Emotional Literacy and Students' Academic Achievement in Elementary Schools

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Abstract: This community service activity aims to improve the emotional literacy of elementary school students in Southeast Maluku and Tual City as an effort to support academic achievement and positive character development. Emotional literacy is considered important because it helps students recognize, understand, and manage emotions, thereby improving concentration, learning motivation, and social interaction in the school environment. The activity was implemented using a participatory approach through interactive lectures, group discussions, simulations (role plays), and joint reflections involving students in grades IV–VI. Evaluation was carried out qualitatively through observation and teacher feedback. The results of the activity showed an increase in students' abilities to identify emotions, control behavior, and participate more actively in the learning process. Social-emotional support from teachers, including communication with parents and facilitating educational assistance for underprivileged students, contributed to increased attendance and learning motivation. Overall, strengthening emotional literacy has been shown to contribute to learning engagement and improvements in students' academic attitudes. This activity confirms that integrating emotional literacy into elementary education is an effective strategy for improving the quality of learning and building student character sustainably.

Keywords: Emotional Literacy; Academic Achievement; Elementary School; Character Education.

Introduction

The study of affective aspects in the educational process and emotional literacy in students and teachers is a relatively new field that has received attention in contemporary education, especially in recent years. In previous periods, approaches to emotions in education tended to ignore the role of emotions, even though it has long been understood that emotions influence the overall functioning of individuals and play a significant, even determining, role in interpersonal relationships, motivation, and the learning process (Jelena & Stanislava, 2018). Parenting is a long and challenging journey, beginning at birth and continuing throughout life. From the very beginning of a child's life, development and learning are shaped through the relationships and interactions between parents and children. The characteristics of both the child and the parents play a significant role in determining the quality of the child's early years, a crucial period for growth and development. The concept of parental emotional literacy, an aspect that has not been widely recognized as part of parenting characteristics, plays a crucial role in helping preschoolers manage their emotions and develop social problem-solving skills (Yükçü & Demircioğlu, 2021). As the initial initiator of the concept (Steiner, 1984) Emotional literacy explains that a person's ability to recognize their own feelings and use that understanding as a strength to improve their quality of life. Emotions are a key element in the utilization of cognitive abilities, the learning process, and individual development. Furthermore, various studies show that social and emotional factors have a broad impact, ranging from increasing learning motivation, the ability to remember previously learned knowledge and skills, to developing logical thinking skills (Palma-Luengo et

al., 2025). Emotional literacy as a skill in probationary practice requires the ability to understand and regulate one's own emotions, in order to be responsive to the emotions of others (Knight & Modi, 2014).

Recent psychological literature introduces various models and theories of emotional intelligence, such as the Ability Model, the Trait Model, and the Mixed Model. Each model differs in how it defines and operationalizes key concepts, including the approaches used to study and measure them. Based on these differences (Park, 1999) emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between two constructs that are often used interchangeably: emotional intelligence and emotional literacy. Emotional intelligence is understood as an individual's potential or tendency to achieve emotional fluency, while emotional literacy refers to the collection of skills, strategies, and tools learned and developed to enable an individual to function effectively in the emotional realm. Emotional literacy encompasses the ability to recognize one's own and others' emotions and respond appropriately to them. In line with this view (Batra & Kumar, 2025), widely known as the originator of the term "emotional literacy", states that individuals who have emotional literacy are able to recognize, understand, express, and regulate emotions in themselves and others, emotional literacy encourages a safe, empathetic, and collaborative learning space.

Emotional intelligence helps children think more creatively and act more imaginatively. They can also use their feelings as a guide to solving everyday problems. Emotional literacy is often used as a term to represent the idea of emotional intelligence, which is widely recognized as a crucial factor influencing student success in life, especially during childhood. Many students with high intellectual abilities still experience failure due to their inability to manage their emotions in academic settings. Numerous studies show that a person's emotional state significantly influences academic achievement and social adaptability, both in and out of the classroom (Akhtar et al., 2024). Schools in the 21st century face the enormous challenge of having to educate students from diverse cultural backgrounds, with varying abilities and enthusiasm for learning.not the same (Durlak et al., 2011). However, the reality is that many students lack adequate social and emotional skills. As they progress from elementary school to middle school and then to higher education, their connection to school weakens. When students feel disconnected from school, their academic performance, behavior, and health can decline (Adenuga et al., 2025). The results of the study from Wang et al., (2021) Studies show that warm and supportive family relationships, especially with parents, along with positive self-esteem, form a mutually reinforcing system that enhances children's academic achievement. Therefore, emotional support

and good family relationships are as important as academic ability itself.

Emotional literacy is closely related to academic achievement, showing a significant correlation with it. Students who are able to recognize, understand, and regulate their emotions tend to have higher learning motivation, better decision-making skills, and more optimal academic performance. Children's academic achievement plays a crucial role in determining their future educational experiences. Furthermore, academic achievement is also related to children's mental health throughout their school years and into early adulthood (Tian et al., 2016). Because of the importance of academic achievement, many researchers have tried to identify various factors that influence children's learning success (Bücker et al., 2018). Several factors that have been proven to have a close relationship with academic achievement are the closeness of the relationship between parents and children and the child's level of self-esteem (Booth & Gerard, 2011; Jhang, 2017). The closeness between parents and children is an important indicator of the quality of family relationships, which describes the existence of a warm and strong emotional bond between children and their parents (Zhao et al., 2015)This closeness is seen from the existence of mutually supportive interactions, such as sharing stories about worries, discussing together, and paying attention to each other (Zhang & Fuligni, 2006). Meanwhile, self-esteem is a reflection of how someone assesses themselves as a whole (Asencio, 2013). If someone has high self-esteem, they feel valuable and have positive values. Conversely, low self-esteem is characterized by feelings of dissatisfaction with themselves, self-rejection, and even self-belief.

The family is the primary and most fundamental environment for child development (Elsayed, 2024)The family is recognized as the basic unit of society, playing a vital role in the socialization and development of children. Childhood is a crucial stage, as it is during this period that an individual's personality, values, and moral principles are formed, which then have a long-term impact on their future lives. Furthermore, children constitute a large part of the global population, making their presence a key factor in driving societal development. Childhood is also closely linked to the potential for productivity, generosity, and creativity, which ultimately contribute to the progress and well-being of a society (Elsayed, 2021) as previously explained, the closeness between parents and children is a key indicator of the quality of that relationship. However, most research on parent-child relationships focuses more on the mother-child relationship, while the father-child relationship has received less attention. Yet, both mothers and fathers have distinct and unique contributions to child development. Therefore, their

roles need to be considered together. Furthermore, the roles of mothers and fathers often differ due to the influence of social norms.

In general, fathers play a greater role as breadwinners for the family, while mothers are more involved in direct interaction with children, both in Western and Eastern cultures (Cabrera et al., 2018) for example, in the United States, fathers spend twice as much time working as mothers. Conversely, mothers read to their children almost twice as often (Froiland & Davison, 2014) in China, mothers are also more involved in children's educational activities than fathers (Liu et al., 2025) such as supervising homework and communicating with teachers about children's learning progress. In addition to their different roles, fathers and mothers also exhibit different ways of interacting with their children. Mothers tend to show more affection and emotional support (Jiménez-iglesias et al., 2017), while fathers are more often involved in active or rough physical play (Hagan & Kuebli, 2007). Therefore, to understand the different influences between fathers and mothers, research on parent-child closeness should consider father-child and mother-child relationships separately.

Children and adolescents from low-income families are at greater risk of developing low emotional literacy skills. Research shows that economic deprivation and material limitations can have long-lasting impacts on children's development, such as reduced self-confidence, self-efficacy, independence, and relationships with others. Poor emotional health in children can impact development, disrupt daily functioning, and impact well-being into adulthood (Ghandour et al., 2018). Evidence suggests that the relationship between poverty and child health is mediated by poverty-related social risk factors and social needs (Rodems & Shaefer, 2020). Social risk factors include certain adverse social conditions that are associated with poor health (Foundation & Francisco, 2019). Study results Keeton et al., (2023)showed that 41% of children in the study sample exhibited symptoms that put them at risk for emotional dysfunction. Furthermore, approximately 90% of families reported having at least one unmet social need, and over 37% of families reported having five or more social needs simultaneously. The most frequently reported social needs included difficulty paying bills (39%), housing instability (38%), and food insecurity (36%). These findings indicate that Latinx families from low socioeconomic backgrounds face particularly high levels of social stress, potentially impacting children's psychological and emotional well-being.

There is often confusion about the distinction between emotional intelligence and emotional literacy, leading them to be used interchangeably. The term emotional intelligence is more commonly used in educational contexts in the United States, while educators in the United Kingdom tend to prefer the term emotional literacy. While the two concepts share some similarities, there are fundamental differences. Intelligence relates to an individual's capacity to process information, both cognitively and socio-emotionally, while literacy emphasizes the mastery of linguistic skills and strategies used to convey ideas, interact with others, and overcome communication barriers in everyday life (Coskun & Oksuz, 2019). Thus, literacy focuses on the possession of skills and strategic understanding of their application, while intelligence emphasizes an individual's potential to process and develop information (Matthews, 2006). Emotional intelligence tends to be understood as an individual characteristic related to the development of socio-emotional information processing. Conversely, emotional literacy can be viewed as an instructional approach and a set of learning strategies aimed at teaching socio-emotional skills to students (Orbach, 1998; Tew, 2007; Pratt, 2009).

It's crucial to understand what emotional literacy means. A lack of this skill can have serious consequences, such as behavioral disorders, the breakdown of social relationships, and feelings of hopelessness. This situation arises because education has traditionally emphasized academic achievement through the curriculum, while providing less attention to the ability to manage emotions in everyday life. As a result, many individuals grow up with limitations in understanding and controlling their emotions. One teacher aptly described this situation when she stated that attention to children's reading and writing skills often takes precedence over concern for their future survival and well-being (Liau et al., 2003). The problem of low emotional literacy does not only occur in one country but is a global problem.

The results of the study led the team to conduct community service for several schools in Southeast Maluku and Tual City related to emotional literacy in supporting students' academic achievement in elementary school. This is because in early childhood, in addition to parental education, teachers are also responsible for fostering and teaching children to develop good character. Thus, with existing independence, students can fill it with Human Development that has good human resources. In addition, making Indonesia advanced and globally competitive at the international level. In accordance with the dark period of conflict that occurred in Maluku began on January 19, 1999 and lasted for several years (hereinafter referred to as the Maluku conflict), which resulted in human death and suffering, destruction of property, forced or religious conversion. The Maluku conflict, which is considered a conflict of riots, crimes

and human rights violations on a very large scale, has become a dark and very bad historical record in the process of human civilization (Titaley & Nur, 2022) this community service activity aims to improve the emotional literacy of elementary school students in Southeast Maluku and Tual City as an effort to support improved academic achievement and the formation of positive and adaptive character from an early age.

Method

This community service activity was implemented using a participatory, educational, and contextual approach that focused on strengthening the emotional literacy of elementary school students in Southeast Maluku and Tual City. The schools for the community service activity were SD Negeri 1 Tual, SD Kristen 1 Tual, and SD Inpres Ohijang. The sample students for the community service were grades 4, 5, and 6. The participatory approach was chosen because it emphasized active student involvement in every stage of the activity, so that the learning process was not one-way, but interactive and reflective. This approach also took into account the developmental characteristics of elementary school-aged children who tend to learn effectively through direct experience, discussions, games, and simulations. Prior to the implementation of the activity, the community service team conducted a preparatory phase that included coordination with the principal and teachers to obtain an overview of the students' socio-emotional conditions. This phase also aimed to identify problems that frequently arise in the school environment, such as students' difficulties in controlling emotions, low self-confidence, conflicts between friends, and poor communication skills. Based on the results of this identification, the team developed emotional literacy materials tailored to the level of cognitive and social development of elementary school students. The material provided includes an introduction to basic emotions (such as anger, sadness, happiness, fear, and disappointment), an understanding of the causes of emotions, how to express emotions appropriately, and strategies for regulating emotions in learning situations and social interactions. Students are also taught about empathy, cooperation, and the importance of respecting differences in the school environment.

The activities were implemented through several integrated learning methods. Interactive lectures were used to provide an initial understanding of the concept of emotional literacy. In these sessions, students were invited to engage in dialogue about their personal experiences in dealing with various emotional situations. Small group discussions were held to encourage students to share experiences and learn to understand the perspectives of their peers. Role-playing methods or simulations of social situations were used to train students' skills in resolving conflicts, managing anger, and expressing feelings assertively. Educational games were also implemented to create a fun learning atmosphere and encourage active student involvement. At the end of each session, a joint reflection was held to help students connect the material learned to real-life experiences. This reflection aimed to strengthen the internalization of emotional literacy values so that it not only stopped at cognitive understanding but also impacted behavioral changes. Evaluation of the activities was conducted qualitatively through direct observation of student responses and participation during the activities. Observed behavioral changes included increased courage in expressing opinions, the ability to name and recognize emotions, and how students responded to situations that triggered conflict. In addition, the team also conducted informal discussions and interviews with teachers to obtain feedback on changes in students' social interactions and learning motivation after participating in the mentoring activities. Activity documentation is used as material for reflection and evaluation of the program's sustainability. Through this comprehensive method, community service activities not only aim to provide knowledge about emotional literacy but also to form positive habits in managing emotions and social interactions. Thus, it is hoped that students will be able to develop better self-regulation skills, increase engagement in learning, and demonstrate character development that supports sustainable academic achievement. The assessment of emotional literacy skills refers to a rubric developed byKliueva & Tsagari (2018) from the University of Cyprus and Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences. This instrument contains 20 questions with the following indicators: 1) Building a Learning Environment, 2) Building Relationships, 3) Responding to prevailing behavior, 4) Building a cooperative environment, 5) Building emotional growth.

Results and Discussion

Emotional literacy is a fundamental competency that plays a crucial role in the development of elementary school-aged children, particularly in supporting academic success and character development. At this stage of development, children not only learn to read, write, and count, but also to understand themselves and others. The ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions forms the foundation for self-regulation and healthy social interactions. Theoretically, emotional literacy is closely related to emotional intelligence and emotional

regulation (Brackett et al., 2011) explains that the ability to recognize and regulate emotions helps students reduce academic stress and improve the quality of interpersonal relationships at school. Students who are able to manage frustration when facing difficult tasks tend to persist and are less likely to give up. Conversely, the inability to control emotions can lead to avoidance behavior, conflict with peers, or even decreased motivation to learn. From an educational psychology perspective, emotions have a direct influence on cognitive processes. Positive emotions strengthen learning engagement, while unmanaged negative emotions, such as anxiety and fear of failure, can hinder concentration and academic performance. Thus, emotional literacy is an important prerequisite for creating an optimal learning experience. Research in neuropsychology also shows that emotional regulation is related to the development of the brain's executive functions (Blair & Raver, 2015) found that children with strong self-regulation skills demonstrated improved working memory, cognitive flexibility, and impulse control. These functions are crucial for learning mathematics, reading, and problem-solving. This means that strengthening emotional literacy not only impacts social aspects but also directly supports children's academic readiness. In the social context of school, emotional literacy helps create a safe and supportive classroom climate (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009) suggests that students' social-emotional competencies contribute to the creation of a collaborative and conflict-free learning environment.

Students with emotional awareness are better able to work collaboratively in groups, appreciate differences, and resolve conflicts constructively. An emotionally safe environment fosters a sense of belonging to the school, which ultimately has a positive impact on academic achievement. Furthermore, emotional literacy acts as a protective factor against problematic behavior (Eisenberg et al., 2010) found that good emotional regulation skills are associated with lower levels of aggression and increased prosocial behavior in children. In areas with complex social backgrounds or experiences of conflict, strengthening emotional literacy is a preventative strategy for building psychological resilience and a culture of peace from an early age. From an educational intervention perspective, various studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of social and emotional learning (SEL) programs. A meta-analysis conducted by Taylor et al., (2017) Studies of hundreds of SEL programs have shown that these interventions significantly impact academic achievement, psychological well-being, and reduce problem behaviors, even years after program completion. These findings confirm that emotional literacy is not merely a supplement to the curriculum but

an essential component of modern education systems. Furthermore, emotional literacy plays a role in the formation of children's identity and self-concept (Orth & Robins, 2014) research shows that positive self-esteem in childhood contributes to academic success and long-term well-being. Emotional literacy helps children build a healthy sense of self, making them more confident in facing academic and social challenges. In the context of human resource development, emotional literacy is one of the essential competencies of the 21st century. The World Economic Forum (2020) places emotional intelligence, collaboration skills, and self-regulation as key skills needed in the future workforce. Therefore, strengthening emotional literacy in elementary schools is a long-term investment in developing a generation that is adaptive, creative, and able to compete globally.

Based on this description, community service activities focused on strengthening emotional literacy in elementary schools have significant relevance. This intervention not only improves academic achievement but also shapes students' character, making them resilient, empathetic, and able to build healthy social relationships. In the long term, strengthening emotional literacy contributes to a more harmonious and productive society. The following are the results of interviews with several students:

T	:	*After school, do children repeat the lessons given by the teacher in class?*
S23	:	*I review the lesson the teacher gave me. Usually, after lunch, I take a break from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM to focus on studying.*
S12	:	*I lack concentration in studying because I usually help my father and mother sell at the market.*
S5	:	*I can't focus on studying because I usually take care of my younger sibling because my parents go to work.*

Based on the interview results, differences in self-management and learning responsibility skills were observed among students, which are closely related to emotional literacy and impact academic achievement. S23 demonstrated good self-regulation skills. He was able to manage his time between rest and study and was aware of the importance of reviewing lessons independently between 7:00 PM and 9:00 PM. This behavior reflects the ability to manage emotions, self-discipline, and intrinsic motivation. Good emotional literacy helps students like S23 stay focused and consistent in their studies, potentially supporting optimal academic achievement. In contrast, S12 and S5 demonstrated challenges in concentrating on their studies due to the demands of family responsibilities. S12 had to help his parents sell at the market, while S5 looked after his younger sibling because both parents worked. These conditions can impact their emotional states, such as fatigue, stress, or lack of rest. When emotional regulation skills are not optimally developed,

students tend to experience difficulty maintaining focus on their studies. This potentially impacts low concentration and academic achievement. These findings suggest that emotional literacy plays a crucial role in helping students cope with external pressures, such as family responsibilities and limited study time. Students who are able to recognize and manage their emotions well tend to be better able to manage their time, cope with stress, and maintain motivation to learn despite challenges. Thus, emotional literacy is not only related to social aspects but also directly contributes to students' learning readiness and academic achievement.

Figure 2. Mentoring for Students at Ohoijang Elementary School, Southeast Maluku

The differences in student responses (S23, S12, and S5) can be explained through the concepts of self-regulation and emotional literacy. S23 demonstrated good time management skills and study discipline. These skills are related to emotional regulation and self-control, which are core components of emotional literacy. A study by Blair & Raver, (2015) studies have shown that good self-regulation in childhood is directly related to improved executive functions such as concentration, impulse control, and planning, all of which support academic achievement. In contrast, S12 and S5 face significant family responsibilities, such as helping parents work and caring for younger siblings. This situation can potentially lead to emotional distress, fatigue, and stress. When children are in chronic stressful situations, cognitive abilities such as attention and working memory can be impaired (McEwen & Morrison, 2014) this explains why S12 and S5 had difficulty focusing on their studies. Emotional literacy serves as a protective factor against external pressures. Children who are able to recognize and manage their emotions tend to be better able to cope with stress and maintain motivation to learn (Brackett et al., 2011) in this context, S23 likely has more developed self-regulation skills, allowing him to consistently study despite having

other after-school activities. Children who feel in control of their time and confident in their abilities will demonstrate better motivation and performance. Conversely, when children feel burdened or lack control over a situation, negative emotions such as fatigue and anxiety can hinder achievement. Socioeconomic factors also play a role. Children who have to help their parents work or care for younger siblings often experience limited study time and academic support at home. A study byHair et al. (2015)This study shows that family economic pressure is associated with increased stress in children, which ultimately impacts cognitive function and academic achievement. Therefore, the conditions demonstrated by S12 and S5 are not solely due to a lack of desire to learn, but are influenced by emotional factors, family environment, and self-regulation skills. Emotional literacy is key to helping students manage this stress and maintain focus and motivation to learn.

Figure 2. Mentoring for Students at Tual 1 Christian Elementary School

Children's ability to adapt and deal with social situations in the early years of school greatly influences the development of their learning achievements and behavior in the future (Pianta et al., 1995) children who adjust well to the social environment of school from the start tend to have a better start in learning. These positive social experiences also help them continue their development as they continue their education to the next level. Some signs that a child is adjusting well in the classroom include the ability to manage emotions, a positive attitude toward school, the ability to build relationships with peers, active involvement in school activities, and good self-control. These factors are closely related to a child's academic success (Birch & Ladd, 1997). Furthermore, especially in the early elementary grades, children's ability to adjust is also greatly influenced by the quality of their relationships with adults, particularly teachers. Therefore, the quality of the

relationship between teachers and children from the beginning of school is thought to be an important indicator predicting a child's future success or difficulties (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). The following are the results of the interview with the teacher:

L : *What about students who rarely attend school and those who are lazy to study?*

T3 : *Usually, if a student hasn't been to school for three days, we, as homeroom teachers, go to the parents' homes to check on them. We usually find them at home, looking after their younger siblings. Parents usually go to work and return home in the evening.*

T5 : *We usually ask for the parents' cell phone number and communicate and ask the parents to come to school so we can discuss and find a solution.*

T7 : *We identify underprivileged students so they can receive scholarships to boost their academic performance. This ultimately motivates them to study.*

Interview results indicate that students who rarely attend school and lack motivation to learn generally face family situations that require additional responsibilities, such as caring for younger siblings while parents are at work. This situation indicates that the problem of attendance and low motivation to learn cannot be understood solely as a lack of academic interest but rather is related to socio-emotional factors. The burden of household responsibilities has the potential to cause emotional pressure, fatigue, and stress that can disrupt students' concentration and engagement in learning. In the context of emotional literacy, the ability to recognize and manage emotions is a crucial factor in determining how students respond to such pressure. A study by Abdelshafy et al., (2025) research shows that emotional regulation and academic persistence significantly influence students' academic success. This means that students with strong emotional regulation skills are better able to maintain focus and academic performance despite facing external challenges. Conversely, limitations in emotional management can magnify the negative impact of stress on academic achievement. Teachers' home visits and communication with parents reflect the presence of social-emotional support within the school environment (Leasa et al., 2024). Such support is crucial because positive relationships between teachers and students have been shown to increase learning engagement and adaptive academic behavior (Reeve & Cheon, 2021) when students feel cared for and supported, they develop a sense of security and attachment to school, which contributes to increased attendance and motivation to learn. Furthermore, the policy of providing scholarships to underprivileged students impacts not only the financial aspect but also the emotional one. This assistance can increase self-confidence, hope, and motivation to achieve Carpendale et al., (2025) found that social-emotional interventions

integrated into school policies positively impacted long-term student academic achievement and attendance. Thus, the support provided by schools not only addressed financial barriers but also strengthened aspects of emotional literacy that support academic success. Overall, these interview findings confirm that emotional literacy acts as a bridge between students' social conditions and their academic achievement. Students who are able to manage their emotions and receive adequate social support tend to demonstrate higher learning engagement, more consistent attendance, and optimal opportunities for academic achievement. Therefore, strengthening emotional literacy in elementary schools is an important strategy for holistically improving the quality of education.

Figure 3. Group Photo of Teachers at SD Negeri 1 Tual

In Malaysia, a lack of emotional literacy has also been linked to various problematic behaviors among adolescents, such as vandalism, theft, and drug use. Therefore, drug and juvenile delinquency issues can be viewed as a real global problem. This is consistent with studies Shah et al., (2023) research shows that permissive and authoritative parenting styles are negatively related to antisocial behavior, meaning that the stronger the implementation of these two parenting styles, the lower the tendency for adolescents to engage in antisocial behavior. Conversely, authoritarian parenting styles show a positive relationship with antisocial behavior, meaning that the higher the authoritarian parenting style, the higher the tendency for antisocial behavior in adolescents. Furthermore, emotional intelligence has been shown to act as a full mediator in the relationship between permissive parenting styles and antisocial behavior. This problem has the potential to be prevented if educators understand that low emotional literacy can be minimized by identifying and addressing its root causes appropriately. In response to the rise in antisocial behavior among young people, the Asia-Pacific region

has in recent years shown renewed attention to civics and moral education. In Australia, the need to strengthen civics education in the formal curriculum is emphasized (Heggart et al., 2018). Besides that, Cogan & Morris, (2001) reports indicate that countries such as Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand have planned school curriculum revisions that will include significant changes in civics education in the coming years. In this context, the Indonesian government believes that preparing the younger generation is the only way to become a truly powerful nation by 2045. Education is considered the best place to prepare agents of national change who will bring prosperity to others. This belief also underpins the world's belief that Indonesia will become a truly powerful nation in all sectors by 2045, or 100 years after its independence (Rokhman et al., 2014).

East Asians generally show less emotion in front of others compared to their Western counterparts (Levenson et al., 1992) several studies have shown that emotional literacy programs can help reduce school dropout rates in children and adolescents (Li & Hesketh, 2024) emotional literacy is also known to be associated with improved academic achievement, better friendships, more stable mental health, developed social skills, positive attitudes toward school, and a stronger self-concept (Adeyemo, 2008) in adults, emotional literacy is related to the ability to deal with stress or problems, self-confidence in one's own abilities, and psychological and emotional well-being (Joseph et al., 2015) this suggests that emotional literacy plays a crucial role in preventing mental health disorders and in building and maintaining healthy relationships with others. This means that the implementation of the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka curriculum in elementary schools can positively impact the learning environment and emotional well-being of elementary school students (Leasa, Pelamonia, et al., 2024) therefore, discussions about emotional literacy are an important part of guidance and counseling services, particularly those that are preventative and protective. Accurate measurement of emotional literacy is essential in research. However, in many studies, researchers still use emotional intelligence scales to measure emotional literacy because specific instruments for emotional literacy are still limited (Akbağ, 2016) children with low emotional literacy skills often have difficulty expressing their feelings or needs. As a result, they easily become upset, experience misunderstandings with others, and sometimes exhibit disruptive behavior. This condition is exacerbated for children living in difficult situations, such as family problems, economic constraints, or traumatic experiences. By helping students develop emotional literacy, they will be better able to cope with problems, become more resilient, and participate more positively in classroom activities, thereby improving academic achievement.

Conclusion

This community service activity confirms that emotional literacy plays a crucial role in supporting the academic development and character development of elementary school students. Students' ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions has been shown to be associated with improved learning concentration, discipline, courage in expressing opinions, and the ability to collaborate with peers. Students who demonstrate better emotional regulation tend to have higher learning engagement and are able to maintain focus in learning activities. Field findings also indicate that family socioeconomic factors influence student attendance and motivation. Students with domestic responsibilities or financial constraints often face emotional stress that impacts academic achievement. However, school interventions through socio-emotional approaches, such as home visits, communication with parents, and scholarships, have been shown to revitalize student enthusiasm and participation in learning. This suggests that emotional and social support from the school environment serves as a protective factor against external obstacles faced by students. In addition to enhancing individual abilities, emotional literacy strengthening programs also contribute to the creation of a more positive, inclusive, and supportive school climate. An emotionally safe learning environment encourages students to be more active, confident, and feel a sense of connection to school. Thus, emotional literacy serves not only as a character development strategy but also as a foundation for improving the overall quality of learning. Overall, this activity demonstrates that integrating emotional literacy into basic education practices is a strategic step in developing resilient, empathetic, and competitive human resources. Therefore, strengthening emotional literacy needs to be carried out sustainably through collaboration between schools, parents, and other educational stakeholders, so that its impact on academic achievement and student character development can be long-term and sustainable.

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