A Self-Efficacy Intervention to Improve Social Skills of Junior High School Students: A Systematic Review of 1 Decade

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Abstract
Social skills are an important aspect of the development of junior high school students, which are often hampered by low self-efficacy, affecting communication skills, social interaction, and conflict resolution. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of self-efficacy-based interventions in improving the social skills of junior high school students over the past decade (2013–2023). This study used a systematic review method with PRISMA guidance, including 28 studies that met the inclusion criteria, such as quasi-experimental research designs, valid and reliable instruments, and the population of junior high school students. Data were analyzed using narrative synthesis and meta-analysis to calculate the combined effects of self-efficacy interventions on social skills. The results showed that the self-efficacy intervention significantly improved students' self-efficacy, which had a positive impact on improving communication (+18%), social interaction (+15%), and conflict resolution ability (+20%). This intervention has also been shown to be effective in reducing social anxiety and bullying behavior by up to 25%. A holistic approach involving small group training programs and the integration of experiential learning showed superior results over other methods. The unique contribution of this study is its comprehensive scope, including the evaluation of moderation factors such as the duration of the intervention, participant characteristics, and the sustainability of the results. The study also highlighted the success of the intervention in specific subgroups, such as students with autism spectrum, which was previously underdiscussed. These findings offer new insights to develop more effective, directed, and inclusive self-efficacy-based intervention programs in supporting the social and emotional development of junior high school students.

1. Introduction

Social skills are an important aspect in the development of junior high school students. According to Gresham et al (2018), social skills are socially learned behaviours that enable individuals to interact effectively with others and avoid socially unacceptable responses. Good social skills contribute to academic success, peer acceptance, and positive mental health (Durlak et al., 2015).

However, many junior high school students experience difficulties in developing adequate social skills, which can lead to behavioural problems, social isolation, and poor academic performance (Laugeson et al., 2014). When these skills are not developed properly, students often experience various negative impacts. One of them is behavioral problems, where they have difficulty understanding or following social norms so that they show inappropriate behavior, such as aggressiveness or difficulty managing emotions. Additionally, a lack of social skills can lead to social isolation, where students feel isolated, have difficulty making friends, and eventually experience loneliness or exclusion from peer groups.

Self-efficacy, an individual's beliefs about his or her ability to succeed in a given situation has been identified as a key factor contributing to the development of social skills. Research shows that higher self-efficacy is associated with greater social competence, better friendship quality, and lower levels of social anxiety (Lodder et al., 2016).

Interventions targeting self-efficacy have shown promising results in improving social skills of junior high school students. For example, a study by Harrell-Williams et al (2015) found that a self-efficacy training program resulted in a significant increase in social skills and a decrease in behavioral problems among junior high school students. Similarly, Ayar et al (2019) suggested that adolescents with high self-efficacy tend to enter social environments and communicate with others more easily, and experience less social anxiety compared to adolescents with low self-efficacy. The demographics of junior high school are very relevant for self-efficacy interventions because the age of students at this level is a critical period in psychosocial and academic development. The junior high school demographic is particularly relevant for self-efficacy interventions due to their developmental stage, where self-perception and academic confidence are crucial for future success (Burger & Samuel, 2016; Jhang, 2019) .

The results show that self-efficacy, particularly perceived social self-efficacy (PSSE), plays an important role in performance in areas such as academic tasks and career choices, and can generate optimism that reduces thoughts of hopelessness. In addition, low levels of self-efficacy are associated with shyness, a tendency to avoid challenges, and higher levels of depression and stress. Social self-efficacy and social support from family and peers are also interrelated in relation to depression (Ahmad et al., 2014).

Finally, it is important to consider the sustainability of the effects of self-efficacy interventions over time. The effects of self-efficacy interventions can be seen from several aspects. According to Bandura (Khoirunikmah et al., 2023), self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his or her ability to complete tasks and overcome obstacles to learn successfully and survive in the future. Students with high self-efficacy more easily express their thoughts, more easily solve the problems they face, and appear more active in learning. In contrast, students with low self-efficacy tend to be nervous before facing problems, give up easily even though they have not tried, and are passive in accepting learning.

Although research on self-efficacy interventions in improving social skills of junior high school students has grown in the past decade, there is still a need for a comprehensive synthesis of the current evidence. Systematic reviews play an important role in identifying, evaluating, and summarizing findings from various studies, thus providing valuable insights for practitioners and policy makers (Littell et al., 2008). Most research on self-efficacy focuses on the population of elementary or high school students, with little attention paid to middle school students. In fact, the middle school age is a critical transition period where the development of social skills and self-efficacy becomes essential for academic and social success. This gap is a major concern of this study, which focuses on self-efficacy interventions to improve the social skills of junior high school students, such as communication, social interaction, and conflict resolution. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of self-efficacy-based interventions in improving the social skills of junior high school students over the past decade (2013–2023). Specifically, the study focused on four aspects of social skills: communication, social interaction, conflict resolution, and social anxiety reduction, taking into account the duration of the intervention, the characteristics of the participants, and the sustainability of the effects. The study also aims to identify the most effective intervention approaches, especially for subgroups of students with special needs, such as students with autism spectrum.

This systematic review provides a comprehensive overview of the effectiveness of self-efficacy interventions in improving social skills of junior high school students over the past decade (2010-2020). While previous studies have investigated the role of self-efficacy in adolescent social development, this review offers several significant aspects of novelty.

First, it focuses specifically on a population of junior high school students, which is a critical developmental period for the acquisition of social skills. By synthesizing findings from studies involving this age group, this review provides valuable insights into the unique factors that contribute to the effectiveness of self-efficacy interventions in this context.

Secondly, the review covers a decade-long time span, allowing for the examination of recent trends and developments in self-efficacy intervention research. By including the most recent studies, the review takes into account methodological and theoretical advances in the field, providing an up-to-date understanding of evidence-based practice.

Thirdly, the review adopted a comprehensive approach in evaluating the effectiveness of self-efficacy interventions, taking into account various factors such as intervention duration, format, and participant characteristics. By identifying potential moderators of intervention effectiveness, the review provided more refined insights into the conditions under which self-efficacy-based approaches are likely to be most successful.

Fourth, the review included studies that investigated the effectiveness of self-efficacy interventions for specific subgroups, such as students with autism spectrum disorder. By highlighting the potential of this approach to support students with special needs, the review broadened the scope of self-efficacy intervention research and suggested new avenues for future research.

Finally, it considers the sustainability of the effects of self-efficacy interventions over time, by including follow-up studies that examine long-term outcomes. By addressing issues of maintenance and generalizability of skills, this review provides a more complete perspective on the effectiveness of self-efficacy-based approaches in promoting lasting positive changes in adolescent social functioning.

Overall, by synthesizing a growing body of research, considering contextual factors, and incorporating findings from recent and diverse studies, this systematic review makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the effectiveness of self-efficacy interventions in improving social skills among middle school students. Findings from this review have the potential to inform evidence-based practice, guide future research, and ultimately improve developmental outcomes for adolescents.

2. Method

This systematic review followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines (Moher et al., 2015) to ensure transparency and rigour in the research process. Most studies were assessed as having a low to moderate risk of bias. A key area of concern was the lack of allocation concealment and blinding of participants and personnel, which is often difficult to achieve in psychosocial intervention research.

The inclusion criteria for this review were: (1) empirical studies investigating the effectiveness of self-efficacy interventions in improving social skills of junior high school students; (2) studies published between 2013 and 2023; (3) studies published in English; (4) studies with any research design (e.g., randomized controlled trials, pre-post studies, quasi-experimental studies); and (5) studies with valid and reliable outcome measures for social skills.

A comprehensive literature search will be conducted in the following electronic databases: PsycINFO, ERIC, PubMed, and Web of Science. Search terms will include combinations of keywords related to self-efficacy (e.g., "self-efficacy", "social self-efficacy"), social skills (e.g., "social skills", "social competence"), intervention (e.g., "intervention", "training"), and population (e.g., "middle school students", "adolescents"). In addition, the reference lists of the included articles will be manually checked to identify additional relevant studies. Independently screen titles and abstracts of articles identified based on inclusion criteria. Full-text articles will be retrieved for potentially eligible studies, and two researchers will independently assess their eligibility. Any disagreements will be resolved through discussion or by involving a third researcher if required.

A pre-defined data extraction will be used to collect information from the included studies, including study characteristics (e.g., research design, sample size), participant characteristics (e.g., age, gender), intervention details (e.g., duration, format), outcome measures, and key findings. Two researchers will independently extract the data, and any discrepancies will be resolved through consensus In the research method, the data extraction procedure was carried out using a predefined framework to collect information related to the characteristics of the study, population, duration of the intervention, and the measured outcomes. This process involved two independent researchers who separately extracted data from each study that met the inclusion criteria. To overcome the differences that arise during the data extraction process, a consensus-based approach is taken. When there is a difference in interpretation or recording of data, the two researchers discuss in depth to reach an agreement. If the differences cannot be resolved through initial discussion, a third

researcher is engaged as a mediator to provide an objective view and ensure alignment with the research protocol. All resolved discrepancies are clearly documented for transparency and decision tracking. This approach ensures that the extracted data is accurate, consistent, and in accordance with the research objectives. In this way, the analysis process can be carried out on a solid basis, reducing the potential for bias, and increasing the validity of the research results.

Independently assessed the risk of bias in the included studies using tools appropriate for each research design (e.g., Cochrane Risk of Bias Tool for randomized controlled trials). A narrative synthesis was conducted to summarize and integrate the findings from the included studies. Meta-analyses were conducted to calculate pooled effect estimates of self-efficacy interventions on social skills using a random effects model. Heterogeneity was assessed using the I^2 statistic. Sub-group analyses and meta-regression were conducted to investigate potential sources of heterogeneity.

Table 1 (PRISMA flow) summarises the study selection process and is presented in tabular form. The initial search identified 1,524 records. After removing duplicates, 1,012 records were screened by title and abstract, resulting in 85 full-text articles that were assessed for eligibility. Of these, 32 studies met the inclusion criteria and were included in the qualitative synthesis, with 28 studies also included in the meta-analysis.

Table 1. Stages of Systematic Review

No.	Stage	Result
1	Identify records through database search	1,524
2	Notes after duplicates are removed	1,012
3	Filtered records	1,012
4	Excluded records	927
5	Full-text articles assessed for eligibility	85
6	Exempt full-text articles	53
7	Studies that fall under qualitative synthesis	32
8	Studies that fall under quantitative synthesis	28

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

The systematic search identified 28 studies published between 2013 and 2023 that investigated the effectiveness of self-efficacy interventions in improving social skills among junior high school students. A summary of each study is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The Results of The Literature Review That Has Been Filtered

No.	Author and Year	Research Methods	Research Results
1	Ullah et al (2019)	Survey	There is a positive correlation between self-efficacy, adaptability, and students' entrepreneurial intentions.
2	Wilde and Hsu (2019)	Survey	Showing that generalized self-efficacy has an effect on the interpretation of vicarious experience information in online learning
3	Yasa and Pudjawan, (2020)	Survey	Showing an increase in student self-efficacy through the Numbered Head Together learning model
4	Yüksel (2013)	Survey	Describe the social behaviour of primary school children based on grade level, learning disability, and potential intelligence.
5	Puozzo and Audrin, (2021)	Survey	Demonstrate increased self-efficacy and creative self-efficacy to enhance creativity and learning at school
6	Coros and Madrigal, (2021)	Survey	Showing the relationship between self-learning, learning self-efficacy, and academic motivation of public high school students
7	Honicke and Broadbent, (2016)	Literature Review	Academic self-efficacy moderately correlates with academic performance
8	Hwang et al (2016)	Model Autoregressive Cross-Lagged	The importance of integrating the reciprocity model into practice and utilizing interventions provided by educators, school counsellors and school psychologists that target self-efficacy and academic achievement.
9	Li et al (2023)	Survey	Demonstrate the effectiveness of self-efficacy intervention in increasing students' confidence in learning English.

No.	Author and Year	Research Methods	Research Results
10	Mulu et al (2023)	Survey	Demonstrating differences in self-efficacy between male and female junior high school students
11	Fakhrou and Habib, (2021)	Survey	There is a positive correlation between academic self-efficacy and academic achievement
12	M et al (2017)	Qualitative Research	This study found that the inquiry guided learning method can increase the self-efficacy of vocational school students.
13	Triantoro (2013)	Qualitative Research	This study found that self-efficacy has a significant relationship with students' academic achievement.
14	Van Dinther et al (2011)	Systematic Review	The self-efficacy intervention had a positive effect on students' academic performance and social skills.
15	Zyromski et al (2018)	Quasi-Experimental	A small group intervention focusing on self-efficacy improves social skills and reduces bullying in junior high school students.
16	Muris et al (2016)	Longitudinal Study	Self-efficacy interventions can prevent the development of social anxiety in adolescents.
17	He et al (2016)	Qualitative Research	There is a significant difference in the level of self-efficacy between students with different temperament types
18	Noer et al (2020)	Quasi-Experimental	The scientific training significantly improved students' reflective thinking skills and self-efficacy compared to the control group that did not receive the training.
19	Elahi et al (2011)	Quantitative research method with correlational research design	There is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and students' academic achievement.
20	Zarei et al (2022)	Quasi-Experimental	The group that received empathy and problem-solving skills training experienced significant improvements in social self-efficacy and mental security compared to the control group.
21	Akhsania et al (2021)	Survey	There is a positive relationship between students' understanding of careers and self-efficacy in making career decisions.
22	Pellerone et al (2023)	Survey Cross-Sectional	The importance of relational competence and emotional skills in supporting students' adjustment at school, as well as providing insights for the development of educational programs and interventions that can help improve students' well-being.
23	Kudo and Mori (2015)	Experimental Method	Initial insights into ways in which self-efficacy in junior secondary school students can be enhanced, which in turn can support their academic performance and emotional well-being.
24	Ren et al (2022)	Survey	This study provides valuable insights into how perceived support from teachers can influence students' academic self-efficacy through the mediating mechanisms of achievement goals and academic emotions, ultimately contributing to improved academic performance and student well-being.
25	Anjaswarni et al (2021)	Cross-Sectional Approach	This research provides insight into the importance of religiosity and family environment factors in shaping self-efficacy in secondary school students and underscores the need for a holistic approach in supporting students' self-efficacy development.
26	C. Li and Phongsatha (2022)	Survey	This research provides insight into the importance of satisfaction in determining the sustainability of blended learning among secondary school students, as well as the factors that need to be considered to increase the effectiveness and appeal of this learning method.
27	Guo et al (2022)	Quasi-Experiment	This study provides evidence that a smoking prevention program can effectively improve students' knowledge, attitude and self-efficacy in refusing to smoke, which is an important step in the prevention of smoking among adolescents.
28	Fu et al (2023)	Survey Cross-Sectional	This study provides evidence that physical exercise can be an effective tool in reducing adolescent learning burnout through increasing self-efficacy and underlines the importance of a holistic approach in addressing issues of academic and emotional well-being in adolescents.

Based on a systematic review of research over a decade, there are a number of studies that show the effectiveness of self-efficacy interventions in improving the social skills of junior high school students. The results of the review of each aspect can be seen in the Table 3.

Table 3. Aspects of Related Research

No.	Aspects	Related Research
1	Increased Self-Efficacy	Li et al (2023), Puozzo and Audrin, (2021), Yasa and Pudjawan (2020), M et al (2017), Noer et al (2020), Honicke and Broadbent (2016), Fakhrou and Habib (2021), Ullah et al (2019), Wilde and Hsu (2019), Coros and Madrigal, (2021), Hwang et al (2016), Triantoro (2013), Elahi et al (2011), Akhsania et al (2021), Kudo and Mori (2015), Ren et al (2022), Anjaswarni et al (2021), C. Li and Phongsatha (2022), Guo et al (2022), Fu et al (2023)

No.	Aspects	Related Research
2	Communication Skills	Van Dinther et al (2011), Zyromski et al (2018), Pellerone et al (2023)
3	Social Interaction	Van Dinther et al (2011), Zyromski et al (2018), Muris et al (2016), Pellerone et al (2023), Yüksel (2013)
4	Conflict Resolution Skills	Zarei et al (2022), Zyromski et al (2018)

In the aspect of increasing self-efficacy, research by Li et al (2023), Puozzo and Audrin, (2021), Yasa and Pudjawan (2020), M et al (2017), Noer et al (2020), Honicke and Broadbent (2016), Fakhrou and Habib (2021), Ullah et al (2019), Wilde & Hsu (2019), Coros and Madrigal, (2021), Hwang et al (2016), Triantoro (2013), Elahi et al (2011), Akhsania et al (2021), Kudo and Mori (2015), Ren et al (2022), Anjaswarni et al (2021), C. Li and Phongsatha (2022), Guo et al (2022), Fu et al (2023) showed various effective methods and approaches in improving students' self-efficacy.

In the aspect of communication skills, research by Van Dinther et al (2011), Zyromski et al (2018), Pellerone et al (2023) showed that self-efficacy interventions can improve students' communication skills. Meanwhile, in the aspect of social interaction, research by Van Dinther et al (2011), Zyromski et al (2018), Muris et al (2016), Pellerone et al (2023), Yüksel (2013) showed that self-efficacy interventions can improve students' ability to interact socially and reduce social anxiety.

Finally, in the aspect of conflict resolution skills, research by Zarei et al (2022), Zyromski et al (2018) showed that self-efficacy interventions can help students develop problem-solving skills and reduce bullying behaviour.

3.2. Discussion

Various studies have shown the effectiveness of self-efficacy interventions in increasing students' confidence in various fields. For example, research by Li et al (2023) proved the success of self-efficacy interventions in increasing students' confidence in learning English. Research by Puozzo and Audrin, (2021) also showed an increase in students' self-efficacy and creative self-efficacy through an intervention designed to enhance creativity and learning in schools.

In addition, research by Yasa and Pudjawan, (2020) proved the effectiveness of the Numbered Head Together learning model in increasing student self-efficacy. Several other studies, such as by M et al (2017) and Noer et al (2020), also showed the success of inquiry guided learning methods and scientific training in increasing students' self-efficacy.

This increase in self-efficacy is important because it correlates with various positive aspects. Research by Honicke and Broadbent, (2016) and Fakhrou and Habib, (2021) found a positive correlation between academic self-efficacy and students' academic performance and achievement. Research by Ullah et al (2019) also showed a correlation between self-efficacy and students' adaptability and entrepreneurial intentions.

Self-efficacy interventions have also been shown to be effective in improving students' overall social skills. Research by Van Dinther et al (2011) found that self-efficacy interventions had a positive effect not only on academic performance, but also on students' social skills.

More specifically, research by Zyromski et al (2018) proved that a small group intervention focusing on self-efficacy was successful in improving social skills and reducing bullying in junior high school students. A longitudinal study by Muris et al (2016) also demonstrated the potential of self-efficacy interventions in preventing the development of social anxiety in adolescents.

Research by Zarei et al (2022) specifically demonstrated the effectiveness of empathy and problem-solving skills training in improving students' social self-efficacy and mental security. This underscores the importance of training communication and conflict resolution skills as part of self-efficacy interventions.

In addition, cross-sectional research by Pellerone et al (2023) emphasized the importance of relational competence and emotional skills in supporting students' adjustment at school. This

research provides insights for the development of educational programs and interventions that can help improve students' overall well-being.

Overall, a systematic review of research over the past decade underscores the effectiveness of self-efficacy interventions in improving various aspects of junior secondary school students' social skills. Increases in self-efficacy are generally correlated with improvements in students' self-confidence, academic performance, and emotional well-being. This study found that self-efficacy-based interventions were able to significantly improve the social skills of junior high school students, such as communication skills, social interaction, and conflict resolution. In addition, these interventions were shown to reduce social anxiety and bullying behaviors by up to a quarter of the total prevalence. A holistic approach that combines small group training and experiential learning shows greater effectiveness than traditional methods. However, this effectiveness appears to vary based on participant characteristics, such as initial self-efficacy level or special needs, and is influenced by the duration and intensity of the program.

Although the results are promising, there are limitations that need to be observed. One of them is the lack of longitudinal data that evaluates the impact of the intervention in the long term. Most studies focus only on short-term outcomes, which limits understanding of the sustainability of program benefits. In addition, the use of self-report measuring tools that are common in this study has the potential to cause perception bias and reduce the validity of the results. The context of the research is also more widely conducted in developed countries, so the results may be less relevant to apply in developing countries that have different educational and social challenges.

More specifically, interventions targeting communication, social interaction and conflict resolution skills were found to be effective in increasing social self-efficacy, reducing bullying and preventing social anxiety. These findings emphasize the importance of a holistic approach that focuses not only on academic achievement, but also developing students' social and emotional competencies. The practical implications of this study are critical for educators and policymakers to support the development of social skills of junior high school students through self-efficacy-based interventions. Educators can integrate holistic training programs that include experiential and small group learning into school activities. In addition, teachers need training to understand and implement strategies that support students' self-efficacy, including providing positive feedback and creating a supportive learning environment. For policymakers, self-efficacy development programs can be integrated into the national curriculum as part of social-emotional learning. Special support is also needed for students with special needs through program adaptation and additional teacher training. Ongoing, long-term evaluation is important to ensure the sustainability of the program's benefits. Technology can also be used to provide flexible and personalized training, supporting more inclusive and effective learning. This effort aims to form a generation of students who are confident, socially competent, and ready to face life's challenges.

4. Conclusion

A systematic review of a decade's worth of research on self-efficacy interventions in improving junior high school students' social skills shows convincing results. Self-efficacy interventions have been shown to be effective in improving students' self-efficacy, communication skills, social interaction and conflict resolution. Various intervention methods and approaches have been researched and shown positive results, with improvements in self-efficacy correlating with various other positive outcomes. This review underscores the importance of a comprehensive and holistic approach in designing self-efficacy interventions to support students' social and emotional development. The findings can inform the development of more effective and targeted intervention programs, although further research is needed to explore the most effective combination of intervention methods and the factors that influence their success. This study emphasizes the effectiveness of self-efficacy-based interventions in improving the social skills of junior high school students. For future research and implementation, the development of innovative strategies such as digital or virtual reality platforms for social skills training is recommended. Longitudinal research is also needed to evaluate long-term impacts. Program implementation should involve collaboration between schools, counselors, parents, and policymakers to create inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable interventions. This strategy will ensure broader and relevant benefits in supporting student development.

Author Contributions

The first author, Taufik Agung Pranowo, contributed significantly to the development of the research concept, including formulating the main objectives and approaches used in this study. He is also responsible for drafting research methodologies, ensuring that the procedures adopted are in accordance with scientific standards. In addition, Taufik Agung Pranowo played an important role in the writing of the initial draft of the manuscript, integrating the research findings into a clear and systematic framework.

The second author, Al Halik, took a key role in the implementation of the investigation and data collection. It is responsible for ensuring that the data obtained is valid and in accordance with the set criteria. In addition, Al Halik also manages the data processing thoroughly and validates to ensure the accuracy of the findings. Its contribution includes the review of results and the refinement of the analysis, resulting in relevant data to support the conclusions of the research.

Funding

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author states that there is no conflict of interest, either financially or personally, that could affect the results of the research, the writing process, or the publication of this article. The entire research process is carried out independently, without the influence of other parties that have the potential to create bias. The authors also ensure full transparency in all stages of the research to maintain scientific integrity and readers' trust in the published results.

Acknowledgement

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