

The Influence of Self-Efficacy and Peer Support on the Learning Independence of Buddhist Junior High School Students in Sungai Pinyuh Subdistrict

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ABSTRACT

Learning independence is an individual's ability to organize, control, and carry out learning activities without intervention from other parties. However, observations indicate low learning independence among Buddhist students in Sungai Pinyuh Subdistrict, a religious community within the local education system. This study aims to determine the partial and simultaneous influence of self-efficacy and peer support on the learning independence of Buddhist students in this subdistrict. This quantitative study used the ex post facto method and involved a sample of 233 students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire validated through expert judgment and analyzed using multiple regression. The results show a strong relationship between self-efficacy and peer support, taken together, and learning independence ($R = 0.724$). Self-efficacy and peer support jointly explain 52.4% of the variance in learning independence, with self-efficacy having a stronger influence than peer support. These findings suggest that strengthening students' self-efficacy, supported by structured peer interaction, can effectively improve the learning independence of Buddhist students in underrepresented educational settings.

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1. INTRODUCTION

An important aspect of education is learning independence. Students should ideally possess the competency of learning independence. Twenty-first-century learning emphasizes that students should be able to learn throughout their lives, manage information, and take responsibility for their own learning process.

The Buddha stated in a verse (D.II.156), "*appamadena sampadetha*," meaning "strive diligently." This verse highlights the importance of sustained effort, or diligence, and self-awareness, particularly in learning. Learning independence not only enables

students to achieve academic success but also equips them with adaptive skills for today's digital era, which presents many obstacles.

Learning is a lifelong process that requires individuals to develop themselves [1] continually. Within this process, students are expected to develop knowledge independently while teachers act only as facilitators [2]. As part of the broader social environment, peers are also recognized as a factor supporting the process of learning dhamma [3].

Sungai Pinyuh Subdistrict is one subdistrict in West Kalimantan Province with a multicultural population comprising various religious communities, including a community of Buddhist students. The number of Buddhist students in Sungai Pinyuh District is relatively high compared to other districts. Within the national education system, Buddhist students also face various challenges in developing learning independence.

Observations indicate low learning independence among Buddhist students in Sungai Pinyuh Subdistrict. Low learning independence can lead to various problems, ranging from students experiencing difficulty understanding material, decreased learning motivation, and suboptimal academic achievement. In addition, students with underdeveloped learning independence risk being unprepared for higher education and may face obstacles in today's workforce, which places strong demands on independence and responsibility.

One internal factor affecting learning independence is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their own ability to complete tasks. The Buddha taught in (A.IV.41) through the principle of *saddha* (faith/confidence), articulated as the fundamental element that gives rise to *viriya* (energy/effort) and *panna* (wisdom), which can strengthen an individual's determination to keep striving without giving up in the face of circumstances. Thus, self-efficacy can be conceptualized as a modern psychological manifestation of *saddha* that can foster learning independence. Bandura argued that self-efficacy has a major influence in determining an individual's persistence, level of effort, and resilience when facing difficulties [4].

In the field of educational psychology, self-efficacy is recognized as one of the key determinants of learning success [5]. Beliefs of this kind are viewed as one of the primary strengths that serve as valuable capital within the individual [6], and are especially important when individuals face challenges; those with low self-efficacy tend to show hesitation and self-doubt [7]. The level of self-efficacy also shapes how individuals respond to feedback: those with high self-efficacy tend to exert greater effort when receiving criticism or suggestions [8].

This concept aligns with the Buddhist concept of *saddha*, which plays an important role in fostering an individual's persistence in learning. Based on (A.V.38), it can be understood that an individual who possesses *saddha* within themselves will exert effort and show enthusiasm toward the goals they wish to achieve. This confidence generates a sense of responsibility and the courage to engage in independent learning, aligning with self-efficacy, which drives individuals to devise strategies and direct their learning behavior. Research findings support this view, showing that students with high self-efficacy tend to be more independent in learning and better able to cope with academic obstacles [9].

In addition, external factors such as social support also play an important role in shaping learning independence, particularly peer support. Peers play a particularly important role for a relatively well-represented religious community such as Buddhist students in Sungai Pinyuh Subdistrict, serving as a source of motivation, inspiration, and assistance for students who experience difficulty understanding learning material. Peer support within Buddhist education ideally also reflects the value of *metta* (loving-kindness)—an attitude of mutual support among one another. This aligns with the view of [10], who state that through *metta*, a compassionate environment and positive social support can be created. However, observations indicate that this attitude of mutual support and cooperation is not yet optimal, so the value of *metta* as a foundation for social relations in Buddhist teaching has not yet been fully reflected in students' learning lives. Meanwhile, peer support can foster a sense of solidarity and togetherness in supporting students' academic development. Mutual peer support and encouragement within the Buddhist learning community is also a manifestation of the value of *Sangha*, in line with the view expressed by Bhikkhu Bodhi, who states that interaction within the *sangha* community is not merely social assistance but serves as the primary foundation for achieving shared learning goals (S.V.2).

Individuals tend to follow the behavior of their peers, meaning that individual behavior can be shaped by the group to which one belongs [11], largely because individuals spend more time with peers than with anyone else [12]. This is reflected in the Buddhist concept of *kalyanamitta*—good friends who provide positive influence and guide individuals toward happiness [13]. The positive influence of peers is evident in participation in beneficial activities, such as forming study groups [14]. Peer relationships also support social development by helping individuals adjust to group norms, share experiences, demonstrate sportsmanship, and develop a sense of responsibility [15]. Overall, peers are recognized as one of the contributing factors shaping adolescents' lives [16], since the quality of an individual's life is closely tied to the quality of the people around them [17]. Emotional support among peers requires an articulated, empathetic understanding of one another; a lack of such empathy shows up as unhelpfulness, bullying, and discrimination [18].

Fundamentally, learning independence cannot be separated from two factors: internal and external. Self-efficacy can encourage students to feel confident in their own abilities, while peer support can strengthen students' courage and motivation for independent learning. These factors complement one another in fostering student learning independence, particularly for communities with unique social characteristics, such as Buddhist students in Sungai Pinyuh Subdistrict.

Al-Labibah [19] states that self-efficacy and peer support contribute significantly to learning independence. This argument aligns with Saroni [20], who states that peer interaction and learning motivation are important factors in improving elementary school students' learning independence. Sihalo et al. [21] argue that peer support affects self-efficacy and learning emotions, which in turn influence student independence.

Although extensive research has examined self-efficacy, peer support, and learning independence, findings on self-efficacy's influence on learning independence remain

inconsistent, and most studies have used general populations without considering specific socio-religious contexts. This underscores the urgency of further exploration, given the issue's unique characteristics and its potential to yield different findings.

2. METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with the *ex post facto* method. The research was conducted from March to June 2026 at SMP 1, SMP 2, SMP 3, and SMP 4 in Sungai Pinyuh. The research subjects were Buddhist junior high school students in Sungai Pinyuh Subdistrict. The sample consisted of 233 students, selected using purposive sampling.

This study involved two experts to test the validity of the research instrument. The content validation process employed expert judgment. Data collection in this study used non-test techniques, namely questionnaires and documentation. The questionnaire was an instrument used to measure the influence of self-efficacy and peer support on the learning independence of Buddhist junior high school students in Sungai Pinyuh Subdistrict. The instrument was developed as a questionnaire containing a series of statement items, each accompanied by four response options—Strongly Disagree (STS), Disagree (TS), Agree (S), and Strongly Agree (SS)—using a Likert scale.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Categories of the Learning Independence, Self-Efficacy, and Peer Support Variables

Variable	Category	Range	Frequency	Percentage
Learning Independence	High	≥ 39	28	12%
	Moderate	28–39	174	75%
	Low	< 28	31	13%
Self-Efficacy	High	≥ 35	42	18%
	Moderate	25–35	160	69%
	Low	< 25	31	13%
Peer Support	High	≥ 44	40	17%
	Moderate	30–44	156	67%
	Low	< 30	37	16%

Table 1 shows that the majority of Buddhist junior high school students in Sungai Pinyuh Subdistrict have a moderate level of learning independence (75%), moderate self-efficacy (69%), and moderate peer support (67%).

Table 2. Model Summary of Self-Efficacy and Peer Support on Learning Independence

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
.724 ^a	.524	.519

The results in Table 2 show a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.724. This R value indicates that the relationship between the Self-Efficacy and Peer Support variables, taken together, and Learning Independence falls into the strong category. The R Square value of 0.524 indicates that 52.4% of the variance in Learning Independence is explained by the Self-Efficacy and Peer Support variables—meaning that X_1 and X_2 jointly account for

52.4% of the variation in the learning independence of Buddhist junior high school students in Sungai Pinyuh Subdistrict. In comparison, other factors influence the remaining 47.6%.

The Adjusted R Square value of 0.519 shows that the difference between the R Square (0.524) and the Adjusted R Square (0.519) is very small; nevertheless, the regression model can be considered fairly good and stable in explaining the relationship between variables. Overall, the findings indicate that the regression model used is quite good and plays a significant simultaneous role in improving the learning independence of Buddhist junior high school students in Sungai Pinyuh Subdistrict.

Self-efficacy and peer support contribute to one another, consistent with previous research by [22], which found that peer interaction significantly influences self-efficacy. This indicates a strong relationship between self-efficacy and peer support. Both variables also significantly influence learning independence, consistent with previous research by [23]. It is hoped that Buddhist junior high school students in Sungai Pinyuh Subdistrict will continue to build confidence in their abilities and maintain good relationships with peers to improve their learning independence further.

Self-efficacy plays an important role in the process of developing learning independence [24]. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to exert greater effort and persist longer when facing difficulties compared to individuals who doubt their own abilities. One who possesses unwavering confidence and virtues that others value will reach the far shore and the cessation of mental defilements (S.V.396). This aligns with the concept of self-efficacy, which requires self-confidence in order to practice toward achieving desired goals. Fundamentally, self-efficacy plays an important role in and contributes to learning independence, as shown in research by [25], which states that higher student self-efficacy can drive students to achieve more optimal learning outcomes.

According to Buddhist teaching, having good friends and associating with virtuous people can help one develop and practice the Noble Eightfold Path (S.V.30), meaning an individual's progress does not stand alone but is supported by good friends. This aligns with peer support, which provides positive encouragement, a peer environment that supports learning goals, and equal relationships that strengthen learning motivation and resilience. The Buddha also explained in (A.VII.35) the benefits of having good friends—a positive social environment can influence how an individual thinks, speaks, and behaves. Individuals who associate with virtuous friends will develop beneficial behavior. This sutta explains that peer support plays an important role in moral and spiritual development. Through friends who support virtuous conduct, individuals are influenced to do the same — support in the form of motivation, behavioral role-modeling, and encouragement to become better.

Table 3. Coefficients (T-Test) for Self-Efficacy and Peer Support on Learning

	Independence				
	<i>Coefficients</i>				
	Unstandardized		Standardize		
	Coefficients		d		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	8.743	1.564		5.591	.000
SELF EFFICACY	.562	.059	.532	9.545	.000
PEER SUPPORT	.211	.043	.271	4.867	.000

Based on the t-test results, it can be determined that Self-Efficacy and Peer Support influence Learning Independence. The multiple regression equation for Self-Efficacy and Peer Support on Learning Independence can be formulated as follows:

$$Y = 8.743 + 0.562X_1 + 0.211X_2$$

Where:

Y = Learning Independence

X₁ = Self-Efficacy

X₂ = Peer Support

The constant value of 8.743 indicates that if the self-efficacy and peer support variables are zero, the dependent variable (learning independence) equals 8.74. The positive regression coefficient for self-efficacy (0.562) means that as the self-efficacy variable increases, the learning independence variable also increases. The positive regression coefficient for peer support (0.211) means that as the peer support variable increases, the learning independence variable also increases. Thus, both self-efficacy and peer support positively influence students' learning independence, with self-efficacy contributing more than peer support.

The calculation results show a constant value of 8.743 with a significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that when the self-efficacy and peer support variables are zero, the dependent variable equals 8.743. The regression coefficient for self-efficacy shows that self-efficacy has a positive and significant influence on learning independence: every one-unit increase in self-efficacy increases learning independence by 0.562. For peer support, the regression coefficient shows that peer support also has a positive and significant influence on learning independence, with every one-unit increase in peer support increasing learning independence by 0.211.

Analysis of the standardized beta coefficients—0.532 for self-efficacy and 0.271 for peer support—indicates that self-efficacy is the more dominant variable influencing learning independence than peer support. Based on the t-test results, it can be concluded that both self-efficacy and peer support influence the improvement of students' learning independence, but the contribution of self-efficacy (0.562) is more significant than that of peer support (0.211).

Table 4. ANOVA (F-Test) of the Regression of Self-Efficacy and Peer Support on Learning Independence

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3600.008	2	1800.004	126.394	.000 ^b
Residual	3275.477	230	14.241		
Total	6875.485	232			

Table 4 shows an F value of 126.394 with a significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), demonstrating that the multiple regression model of self-efficacy and peer support simultaneously has a significant influence on learning independence. The Regression Sum of Squares is 3600.008, while the Residual Sum of Squares is 3275.477, indicating that most of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the combined independent variables. The Mean Square Regression value is 1800.004, and the Mean Square Residual is 14.241, further reinforcing that the regression model in this study is strong, as reflected in the large F value. Based on these results, it can be concluded that self-efficacy and peer support simultaneously play a role in improving the learning independence of Buddhist students.

4. CONCLUSION

Self-efficacy and peer support simultaneously influence the learning independence of Buddhist junior high school students in Sungai Pinyuh Subdistrict, contributing 52.4% (R Square = 0.524)—a strong relationship. The regression equation obtained is $Y = 8.743 + 0.562X_1 + 0.211X_2$. Both coefficients are positive, meaning that as self-efficacy and peer support increase, learning independence also increases, with self-efficacy contributing more dominantly ($\beta = 0.532$) than peer support ($\beta = 0.271$).

These findings suggest that efforts to strengthen students' self-confidence in their own abilities should be prioritized, while peer support programs remain a valuable complement — particularly since concepts such as *saddha* and *metta* in Buddhist teaching can serve as a cultural entry point for both. It should be noted that the *ex post facto* design used means these relationships are correlational rather than causal, and the sample was limited to four schools in one subdistrict, so the findings should not yet be generalized beyond this population.

For schools and Buddhist religious teachers in Sungai Pinyuh Subdistrict, these findings point toward two concrete steps: designing learning activities that give students manageable success experiences to build self-efficacy, and facilitating structured peer study groups rather than leaving peer interaction to develop informally, given that observations in this study found peer solidarity had not yet been fully realized in practice.

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