


The role of social learning and social support in reducing academic anxiety and enhancing achievement motivation among students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the contribution of social learning and social support to reducing academic anxiety and stimulating achievement motivation in Elementary School Teacher Education students. The method used is a quantitative correlational approach involving a total of 150 undergraduate students selected through proportional random sampling. The Likert scale instruments used included social learning, social support, academic anxiety, and student achievement motivation. Data analysis used in this study is multiple regression and mediation with the aim of testing the direct and indirect relationships between variables. The research findings provide information that social learning significantly reduces academic anxiety and increases student achievement motivation. Other findings of the research show that social support has a direct and significant effect on increasing achievement motivation and functions as a partial mediator in the relationship between social learning and achievement motivation. Data analysis of academic anxiety also shows a negative effect on achievement motivation, indicating that academic anxiety becomes a psychological barrier to optimal academic achievement. The results of this study also demonstrate the central role of collaborative learning environments and mutually supportive social interactions in improving the emotional well-being and increasing the motivation of student teachers. The practical implications of this research for higher education institutions highlight the need to strengthen peer learning structures, mentoring systems, and socio-emotional support services. This study also contributes to the relevant literature by integrating social learning theory and social support theory in the context of elementary school teacher education. Furthermore, this study provides comprehensive data to understand how social and psychological factors can work together to shape students' academic motivation.

Keywords: social learning, social support, academic anxiety, achievement motivation

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of learning dynamics in higher education often requires the attention of academics and practitioners to better understand the psychological processes that greatly influence students' academic achievement. Some potential psychological variables for research include academic anxiety, social learning, social support, and achievement motivation, which are considered central to the development of contemporary education (Firdania & Eryani, 2022; Fitriani et al., 2020). The need to support increasingly student-centered learning also implies the need for deeper skills and insights into patterns of social interaction and emotional support that are affective and motivate students. (Hasan et al., 2023; Rahayu et al., 2020). This expectation is relevant in the context of elementary school teacher education, which strives to equip students not only to excel in the realm of academic competence but also to be equipped with emotional resilience and strong interpersonal skills as prospective professional educators for the future.

Various realities at universities in Indonesia show that students' academic anxiety is increasing year after year. Academic anxiety is typically characterized by feelings of tension, worry, and anxiety. This is often triggered by academic demands, such as exams, coursework, and evaluations (Azhari et al., 2022). Students in a highly competitive, results-driven environment often experience pressure to achieve high grades and maintain academic excellence. This leads to stress, which often places a greater psychological burden on the students. Elementary School Teacher Education students also frequently face dual pressures related to academic responsibilities and the pressure to master pedagogical skills in elementary school teaching practices. If not properly addressed, these pressures can disrupt learning performance, reduce concentration, and diminish students' self-confidence. Furthermore, they can lead to increasingly passive participation in academic activities.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1997) is one of the foundations that provides an important conceptual framework for understanding the reality of students in acquiring knowledge, attitudes, and behavior through observation, imitation, and modeling in a social context (Ansani & Samsir, 2022; Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018; Manik et al., 2022). Bandura argued that individuals learn not only through direct experience but also by observing others and understanding the consequences of their actions. When correlated with the educational reality of prospective elementary school teachers, this concept is reflected in the relationships between students learning from lecturers and peers through collaborative activities, group discussions, microteaching sessions, and field practice. This social process is expected to help build strong self-efficacy and pedagogical skills and support the development of adaptive coping strategies to address academic stress (Lewis et al., 2021; Theelen et al., 2022). Therefore, social learning is believed to reduce academic anxiety by strengthening self-confidence and encouraging collective support among students.

Furthermore, social support plays a crucial role in reducing academic stress and anxiety experienced by students. According to Cohen (2004), social support includes the provision of psychological resources and guidance aimed at helping individuals manage stress. This support can take various forms, including emotional encouragement, personal guidance and appreciation. For elementary school teacher education students, social support can come from lecturers, classmates, family members, or the campus community. Relevant research shows that individuals who receive strong social support tend to experience lower stress and anxiety, along with higher learning motivation, compared to individuals who receive less support from their social environment (Drageset, 2021; Gottlieb & Bergen, 2010). However, studies examining social support and social learning and their correlation with academic anxiety and student achievement motivation are still limited. This is especially true in Indonesia, a country known for its diverse and collectivist culture.

Achievement motivation is a fundamental psychological factor that supports students in achieving academic success. McClelland (1975) defined achievement motivation as an internal drive to achieve excellence, overcome challenges, and gain recognition for one's abilities. Students with high levels of achievement motivation typically demonstrate persistence, initiative, and a results-oriented mindset. Achievement motivation not only influences academic outcomes but also shapes the quality of pedagogical competence and professional identity of future educators (Werdhiastutie et al., 2020). However,

achievement motivation can be further degraded if students experience high levels of academic anxiety, lack adequate social support, or are not actively involved in collaborative learning.

Although research has been conducted on the relationship between these variables, a conceptual gap remains in understanding how social learning and social support simultaneously influence academic anxiety and achievement motivation. Most previous studies have examined these variables independently. (Puspitasari et al., 2021; Ramadona & Monika, 2023). For example, Bandura's theory emphasizes the formation of behavior and self-efficacy through social observation, whereas Cohen's framework emphasizes the protective function of social support against stress. However, the integration of these two perspectives in teacher education has rarely been studied in depth. Furthermore, research on academic anxiety is limited to students in science, engineering, and medical programs, providing little empirical evidence for correlations with elementary school teacher education students.

Based on the various studies and data found, this study focuses on analyzing the role of social learning and social support in reducing academic anxiety and increasing achievement motivation in elementary school teacher education students. More specifically, this study aims to examine several issues, including a) the influence of social learning on academic anxiety, b) the influence of social learning on achievement motivation, c) the influence of social support on achievement motivation, and d) the mediating role of social support in the relationship between social learning and achievement motivation.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational survey design. The primary objective of this design was to examine the direct and indirect effects of social learning, social support, academic anxiety, and achievement motivation on elementary school teacher education students' academic performance.

2.1. Population and Sample

The population in this study comprised all students of the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program at Sari Mutiara Indonesia University in the 2024/2025 academic year. The sample consisted of 150 students selected using proportional random sampling. The inclusion criteria required that participants be active students who had completed at least two semesters of study.

2.2. Research Instruments

This research will obtain data from four main instruments: 1) the Social Learning Scale (adapted from Vrieling et al., 2016), (2) the Social Support Scale (Gottlieb & Bergen, 2010), (3) the Academic Anxiety Scale (Hooda & Saini, 2017), and (4) the Achievement Motivation Scale (McClelland, 1975). All instruments in this study used a five-point Likert-type response format, with scores ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Furthermore, instrument validity was checked using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

2.3. Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained will be analyzed using multiple regression analysis to assess the direct relationship between the variables. Mediation analysis will also be conducted following Baron and Kenny's procedure to determine the role of social support as a mediating factor. Prior to the main analysis, classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity) will be performed to ensure statistical suitability. These analyses will be performed using SPSS version 26.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Research Findings

3.1.1. Data Description

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the four main variables: social learning (X_1), social support (X_2), academic anxiety (Y_1), and achievement motivation (Y_2).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables (N = 150)

Variable	Mean	SD	Category	Score Range
Social Learning	4.15	0.47	High	1–5
Social Support	4.07	0.52	High	1–5
Academic Anxiety	2.78	0.61	Moderate	1–5
Achievement Motivation	4.22	0.45	High	1–5

Table 1 clearly shows that most students have high levels of social learning and social support, while academic anxiety is moderate. Achievement motivation also fell within the high category. This indicates that students generally exhibit high enthusiasm for learning, coupled with a desire to excel academically. These results indicate that the learning environment in this course effectively fosters collaborative learning experiences and provides adequate social support for students.

3.1.2. Test of Validity and Reliability

Construct validity was assessed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). All items in the four variables achieved factor loadings above 0.60, with a significance level below 0.05. These results indicate satisfactory item validity. Reliability testing also yielded high Cronbach's alpha values. The data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Instrument Reliability Test Results

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Criteria
Social Learning	12	0.89	Reliable
Social Support	10	0.87	Reliable
Academic Anxiety	8	0.85	Reliable
Achievement Motivation	10	0.91	Reliable

All alpha values exceeded 0.70. This is significant and confirms the strong internal consistency of each instrument.

3.1.3. Corelation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships between variables. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix

Variable	X_1	X_2	Y_1	Y_2
Social Learning (X_1)	1	0.63**	-0.41**	0.58**
Social Support (X_2)		1	-0.36**	0.55**
Academic Anxiety (Y_1)			1	-0.48**
Achievement Motivation (Y_2)				1

Note: $p < 0.01$ (* indicates high significance).

Table 3 shows that social learning is positively and significantly correlated with social support ($r = 0.63$) and achievement motivation ($r = 0.58$) but negatively correlated with academic anxiety ($r = -0.41$).

Furthermore, the results also indicate that academic anxiety is negatively correlated with achievement motivation ($r = -0.48$). This suggests that higher anxiety is strongly associated with lower motivation levels.

3.1.4. Analysis of Multiple Regression

Multiple regression was used in the data analysis of this study to assess the direct influence of social learning on academic anxiety and achievement motivation, as well as to review the extent of the influence of social support on achievement motivation. See Table 4.

Table 4. Multiple Regression Results

Relationship	β	t	Sig.	Description
Social Learning → Academic Anxiety	-0.37	-4.82	0.000	Significant
Social Learning → Achievement Motivation	0.41	5.26	0.000	Significant
Social Support → Achievement Motivation	0.35	4.98	0.000	Significant
Academic Anxiety → Achievement Motivation	-0.28	-3.47	0.001	Significant

These findings indicate that social learning significantly reduces academic anxiety and positively increases achievement motivation in elementary school teacher education students. The social support variable also positively contributes to achievement motivation, while academic anxiety has a negative effect.

3.1.5. Mediating Testing: The Role of Social Support

The Sobel test used in this study was to assess whether social support mediates the relationship between social learning and achievement motivation in elementary school teacher education students.

Table 5. Mediation Test (Sobel Test)

Mediation Path	Z-value	Sig. (p)	Description
Social Learning → Social Support → Achievement Motivation	3.47	0.001	Partial Mediation

Mediation analysis (Table 5) on the variables of this study showed that social support significantly mediated the relationship, although the direct influence of social learning on achievement motivation remained significant, thus confirming partial mediation.

3.1.6. Final Research Model

The final empirical model provides several important points regarding various relationships, including: (1) Social learning reduces academic anxiety, (2) Social learning promotes achievement motivation, both directly and indirectly through social support, (3) Social support serves as a psychological foundation that also strengthens the relationship between social learning and achievement motivation, (4) Academic anxiety acts as a inhibiting factor that reduces students' achievement motivation.

The structural model explained an R^2 value of 0.52 for achievement motivation. This indicates that 52% of the variance is influenced by social learning, social support, and academic anxiety. The remaining 48% likely stems from other factors, such as personality traits, academic climate, or individual learning strategies.

Simply put, the results of this study emphasize that the combination of effective social learning and strong social support contributes to a conducive academic environment that enhances achievement motivation and reduces anxiety in elementary school teacher education students. This model reinforces the importance of the social and emotional dimensions of learning, especially for prospective teachers preparing to enter the world of education.

3.2. Discussion

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the social and psychological mechanisms influencing academic anxiety and achievement motivation among students in the Elementary School Teacher Education program. The results indicate that social learning has a significant negative effect on academic anxiety and a significant positive effect on achievement motivation. Furthermore, social support acts as a mediating variable, strengthening the impact of social learning on achievement motivation. Simply put, this suggests that students who actively interact socially and receive strong social support tend to exhibit lower levels of academic anxiety and higher levels of achievement motivation.

3.2.1. Social Learning as a Reduction Mechanism for Academic Anxiety

The results of the study which show that social learning has a negative impact on academic anxiety are in line with the Social Learning Theory presented by Bandura (1997). Bandura proposed that individuals continually strive to develop self-efficacy through observing the success of others (indirect experience) and direct social interactions. When elementary school teacher education students observe their peers successfully completing academic assignments, they develop the belief that they too can succeed. This sense of efficacy indirectly helps reduce the fear of failure and the stressful emotional feelings associated with academic demands.

Some student activities include group discussions, microteaching, and collaborative classroom practice. These activities create a safe and conducive environment for elementary school teacher education students to learn from the mistakes and experiences of others (Firdania & Eryani, 2022; Fitriani et al., 2020). The presence of such interactions is believed to increase collective efficacy and reduce the anxiety that students often feel regarding academic assignments. As stated by Koutroubas and Galanakis (2022), positive social interactions contribute to improved self-regulation and more adaptive emotional management for students (Miranda et al., 2024; Rahayu et al., 2020). This study aligns with the well-established perspective that social learning can serve as an effective and efficient psychological mechanism to reduce the academic anxiety often felt by prospective teachers. This pressure is a dual pressure related to academic and professional expectations.

Accordingly, these results are consistent with Dlouhá et al. (2013) who found that elements of social learning (such as collaborative projects, communication, cooperation, behavior, and reflection) contribute significantly to the development of a socially based and sustainable learning environment. Students who actively communicate and collaborate to solve a problem are not only cognitively engaged but also receive emotional support from the interaction. Such environments have been shown to reduce stress and anxiety, particularly in learning environments that require intensive interpersonal engagement, including in elementary school teacher education.

3.2.2. Social Support as a Psychological Mediaton

This study found that social support mediates the relationship between social learning and achievement motivation, thus carrying important theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this finding confirms Cohen (2004) social support theory suggests that social support plays a fundamental role in mitigating the negative effects of stress and anxiety. Students who receive emotional support from lecturers, peers, and the campus environment tend to experience significantly lower stress levels and greater intrinsic motivation (Jia & Cheng, 2022; Lixing & Caiga, 2024). Social support will increase the sense of psychological security, so that individuals can focus on self-development and academic achievement without fear of negative evaluation or failure (Zahid et al., 2025).

Empirically, these findings align with Drageset (2021) and Gottlieb & Bergen (2010), who reported that the quality of social relationships is positively correlated with mental well-being and academic achievement. When viewed from the perspective of the educational environment, elementary school teachers have found that supportive guidance and constructive feedback from lecturers are recognized as being able to increase student competence and autonomy and are key components of student achievement motivation (McClelland, 1975). Furthermore, peer support strengthens a sense of belonging and serves as a fundamental element of social motivation.

Effective social support not only provides emotional comfort but also provides information, such as constructive learning advice and strategies. For example, students who receive guidance on time management or exam preparation from peers or professors will be more prepared to face academic challenges (Gunawan et al., 2022; Ramadona & Monika, 2023). This is also supported by the argument that the effectiveness of social support does not depend on the quantity of interactions but rather depends on the quality of collaboration and empathy in the student's interactions (Kramer & Hsieh, 2021). Therefore, the existence of meaningful and contextually relevant support is a fundamental foundation for strengthening achievement motivation among elementary school teacher education students.

3.2.3. Social Learning and Achievement Motivation

Temuan dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran sosial secara nyata berdampak positif terhadap motivasi berprestasi siswa. Hal ini selaras dengan pernyataan McClelland yang mengemukakan bahwa motivasi berprestasi dibentuk oleh pengalaman sosial yang menumbuhkan nilai-nilai keunggulan dan kompetensi (McClelland, 1975). Students who learn in a supportive social environment tend to develop higher aspirations due to the competition, social recognition, and academic achievement.

Social learning also helps students internalize positive behavioral models by observing peers or professors who demonstrate superior academic achievement (Hidayat & Ramli, 2019; Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018; Humeijia, 2021). This clearly demonstrates that success can be achieved optimally through effort rather than innate ability. This modeling effect aligns with Bandura's observational learning concept, which teaches individuals to adopt observed behaviors when those behaviors produce satisfactory results. In an elementary school teacher education environment, students who observe their peers mastering microteaching skills or achieving high academic grades will indirectly motivate themselves to adopt similar behaviors. This is achieved through more diligent practice, managing study time, and strengthening each student's academic engagement.

Higher achievement motivation is also closely related to learning that can be conceptualized and managed independently, as well as the ability to manage the independent learning process (Prasetyo & Laili, 2023). A social learning environment will provide a platform and opportunity for students to develop active, reflective, and collaborative learning strategies. These findings align with the emphasis that achievement motivation contributes significantly to improving the quality of human resources (Werdhiastutie et al., 2020). Therefore, the integration between social learning and an optimal social support system can be an effective strategy to increase the achievement motivation of prospective elementary school educators.

3.2.4. Academic Anxiety and Its Impact on Motivation

Anxiety about academic grades negatively impacts students' achievement motivation. These findings align with research by Madhuri Hooda and Saini, which suggests that academic anxiety can increase self-confidence, inhibit critical thinking, and reduce student persistence (Hooda & Saini, 2017). In reality, elementary school teacher education students who often feel burdened by college assignments, lecturers' expectations, or academic pressure will tend to show lower motivation for the desire to achieve (Marianty et al., 2025; Pascoe et al., 2020; Simón et al., 2024; Yawa et al., 2021; Zhou, 2025). When students focus more on avoiding failure than on achieving success, it ultimately undermines their academic achievement.

However, this study also shows that academic anxiety can be reduced, especially with social interactions and a supportive environment (Hidayat & Ramli, 2019; Nova et al., 2025; Prayitno & Andayani, 2023). Efforts to balance psychological stress can be achieved through collaborative learning and mutual support. This aligns with Cohen's stress buffering model, which states that social support reduces the negative impact of stress by increasing an individual's self-confidence (Cohen, 2004). Therefore, the stronger the quality of social relationships among students, the lower their academic anxiety and the higher their motivation to achieve (Nova et al., 2025; Yeni et al., 2019). Academic anxiety is a condition often overlooked by education observers, even though it is a crucial variable in learning success. Even adult learners, often considered resilient, can still experience academic anxiety.

3.2.5. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this study will add to the research supporting Bandura and Cohen's theories in the context of teacher education in Indonesia. The integration of these various theories implies that learning is not solely cognitive, but also encompasses students' emotional and social aspects (Ansani & Samsir, 2022; Manik et al., 2022). The empirical model developed in this study refers to the important reality that social learning has been shown to influence achievement motivation both directly and through social support as a mediating mechanism (Calafell et al., 2024; Korpershoek et al., 2020). These findings also strengthen the argument that academic success is inseparable from various social and emotional factors within the educational environment.

Practically, this research has significant implications for higher education institutions, particularly elementary school teacher education programs. First, it relates to the awareness of the importance of lecturers and institutions that must foster a collaborative and supportive academic climate. This will impact students' sense of security in asking questions, discussing, and sharing experiences (Leeuwen & Janssen, 2019). Secondly, the development of mentoring and peer learning programs has been shown to effectively strengthen social learning and emotional support among elementary school teacher education students (Haas et al., 2024; Kachaturoff et al., 2020; Toreid et al., 2025). Third, the role of institutions in providing robust academic and psychosocial counseling services to help students manage academic anxiety. Fourth, the integration of project-based learning and collective reflection has been shown to significantly encourage students to learn from their own and their social experiences (Arefian & Esfandiari, 2024). It is hoped that these views will support and make the learning process more comprehensive, safe, and meaningful for students a success.

Social learning is crucial for promotion and attention at the higher education level. This is because academic anxiety and other psychological issues have been shown to significantly impact the academic achievement of elementary school teacher education students. Therefore, support from various parties is needed to achieve optimal and comprehensive learning outcomes. It's time for higher education to become a supportive and mutually meaningful environment.

3.2.6. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be considered. First, it relates to data acquisition through a hypothetical survey approach, making it impossible to fully establish causal relationships. Second, the sample size was limited to students at a single university, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. Third, it is related to the limitations of the research variables, which only examined four main variables. Other factors, such as personality, learning style, and family support, may also influence academic anxiety and achievement motivation but have not been further investigated.

Based on these limitations, future research should consider a longitudinal approach to observe changes in students' academic motivation and anxiety over a longer period. Furthermore, a mixed-methods design could provide deeper insight into each student's subjective experiences through interviews or observations. Furthermore, the development of an intervention model based on social learning and emotional support is highly recommended for empirical testing to evaluate its effectiveness in reducing anxiety and increasing achievement motivation across various elementary education contexts.

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study confirm that social learning and social support are two important pillars in supporting a more emotionally healthy and intellectually productive academic environment. Social learning has been shown to contribute to the development of students' self-confidence and help reduce academic anxiety. Furthermore, social support strengthens interpersonal connectedness and fosters motivation for academic success. The integration of these elements produces a synergistic effect that significantly shapes the achievement motivation of Elementary School Teacher Education students. Therefore, an educational approach that emphasizes socially connected learning and a supportive academic

environment is an essential foundation for preparing knowledgeable, resilient, and high-achieving prospective teachers.

Ethical Approval

The study fell outside the scope of procedures that require ethical approval.

Informed Consent Statement

Not Applicable

Authors' Contribution

AA was responsible for the conceptual development, research design, data analysis, and preparation of the manuscript. PRI contributed to the translation processes, data collection, and validation procedures. AL and CM assisted in conducting the literature review, interpreting the findings, and reviewing the final version of the manuscript for accuracy and clarity.

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