

**THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY AND
STUDENTS' HIGHER ORDER THINKING SKILLS IN READING
COMPREHENSION AT UNIVERSITAS LANCANG KUNING**

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Riska Purwanti, 2026 : The Correlation between Academic Self-Efficacy and Students' Higher Order Thinking Skills in Reading Comprehension at Universitas Lancang Kuning

In the context of 21st-century education, university students are required to develop not only linguistic competence but also Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) to engage critically with academic texts, while psychological factors such as academic self-efficacy play an important role in shaping learning behavior and cognitive engagement. However, empirical studies examining the relationship between these variables at the university level remain limited, particularly in Indonesian EFL contexts. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the correlation between academic self-efficacy and students' HOTS in reading comprehension at Universitas Lancang Kuning. This research employed a quantitative correlational design using a survey method involving 91 English Education students selected using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error. Data were collected through two validated questionnaires adapted from Li and Wang (2010) to measure academic self-efficacy and Witdianti (2023) to assess HOTS, and were analyzed using SPSS version 26. The results revealed a strong positive correlation between academic self-efficacy and HOTS ($r = 0.716$, $p < .001$). Descriptive findings indicated that students' academic self-efficacy ($M = 3.25$) and HOTS ($M = 3.14$) were categorized at a very high level. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.513$) shows that academic self-efficacy accounts for 51.3% of the variance in students' HOTS in reading comprehension. Overall, the findings suggest that higher academic self-efficacy is closely associated with stronger higher-order thinking skills, underscoring the importance of fostering students' self-belief to enhance cognitive engagement in EFL reading contexts.

Keywords : *self-efficacy, higher order thinking skills*

ABSTRAK

Riska Purwanti, 2026 : Korelasi antara Efikasi Diri Akademik dan Keterampilan Berpikir Tingkat Tinggi Siswa dalam Pemahaman Membaca di Universitas Lancang Kuning

Dalam konteks pendidikan abad ke-21, mahasiswa dituntut untuk tidak hanya mengembangkan kompetensi linguistik tetapi juga Keterampilan Berpikir Tingkat Tinggi (KBTT) untuk terlibat secara kritis dengan teks akademik, sementara faktor psikologis seperti efikasi diri akademik memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk perilaku belajar dan keterlibatan kognitif. Namun, studi empiris yang meneliti hubungan antara variabel-variabel ini di tingkat universitas masih terbatas, terutama dalam konteks EFL di Indonesia. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki korelasi antara efikasi diri akademik dan HOTS siswa dalam pemahaman bacaan di Universitas Lancang Kuning. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain korelasional kuantitatif dengan metode survei yang melibatkan 91 mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris yang dipilih menggunakan rumus Slovin 5%. Data dikumpulkan melalui dua kuesioner yang telah divalidasi, diadaptasi dari Li dan Wang (2010) untuk mengukur efikasi diri akademik dan Witdianti (2023) untuk menilai HOTS, dan dianalisis menggunakan SPSS versi 26. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan korelasi positif yang kuat antara efikasi diri akademik dan HOTS ($r = 0,716$, $p < 0,001$). Temuan deskriptif juga menunjukkan bahwa efikasi diri akademik siswa ($M = 3,25$) dan HOTS ($M = 3,14$) dikategorikan pada tingkat yang sangat tinggi. Koefisien determinasi ($R^2 = 0,513$) menunjukkan bahwa efikasi diri akademik berkontribusi sebesar 51,3% terhadap HOTS siswa dalam pemahaman bacaan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa dengan efikasi diri akademik yang lebih tinggi cenderung menunjukkan keterampilan berpikir tingkat tinggi yang lebih kuat dalam pemahaman bacaan, menyoroti pentingnya memperkuat keyakinan diri siswa untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan kognitif dalam konteks membaca EFL.

Kata kunci: *efikasi diri, keterampilan berpikir tingkat tinggi*

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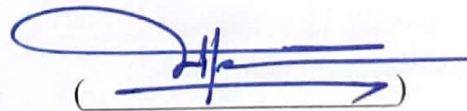
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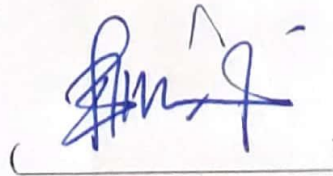
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Pekanbaru, February 11th, 2026
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

In the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and 21st-century education, university students are increasingly expected to master complex literacy skills that extend beyond literal comprehension. These include the ability to analyze, evaluate, and generate new ideas collectively referred to as Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). Such skills are essential in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, particularly in reading comprehension, where students must critically engage with texts to interpret and synthesize meaning. However, recent studies show that the integration of HOTS into EFL reading instruction remains limited in many Indonesian universities (Maryamah et al., 2024). As global academic literacy demands intensify, the ability to process information critically has become a key indicator of academic competence and readiness for international engagement.

Alongside cognitive development, psychological factors particularly academic self-efficacy play a crucial role in students' academic success. Academic self-efficacy refers to one's belief in their ability to organize and complete academic tasks effectively (Bandura, 1997; (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). (Sholihah & Juniardi, 2025) reported a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.469$, $p < .001$) between self-efficacy and reading comprehension among university students, indicating that learners who possess greater academic confidence tend to achieve better comprehension outcomes. Similarly (Hinduja et al., 2024) emphasized that self-efficacy shapes students' cognitive effort, learning strategies, and persistence in overcoming challenges.

In Indonesia, reading literacy remains a significant concern. Although large-scale assessments such as PISA focus on school-aged learners, their outcomes reflect broader educational weaknesses that persist in higher education. Indonesian students' literacy levels have consistently fallen below the (OECD, 2019) average, highlighting the need for universities to reinforce students' critical reading competence. Preliminary observations and a brief interview with the Reading lecturer indicate that students' belief in their academic ability contributes to how

well they handle higher order reading tasks. While they can understand texts at a literal level, their confidence and reasoning weaken when required to analyze and evaluate academic readings. Although journal-based assignments, group discussions, and digital reading tools have been used to support them, students' performance remains moderate. This suggests that technology alone is not enough, and self-efficacy plays an important role in developing HOTS in reading comprehension.

This issue is closely linked to students' academic self-efficacy. Many perceive English academic texts as complex, leading to anxiety and low confidence when engaging with reading materials. Apriliyani and Usuludin (2023) also found a weak correlation ($r = 0.174$) between self-efficacy and reading comprehension among Indonesian high-school students, suggesting that self-belief remains an underdeveloped aspect of language learning. Consequently, even with adequate linguistic competence, students' lack of confidence can hinder the activation of higher-order cognitive processes essential for deep comprehension.

Despite extensive research on self-efficacy, reading comprehension, and HOTS, several gaps remain. Most previous studies have focused on secondary education, leaving limited insight into how these variables interact at the university level. For example, (Wulandari et al., 2023) found that self-efficacy and learning style explained only 4.5% of reading comprehension variance among high-school students, implying that the relationship might differ for more mature learners facing higher cognitive demands. Additionally, much of the existing research on HOTS in Indonesia is descriptive or qualitative such as textbook analyses or exam item classifications rather than quantitative investigations that measure students' cognitive performance (Khabila et al., n.d.). As a result, there is still a lack of empirical evidence connecting self-efficacy with HOTS in university-level reading contexts.

Another limitation lies in the tendency of past studies to treat self-efficacy and reading comprehension as separate constructs, without examining their interaction with cognitive processes like HOTS. This narrow approach limits understanding of how psychological motivation and cognition work together in

comprehension. Furthermore, in regional contexts such as Riau particularly at Universitas Lancang Kuning there is almost no empirical research exploring this relationship. Most local studies focus on teaching strategies or material development rather than the interplay between psychological and cognitive factors in EFL learning.

Addressing these gaps, the present study carries both urgency and novelty. It seeks to investigate the correlation between academic self-efficacy and higher-order thinking skills in reading comprehension among university students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Lancang Kuning. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative quantitative approach, combining psychological and cognitive constructs that have rarely been examined simultaneously within the Indonesian EFL higher education context. Through a correlational design, the study aims to provide empirical evidence of how students' confidence in their academic abilities relates to their higher-order cognitive engagement during reading activities.

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the understanding of the relationship between psychological and cognitive factors influencing EFL reading comprehension. It also offers a regional perspective that broadens current academic discourse, which has been largely dominated by metropolitan-based studies. The findings are anticipated to serve as a foundation for future research and educational innovation, particularly in enhancing students' analytical reading competence and academic confidence in local university settings such as Universitas Lancang Kuning.

In conclusion, while prior research has explored self-efficacy, reading comprehension, and HOTS separately, the intersection of these variables remains underexplored especially in the context of Indonesian higher education. This study aims to fill that gap by examining the relationship between academic self-efficacy and students' higher-order thinking skills in reading comprehension. Through this investigation, the researcher hopes to contribute both theoretically and empirically to the development of English language education, fostering confident and critically literate university learners prepared to meet the demands of global academia.

B. Identification of the Research

Based on the background described above, the main issues identified in this study are as follows:

1. Many students at Universitas Lancang Kuning have difficulty applying Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) especially analyzing, evaluating, and creating meaning during reading comprehension tasks.
2. The students faced low academic self-efficacy, lack confidence and persistence when engaging with complex texts.

C. Limitation of the Research

This research focuses only on the relationship between academic self-efficacy and higher order thinking skills in reading comprehension among students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Lancang Kuning. The data are collected based on students' perceptions through questionnaires, without using reading tests or experimental treatments. Therefore, the results of this research will only describe the correlation within the limits of students' self-perceived academic abilities and higher-level thinking in reading.

D. Formulation of the Research

The formulation of this research can be formulated as follows, "Is there any significant correlation between academic self-efficacy and students' higher order thinking skills in reading comprehension at Universitas Lancang Kuning?"

E. The Purpose of the Research

The primary purpose of this research is to determine whether there is a significant correlation between academic self-efficacy and students' higher order thinking skills in reading comprehension at Universitas Lancang Kuning.

F. Significance of the Research

Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of knowledge in the field of English education, particularly by providing empirical

evidence on the relationship between academic self-efficacy and higher order thinking skills (HOTS) in reading comprehension. The findings are anticipated to enrich the theoretical understanding of how psychological factors, such as self-belief, interact with cognitive processes in EFL reading contexts, thereby supporting and extending existing frameworks within educational psychology and language learning.

Practically, the study is expected to provide several meaningful contributions:

1. For Lecturers : The findings may serve as a reference in designing teaching strategies that not only improve students' reading comprehension but also enhance their academic self-confidence and critical thinking ability during reading tasks.
2. For Students : The research can help students recognize the importance of self-efficacy in their learning process, encouraging them to develop greater confidence and independence in understanding academic texts that require analytical and evaluative thinking.
3. For Future Researchers : The results may serve as a foundation for further studies exploring other variables related to self-efficacy and HOTS, such as motivation, metacognitive awareness, or learning strategies, within different educational settings.

G. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and to ensure conceptual clarity, several key terms used in this research are defined as follows:

1. Academic Self-Efficacy : Refers to students' belief in their ability to organize, control, and accomplish academic tasks successfully (Bandura, 1997; (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020)). In this study, academic self-efficacy specifically denotes students' confidence in understanding and completing reading-related activities in English.
2. Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) : Represent advanced cognitive abilities that involve analyzing, evaluating, and creating new ideas based on information from a text (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). In this research,

HOTS are reflected in students' ability to interpret, assess, and synthesize meaning when engaging with English reading comprehension tasks.

3. Reading Comprehension : Refers to the process of constructing meaning from written texts through understanding, interpreting, and evaluating information. In this study, reading comprehension focuses on how students apply higher-order cognitive processes to comprehend academic English texts effectively (Grabe & Stoller, 2021).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

Based on the overall findings of this study, it can be concluded that academic self-efficacy has an important role in supporting students' Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in reading comprehension among English Education students at Universitas Lancang Kuning. Throughout this research process, it was found that students who believe in their academic abilities tend to be more confident, persistent, and responsible when facing challenging reading tasks that require deeper analysis and critical thinking. This study shows that academic self-efficacy does not only influence students' motivation, but also shapes how they regulate their learning, apply strategies, and engage actively with English texts. When students feel capable of managing academic demands, they are more willing to explore ideas, evaluate information, and construct meaning beyond surface understanding. Although this research does not indicate a causal relationship, the findings clearly demonstrate that academic self-efficacy and higher-order thinking skills are closely connected in the EFL university context. Therefore, strengthening students' confidence in their own learning abilities is essential in developing critical, reflective, and independent readers who are prepared for academic challenges and lifelong learning.

B. Suggestion

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several suggestions are proposed as follows :

1. lecturers are encouraged to pay greater attention to students' academic self-efficacy in the learning process. Creating a supportive classroom atmosphere, providing constructive feedback, and designing learning tasks according to students' abilities may help students develop stronger confidence in their academic performance.
2. The English Education Department is advised to integrate self-efficacy development into learning programs across subjects. Through mentoring activities, academic guidance, and reflective learning practices, students can be guided to apply positive learning beliefs in various academic contexts.
3. Students are encouraged to actively develop positive attitudes toward learning by setting clear academic goals, practicing self-reflection, and engaging in critical reading activities. By strengthening their self-efficacy, students may improve their higher-order thinking skills and overall reading comprehension.
4. Future researchers are suggested to conduct further studies using experimental, longitudinal, or mixed-method designs to explore causal relationships between academic self-efficacy and HOTS. Involving larger and more diverse samples may also help strengthen the generalizability of future findings.

Finally, curriculum developers are recommended to incorporate HOTS-oriented and self-efficacy-based learning activities into instructional materials and assessment systems in order to support students' academic and psychological development in a more balanced and sustainable manner. Overall, it is hoped that these recommendations will be taken into consideration to strengthen future research and educational practices. Through continued investigation, academic contributions related to self-efficacy and higher-order thinking skills in reading

comprehension can be further enriched, thereby providing stronger theoretical and practical implications for EFL teaching and learning.

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