

## DEVELOPMENTS IN SELF-EFFICACY AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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### Abstract

*Self-efficacy, or an individual's belief in their ability to accomplish tasks, plays a crucial role in academic success, particularly at the primary education level. This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology to analyze empirical studies from the past five years (2019-2024) focusing on the impact of self-efficacy on primary school students. Literature searches were conducted across three major databases: Google Scholar, SINTA, and Scopus, yielding 213 articles, which were subsequently screened to obtain 10 articles meeting the inclusion criteria. The analysis process involved three-stage thematic coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, followed by validation through researcher triangulation and member checking. This study explored the impacts of high and low self-efficacy on students' academic performance and identified factors influencing self-efficacy formation, such as family support, teaching quality, school environment, and social interactions. The findings revealed that high self-efficacy positively correlates with better academic achievement, active learning engagement, and resilience in facing academic challenges, while low self-efficacy negatively impacts students' participation in academic activities and learning motivation. The analysis also uncovered the critical role of success experiences, social support, and learning environment quality in shaping students' self-efficacy. Based on these findings, further research is recommended to design more effective interventions for enhancing self-efficacy through social reinforcement and positive academic experiences, supporting students' long-term development across various life aspects.*

**Keywords:** *Self-Efficacy; Primary School; Academic Performance; Education.*

### Abstrak

Self-efficacy, atau keyakinan individu terhadap kemampuan diri dalam menyelesaikan tugas, berperan penting dalam kesuksesan akademik, terutama pada jenjang pendidikan dasar. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode Systematic Literature Review (SLR) untuk menganalisis studi-studi empiris selama lima tahun terakhir (2019-2024) yang berfokus pada pengaruh self-efficacy terhadap peserta didik di Sekolah Dasar (SD). Pencarian literatur dilakukan pada tiga database utama: Google Scholar, SINTA, dan Scopus, menghasilkan 213 artikel yang kemudian melalui proses screening hingga tersisa 10 artikel yang memenuhi kriteria inklusi. Proses analisis melibatkan coding tematik tiga tahap: open coding, axial coding, dan selective coding, dilanjutkan dengan validasi melalui triangulasi peneliti dan member checking. Studi ini mengeksplorasi dampak self-efficacy tinggi dan rendah terhadap performa akademik peserta didik, serta mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pembentukan self-efficacy, seperti dukungan keluarga, kualitas pengajaran, lingkungan sekolah, dan interaksi sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa self-efficacy tinggi berkorelasi positif dengan pencapaian akademik yang lebih baik, keterlibatan aktif dalam pembelajaran, dan ketahanan menghadapi tantangan akademik, sementara self-efficacy rendah berdampak negatif terhadap partisipasi peserta didik dalam kegiatan akademik dan motivasi belajar. Analisis juga mengungkapkan peran kritis pengalaman keberhasilan, dukungan sosial, dan kualitas lingkungan pembelajaran dalam membentuk self-efficacy peserta didik. Berdasarkan temuan ini, penelitian lebih lanjut disarankan untuk merancang intervensi yang lebih efektif dalam meningkatkan self-efficacy melalui penguatan sosial dan pengalaman akademik positif, guna mendukung perkembangan jangka panjang peserta didik di berbagai aspek kehidupan.

**Kata Kunci:** Self-Efficacy, Sekolah Dasar, Efikasi Diri, Pendidikan.

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## Introduction

An individual's ability to value themselves and develop self-confidence is crucial. This self-confidence can also be referred to as self-efficacy (Wray et al., 2022). Self-efficacy represents an individual's capacity to utilize self-confidence in navigating life (Kurniawati, 2016; Oktariato et al., 2024). Alternatively, self-efficacy can be defined as one's belief in acting based on their possessed skills (Zagoto, 2019). Individuals with high self-efficacy believe in their capability to perform tasks as complete human beings and solve encountered problems. Thus, self-efficacy serves as a foundation for organizing, completing tasks, achieving goals, producing outcomes, and taking action. Those who can confidently control the results of their efforts demonstrate self-efficacy.

Mastery of self-efficacy becomes paramount in living life as a social being, including self-efficacy capabilities in education. Education plays a vital role in developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Budiman, 2006). Through education, humans learn and are shaped to maximize their potential. Achieving this potential requires conviction and confidence in one's abilities. Therefore, self-efficacy holds particular urgency for academic practitioners (Margareta & Wahyudin, 2019). These academic practitioners are not limited by educational level. The formation of self-efficacy can begin from the most basic educational level: Primary School. Primary school is a basic education institution conducted over six years, aiming to equip students with fundamental knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Education serves as a crucial foundation in producing competent individuals ready to face contemporary challenges. Quality individuals must also possess high self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, as an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in specific tasks or achieve certain goals, becomes a primary determinant in one's behavior and motivation. Strong self-belief will encourage individuals to be more persistent in facing challenges, take initiative, and achieve success (Samin, 2020). There are three aspects of self-efficacy: 1) academic self-efficacy, related to students' belief in their ability to perform tasks, manage learning activities, and live up to their own and others' academic expectations; 2) social self-efficacy, connected to the belief in one's ability to form and maintain relationships, be assertive, and engage in leisure activities; and 3) self-regulatory efficacy, which relates to the ability to resist peer pressure (Baron & Bryne, 2017).

Self-efficacy represents an individual's ability to employ self-confidence in living life (Widyawati & Hanifah, 2020). In other words, self-efficacy is one's belief in acting based on possessed skills. Individuals with high self-efficacy believe in their ability to perform tasks as complete human beings and resolve encountered problems. Self-efficacy operates through cognitive, motivational, affective, and selective mechanisms that collectively influence individual behavior and achievement. Self-efficacy also has several factors: 1) behavioral choice is a crucial factor in forming students' self-efficacy as it is based on the reality that students' success in performing certain tasks or skills can increase self-efficacy, while repeated failures can reduce it; 2) effort magnitude and persistence represent strong beliefs about the effectiveness of students' abilities that will determine efforts to overcome difficult situations; 3) thought patterns and emotional reactions, where students with high efficacy tend to attribute failure to insufficient effort, while those with low efficacy consider failure to stem from their lack of ability.

## Research Methods

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology. The SLR approach aims to identify, evaluate, and synthesize evidence from previous research, providing a comprehensive overview of the topic under discussion. Data collection was conducted through articles and other accredited and credible sources. SLR is specifically designed to synthesize relevant previous research findings to gather evidence with strong validity.

In this study, the SLR process began with determining specific research topics. Literature searches were conducted across three main databases: Google Scholar, SINTA, and Scopus, using keywords: "Self-Efficacy," "Elementary School," and their variations. The initial search yielded 245 articles, which then underwent screening based on inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The data selection and analysis in this study were conducted in stages to ensure that only relevant and quality articles were included. The process began with an initial identification phase, where 213 articles were collected from various sources. Initial screening based on titles and abstracts narrowed this down to 90 articles more closely aligned with the research topic. From this number, researchers conducted a more in-depth assessment of each article through full-text reading, ultimately resulting in 10 articles that met all selection criteria.

For data analysis, a coding process and thematic synthesis were conducted in several steps. In the first stage, open coding, researchers identified the main themes from each article. Next, during axial coding, related themes were grouped together. Finally, in the selective coding stage, these themes were integrated into several main categories that provided a broader framework of understanding.

The results of this coding process were analyzed using a synthesis matrix, which included basic information about the articles, such as authors, publication year, and country of origin. This matrix also recorded the research methods used, research samples, main findings, and implications of each finding. This structure helped organize comprehensive and structured information, allowing the research results to be understood more clearly and deeply.

**Table 1.** Synthesis Matrix of Review Results: A systematic analysis of self-efficacy research in elementary education (2019-2024)

No	Penulis & Tahun	Negara	Metode	Sampel	Temuan Utama	Implikasi
1	Tannert & Gröschner (2021)	Germany	Quantitative	279 students from 20 classes in 2 elementary schools	Students' enjoyment during COVID-19 crisis was relatively low, while anxiety was high. Self-efficacy correlated with family and school support, and teacher-student relationships	Important to build positive relationships and communication between students and teachers during distance learning
2	Ma et al. (2021)	China	Mixed method	63 5th grade students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem-solving approach significantly improved students' computational thinking skills</li> <li>• Enhanced students' self-efficacy in computational thinking</li> </ul>	Integrating problem-solving approaches into computational thinking instruction

3	Fischer et al. (2021)	Germany	Systematic review	36 publications from 33 studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective in improving CT skills for both male and female students</li> <li>• Teachers generally feel confident in handling bullying</li> <li>• Teachers with high self-efficacy tend to intervene more frequently</li> <li>• Lack of clear relationship between teacher self-efficacy and intervention strategies</li> </ul>	Need to enhance teacher self-efficacy in handling bullying through pre-service and in-service training
4	Muhonen et al. (2021)	Finland	Quantitative	24 first-grade teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers with low self-efficacy rarely engaged in educational dialogue</li> <li>• Teachers with high self-efficacy used high-quality student-initiated dialogue</li> <li>• Self-efficacy influences teacher-student dialogue quality</li> </ul>	High-quality dialogue is crucial for learning; need to improve teacher self-efficacy in facilitating dialogue
5	Wang et al. (2023)	China	Quantitative	400 elementary students aged 10-11	Mathematics self-efficacy mediates the relationship between parenting style and mathematics anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents need to create warm and supportive environments</li> <li>• Need to enhance students' mathematics self-efficacy</li> </ul>
6	Harpaz Grinshtain (2019)	& Israel	Quantitative	192 parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative teacher-parent relationships positively correlate with autonomous help-seeking</li> <li>• High parental self-efficacy correlates with autonomous help-seeking</li> </ul>	Importance of building collaborative teacher-parent relationships and enhancing parental self-efficacy
7	Bagci et al. (2020)	England	Mixed method	Study 1: 101	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-ethnic friendship self-</li> </ul>	Important to build self-efficacy in

					students Study 2: 262 students	efficacy predicted by prior contact, indirect contact, and intergroup anxiety	forming cross-ethnic friendships and parental role modeling
8	Peura et al. (2021)	Finland	Quantitative	1,327 elementary students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Parents' cross-ethnic friendship quality predicts children's cross-ethnic friendship quality</li><li>Self-efficacy tends to increase over time</li><li>Relationship exists between self-efficacy sources and its developmental patterns</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Need for monitoring changes in student self-efficacy</li><li>Differentiated learning can support self-efficacy</li></ul>	
9	Bellemans & Devos (2021)	Belgium	Qualitative	23 elementary school principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Success experiences are the most important source of self-efficacy</li><li>Emotional warmth and social persuasion are important for self-efficacy</li></ul>	Importance of acknowledging small successes	
10	Bubić, Tošić, & Mišetić (2021)	Croatia	Quantitative	301 elementary school students and their parents (60 fathers, 241 mothers)	Parental self-efficacy influences children's academic achievement (GPA), perceived academic control, and avoidance goals. Students' perceptions of parental involvement affect perceived academic control and mastery goal approach	Parents need to support children's self-efficacy and actively engage in school activities to improve learning outcomes	

To ensure analysis quality, this study adopted several steps to guarantee validity and reliability. First, researcher triangulation was conducted. This step helped minimize bias and strengthen the consistency of results. Second, a member checking method was implemented, which involved validating the analysis results by an expert in educational psychology. This step aimed to ensure that data interpretation aligned with in-depth understanding and knowledge in the field. Finally, an audit trail was conducted, comprising complete documentation of all decision-making processes during article selection and analysis. This documentation included notes of every step taken, facilitating traceability when needed and enhancing research process transparency.

This study has several methodological limitations. First, the research focused only on publications in English and Indonesian. Consequently, important findings in other languages

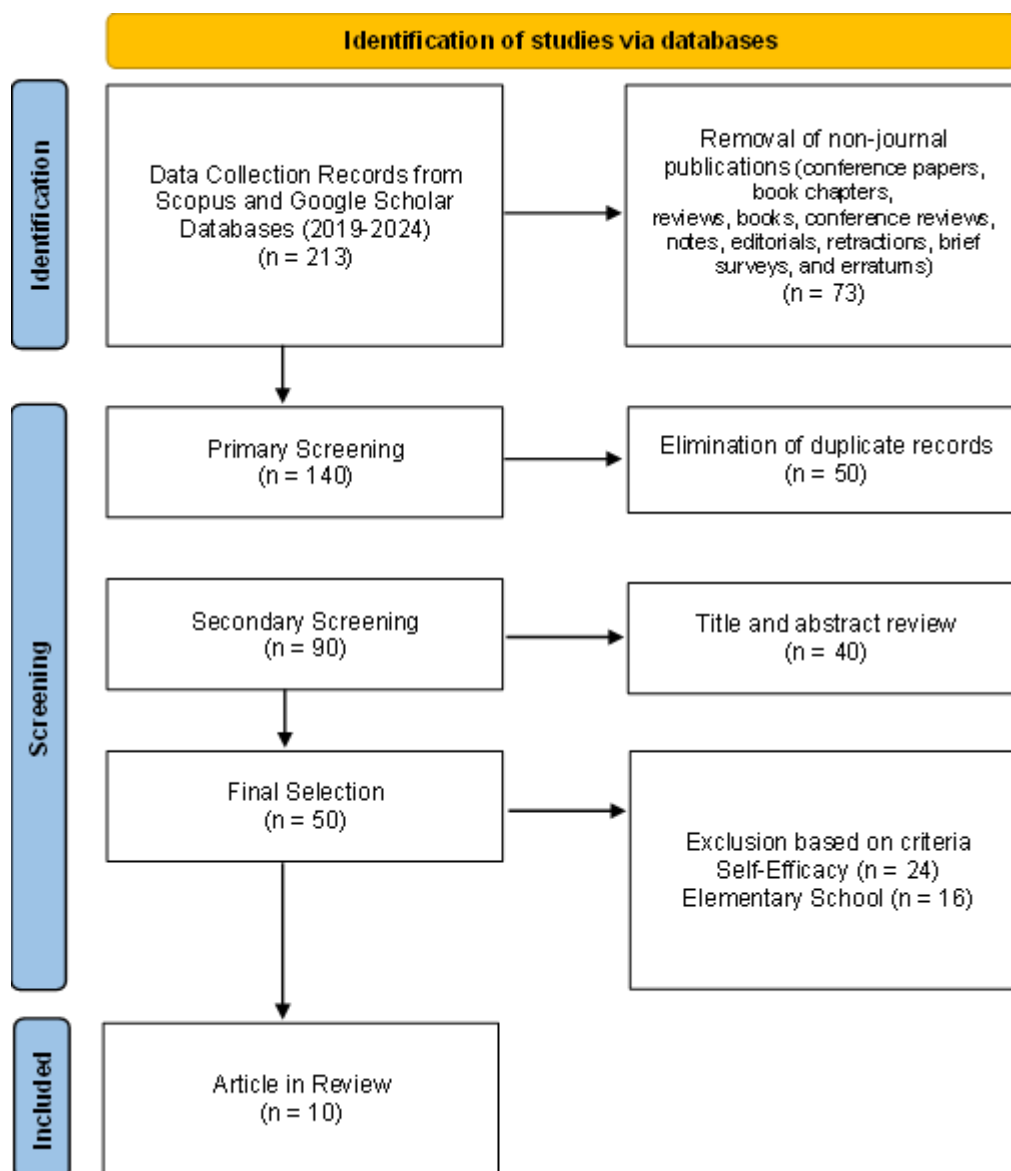
may not have been accommodated. Second, the research was limited to the period from 2019 to 2024. This limitation might have excluded relevant earlier studies. Additionally, limited access to several paid databases also posed a barrier, as not all information sources could be accessed to enrich the analysis.

Nevertheless, the coding process and thematic analysis yielded two important main themes. The first theme concerns how self-efficacy or one's self-belief influences academic achievement. The second theme highlights various factors that can influence self-efficacy. Both themes provide a deeper understanding of self-efficacy's role in education and various aspects that might strengthen or weaken it. The PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1) shows the systematic article selection process, with a total of 10 articles meeting all inclusion criteria and being analyzed in this review.

## Results and Discussion

The chosen topic focused on improving student self-efficacy through achievement goals. The keywords used included: "Self-Efficacy" and "Elementary School." These keywords were used to search articles in authoritative databases such as Google Scholar, SINTA, and Scopus, which collectively index research systematically.

Furthermore, we established inclusion and exclusion criteria in this review as follows: (1) journals must discuss self-efficacy, (2) research subjects are elementary school students, (3) research is quantitative or qualitative, (4) articles are written in English and Indonesian, and (5) research was conducted between 2019 and 2023. Journals that did not meet the criteria included: (1) journals discussing self-efficacy outside the educational context, (2) articles not written in English and Indonesian, and (3) articles in the form of reviews, reports, books, literature reviews, or research with unclear methodology. The research workflow using the PRISMA diagram can be seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** PRISMA Flow Diagram: Article selection and screening process for systematic literature review on self-efficacy in elementary education

#### *Analysis of Self-Efficacy Impact on Academic Achievement*

Various studies have shown that self-efficacy is a key factor in determining students' ability to face academic challenges. High self-efficacy enables students to develop more effective strategies in completing complex tasks, while low self-efficacy tends to limit their participation in activities perceived as difficult (Rakhmawati & Mustadi, 2019). In other words, differences in students' self-efficacy levels can significantly contribute to academic success or failure.

In students with high self-efficacy, strong self-belief not only influences how they view challenges but also encourages them to participate more actively in the learning process (Muhonen et al., 2021). These students tend to have higher confidence in facing various academic situations, including complex tasks. They are more likely to try new strategies, persist longer in problem-solving, and ultimately achieve better results (Ma et al., 2021; Tannert & Gröschner, 2021). Empirical studies over the past five years indicate that high self-efficacy positively correlates with better academic achievement, particularly at the elementary education level.

Conversely, students with low self-efficacy tend to doubt their ability to complete difficult tasks. This lack of confidence often causes them to avoid activities perceived as difficult, thus missing opportunities for development (Tłuściak-Deliowska, 2022). Studies show that students with low self-efficacy are more likely to give up when facing academic challenges and more likely to seek easier but less effective alternative ways to complete tasks (Peura et al., 2019). This can negatively impact their academic development, reinforcing a cycle of failure that further inhibits their self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy not only influences academic achievement but also affects student behavior in educational contexts. Students with low self-efficacy often avoid academic challenges and are more vulnerable to negative behaviors such as cheating or task avoidance (Bellemans & Devos, 2023; Su et al., 2021). Conversely, students with high self-efficacy take more responsibility for their learning, persevere despite failure, and tend to be more persistent in achieving their academic goals. Research from the last five years reveals that increasing student self-efficacy can play an important role in reducing dishonest behavior and increasing their intrinsic motivation to learn.

To support students with low self-efficacy, various approaches have been tested in empirical studies. Approaches such as positive reinforcement, constructive feedback provision, and providing small success experiences have proven effective in improving student self-efficacy (Bubić et al., 2020; Bürgermeister et al., 2021). Teachers can play an important role in shaping a supportive learning environment where students are encouraged to try new things and accept failure as part of the learning process. Efforts to increase student self-efficacy not only help them in learning but also have long-term impacts on their academic achievement and self-development (Smit et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023).

Finally, self-efficacy also influences students' ability to adapt to changes and challenges outside the school environment. Students with high self-efficacy are not only better prepared to face the academic world but are also more capable of adapting to broader career and life challenges. In this context, self-efficacy serves as a strong foundation for career development and personal success, giving students confidence that they can achieve their long-term goals through effort and hard work. Thus, it is important for educators to continue encouraging increased self-efficacy in students, as its impact extends beyond the classroom and provides positive influences in their overall lives.

#### *Identification of Factors Influencing Self-Efficacy*

Research on self-efficacy, particularly among elementary school students, has evolved significantly over the past five years (2019-2024). Self-efficacy, defined as individuals' beliefs in their ability to organize and execute actions necessary to achieve goals, has become a primary focus in educational psychology. In the context of elementary education, self-efficacy influences how students learn, interact with the school environment, and participate in academic processes (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, it is crucial to understand the factors that influence self-efficacy, both in low and high conditions, among elementary school students.

Empirical research between 2019-2024 shows that factors such as parental support, teaching quality, school environment, and social interactions with peers play crucial roles in shaping elementary school students' self-efficacy (Bagci et al., 2020; Fischer et al., 2021; Muhonen et al., 2021). Emotional support from parents, for instance, can strengthen students' beliefs that they can complete school tasks, while a positive learning environment and supportive teachers can boost their confidence. Conversely, lack of support or uncertainty in the



learning environment can lead to decreased student self-efficacy (Harpaz & Grinshtain, 2020; Yang et al., 2021).

Another significant factor is the experience of success and failure in academics. Students who consistently experience success in academic tasks tend to have high self-efficacy (Oktariato et al., 2024). Conversely, repeated failures can lower students' confidence in their abilities, especially if these failures are not balanced with adequate support from teachers or parents (Gebauer et al., 2020; Harpaz & Grinshtain, 2020). Even small successes can strengthen students' self-efficacy, while failures without proper learning mechanisms can make students reluctant to try again.

The influence of social interaction cannot be ignored. Peers who provide encouragement and support can help increase student self-efficacy, particularly in facing academic challenges (Bagci et al., 2020; Oktay et al., 2021). Conversely, social pressure or feelings of isolation can decrease student motivation and make them feel incapable. In some cases, bullying or conflicts with peers can be significant factors causing decreased self-efficacy in elementary school students (Fischer et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2023).

This research also found that self-efficacy levels can be influenced by students' perceptions of their problem-solving and critical thinking abilities. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to overcome academic challenges and demonstrate better performance compared to students with low self-efficacy (Muhonen et al., 2021). Those who believe they can master subject matter and succeed in school tasks tend to be more motivated, more active in learning, and more resilient to failure.

Overall, research over the past five years shows that self-efficacy in elementary school students is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. Factors such as family support, academic experience, social interaction, and school environment all play roles in shaping students' self-efficacy levels. A deeper understanding of these factors can help teachers, parents, and education policymakers design more effective strategies for improving student self-efficacy, which ultimately can enhance their academic performance.

#### *Research Limitations*

In conducting this research, we acknowledge several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. The main limitation lies in the article selection that only included publications in Indonesian and English, meaning potentially important findings in other languages may not be included in this analysis. The research timeframe limited to the last five years (2019-2024) also restricts our understanding of long-term self-efficacy development. Additionally, limited access to several paid databases may have resulted in some relevant articles being excluded from the analysis. The methodological variations between studies also made direct comparisons challenging, especially since most research focused on urban contexts and underrepresented rural areas. Differences in education systems and cultural contexts between countries also affect how self-efficacy is interpreted and applied in different educational settings. The diverse socio-economic conditions across research areas also present unique challenges in generalizing findings.

#### *Research Implications*

The findings of this study provide important implications, both theoretical and practical, for developing self-efficacy in elementary school students. Theoretically, this research enriches our understanding of how self-efficacy develops and functions in the context of elementary education. Our findings contribute to the development of a more comprehensive theoretical model about the relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement, as well as the

factors influencing it. This research also strengthens the theoretical foundation for designing effective educational interventions.

Practically, these research findings can serve as guidelines for teachers and education practitioners in developing self-efficacy enhancement programs suitable for local contexts. Educators can use these findings to create learning environments that support the development of student self-efficacy, including designing learning activities that provide successful experiences and positive reinforcement. For policymakers, this research provides empirical grounds for developing educational policies that consider the psychological aspects of learning, particularly in the context of developing self-efficacy among elementary school students.

## Conclusion

Based on systematic analysis of recent research on self-efficacy at the elementary school level, it can be concluded that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in students' academic success. Research results consistently show that students with high self-efficacy demonstrate better academic achievement, stronger learning motivation, and greater resilience in facing academic challenges. Conversely, low self-efficacy is associated with decreased participation in learning and reduced learning motivation. Factors such as family support, teaching quality, school environment, and social interactions are proven to have significant influence in forming student self-efficacy.

For future research, longitudinal studies are needed to track the development of elementary school students' self-efficacy over the long term, as well as the development and evaluation of effective intervention programs. Special attention needs to be given to the role of technology in developing self-efficacy, considering the increasing importance of digital learning in the modern era. By understanding the complexity of self-efficacy and its influencing factors, educators and policymakers can design more targeted interventions to support the academic and psychological development of elementary school students.

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