



Exploring Motivation, Discipline, and Self-Efficacy in Arabic Language Learning at Madrasah Tsanawiyah in Batam City: A Multiple Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how motivation, discipline, and self-efficacy shape the Arabic language learning experiences of Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) students in Batam City. Using a qualitative, multiple-case study design, the research was conducted at MTs Bina Ummah and MTs Hang Nadim. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, and were examined using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman. The findings reveal that students' learning motivation is constructed through two primary contexts: religious meaning and digital learning experiences. At MTs Bina Ummah, Arabic learning is perceived as an integral part of religious practice, which strengthens students' learning commitment and perseverance. In contrast, at MTs Hang Nadim, motivation develops through the use of interactive digital media that promotes active student engagement. Learning discipline shifts from rule-based compliance toward reflective self-discipline, particularly when students are entrusted with greater responsibility for managing their own learning. Self-efficacy grows through continuous teacher support and incremental experiences of success, fostering students' confidence to participate and communicate in Arabic. Rather than defining learning outcomes solely in terms of academic achievement, this study conceptualizes outcomes qualitatively as students' perceived learning success, sustained engagement, learner autonomy, and increased self-confidence. Conceptually, the findings demonstrate that the dynamic interaction of motivation, discipline, and self-efficacy forms a meaningful Arabic language learning system within the spiritual and digital contexts of madrasah education.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi bagaimana motivasi, kedisiplinan, dan efikasi diri membentuk pengalaman belajar bahasa Arab siswa Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) di Kota Batam. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus ganda yang dilaksanakan di MTs Bina Ummah dan MTs Hang Nadim. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi pembelajaran, dan analisis dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa motivasi belajar siswa bersumber dari dua konteks utama, yaitu makna religius dan pengalaman pembelajaran digital. Di MTs Bina Ummah, pembelajaran bahasa Arab dipersepsikan sebagai bagian dari praktik keberagamaan, sehingga memperkuat komitmen belajar dan ketekunan siswa. Sementara itu, di MTs Hang Nadim, motivasi tumbuh melalui pemanfaatan media digital yang interaktif dan mendorong keterlibatan aktif siswa. Kedisiplinan belajar mengalami pergeseran dari kepatuhan berbasis aturan menuju kesadaran

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reflektif, terutama ketika siswa diberi kepercayaan untuk mengelola tanggung jawab belajarnya. Efikasi diri berkembang melalui dukungan guru dan pengalaman keberhasilan bertahap, yang meningkatkan keberanian siswa untuk berpartisipasi dan berkomunikasi dalam bahasa Arab. Penelitian ini memaknai hasil belajar tidak semata sebagai capaian akademik, tetapi sebagai persepsi keberhasilan belajar, keterlibatan berkelanjutan, kemandirian belajar, dan peningkatan kepercayaan diri. Secara konseptual, temuan ini menegaskan bahwa interaksi antara motivasi, kedisiplinan, dan efikasi diri membentuk sistem pembelajaran bahasa Arab yang bermakna dalam konteks spiritual dan digital madrasah

Introduction

Arabic language learning holds a strategic position in Islamic secondary education because it functions both as a gateway to understanding primary Islamic sources and as a medium for developing students' academic competencies and character formation (Ahmad et al., 2022). Despite its centrality, numerous studies report persistent challenges in Arabic learning outcomes, particularly low student engagement, limited self-confidence, and difficulties in sustaining learning motivation, even though Arabic is taught formally and continuously (Fitri et al., 2023). These issues indicate that barriers to Arabic language learning extend beyond linguistic complexity and are closely linked to students' psychological and pedagogical conditions.

Recent scholarship highlights learning motivation, learning discipline, and academic self-efficacy as critical internal factors shaping second or foreign language learning experiences, including Arabic (Mujahidin, 2024). However, existing research is predominantly quantitative, treating these variables as statistical predictors rather than exploring how students construct meaning, develop reflective discipline, and build academic confidence within authentic learning contexts (Febriani et al., 2023). Qualitative studies that examine the interaction of these factors in Islamic secondary education remain limited, particularly in multicultural urban madrasahs such as those in Batam City (Nurhayati et al., 2024). Social context, school culture, and pedagogical approaches—both religious and digital—may generate learning dynamics distinct from those found in traditional madrasahs or higher education settings (Rozak et al., 2023).

Addressing these gaps, this study qualitatively investigates how learning motivation, reflective discipline, and academic self-efficacy shape students' learning experiences and perceptions of learning outcomes in Madrasah Tsanawiyah in Batam City. Using a multiple case study design, the research seeks to deepen conceptual understanding of Arabic language learning as an academic, affective, and contextually embedded process within Islamic secondary education (Mulu et al., 2024). Although prior studies affirm the importance of motivation and self-efficacy, most focus on higher education or rely on quantitative measures that reduce learning outcomes to academic scores (Kdouh, 2022). Little is known about how discipline evolves from structural compliance to reflective awareness, or how this evolution reinforces self-efficacy among Madrasah Tsanawiyah students. Moreover, urban multicultural madrasahs such as those in Batam remain underrepresented in the literature, despite their unique sociocultural and pedagogical characteristics (Alshammari et al., 2024).

This study contributes by offering an in-depth account of how students interpret successful Arabic learning, develop academic confidence, and sustain engagement through the interplay of motivation, discipline, and self-efficacy (Fitri et al., 2023). The findings are expected to enrich theoretical discussions on second language learning in Islamic secondary education and support the development of a more contextualized conceptual model of Arabic language learning (Muassomah, 2023). The novelty of this

study lies in its qualitative conceptual framework that explains the dynamic interaction among motivation, reflective discipline, and self-efficacy within madrasah settings.

Rather than treating these constructs as isolated predictors, the study demonstrates that motivation provides learning meaning, discipline regulates reflective learning processes, and self-efficacy strengthens learning sustainability (Saleh et al., 2024a). Together, these factors form a holistic learning system grounded in both spiritual and digital learning experiences (Calafato, 2023), offering a conceptual model of how they collectively shape Arabic language learning practices in contemporary madrasahs (Sisharwati et al., 2025).

Method

This study was conducted at MTs Swasta Bina Ummah and MTs Hang Nadim, two Islamic secondary schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama) of Batam City, Riau Islands Province. MTs Swasta Bina Ummah is recognized as a modern pesantren-based madrasah with a tahfizul Qur'an program, where discipline and religious activities form the core of the school culture. In contrast, MTs Hang Nadim represents an urban madrasah characterized by the integration of digital learning technologies and a student population with diverse socioeconomic and academic backgrounds. These two sites were purposively selected to enable comparison of how differing social and managerial environments shape students' motivation, discipline, and self-efficacy in learning Arabic (Ahamat & Abdullah, 2021).

Participant selection followed purposive sampling and prioritized data richness rather than statistical representativeness. Sixteen key informants were involved: 12 students, 3 Arabic language teachers, and one madrasah principal. Variations in student achievement levels (high, moderate, and low) were intentionally included to capture diverse learning experiences and to ensure thematic saturation. Such a sample size is considered adequate in qualitative case study research when data collection yields depth, repetition, and conceptual saturation. Students were assigned coded identifiers to maintain confidentiality: S1–BU to S6–BU for MTs Bina Ummah and S1–HN to S6–HN for MTs Hang Nadim.

The researcher served as the primary instrument, directly conducting interviews, observations, and data interpretation (Nurhayati & Liana, 2025). Supporting instruments included semi-structured interview guides, observation sheets, and document analysis protocols. These instruments were designed to explore participants' experiences and subjective meanings related to learning motivation, discipline, and academic self-efficacy. Instrument validity in qualitative research is ensured through clarity of focus, alignment with theoretical frameworks, and consistent application in the field.

Data were collected through three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation (Nabella et al., 2022). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students, teachers, and principals to explore their perspectives on Arabic learning and the psychosocial factors influencing it. Participant observation in Arabic classrooms allowed the researcher to examine learning behaviors, disciplinary patterns, and instructional strategies. Documentation included students' test scores, attendance records, assignments, and school regulations related to discipline and character development (Abubakar, 2021). Interview and observation guides were reviewed by experts in Arabic education and pilot-tested to ensure clarity and reliability (Moleong, 2022).

Table 1. Relationship Between Data Sources and Research Focus

Data Source / Informant	Research Focus Explored	Data Collection Technique
Students (12 participants)	Experiences of learning motivation, self-efficacy, discipline, and Arabic language learning outcomes.	In-depth interviews & classroom observation.
Arabic Language Teachers (3 participants)	Teaching strategies, discipline management, support for students' self-efficacy, and evaluation design.	Interviews, observations, and documentation of teaching materials.
Madrasah Principals (2 participants)	School policies on character development, discipline, and student motivation enhancement.	Interviews and analysis of madrasah policy documents.

Data analysis employed the Miles and Huberman interactive model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2020). During data reduction, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were coded and categorized to identify emerging themes. Data were then organized into narrative descriptions, tables, and thematic matrices to facilitate cross-case comparison. The final stage involved interpreting the findings and verifying them against the research questions and theoretical frameworks (Anggito & Setiawan, 2022).

To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied source, technique, and time triangulation. Data were collected from multiple informants, using varied techniques, and across different time points to enhance consistency. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with participants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations (Eckhaus & Davidovitch, 2023). The research was carried out over three months, from March to May 2025, covering pre-observation, main data collection, and validation through triangulation and field-based verification.

Results and Discussion

Results

Characteristics of MTs Swasta Bina Ummah and MTs Hang Nadim

This study was conducted at two Islamic junior secondary schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Batam City: Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Swasta Bina Ummah and MTs Hang Nadim. These institutions were purposively selected because they represent contrasting yet complementary characteristics that reflect the diverse realities of Arabic language learning in an urban madrasah context.

MTs Swasta Bina Ummah, located in the Sei Panas area of Batam Kota District, is widely recognized as a modern *pesantren-oriented* institution with a strong religious culture. Its vision emphasizes developing an Islamic generation that excels academically, upholds noble character, and possesses a global outlook. The school integrates religious and general education through programs such as *tahfizul Qur'an* (Qur'an memorization), *halaqah tarbawiyah* (religious study circles), and character education grounded in Islamic manners (*adab*). With approximately 180 students and 15 permanent teachers, Arabic is taught both as a compulsory subject and through extracurricular activities such as the Arabic Club and weekly Muhadatsah Day. Preliminary observations indicate that the learning environment is structured and disciplined, with teachers employing memorization-based methods and basic communicative practices. Despite this, students display varying levels of motivation and self-efficacy, particularly during spontaneous

speaking tasks, making this site relevant for examining how institutional discipline shapes Arabic learning experiences.

In contrast, MTs Hang Nadim, located in Tanjung Sengkuang, Batu Ampar District, represents a digital and open madrasah model supported by more advanced technological facilities. Its vision focuses on nurturing students who are faithful, knowledgeable, of good character, and globally competitive. The school serves approximately 220 students with 20 active teachers. Arabic instruction emphasizes communicative competence and integrates digital tools such as a Learning Management System (LMS) and interactive quiz-based applications. The learning environment is more flexible, encouraging students to use Arabic in daily interactions and project-based assignments. However, this openness also presents challenges in maintaining consistent discipline, making the school an ideal context for exploring how autonomy and intrinsic motivation develop in less structured settings.

Together, these two madrasahs represent distinct approaches to learning management and character development. MTs Bina Ummah reflects a religious, discipline-oriented model rooted in *pesantren* values, whereas MTs Hang Nadim embodies a modern urban model that prioritizes innovation, autonomy, and technological integration. These differences provide a rich basis for comparing how motivation, discipline, and self-efficacy evolve within contrasting educational cultures operating under the same madrasah system.

Batam City's broader geographical and social context further enriches this study. Situated near Singapore and Malaysia, Batam is a multicultural urban area with diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. This diversity creates a dynamic educational environment in which students engage with global influences while maintaining their Islamic identity. As such, Batam offers a meaningful setting for examining how Arabic language learning fosters motivation and self-efficacy amid the pressures of globalization and cultural exchange.

In sum, the selection of MTs Swasta Bina Ummah and MTs Hang Nadim was based not merely on accessibility but on their representation of two distinct faces of contemporary Islamic education: one emphasizing discipline and religiosity, and the other highlighting creativity and learner autonomy. Together, these contexts enable a comprehensive understanding of how motivation, discipline, and self-efficacy interact to shape Arabic language learning outcomes in the madrasah environment.

The Role of Motivation in Learning Arabic

The findings reveal that students' motivation to learn Arabic in the two madrasahs emerges from distinct contextual sources, yet both forms significantly influence learning engagement and outcomes. At MTs Swasta Bina Ummah, motivation is primarily rooted in religious values and Islamic spirituality. Students perceive Arabic as the language of the Qur'an and a means of deepening their relationship with Allah. As one student explained, "I am enthusiastic about learning Arabic because I want to better understand the meaning of the Qur'an, not just for the grades" (S2-BU, interview, April 2025). This reflects spiritual intrinsic motivation, which aligns with Deci and Ryan's concept of identified regulation, where learners engage in an activity because they recognize its personal and moral significance.

In contrast, students at MTs Hang Nadim are motivated largely by digital learning experiences. Teachers frequently use LMS platforms, Kahoot, and Quizizz to create interactive and game-like learning environments. One student noted, "When learning uses apps like games, I get excited. Sometimes I want to win, sometimes I just want to know the meaning of new words" (S3-HN, interview, April 2025). Here, motivation is driven by

digital curiosity and the enjoyment of interactive learning, which supports autonomy and active participation.

Triangulated data from interviews, observations, and documentation confirm that religious and digital motivations function as two dominant motivational pathways among Madrasah Tsanawiyah students in Batam City. At Bina Ummah, intrinsic motivation is reinforced through religious programs such as tahfizul Qur’an and halaqah tarbawiyah, which position Arabic as a language of worship. Teachers frequently contextualize vocabulary and grammar using Qur’anic verses and hadiths, strengthening students’ sense of spiritual purpose. At Hang Nadim, motivation is strengthened through technology-enhanced learning, quick feedback, and symbolic rewards. LMS activity logs show high levels of student engagement, including voluntary practice outside class hours.

Although the sources differ, both forms of motivation positively influence student engagement and learning achievement. Intrinsic–spiritual motivation at Bina Ummah fosters commitment and perseverance, while digital–experiential motivation at Hang Nadim enhances curiosity, autonomy, and enjoyment. The role of motivation is presented in Table 1 below. Together, these findings demonstrate that Arabic learning in madrasahs benefits from a balance between religious meaning and pedagogical innovation.

Table 1. The Role of Motivation in Arabic Language Learning

No	Aspect	Scope	Description
1	Intrinsic Motivation	Internal drive of the student	Students learn Arabic because of their desire to understand the Qur’an, Hadith, and classical Islamic texts, as well as to deepen religious values.
2	Extrinsic Motivation	External encouragement	Students study Arabic to obtain good grades, receive praise from teachers or parents, or gain academic recognition.
3	Active Participation	Engagement in classroom activities	Highly motivated students are more willing to ask questions, answer, join discussions, and practice speaking Arabic without fear of making mistakes.
4	Learning Consistency	Continuity of students’ learning efforts	Motivation encourages students to complete assignments, attend classes regularly, and practice independently outside school hours.
5	Independent Learning	Self-directed development of language skills	Motivated students read additional literature, learn new vocabulary, and practice without always depending on the teacher’s instructions.
6	Learning Resilience	Ability to cope with learning difficulties	Motivated students are more capable of handling grammar challenges and do not easily give up when facing difficulties.
7	Implications for Learning Outcomes	Academic and non-academic achievements	High motivation correlates with better grades, deeper comprehension, and positive attitudes toward Arabic language learning.

Self-Determination Theory provides a useful lens for interpreting these patterns. The theory posits that motivation flourishes when learners’ needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness are fulfilled. At Bina Ummah, spiritual relatedness gives learning deep personal meaning. At Hang Nadim, digital tools support autonomy and competence through exploration and immediate feedback. These motivational conditions strengthen students’ self-efficacy, enabling them to participate more confidently in Arabic communication (Diani, 2024).

Extrinsic motivation also plays a role, particularly through recognition from teachers, parents, and peers. Students reported that praise and good grades encouraged them to

study harder. However, extrinsic motivation was less stable; when rewards were absent, enthusiasm tended to decline. This aligns with findings from Bakar (2025), who noted that extrinsic rewards may trigger initial motivation but do not guarantee long-term engagement.

Overall, the study shows that motivation in Arabic language learning is constructed through two complementary pathways: religious–intrinsic motivation and digital–experiential motivation. Religious motivation provides meaning and value orientation, while digital motivation offers engaging experiences that support autonomy and sustained participation. Unlike previous studies that treat these sources separately, this research highlights their integration as a key factor in maintaining student engagement and strengthening learning outcomes in contemporary madrasah education.

The Role of Discipline in Improving Arabic Language Learning Outcomes

The findings show that students' learning discipline in the two madrasahs develops through two distinct contextual patterns. At MTs Swasta Bina Ummah, discipline is collective, structured, and reinforced through school regulations, religious routines, and consistent teacher supervision. As one teacher noted, "Students are already accustomed to guidance. They know their study schedule, memorization time, and break time. If they break the rules, they are corrected but in an educational way" (G1-BU, interview, April 2025). Classroom observations and school documents confirm that this structured discipline promotes order, punctuality, and academic responsibility, although for some students, compliance appears habitual rather than grounded in reflective self-awareness.

In contrast, discipline at MTs Hang Nadim develops in a more reflective and autonomous manner. Students are entrusted with managing their own time and learning responsibilities, particularly in completing Arabic tasks and project-based assignments. One student explained, "Our teacher trusts us to complete assignments on time. It would be embarrassing to be late" (S4-HN, interview, May 2025). Observational data indicate that this trust fosters self-regulation, while digital learning records show consistent and often early submission of assignments.

Taken together, these findings suggest that collective discipline builds external order and learning routines, whereas reflective discipline cultivates internal responsibility and self-management. Both forms contribute positively to a learning organization and Arabic academic achievement. Data from interviews, observations, and documentation further show that disciplined students—those who arrive punctually, complete tasks consistently, and use learning time effectively—demonstrate more stable learning progress and greater readiness for subsequent lessons.

However, the findings also reveal that overly rigid discipline may create psychological pressure, reducing students' willingness to ask questions or experiment with new learning strategies. This study, therefore, emphasizes that effective discipline in Arabic language learning extends beyond rule compliance. It requires meaningful, humanistic discipline that provides space for reflection and personal growth. Within the madrasah context, balancing discipline rooted in religious values with trust-based reflective discipline is essential for sustaining improvements in Arabic learning outcomes.

Table 2. The Role of Discipline in Improving Arabic Language Learning Outcomes

No	Aspect	Scope	Description
1	Attendance Discipline	Punctuality and class participation	Students who attend classes regularly and arrive on time demonstrate stronger consistency in Arabic learning.
2	Task Discipline	Timeliness in completing assignments	Discipline helps students submit assignments on schedule, fostering responsibility and academic accountability.
3	Rule Compliance	Adherence to school and classroom rules	Disciplined students respect school regulations and classroom etiquette, creating a conducive learning atmosphere.
4	Time Management	Organizing study schedules effectively	Discipline enables students to balance schoolwork, homework, and personal practice in Arabic learning.
5	Consistency in Practice	Regular engagement in exercises	Disciplined learners consistently practice vocabulary and grammar, which strengthens mastery of Arabic.
6	Peer Interaction	Orderly and respectful collaboration	Discipline ensures that group discussions and cooperative learning in Arabic run productively and effectively.
7	Impact on Outcomes	Contribution to learning achievements	Higher discipline is correlated with better academic results and the development of positive study habits.

Overall, learning discipline is a key determinant of Arabic language learning success. It supports consistency, organizes study patterns, and strengthens students' academic quality. Its effectiveness, however, depends on a supportive school environment, balanced strategies that combine firmness with appreciation, and sensitivity to students' psychological well-being. These findings reinforce the understanding that discipline is not merely a set of rules but a learning culture that must be cultivated in an integrative and adaptive manner.

The Role of Self-Efficacy in Learning Behavior

The findings demonstrate that students' self-efficacy plays a central role in shaping learning behavior and influencing the success of Arabic language learning in both madrasahs. At MTs Swasta Bina Ummah, self-efficacy develops through religious beliefs and strong emotional support from teachers. Students perceive success in learning Arabic as an extension of worship, which reinforces their confidence. As one student expressed, "When I am able to explain the meaning of a verse correctly, it feels like an act of worship, and that makes me more confident" (S5-BU, interview, May 2025). Interview and observation data show that teachers consistently provide verbal encouragement, prayers, and positive feedback, creating a psychologically safe learning environment that motivates students to persist despite errors.

At MTs Hang Nadim, self-efficacy grows primarily through communicative and practice-based learning experiences. Teachers provide opportunities for students to practice speaking Arabic through presentation days, vlog projects, and collaborative group work without excessive pressure. One teacher noted, "What matters is that they are brave enough to try; mistakes are part of learning" (G1-HN, interview, April 2025). Students also reported that repeated practice through digital media helped them overcome anxiety and build confidence: "After recording videos frequently, I am no longer shy to speak in front of the class" (S2-HN, interview, April 2025). Documentation and classroom observations confirm improvements in students' confidence, fluency, and active participation.

Overall, the findings suggest that self-efficacy in madrasahs develops through two primary pathways: spiritual and social reinforcement at Bina Ummah, and practical experience supported by learning technology at Hang Nadim. From the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory, both pathways strengthen self-efficacy through mastery experiences, social persuasion, and positive emotional states. Students with high self-efficacy are more willing to take risks in speaking, ask questions actively, and complete Arabic learning tasks consistently.

These results confirm that self-efficacy is not merely a by-product of linguistic ability but is constructed through a learning environment that provides meaning, trust, and repeated experiences of success. Consequently, Arabic language teachers serve not only as content instructors but also as facilitators and mentors who strengthen students' self-efficacy through positive feedback, guided reflection, and recognition of progress. This approach supports sustained engagement and enhances Arabic learning outcomes.

Table 3. The Role of Self-Efficacy in Learning Behavior

No	Aspect	Scope	Description
1	Confidence in Abilities	Belief in handling Arabic tasks	Students with high self-efficacy believe they can complete Arabic assignments successfully, even when the tasks are difficult.
2	Persistence	Continuation despite challenges	Self-efficacious students persist longer and show resilience when facing complex Arabic grammar or texts.
3	Willingness to Try	Readiness to practice and take risks	Students with strong self-efficacy are more willing to speak, write, and experiment with Arabic without fear of failure.
4	Coping Strategies	Approaches to overcoming difficulties	Self-efficacy shapes how students use strategies such as reviewing, asking teachers, or peer learning to solve problems.
5	Independent Learning	Initiative to learn without full dependence	Students with high self-efficacy actively seek resources (dictionaries, online platforms) to support their Arabic learning.
6	Emotional Regulation	Managing stress and anxiety	Strong self-efficacy helps students reduce anxiety during Arabic exams or oral presentations.
7	Impact on Outcomes	Academic and behavioral achievements	High self-efficacy positively correlates with better academic performance, active participation, and positive learning attitudes.

Although self-efficacy generally supports positive learning behavior, the findings also reveal cases where excessive self-efficacy leads to overconfidence and insufficient preparation. Some students felt overly certain of their abilities, resulting in reduced effort and suboptimal outcomes. This aligns with self-efficacy literature, which emphasizes the importance of balancing confidence with realistic self-assessment (Pajares, 2020). Overall, self-efficacy significantly influences students' activeness, task consistency, social engagement, emotional regulation, and overall learning outcomes. Healthy self-efficacy, nurtured through successful experiences, constructive feedback, and consistent reinforcement, contributes meaningfully to improving Arabic language learning achievement in Madrasah Tsanawiyah settings.

Interaction of Motivation, Discipline, and Self-Efficacy

The findings demonstrate that self-efficacy plays a pivotal role in shaping students' learning behavior and overall success in Arabic language learning at the Madrasah

Tsanawiyah level. Data from interviews, observations, and documentation consistently show that students with high self-efficacy are more willing to participate in learning activities, more persistent when facing challenges, and more consistent in completing Arabic learning tasks.

At MTs Swasta Bina Ummah, students' self-efficacy develops through religious beliefs and strong emotional support from teachers. Students perceive success in understanding or explaining Qur'anic verses as an act of worship, which reinforces their confidence. As one student expressed, "When I am able to explain the meaning of a verse correctly, it feels like an act of worship, and that makes me more confident" (S5-BU, interview, May 2025). Classroom observations further show that teachers provide continuous verbal reinforcement, prayers, and positive feedback, creating a psychologically safe learning environment that encourages students to persist despite making mistakes.

In contrast, at MTs Hang Nadim, self-efficacy grows through communicative and practice-based learning experiences. Teachers provide opportunities for students to practice speaking Arabic without excessive pressure. One teacher noted, "What matters is that they are brave enough to try; mistakes are part of learning" (G1-HN, interview, April 2025). Observations and documentation of learning projects, such as presentation days, Arabic vlog assignments, and collaborative group work, demonstrate gradual improvements in students' confidence, fluency, and active participation.

Taken together, these findings suggest that self-efficacy in madrasahs develops through two primary pathways: spiritual-social reinforcement at MTs Bina Ummah and practical, technology-supported experience at MTs Hang Nadim. From the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory, both pathways strengthen self-efficacy through mastery experiences, social persuasion, and positive emotional conditions. Students with high self-efficacy are more active in asking questions, more willing to take risks in speaking, and less likely to give up when encountering difficult material.

The data also show that self-efficacy interacts dynamically with motivation and discipline to shape more mature learning patterns. Motivation initiates learning effort, discipline sustains the consistency of that effort, and self-efficacy reinforces students' mental resilience for long-term persistence. This interaction is reflected in improved comprehension of learning materials, active classroom engagement, and stronger academic achievement in Arabic. The interaction among motivation, discipline, and self-efficacy is presented below.



Figure 1. Theory of the Interaction between Motivation, Discipline, and Self-Efficacy

Overall, the findings confirm that self-efficacy is not merely a by-product of linguistic ability but is constructed through a meaningful and supportive learning environment that provides authentic experiences of success. Accordingly, Arabic language teachers should

function not only as content instructors but also as facilitators who strengthen students' self-efficacy through positive feedback, guided reflection, and recognition of individual progress. Such an approach effectively supports sustained engagement and continuous improvement in Arabic language learning outcomes.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that Arabic language learning in Madrasah Tsanawiyah is not merely a linguistic process but a contextual learning system shaped by the dynamic interaction of motivation, discipline, and academic self-efficacy. This section situates the key findings in relation to existing literature and shows how they support, refine, and extend prior work on Arabic and foreign language learning in Islamic and broader educational contexts.

Learning motivation, integrating religious meaning, and digital experience

The identification of two primary motivational pathways, intrinsic religious motivation at MTs Bina Ummah and digital experiential motivation at MTs Hang Nadim, both support and extend previous studies. Earlier research on foreign language learning has often treated motivation as a relatively homogeneous construct and examined its linear relationship with academic achievement (Goetze & Driver, 2022). The present findings affirm that motivation is indeed a strong predictor of engagement and success, but they also demonstrate that, in madrasah contexts, motivation is contextually grounded in spiritual meaning and technology-mediated experience rather than being purely individual or decontextualized.

The nature of religious motivation found at MTs Bina Ummah is consistent with Anggraeni et al. (2025), who emphasize the importance of value-laden goals and internalized purposes in sustaining learners' commitment. In this study, students perceive learning Arabic as part of their worship and identity as Muslims, which resonates with Self-Determination Theory's notion of identified regulation, where activities are endorsed as personally meaningful (Tnopo et al., 2025). The findings thus support Fadhilah and Jauhari (2025), who argue that communicative Arabic learning becomes more sustainable when linked to religious practice and spiritual relevance. However, this study goes further by showing how such religiously grounded motivation shapes not only persistence but also students' interpretation of what counts as "successful" Arabic learning (for example, understanding Qur'anic meanings rather than merely obtaining high grades).

The digital experiential motivation identified at MTs Hang Nadim is in line with studies showing that technology-integrated learning can enhance enjoyment, engagement, and perceived relevance, especially among digital natives (Song, 2024). This study confirms those results in a madrasah setting, demonstrating that interactive platforms, gamified quizzes, and project-based digital tasks foster curiosity and active participation in Arabic, complementing more traditional religiously oriented motivations. It thereby refines Ahamat and Abdullah's (2021) findings on self-efficacy and language learning strategies in ESL classrooms by showing that, in Arabic learning for madrasah students, digital tools do not replace religious meaning but coexist with and reinforce it when implemented thoughtfully.

Finally, this study aligns with Eckhaus and Davidovitch (2023), who highlight the role of learning methods and motivation in shaping students' retrospective perceptions of learning quality, but it extends their work by situating motivation in explicitly spiritual and digital ecosystems. Overall, the findings contribute a more nuanced,

multidimensional understanding of motivation as an emergent property of religious values, pedagogical design, and technological mediation, rather than a static individual trait.

Learning discipline from structural compliance to reflective awareness

The findings of this study mark a shift from a structural, rule-based discipline at MTs Bina Ummah to a more reflective, autonomy-supportive discipline at MTs Hang Nadim, both of which corroborate and refine existing literature on discipline in Islamic education. Prior research has established that pesantren-based institutions rely heavily on structured routines, strict regulations, and close supervision to cultivate order and compliance (Susiawati, 2024). This study supports that view, showing that such discipline effectively creates stable learning environments and predictable academic routines in Arabic language classrooms.

However, the findings also lend weight to critiques that overreliance on external control can limit students' autonomy and reflective engagement. Afif (2024) notes that discipline without internalization may foster dependence on external authority rather than self-regulated learning. The present study confirms this risk: in some cases, students at MTs Bina Ummah comply with rules habitually, without fully understanding the rationale behind them or integrating discipline into their own learning goals. In this sense, the findings partially challenge views that equate stricter discipline with better long-term outcomes, and instead suggest that discipline must be complemented by reflective practices to sustain deep learning.

In contrast, the model of discipline at MTs Hang Nadim supports Eckhaus and Davidovitch's (2023) conclusion that autonomy-supportive environments, which trust students to manage time and tasks, can foster internal responsibility and active engagement, especially in contemporary learning contexts. This study adds to Kadir's (2024) work on tahfiz-based school management by showing that even in Islamic settings, discipline can be reconfigured from control to trust, where students experience expectations as shared responsibility rather than external imposition. The findings also resonate with Anam et al. (2025), who show that discipline is a key factor in Qur'an memorization achievement, yet this study nuances their conclusions by emphasizing that discipline is most effective when it is both structurally consistent and internally meaningful.

Taken together, the findings enrich the discourse on discipline by positioning it as a developmental construct that can evolve from structural compliance toward reflective awareness. They suggest that madrasahs should not abandon traditional structures but recalibrate them with humanistic and autonomy-supportive strategies that help students understand and own the purposes of discipline in their Arabic learning.

Self-efficacy as a mechanism for sustaining learning

The central role of academic self-efficacy in shaping students' courage, perseverance, and consistency in learning Arabic strongly supports prior research while adding contextual depth. Fitri, Lubis, et al. (2023) and Ahmad et al. (2022) highlight self-efficacy as a significant determinant of Arabic learning achievement. The present study substantiates these quantitative findings through qualitative evidence showing how self-efficacy is constructed through everyday classroom interactions, religious framing, and repeated mastery experiences.

The role of spiritual meaning in fostering self-efficacy at MTs Bina Ummah provides an important extension to studies such as Abushihab et al. (2025), which examine motivation and attitudes toward learning Arabic among diverse student groups. While prior work emphasizes affective and attitudinal dimensions, this study shows that in Islamic secondary education, students' beliefs that success in Arabic constitutes an act of worship can strengthen their confidence and willingness to persist, especially when reinforced by teachers' prayers and verbal affirmation. This suggests that spiritual framing can function not only as a motivator but also as a source of efficacy beliefs in religious learning environments.

At MTs Hang Nadim, the finding that self-efficacy develops through communicative practice, digital projects, and gradual success experiences corroborates Al Firda and Pamungkas (2022), who underscore the importance of project-based learning and practice-oriented models in building confidence and skills. The present study also reinforces Bandura's (2020) theoretical claim that mastery experiences are the most powerful source of self-efficacy, confirming this in the specific domain of Arabic as a foreign language in madrasahs. Additionally, the results align with Calafato (2023) and Goetze and Driver (2022), who identify self-efficacy as a key predictor of engagement and achievement in multilingual and SLA contexts; however, this study extends their work by showing how self-efficacy is shaped by the unique combination of spiritual and digital learning environments found in urban Indonesian madrasahs.

Furthermore, by illustrating how self-efficacy mediates the relationship between motivation and discipline, this study refines Husna's (2020) and Al-Qahtani's (2020) findings on the interplay between discipline, motivation, and achievement. Rather than treating self-efficacy as an additional predictor, the present study conceptualizes it as a psychological mechanism that transforms motivational energy and disciplined behavior into sustained engagement and resilience in the face of linguistic challenges.

The conceptual model emerging from this study, which positions motivation, discipline, and self-efficacy as an integrated learning system, both supports and advances current scholarship. Al-Qahtani (2020) and Husna (2020) describe motivation and discipline as important predictors of language learning outcomes, while Sisharwati et al. (2025) examine the combined effect of motivation, discipline, and self-efficacy on Arabic achievement in Madrasah Tsanawiyah. This study affirms their empirical conclusions regarding the importance of these three constructs, but it challenges the common linear and additive treatment of them as separate predictors. Instead, it proposes a dynamic, reciprocal model in which motivation initiates learning efforts, discipline structures and sustains them, and self-efficacy enables students to persist and adapt in the face of difficulties.

The model also complements Abu and Susetyarini (2025), who highlight the interplay of motivation, growth mindset, and metacognition in fostering deep learning. While their focus is broader and not specific to Arabic, the present study offers a parallel argument in a more specialized context: sustained Arabic learning engagement requires simultaneous development of affective (motivation), regulatory (discipline), and belief-based (self-efficacy) dimensions. Similarly, the study resonates with Rozak et al. (2023), who discuss intention and motivation in online Arabic learning by showing that intention alone is insufficient without disciplined habits and confidence in one's capabilities.

Moreover, by situating this interaction within the specific context of urban, multicultural madrasahs that combine spiritual programs with digital innovation, the study extends Zaenabul Mukarromah's (2023) analysis of teacher discipline and Arabic learning outcomes. While Zaenabul Mukarromah emphasizes the teacher's disciplinary

role, the present model foregrounds the reciprocal and systemic nature of student motivation, school-level discipline culture, and evolving self-beliefs. In doing so, it contributes to the development of a more contextual, humanistic, and contemporary framework for Arabic language education in Islamic settings.

Collectively, these linkages show that the success of Arabic learning in madrasahs should be understood not only through test scores but through the institution's capacity to cultivate sustained engagement, learner autonomy, and meaningful use of Arabic in both religious and academic domains. The interaction model proposed by this study thus complements and extends existing literature by offering a theoretically grounded, empirically informed framework that captures the complexity of learning Arabic in the shifting landscape of modern Islamic education.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Arabic language learning in Madrasah Tsanawiyah is shaped by the dynamic interaction of three key psychopedagogical factors: learning motivation, reflective discipline, and academic self-efficacy. Motivation emerges from two contextual sources: religious meaning and digital learning experiences, while discipline develops along a continuum from structural compliance to reflective self-regulation. Self-efficacy functions as the psychological mechanism that sustains students' persistence and active engagement. Together, these factors form an integrated learning system that enables students to interpret learning success not only through academic scores but through sustained engagement, autonomy, and confidence in using Arabic meaningfully.

This study, however, is limited by its qualitative multiple-case design, which focuses on two madrasahs within a single urban context. The findings, therefore, cannot be generalized to all Islamic secondary schools, particularly those in rural or pesantren-based environments with different cultural dynamics. Data were also dependent on self-reported experiences, which may be influenced by social desirability. Future research should employ mixed-methods or longitudinal designs to examine how motivation, discipline, and self-efficacy evolve over time, and to test the conceptual interaction model across more diverse institutional settings.

The study opens several avenues for further inquiry, including the development of intervention models that integrate spiritual meaning with digital pedagogy and the empirical testing of how reflective discipline can be systematically cultivated in madrasah environments. Practically, the findings suggest that Arabic teachers should adopt roles as facilitators who nurture intrinsic motivation, scaffold self-efficacy, and promote learner autonomy. Theoretically, the study contributes a contextualized framework for understanding Arabic language learning as a holistic system, offering a foundation for future research on psychopedagogical factors in Islamic education.

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