

## Success of Social Sciences Learning in Fourth Grade Elementary School Students in Buay Madang Timur Sub-district: Is There a Connection Between Self-efficacy and Self-directed Learning?

Baharudin <sup>1\*</sup>, Nur Asiyah <sup>1</sup>, Ida Fiteriani <sup>1</sup>, Abu Dharin <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, Indonesia

✉ [baharudin@radenintan.ac.id](mailto:baharudin@radenintan.ac.id)\*

### ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore and understand the potential relationship between self-efficacy and students' self-directed learning at the Elementary School level. The research design employed is quantitative associative research with a correlational design. A total of 80 students from three elementary schools were selected as research subjects using cluster sampling without specific divisions. Unlike previous studies that tend to discuss self-efficacy and independent learning in general terms, this study offers a specific approach focusing on the subject of Social Studies (IPS). Social Studies was chosen due to its significant role in developing students' understanding of history, geography, and the social and cultural dynamics that shape their identity. The results of the analysis using T-tests and correlation tests indicate a significant correlation, providing evidence of a tangible relationship between the levels of self-efficacy and self-directed learning among students in the subject of Social Sciences (IPS). The implications of this research go beyond understanding this relationship, offering potential contributions to educational practices. The findings can serve as a reference for educators and educational practitioners to better understand how to enhance students' self-efficacy and self-directed learning. Furthermore, this research provides a foundation for taking further actions to address issues related to self-efficacy and self-directed learning in the elementary education environment. Therefore, it is hoped that this research will provide substantial benefits for educational development, especially in enhancing the effectiveness of student learning at the Elementary School level in the subject of Social Sciences (IPS).

**Keywords:** *Elementary School, Self-Efficacy, Students' Self-Directed Learning*

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### INTRODUCTION

Primary education serves as the fundamental foundation in the educational journey, playing a crucial role in shaping the intellectual development and characteristics of students (Elihami, 2022; Hadi, 2019; Handayani et al., 2019; Nindya & Dafit, 2021; Wiryanto et al., 2023). During this phase, learning serves not only as a means of knowledge enhancement but also as a crucial stage in molding the attitudes, character, values, and self-directed learning abilities of students (R. R. Dewi et al., 2021; Kapoh et al., 2023; Marsakha et al., 2021; Suardin et al., 2023; Wachidi et al., 2020). Specifically, the fourth grade in Elementary School becomes a highly vital period in

shaping students' understanding of Social Sciences (IPS) (Wati & Suarni, 2020; Yenni Arnas et al., 2023). This involves a deep understanding of history, geography, as well as social elements that build insight and identity for students. The subject of Social Sciences (IPS) plays an irreplaceable central role, providing students with the opportunity to delve into various dimensions of social life, reflect on history, explore geography, and appreciate cultural richness (Haryanti et al., 2022; Yoga, 2020).

At the Elementary School (SD) level, the curriculum designs Social Sciences (IPS) as an integral part of the learning process (Anna Maria Oktaviani, Arita Marini, 2022; Nasution et al., 2023; Riadi et al., 2023). The goal is to shape an understanding that is not only holistic but also critical of the diversity and dynamics of the social environment faced by students. There is an increasing urgency to comprehend the psychological factors that contribute to the dynamics of learning, especially in the context of primary education, in line with the growing complexity of educational demands (Aditya et al., 2021; Jumriani et al., 2021; Yenni Arnas et al., 2023). Success in building a strong academic foundation is closely related to the development of students' self-confidence or self-efficacy (Basith et al., 2020; Safiyah & Widyastuti, 2022). Self-efficacy reflects the belief derived from their assessment of personal ability to succeed in academic tasks (Khabibah et al., 2019; Risa et al., 2022; Roebianto, 2020; Saepuloh et al., 2021).

In this situation, the self-efficacy of elementary school children can be considered a primary driver behind the intrinsic motivation they possess. When they believe they can overcome difficulties, they tend to have higher learning enthusiasm and are willing to face various challenges (El Hasbi et al., 2022; Ernawati et al., 2021). In other words, self-efficacy is not just about believing that they can understand lessons but also the confidence that they can overcome obstacles and enhance their learning skills (Azizah et al., 2022; Habib, 2021; Lianto, 2019; Maulidiyah & Rohman, 2022; Qomariah et al., 2022). Therefore, understanding and managing self-efficacy in elementary school children not only form the basis for academic achievement but also equip them with essential tools to face changes and challenges in the lifelong learning process (Windiyani et al., 2023).

If self-efficacy can be effectively instilled, children are likely to demonstrate strong enthusiasm for learning (Dantes et al., 2022; Flaurina et al., 2021; Miranda et al., 2020). They not only perceive challenges as mere obstacles but as opportunities to grow and develop positive attitudes toward learning (Asrial et al., 2023; Rohana, 2019; Suherman, 2022). In this situation, self-efficacy becomes a primary driver behind a vibrant learning spirit (Maulidiyah & Rohman, 2022). Children with high confidence in their abilities feel capable of overcoming difficulties, which, in turn, fosters a proactive attitude toward learning. They actively seek understanding, overcome obstacles, and engage constructively in the learning process (Aprilia et al., 2021; Rakhmawati & Mustadi, 2019). Self-efficacy has a close connection with self-directed learning, as an individual's belief in their ability to succeed influences attitudes and behaviors in the context of independent learning.

The development of self-efficacy and self-directed learning are two inseparable aspects in crafting a successful educational stage for students (Wijayati et al., 2022; Fitriyah et al., 2023). In an academic context, when someone has a high level of self-efficacy related to learning tasks, they tend to be more confident in facing challenges, more enthusiastic about overcoming obstacles, and more capable of sustaining intrinsic motivation (Masrun & Rusdinal, 2022; Triwiratman et al., 2023; Putri et al., 2024). This belief creates a psychological foundation that enables individuals to take initiative,

manage time, and develop effective learning strategies (Alfiana et al., 2022). Thus, self-efficacy becomes a crucial factor in shaping self-directed learning, providing a strong foundation of self-efficacy that encourages individuals to be active, engaged, and responsible for their own learning processes (Mirzawati et al., 2020; Palapa, 2023).

Learning independence is the ability of students to organize, manage, and take initiative in the learning process without relying entirely on the guidance of teachers (Amalia et al., 2022; Firdaus et al., 2021; Sari & Zamroni, 2019). Learning independence plays a crucial role in shaping students' development (Rizky & Astutik, 2021). In addition to students' ability to develop a deep understanding of learning objectives, learning independence helps them manage time efficiently and actively engage in the learning process (F. S. Dewi, 2022; Agung Purnomo & Ekantini, 2022). Elementary school children with good learning independence tend to be more proactive in seeking information sources and developing a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Learning independence is not only about practical aspects but also has a positive impact on the development of organizational skills in children (Titiek Murniati et al., 2022; Wahyuningsih et al., 2022).

The ability to plan, organize material, and maintain the continuity of learning helps create a structured and effective learning framework. Moreover, the role of learning independence is inseparable from shaping a positive mindset toward education (Dharmawati, 2021; Yao, 2021; Maryani et al., 2024). Children with good learning independence tend to view challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles (Durnali, 2020). They develop a strong and positive mental attitude toward the learning process, which can help them overcome difficulties with confidence (Chen et al., 2023). Thus, learning independence is not just a practical skill but a foundation for the personal and academic development of children. It shapes individuals who are proactive, responsible, and have a positive attitude toward knowledge (Nurkholis et al., 2018; Ramadhanty, 2023).

Through a series of conducted interviews, it has been revealed that there are interesting behavioral patterns that can be identified in social studies learning. Firstly, some students tend to overly rely on teacher instructions and show insufficient active initiative during the learning process. Secondly, it was found that there are students who are reluctant and lack confidence in expressing their own opinions. The third finding notes that some students often experience delays in submitting assignments while waiting for responses from others. Lastly, there are students who still exhibit a strong dependence on parents and overly rely on the internet as their primary source of information. These findings provide a significant impetus to enhance students' self-directedness and confidence in the context of social studies learning, creating a more dynamic and responsive environment to individual needs.

Based on the interview results, the researcher intends to conduct an in-depth study on the correlation between self-efficacy and self-directed learning in the context of Social Studies (IPS) learning at the Elementary School level. The interview findings indicate challenges faced by a number of students in developing self-directed learning, especially in terms of taking initiative, time management, and lack of confidence in expressing opinions. Meanwhile, previous research findings, such as those conducted by Nanda Mirzawati (2020), Nanda Mirzawati (2020), Elia Firda Mufidah (2021), Ewy Diryatika (2023), Juz Indrianti (2022), I Gede Jaya Putra Negara (2023), dan Yuyun Elizabeth Patras (2021) assert that there is a positive relationship between the level of self-efficacy and students' self-directed learning.

The research gap lies in the lack of studies that specifically link self-efficacy and learning independence within the context of Social Studies (IPS) learning at the elementary school level. Although various previous studies have shown a positive relationship between the two, there has been limited in-depth research on how factors such as initiative-taking, time management, and self-confidence in expressing opinions can affect students' learning independence in Social Studies.

The novelty of this research lies in its approach, which focuses more specifically on the context of IPS learning in elementary schools, a topic that has not been extensively researched before. It also seeks to explore factors that may not have been widely investigated in previous studies. In addition, this research aims to understand the role of self-efficacy in a more comprehensive manner, not only as a separate variable but also in relation to students' learning behavior in real learning situations.

This research is initiated with the belief that a deeper understanding of the correlation between self-efficacy and self-directed learning can provide valuable contributions to the development of more effective learning approaches at the Elementary School level. By elucidating this relationship, the study aims to identify factors influencing the development of self-directed learning and self-efficacy and formulate specific recommendations for their improvement. Additionally, the research is directed toward providing a comprehensive and contextual insight into how strengthening self-efficacy can support the development of students' self-directed learning, particularly in the realm of Social Studies learning. Through this research, it is expected to make a significant contribution to our understanding of the factors influencing self-directed learning and self-efficacy at the Elementary School level.

## **METHOD**

The research design employed in this study is a quantitative associative research with a correlational research design. Quantitative associative research aims to determine the relationship between two or more variables. This study is of an associative nature; hence, a correlational research design is utilized. Correlation design is a quantitative research procedure used to measure the relationship between two or more variables through statistical correlation analysis procedures (Creswell, 2016). The sampling technique employed is cluster sampling. Cluster sampling is a data collection technique that randomly selects several groups from the population, then takes some or all elements from each selected group to form the sample (Campbell et al., 2020). The research subjects include the total sample of 80 students distributed across three elementary schools, taken as a whole without specific divisions.

Regarding the strength of the study, this can be seen from the sample size used, which consists of 80 students. With this sample size, it is expected that the study will have sufficient power to identify a significant relationship between the self-efficacy and learning independence variables. A sufficiently large sample size helps improve the reliability of the research findings and the ability to generalize the results to a broader population. This statistical analysis section will include further details on the statistical methods used and how the data will be analyzed.

In this research, the instrument employed is a questionnaire. According to Eko Putro Widoyoko (2022), the Likert scale is a commonly used psychometric scale in questionnaires, where the respondents' assessment is determined based on their level of agreement with the questions. The alternatives used by the researcher for positive statements are strongly agree (SS) with 4 points, agree (S) with 3 points, disagree (TS) with 2 points, and strongly disagree (STS) with 1 point. For negative statements,

namely strongly agree (SS) with 1 point, agree (S) with 2 points, disagree (TS) with 3 points, and strongly disagree (STS) with 4 points. In this study, to test quantitative data in the form of a questionnaire, several tests are conducted. The prerequisite tests carried out in this research include the normality test, linearity test, and heteroskedasticity test. After the prerequisite tests, hypothesis tests can be conducted, namely the T-test and correlation test. The correlation test is used to determine the relationship between the self-efficacy variable and self-directed learning.

The indicators of the self-efficacy variable in this study include several key aspects. These are the belief in the ability to complete specific tasks, the confidence to self-motivate, the belief in the ability to make persistent efforts, the confidence to endure challenges, and the ability to solve problems effectively. On the other hand, the indicators of the self-directed learning variable focus on traits such as independence and responsibility, the ability to take initiative or demonstrate creativity, being progressive and persistent in pursuing goals, and having strong self-assurance in learning activities.

In quantitative data analysis, several tests are conducted to ensure that the data used is appropriate and valid. The prerequisite tests include normality testing (to check if the data follows a normal distribution), linearity testing (to ensure the relationship between variables is linear), and heteroscedasticity testing (to check if the variance of the data is consistent). After the prerequisite tests, hypothesis testing is carried out using T-tests and correlation tests. The correlation test is used to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and learning independence variables. The data collection method must be accompanied by an instrument grid to ensure that the instruments used are clear and aligned with the research objectives. Further explanation of the data analysis will be provided based on the type of data obtained and the steps taken in the analysis.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Data Results

Based on the data analysis obtained from elementary school students with the variables under investigation, namely self-efficacy and self-directed learning, the interpretation of the results is as follows:

#### a. Prerequisite Tests

##### 1) Normality Test

Normality test is a useful test to determine whether the collected data is normally distributed or not. The data is considered normally distributed if the significance value is  $> 0.05$ . The description of the test results for self-efficacy on elementary school students' self-directed learning is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of the normality test results for self-efficacy on elementary school students' self-directed learning.

Tests of Normality							
Hasil	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
	Group A	.078	80	.200*	.972	80	.081
	Group A	.087	80	.200*	.972	80	.072

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on the results in the table above, the Sig. values obtained are 0.081 and 0.072, respectively, leading to the conclusion that the data is normally distributed. The normality test is obtained from the Shapiro-Wilk test, with a significance value greater than 0.05.

## 2) Linearity Test

The Linearity Test is a test used to determine the form of the relationship between independent or dependent variables. The data is considered related if the Sig. value  $> 0.05$ . The description of the linearity test results of self-efficacy on the self-directed learning of elementary school students is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Description of the Linearity Test results of self-efficacy on the self-directed learning of elementary school students.

Tabel 2 : ANOVA

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squer	F	Sig.
Kemandirian Belajar*SelfEfficacy	Between Groups	(Combined)	514.222	17	30.248	1.343	.197
		Linearity	.444	1	.144	.006	.936
		Deviation from Linearity	514.078	16	32.130	1.427	.159
Within Groups			1395.978	62	22.516		
Total			1910.200	79			

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the linearity test of the variables above shows a linear relationship between self-efficacy and the self-directed learning of elementary school students. The Sig. value is 0.159, which is greater than 0.05.

## 3) Homogeneity Test

Homogeneity test is used to determine whether the variances of the data distribution are equal (homogeneous) or not equal (non-homogeneous). The data is considered homogeneous if the Sig. value is  $> 0.05$ .

Table 3. Description of the results of the Homogeneity test of self-efficacy on the self-directed learning of elementary school students.

Test of Homogeneity of Variance

Hasil			
Levene Statistic	Df1	Df2	Sig.
.82	1	150	.774

The description of the Homogeneity test results of self-efficacy on the self-directed learning of elementary school students. Based on the table, the homogeneity test results show a significance value  $> 0.05$ , indicating that the data on self-efficacy toward self-directed learning of elementary school students is homogeneous. It is confirmed that the result of the two-tailed significance value is 0.774, which is greater than 0.05.



#### 4) Hypothesis Test

In this hypothesis test, the tests conducted are the T-test and correlation test. The T-test aims to determine whether the independent variable has an influence on the dependent variable, while the correlation test aims to determine the relationship between the two variables. The description of the T-test results for self-efficacy on the self-directed learning of elementary school students is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. T-test for self-efficacy on the self-directed learning of elementary school students.

			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
			F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference	95% Interval Difference	Confidence of the Upper
Hasil	Equal assumed	variances	.082		-2.976	158	.003	-2.30000	.77276	-3.82626	-.77374
	Equal assumed	variances not		.774	-2.976	157.976	.003	-2.30000	.77276	-3.82627	-.77373

Based on Table 4, the results of the t-test using SPSS show that the t-value is Sig. 0.003, which means that the Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.003 < 0.05. This indicates a difference between self-efficacy and the self-directed learning of elementary school students. The description of the correlation test results between self-efficacy and self-directed learning of elementary school students is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Correlation test between self-efficacy and self-directed learning of elementary school students.

		SelfEfficacy	Kemandirian Belajar
Selfefficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	-.223
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.047
	N	80	80
KemandirianBelajar	Pearson Correlation	-.223	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	
	N	80	80

\*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Based on the correlation test results using SPSS, it is found that the Sig. (2-tailed) value between media exposure and motivation of Islamic Religious Education students is 0.047 < 0.050, which means there is a significant correlation between self-efficacy and self-directed learning of elementary school students

## DISCUSSION

The relationship between self-efficacy and students' self-directed learning in Elementary School's Social Studies (IPS) subject proves to be robust, where students' self-confidence plays a crucial role in their ability to learn independently. High self-efficacy levels provide students with the belief that they can successfully handle IPS tasks, especially in understanding complex concepts. In IPS learning, which focuses on understanding society, culture, and social interactions, self-efficacy establishes a

strong psychological foundation. Students who are confident in their abilities are more motivated to explore various IPS topics, develop curiosity about social dynamics, and actively engage in learning.

The combination of self-efficacy and self-directed learning enables students to take initiative in determining effective learning methods, manage time wisely, and overcome challenges in IPS learning. Self-directed learning in the context of IPS also reinforces the practical aspects of self-efficacy, helping students develop analytical skills, problem-solving abilities, and decision-making skills needed to understand social and cultural realities. With these abilities, students can effectively explore information sources, design learning approaches according to their preferences, and critically evaluate various perspectives in the IPS context. Additionally, self-directed learning provides opportunities for students to enhance critical skills such as logical reasoning, information synthesis, and critical evaluation.

Through the development of self-efficacy and self-directed learning in IPS subjects, elementary school students not only cultivate solid academic skills but also shape critical thinking patterns and attitudes towards social issues. This positive relationship provides a crucial foundation for students' development into individuals ready to face complex challenges in the global community. Therefore, attention to the development of self-efficacy and self-directed learning in IPS subjects is highly relevant for preparing a generation with excellence in thinking and acting in this increasingly dynamic era. These efforts not only contribute to students' academic well-being but also shape characters capable of competing and adapting in an ever-changing environment.

The main finding of this study shows a significant relationship between self-efficacy and students' self-directed learning in Social Studies (IPS) at the elementary school level. This finding differs from previous studies, which tend to be more general and not focused on the context of IPS learning at the elementary level. Most previous studies, such as those conducted by [Ewy Diryatika \(2023\)](#), [Novita Khoirunnisa \(2024\)](#), dan [Estur Septinityas \(2022\)](#), more emphasizes the relationship between self-efficacy and self-directed learning at higher education levels, such as in secondary schools or universities. The research conducted by [Adhiyati \(2024\)](#), [Karmila \(2020\)](#), [Diryatika \(2023\)](#), [Nanda Mirzawati \(2020\)](#), [Nanda Mirzawati \(2020\)](#), [Elia Firda Mufidah \(2021\)](#), [Juz Indrianti \(2022\)](#), [I Gede Jaya Putra Negara \(2023\)](#), dan [Yuyun Elizabeth Patras \(2021\)](#) although these studies discuss the relationship, they have not specifically focused on Social Studies (IPS) subjects for elementary school students. Moreover, previous research often used general instruments to measure self-efficacy, while this study employs a more contextual approach tailored to the Social Studies learning situation in elementary schools. This study also differs because it measures the role of self-efficacy in enhancing self-directed learning at a younger age, offering a new perspective in elementary education that has not been extensively explored before.

The implications of this study are highly significant for the development of more effective teaching methods in elementary schools, particularly in the context of Social Studies (IPS). The findings suggest that enhancing students' self-efficacy can strengthen their self-directed learning, which, in turn, increases their active engagement in the learning process. Educators can, therefore, design learning strategies that better support the development of students' self-efficacy, such as providing opportunities for independent task management and offering constructive positive feedback. Implementing programs focused on boosting students' self-



confidence can help them overcome academic and social challenges in IPS learning. Additionally, this study enriches the understanding of how character education, such as confidence and initiative, can shape students' attitudes and skills needed to face global challenges in the future.

While this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between self-efficacy and self-directed learning in IPS, several limitations should be considered. One limitation is the use of a sample limited to 80 students from three elementary schools, which may not fully represent a larger population. Furthermore, although the instrument used was adapted to the research context, the measurement of self-efficacy using a Likert scale may have limitations in capturing the more complex and subjective dimensions of self-efficacy. Another limitation is the quantitative approach employed in the research, which does not allow for in-depth exploration of contextual or individual factors that could influence the relationship between the two variables. Therefore, further research using a qualitative approach or a larger, more diverse sample could provide a more comprehensive understanding of this topic.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this research, it was found that the positive relationship between self-efficacy and students' self-directed learning in Elementary School's Social Studies (IPS) significantly influences students' ability to learn independently. High levels of self-confidence play a crucial role in enhancing students' self-directed learning, particularly in understanding and mastering IPS concepts. Moreover, when students have a good combination of confidence and self-directed learning, they tend to be more proactive in determining effective learning methods, managing time wisely, and overcoming various challenges in IPS learning.

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## **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT**

The Author Contributions: BHR, Led the design and execution of the study, developed research questions and hypotheses, oversaw data collection and analysis, and wrote and revised the final manuscript, AD, Conducted the literature review and theoretical framework, assisted with data analysis and interpretation, and provided insights on the implications of the findings, IF, Managed data collection logistics, administered surveys and interviews, and contributed to data entry and preliminary analysis., FI, Performed statistical analysis of the data, interpreted the results, and assisted in preparing tables and figures for the manuscript.

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