational institutions comparable to general education. Madrasas are recognized as public schools under National Education System Law Number 2/1989, in addition to being educational institutions on par with the general public. The Ministerial Decree for 3 is seen as a positive step in improving the quality of madrasas (Mariana, 2022).

Madrasah organizers play a role in creating programs that are launched to develop the potential of students according to the direction and phase of development (Taliak, 2018). Furthermore, Wekke's study (2019) and Alfiansyah demonstrates that the educational management board and teacher panel in Madrasa attempted to sense and hear the sound of the milieu to improve the quality of madrasas. Madrasa's management is based on empowering all components of education that are interrelated in realizing quality education (Alfiansyah et al., 2020). These components include teachers, students, the community, the environment, and the learning curriculum (Syafaruddin et al., 2020). In this context, students are not only intended as objects of education but are also placed as educational subjects who must be actively involved in developing their potential. This is also in line with the demands of the global community for the next generation who must be adaptive, creative, and innovative in responding to the rapid changes and developments in the world (Putra et al., 2022).

Concerning education curriculum and the focus on preparing students to participate in the global world, unlike prior definitions of a madrasa, technology, information, English language, and other 21st century skills are now incorporated in the madrasa curriculum and promote progress, teachers' understanding in encouraging

studentmotivation is also important. Based on the facts above, researcher believe madrasa students need to be encouraged by their surroundings, especially the teacher itself. Students' learning outcomes are highly dependent on teaching effectiveness including instruction behaviors relating to teacher motivation factors (Han & Yin, 2016).

In the context of English in madrasa, Islamic teaching in English is necessary for educators, learners, and madrasa principals (Rohman, 2017; Amri et al., 2017). The emphasis of English teaching should be on Islamic teaching. Due to the fact that the future generation will be responsible for Indonesian future, it is mandatory that students need to be taught Islamic moderation ideas early on in both religious and general courses like math, biology, English and so on. The integration of indigenous wisdom, such as the principles of the students' religion and the culture of the society in which the students live enhances the relevance of English as foreign language instruction.

2.3. English language learning

The global use of English places it in multiple categories, such as native language, English as a second language (ESL), and English as a foreign language (EFL). In non-English speaking countries, educational institutions teach English as a second or foreign language. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language because most citizens do not utilize it in their daily interactions. ESL and EFL are similar, yet there are several key variances (Sekhar, 2017). Songbatumis (2017) states that even though EFL and ESL look similar, we should keep in mind that EFL and ESL learners have a lot of problems because their native tongue may not have that particular sound (Songbatumis, 2017).

The researcher's information regarding English language learning in this study emphasizes that the study's investigation of students' self-efficacy in the language learning process involves the four language skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

In English language learning in Indonesia context, English pronunciation differences between Indonesia and English and the absence of some English sounds in Bahasa Indonesia are two factors contributing to the difficulties faced by Indonesian students studying the language.

In the context of English learning classrooms, Shibata (2019) contends that the learner beliefs are the beliefs held by the students about what is involved in learning a language, how to learn it and their own language-learning ability and these considered as one of the most influential; factors in utilising language strategies. If language learners are motivated to complete classroom tasks based on their level of self-efficacy, classroom performance (such as grades, peer assessments, and language development) appears to be influenced by language learners' perceptual confidence. As previously stated, learners' perceptions about their abilities to be proficient in a foreign language determine their goals, level of interest in the subject, and, ultimately, academic accomplishment. To improve the quality of English teaching in the EFL context, effort should be taken to promote comprehensive personal and professional growth. Many recent studies have

examined the significance and logic of adding cultural studies and knowledge of learners' psychological elements into foreign language education. This is consistent with Kostikova (2018) belief that cultural studies boost motivation and build a culture of curiosity and openness.

3. Method

The study employs a quantitative approach. In a simple sense, quantitative data deal primarily with numbers, and the researchers usually base their work on the belief that facts and feelings can be separated (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2018; Creswell, 2018). In line with the approach, this study which aims to evaluate the level of students' self-efficacy in learning English at the 12th grade used a survey method. The use of survey research is comparable to Mujahid's (2023) study, which likewise examines students' self-efficacy. The survey method is a study approach used on large or small populations, which possess three characteristics: the information is collected from a group of people to describe characteristics; the main way in which the information is collected is through asking questions (written or spoken); the information is collected from a sample rather than whole population (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2018). The reason for adopting the descriptive survey in this study is to get complete data as it focuses on students' actual behavior and includes one variable which is students' self-efficacy at the 12th grade of one public madrasa.

The participants involved in this study were thirty-four madrasa students consisting of twenty-two female and twelve male students. The researcher asked some students and an English teacher who is familiar with their English achievements and behavior to select the students who would become research subjects. All of the research participants were third-year students who were supposed to have experience in the development of character education in English learning since the first year.

The researcher uses data collection techniques in the form of a spread of questionnaires. Before collecting data, the researcher surveys the place, observe the research problems, and find related research tools to be used. The questionnaire functioned as the main source of data; meanwhile, the observations were used as supporting sources of data.

To decide students' self-efficacy level this study uses Bandura's range score. Bandura (2006 in Lestari, 2020) argues that to measure self-efficacy scale, individuals are provided with items depicting varying degrees of task demands in the conventional methodology for testing self-efficacy beliefs, and they rate the strength of their belief in their ability to execute the required actions. The score of low self-efficacy level shown by the number ranges from 10 to 30. Whereas, the number ranging from 40 to 70 shows moderate self-efficacy level, and the number ranges from 80 to 100. The instructions and range score for standard response to assess self-efficacy level are shown in Figure 1.
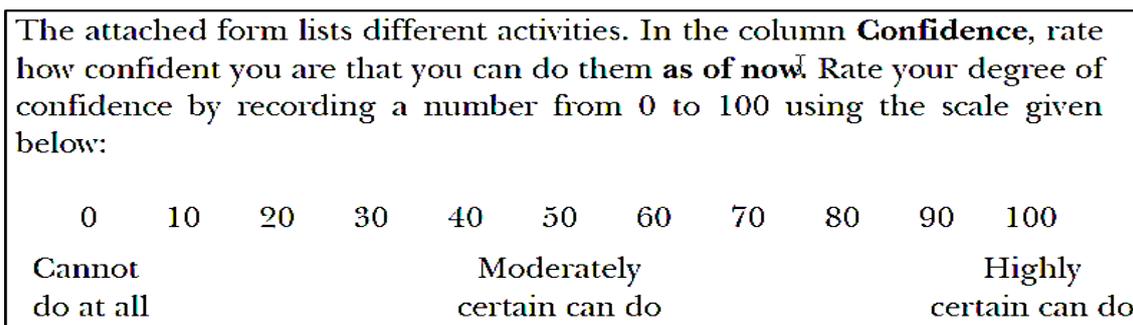
The attached form lists different activities. In the column **Confidence**, rate how confident you are that you can do them **as of now**. Rate your degree of confidence by recording a number from 0 to 100 using the scale given below:

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

Cannot do at all				Moderately certain can do					Highly certain can do

Figure 1. Instructions and standard response

The researcher asked permission first to give questionnaires to the students. After getting permission, the questionnaires were given to the students. Instructions on how to answer them (mark and fill) were explained to the students. The researcher gave thirty minutes to students for marking the answers. Once students finished, the researcher made sure that all questions had been completed. Questionnaire results were then collected as data information.

In analyzing the data, the researcher verifies all of the information gathered from the questionnaires given to the students and categorizes each students' response based on their particular responses, taking into account their efficacy level- low, moderate or high. Then the responses from the students were examined in order to determine their self-efficacy level when learning English. The researcher displayed the data in this phase using a chart derived from students' response. Following data analysis, the researcher concludes the most common self-efficacy level in learning English.

4. Findings and discussion

A closed-ended questionnaire was administered to the students to answer the research question about the most common self-efficacy level of Madrasa 12th-grade students in learning English. To ease the process, the questionnaire was given online through Google Forms. It is in line with Mani and Radhakrishnan's (2013) opinion that online surveys gained much importance in this information era due to the advent of information technology. Since, designing online questionnaires besides very essential, also ultimately saves time, and money and becomes feasible.

The online questionnaire consisted of forty statements that measure students' self-efficacy level in learning English. Each language skill: listening, speaking, reading, and writing was represented through ten statements that its response reflected the student's self-efficacy. The statements were adapted from previous research and already validated by psychology experts.

After giving an online questionnaire to the students, the researcher categorized students' responses into three self-efficacy levels namely low, moderate, and high self-efficacy levels. To answer the research question of this study asking about the highest self-efficacy level in one class of twelve-grade Madrasa students in Bandung, Table 1

until Table 4 shows the result of the questionnaire. Table 1 shows the result of students' self-efficacy in listening skills.

Table 1

Students' self-efficacy in listening skill.

No	Statements	Students' Self-efficacy		
		Low	Moderate	High
1.	Students understand an English song	0	64.7%	35.3%
2.	Students understand English announcements at school.	2.9%	85.3%	11.8%
3.	Students understand the material explained by the teacher using English.	0	76.6%	23.6%
4.	Students understand the teachers' instructions in English.	2.9%	70.6%	26.5%
5.	Students understand my friend when speaking English in class.	2.9%	76.6%	20.6%
6.	Students understand English films without using additional subtitles.	8.8%	85.3%	5.9%
7.	Student understand English short stories	2.9%	76.5%	20.6%
8.	Students understand English dialogue.	5.9%	85.3%	8.8%
9.	Students understand English conversation	0	64.7%	35.3%
10.	Students understand English food advertisements on TV.	5.9%	73.6%	20.6%

Table 1 shows the result of students' responses to ten statements about listening ability in various activities. The response reveals that most of the students' self-efficacy in listening activity was at a moderate level. From ten statements, at each statement, most of the students were at a moderate self-efficacy level. In some activities like listening to English songs, understanding the teacher's explanation using English, and comprehending English conversation, no one responded that they were not confident in doing the task. Whereas, in those three activities mentioned above many students responded that they were confident in doing the activity.   Next is Table 2 showing the students' self-efficacy level in speaking skills.

Table 2

Students' self-efficacy in speaking skill.

No	Statements	Students' Self-efficacy		
		Low	Moderate	High
1.	Students can introduce themselves in English.	0	35.3%	64.7%
2.	Students can ask questions using English.	2.9%	49.9%	50%
3.	Students feel comfortable when they speak English in class.	0	76.6%	23.6%
4.	Students are confident in speaking English.	0	38.3%	61.7%
5.	Students are happy to role-play and make dialogue using English.	5.9%	64.7%	29.4%
6.	Students can answer the questions given by the teacher using English.	11.8%	70.6%	17.6%
7.	Students can answer English oral tests.	11.8%	76.6%	11.8%
8.	Students like to speak English with friends.	11.8%	73.6%	14.7%
9.	Students can speak English without preparation.	17.6%	70.6%	11.8%
10.	Students can speak English like a native speaker.	70.6%	23.5%	5.9%

Table 2 shows the result of students' responses to statements measuring students' self-efficacy in speaking skills. Towards statements about several speaking activities, students' responses were varied compared to those in listening skills. Seven out of ten statements show that students' responses were categorized into moderate self-efficacy. Three out of ten students' responses were categorized into high self-efficacy level. Those are towards the statements: *I can introduce myself using English, I can ask questions using English* and *I feel confident that I can learn to speak English*. One interesting finding, towards number 9 statement *"I can speak English like a native speaker"* most of the students (70%) responded that they had low self-efficacy. From the result, it can be concluded that speaking English like a native speaker is not an easy thing to do.

Table 3

Students' self-efficacy in reading skill.

No	Statements	Students' Self-efficacy		
		Low	Moderate	High
1.	Students understand the contents of the English narrative story.	5.9%	64.7%	29.4%
2.	Students are happy when reading their favorite topics	0	38.2%	61.8%
3.	Students understand English short stories.	2.9%	64.7%	32.3%

4.	Students understand what is being read when reading slowly and carefully.	0	38.3%	61.7%
5.	Students can take notes in English.	2.9%	58.7%	38.2%
6.	Students can read English newspapers	8.8%	70.6%	20.6%
7.	Students can read English TV advertisements	5.9%	55.9%	38.2%
8.	Students feel happy reading an English novel.	20.6%	70.6%	8.8%
9.	Students understand English text.	2.9%	64.%	33%
10.	Students can answer the question of English reading text.	5.9%	67.7%	26.5%

Table 3 shows students' self-efficacy level in reading skills. Most of the students' reading skill ability was at a moderate level. Eight out of ten statements show that students' responses were categorized into moderate self-efficacy. Whereas two out of ten statements show that students respond mostly to high self-efficacy levels. The statement was: *I am happy when reading with topics I like, and I can understand what is being read when reading slowly and carefully.* From this result, it can be concluded that students will have high self-confidence in finishing the task if they like the topic being read and if they read something carefully.

Table 4

Students' self-efficacy in writing skill.

No	Statements	Students' Self-efficacy		
		Low	Moderate	High
1.	Students can write English texts.	0	58.7%	41.2%
2.	Students enjoy writing short conversations.	5.9%	61.8%	32.4%
3.	Students can write English sentences into a paragraph.	2.9%	64.7%	29.4%
4.	Students can write a short message using English.	5.9%	55.9%	38.2%
5.	Students enjoy writing in English on social media.	2.9%	53%	44.2%
6.	Students can arrange English sentences from material that has been taught in class.	5.9%	67.7%	26.5%
7.	Students enjoy writing diaries using English.	2.9%	70.6%	26.5%
8.	Students can write personal experiences in English.	5.9%	67.7%	26.5%
9.	Students feel confident in their ability to write English texts.	5.9%	67.7%	26.5%
10.	Students can write English the way they think	0	64.7%	35.3%

Lastly, Table 4 shows the result of the questionnaire measuring students' self-efficacy in writing skills. From the table, we can see that the response mostly indicated that students' self-efficacy was at a moderate level. Regarding the statement *I can write in English,* most students' responses show that most of the students (58.7%) were in moderate self-efficacy level and 41.2 % were in high self-efficacy level, whereas there was no single response indicating that students with low self-efficacy level. The condition was similar to the statement *I can write English the way I think it is.* More than half of the students or 64.7% were in moderate self-efficacy level and 35.5 % were in high self-efficacy level, whereas there was no single response indicating that students in low self-efficacy levels. From the response, it can be concluded that in writing skills most students are confident to successfully finish the task.

After analyzing the questionnaire's results consisting of four skill categories: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, most of the students' self-efficacy levels were at moderate level. In listening and writing, students' responses show that all statements were at a moderate level. However, in speaking and reading the results were varied compared to the previous research conducted by Izyan et al. (2015), we can observe similarities in the resulting study. From the two results of the study, most of the students' self-efficacy were at a moderate level. In Izyan et al. (2015) research, it was found that the level of students' self-efficacy in learning English was at a moderate level. From ten items in each skill, only one item was at the high level, while the rest were at the moderate level. Whereas, in the current study from 40 statements, students' responses mostly show that they were in moderate self-efficacy levels. 34 out of 40 items we can see that in some statements students acknowledge that they are highly confident in doing the task of the activity. Furthermore, we can also find that in toward ten statements, no one responded that they were in low self-efficacy level.

From many studies on self-efficacy, we can see that self-efficacy has a positive correlation with children's learning motivation and learning results. According to Bandura (1982), people with strong self-efficacy can plan effectively and complete a task. Such people believe in their abilities and firmly utilize them in such a way that they attain goals and even complete complex activities. A person with low self-efficacy avoids complicated jobs, is unable to plan to achieve goals, and believes in his/her abilities to achieve the goals (Bandura 1982 in Ahmad and Safaria, 2013). Moreover, Zimmerman et al. (1992 in Lestari, 2022) assert that students with high self-efficacy are confident in their ability to understand a lesson, manage educational issues, and choose the most demanding courses.

Understanding children's abilities and student self-efficacy were critical in the learning activity, according to the teacher, because students had distinct and specialized abilities as well as varying levels of self-efficacy. Knowing the student's degree of self-efficacy allows the teacher to provide a distinct psychological approach to pupils, particularly those with low levels of self-efficacy, to motivate them to learn better and achieve their learning objectives. Moreover, students acquire information about their self-

efficacy in a given domain from their performances, observations of models, forms of social persuasion, and physiological indexes (Riaz et al., 2019; Gale, 2021). However, the information acquired from these sources does not influence efficacy automatically but is cognitively appraised.

Furthermore, self-efficacy is also said to have an important role in student achievement particularly in learning English as a Foreign Language. Raoofi et al. (2012) stated that in second or foreign-language learning contexts, student self-efficacy has emerged as one of the most important independent variables influencing learner performance and attainment. The importance of self-efficacy in increasing motivation and learning achievement is also emphasized by Blumenthal (2014 in Suryarini, 2022) who says that self-efficacy beliefs play an important role in determining students' learning outcomes. Students are expected to have realistic challenging goals that are attainable. With realistic targets, students can track their progress and assess whether or not their current work method is worthwhile (Blumenthal, 2014 in Suryarini, 2022).

Because it is proven that self-efficacy is important, teachers need to take a different approach for students with different self-efficacy. For students who have high self-efficacy, they are expected to be able to maintain it. Researcher generally agree that people with a high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to pursue difficult tasks, stay interested in those projects, and put in more effort in the process (Yahia, 2015). However, according to Iddrus and Saleh (2008), even though someone's self-efficacy level is high, it does not mean that they will always remain high. It should be maintained. Therefore, to ensure this; Because the level of self-efficacy was dependent on the difficulty level of a particular project, the teacher was advised to always encourage students to maintain their level and boost their confidence level.

Whereas, for students who have self-efficacy which is included in the medium and low categories, it is hoped that the teacher designs some movements. This study proposed three approaches for teachers to take. First, incorporating students' families in the learning process. Second, by assisting students in setting goals and recognizing progress. Third, by generating activities and techniques to cope with learning difficulties as they arise. Fourth, provide motivation and provide empowerment to increase their self-efficacy. Students may increase their self-efficacy by noting their learning progress, attaining goals, and setting new challenges. The researcher suggest that these kinds of approaches should also be supported by the institution.

5. Conclusion

This study investigates the self-efficacy levels of tenth-grade students at a public madrasa in Bandung across four English language skills. The research utilized a questionnaire as the primary instrument. Analysis of the 40 statements in the questionnaire revealed varied results. Overall, the findings indicate that most students exhibit a moderate level of self-efficacy in the four language skills. To address the range of self-efficacy levels, three actions are proposed. Students with high self-efficacy should

be encouraged to sustain it, while those with moderate or low self-efficacy require tailored strategies and motivation from teachers to improve. Enhancing self-efficacy is critical, as it significantly influences students' success in achieving learning objectives.

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