

# ***The Relationship Between Family and Primary School Students' Academic Self-efficacy***

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**Abstract:** During the initial stage of personality formation, primary school students are in a crucial period that needs to focus on mental health, and family is an essential factor affecting children's academic self-efficacy in this period. This paper summarizes the following conclusions by summarizing the research in related fields in the past two decades: 1. Increase the research on academic self-efficacy of primary school students, and set the main research object as the upper primary school group; 2. Follow the trend of social development, pay attention to the exploration of husband-wife relationship and sibling relationship; 3. Establish a more systematic theoretical framework. Therefore, the contribution of this paper is to summarize the current research status in this field, point out the current research deficiencies, and provide suggestions for future research goals and improving primary school students' academic self-efficacy.

**Keywords:** academic self-efficacy, family, primary school students, research review

## **1. Introduction**

The concept of self-efficacy was first proposed by the famous American psychologist Albert Bandura. In the past 30 years since then, self-efficacy has not only been widely accepted by the psychological community, but also triggered a large number of primary and empirical studies, becoming an essential psychological variable in psychological orientation. Moreover, it is also increasingly penetrating into organizational behavior and has gradually become an important topic of its research. At the same time, the application effect of self-efficacy theory in the field of practice has also been fully confirmed.

At present, there are not many studies on academic self-efficacy in China, especially the research focusing on middle school students and college students, and there are few studies on primary school students' academic self-efficacy. There is no doubt that guiding primary school students to cultivate good learning self-confidence is an indispensable cornerstone for students' learning careers and even the development of the whole education process and the development of education. As an important part of education, a family has a far-reaching impact on primary school students who have initially formed their personalities. By combing the research literature on academic self-efficacy and family relationships of primary school students at home and abroad in the past two decades, this paper clarifies the current research status in this field, summarizes the research deficiencies and indeed, and provides reference suggestions for promoting the research direction of academic self-efficacy.

## **2. Classification of Family Factors and the Definition of Academic Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy is a developing concept. When Bandura first proposed this concept in 1977, he believed that it referred to the individual's ability judgment, belief or subjective self-control, as well as their sense of whether they could complete an activity at a certain level. There has been a distinction between 'general self-efficacy' and 'special self-efficacy' since the concept's inception. The term "general self-efficacy" emphasizes its applicability. As a result, the academic self-efficacy discussed in this paper usually falls under the category of 'special self-efficacy', which means that 'learners give subjective judgment and evaluation of their ability to the learning tasks they are about to complete or the learning goals they achieve'. On the basis of Bandura's original theory, Schunk DH constantly improved the concept of academic self-efficacy, and proposed the dimension of "self-control"[1]. Since then, most domestic scholars have chosen to follow Schunk's theory. For example, Wang Kairong and others proposed in 1999 that learning ability and learning behavior are two important parts of academic self-efficacy. In related literature the following year, Liang Yusong also emphasized the necessity of individuals' judgment and confidence in their ability to complete academic tasks for the study of academic self-efficacy [2].

In a word, academic self-efficacy is the individual's speculation or judgment on the ability to carry out a certain behavior in the academic field. It means whether people are convinced that they can successfully carry out learning to bring a certain result.

There is no relevant literature to make strict standards for the influencing factors of family environment on children's education. This paper uses the literature method to sort out the family education literature in recent years by dividing the family environment into subjective and objective family environments.

### **2.1. The Influence of Subjective Family Environment on Children's Development**

#### **2.1.1. Parenting Style**

Parenting style is a blend of parenting principles, parental conduct, and the emotional expression of children. This pairing, which is largely constant and doesn't alter depending on the circumstance, captures the core of interpersonal communication. Distinct parenting approaches have distinct effects on the nurturing and creation of children's academic self-efficacy.

#### **2.1.2. Family Interpersonal Relationship**

A family interpersonal relationship is one in which family members interact or connect. It is a relationship that is tied to marriage or blood. There are husband and wife relationships, parent-child relationships, brother and sister relationships, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationships, sister-in-law relationships, grandson relationships and so on. The most important psychological impact on children is the relationship between parents who are closely related to themselves and the parent-child relationship between themselves and their parents.

### **2.2. The Influence of Objective Family Environment on Children's Development**

#### **2.2.1. Family Structure**

Family structure refers to family members' composition, interaction, mutual influence, and the resulting connection mode, including horizontal combination (the connection between the same generation), and vertical combination (the connection between generations), which can be divided from different angles.

Yang Shantan et al. divided families into complete and incomplete families according to the integrity of the family structure. The complete family is composed of parents and children. The incomplete family refers to a family in which one or both parents are absent due to death, divorce, abandonment or other reasons.

### **2.2.2. Family Socioeconomic Status**

The impact of family economic and social status is generally divided into direct and indirect effects. This paper mainly discusses the direct impact on children's academic self-efficacy, that is, family objective factors, such as economic status, learning conditions, etc.

### **2.2.3. Parental Education Level**

A person's occupation is an important index to measure the level of social status in modern society, and it can also reflect the education level of parents to a certain extent. Parents' occupations often represent the family's economic and social status. This material reality will affect their self-realization needs, which will indirectly affect their children's education methods and expectations, thus affecting their children's development.

Based on the preceding research on family education and academic self-efficacy, this paper examines the impact of subjective and objective family environments on children's academic self-efficacy.

## **3. The Influence of Subjective Family Environment on Academic Self-efficacy**

### **3.1. Parenting Style**

Regarding the influence of family factors on children, the study of parenting style is the earliest and most. Most researchers pay attention to the influence of a mother's parenting attitude and education mode on children. Xu Ruyan, Liu Zaihua, Lu Anping, Shen Junjuan studies have shown that parental education is related to pupils' self-efficacy [3][4][5][6]. Parents' positive parenting styles, such as democratic and emotional warmth, help to improve their self-efficacy. Negative parenting styles, such as laissez-faire, doting, and negative parenting styles, often lead to their sensitivity and inferiority. If they do not believe in their own abilities, they are likely to have low self-efficacy. Based on the above research results, Liu Sijin concluded in October 2021, based on the above research findings, that primary school students' academic self-efficacy plays a mediating role in parents' educational methods and their sense of responsibility: parents' positive parenting styles can not only directly promote primary school students' sense of responsibility, but also indirectly promote their sense of responsibility through primary school students' self-efficacy. Primary school students' academic self-efficacy can mitigate the negative impact of their parents' negative parenting style on their sense of responsibility [7].

Many domestic research results show that family environment and self-efficacy play an intermediary role between parental burnout and primary school students' academic performance. Students are eager for the attention and understanding of their parents at home. Parents with parenting burnout will ignore and ignore their children in some respects, thus causing adverse effects on the family environment.

In turn, it affects the psychological state of students and gradually reduces their self-efficacy, which affects their performance in school and leads to unsatisfactory academic performance [8]. On the contrary, if parents do not have parenting burnout, it will promote the formation of a good and harmonious family environment, children will be recognized by the family environment, enhance confidence, self-efficacy continue to improve, so as to cultivate their optimism and cheerful

character, such a character will promote children into the campus, better deal with the relationship between students, so that children will not affect learning because of inferiority, so that there will be a virtuous circle, more and more excellent results [9][10].

In addition, there are many discussions at home and abroad on the relationship between perceived parental education involvement and academic self-efficacy. The higher the level of perceived parental education involvement, the stronger the level of academic self-efficacy, and the improvement of academic self-efficacy further brings a higher level of learning engagement. The father's education involvement and the mother's education involvement are different for the academic self-efficacy of primary school students. Perception of mother involvement affects academic self-efficacy, which in turn affects primary school students' learning engagement; however, the father's educational involvement has no significant impact on perceived father's involvement, but only has a significant impact on academic self-efficacy. Perceived father's educational involvement also affects learning engagement through academic self-efficacy. Parents' educational involvement is more involved in the mother's education, and the father's educational involvement is less so that primary school students do not or rarely perceive the father's educational involvement. It shows that primary school students perceive the mother's involvement in their education as significantly better than the father's. However, in the study of Wu Xinchun, Guo Suran, Liu Chang and others in 2012, it was found that with the development of society, more and more women are not satisfied with the situation of full-time mothers, while fathers not only bear parenting, but also bear more and more educational responsibilities, so fathers' educational involvement is getting higher and higher[11]. Through positive spiritual encouragement to children, fathers can bring different influences to children, such as self-confidence, courage, adventurous spirit, strength, majesty and strength, etc., thus having a positive impact on children's academic self-efficacy[12]; in the process of participating in parenting, fathers pay more attention to the direction of children's development, guidance and control of children. In parenting, the 'strict father and loving mother' tradition still reigns supreme [13].

### **3.2. Family Relationships ( Parent-child Relationship and Couple Relationship )**

According to the relevant literature collection in recent years, it is found that the academic achievements are not rich in the research on family relationships and academic self-efficacy, and the influence of sibling relationships on academic self-efficacy is still a blank. Therefore, this paper only discusses the role of the parent-child relationship and husband-wife relationship in education.

As an important part of the subjective family environment, the relationship between parents has a significant impact on children's learning burnout. Most of the research in related fields at home and abroad presents the same research results. The higher the frequency of parental marital conflict, the greater the intensity, the lower the degree of resolution, and the higher the degree of children's learning burnout [14]. When parents conflict, if children can take active behavior, avoid bad cognition or avoid bad behavior to improve their level of coping self-efficacy, their psychological negative impact from parental marital conflict will also be reduced, which means that parental marital conflict will have a negative impact on children's psychological development, which will further expand to children's attitude towards learning [15]. Parental marital conflict can cause children long-term emotional stress, especially frequent and destructive conflicts in the family will increase children's negative emotions and insecurity, thus affecting children's emotional regulation and expression. When this negative emotion is transferred to the learning aspect, after a long period of accumulation, children will have learning burnout.

Because the definition of the parent-child relationship is too vague and the influencing factors are complex, there are few studies on the theme of children's academic self-efficacy with the theme of the parent-child relationship in this field, but some literature will mention the research content in

other family problems. A good parent-child relationship helps to improve children's academic self-efficacy. Children are more likely to obtain their parents' understanding and support through equal communication in a family atmosphere of emotional warmth and understanding, enhancing their learning self-confidence and fully developing their academic delay of gratification. The 'parent-centered' family model will have a negative impact on communication between parents and children, making children feel inferior and frustrated in school, and academic self-efficacy will suffer [16]. The closer the parent-child relationship, the higher the children's academic self-efficacy, especially in terms of behavioral self-efficacy. It is clear that maintaining a close parent-child relationship is critical [17].

#### **4. The Influence of Objective Family Environment on Academic Self-efficacy**

##### **4.1. Economic Status**

According to many research results, family socioeconomic status is an important factor affecting children's academic self-efficacy. Among them, Yuan Yanyun pointed out in the study that family socioeconomic status not only directly affects children's general self-efficacy, but also indirectly affects children's general self-efficacy through two mediating variables of parental care and coping style [18]. Parents with higher socioeconomic status invest more in their children's education and pay more attention to their own parenting styles. As a result, children feel more warmth and support from their parents, and are more likely to develop positive psychological qualities and promote their academic self-efficacy; parents with low family socioeconomic status are more difficult to provide warmth and care for their children, and cannot provide a warm family environment for children, which is not conducive to the development of academic self-efficacy.

Academic self-efficacy of primary school students differs between urban and rural areas, which is an important standard for measuring economic differences. Parents from urban families have better economic circumstances, more high-quality educational resources, and are better educated. Education is frequently more expensive. Abundant material conditions promote academic self-efficacy in children, which has a significant positive impact on term performance. According to Shen Kailu's research, urban primary school students have higher psychological capital than rural primary school students [19]. Snyder's research on hope found that students' performance is closely related to their level of hope. Generally, children with hope have better academic performance, and high elasticity and interest are conducive to students' academic performance, and vice versa. The economic differences between urban and rural areas will also affect the learning motivation of primary school students. Wang Youzhi points out that the learning enthusiasm of urban primary school students is higher than that of rural primary school students, and the prestige motivation of urban students is greater, that is, learning is more regarded as winning the praise and respect of the people around them, and becoming a celebrity expert with social influence in the future [20]; the learning motivation of rural students is more to get rid of family poverty.

##### **4.2. Family Structure**

Due to the influence of various factors, the subjects of different families participating in children's education are not the same, and the intervention effect of different family structures on academic self-efficacy is also different.

In recent years, the divorce rate at home and abroad has been increasing year by year, and the proportion of single-parent families in primary school is also increasing. However, there are few studies on the academic self-efficacy of children in single-parent families at home and abroad. Children of single-parent families are not guaranteed to live, and they are prone to alternative feelings as a result of family changes; if they are primary school students from single-parent

families formed by divorce, they have a deep sense of anxiety and abandonment, which leads to a decrease in their need for dignity and self-realization brought about by higher-level learning, negatively affecting academic self-efficacy [21]. Obviously, research has shown that the impact of single-parent families on children cannot be generalized. For example, compared with non-accompanied single-parent parents, accompanying single-parent parents will reduce the probability of negative psychological occurrence of children, thereby reducing the negative impact of negative psychology on children's learning [22]. This means that the impact of single-parent families on children's academic self-efficacy does not necessarily have a significant correlation.

Furthermore, migrant children are a distinct social group in our society's transition period. Migrant children's migration and mobility have had a significant impact on their original learning and life in the city. Migrant children have lower academic self-efficacy than non-migrant children, but family support is not significantly different. This demonstrates that, despite migrant families' attention to children's learning, an unstable learning environment and social groups continue to have a negative impact on children's learning. Good academic support is critical in improving migrant children's academic self-efficacy. In addition, there is a positive correlation between migrant children's school well-being and academic self-efficacy. For example, Liu Zaihua found that due to the improvement of Beijing's education system and the quality of educational resources, migrant children's learning values are good, school well-being is high, and academic self-efficacy is significantly improved. It can be seen that the impact of migrant children's academic self-efficacy is not more subjective factors of the family, but due to the objective environment brought about by the change of the learning environment. Moreover, Liu Zaihua's research results only represent the group with the improved learning environment. Throughout the research literature on the overall academic self-efficacy of migrant children, the results are still not optimistic. Migrant children tend to have more problems of learning and emotional maladjustment, Wang Daoyang et al. further deepened this conclusion, and found that migrant children's negative academic emotions have a negative predictive effect on the sense of basic ability and control in learning self-efficacy. In addition, Xinghua's survey in 2012 found that the self-esteem level of migrant children was significantly lower than that of urban children, and the level of inferiority was significantly higher than that of urban children; Therefore, Wang Daoyang, Lu Xiang, Yin Xin pointed out that the inferiority of migrant children can positively predict the development of their academic self-efficacy, and emotional regulation strategies play an intermediary role in it. All in all, paying attention to the mental health of migrant children is still the top priority to solve their learning enthusiasm.

Parents often bear the most important work and responsibilities in family education. However, due to the work of parents, rural left-behind children lack the company of one or both parents in the process of growth, and their academic self-efficacy research is special. Due to the long-term migrant work of parents and the serious lack of family education, the individual difference of academic self-efficacy of left-behind children is very large, and the overall development level is not high [16]. The learning adaptability is also very poor, which is much higher than the national norm problem detection rate [23]. Left-behind children have more serious academic procrastination than non-left-behind children due to a lack of parental academic expectation and supervision, and obtaining more social support will help them improve their learning self-confidence and higher the subjective well-being of learning. Although there are other caregivers who have replaced the role of parents in trying to fill the vacancy of left-behind children in family education, the efficiency of their parenting styles is lower than that of rural non-left-behind children in all dimensions, but it is undeniable that the parenting style of rural left-behind children has a direct impact on children's learning engagement through academic self-efficacy, and the use of positive and warm parenting styles will still have a positive impact on children's learning enthusiasm [24]. That is to say, even if



the lack of parental education involvement will reduce the academic self-efficacy of left-behind children, the importance of family education is still self-evident.

### 4.3. Parents' Personal Education Level

According to Ling Hui's 2002 study, the parents of children with poor academic performance were mostly uneducated and non-technical. It demonstrates that people with higher education can provide a more rational education for their children while also having an auxiliary effect on their children's understanding and learning of cultural courses [25]. Wu compared the differences in the influence of parents' education level on children's academic self-efficacy between urban and rural areas in the study: in urban families, fathers' ability to guide children to learn will have a significant positive impact on children's academic performance and learning enthusiasm [26]. On the contrary, the influence of mother's education level on academic performance is negative. In the family, mothers with higher education will have no time to manage their children because they are busy with work and housework [26]. Although mothers with low education have time to manage their children, they do not have the ability to tutor their children due to insufficient knowledge reserves, which has a negative impact on their children's learning self-confidence. In rural schools, parents' low education level, coupled with the rapid updating of knowledge, leads to their low participation in education, so the relationship between rural primary school students' academic performance and their parents' education level is not obvious.

In rural families, because fathers are the main source of the family economy and are in a strong position in the family, their education level has a greater impact on children's academic self-efficacy than on mothers. Fathers with higher education levels will consider cultivating children and taking a different development path from fathers in the future, thus promoting the improvement of children's academic self-efficacy [24]. It can be seen that the personal knowledge and cultural level of parents are indeed helpful to the academic development of children, but the influence of other factors on the father and mother is different between regions and regions, so it should be discussed differently.

## 5. Discussion

The study of academic self-efficacy first emerged in foreign countries. From 2000 to 2010, a large number of achievements have emerged. Domestic research on family and primary school students' academic self-efficacy has been increasing in recent years, especially after 2010. The research results are quite abundant, but compared with other age groups, the achievements in the field of children are still less than those of middle school students and college students. This may be related to the maturity of children's personalities and the difficulty of collecting data. Based on the above summary, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1) Parenting style, family economic status and family structure are the mainstream research directions in this field, and the research directions are diversified and comprehensive.

2) There are still many deficiencies in the current research on family interpersonal relationships as an important subjective family factor. There are huge vacancies in many fields, especially in the relationship between husband and wife and the relationship between compatriots, which may also be related to the subjective factors of interpersonal relationships.

3) Although the research results on family structure are also diversified, they have the same defects as the research on family interpersonal relationships, that is, there is a lack of research on divorced families, multi-child families, and one-child families.

According to the current research results, the conclusions of the influence of parents' personal education level on pupils' academic self-efficacy are diversified; the influence of parents' personal

upbringing on children seems to be different in different education levels and different regions, but there is no absolute scientific conclusion at present. Moreover, there are few studies on this topic in the current academic achievements, but as part of the research in other directions, which shows that it is necessary to build a systematic theoretical systematic framework in this field.

In view of the above results, it is not difficult to find that there is still much room for expansion in this field:

1. Childhood is a critical period for the establishment of healthy personality, and there are few research data in this field, and most of them are the summary of teaching experience of schoolteachers. In order to expand the empirical research in this field, we can mainly take the senior students of primary school as the research group;

2. Strengthen research and exploration in the field of family relationships. Since the 21 st century, the divorce rate at home and abroad has been high, and the marriage age is generally short. The relationship between husband and wife and divorced families have long been an important topic that cannot be ignored in children's education. In addition, since the opening of the three-child policy in 2021, multiple-child families will become the mainstream of family structure in the future. In order to conform to the trend of the times and the trend of social development, it is necessary to increase the investigation of family interpersonal relationships in different families and carry out research on this basis.

3. Establish a more systematic theoretical academic framework. The study found that the current theory of academic self-efficacy has been developing, there is no clear conclusion, and the division of family factors in children's education is also different, which undoubtedly brings difficulty to the specialization of research in this field. Similarly, the results of some research directions such as the education level of parents are fragmented and there is no systematic conclusion, which is also a major direction of current research development.

## 6. Conclusion

In recent years, the research on academic self-efficacy has gained increasing attention, signifying a positive direction in the field. Existing research has largely focused on investigating the relationship between academic self-efficacy, key learning variables, and external subjective and objective factors, resulting in significant achievements. However, a thorough review of the relevant literature reveals a gap in the investigation of the cultivation and intervention of academic self-efficacy in both domestic and foreign research, particularly in understanding the role of the family as a crucial educational environment in shaping children's academic self-efficacy. Additionally, exploring how parents can effectively guide their children in developing a positive learning attitude and enthusiasm for learning remains a valuable direction for future research on this topic.

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