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# A Learning Climate that Supports Autonomy as a Driver of Students' Self-Efficacy in Economics Learning

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## ABSTRACT

In the learning process, students' beliefs in their own abilities do not form spontaneously; instead, they develop through experiences shaped by classroom dynamics and the quality of pedagogical interaction. Low self-efficacy is often a major obstacle to economic learning, especially when students encounter material that requires conceptual analysis and numerical skills. To understand how such self-beliefs are constructed in real classroom contexts, this study explores students' subjective experiences of interpreting an autonomy-supportive learning climate and how this climate strengthens their self-efficacy. The research employed a qualitative approach using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) design and involved six grade XI social science students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and documentation, and were analyzed following IPA procedures. The findings generated four key themes: (1) teacher-provided autonomy that fosters confidence through opportunities for student choice; (2) verbal encouragement that helps students interpret their abilities positively; (3) small mastery experiences that serve as internal validation of competence; and (4) a positive classroom atmosphere that provides psychological safety for active participation and exploration. These results emphasize that self-efficacy development is a socio-psychological process influenced by emotional states, interpersonal support, and meaningful learning experiences. The study highlights the importance of creating a learning climate responsive to students' psychological needs as an effective pedagogical strategy for enhancing self-efficacy in economics learning.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Learning outcomes at the secondary level are often influenced by a combination of cognitive, affective, and contextual factors that interact within the learning process [1]. In

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contemporary educational studies, attention is no longer focused solely on knowledge transfer, but also on the psychological constructs underlying students' capacity to act effectively in learning situations, one of which is self-efficacy, an individual's belief in their capacity to plan and execute actions required to achieve specific outcomes [2]. Self-efficacy has been shown to correlate strongly with learning motivation, persistence in the face of challenges, and academic achievement; students with high levels of self-efficacy tend to be more motivated to take initiative, use adaptive learning strategies, and recover more quickly from academic setbacks [3]. However, the development of self-efficacy does not occur in a vacuum: the classroom environment or learning climate serves as the primary contextual setting, providing signals, support, and experiences that enable or hinder the development of such self-beliefs [4]. Therefore, understanding how elements of the learning climate, particularly those that support autonomy, shape students' self-efficacy is essential for pedagogical practices that aim to enhance learning quality and academic outcomes sustainably [5].

Theoretical studies provide two complementary conceptual pathways to explain this relationship. First, Social Cognitive Theory positions self-efficacy as a central construct arising from the triadic interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors; Bandura's four major sources of self-efficacy mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and affective states offer an empirical framework for understanding how classroom environments might facilitate or hinder self-belief formation [2]. Second, Self-Determination Theory emphasizes that fulfillment of the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness is a prerequisite for intrinsic motivation and feelings of competence; autonomy-supportive learning climates have consistently been found to enhance students' sense of competence and engagement [6]. Integrating these two perspectives enables the formulation of a strong theoretical hypothesis: learning climates that provide room for student autonomy not only foster intrinsic motivation, but also directly and indirectly build self-efficacy by offering meaningful mastery experiences, supportive verbal persuasion, and conducive affective conditions [7].

Despite existing research on the connection between learning environments and self-efficacy, several limitations highlight empirical and conceptual gaps that remain to be addressed. First, most studies examining this relationship employ quantitative approaches that emphasize correlational measurement or causal effects; such approaches often obscure how students themselves make meaning of pedagogical practices, for instance, how students interpret task choice, feedback, or teaching styles and translate these into changes in self-belief. Second, research on autonomy-supportive learning climates has largely focused on higher education or science subjects, resulting in limited contextual understanding at the secondary level, especially in economics learning at senior high schools. Third, few studies provide in-depth qualitative evidence on the psychological mechanisms that mediate the formation of self-efficacy in everyday classroom practice, such as the role of "small wins" and social validation from teachers. These gaps necessitate a research approach capable of exploring students' subjective experiences, revealing the nuanced meanings embedded in pedagogical interactions, and formulating practical implications for designing learning environments that genuinely facilitate the development of academic self-beliefs.

Based on these considerations, this study adopts a qualitative approach using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore in depth how eleventh-grade students in economics classes perceive and experience an autonomy-supportive learning climate, and how such experiences influence the development of self-efficacy. This methodological choice reflects the need to uncover the structure of students' subjective experiences, how they interpret teacher actions, how they respond to opportunities for choice, and how small successes or failures shape their narrative of self-ability. By focusing on direct student experiences, this research aims to bridge macro-level theory (SCT and SDT) with micro-level classroom practice, producing understanding that is not merely correlational but rich in meaning and applicability for educators. Within this framework, participants were selected purposively to provide variation in experience (e.g., students with low vs. high self-efficacy), enabling phenomenological analysis to extract themes that are idiographically valid yet relevant to broader contexts.

This study offers both conceptual and practical contributions. Conceptually, it enriches the discourse on self-efficacy development by positioning autonomy support as a central mechanism linking the classroom environment and academic confidence, while highlighting the specific roles of self-efficacy sources (mastery experiences, verbal persuasion, modeling) in contexts involving learning choices. In practice, the findings are expected to provide concrete recommendations for economic teaching practices, for example, scaffolding task design to enable gradual achievement, feedback strategies that maximize verbal persuasion without triggering anxiety, and classroom interaction arrangements that strengthen psychological safety. Furthermore, this research seeks to contribute to the local literature on secondary education in Indonesia by providing qualitative evidence from a state senior high school in Purwakarta, offering a basis for policy adaptation and teacher training oriented toward sustained student learning capacity development.

Finally, this paper is structured as follows: after an introduction that frames the study's urgency and contribution, the following section presents a brief literature review connecting theories of self-efficacy and autonomy support, followed by a research methodology section outlining the IPA approach, participant selection, and techniques of data collection (in-depth interviews, observation, documentation), as well as thematic analysis procedures. The results section presents the empirical themes generated from the analysis, which are subsequently discussed within a theoretical framework to highlight pedagogical implications and research limitations. The article concludes with recommendations for educators and future researchers. Thus, this study not only extends the theoretical understanding of how autonomy-supportive learning climates foster self-efficacy, but also offers practical guidelines for everyday teaching practice.

## 2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) design to explore students' subjective experiences in interpreting an autonomy-supportive learning climate and its contribution to the development of self-efficacy in economics learning. The IPA approach was selected because it focuses on in-depth interpretation of personal experiences, making it well-suited to uncovering

psychological processes that cannot be captured by quantitative methods. IPA also enables the researcher to understand how teacher actions, classroom dynamics, and learning experiences are interpreted by students, serving as a foundation for the formation of academic self-beliefs.

The research participants consisted of six eleventh-grade social science students from a public senior high school in Purwakarta Regency, selected through purposive sampling based on variations in self-efficacy levels (high, medium, low) and willingness to participate in in-depth interviews. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and learning documentation. Interviews were used to uncover students' personal experiences, while observations captured teacher practices and classroom atmospheres that aligned with an autonomy-supportive climate. Documentation, such as lesson plans and sample assignments, served as supporting materials to understand the pedagogical context.

Data analysis followed the IPA steps outlined by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, beginning with repeated readings of transcripts, generating initial codes, developing emergent themes, and integrating themes across participants [8]. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of techniques, member checking, and peer debriefing. All research procedures adhered to ethical principles, including participant anonymity and voluntary consent.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Result

##### Autonomy Support Enhances Self-Efficacy

The findings of this study show that autonomy support in the learning process significantly strengthens students' sense of self-efficacy. When students are given opportunities to choose how to complete assignments, select topics, or determine learning strategies, they perceive these choices as a form of trust from the teacher. Most participants stated that having the freedom to make decisions made them feel more confident and better prepared to face challenging material. This indicates that autonomy is not merely interpreted as freedom, but as validation of their personal capability.

The study also demonstrates that autonomy support fosters an autonomy-supportive learning climate, as described in Self-Determination Theory, in which a learning environment that provides choices, acknowledges students' perspectives, and minimizes external control contributes to increased perceived competence. When students have control over their learning processes, their sense of ability grows internally rather than being solely driven by teacher directives. Autonomy thus functions as a psychological trigger that strengthens their sense of agency and belief in their capacity to regulate their own actions.

Furthermore, consistent with Social Cognitive Theory, autonomy enhances self-efficacy through mechanisms of personal control. By allowing students to set their own targets and choose strategies, they begin to view themselves as active agents in their learning journey. This strengthens internal beliefs such as "I am capable" or "I can try," reflecting positive self-evaluations that support academic confidence. These findings align with

previous research indicating that autonomy mediates the relationship between classroom climate and learning motivation, encouraging students' academic initiative.

Overall, the results highlight that autonomy support is not merely a classroom management technique; it is a psychological structure that helps students perceive themselves as competent in meeting academic demands. In the context of economics learning, providing students with choices makes them more willing to express ideas, experiment with new problem-solving strategies, and persist when encountering complex material. The findings imply that teachers can foster higher self-efficacy by offering task alternatives, providing multiple ways to complete assignments, or involving students in setting daily learning goals. This approach not only enhances learning comfort but also strengthens students' confidence sustainably.

### Teacher Support as a Reinforcer of Self-Belief (Verbal Persuasion)

The findings indicate that teacher support delivered through affirming words, verbal encouragement, and constructive feedback plays a significant role in shaping students' confidence in their academic abilities. Students described how teachers' choice of words, expressions of praise, and explanations of learning processes directly influence their willingness to try and face academic challenges.

One student stated, "*When the teacher says 'you can do it,' it makes me brave enough to try*" (DR), illustrating that verbal persuasion from teachers acts as a psychological motivator that strengthens students' perceived capability. Another student emphasized, "*My score was bad, but the teacher said it's part of the process*" (MR), suggesting that teachers who emphasize learning as a process rather than solely on outcomes help reduce student anxiety and foster a more positive self-perception.

Overall, the results demonstrate that verbal persuasion from teachers is not merely supportive language but a meaningful pedagogical tool that reinforces students' self-belief, reduces fear of failure, and encourages greater academic resilience.

### Small Successes as Catalysts for Self-Efficacy (Mastery Experience)

The study reveals that small successes or *mastery experiences* are among the most influential factors in strengthening students' self-efficacy. Many students described that their confidence in their academic abilities did not develop instantly, but rather gradually through experiences overcoming tasks they initially perceived as difficult. One student captured this transformation clearly: "*When I managed to answer a difficult question, I realized I could actually do it*" (YS). This illustrates that small wins are not merely momentary sources of satisfaction; they provide concrete evidence that students' abilities exceed their expectations.

Another student added, "*My assignment was praised, and it made me feel capable*" (NA), highlighting how positive feedback on tangible performance significantly reinforces perceived competence. In essence, mastery experience serves as an internal form of self-validation distinct from verbal persuasion, as students can directly see, experience, and feel their own capabilities in action.

Overall, the findings emphasize that small successes create powerful psychological momentum. These experiences help students reinterpret their abilities, build resilience, and develop greater confidence in their capacity to face academic challenges.

### A Positive Classroom Climate as the Foundation of Psychological Safety and Self-Efficacy

The study highlights that a positive classroom climate plays a crucial role in shaping students' courage, emotional comfort, and confidence in learning economics. Unlike the previous themes that focus on direct teacher–student interactions, this theme shows that the social environment and emotional atmosphere of the classroom function as collective factors that indirectly yet powerfully influence self-efficacy.

Many students described that a comfortable, non-tense, and supportive classroom atmosphere made them more willing to express their ideas, ask questions, and attempt challenging problems. One student shared, “*When the class is lively but orderly, it feels easier to learn*” (AR), indicating that a dynamic yet well-managed classroom creates a safe space for participation. Another student noted, “*When my friends are active, I become active too*” (SL), suggesting positive social contagion in which peer engagement stimulates individual engagement. Conversely, negative emotional climates were reported to diminish confidence, as one student stated, “*When the atmosphere is tense, I immediately lose confidence*” (MR).

These accounts illustrate that the classroom climate serves as an essential emotional resource that determines whether students' self-efficacy develops or diminishes. A positive classroom environment not only fosters psychological safety but also encourages active participation, persistence, and confidence in navigating academic challenges. Interestingly, the study also found that students are influenced not only by teachers but also by the presence and behavior of their peers. When classmates display positive attitudes—such as actively asking questions, helping one another, or showing enthusiasm—other students tend to follow suit. This phenomenon is known as *collective classroom efficacy*, in which an individual's confidence is shaped by the collective confidence of the group.

Students reported feeling safer and more supported when they realized they were not alone in experiencing confusion or difficulty. This sense of shared struggle encouraged them to experiment, speak up, and engage in independent learning. The findings reinforce the view that, although self-efficacy is an individual construct, it is deeply rooted in social interactions and the classroom's collective emotional climate. Overall, the results highlight that peer dynamics serve as an important social foundation that amplifies individual self-belief and promotes a more engaged, collaborative learning environment.

## 3.2 Discussion

### Autonomy Support Enhances Students' Sense of Capability (Self-Efficacy)

The findings indicate that autonomy support in learning, particularly through opportunities to choose how to complete tasks, select topics, or determine learning strategies, is perceived by students as a form of teacher trust in their abilities. Almost all participants stated that when teachers allow them space to make choices, they feel more confident and

1 better prepared to face challenging material. One student expressed, “When the teacher gives options for how to do assignments, I feel more confident” (AR). This statement shows that autonomy is understood not merely as freedom, but as a validation of personal capacity. Another student added, “When we can choose our own topic, I get motivated. It feels like being trusted” (LN), emphasizing that feeling trusted triggers learning enthusiasm and a heightened sense of ability.

26 This finding aligns with the concept of an autonomy-supportive learning climate, as described in Self-Determination Theory, which states that learning environments that offer choice, listen to students’ perspectives, and reduce external control can enhance perceived competence [9]. When students have control over their learning processes, they experience an internally driven increase in their sense of capability rather than merely responding to teacher instructions. Autonomy functions as a “psychological trigger” that nurtures agency, the belief that they have the capacity to regulate their own actions [10]. Thus, autonomy is not just a classroom management technique, but a psychological factor that directly contributes to building self-efficacy [6].

32 Within the framework of Social Cognitive Theory, autonomy strengthens self-efficacy through mechanisms of personal control. When students are given opportunities to set goals and choose strategies, they view themselves as active agents in learning. This perception of control generates positive self-evaluations such as “I can do this,” “I can try,” or “I have my own way to solve the task.” Accordingly, autonomy support serves as an ecological experience that activates sources of self-efficacy through internal beliefs and competence attributions [11]. These findings are consistent with previous studies demonstrating that autonomy mediates the relationship between classroom climate and learning motivation and increases students’ academic initiative [2].

9 Overall, the findings highlight that autonomy support is not merely about granting freedom but about shaping psychological structures that enable students to perceive themselves as competent individuals in meeting academic demands. In the context of economics learning, providing choice encourages students to express opinions, try new problem-solving strategies, and persist when facing complex material. An important implication is that teachers can foster higher self-efficacy by employing strategies such as offering task alternatives, providing varied methods of completion, or allowing students to set daily learning goals. This approach not only increases learning comfort but also sustainably strengthens students’ confidence in their academic abilities.

### **Teacher Support as a Reinforcer of Self-Belief (Verbal Persuasion)**

The findings indicate that teacher support through affirmative statements, verbal encouragement, and constructive feedback plays a significant role in shaping students’ beliefs about their academic abilities. Students described how the way teachers speak, choose their words, offer praise, and provide explanations related to learning processes directly influences their willingness to try and face academic challenges. One participant stated, “When the teacher says ‘you can do it,’ it makes me brave enough to try” (DR), demonstrating that verbal persuasion from teachers serves as a psychological driver that helps students feel more capable than before. Another student emphasized, “My score was

low, but the teacher said it is part of the process” (MR), indicating that focusing on the learning process rather than the final result can reduce student anxiety and foster a more positive self-perception.

These findings are consistent with the concept of verbal persuasion in the framework of Social Cognitive Theory, which states that an individual’s self-belief can be strengthened through credible and realistic verbal encouragement. Verbal persuasion becomes effective when delivered by figures who hold psychological authority for students, in this case, teachers. Encouragement such as “you are capable,” “this just takes practice,” or “try first, we will discuss it together later” not only motivates students emotionally but also provides a “cognitive anchor” for re-evaluating their abilities [12]. When teachers normalize mistakes as part of the learning process, students develop a growth mindset, which supports the construction of self-efficacy through reinterpreting failure as a learning opportunity rather than evidence of incompetence [2].

Furthermore, supportive teacher communication also creates a sense of acceptance and personal appreciation [13]. Educational studies show that teacher emotional support can enhance students’ psychological safety and increase their self-esteem and self-efficacy, particularly in learning contexts that require analytical skills, such as economics. The findings of this study reveal that teachers who maintain a calming demeanor, reduce classroom tension, and validate students’ efforts can create a learning environment conducive to the development of self-belief [14]. Students view teachers not only as transmitters of content but also as emotional regulators who help them face academic challenges without excessive fear [15]. As a result, students become more willing to try, more open to receiving corrections, and more consistent in completing tasks.

From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, verbal teacher support can be understood as fulfilling the psychological need for relatedness, feeling emotionally connected to others [16]. When students perceive positive relationships with teachers, they become more receptive to guidance and reinforcement [17]. This process, in turn, enhances their perceived competence, which is a crucial component in developing intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy [18]. Thus, teacher support functions not only at the interpersonal level but also as a motivational mechanism that strengthens internal structures of perceived ability [6].

Overall, the findings in this theme highlight that teacher support through verbal persuasion plays a crucial role in transforming students’ beliefs about their capabilities. In economics learning, where many students experience anxiety regarding abstract concepts or calculation tasks, the presence of supportive teachers becomes decisive in encouraging students to face academic challenges. The implications are clear: teachers need to integrate forms of verbal support into everyday practice, such as offering specific praise for effort, providing feedback that focuses on strategy, and fostering nonjudgmental communication. This approach not only strengthens students’ self-efficacy but also enhances academic resilience and long-term learning orientation.

### **Small Successes as Triggers for Self-Efficacy (Mastery Experience)**

One of the most dominant findings in this study is that small wins (minor achievements) serve as crucial turning points in shaping students’ self-belief. Many students

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explained that their confidence in academic ability did not emerge suddenly, but grew gradually through experiences of overcoming tasks that were initially perceived as difficult. One student described this change very clearly: “When I managed to answer a difficult question, I felt that I could actually do it” (YS). This statement illustrates that small successes not only provide momentary satisfaction but also serve as empirical evidence for students that their capacity is far greater than they previously imagined. Another student added, “When my assignment was praised, I felt capable” (NA), emphasizing that positive feedback on concrete performance can significantly reinforce perceptions of competence. In other words, mastery experience serves as an internal form of self-validation, distinct from verbal support, because students can directly see, experience, and feel their abilities.

From a theoretical perspective, the primary source of self-efficacy is mastery experience, which aligns this finding with the Social Cognitive Theory framework [2]. Successful experiences, especially those achieved through effort rather than coincidence, create a stable cognitive foundation for students to believe in their capabilities [19]. Unlike verbal persuasion, which is external, mastery experiences are more enduring because they are rooted in tangible evidence that can be recalled when facing future challenges [20]. When students are able to complete tasks they once found intimidating, their mental representation of themselves shifts; failure is no longer interpreted as a fixed personal trait, but rather as part of the process toward success [21]. These findings show that self-efficacy develops through positive attribution processes: students interpret success as the result of their abilities and appropriate strategies, thereby increasing their confidence to try again in future academic situations.

Furthermore, small successes also have more complex psychological effects beyond simply increasing feelings of competence [22]. In the context of economics learning, often perceived as difficult, small wins can reduce learning anxiety and foster intrinsic motivation to explore the material further. Several students admitted that when they succeeded in completing questions that initially intimidated them, their fear of the subject decreased drastically. Thus, mastery experience not only shifts perceptions of ability but also changes affective conditions associated with the learning process. Previous educational studies have shown that emotional tension can hinder self-regulation, indicating that small successes may interrupt the cycle of anxiety by increasing more stable self-confidence.

Within the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, successful experiences are also associated with fulfilling the psychological need for competence [23]. When students experience success through their own efforts, they gain an increased sense of perceived competence, which further strengthens intrinsic motivation [24]. These findings illustrate that mastery experience is not merely about outcomes, but also about the subjective experience of perceived progress. This experience encourages students to develop positive expectations about their own abilities, ultimately strengthening self-efficacy through an adaptive cycle: success increases confidence, and they try success again. Thus, small successes function as catalysts that drive simultaneous psychological and behavioral changes [25].

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Based on these overall findings, it can be concluded that small successes play a fundamental role in building students’ self-efficacy in economics learning. The implications

are highly practical: teachers need to design scaffolded tasks, provide opportunities for early success, and create learning structures that allow students to experience visible progress. Strategies such as gradual practice exercises, example problems that support incremental improvement, and emphasizing effort and strategy rather than final grades can serve as effective means to continuously strengthen students' self-belief. Ultimately, small successes are not trivial; they are leverage points that drive self-belief transformation, which in turn impacts academic resilience, learning engagement, and long-term learning outcomes.

### **A Positive Classroom Climate as the Foundation of Psychological Safety and Self-Efficacy Development**

The findings of this study reveal that classroom climate plays a decisive role in shaping students' confidence, emotional comfort, and courage in economics learning. Unlike the previous three themes, which emphasize direct interaction between teachers and students, this theme highlights that the social environment and emotional atmosphere of the classroom function as collective factors that indirectly but powerfully influence students' self-efficacy. Many students described that a comfortable, relaxed, and supportive classroom atmosphere made them more confident in expressing opinions, asking questions, and attempting to solve difficult problems. One student stated, "When the class is lively but orderly, I can learn more comfortably" (AR), indicating that a dynamic yet well-managed class creates a safe space for participation. Another student commented, "When my classmates are active, I become active too" (SL), suggesting positive social contagion, where peer engagement influences individual engagement. Conversely, students honestly admitted that negative emotional climates could paralyze their confidence: "When the atmosphere is tense, I immediately lose confidence" (MR). These remarks indicate that classroom climate is a powerful emotional factor that determines whether confidence emerges in the learning process.

These findings strongly resonate with the Social Cognitive Theory framework, particularly the dimension of physiological and affective states as a source of self-efficacy [2]. According to this theory, emotional conditions, whether comfort, anxiety, or pressure, can either enhance or reduce individuals' perceptions of their capabilities [26]. When students are in a tense classroom atmosphere, they tend to assess their abilities lower than they actually are, as the brain interprets emotional threat as a cognitive barrier. However, when the classroom climate is supportive and non-threatening, students can access their cognitive abilities more optimally. In other words, the classroom social environment does not merely serve as the backdrop for learning events but as an emotional experience that informs how students perceive themselves in academic contexts. This study demonstrates that psychological safety in the classroom is a prerequisite for activating self-efficacy [27].

From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, a warm, non-threatening classroom atmosphere also fulfills the psychological need for relatedness, the feeling of being connected and accepted within a learning community. When students perceive the classroom as a supportive space, they become more willing to take cognitive risks and more open to new learning experiences. In economics learning, often perceived as "difficult," psychological safety is an essential condition for effective learning. The findings show that a positive classroom climate encourages active participation, increases mental readiness to

try, and reduces fear of making mistakes. Thus, classroom climate functions as a social arena that regulates students' emotional readiness to build self-efficacy [6].

Interestingly, the study also found that students are influenced not only by teachers but also by peers. When classmates show positive attitudes, such as asking questions actively, helping each other, or showing enthusiasm, other students naturally adopt the same rhythm. This phenomenon is known as collective classroom efficacy, a condition in which the group's collective belief influences individual confidence. Students feel safer when they know they are not alone in facing difficulty or confusion. This allows them to experiment, speak up, and learn independently. These findings reinforce the idea that although self-efficacy is an individual construct, it has deep social roots.

Overall, this theme demonstrates that a positive classroom climate is the emotional foundation for students' self-efficacy development. A safe, nonjudgmental, and supportive environment enables students to tap into their full potential. Conversely, a tense atmosphere can close pathways to courage and reduce motivation. The practical implications are clear: teachers must actively create a psychologically safe, friendly, and supportive classroom climate that views learning as a process rather than merely an outcome. Effective strategies may include using light humor, designing collaborative activities, accepting mistakes as part of learning, and maintaining calm yet structured classroom leadership. In this way, classroom climate does not simply serve as a context, but rather as a fundamental educational element in shaping students' confidence and academic success.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the development of students' self-efficacy in learning economics is a psychological process shaped by the dynamic interaction between personal factors and the classroom environment. Autonomy support, teacher verbal persuasion, small success experiences, and a positive classroom climate were found to play significant, complementary roles in strengthening students' confidence. When students are given choices, feel trusted, and have a sense of control over their learning process, they demonstrate greater perceived competence and readiness to face academic challenges. Supportive teacher communication encourages students to interpret difficulties more constructively, while incremental success provides concrete evidence that their efforts can lead to real outcomes. In addition, an emotionally safe classroom climate motivates students to keep trying without fear of failure.

These findings reinforce Bandura's framework and the Self-Determination Theory, emphasizing that fulfilling students' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness supports the development of motivation and self-efficacy. Practically, this research highlights the importance of designing learning activities that focus not only on academic achievement but also on students' psychological well-being. Strategies such as offering learning choices, providing scaffolded tasks, maintaining positive communication, and fostering a supportive classroom environment can be effective interventions to enhance students' confidence in learning economics. Therefore, schools are encouraged to build a conducive learning culture in which students can become more resilient, confident, and better able to face academic challenges and other life situations more adaptively.

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