



Exploring the Influence of Self-Efficacy on Self-Regulated Learning: The Mediating Role of Growth Mindset

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effect of self-efficacy on self-regulated learning with a growth mindset as a mediator, within the context of a student-centered progressive learning paradigm. In a student-centered learning approach, it was found that high intelligence does not guarantee good self-regulation skills. Previous literature indicates that self-efficacy has a significant relationship with self-regulated learning skills, while a growth mindset is suspected to play a mediator in this relationship. This study used a quantitative approach with a correlational survey method. The study population was all 1,800 students at SMA Negeri 14 Bekasi City. A sample of 317 students was determined based on the Krejcie & Morgan table, and the number of data processed was 318 respondents. The results showed that self-efficacy has a positive influence on self-regulated learning at a significant level of $p < 0.05$. In addition, a growth mindset was proven to mediate the relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulated learning. The conclusion of this study emphasizes the importance of strengthening self-efficacy and cultivating a growth mindset as strategies in improving student learning independence, especially in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. It is recommended that educators and policymakers integrate growth mindset training into student character development programs. This research provides important additional data for the development of self-regulated learning theory and the implementation of a curriculum focused on student competencies.

Keywords: Growth Mindset, Self Efficacy, Self-regulated Learning, Independent Learning Curriculum

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INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia is undergoing a significant transformation through the "Merdeka Belajar" (Freedom to Learn) policy initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Maulana, 2021). This policy provides schools and teachers with greater freedom to develop learning and assessment strategies based on students' contextual needs. Four key programs focused on the changes include the elimination of the National Standardized School Exam (USBN), the elimination of the National Examination (UN), the simplification of the Lesson Plan (RPP), and the implementation of a zoning system in New Student Admissions (PPDB) (Widyastuti, 2022). The primary goal of this policy is to build a more flexible, student-centered learning system and encourage independent learning according to each student's potential (Merdeka Belajar, 2022).

However, there is a gap between the ideal situation and the reality on the ground. The implementation of independent learning has not yet been fully achieved in accordance with the spirit of "Merdeka Belajar." This situation became even more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when students were required to participate in online learning from home (Stanistreet et al., 2020). This situation demands students to be independent in their learning, yet in reality, many still demonstrate a high dependence on teachers, both in understanding the material and completing assignments (Hoofman & Secord, 2021). This poses an obstacle to creating student-centered learning and fostering lifelong learning potential.

This phenomenon reflects a lack of self-regulated learning (SRL) skills, or the ability to self-regulate learning. Students are not yet fully capable of managing their time, setting learning goals, monitoring progress, or evaluating their own learning outcomes (Zimmerman, 1989). SRL is an essential competency in the context of 21st-century education, which emphasizes flexibility, creativity, and lifelong learning (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2023). This weakness indicates that psychological factors, such as self-efficacy and a growth mindset, need to be strengthened to foster adaptive and sustainable independent learning.

The concept of self-regulated learning (SRL) encompasses three main aspects: cognitive, affective, and behavioral, which are consciously and systematically activated to achieve learning goals (Zimmerman, 1990, 2000). This process includes self-observation, self-evaluation, and reactions to learning outcomes, which will guide subsequent adjustments to learning strategies. Furthermore, recent studies have shown that contemporary SRL models have been developed and widely applied in various digital learning and lifelong learning contexts, integrating motivational and metacognitive strategies in self-management of learning.

One of the main determinants of SRL is self-efficacy, which is an individual's belief in their ability to complete a task or achieve a specific learning goal (Panadero et al., 2017). Bandura emphasized that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to set challenging goals, persist in the face of adversity, and view failure as a learning opportunity, while those with low self-efficacy give up more easily and view challenges as threats. Modern research increasingly shows that self-efficacy is positively correlated with deeper cognitive and metacognitive strategies, as well as active engagement in the learning process recommended in SRL (Gan et al., 2020).

Furthermore, a growth mindset plays a crucial role in strengthening self-regulated learning (SRL) abilities. This concept was introduced by Carol Dweck, who identified two types of mindsets: a fixed mindset the belief that abilities are fixed and unchangeable—and a growth mindset, the belief that abilities can be developed through effort, appropriate strategies, and learning from mistakes (C. S. Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Individuals with a growth mindset tend to be more resilient in the face of challenges and

are less likely to give up when they experience failure, because they view difficulties as part of the learning process (Campbell et al., 2020). In an educational context, students with a growth mindset are more open to feedback, more persistent in overcoming difficulties, and better able to independently monitor and reflect on their learning process. This suggests that a growth mindset not only impacts learning motivation but also serves as a psychological foundation that supports the development of holistic self-regulated learning skills (Cavanagh et al., 2018). Recent research also shows that interventions to foster a growth mindset contribute positively to improved self-regulation in learning, particularly in challenging or changing learning situations, such as online and independent learning post-pandemic.

The research focuses on the context of the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar policy and the challenges of learning during the pandemic emergency. This approach provides a more holistic view in understanding the internal factors that influence students' independent learning, particularly in learning systems that demand high flexibility and adaptability. In addition to exploring the direct relationship between self-efficacy and SRL, this study also empirically explores the role of growth mindset as a psychological mediator. Growth mindset is positioned as a cognitive-affective element that can strengthen the impact of self-efficacy on the effectiveness of self-regulation in learning (Coertjens, 2022; Orosz et al., 2023). This research provides a novel contribution to the study of secondary education in Indonesia, particularly during the transition to more independent digital learning after the pandemic, where student psychological readiness is key to the successful implementation of adaptive and sustainable education policies.

Therefore, the research questions include: (1) Does self-efficacy influence self-regulated learning? and (2) Can growth mindset act as a mediator between self-efficacy and self-regulated learning? This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of learning strategies that are more responsive to student needs and support the more effective implementation of the Merdeka Belajar policy at the educational unit level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a key concept in social cognitive theory developed by Albert Bandura, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute the actions necessary to achieve specific outcomes (Bandura, 2006). Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy tend to be more confident, persistent in completing tasks, and better able to overcome academic challenges. In an educational context, self-efficacy has a significant impact on students' motivation, persistence, and learning strategies. Research by Usher and Pajares (Pajares, 1997) showed that students with high self-efficacy are more active in using cognitive and metacognitive strategies and are more motivated to achieve their learning goals independently. Recent research continues to strengthen the relevance of self-efficacy in 21st-century learning. According to Lestari et al. (2023), self-efficacy plays a crucial role in enhancing students' ability to manage independent learning processes in online and hybrid learning (Lestari et al., 2024). Furthermore, research by Wang et al. (2022) found that self-efficacy acts as a strong predictor of academic achievement and learning engagement in digital environments (Wang & Wang, 2022). In another study, strengthening self-efficacy through the practice of reflective learning strategies can improve students' learning independence and academic resilience (Honicke & Broadbent, 2016; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022). These findings suggest that developing self-efficacy is not only important as an individual psychological variable but also strategic in supporting the successful implementation of independent learning policies such as Merdeka Belajar (Freedom to Learn) in Indonesia.

Self-regulated learning (SRL)

Self-regulated learning (SRL) is an active and constructive process in which individuals set their own learning goals and monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior in achieving those goals. According to Zimmerman (2000), SRL encompasses three main phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection, all of which occur continuously and involve metacognitive awareness, self-control, and internal motivation (Zimmerman, 1989, 2000). In the context of modern education, SRL is considered a crucial skill to support lifelong learning and learning independence, especially in digital-based or hybrid learning systems such as those implemented in the Merdeka Belajar policy. Recent research by Panadero (2017) shows that students with good SRL skills are more adaptive in choosing learning strategies, are able to manage their time effectively, and have higher academic resilience when facing pressure or difficulties (Panadero, 2017; Panadero & Broadbent, 2018). Furthermore, SRL is closely related to other psychological factors such as self-efficacy and mindset, which contribute to shaping students' mental readiness to take responsibility for their learning process (Jin et al., 2023). Therefore, strengthening SRL among students is not only part of developing cognitive competencies, but also the foundation of character education and sustainable learning independence.

Growth mindset

A growth mindset is the belief that a person's abilities and intelligence are not fixed, but can be developed through effort, appropriate strategies, and learning from experience. This concept was first introduced by Carol Dweck, who distinguished between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset, where individuals with a fixed mindset believe that intelligence is innate and unchangeable (C. S. Dweck & Leggett, 1988). In an educational context, a growth mindset plays a crucial role in fostering perseverance, persistence, and a positive response to failure. Students with a growth mindset tend to be more resilient, open to feedback, and able to view difficulties as challenges that can enhance their capacity. Recent research shows that a growth mindset contributes significantly to building self-efficacy and adaptive learning strategies, and influences learning engagement by increasing intrinsic motivation (He & Zhang, 2024). Furthermore, a growth mindset also acts as an indirect predictor of academic achievement through the mediation of metacognition and self-efficacy variables (Rammstedt et al., 2022, 2022). In a learning system that demands independence, such as Merdeka Belajar (Freedom to Learn), developing a growth mindset is crucial for equipping students with psychological resilience and self-confidence to manage their learning process independently and sustainably.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. This design was used to test the relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulated learning variables, as well as to examine the role of growth mindset as a mediating variable. This approach is considered relevant for explaining the direct and indirect influences between psychological variables in the context of student self-regulated learning in secondary schools (Ghanad, 2023; Walliman, 2021). The choice of a correlational design also allows for the analysis of causal relationships using advanced statistical methods such as path analysis.

Instrument

The research instrument used was a closed-ended questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." This instrument consists of three main sections, each representing a research variable. The self-efficacy scale was developed based on Bandura (2006) theory, which measures students' beliefs in their ability to complete tasks and face learning challenges. The self-regulated learning scale was developed referring to Zimmerman, (2000) three-phase model, namely planning (forethought), implementation (performance), and self-reflection, which describes students' ability to manage the learning process independently. Meanwhile, the growth mindset scale was developed based on Dweck & Leggett (1988) theory, which measures the extent to which students believe that intelligence and abilities can be improved through appropriate effort and strategies. All constructs have undergone content validity testing by experts in the fields of education and psychology, and their reliability was tested through limited trials. The results of the reliability test showed that all instruments had Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.7, indicating that the instruments have good internal consistency and are suitable for use in research data collection.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. To examine the relationships between variables and their mediating roles, path analysis was used using statistical SPSS software. Prior to the path analysis, the data were tested to ensure they met the assumptions of normality, linearity, and multicollinearity. The significance of the relationships between variables was determined at the 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to determine the effect of self-efficacy on self-regulated learning and to examine the role of growth mindset as a mediator in this relationship. Based on the results of a linear regression analysis conducted using SPSS, self-efficacy was found to have a positive effect on self-regulated learning, with a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.226 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.051. This indicates that self-efficacy contributes 5.1% to self-regulated learning, while the remaining 94.9% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study.

Table 1. Regression Results of Self-Efficacy on Self-Regulated Learning

Independent Variable	R	R^2	Significance (p)
Self-Efficacy	0.226	0.051	< 0.05

Next, a path analysis was conducted to test the mediation relationship by growth mindset. The regression results between self-efficacy and growth mindset show a coefficient value of $\alpha = 0.371$ with a standard error (SEa) of 0.138 and a significance value of $p = 0.028$, indicating a positive and significant effect of self-efficacy on growth mindset, as shown in the table:

Table 2. Regression Results of Self-Efficacy on Growth Mindset

Coefficient (a)	Sea	Significance (p)
0.371	0.138	0.028

Furthermore, the regression results of growth mindset on self-regulated learning yielded a coefficient value of $\beta = 0.234$, $SE\beta = 0.054$, and a significance value of $p = 0.001$, indicating that growth mindset also has a significant effect on self-regulated learning, as shown in the table:

Table 3. Regression Results of Growth Mindset on Self-Regulated Learning

Koefisien (b)	SEb	Significance (p)
0.234	0.054	0.001

The mediation test was conducted using the Sobel test, and the results showed a test statistic of 2.273, with a p-value of 0.023. Because the p-value is smaller than the 0.05 significance level, it can be concluded that growth mindset acts as a significant mediator in the relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulated learning, as shown in the table:

Table 4. Sobel Test Results (Mediating Effect)

Test Statistic (Z)	Standard Error	p-value
2.273	0.038	0.023

The overall multiple regression test yielded the following results:

Table 5. Multiple Regression Results
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.226 ^a	.051	.048	9.275	.051	16.988	1	316	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Efficacy

Thus, the alternative hypothesis in this study is accepted, namely that there is an indirect effect of self-efficacy on self-regulated learning through a growth mindset. This finding indicates that students with high self-efficacy tend to develop a growth mindset, which in turn encourages them to study independently and regularly. These results align with previous research showing that self-efficacy and a growth mindset play an important role in supporting students' learning independence.

The results of this study indicate a positive and significant influence between self-efficacy and self-regulated learning, with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.051, or 5.1%. This means that self-efficacy contributes 5.1% to students' independent learning abilities, while the remainder is influenced by other factors. This finding is consistent with [Bandura \(2006\)](#) theory, which states that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in guiding an individual's motivation, thinking, and actions in completing tasks and achieving

goals. Students who are confident in their abilities tend to demonstrate greater effort and persistence in learning.

Furthermore, the regression analysis showed that self-efficacy has a positive and significant influence on growth mindset, with a coefficient value of 0.371 and a significance level of $p = 0.028$. This indicates that students with high self-efficacy tend to develop a growth mindset. A growth mindset is the belief that abilities can be developed through effort, strategies, and learning from experience (C. Dweck, n.d.). Therefore, self-efficacy not only directly influences self-regulation but also forms a framework that supports adaptive and sustainable learning.

The effect of growth mindset on self-regulated learning was also proven significant, with a coefficient of 0.234 and a significance value of $p = 0.001$. This indicates that students who believe their abilities can develop through effort are better able to regulate, monitor, and evaluate their learning process independently. Previous research by Panadero also supports this finding, stating that growth mindset is closely related to metacognitive strategies and self-regulation in learning (Panadero, 2017; Panadero & Broadbent, 2018). Students with a growth mindset are more open to feedback and less likely to give up when facing academic difficulties.

The results of the mediation test using the Sobel test indicate that growth mindset can act as a mediator in the relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulated learning. The Sobel statistic value of 2.273 with a p-value of 0.023 (<0.05) confirms the statistical significance of the relationship. These findings reinforce Bandura's (2001) social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the importance of the interaction between personal factors (self-efficacy), behavior (learning strategies), and the environment (learning support) in developing effective learning behaviors (Bandura, 2006; Bandura & Wessels, 1994). In this case, a growth mindset acts as a psychological mechanism that bridges self-confidence with independent learning skills.

Practically, these results have important implications for education, particularly in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, which demands student learning independence. Educators need to strengthen students' self-efficacy through meaningful learning experiences, positive feedback, and appropriate challenges. Furthermore, educational interventions designed to foster a growth mindset have been shown to improve self-regulated learning skills who stated that the integration of a growth mindset and self-efficacy yields optimal results in independent learning (Gan et al., 2020).

Therefore, this research complements previous studies highlighting the importance of psychological variables in the learning process. Students with high self-efficacy and a developed growth mindset are better able to navigate learning challenges and take responsibility for their own academic progress. This aligns with the concluded that a growth mindset can be a significant intermediary in improving student well-being and learning persistence (Mutaharrikah & Wahidah, 2023; Wahidah et al., 2022). Therefore, efforts to improve the quality of education must involve both cognitive and affective aspects through learning strategies that build confidence and positive mindsets.

The Sobel test findings indicate that growth mindset significantly mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulated learning, with a Sobel statistic of 2.273 and a p-value of 0.023. This means that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy tend to develop a growth mindset, which then encourages them to engage in independent learning strategies. These results align with psychological mediation models, which suggest that self-confidence influences learning outcomes not only directly but also through intermediary cognitive and motivational variables (Zimmerman, 2000).

Then, Sobel test results provide strong evidence that growth mindset significantly mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulated learning. This means that individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs tend to develop a growth mindset, which

in turn facilitates more structured and goal-oriented independent learning behavior (self-regulated learning). This finding supports [Bandura's \(2001\)](#) argument in social cognitive theory, which emphasizes that behavior formation is influenced by the dynamic interaction between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors ([Bandura & Evans, 2006](#); [Crain, 2015](#)). In this case, self-efficacy acts as a personal factor that fosters confidence in one's ability to manage learning, while a growth mindset serves as a cognitive mechanism that strengthens learning intentions and resilience in the face of academic challenges ([C. S. Dweck & Leggett, 1988](#)).

Furthermore, the mediating role of a growth mindset in this model demonstrates the importance of interventions that not only foster students' self-confidence but also foster adaptive mindsets toward failure and challenges. Individuals with a growth mindset are better able to interpret obstacles as opportunities for learning, ultimately increasing intrinsic motivation and the use of planned learning strategies such as goal setting, progress monitoring, and self-reflection ([Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022](#); [Schunk & Zimmerman, 2023](#)). This aligns with Zimmerman's (2000) findings, which state that self-regulated learners are those who possess internal control over the learning process and are able to effectively manage their emotions and cognitive resources. Therefore, an educational approach that synergistically combines self-efficacy strengthening and growth mindset development will be more effective in fostering students' learning independence, especially in the context of 21st-century learning, which demands flexibility, resilience, and lifelong learning.

And the practical implications of these results suggest that interventions aimed at improving self-regulated learning in students need to simultaneously consider strengthening self-efficacy and developing a growth mindset. Teachers and learning facilitators can design programs that emphasize the importance of effort, reflection on mistakes, and the development of flexible learning strategies. These efforts not only enhance independent learning competency but also shape individuals who are more resilient in facing academic challenges ([Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022](#); [Schunk & Zimmerman, 2023](#)). Therefore, a growth mindset is not just a mental attitude but also a crucial psychological mechanism in the context of 21st-century learning.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that growth mindset plays a significant mediator in the relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulated learning. These findings indicate that an individual's belief in their abilities (self-efficacy) does not directly drive independent learning strategies, but rather is indirectly influenced through a growth mindset. In other words, the higher a person's self-confidence, the more likely they are to develop a mindset that abilities can be improved through effort and appropriate strategies, which ultimately strengthens planned, monitored, and reflective learning behaviors. The implications of these findings reinforce the relevance of social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the interaction between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors in shaping learning outcomes. Therefore, efforts to improve self-regulated learning in educational contexts need to be directed not only at enhancing self-efficacy but also at developing a growth mindset through learning strategies that foster a process-oriented approach, persistence, and resilience in the face of failure. This approach is crucial for developing independent, resilient learners who are able to adapt to the challenges of 21st-century learning.

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