



The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Stress in Grade VII Junior High School Students

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Abstract: Emotional intelligence is suspected to play a role in an individual's ability to cope with and manage academic stress. This study aims to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic stress of grade VII students of SMP Negeri 5 Kupang for the 2025/2026 Academic Year. The sample in this study is 36 students in grades VII A and B of SMP Negeri 5 Kupang for the 2025/2026 Academic Year. The data collection tools used in this study are emotional intelligence questionnaires and academic stress questionnaires. The research method is quantitative with a correlational approach. Data were analyzed using product moment correlation techniques. The results showed that there was a weak negative relationship between emotional intelligence and academic stress ($r = -0.044$; $p > 0.05$).

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Stress Academic; Students

Abstrak: Kecerdasan emosional diduga berperan dalam kemampuan individu menghadapi dan mengelola stres akademik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara kecerdasan emosional dengan stres akademik siswa kelas VII SMP Negeri 5 Kupang Tahun Pelajaran 2025/2026. Sampel dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VII A dan B SMP Negeri 5 Kupang Tahun Pelajaran 2025/2026 yang berjumlah 36 siswa. Alat pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah angket kecerdasan emosional dan angket stres akademik. Metode penelitian ini adalah kuantitatif dengan pendekatan korelasional. Data dianalisis menggunakan teknik korelasi product moment. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat hubungan negatif yang lemah antara kecerdasan emosional dan stres akademik ($r = -0,044$; $p > 0,05$).

Kata kunci: Kecerdasan Emosional; Stress Akademik; Siswa

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Introduction

Education has a very important role for the lives and development of students. Education carried out in educator units is able to meet various needs of students and affect the quality of life. However, during the learning process at school, students often experience stress due to difficulties in adjusting to existing programs. One type of stress that is often experienced by students at school is academic stress.

Academic stress is a condition or condition in the form of physical, mental, or emotional disorders that can be caused by a mismatch between the demands of the environment and the actual resources possessed by students so that they will be increasingly burdened with various pressures or demands at school (Vania et al., 2019:251). This stress can arise due to high academic demands, such as task loads, difficulty managing study time, busy lesson schedules, and demands to continue to excel. This condition becomes increasingly worrying because it can affect students' psychological readiness in undergoing a long-term educational process (Anjala, 2024).

According to Fitriyanti (2025:4), "academic stress can be seen from behavioral changes such as failing to complete assignments, getting unsatisfactory grades, difficulty concentrating, skipping school, and students who experience academic stress often feel inferior and unoptimistic about students' abilities". In addition, academic stress that is not managed properly can also cause various negative impacts, such as decreased concentration ability, the emergence of anxiety, and reduced enthusiasm for learning. Therefore, supporting factors are needed that can help students manage the academic pressure they face. One of the internal factors that affect the occurrence of academic stress is emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is one of the factors that exist in students that has a considerable contribution to their learning outcomes. Fitriastuti (in Saputra et al, 2024) explained that emotional intelligence is a social intelligence related to a person's ability to know both his emotions and the emotions of others and his ability to distinguish his emotions from others which is used to regulate his mindset and behavior.

According to Goleman (in Apriliani and Muhid, 2025), emotional intelligence is a person's ability to organize his or her emotional life with intelligence (to manage our lives intelligently), maintaining emotional alignment and one's sensitivity to emotions and his ability to express them appropriately reflected in aspects such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. In the context of education, emotional intelligence has an important role in helping learners deal with various academic pressures that arise during the learning process.

According to Goleman (in Samsu, 2025:4), "individuals who have low emotional intelligence tend to be seen as stubborn, difficult to get along with, easily frustrated, not easily trusted in others, insensitive to environmental conditions and tend to be desperate when experiencing stress". This ability allows students to stay motivated, think rationally, and be adaptive in facing various academic challenges. Therefore, emotional intelligence is an important aspect to be studied in relation to academic stress.

Based on the results of an interview with a BK teacher at SMP Negeri 5 Kupang on October 6, 2025, it is known that students often feel frustrated quickly when doing assignments, have low levels of confidence, and have sleep problems. These conditions not only have an impact on academic achievement, but also affect their social relationships with peers and teachers. Therefore, academic stress is an important issue that needs attention from all parties.

However, not all students experience stress in the same way. Some students are still able to learn well despite being under academic pressure. They are able to regulate their emotions, control themselves, and find solutions when facing learning difficulties. The difference in students' responses to academic stress indicates the existence of internal factors at play, one of which is emotional intelligence. Therefore, it is important to look at how emotional intelligence can affect students' ability to cope with academic stress.

Research shows that junior high school students often experience academic stress at a moderate to high level, especially in their first year of high school (Linden & Stuart, 2020; Redi et al., 2018). According to Gupta and Narang (2023), students with low emotional intelligence are more likely to feel overwhelmed and experience higher stress than their peers. This shows that the ability to recognize and manage emotions has a great influence on the way students deal with learning demands. If not handled properly, academic stress can hinder students' academic and psychological development. Therefore, support from teachers, counselors, and schools is needed so that students can adapt and learn more optimally.

Seeing the importance of the role of emotional intelligence in helping students cope with academic pressure, it is necessary to understand further what is meant by emotional intelligence. According to Goleman (in Marfu'ah, 2024:113), "emotional intelligence is the ability of a person to manage his emotional life with intelligence to maintain emotional harmony and their expression through self-awareness skills, self-control, self-motivation, empathy and social skills".

According to Goleman (2020: 42), "emotional intelligence consists of five main aspects, namely self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills". Drigas and Papoutsis

(2020) explain that a person with high emotional intelligence is usually able to deal with pressing situations more calmly, make the right decisions, and interact with the environment better.

In the world of education, this ability is very important because it helps students adjust to the demands of learning. In relation to these learning demands, students are also vulnerable to academic pressure. "Academic stress is the pressure that arises when learning demands are felt to exceed the student's ability to cope with them" (Barseli et al. in Febriani, 2025). Therefore, emotional intelligence is considered to play a big role in determining how students assess and respond to these pressures.

Although there is a lot of research on academic stress, studies that examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic stress in grade VII junior high school students are still limited. Each school has unique learning environment characteristics, so research results from other schools are not necessarily fully relevant. This gap is the basis for the need for more specific and empirical research in the context to be studied. This research is important to provide a deeper understanding of the role of emotional intelligence in reducing students' academic stress levels. The results of the research are expected to be the basis for schools to develop guidance and counseling programs, strengthen emotional skills, and stress management strategies that are in accordance with the needs of students, especially for grade VII students who are in the adaptation period.

Based on the above background description, the researcher is interested in researching the Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Stress of Grade VII Students at SMP Negeri 5 Kupang for the 2025/2026 academic year.

Method

Research Design and Setting

Although there is a lot of research on academic stress, studies that examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic stress in grade VII junior high school students are still limited. Each school has unique learning environment characteristics, so research results from other schools are not necessarily fully relevant. This gap is the basis for the need for more specific and empirical research in the context to be studied. This research is important to provide a deeper understanding of the role of emotional intelligence in reducing students' academic stress levels. The results of the research are expected to be the basis for schools to develop guidance and counseling programs, strengthen emotional skills, and stress management strategies that are in accordance with the needs of students, especially for grade VII students who are in the adaptation period.

Based on the above background description, the researcher is interested in researching the Relationship

Between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Stress of Grade VII Students at SMP Negeri 5 Kupang for the 2025/2026 academic year.

Participants, Sample, or Data Sources

The population consists of 145 grade VII students of SMP Negeri 5 Kupang for the 2025/2026 Academic Year. The sample consists of 36 students, representing 25% of the total population. The participants were selected using a simple random sampling technique.

Instruments and Measures

Data were collected using emotional intelligence questionnaires and academic stress questionnaires. Emotional intelligence questionnaires and academic stress questionnaires used a four-point Likert scale. Validity was tested using Product Moment correlation, while reliability was tested using Alpha Cronbach. The emotional intelligence questionnaire had 39 items with a reliability coefficient of 0.784. Meanwhile, the academic stress questionnaire had 49 items with a reliability coefficient of 0.918.

Procedure and Research Ethics

Data were collected by administering the questionnaires to selected participants. Respondents' information was kept confidential and used only for research purposes.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Simple Linear Regression with SPSS version 22 for Windows. A significance level of 0.05 was used to determine the influence of emotional intelligence on learning achievement.

Results and Discussion

Results

Normality Test

Before conducting further analysis, the data were first tested for normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The test was conducted using SPSS for Windows version 22. The decision-making criterion was based on the significance value: the data were considered normally distributed if the significance value was > 0.05 and not normally distributed if the significance value was < 0.05 (Sugiyono, 2016:79). The results of the normality test are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Results of the Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
Unstandardized Residual		
N		36
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	27.66900715
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.114
	Positive	.114
	Negative	-

Test Statistic		.114
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 ^{c,d}
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.		
d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.		

Based on the table above, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value was $0.200 > 0.05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that the research data were normally distributed.

Linearity Test

The linearity test was used to determine whether the independent and dependent variables had a linear relationship. The linearity test was conducted using SPSS version 22 for Windows through the Test for Linearity at a significance level of 0.05. The results were assessed based on the Deviation from Linearity row. If the significance value was < 0.05 , the relationship was considered non-linear, whereas if the significance value was > 0.05 , the relationship was considered linear (Hardani et al., 2020:395). The results of the linearity test between Emotional Intelligence and Learning Achievement are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Results of the Linearity Test

ANOVA Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Stress Academic * Emotional Intelligence	Between Groups	(Combined)	20903.972	24	870.999	1.61	.206
		Linearity	51.884	1	51.884	.096	.762
		Deviation from Linearity	20852.088	23	906.613	1.678	.187
	Within Groups		5943.000	11	540.273		
	Total		26846.972	35			

Based on Table 2 above, the Deviation from Linearity value was $0.187 > 0.05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a linear relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Learning Achievement.

Hypothesis Testing

The results Uji Korelasi *Product Moment Pearson* are presented in Table 3 below

Tabel 3. Result of the Pearson Product Moment

Correlation Test

Correlations		Intelligence Emotional	Stress Academic
Intelligence Emotional	Pearson Correlation	1	-.044
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.799
	N	36	36
Stress Academic	Pearson Correlation	-.044	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.799	
	N	36	36

From the table above, several conclusions can be drawn as follows:

a. Based on *Pearson Correlation values*

It is known that the *Pearson Correlation* value for the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic stress with $N=36$ is (-0.044) . This value is between the correlation coefficient values of $0.00 - 0.199$. These results show that there is a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and academic stress, which indicates that an increase in emotional intelligence tends to be followed by a decrease in academic stress. However, the relationship is not proven to be significant based on the results of statistical testing.

b. Based on *the value of sig. (2-tailed)*

From table 4.1 above, it is known that the *Sig. (2-tailed)* value between emotional intelligence and academic stress is $0.799 > 0.05$. This shows that there is a relationship between the variables of emotional intelligence and academic stress in grade VII students of SMP Negeri 5 Kupang for the 2025/2026 academic year.

Discussion

Based on the results of *Pearson's correlation analysis*, a correlation coefficient value of -0.044 with a significance value (*Sig. 2-tailed*) of $0.799 > 0.05$ was obtained in a research sample of 36 students. These results show that the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic stress in grade VII students of SMP Negeri 5 Kupang for the 2025/2026 academic year is at a weak relationship level with a negative direction.

Negative coefficient values indicate that an increase in emotional intelligence tends to be followed by a decrease in academic stress. Thus, the zero (H_0) hypothesis that states that there is no relationship between emotional intelligence and academic stress is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_a) that states that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic stress is accepted.

Based on the results of the study, emotional intelligence shows a negative relationship with academic stress, even though the relationship is in the very weak category and not statistically significant.

This indicates that grade VII students who have better emotional intelligence tend to experience lower academic stress.

The results of this study are in line with the results of research by Rohmah et al., (2025) that there is a significant relationship with a negative direction on emotional intelligence with academic stress for 9th grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Wonoayu. Which means that, the higher the level of emotional intelligence of students, the lower the academic stress that occurs. These results are evidenced by the acquisition of a value of $r = -0.016$ at a significance level of $0.035 < 0.05$.

Another study from Sahri (2025) also showed that there was a significant negative relationship between emotional intelligence and academic stress, with a Pearson correlation coefficient value of $r = -0.642$ and a significance level of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.01$). These findings show that the higher the emotional intelligence students have, the lower the level of academic stress they experience.

These findings indicate that emotional intelligence is related to academic stress in students. Students with good emotional management skills tend to be better able to deal with academic stress, so they are less likely to experience stress. On the other hand, low emotional intelligence can be a trigger for increased academic stress. However, academic stress is not only influenced by emotional intelligence alone, but also by various other factors.

Barseli et al. (2017), said that the factors that cause the emergence of academic stress are academic demands that are considered too heavy, poor exam results, accumulated assignments, and social environment. The more assignments, exams, and grade targets that students must achieve, the more likely they are to experience academic stress. Sutari and Bolitan (2026), said that in the world of education, students with a good level of emotional intelligence tend to be better able to overcome anxiety during exams, face conflicts between friends, and maintain learning motivation. This shows that emotional factors can be an important foundation for learning success. Therefore, academic stress will be reduced.

Theoretically, emotional intelligence consists of several main components such as self-awareness, the ability to manage emotions, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills (Hartini & Yasin, 2019). These components play an important role in helping students deal with various academic pressures that arise in the school environment. Students who have good self-awareness will be better able to recognize their emotional state when facing assignments or exams, while the ability to manage emotions helps them stay calm and not easily depressed. In addition, self-motivation encourages students to keep striving to achieve academic goals, empathy helps in building good relationships with friends and teachers, and social skills support adaptability in the learning environment. Thus, these five

components together can affect the level of academic stress experienced by students

Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis using the Pearson Correlation test, a correlation coefficient value of -0.044 with a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of $0.799 > 0.05$, so it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic stress in grade VII students of SMP Negeri 5 Kupang. Although the direction of the relationship shows a negative relationship, that is, the higher the emotional intelligence, the lower the tendency for academic stress, but the relationship is in the very weak category and not statistically significant.

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