Explore the Role of Self-efficacy and Anxiety in MFL Achievement at Public Universities in Malaysia

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Abstract
Psychology plays a significant role in people's everyday life. The success and failure people encounter every single day most rely on our daily psychological well-being. As such people might suffer from certain psychological issues, which on some occasions influence their everyday work. Mental variables such as self-efficacy and anxiety can cause problems for students to perform in their academic life as well. This study aims to investigate the effect of Mandarin foreign language (MFL) learners' self-efficacy and anxiety on their course achievement at public universities in Malaysia (N=590, ages ranging from 18-26 years). The data was collected through self-efficacy, anxiety scales, and the end-of-semester course grades. Language anxiety and self-efficacy were found to be positive and significant predictors of MFL course achievement in a multiple linear regression analysis. An independent simple t-test analysis revealed that there is no statistically significant difference of MFL self-efficacy and MFL anxiety based on gender. one-way ANOVA analysis revealed level three MFL learners have higher self-efficacy compared to level one learners. However, there is no significate difference in MFL anxiety among the three language proficiency levels. The study concluded that the psychological aspect of the learners plays the role in Mandarin foreign language learning.
Keyword: Self-efficacy, Anxiety, Mandarin Foreign Language, Achievement, Psychology

Introduction
Mandarin, China's official language, has the greatest number of speakers worldwide, both as a heritage language and as a second or foreign language in and outside of China. As China is the world's second-largest economy, keeps strong links with foreign nations, the number of non-native learners is growing. Outside of China, more than 0.2 billion people are studying Mandarin by 2020 (Xinhua, 2020). However, those students face a variety of challenges, including the natural difficulty of the target language, loss of confidence. The

natural difficulty of the target language made the students nervous, a lack of motivation, psychological barriers, attitude problems, and a loss of interest in learning the language.

According to the many studies (Rosli et al., 2012; Abdullahi et al., 2018; Fen et al., 2021) done in the public institutions in Malaysia, students lack self-confidence in their capability of learning. Students' attitude and motivation plays a key role in their foreign language performance (Abdul Aziz et al., 2021). Studies Chua et al (2015); Cheong et al (2019) found that learners in Malaysian public institution expressed that Mandarin is exceedingly difficult to learn especially the pronunciation and writing. They feel anxious and worried that they are not able to cope with class. The learners feel anxious and demotivated and slowly lose interest and are very passive in the class activities and are not engaged in the learning. Many students discontinue the higher-level of Mandarin learning. some Mandarin instructors in Malaysia believe that the natural difficulty of the target language demotivates learners to the learner, therefore learners   perform poorly in the language.

It related to learning Mandarin as a foreign language, the nature of language difficulties due to the pronunciation (five different tones) and the non-alphabetic writing system of the language could affect the Malay learner's learning outcome. Based on the language difficulties ranking developed by the foreign service of the institution (FSI) of American defined Mandarin Chinese language categories as IV less commonly taught language which is an exceptional difficulty for English language native speakers. On the other hand, there are other variables concerning individual differences that could affect learner's learning outcomes as well (Brown, 2007).

Although there are large numbers of students enroll in Mandarin foreign language learning every year at high education institutions in Malaysia but based on the observation and study conducted (MLAA, 2019) there was a differential in enrollments from the lower levels to higher levels. Taking the University Science University of Malaysia as an example, more than 100 students are taking Mandarin Chinese level one every semester from various faculty, but less than 10 students continue up to level three. The Modern Language Association conducted a survey to find out the enrolment of Mandarin foreign language learning at various levels. The survey showed that there was a significant difference in the enrolment of Mandarin foreign language from a lower level to a higher level. There were only 22% of learners who continue learning Mandarin foreign language at intermediate levels and advanced levels. MLAA (2019) Gardner, Moorcroft, and MacIntyre (1997) reported that there as a significant correlation between the high level of dropouts of second language learning and language anxiety.

In teaching Mandarin as a foreign language in high institutions, more attention paid on linguistic mistake analysis, inter-linguist research, language acquisition, and linguistic skills compared to communication ability's development. there are abundant of studies that showed that self-efficacy, engagement, attitude, and anxiety are influential variables might predict English language performance, little study conducted to investigate these variables as related to Mandarin foreign language performance of Malaysian high institution learners. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy, anxiety among MFL learners' course achievement at public universities in Malaysia.

This study intends to answer the following research questions:
1. Is there a significant relationship between self-efficacy, anxiety, and course achievement among Mandarin foreign language learners?
2. Are there any differences in Mandarin foreign language learners' self-efficacy, and anxiety according to their demographic variables such as gender and proficiency level?

Literature Review
Self-efficacy

A psychologist and professor Albert Bandura, who is the first one to create the term "Self-efficacy" (1977) considered self-efficacy as cornerstone for any academic endeavor Psychologists looked at self-efficacy from different perspectives. Bandura (1988, 1997) stated that Self-efficacy is an individual's self-belief in his or her own ability in performing a task. Bandura (1994) believed that there are four psychological processes that self-beliefs of efficacy affect human functioning: 1) cognitive process 2) motivational process 3) effective process 4) selection process. Since Bandura introduced self-efficacy, many studies in social science and behavioral science have used self-efficacy to investigate and study human functioning. The research even include medical, psychology, business, foreign affairs, and education. There has been an increasing interest in studies on student self-efficacy in the context of academic motivation and accomplishment during the previous decade. There is a growing body of scientific research showing pupils' academic efficacy and achievement. Self-efficacy is central to social cognitive theory in a second language or foreign language learning. Self–efficacy is different from self-esteem. Self-efficacy is more focused on "doing," it is more closely related to an individual's perceived abilities. Self-efficacy is perceived as a principal variable in predicting learners' performance in education and actual abilities (Bandura, 1997), or aptitude (Schunk, 2003). Self-efficacy according to some researchers (Schunk, 2003) also can affect learners' motivation.

Self-efficacy plays an especially key role in education and second/foreign language learning. Foreign language learners need to have a positive belief in their capabilities in learning foreign languages. According to Bandura (1986); Schunk (2003), learners' beliefs of their abilities in learning can affect their performance. Learners with high self-efficacy even with low ability can engage themselves in tasks, therefore they can achieve better scores compared to the learners with low self-efficacy.

Learners who observed their friends and peers successfully performed the task, which helps them to develop a positive belief in their capabilities, this experience will enhance their self-efficacy. Learners also develop high self–efficacy when they receive encouragement and positive feedback from their advisors and teachers. Psychological factors such as anxiety also affect self-efficacy. Learners who have low anxiety tend to perceive a pleasant environment and situations; this will help learners strengthen their self-efficacy beliefs. Since self-efficacy in second or foreign language learning is task-specific that is different from context to context, therefore needs to be measured specifically. Since foreign language learning is different from other learning, research should pay more attention to how foreign learners develop their self-efficacy and what are the factors that affect their self-efficacy beliefs.

In the Foreign language learning context, many researchers found out there is a positive correlation between learners' self-efficacy and their language achievement in particular

language skills. Behzad and Majid (2010) investigated the affective factors self-efficacy plays a role in English Language reading comprehension. The study used a self-design self-efficacy scale in reading comprehension to examine 150 majors in English literature university learners. The study proven that learners who have high self-efficacy performed better in English reading comprehension. However, Siegle et al (2020) argued that the relationship between self-efficacy on English reading comprehension among higher degree learners might not generalized to other language skills such as Listening comprehension. Other researchers (Chen et al., 2007; Rahimi and Adebini, 2009) discovered the positive correlation between self-efficacy and English as foreign language learners' listening achievement. Chao et al (2018) looked at the relationship between self-efficacy and Chinese and English language success in eighth to eleventh graders from four Hong Kong secondary schools. According to the findings, Chinese language self-efficacy and self-concept were significant determinants of Chinese language learning outcomes. The study found that Chinese language self-efficacy was a strong predictor of Chinese language learning outcomes in general, but it did not find a link between self-efficacy and Chinese language learning in specific skills.

Foreign Language Anxiety
Anxiety is a widely considered psychological phenomenon in many areas of research. Zhang (2001) defined anxiety as the psychological variables through which foreign language students undertake the learning process. Scholars (Su, 2002b; Abdullah et al., 2021) have studied the effects of anxiety on foreign language learning in various settings and amongst various foreign languages and grades, also different language proficiency levels. Since foreign language anxiety was recognized as situation-specific anxiety related to foreign language acquisition, several measures for measuring in instructional contexts with distinct target languages such as Spanish, Japanese, French, English, Arabic, Chinese have been created. The results shown that foreign language anxiety is a common emotional reaction towards learning foreign languages at various educational levels: schools, colleges, and universities at various language proficiency Levels: beginner, intermediate, and advance. Researchers found that foreign language anxiety has negative effects on academic second/ foreign language learning (Horwitz, 2001; Tallon, 2009).

With increased attention has been given to foreign language learners and their affective factors that influence language learners, researchers start to look at the relationship between affective factors and foreign language learner's performance. Liu & Huang (2011) also claimed that language anxiety is the most powerful predictor among the affective factors that affect foreign language learners' performance. Horwitz (2001) investigated the relationship between foreign language anxiety and language achieved among Spanish and French beginning learners. The study found the significant negative correlation between language anxiety and Spanish and French learners' grade. It was showed that learners who experienced a high level of foreign language anxiety received a lower grade. Some researchers also looked at the relationship between foreign language anxiety and specific language skills performance. Dalkilic (2001) investigated the correlation between foreign language anxiety levels and learners' speaking performance. The study found that the learners' overall grades in speaking courses negatively correlated to language anxiety. The study discovered that learners' oral grades tend to be higher while their level of foreign language anxiety increased. Park and Lee (2005) also discovered a significant negative correlation between learners'

speaking performance and anxiety among Korean students who are learning English as a foreign language.

Language anxiety did not catch the interest of Mandarin as a foreign language researchers and instructors. A few studies only looked at Mandarin language anxiety in the classroom and its associated factors. (Luo, 2013; Sung & Xiaoshi, 2019) one researcher studied Mandarin speaking anxiety in the Malaysian context (Ting et al., 2016). There was no study so far that looked at the influence of language anxiety on learners' achievement. More research need to conduct in the future.

Methodology Research Design

The researcher used quantitative research in the sense that quantitative data was generated. The information was gathered using self-efficacy and anxiety questionnaires. Data was collected from participants who enrolled in a Mandarin course at selected Malaysian public universities. The data gathered were statistically analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)Participants.

The participants who were enrolled in three diverse levels of Mandarin courses from different public universities voluntarily took part in this study. These 590 random samples took part in answering the questionnaires to provide every individually targeted demographic the opportunity to be chosen, which ultimately lends credibility to the study. These students were 20.2%(n=119) males and 79.8% （n=471 females. As for the level of Mandarin that participants enrolled 45.1% (n =266) of respondents were in Mandarin level 1, while 23.7% of students (n = 140) took Mandarin level 2 and 31.2% of students (n=184) took Mandarin level 3. All the participants are not native speakers, their first language is Bahasa Malayu (Malay language).

Instrument
Self-efficacy Scale

The Current Mandarin foreign language Self-Efficacy scale was adapted and modified from Wang's (2004) English self-efficacy scale originally developed from interview and verbal protocol. The scale modified as a self-report designed to measure Mandarin foreign language self-efficacy. The original scale consists of 32 items, but only 22 items are used for the purpose of the study which was categorized into four distinctive dimensions: seven items for Mandarin speaking self-efficacy, six items for Mandarin Listening self-efficacy, five items for Mandarin Reading self-efficacy and four items for Mandarin writing self-efficacy. Wang's (2004) self-efficacy scale has been used extensively in the previous study. For instance, Kim et. al (2021) reported .93 for the scale internal reliability in general self-efficacy scale while .92 was reported for speaking, .90 for listening, .88 was reported for reading and .84 was reported for writing dimensions, respectively. The scale measures how well the participants can achieve tasks commonly associated with Mandarin foreign language learning. The scale is a measurement instrument with 22 items on a 7-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 7 "strongly disagree" to 6 "disagree", 5 "somewhat disagree" 4 "natural", 3 "somewhat agree" 2 "agree" and 1 "strongly agree". The score of the scale will be calculated. The high score of the scale indicates a high level of Mandarin foreign language self-efficacy and in other words that the low score of the scale indicates a low level of Mandarin foreign language self-efficacy. Although internal consistency of the scale has been established in previous study as earlier

mentioned, the researcher would evaluate it again via Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha was reported for internal reliability was .90.

Anxiety Scale

Mandarin foreign language anxiety scale will adapt and modify the scale from: the Foreign Language Learning Anxiety Scale which was developed by Horwitz, Horowitz, and Cope (1986). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Mandarin Chinese Language Learning Anxiety Scale developed by Luo (2013). The Foreign Language Learning Anxiety Scale has been the most widely used instrument to measure all target foreign language learner's anxiety, and the foreign language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) measure foreign language learners' speaking anxiety, does not pay much attention to the characteristics of the specific target language.

Mandarin foreign Language anxiety scale consists of 16 items, and it has been extensively used in different contexts. Studies (Horwitz et al., 1986) have evaluated psychometric properties of the scale and found it to be valid and reliable. According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) the internal consistence of the scale is .83. Participants will be asked to indicate the response to which they disagreed or agree with the statements given by using a 7-point Likert-type scale from 7 (strongly disagree) to 1 (strongly agree). so, the score of the scale will be calculated, the high scores on the anxiety instrument indicated high levels of Mandarin language anxiety.

Mandarin Course Achievement

The Mandarin learners' achievement would be measured through their end of semester grade. The end of semester grade would be used to examine the target participants' Mandarin achievement. Similarly, the achievement grade has been used in numerous studies as global measures of language achievement Aida (1994); Bailey (1983); Chastain (1975); Comeau (1992) as cited in Marcos-Llinás & Garau (2009); hence the researcher will adopt this measure in the current study. The students' end of semester grade will be obtained at the end of the semester represented scores on oral and written quizzes and tests, projects, in-class activities, and final examination grade. All letter grades will transform to a standard grade point average (GPA) scale (i.e., F = 0.00 to A+ = 4.00).

Reliability of the Instrument

To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was used. The primary goal of the alpha coefficient of Cronbach is to measure its internal consistency. In most social science research, if a reliability coefficient is .70 or above regarded as 'acceptable.' The greater the alpha coefficient of Cronbach, the better the internal consistency. If a scale reliability coefficient is more than .90, it shows that the scale reliability is extremely excellent. When the reliability of the scale is below .60, it indicates that the scale should be reviewed as unsatisfactory, in other words, the scale needs to be revised (Bryman, 2012). The internal consistency coefficient of the questionnaire subscale is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Reliability of MFL Self-efficacy scale

Dimension	Correction Item Total Correlation (CITC)	α coefficient after items deletion	Cronbach's α coefficient
Mandarin Foreign language Self-Efficacy scale	.929	.930	.930
Mandarin Foreign language Anxiety scale	.880	.878	.878

Data Analysis
Relationship between Self-efficacy, Anxiety and MFL course achievement
To answer the first research question that to exam if there is a significant relationship between self-efficacy, anxiety and course achievement among Mandarin foreign language learners, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict MFL achievement based on self-efficacy and anxiety. The result of multiple liner regression revealed that both self-efficacy and anxiety are significant predictor explained 97.2% of variance, (F (2,588) =10334.265 p < .001), with R^2=.972. It was found that Self-efficacy significantly predicts MFL learners' course achievement (β = 11.3, p<.001), as did anxiety (β = 5.5, p<.001)

Table 2
Regression result of self-efficacy and anxiety predicting MFL course achievement

	B	SE	95% CI	β	t	p
MFL Anxiety	5.538	.400	[4.752,6.325]	.306	13.831	.000
MFL Self-Efficacy	11.316	.363	[10.603,12.030]	.690	31.143	.000

Note. R^2= .972   N=590   CI = confidence interval β to P<.05

MFL Self-efficacy Level in Relation to Gender
To answer the research question to examine if there is statistically significant difference of MFL self-efficacy based on gender, an independent t test was conducted. The result of independent simple t test indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between female learners (M=4.55, SD=.79) and male learners (M=4.51, SD=.78) of MFL self-efficacy, t (588) =0.580, p=0.76＞0.05. The finding did not support previous study findings on the relationship between self-efficacy and gender. Fallan & Opstad, (2016) found that gender has significant effect on self-efficacy. Female students have lower self-efficacy compared to male students. in terms of language learning, Namaziandost & Cakmak (2020) discovered Flipped English classroom practice improved female student's self-efficacy compared to the male students.

Table 2
Difference of female and Male learners' MFL self-efficacy

	Female		Male				
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*t*	*p*
MFL Self-Efficacy	4.55	0.79	4.51	0.78	588	0.58	0.76

MFL Self-efficacy in Relation to Language Proficiency Level

To examine if there is statistical significate difference of MFL self-efficacy based on language proficiency level, one way ANOVA analysis was conducted. The result revealed that there was a significant difference in self-efficacy between at least two groups (f (3.9,0.6) = [6.485), p=0.001＜0.05) among Mandarin as foreign language learners.

Table 3
One-Way Analysis of Variance of MFL self-efficacy by language proficiency level

	df	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig.*
Between Groups	2	7.707	3.854	6.595	0.001
Within Groups	586	342.397	0.584		
Total	588	350.104			

Tukey's HSD Test for multiple comparisons found that the mean value of MFL self-efficacy was significant difference between level 3 and level 1 (p=0.01＜ 0.05,   95% C.I.= [-0.43,0.86]). There was no significant difference between level 2 and level 3(p=0.085＞0.05), or between level 1 and level 2(p=0.055＞0.05). Therefore, level 3 MFL learners have higher self-efficacy compared to level 1 learners. It indicated that the MFL learners with beginning level displayed lower self-efficacy compared to learners with advanced level. The finding sported the previous study. Alsmari (2021) discovered that there was a significant correlation between English proficiency and L2 digital literacy skills and strategies (DLSs) self-efficacy. Intermediate and upper-intermediate English levels displayed low self-efficacy in their capability in English as second language digital literacy skills and strategies compared to advanced English language learners.

MFL Anxiety in relation to Gender

To examine if there is statistically significant difference of MFL anxiety based on gender, an independent T test was conducted. The result of independent sample t test indicates that there is no statistically significant difference of MFL anxiety between female learners (M=4.09, SD= and male learners (t=.294, df=588, p=0.785＞0.05) the finding confirmed support the previous studies. Yassin & Razak (2018) investigate foreign language anxiety among 240 university students in Pakistan. The study did not find the significant difference of foreign language anxiety between female and male learners.

Table 4
Difference of female and Male learners' MFL anxiety

	Female		Male				
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*t*	*p*
MFL Anxiety	4.09	0.93	4.07	0.83	588	0.273	0.785

MFL Anxiety in Relation to Language Proficiency Level
To examine if there is statistical significate difference of MFL anxiety based on language proficiency level, one way ANOVA analysis was conducted. The result revealed that there was no statistically   significant difference in anxiety (f (2,587) = [.137], p=.872＞0.05) among Mandarin as foreign language learners for three language proficiency levels.

Table 5
One-Way Analysis of Variance of MFL self-efficacy by language proficiency level

	df	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig.*
Between Groups	2	230	.115	.137	.872
Within Groups	587	490.889	.836		
Total	589	491.119			

The finding confirmed the previous study. Su (2022b) studied the levels and causes of foreign language pleasure (FLE) and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) in 231 Chinese EFL undergraduates with intermediate to low English competence. The study revealed that there was no significant difference in FLCA levels between students with intermediate and lower English proficiency.

Conclusion and Recommendations
The aim of this study investigated the role of self-efficacy, and anxiety on Mandarin foreign language learners' course achievement at selected Malaysian public universities. The study found that both self-efficacy (β = 11.3, p<.001), as did anxiety (β = 5.5, p<.001) are predictors of Mandarin course achievement. The independent simple t test investigated the difference of self-efficacy and anxiety-based gender and Mandarin proficiency level. The result indicated that there is no statistically significant difference of self-efficacy and anxiety between female and male learners. One way ANOVA analysis investigated the statistically significant difference of self-efficacy and anxiety based on Mandarin proficiency level. The result revealed that   Mandarin level three learners have better self-efficacy compare to the level one and level two learners. However, study did not find the statistically   significant difference in among Mandarin foreign language learners for three language proficiency levels.

As we are all aware, foreign language learning is inherently stressful, language instructors should help learners to reduce anxiety and gain self-efficacy in foreign language learning. Foreign language instructors should make learners aware that anxiety is a common phenomenon in foreign language learning and learn to deal with anxiety. Foreign language

instructors should acknowledge students' anxious feelings by encouraging them to emphasize communicative effectiveness rather than formal accuracy. Instructors should provide a conducive and pleasant learning environment, plan the lessons from learners' perspectives, and plan classroom activities to embarrass or anxiety-provoking for learners. to help learners to reduce anxiety because a positive mood can boost learners' belief in their self-efficacy.

To help learners to improve their self-efficacy in learning Mandarin as a foreign language, Instructors should give learners positive feedback and communication, guide the learners throughout the task, and motivate them to gain self-confidence in completing the given task Instructors also should avoid setting too difficult tasks beyond the learners' capability especially at beginning level. Instructors also can use peer models who can complete tasks successfully to encourage and motivate learners. Avoid comparing learners' performance with each other.

In sum, this research contributes to knowledge in the field of MFL education by enhancing our understanding of how self-efficacy and anxiety influence MFL learners' achievement. The study focused on the learners who are learning Mandarin as a foreign language more in Pinyin, Chinese characters are not considered. Further study should investigate the learners with more on learning with Chinese Characters.

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