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STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY IN SOCIAL STUDIES LEARNING AT MTSS DARUL MAKMUR SUNGAI CUBADAK

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Abstrak

Efikasi diri siswa berperan penting dalam pembelajaran IPS karena siswa perlu memobilisasi persepsi atas kemampuannya untuk menginterpretasikan fenomena sosial, merumuskan respons beralasan, dan mempertahankan keterlibatan ketika menghadapi ketidakpastian kognitif maupun sosial. Namun, penelitian terdahulu lebih banyak mengoperasionalkan efikasi diri melalui pendekatan berbasis pengukuran sehingga belum memadai dalam menjelaskan bagaimana keyakinan efikasi diwujudkan dalam praktik pembelajaran yang situasional, khususnya pada konteks pendidikan madrasah. Penelitian ini menganalisis manifestasi efikasi diri siswa kelas VII dalam pembelajaran IPS di MTsS Darul Makmur Sungai Cubadak. Dengan desain deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian melibatkan 23 siswa, guru IPS, dan kepala madrasah. Data observasi kelas, wawancara semiterstruktur, dan dokumentasi dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa efikasi diri beroperasi sebagai penilaian kemampuan yang dinamis dan spesifik terhadap tugas, yang diwujudkan melalui inisiasi tugas, partisipasi, persistensi, respons terhadap kesalahan, dan keterlibatan kembali. Manifestasi tersebut dibentuk oleh pengalaman keberhasilan, pemodelan teman sebaya, umpan balik guru, dan keadaan afektif. Studi ini memperluas pemahaman situasional tentang efikasi diri dan menegaskan otonomi progresif sebagai kondisi pedagogis untuk mempertahankan keterlibatan siswa dalam tugas IPS yang menantang.

Kata Kunci: Efikasi diri siswa; pembelajaran IPS; keterlibatan kelas; pendidikan madrasah

Abstract

Student self-efficacy is consequential for Social Studies learning because students must mobilize perceived capabilities to interpret social phenomena, formulate reasoned responses, and persist amid cognitive and social uncertainty. However, existing research has largely operationalized self-efficacy through measurement-oriented approaches, offering limited insight into how efficacy beliefs are enacted in situated classroom practices, particularly within madrasah education. This study examines how student self-efficacy is manifested in Grade VII Social Studies learning at MTsS Darul Makmur Sungai Cubadak. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, the study involved 23 students, a Social Studies teacher, and the madrasah principal. Data from classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. Findings demonstrate that self-efficacy operates as a dynamic, task-specific judgment manifested through task initiation, participation, persistence, responses to error, and re-engagement. These manifestations are informed by mastery experiences, peer modeling, teacher feedback, and affective states. The study advances a situated understanding of self-efficacy and underscores progressive autonomy as a pedagogical condition for sustaining students' engagement with demanding Social Studies tasks.

Keywords: Student self-efficacy; Social Studies learning; Classroom engagement; Madrasah education.

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INTRODUCTION

Social Studies (Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial/IPS) learning is expected to equip students not only with substantive knowledge but also with the capacity to interpret social phenomena (Supardi, 2021), examine problems from multiple perspectives, articulate reasoned arguments, and make informed judgments (Al Hidayah et al., 2026). Such demands require students to engage actively with learning tasks rather than merely reproduce information presented by the teacher (Mahardika & Nur Ramadhan, 2021). Within this context, student self-efficacy is particularly relevant because students' perceptions of their own capabilities shape how they approach demanding tasks, respond to setbacks, participate in classroom activities, and sustain their efforts when initial attempts prove unsuccessful (Yusuf et al., 2025). Bandura (1997) conceptualizes self-efficacy as individuals' judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to attain designated performances. This conception distinguishes self-efficacy from generalized confidence or self-esteem because efficacy beliefs are inherently task- and context-specific (Sahin et al., 2024). In classroom settings, therefore, self-efficacy is reflected not simply in what students know, but also in how they mobilize their perceived capabilities when confronted with unfamiliar questions, challenging assignments, classroom interaction, and the possibility of failure (Zamhariroh & Muhid, 2025). Previous research has likewise highlighted the relevance of self-efficacy to students' engagement, participation, learning experiences, and responses to academic challenges (Ulum et al., 2024).

The development and modification of efficacy beliefs are grounded in four principal sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states (Sardin et al., 2025). Bandura (1997) explains that mastery experiences constitute the most influential source of efficacy information because individuals interpret previous successes and failures when judging their capabilities in subsequent situations. Vicarious experiences arise when individuals observe others performing a task and use those observations as information about what they themselves may be capable of accomplishing (Yosef et al., 2025). Verbal persuasion encompasses encouragement, feedback, evaluation, and other forms of social communication that convey judgments about capability (Wuisan et al., 2024). Physiological and affective states refer to the interpretation of emotional and bodily responses—such as anxiety, tension, frustration, enthusiasm, or calmness—that accompany engagement with a task (Alfiyah & Habiby, 2025). These four sources should not be treated as dimensions of self-efficacy itself; rather, they constitute the principal channels through which efficacy information is acquired and interpreted (Harpizon et al., 2025). Their significance in educational settings lies in the ways such information becomes apparent in students' classroom conduct, including their readiness to initiate challenging tasks, persistence following setbacks, responses to feedback, willingness to learn from peers, and management of emotional responses during learning activities (Yendi et al., 2025).

The significance of self-efficacy is particularly pronounced in Social Studies because the subject entails forms of learning that demand inquiry, interpretation, critical reasoning, communication, and informed decision-making (Setiyowati et al., 2025). Sapriya (2017)

characterizes Social Studies as an interdisciplinary field that integrates knowledge from the social sciences to facilitate students' understanding of social life and the problems embedded within it. Accordingly, Social Studies learning extends beyond the acquisition of factual knowledge to encompass students' capacity to examine social issues, establish connections among events and concepts, interpret evidence, and formulate reasoned responses (Vilona et al., 2026). Consistent with this orientation, the National Council for the Social Studies (2010) emphasizes inquiry, critical thinking, civic reasoning, and informed decision-making as central purposes of Social Studies education (Suciwati & Rosdiana, 2024). These disciplinary demands place students in situations in which they must formulate and defend ideas, respond to questions, negotiate different perspectives, and reconsider their interpretations in light of new information or feedback (Wahid & Suhaili, 2024). From a social constructivist perspective, such processes are shaped through active participation, interaction, dialogue, and the integration of prior and newly encountered knowledge (Andarista et al., 2025). In this setting, self-efficacy becomes particularly visible in students' willingness to contribute to discussions, respond to analytical questions, participate in presentations, persist with difficult tasks, and reconsider unsuccessful responses rather than immediately disengaging (Elanda et al., 2025).

These concerns are evident in the Social Studies classroom at MTsS Darul Makmur Sungai Cubadak. Preliminary observations of Grade VII learning activities revealed students' hesitation when they encountered questions requiring analysis and interpretation. Some students responded by lowering their gaze or avoiding eye contact when invited to contribute, while others appeared reluctant to communicate their ideas during group presentations. Students also tended to seek detailed procedural directions before proceeding with tasks, particularly when activities required them to explain causal relationships or interpret social phenomena. In addition, corrective feedback was sometimes followed by diminished engagement, and some students showed limited inclination to reconsider an unsuccessful response or explore an alternative explanation. These observations suggest that the issue cannot be reduced to whether students possess sufficient subject knowledge to produce correct answers. Rather, the classroom interactions point to differences in how students perceive and enact their capabilities when learning becomes cognitively demanding or socially exposing. Their willingness to initiate a task, persist after difficulty, respond to feedback, draw upon peer experiences, and regulate emotional responses provides an important empirical entry point for examining student self-efficacy as it is manifested in everyday Social Studies learning (Faizal et al., 2025; Gulo et al., 2024).

A growing body of research has examined self-efficacy in relation to students' engagement, academic experiences, classroom participation, and learning behavior across diverse educational contexts (Ariawan et al., 2024). Other studies have considered self-efficacy alongside students' responses to learning challenges and broader educational outcomes (Anggarini et al., 2025; Levinta et al., 2024). Collectively, this literature establishes self-efficacy as a useful construct for understanding students' engagement with learning. Nevertheless, much of the existing literature has approached self-efficacy through measurement-oriented designs that quantify levels of efficacy or examine its statistical association with particular learning outcomes (Wihartati et al., 2026). While such approaches are valuable for identifying patterns across groups, they provide less insight into the concrete ways efficacy beliefs become visible in classroom interaction: how students respond when a question exceeds their initial understanding, how they interpret feedback, whether they persist following an unsuccessful attempt, how peer performance shapes their willingness to participate, and how emotional responses accompany these processes. This limitation is especially pertinent in Social Studies learning, where analytical, interpretive, dialogical, and participatory activities constitute important features of classroom practice.

Moreover, relatively little attention has been directed toward describing student self-efficacy within the specific sociocultural and instructional context of madrasah education. A contextualized qualitative account is therefore warranted to illuminate how self-efficacy is manifested in students' actual learning practices rather than representing it solely through numerical measures.

Against this background, the present study examines student self-efficacy in Social Studies learning at MTsS Darul Makmur Sungai Cubadak through a qualitative descriptive approach. The study does not seek to establish causal relationships, estimate statistical associations, or determine the effect of self-efficacy on academic achievement. Instead, it aims to provide a context-sensitive account of how students' efficacy beliefs are manifested as they engage with Social Studies learning activities. Bandura's (1997) framework of mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states serves as the conceptual lens for interpreting these manifestations, while students' classroom responses and learning experiences constitute the primary empirical focus. The study consequently contributes a contextual description of student self-efficacy within Social Studies learning in a madrasah setting, with particular attention to students' responses to challenging tasks, participation in classroom interaction, persistence following difficulty, reactions to feedback, observations of peers, and emotional responses during learning. This positioning enables the study to connect an established theoretical framework with naturally occurring classroom phenomena without reducing the inquiry to measurement or causal explanation. Accordingly, the study aims to describe how student self-efficacy is manifested in Social Studies learning at MTsS Darul Makmur Sungai Cubadak and how mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states are reflected in students' classroom experiences. The research question is: How is student self-efficacy manifested in Social Studies learning at MTsS Darul Makmur Sungai Cubadak?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to describe student self-efficacy in Social Studies learning as it occurred within the natural classroom setting of MTsS Darul Makmur Sungai Cubadak. This design was selected because the study sought to obtain a comprehensive description of students' experiences, responses, and participation in learning without manipulating the instructional context or reducing the phenomenon to numerical measures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The inquiry focused on how students demonstrated confidence when undertaking learning tasks, responded to difficulties, persisted in completing challenging activities, participated in classroom interactions, responded to teacher feedback, and interacted with peers (Arikunto, 2019). Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy provided the conceptual framework for understanding these manifestations through four sources of efficacy information: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states. These sources were used to guide the organization and interpretation of the qualitative data rather than as quantitative measurement dimensions (Moleong, 2021). The study was conducted at MTsS Darul Makmur, Nagari Sungai Cubadak, Baso District, Agam Regency, West Sumatra, during the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, with Grade VII Social Studies learning as the research context. The research site was purposively selected based on preliminary observations indicating variation in students' participation, responses to challenging learning activities, and engagement in classroom interaction. The participants comprised 23 Grade VII students selected purposively to provide varied accounts of their experiences in Social Studies learning. The Social Studies teacher served as a key informant because of their direct involvement

in classroom instruction, while the head of the madrasah served as a contextual informant concerning the broader educational environment. Student informants were selected based on their regular participation in Social Studies learning, willingness to participate in interviews, and ability to articulate their learning experiences (Flick, 2022). Informants were identified using anonymized codes to protect their identities throughout data management and reporting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018a).

Data were collected through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation (Bryman, 2016; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018b). Classroom observations were conducted during regular Social Studies lessons to document students' learning behaviors and classroom participation, including their responses to questions and assignments, willingness to express opinions, persistence when encountering difficulties, participation in discussions and presentations, responses to teacher feedback, interactions with peers, and observable emotional responses during learning activities (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Observation records were maintained in descriptive field notes and were not converted into numerical scores. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the student informants and the Social Studies teacher to obtain detailed information about students' experiences, perceptions, responses to learning difficulties, participation, and experiences of feedback during Social Studies learning (Manen, 2016; Maxwell, 2022). The head of the madrasah was also interviewed to provide contextual information about the educational environment. The interview guide was developed in accordance with the research question and informed by Bandura's (1997) conceptualization of self-efficacy, addressing students' experiences of successful and difficult tasks, observations of peers, encouragement and feedback, and emotional responses during learning. Documentary evidence, including Social Studies teaching materials, lesson plans or *Modul Ajar*, student assignments, classroom records, photographs, and learning-session recordings where available and ethically permissible, was used to complement and contextualize the observational and interview data (Krippendorff, 2018). The researcher served as the primary research instrument, supported by an observation guide, semi-structured interview guide, field notes, and documentation protocol (Miles et al., 2014).

The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data analysis was conducted alongside data collection to enable continuous comparison between emerging findings and the original field evidence. Interview recordings were transcribed, observation notes were organized, and documentary materials were compiled into a structured qualitative dataset (Sembiring et al., 2023). During data condensation, information relevant to student self-efficacy was identified, coded, compared, and grouped according to recurring patterns and descriptions across the data sources (Abubakar, 2021). Bandura's (1997) four sources of efficacy information served as a conceptual reference for organizing the data, while categories emerging directly from participants' accounts and classroom observations were retained. The coded data were then organized into descriptive categories and displayed through thematic matrices and narrative summaries to facilitate comparison across informants and sources (B. Pasaribu et al., 2025). Conclusions were developed by examining recurring patterns, similarities, and differences and were repeatedly verified against the original transcripts, field notes, and documentary evidence. The trustworthiness of the findings was strengthened through source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail (Johnson & Christensen, 2023). Information obtained from students was compared with accounts from the teacher and head of the madrasah and with evidence from classroom observations and relevant documents. Member checking was conducted to clarify participants' statements and confirm the

accuracy of the researcher's interpretation (Sugiyono, 2024). An audit trail documenting data collection, data organization, coding procedures, and analytical decisions supported the dependability and confirmability of the findings, while detailed descriptions of the research setting and participants were provided to support transferability (Sugiyono, 2013; Widodo et al., 2023).

The research procedure began with obtaining permission from the madrasah and securing informed consent from the participants and, where required, their parents or guardians (Abdullah et al., 2022). Following participant selection, the researcher conducted classroom observations during regular Social Studies lessons, followed by semi-structured interviews and the collection of relevant documentary materials. Interview recordings were transcribed, observation notes were systematically organized, and documentary evidence was compiled for analysis. Data collection and analysis proceeded iteratively, allowing evidence from different sources to be compared and clarified throughout the research process. Ethical principles were maintained at every stage by ensuring voluntary participation, protecting participants' anonymity and confidentiality, and respecting their right to decline participation or withdraw from the study without adverse consequences (Sari et al., 2023). Participant names were replaced with codes in transcripts and reporting, while recordings, transcripts, field notes, and documentary materials were securely stored and used solely for research purposes. These procedures ensured that the study produced a systematic, transparent, and empirically grounded description of student self-efficacy in Social Studies learning, consistent with the principles of qualitative descriptive inquiry.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that student self-efficacy in Social Studies learning at MTsS Darul Makmur Sungai Cubadak is manifested through students' engagement with the intellectual, interpretive, and participatory demands of the subject. Social Studies is not confined to the acquisition of knowledge about social, historical, economic, and civic phenomena; it also requires students to interpret social realities, examine relationships among events and their consequences, consider multiple perspectives, articulate reasoned responses, and engage with social issues (Hidayat & Fajri, 2024). These demands require students to exercise confidence when initiating learning tasks, mobilizing the effort needed to complete them, sustaining participation, and responding to difficulties (Elanda et al., 2025; Gitara & Fahmawati, 2024). In this context Bandura (1997), self-efficacy refers to students' judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute the actions required to accomplish particular learning tasks. Evidence from classroom observations and interviews shows variation in students' confidence when completing tasks, motivating themselves to engage in learning activities, sustaining effort, and enduring learning difficulties (Asfanudin et al., 2024). Such variation was particularly evident when students encountered demanding tasks and were required to respond independently or participate actively in classroom interaction (Fidyawati et al., 2024; Gee et al., 2025). The qualitative evidence also shows that some students hesitated to respond because they were uncertain about their answers or concerned about making mistakes, while others experienced difficulty maintaining motivation and persistence when facing challenging tasks (Humairah et al., 2024; Kartini & Sundayana, 2025). These patterns can be understood through Bandura's (1997) framework, in which mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states provide information from which individuals form judgments about their capabilities. Thus, the findings position self-efficacy not as a fixed or uniform personal attribute, but as a context-sensitive aspect of students' engagement with the cognitive and participatory demands of Social Studies learning. The

discussion consequently examines three interconnected aspects of this phenomenon: the manifestation of student self-efficacy in Social Studies learning, the pedagogical role of teachers in providing efficacy-relevant learning experiences, and the challenges that constrain students' consistent enactment of self-efficacy.

Student Self-Efficacy in Social Studies Learning at MTsS Darul Makmur Sungai Cubadak

At MTsS Darul Makmur Sungai Cubadak, student self-efficacy becomes most visible when Social Studies learning moves beyond factual recall toward interpretation, causal reasoning, evaluation of social phenomena, and the formulation of explanations. Students' perceived capability varies with the demands of these tasks: some readily initiate analytical responses, articulate their interpretations, and continue working despite incomplete answers, while others hesitate when questions are unfamiliar, relationships among events are complex, or the adequacy of their responses is uncertain (Lase & Afri, 2025). The critical issue, therefore, lies not simply in whether students possess relevant knowledge, but in whether they perceive that knowledge as sufficient to perform the task at hand (Khusna et al., 2024; Nafsi & Abdussakir, 2025). In this classroom context, efficacy is enacted through students' readiness to answer, explain, participate, sustain effort, and reconsider an unsuccessful response (Hermita et al., 2025; Khusna et al., 2024). This situated pattern corresponds to Bandura's (1997) view of self-efficacy as a judgment of capability in relation to designated performances. Accordingly, the locus of self-efficacy is evident in the moment-to-moment relationship between students' perceived capability and the intellectual demands of Social Studies tasks (Ramadhani & Hardew, 2024; Riyadi & Fitriani, 2025), particularly under conditions of uncertainty, difficulty, and possible error.



Figure 1. Social Studies classroom instruction and student persistence in facing learning difficulties

The first empirical manifestation of this situated self-efficacy is students' confidence in undertaking specific Social Studies tasks. Figure 1 captures the classroom context in which such confidence is enacted, particularly when students encounter tasks requiring sustained engagement with learning difficulties. The interview data provide further evidence of how students appraise their capability in relation to particular task demands. Aditya explained,

"When I understand the Social Studies material, I feel more confident to answer the questions. If I *have* learned something similar before, I usually try to answer first, even when I am not completely sure that my answer is correct. But when the question is unfamiliar and I do not understand what it is asking, I tend to hesitate because I am afraid that my answer will be wrong." (AD, Male, 13 years old, Grade VII student)

This account suggests that confidence is contingent on students' perceived readiness to meet the immediate cognitive demands of a task. Emilka reported a comparable experience:

“I am usually willing to do the assignment when I understand the explanation and know what I have to do. When the question is difficult, especially when I have to explain the reason or relationship between events, I sometimes need to think for a long time before answering. I become less confident when I am not sure whether my explanation is correct.” (EM, Female, 13 years old, Grade VII student)

Her account further indicates that perceived capability becomes less secure as task demands shift from recalling information to constructing explanations and establishing relationships among social phenomena. The convergence of the visual and interview evidence therefore suggests that students’ confidence is task-specific and shaped by their appraisal of understanding, familiarity, and perceived response adequacy. This finding accords with Bandura’s (1997) conceptualization of self-efficacy as a judgment of capability in relation to designated performances, particularly through mastery experiences that provide information for subsequent efficacy judgments. In Social Studies learning, confidence is consequently manifested not as a stable personal attribute but as a situated readiness to mobilize knowledge and attempt a particular intellectual task (Malanua et al., 2024).

Beyond confidence in performing particular tasks, the findings indicate that students’ perceived capability was also reflected in their willingness to initiate and continue learning activities (Nisa’ et al., 2025). These accounts indicate that the manifestation of self-efficacy at this stage lies not simply in whether students feel confident, but in whether perceived capability is sufficient to activate and sustain a learning response (J. Pasaribu et al., 2025; Pautina & Pratiwi, 2024). The pattern also shows an important distinction from the preceding finding: whereas confidence concerns students’ appraisal of their capability to perform a particular task, self-motivation becomes visible in the subsequent decision to start, continue, or temporarily suspend learning activity (Putriluga, 2024; Rachmawati & Nurlaili, 2024). Within Bandura’s (1997) framework, such behavioral regulation reflects the functional role of efficacy beliefs in determining whether individuals initiate action and sustain effort toward a designated performance. Thus, in the Social Studies classroom, students’ self-motivation was manifested through the conversion of perceived capability into concrete engagement, particularly when students had to decide whether they could proceed with a task whose demands were not immediately clear (Maksum & Handayani, 2024).

Table 1. Analytical Synthesis of Student Self-Efficacy in Social Studies Learning

Higher-Order Finding	Task Demand	Capability Appraisal	Learning Action	Persistence	Response to Error	Peer Experience	Teacher Feedback	Affective Response
Task-specific efficacy	Unfamiliar analytical and interpretive tasks	Capability judged from understanding and familiarity	Answering, explaining, and attempting tasks	Effort depends on perceived task manageability	Hesitation when correctness is uncertain	Peer performance provides comparison	Clarification supports task understanding	Uncertainty may weaken readiness
Efficacy-driven engagement	Tasks requiring independent initiation	Students assess whether they can proceed	Starting and continuing learning activities	Engagement maintained when progress is perceived	Unsuccessful attempts may interrupt action	Observing peers can encourage participation	Guidance provides efficacy-relevant information	Confidence supports willingness to act
Persistence under difficulty	Extended reasoning and challenging questions	Capability is reassessed as difficulty increases	Continuing, reconsidering, or reducing effort	Persistence becomes the critical manifestation	Failure may trigger withdrawal or renewed effort	Peer persistence offers vicarious information	Encouragement can support continued effort	Frustration and declining motivation may constrain persistence
Negotiation of error and evaluation	Discussion, questioning, and presentation	Capability is judged alongside social exposure	Expressing or withholding ideas	Persistence depends partly on perceived social safety	Fear of incorrect answers may limit participation	Classmates become part of the evaluative context	Feedback shapes interpretation of performance	Fear, embarrassment, and hesitation become salient

Higher-Order Finding	Task Demand	Capability Appraisal	Learning Action	Persistence	Response to Error	Peer Experience	Teacher Feedback	Affective Response
Dynamic efficacy regulation	Varied cognitive and participatory demands	Capability judgments change across situations	Initiating, persisting, reconsidering, or disengaging	Effort is regulated according to changing demands	Previous outcomes inform subsequent attempts	Peer experiences provide vicarious efficacy information	Teacher responses provide verbal persuasion	Affective states influence subsequent efficacy appraisal

Note. The table presents a higher-order synthesis of qualitative evidence from classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentary materials. The five rows represent analytically consolidated findings rather than quantitative dimensions or measured levels of self-efficacy.

Table 1 demonstrates a consistent analytical pattern in which student self-efficacy was manifested through the continuous appraisal and regulation of capability across changing Social Studies demands. The findings show that students' judgments were initially shaped by task familiarity and perceived cognitive difficulty, then translated into decisions to initiate, sustain, reconsider, or reduce learning activity. As tasks became more demanding, persistence and responses to unsuccessful attempts became particularly important, while peer observation and teacher feedback supplied socially mediated efficacy information. Emotional responses; including uncertainty, fear of error, frustration, and declining motivation—further accompanied students' appraisal of whether they could manage demanding tasks (Putra et al., 2024; Riyadi & Fitriani, 2025). Taken together, the five findings indicate that self-efficacy was not a fixed attribute but a dynamic, task-specific judgment enacted through students' cognitive, behavioral, social, and affective responses during Social Studies learning, consistent with Bandura's (1997) framework.

The findings demonstrate that student self-efficacy in Social Studies learning is best understood as a situated and continually negotiated judgment of capability, rather than as a fixed individual disposition. Students' perceptions of what they were capable of doing were closely contingent upon the cognitive demands, familiarity, and social conditions of particular learning situations, and became observable through their decisions to initiate tasks, sustain effort, respond to setbacks, and re-engage after unsuccessful attempts (Haniifah & Nugraheni, 2024). These judgments were shaped by the information students derived from prior accomplishments, observations of peers, teacher feedback, and their own affective responses to difficulty, thereby illustrating the interrelated sources through which efficacy beliefs are formed and recalibrated. Importantly, the findings suggest that hesitation, reduced participation, or withdrawal should not be interpreted simply as evidence of limited academic competence; rather, they may reflect momentary judgments that the perceived demands of a task exceed students' available capability. Self-efficacy therefore emerges in this setting through the ongoing interaction between students' perceived capabilities and the demands of classroom practice (Asfanudin et al., 2024). This interpretation extends the understanding of self-efficacy in Social Studies by showing how efficacy beliefs are enacted, tested, and recalibrated in the immediacy of classroom learning, particularly when students encounter cognitive uncertainty, social evaluation, and the possibility of error.

The Role of Teachers in Enhancing Student Self-Efficacy Through Social Studies Learning

Teacher practices shaped the classroom conditions in which students could test and interpret their perceived capability in Social Studies learning (Andarista et al., 2025; Gulo et al., 2024). Students were given opportunities to answer questions, explain their reasoning, participate in discussions, and attempt demanding tasks before receiving clarification or correction (Kartini & Sundayana, 2025; Maksum & Handayani, 2024). These opportunities enabled students to obtain

efficacy-relevant information from their own performance, from observing peers, and from teacher feedback. In Bandura's (1997) framework, such experiences correspond to mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and verbal persuasion, while students' emotional responses to difficulty provide additional information through physiological and affective states. Teacher guidance therefore functioned as a pedagogical context that enabled students to enact, evaluate, and recalibrate task-specific judgments of capability during Social Studies learning (Fidyawati et al., 2024; Harpizon et al., 2025).



Figure 2. Teacher-guided instruction and active student engagement in Social Studies learning

The teacher's contribution to students' self-efficacy was evident in the provision of opportunities to participate directly in Social Studies learning activities (Gitara & Fahmawati, 2024; Hidayat & Fajri, 2024). Figure 2 depicts teacher-guided instruction in which students were positioned to engage with learning tasks through questioning, responding, and active participation. This classroom practice was also reflected in students' accounts of how the teacher opened opportunities for them to attempt responses rather than immediately providing the correct answer. Filza explained,

"The teacher gives us opportunities to try answering questions. We are given the chance to answer even when we are still unsure." (FL, Female, 13 years old, Grade VII student).

This account indicates that teacher guidance created a performance space in which students could translate their understanding into action while retaining opportunities to learn from incomplete or uncertain responses. The pedagogical significance lies in the repeated experience of attempting a task: students were not only exposed to instructional content but were also placed in situations where they could assess their ability to respond to specific Social Studies demands (Asmoro, 2026). Such experiences correspond to Bandura's (1997) conception of mastery experiences as a primary source of efficacy information, because judgments of capability are informed by how individuals interpret their own performance. The teacher's practice of distributing opportunities to participate therefore provided a concrete classroom condition through which students could test their perceived capability, experience task engagement, and develop more informed judgments about their ability to undertake Social Studies learning activities (Bustami et al., 2021; Hadi et al., 2025).

Beyond providing opportunities for students to attempt learning tasks, teacher feedback served as another important source of information through which students interpreted their capability. Classroom interaction showed that students' responses were followed by clarification, correction, or encouragement, particularly when their answers were incomplete or when they appeared uncertain about how to proceed (Sulisworo et al., 2012; Supardi, 2021). Such feedback

was relevant to the self-efficacy patterns identified earlier because students' willingness to continue an activity depended not only on whether they could produce an initial response, but also on how they understood the feedback received after that attempt (Anggarini et al., 2025; Humairah et al., 2024). Verbal encouragement and task-related clarification can provide students with information about the possibility of completing a task and about the specific actions required to improve their response (Nisa' et al., 2025; Putra et al., 2024). This corresponds to Bandura's (1997) concept of verbal persuasion, in which credible social feedback contributes to individuals' judgments concerning their capability. In Social Studies learning, therefore, teacher feedback was pedagogically meaningful when it directed students back toward the task, clarified the reasoning required, and maintained opportunities for further participation rather than simply evaluating responses as correct or incorrect (Hidayat & Fajri, 2024; Vilona et al., 2026). Such interaction positioned feedback as part of the learning process through which students could reconsider unsuccessful attempts and regulate their subsequent engagement with demanding Social Studies tasks (Elanda et al., 2025).

The central finding is that teacher practice provides the immediate pedagogical conditions through which students' self-efficacy becomes actionable in Social Studies learning. By opening opportunities to perform, facilitating peer observation, and providing task-related feedback, teachers make efficacy-relevant experiences available for students to assess and recalibrate their perceived capability. The significance of teacher guidance therefore lies not in directly producing self-efficacy, but in structuring classroom interactions through which students can experience performance, interpret feedback, manage uncertainty, and sustain engagement with specific learning demands.

Challenges Faced by Students in Developing Self-Efficacy at MTsS Darul Makmur Sungai Cubadak

A central challenge in developing student self-efficacy was students' limited readiness to engage independently with demanding Social Studies tasks (Yusuf et al., 2025). Classroom evidence showed that when tasks required interpretation, causal reasoning, or explanation beyond familiar material, some students remained dependent on teacher direction and became hesitant to initiate or sustain their responses (Nuryadi et al., 2025). The issue, therefore, was not merely difficulty in understanding content, but limited opportunities to experience independent performance. From Bandura's (1997) perspective, this condition is significant because mastery experiences provide the primary basis for efficacy judgments. When students rely heavily on external guidance to initiate, perform, or evaluate a task, their own performance becomes less available as evidence of capability (Lie et al., 2025). Figure 3 consequently situates teacher facilitation and student autonomy as interconnected conditions: guidance supports task engagement, but the development of self-efficacy requires students to progressively transform such support into independent performance.



Figure 3. Teacher facilitation and institutional barriers to students' self-efficacy development

The Social Studies teacher emphasized that students' difficulties became more visible when learning tasks required independent reasoning beyond direct instructional guidance (Kartini & Sundayana, 2025; Lase & Afri, 2025). Delmawati, S.E., explained,

"Students still need guidance when they face difficult Social Studies tasks, especially when they have to explain their answers or determine how to solve a problem independently. Some students tend to wait for further direction before continuing the task." (DW, Female, 51 years old, Social Studies teacher)

This account indicates that dependence on teacher guidance becomes more pronounced when task demands require students to initiate, organize, and sustain their own learning actions. The difficulty, therefore, lies not merely in content comprehension but in transforming guided participation into independent performance (Gitara & Fahmawati, 2024). Within Bandura's (1997) framework, this condition limits the extent to which students can derive mastery information from their own efforts, particularly when successful task completion remains strongly dependent on external direction.

A complementary institutional perspective was provided by Eka Dewi Murni, S.Pd., who highlighted the importance of students' learning independence in responding to academic difficulties. He explained,

"Students need to become more independent in managing their learning, particularly when they encounter difficulties. When they are accustomed to waiting for guidance, they may become less confident in deciding how to continue the task by themselves." (EDM, Male, 43 years old, Principal of MTsS Darul Makmur Sungai Cubadak)

This account extends the classroom-level observation by locating students' difficulties within the broader development of learning autonomy. The convergence between the teacher's and principal's accounts suggests that external guidance remains necessary for supporting task engagement, but persistent dependence can restrict students' opportunities to experience themselves as capable agents of learning (Pautina & Pratiwi, 2024). Self-efficacy development consequently requires a gradual movement from teacher-supported participation toward greater student responsibility for initiating, managing, and evaluating learning performance (Rachmawati & Nurlaili, 2024; Riyadi & Fitriani, 2025).

The findings show that the development of student self-efficacy at MTsS Darul Makmur Sungai Cubadak is constrained primarily by students' limited readiness to transform teacher-supported learning into independent performance. Difficulties become more apparent when

Social Studies tasks require interpretation, explanation, problem solving, and sustained effort without immediate direction (Anggarini et al., 2025; Asfanudin et al., 2024). Dependence on teacher guidance may facilitate students' engagement with challenging tasks, but excessive reliance on external support reduces opportunities for students to experience their own performance as evidence of capability (Alfiyah & Habiby, 2025; Nazira et al., 2024). From Bandura's (1997) perspective, this condition is particularly important because mastery experiences constitute a primary source of efficacy judgments. The challenge, therefore, is not simply to provide greater assistance, but to create a gradual transition from guided participation toward autonomous task initiation, persistence, and self-evaluation (Ramadhani & Hardew, 2024; Yendi et al., 2025). In this context, strengthening student self-efficacy requires classroom practices that maintain instructional support while progressively increasing students' responsibility for managing their own learning.

Conclusion

The central finding is that self-efficacy among Grade VII students at MTsS Darul Makmur Sungai Cubadak is dynamically constructed through task-specific judgments of capability, shaping their willingness to initiate, participate in, and persist with Social Studies learning. Students engaged more readily when tasks were familiar and cognitively accessible, whereas unfamiliar questions, complex reasoning, uncertainty, and fear of error constrained their responses and persistence. These judgments were continually informed by mastery experiences, peer observation, teacher feedback, and affective responses, demonstrating that self-efficacy is enacted through the interaction between perceived capability and the demands of particular learning situations. Teacher guidance provided essential opportunities for participation and efficacy-relevant experiences, yet dependence on external direction remained the principal constraint on students' independent performance. Social Studies instruction at the Grade VII level should therefore progressively shift from teacher-supported engagement toward greater student autonomy in initiating tasks, sustaining effort, solving problems, and evaluating their own performance.

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