

Exploring Self-Efficacy among Senior High School Students Facing Academic Challenges

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Abstract: This study aims to provide a descriptive overview of self-efficacy among twelfth-grade students who are facing intense academic demands and transition challenges. Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their capability to organize and execute actions required to manage prospective situations, plays a critical role in determining students' motivation and perseverance. A quantitative descriptive approach was employed with 119 students as respondents. Data were collected using a self-efficacy scale comprising items that measure level, generality, and strength dimensions. The findings show that the majority of students have moderate to high self-efficacy, which implies readiness to face academic tasks. Descriptive statistics further reveal variations between class groups. This study highlights the importance of promoting strategies that maintain and enhance students' confidence in their academic capabilities.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Senior High School, Descriptive Study, Academic Confidence, Student Readiness

1 INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy is a key psychological factor influencing how students perceive their abilities to achieve goals and handle challenging academic tasks (Bandura, 1997). In the context of twelfth-grade students, self-efficacy becomes crucial as they undergo a significant transition phase involving national exams, university entrance selection, and career decision-making (Maimunah, 2020). Students with higher self-efficacy are generally more resilient, motivated, and better able to manage stress compared to their peers with lower self-efficacy (Endah, 2024).

Research by Kusuma Astuti et al. (2024) on grade 12 students of SMAN 44 Jakarta found that self-efficacy has a significant positive influence on students' interest in continuing their education to college level. This shows that confidence in one's abilities not only affects academic performance but also determines their future choices. Despite its importance, few studies specifically describe the self-efficacy profile of students who are at the peak of academic pressure. Understanding students' perceived competence can help teachers, parents, and counselors develop more targeted interventions to boost academic confidence and success.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research used a quantitative descriptive method with twelfth-grade students of SMA 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya as the population. A total of 119 students were selected using systematic sampling based on the Isaac and Michael table with a 95% confidence level. The instrument used was a self-efficacy scale consisting of 33 items covering three dimensions:

1. Level (difficulty level students believe they can handle)
2. Generality (extent to which confidence applies to different tasks)
3. Strength (degree of certainty in their capabilities).

This research adopts self-efficacy scale that developed by Endah (2024), which cite the original version by Bandura (1997). Data were analyzed descriptively using JASP 0.10 for Windows to determine frequency distribution and percentage of students in each self-efficacy category.

3 RESULTS

Tabel 1.
Self-efficacy descriptive statistics

	total
Valid	151
Missing	0
Mean	95.278
Std. Deviation	10.027
Minimum	69.000
Maximum	122.000
25th percentile	88.000
50th percentile	96.000
75th percentile	101.000

Based on Table 1, it can be concluded that the overall level of self-efficacy among respondents is relatively high. The mean score of 95.28 indicates that most individuals have a strong belief in their ability to handle challenges or specific situations. This is supported by the median score (50th percentile) of 96, which is close to the mean and suggests a relatively symmetrical distribution. The range of self-efficacy scores spans from a minimum of 69 to a maximum of 122, reflecting considerable variability among individuals. The standard deviation of 10.03 indicates a moderate level of dispersion, meaning there is a noticeable difference in self-efficacy levels across respondents. The quartile values show that 25% of respondents scored below 88, and another 25% scored above 101, with the remaining 50% falling within this range. Overall, the data suggest that while the majority of respondents demonstrate a good level of self-confidence, there are groups with both low and very high self-efficacy that may warrant further attention.

Table 2.
Self-Efficacy by Class Descriptive Statistics

	12 IPA 1	12 IPA 2	12 IPA 3	12 IPS 4	12 IPS 5	12 IPS 6
Valid	19	24	28	28	25	27
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	102.000	93.250	95.357	94.071	94.280	94.444
Std. Deviation	10.132	11.840	9.429	10.396	8.749	8.350
Minimum	82.000	69.000	70.000	77.000	75.000	77.000
Maximum	120.000	118.000	108.000	122.000	112.000	117.000
25th percentile	95.000	84.000	88.750	85.000	90.000	87.500
50th percentile	103.000	91.500	96.000	93.500	93.000	96.000
75th percentile	110.000	101.000	102.500	97.000	98.000	99.000

Based on Table 2, the descriptive statistics of self-efficacy by class reveal notable variations across different groups. Students from class 12 IPA 1 recorded the highest mean self-efficacy score of 102.00, indicating a stronger confidence in their abilities compared to other classes. In contrast, class 12 IPA 2 had the lowest mean score of 93.25, suggesting a relatively lower self-efficacy level among its students. The remaining classes 12 IPA 3, 12 IPS 4, 12 IPS 5, and 12 IPS 6 had closely clustered mean scores around 94–95, pointing to a generally consistent self-efficacy level across these groups. The standard deviations ranged from 8.35 to 11.84, reflecting moderate variability in self-efficacy within each class. While the minimum scores ranged from 69 to 82, the maximum scores extended up to 122, indicating that some students in all classes displayed exceptionally high self-efficacy. The median values in each class are generally aligned with their respective means, indicating fairly symmetric distributions. Overall, these findings suggest that while self-efficacy levels are relatively balanced among most classes, class 12 IPA 1 stands out with notably higher confidence levels, which may be influenced by class dynamics, academic orientation, or support systems. These patterns highlight the importance of understanding contextual factors in each class that may affect students' belief in their own academic abilities.

4 DISCUSSIONS

The descriptive results show that most students in the twelfth grade have moderate to high levels of self-efficacy, with an overall mean of 95.28 and a relatively low standard deviation (10.02). This suggests that while students generally feel capable of handling academic challenges, there are noticeable variations in their confidence levels across different class

groups. Interestingly, students from class 12 IPA 1 reported the highest mean self-efficacy (102.00), whereas students from class 12 IPA 2 reported the lowest mean (93.25). This finding highlights how contextual factors, such as classroom environment, peer climate, teacher support, and subject characteristics (science vs. social studies), may subtly shape students' perceptions of their own capabilities. The relatively narrower standard deviations in some IPS classes (e.g., 8.35 in 12 IPS 6) indicate more homogeneous levels of self-efficacy among students in those classes, whereas wider spread in IPA classes suggests a more diverse perception of competence.

These differences align with Bandura (1997) assertion that self-efficacy is influenced by mastery experiences and social persuasion. Classes with higher average scores might benefit from more consistent teacher encouragement, collaborative peer culture, or prior academic success, all of which strengthen self-belief. Conversely, in classes with lower mean scores, students might experience less collective confidence, which could dampen individual self-efficacy. Furthermore, the distribution data show that 25% of students scored below 88, and 75% scored below 101, suggesting most students' self-efficacy clusters in the moderate-to-high range. This reflects a promising baseline: students feel fairly confident about their academic tasks but may still struggle when faced with complex or high-stakes challenges, as seen in the "level" dimension of the scale.

In addition to teacher support, peers also play an important role in building and strengthening students' self-efficacy. Findings from Amelia Sari et al. (2025) through a systematic review showed that positive interactions with peers consistently contributed to increased self-confidence and readiness to face academic challenges, especially in the context of adolescents. Drawing from social cognitive theory, it becomes clear that self-efficacy is not static it can be shaped by classroom dynamics, feedback, and emotional support. Schools could capitalize on these insights by fostering environments that promote mastery experiences: offering gradual, scaffolded academic challenges, peer mentoring, and structured teacher feedback to help students internalize success as the result of their own efforts.

However, it is important to note that excessive self-efficacy can also have counterproductive effects. A study by Huda et al. (2024) showed that in grade XII students, excessive self-efficacy can actually reduce critical thinking skills because it gives rise to overconfidence and reduces reflective awareness in learning. Therefore, it is important to maintain a balance between self-confidence and effective management of cognitive processes.

Additionally, the data underscore that academic self-efficacy is not equally distributed contextual and interpersonal factors significantly influence its formation. For example, science-track students in IPA classes might perceive subjects as more demanding, leading to broader variability in self-confidence, whereas students in IPS classes might experience steadier, moderate confidence across the group. These findings reinforce that interventions should not adopt a "one size fits all" approach. Instead, tailored strategies are needed to boost self-efficacy where it is lower and sustain it where it is already strong by leveraging positive peer dynamics, targeted teacher feedback, and skill-building workshops. Ultimately, cultivating robust self-efficacy can help students navigate the transition from high school to university or the workforce with greater psychological resilience and academic persistence.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This descriptive study shows that the majority of twelfth-grade students have moderate to high levels of self-efficacy, positioning them well to cope with academic demands. However, targeted interventions are still needed to help students fully utilize and strengthen their self-belief, especially in facing future academic and career challenges.

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