

# The Role of Spiritual Intelligence And Self-Efficacy In Enhancing Elementary School Students' Academic Achievement: A Systematic Literature Review

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**Abstract.** Modern education often overemphasizes cognitive achievement, neglecting internal student factors crucial for holistic learning success. This study aims to deeply synthesize and analyze the synergistic role of spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy in enhancing the academic achievement of elementary school students. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, relevant articles from databases such as Google Scholar and Garuda were identified and analyzed through a rigorous selection process to map the existing evidence. The synthesis results reveal three main findings: (1) Self-efficacy consistently proves to be a strong predictor of academic achievement, functioning as the "I can" belief that motivates students to strive and persist. (2) Spiritual intelligence positively influences achievement by providing the foundational "why" students should learn, fostering meaning, purpose, and intrinsic motivation. (3) A significant reciprocal relationship exists, where spiritual intelligence can be the foundation that strengthens the development of resilient self-efficacy. It is concluded that the combination of spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy creates an optimal internal psychological ecosystem for academic achievement. The implication of this finding is the urgent need for a shift towards a more holistic pedagogy in elementary schools, one that not only hones intellectual aspects but also consciously cultivates students' spiritual dimensions and self-beliefs to create a complete learning system.

**Keywords:** Self-Efficacy, Systematic Literature Review, Spiritual Intelligence, Academic Achievement, Elementary School

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is an essential foundation for the progress of a nation's civilization. In the educational process, student academic achievement serves as a primary benchmark of success, reflecting knowledge absorption and competency development. However, achieving optimal academic achievement is a complex process that does not depend solely on intellectual intelligence. Various studies consistently show that students' academic success is also influenced by a range of non-cognitive internal factors, including spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy.

Spiritual intelligence, as one internal factor, plays a crucial role in shaping a student's personal foundation (Imamuddin, Isnaniah, & Ismail, n.d.). This concept refers to an individual's capacity to find meaning and value in their life, which then enables them to place every action within a broader, meaningful context (Hilman, 2024). Within education, spiritual intelligence serves as a bridge directing students toward positive and constructive behaviors (Afrianti & Imamuddin, 2022). The development of this aspect, whether through teachers' instructional strategies or the implementation of a religious culture at school, is believed to foster higher learning motivation in students (Zahrudin et al., 2021).

On the other hand, another equally important psychological factor is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief a person holds about their ability to succeed in carrying out a task or achieving a specific goal. This belief functions as a powerful internal motivator for achieving good performance (Fatmi, Asrin, & Nurmawanti, 2024). Low self-belief, as often found in students facing certain subjects, can become a significant barrier to achieving high performance (Rahmawati & Astriani, 2024). Therefore, self-efficacy becomes a determining variable that influences students' persistence, effort, and resilience in facing academic challenges.

Although both are often studied separately, several studies have begun to indicate a connection between spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy. Research by Septiarinda and Lukitoaji (2023) specifically examined the relationship between these two variables in elementary school students, showing that the spiritual dimension can contribute to building a child's foundation of self-confidence. Based on this understanding, this review aims to systematically examine various scientific literature to synthesize and map the central roles of spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy, both independently and in their correlation, in the effort to improve student academic achievement at the elementary school level.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this scientific article is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). Through the SLR method, the researcher reviews and identifies related articles in a structured and systematic manner. The literature search process was conducted through digital databases such as Google Scholar, Garuda, and SINTA using keyword combinations: ("spiritual intelligence" OR "kecerdasan spiritual") AND ("self-efficacy" OR "efikasi diri") AND ("academic achievement" OR "prestasi belajar") AND ("elementary school" OR "sekolah dasar"). Inclusion criteria included journal articles published in the last 7 years (2018-2025) within the elementary school context that were accessible in full-text. Exclusion criteria included non-journal publications (books, theses) and research outside the elementary school context.

Data analysis used thematic synthesis to identify patterns and weave findings from the literature matrix into a coherent narrative argument. This approach is based on research by Chalkiadaki (2018), who views the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) as an essential method for synthesizing academic literature reliably and accurately. The approach aligns with a systematic process that requires a researcher to follow a series of carefully defined steps. The process begins with identification, setting specific selection criteria, and searching relevant literature. Next, a review and in-depth evaluation of the found articles are conducted through phased screening to ensure only the most relevant studies are included. The final stage is

interpretation, where findings from all selected studies are critically synthesized to answer the research question and generate comprehensive conclusions.

In this study, the researcher collected data from 20 scientific articles, comprising 7 articles on the positive relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement, 3 articles on the positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and academic achievement, 4 articles on the relationship between spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy, and 6 articles on strategies and interventions to develop spiritual intelligence (SQ) and self-efficacy (SE). These article sources came from national and international journals via Google Scholar and Garuda. The reviewed articles ranged from 2018 to 2025 and were relevant to the topic discussed, namely the role of spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy in enhancing the academic achievement of elementary school students. Each article used was analyzed and tabulated in a table, which included the author's name, journal title, and their research results. This scientific article then discusses the findings from the reviewed articles, compares them, and draws conclusions based on the analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The systematic literature review process identified a number of relevant articles which were then grouped into four tables. Table 1 discusses the positive relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement.

One of the most consistent and prominent findings from this literature analysis is the crucial positive relationship between self-efficacy and student academic achievement. This finding is not only generally applicable but also proven relevant and significant in the context of elementary education in Indonesia. An international-scale systematic literature review by Manzano-Sánchez et al. (2018) concluded emphatically that there is a significant positive relationship between students' self-beliefs and their academic performance at all education levels. This global consensus provides a solid theoretical foundation that self-efficacy is one of the main psychological predictors of a student's academic success.

This universal finding resonates in various empirical studies conducted on elementary school students in Indonesia. A quantitative study by Ningrum and Rahmawati (2022), for instance, specifically highlighted a positive and significant influence of self-efficacy on students' mathematics learning achievement, even when facing the challenges of online learning. This indicates that belief in one's own ability is essential psychological capital for students to remain resilient and achieve in the midst of changing learning modalities. In line with these findings,

correlational research by Fatmi, Asrin, and Nurmawanti (2024) also confirmed a positive relationship between self-efficacy and the academic achievement of fourth-grade students. Both studies quantitatively strengthen the argument that the higher the level of self-efficacy possessed by students, the greater their chances of achieving optimal learning outcomes.

Findings from Ningsih & Hayati (2020) identify self-efficacy as a strong predictor for academic achievement. This study, which specifically highlighted the context of mathematics—a subject often considered difficult—provides clear confirmation that self-efficacy has a positive and significant impact on learning outcomes. Interestingly, the findings of Anitasari et al. (2021) offer a crucial new perspective: self-efficacy not only encourages positive achievement but also actively *prevents* negative academic behaviors such as cheating. This strengthens the argument that self-efficacy functions as a foundation for academic resilience, where students who believe in their abilities tend to choose honest work strategies rather than dishonest shortcuts. The findings from Novanto et al. (2024) provide further empirical reinforcement, affirming the positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement. This study, conducted in the context of science (IPA) learning, confirmed that students' belief in their abilities (self-efficacy) is an important predictor of their success in understanding academic concepts.

Beyond mere statistics, the manifestation of self-efficacy in students' daily learning behaviors provides a more vivid and in-depth picture. Qualitative research by Rahmawati and Astriani (2024) successfully captured this phenomenon in the classroom. They found that students with high learning outcomes consistently demonstrated high levels of self-efficacy. These students tended to be more persistent, viewed difficulties as challenges to be overcome, and did not give up easily when facing failure. Conversely, students with lower academic achievement often showed doubt in their own abilities, tended to avoid tasks perceived as difficult, and felt discouraged more quickly. This confirms that self-efficacy is not just passive self-confidence, but a dynamic belief that actively influences the level of effort, persistence, and problem-solving strategies used by students.

Overall, the convergence of evidence—from international systematic reviews to local quantitative and qualitative studies—paints a coherent picture that self-efficacy functions as a fundamental psychological asset in the learning process. The "I can" belief becomes an internal trigger that motivates students to exert their full cognitive potential. Without this belief, the intellectual potential students possess may never be fully actualized. Therefore, self-

efficacy can be seen as a vital bridge connecting students' potential and capabilities with tangible, measurable academic achievement.

**Table 1.** The Positive Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Academic Achievement

| No. | Journal  | Author  | Research Findings  |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 1.  | Prima Magistra: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan                     | Pramesthi Ningrum, Rina Dyah Rahmawati  | There is a positive influence of self-efficacy on the mathematics learning achievement of elementary school students during the online learning period.  |
| 2.  | INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research                 | Indi Rahmawati, Linda Astriani  | Students with high and moderate learning outcomes have fairly high levels of self-efficacy. Conversely, students with low learning outcomes show levels of self-efficacy that tend to be quite low.                          |
| 3.  | GeoScienceEd: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sains, Geologi, dan Geofisika | Hidayatul Fatmi, Asrin, Iva Nurmawanti  | There is a significant and positive relationship between self-efficacy and learning motivation with the learning achievement of fourth-grade students.   |
| 4.  | Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences                        | Harold Manzano-Sanchez, Corliss Outley, Jorge E. Gonzalez, David Matarrita-Cascante | A significant positive relationship was found between self-efficacy beliefs and academic performance in Latina/o students at all educational levels.   |
| 5.  | JOURNAL ON TEACHER EDUCATION (JOTE)                            | Ningsih, W. F., & Hayati, I. R. (2020)  | Analyzed the impact of self-efficacy on mathematics learning processes and outcomes. Concluded that self-efficacy has a positive and significant impact on student learning outcomes.  |
| 6.  | Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Pendidikan                              | Anitasari, et al. (2021)  | Self-efficacy negatively affects cheating behavior in elementary school students during online learning. Shows that high self-efficacy reduces negative academic behaviors (like cheating) which correlate with achievement. |

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| 7. | Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Indonesia | Novanto, Y. S., Djudin, T., Yani T, A., & Murdani, E. (2024) | There is a significant influence of self-efficacy on the concept comprehension ability (academic achievement) in science (IPA) for Grade IV students. The POE learning model was also found to be influential. |
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Table 2 presents several research articles on the positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and student academic achievement that have been analyzed. These findings affirm that non-cognitive factors, particularly those related to a student's ability to find meaning in their learning experiences, play an undeniable role in academic attainment.

Quantitative research by Afrianti and Imamuddin (2022) empirically proves a direct influence of spiritual intelligence on mathematics learning outcomes. This statistical evidence indicates that spiritual intelligence is not merely an abstract philosophical concept, but a psychological construct with a real, measurable impact on students' ability to absorb and master subject matter, even in domains often considered the most logical and rational.

The mechanism behind this positive influence is further explained through the theoretical review presented by Imamuddin, Isnaniah, and Ismail (n.d.). They argue that the primary role of spiritual intelligence lies not in directly enhancing intellectual capacity, but in its function as a fundamental catalyst for learning motivation. Students with higher levels of spiritual intelligence tend to have richer and deeper sources of intrinsic motivation. For them, the process of seeking knowledge is no longer seen as an external obligation or a burden, but transforms into a personal journey full of meaning and purpose. This ability to place learning activities within a broader framework of meaning becomes the fuel for students' diligence and persistence in facing academic challenges.

The findings of Basuki (2015) provide additional empirical support for the positive influence of spiritual intelligence on academic achievement, particularly in mathematics. This finding is important as it complements previous studies by showing that spiritual intelligence also functions as a driver of *learning motivation*. This suggests that spiritual intelligence (SQ) not only provides meaning (the "why" dimension) but also directly fuels the motivation ("drive") to succeed academically.

Furthermore, spiritual intelligence plays a role in shaping students' *mindset* towards the learning process itself. As revealed by Afrianti and Imamuddin (2022), spiritual intelligence can bridge student behavior towards a more positive direction. Students with good spiritual intelligence are better able to see difficulties and failures not as the end, but as an integral part of personal growth and maturation. This resilient perspective allows them to bounce back from failure, learn from mistakes, and continue striving with optimism. Thus, spiritual intelligence equips students with mental and emotional toughness, which in turn creates an internal condition highly conducive to achieving brilliant academic performance.

**Table 2.** The Positive Relationship between Spiritual Intelligence and Academic Achievement

| No. | Journal | Author | Research Findings |
|-----|---------|--------|-------------------|
|-----|---------|--------|-------------------|

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|----|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Lattice Journal:<br>Journal of<br>Mathematics<br>Education and<br>Applied | Afrianti, M.<br>Imamuddin         | There is a significant influence of students' spiritual intelligence on their mathematics learning outcomes. The higher the level of spiritual intelligence, the better the mathematics learning outcomes. |
| 2. | FIKROTUNA;<br>Jurnal<br>Pendidikan dan<br>Manajemen<br>Islam              | M. Imamuddin,<br>Isnaniah, Ismail | Students' spiritual intelligence has an important role in mathematics learning, as it can influence learning motivation, anxiety, literacy, problem-solving abilities, and learning achievement.           |
| 3. | Jurnal Formatif   | Kasih Haryo Basuki<br>(2015)      | There is a significant direct influence of spiritual intelligence on mathematics academic achievement. Spiritual intelligence also has an indirect effect through learning motivation.                     |

Table 3 presents several research articles on the relationship between spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy that have been analyzed. A key finding in this review is the identification of a synergistic relationship between spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy. These dimensions—which might initially seem to operate in separate realms (one in the transcendental and meaning of life, the other in the belief in one's own capabilities)—are, in fact, interwoven and mutually reinforcing.

Quantitative research by Septiarinda and Lukitoaji (2023) provides crucial empirical evidence for this. Their study explicitly tested and found a positive and significant correlation between the level of spiritual intelligence and the self-efficacy of fourth-grade elementary school students. This finding provides scientific justification that these two psychological constructs do not stand alone but interact dynamically within the student. Specifically, Farida & Badrus (2019) and Sundari (2016) introduce variables that enrich our understanding. They found that spiritual intelligence, *along with* social intelligence and creativity, contributes to self-efficacy. This suggests that self-efficacy is not built in a vacuum; rather, it is the product of a holistic internal ecosystem where the ability to find meaning (SQ), connect with others (Social Intelligence), and think flexibly (Creativity) are interrelated to build the "I Can" belief.

Conceptually, this relationship can be understood as a process where spiritual intelligence functions as the foundation or root that supports and nurtures self-efficacy. Spiritual

intelligence equips students with a source of internal strength and resilience that cannot be replicated by external factors alone. The ability to find wisdom behind difficulties, view failure as a valuable part of the learning process, and believe in a power greater than oneself, provides students with extraordinary mental toughness. This solid mental foundation then becomes fertile ground for the growth of strong self-belief, or self-efficacy.

When a student faces an academic challenge, such as a complex math problem or a task demanding high creativity, a student with low spiritual intelligence might easily feel intimidated and doubt their abilities, directly eroding their self-efficacy. Conversely, a student whose spiritual intelligence is well-developed has a different framework. They are better able to frame the challenge positively, perhaps as an opportunity to grow or as a "test" that will make them stronger. This optimistic and meaningful outlook on life effectively protects their self-efficacy from fragility. Thus, it can be concluded that the development of a student's spiritual dimension not only impacts character and moral formation but also inherently builds and strengthens their psychological capital—in this case, self-efficacy—to succeed in the academic realm.

**Table 3.** The Relationship Between Spiritual Intelligence and Self-Efficacy

| No. | Journal  | Author   | Research Findings   |
|-----|--|--|---|
| 1.  | Jurnal PGSD Indonesia                              | Nina Eggi Septiarinda, Beny Dwi Lukitoaji          | There is a positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy in fourth-grade students at SDN Se-gugus 02 Banguntapan Bantul.   |
| 2.  | Jurnal Ekonomi dan Dakwah Islam (Al-Tsiqoh)        | Sundari (2016)                                     | Spiritual intelligence has a significant effect on student self-efficacy. In addition, creativity also affects self-efficacy.   |
| 3.  | Jurnal Keperawatan Padjadjaran                     | Wantiyah, Wiwit Ulansari, Fitrio Deviantony (2020) | There is a significant correlation between spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy in patients with Coronary Artery Disease. (Although the context is health, this supports the construct relationship). |
| 4.  | Intelektual: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Studi Keislaman | Ullin Nuril Farida, Badrus (2019)                  | There is a positive relationship between the level of spiritual intelligence and social intelligence on the self-efficacy of Grade XI students at MAN 4 Madiun.   |

Table 4 presents several research articles on strategies and interventions for developing spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy that have been analyzed. The acknowledgment of the important roles of spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy naturally demands the formulation of conscious and structured strategies and interventions. The development of these two internal constructs is not a coincidental process, but the result of deliberate pedagogical efforts, both in the school and home environments. Analysis of the existing literature highlights the importance of a multi-faceted approach involving various parties in a supportive educational ecosystem.

In the educational institution realm, developing students' spiritual intelligence relies heavily on teacher strategies and the implementation of a religious culture at school. Research by Hilman (2024) underscores the central role of teachers in instilling spiritual values through various strategies, such as setting an example (*keteladanan*), habituation, and integrating these values into the learning process. This approach is reinforced by the findings of Zahrudin et al. (2021), which show that the consistent implementation of a religious culture, such as communal worship and instilling noble morals in every interaction, is effective in enhancing students' spiritual intelligence. The school, in this case, functions not only as a place for knowledge transfer but also as a vehicle for character building and spiritual forging. The findings of Nuryana & Ladamay (2025) highlight the central role of teachers (in this case, Islamic Education teachers) as motivators and role models in integrating spiritual values into the curriculum. This provides practical evidence that SQ development is not an abstract concept but can be actively taught and fostered through deliberate pedagogy in the school environment.

However, efforts at school will not reach their optimum point without synergy with the home environment. The role of parents in developing a child's spiritual intelligence is fundamental and irreplaceable. As affirmed by Afero, Setiawan, and Tamami (2024), parents are the "first madrasa" (first school) for a child. It is within the family that the first foundations regarding the concept of God, moral values, and the meaning of life are laid. Therefore, harmonious collaboration between school and home is a necessity. Parental involvement in supporting and continuing spiritual development programs initiated by the school will create a holistic and mutually reinforcing educational ecosystem, as the concept of spiritual intelligence in elementary school-aged children, described by Syahnaz, Widiandari, and Khoiri (2023), includes awareness of God, the ability to distinguish right from wrong, and gratitude.

Meanwhile, in the context of developing self-efficacy, more structured and academically-oriented interventions can be applied. Quasi-experimental research by Sides and Cuevas (2020) tested the effectiveness of a goal-setting intervention on elementary school students. Their results showed that involving students in setting clear achievement targets and monitoring their progress periodically successfully improved academic performance, particularly in mathematics multiplication fluency. This finding provides valuable practical implications for teachers to empower students in taking ownership of their learning process.

Nonetheless, the same study also presents an important note worthy of reflection. The eight-week goal-setting intervention did not show a statistically significant impact on increasing students' motivation or self-efficacy. This provides a deeper understanding that building complex psychological constructs like self-efficacy is a long-term process. A momentary increase in performance does not automatically transform into stronger self-belief. This process likely requires more sustainable intervention that touches upon other sources of self-efficacy formation, such as providing consistent mastery experiences, strengthening verbal persuasion, and creating a psychologically safe learning environment.

**Table 4.** Strategies and Interventions to Develop Spiritual Intelligence and Self-Efficacy

| No. | Journal   | Author  | Research Findings   |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 1.  | Asatiza: Jurnal Pendidikan                                      | Ma'mun Zahrudin, Shalahudin Ismail, Uus Ruswandi, Bambang Samsul Arifin | The implementation of a religious culture at school (through habituation, example, advice, and regulations) is proven effective in increasing students' spiritual intelligence.     |
| 2.  | RUKASI: Jurnal Ilmiah Perkembangan Penedidikan dan Pembelajaran | Hilman  | This research analyzes the spiritual values instilled by teachers and the strategies used to develop students' spiritual intelligence in a madrasa (Islamic elementary school).     |
| 3.  | International Journal of Instruction                            | Jacklyne D. Sides, Joshua A. Cuevas                                     | Goal setting was found to improve student performance in math multiplication, but no significant impact was found on the motivation or self-efficacy of elementary school students. |

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| 4. | Jurnal Parenting dan Anak                  | Farok Afero, Bahar Agus Setiawan, Badrut Tamami      | Parents play a very crucial role in developing a child's spiritual intelligence because they are the first and foremost educators for the child.   |
| 5. | Risalah: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Studi Islam | Assya Syahnaz, Febri Widiandari, Nailurrohmah Khoiri | Spiritual intelligence is an important foundation that supports and optimizes intellectual intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ).  |
| 6. | TADARUS: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam           | Nuryana, Ode Mohamad Man Arfa Ladamay (2025)         | Analyzes the role of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers as educators, motivators, and role models in developing students' spiritual intelligence through integrating spiritual values in the curriculum and interactive activities (worship practices, social activities). |

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## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the synthesis of the reviewed literature, it can be concluded that spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy play synergistic and significant roles in enhancing the academic achievement of elementary school students. Self-efficacy functions as an action catalyst, encouraging students to strive and persist (the "I can" dimension), while spiritual intelligence provides the framework of meaning and purpose underlying that effort (the "why I must be able to" dimension). The two do not operate independently but are mutually reinforcing; mature spiritual intelligence is proven to be a foundation for the growth of resilient self-efficacy. Therefore, ignoring one of these aspects in the educational process means creating an incomplete system, one that might produce students who are academically smart but mentally and spiritually fragile.

The implications of this review are clear: elementary educational institutions need to adopt a more holistic approach. Teachers and policymakers are advised not only to focus on teaching methods that hone cognition but also to actively design and implement strategies to cultivate students' spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy. This can be realized through the habituation of a religious culture in schools, the integration of spiritual values into learning, and the application of techniques such as goal setting and providing positive feedback that builds self-belief.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct quantitative studies that test a model of the simultaneous influence of these two variables on academic achievement, or action research that tests the effectiveness of specific interventions to improve both concurrently.

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