

Correlation Between Non-Academic Abilities and Improvements in the Learning Achievements of Elementary School Students in Bima

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ABSTRACT

This study was motivated by the prevailing orientation of elementary education, which emphasizes academic achievement as the primary indicator of learning success, while non-academic dimensions such as emotional intelligence, social skills, motivation, and self-regulation have yet to receive systematic attention. In fact, the development of elementary school students requires a holistic approach to learning. This study aims to: (1) analyze the relationship between non-academic abilities and student academic achievement; (2) identify the most dominant non-academic dimensions; and (3) examine variations in relationship patterns based on school characteristics. The study employed a quantitative correlational design with an explanatory approach. The sample was selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a validated Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from previous socio-emotional learning and student motivation instruments, measuring dimensions of character learning, social relationships, emotional well-being, and learning motivation, along with students' academic grade records. The instrument was validated through expert judgment and construct validity testing. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, multiple linear regression, and comparative analysis across schools. The results indicate that non-academic skills have a strong and significant relationship with academic achievement ($R = 0.725$; $R^2 = 0.525$), contributing 52.5% of the variance. The dimension of character learning emerged as the most dominant factor, followed by learning motivation and social relationships, while emotional well-being showed a positive but statistically insignificant influence. Additionally, variations in relationship patterns were found across schools, where the dominant factors differed according to the learning environment context. These findings confirm that strengthening non-academic skills is a strategic factor in improving student academic achievement. The implications of this research encourage a transformation of teaching practices toward a more holistic, contextual, and human-centered approach, while also providing an empirical basis for the development of educational policies that strike a better balance between cognitive and non-cognitive aspects.

Keywords: Non-Academic Abilities; Learning Achievement; Primary School Students; Emotional and Social Skills.



Article History:

Received: 18-04-2026

Revised : 11-05-2026

Accepted: 19-05-2026

Online : 01-08-2026

How to Cite (APA style):

Umar, Retnoningsih, Kadir, A., Jayanti, M. I., Saputra, A., & Akbar, M. (2026). Correlation Between Non-Academic Abilities and Improvements in the Learning Achievements of Elementary School Students in Bima. *IJECA (International Journal of Education and Curriculum Application)*, 9(2), 468-479. <https://doi.org/10.31764/ijeca.v9i2.39275>



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1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia's primary education system, the prevailing educational paradigm still largely prioritizes academic achievement as the primary indicator of educational success. Report card grades, test scores, and class rankings often serve as the dominant benchmarks, while non-academic dimensions tend to be treated as secondary (Kristiyuana et al., 2025; Rajagukguk et al., 2021; Wijaya, 2019). This orientation risks fostering a narrow approach to education, focused on rote memorization and short-term cognitive achievements, while neglecting the development of students' affective, social, and personal aspects. However, the developmental characteristics of elementary school-aged children require a holistic approach that not only imparts knowledge but also builds a strong emotional, social, and moral foundation a prerequisite for long-term academic success for students in the school environment (Cain et al., 2021; Lovren & Jablanovic, 2023).

Several studies indicate that non-academic skills, such as emotional intelligence and social skills, are significantly correlated with academic achievement. Research conducted in various countries has found that students with good emotional regulation, high intrinsic motivation, and positive social interaction skills tend to demonstrate greater engagement in learning and more consistent academic performance (MacCann et al., 2019; Santos et al., 2023). The majority of these studies, however, have been conducted in the context of secondary and higher education, while research at the elementary school level particularly within the Indonesian sociocultural context remains relatively limited. Furthermore, many studies focus primarily on simple correlational analyses without exploring the psychopedagogical mechanisms that explain how non-academic skills actually influence the learning process in the classroom (Ofem et al., 2024; Gkintoni et al., 2025; Guo et al., 2021).

Another limitation of previous research is its tendency to view non-academic abilities as a single construct, even though they are functionally multidimensional. Emotional intelligence, motivation, social skills, and personal character have distinct characteristics, developmental dynamics, and pedagogical implications for the development of students' qualities and achievements in school (Ye et al., 2024; Estrada et al., 2021; Guo et al., 2021). This simplification risks leading to overgeneralization and a lack of precision in formulating practical recommendations. Furthermore, variations in school context, family socioeconomic background, and the quality of teacher-student interactions are often not adequately incorporated as variables that may moderate the relationship between non-academic abilities and academic achievement (Rakesh et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2020).

The urgency of this research is further underscored by the implementation of the national curriculum, which emphasizes character building, social-emotional competencies, and meaningful learning. Contemporary educational reforms increasingly position student well-being, character formation, and socio-emotional development as central objectives of schooling rather than merely complementary outcomes of academic instruction (Erdem & Kaya, 2023; Zynuddin, et al, 2023). In this context, the latest curriculum is no longer solely focused on content mastery but instead prioritizes the development of holistic student profiles as the primary goal of education. Within this framework, non-academic skills should not be treated as mere byproducts but rather as core elements of the learning process, as previous studies have shown that emotional intelligence, learning motivation, and social-emotional competencies significantly contribute to student engagement and academic success (Feraco et al., 2022; MacCann et al., 2019; Santos et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, without strong empirical evidence, the integration of non-academic skills into teaching practices risks becoming merely normative jargon that is difficult to implement systematically in elementary schools. This study is also relevant for addressing the educational challenges of the 21st century, which demand critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. Therefore, this study does not merely focus on statistical relationships between variables but seeks to situate learning achievement within the broader framework of human development in elementary education, particularly in the sociocultural context of the Bima region. Therefore, the significance of this study lies in its contribution to enriching the body of knowledge in elementary education, particularly in strengthening the empirical foundation regarding the role of non-academic skills in improving academic achievement. The research findings are expected to serve as a reference for teachers in designing more holistic learning strategies, for schools in developing character-building programs and a conducive learning environment, and for policymakers in formulating educational policies that strike a better balance between cognitive and non-cognitive aspects. This study aims to achieve several academic objectives, including: (1) Non-Academic Abilities and Academic Achievement among Elementary Students in Bima; (2) Dominant Non-Academic Factors among Elementary Students in Bima; and (3) Differences in the Relationship between Non-Academic Skills and Achievement. The final findings of this study have implications for academic performance and hold high practical relevance in promoting a more humanistic, equitable, and sustainable transformation of elementary education within the elementary school environment in Bima.

2. METHODS

This study employs a quantitative correlational design with an explanatory approach, aiming to examine the strength of the relationship and the relative contribution of non-academic abilities to the academic achievement of elementary school students (Alshehri, 2019; Putri et al., 2025). This study employed a quantitative correlational design with an explanatory orientation to examine the relationships between non-academic abilities and students' academic achievement. The analysis applied a multivariate framework to identify the relative contributions of emotional intelligence, social skills, learning motivation, and self-regulation to academic achievement. Data were collected using validated Likert-scale questionnaires and academic score documentation, and analyzed through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression (Khabibullah, 2024; Rauteda, 2025; Yusfiarto, 2023). This approach is also intended to strike a balance between quantitative precision and qualitative depth of understanding, focusing on the relationship between non-academic skills and improved academic performance among elementary school students in Bima. The following research flowchart illustrates the sequence and direction of the research procedures, as shown in Figure 1.

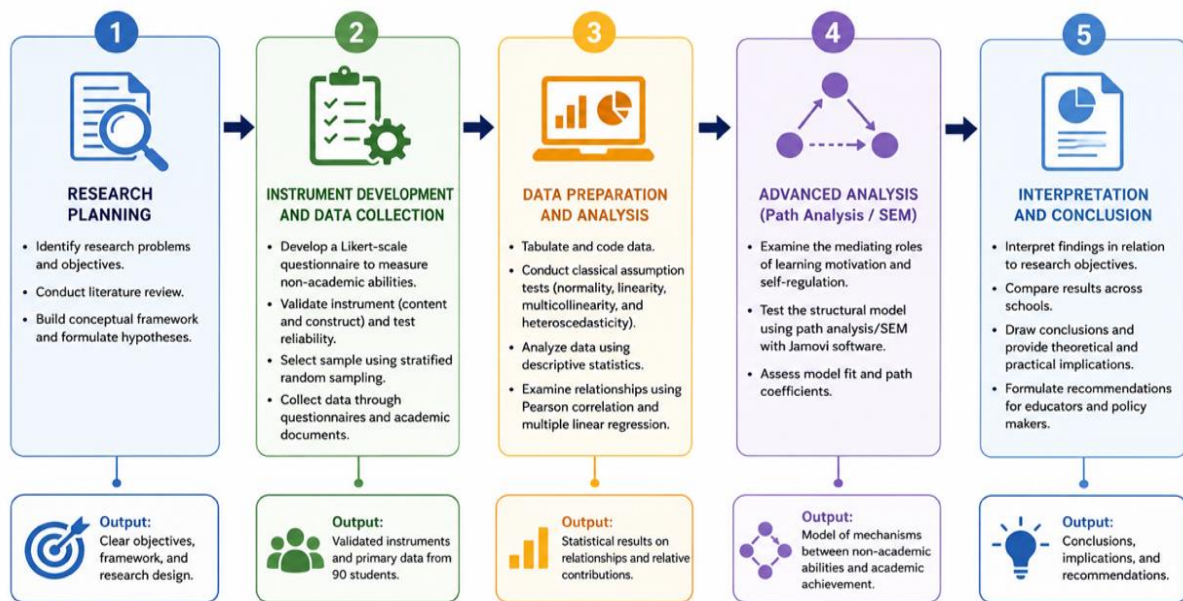


Figure 1. Flowchart and Research Conducting Procedures

The research data sources included 90 students from three elementary schools in Bima, with several key student respondents and classroom teachers serving as supporting informants, as well as school academic documents such as report card grades and summative assessment results. The research sample was determined using stratified random sampling based on grade level and school characteristics to enhance data representativeness. The non-academic ability instrument was developed as a Likert-scale questionnaire and underwent both theoretical and empirical validation procedures, including expert judgment for content validity and exploratory factor analysis for construct validity. Instrument reliability was also assessed using Cronbach's alpha, and all dimensions demonstrated acceptable levels of internal consistency. Academic achievement was measured using a composite academic score from several core subjects to reflect a more stable learning performance and avoid bias toward a specific cognitive domain related to the relationship between non-academic abilities and improved academic achievement among elementary school students in Bima.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics to map the profiles of students' non-academic abilities and academic achievement, followed by classical assumption tests to ensure the validity of inferential analysis. Relationships between variables were analyzed using Pearson's correlation and multiple linear regression to identify the relative contributions of each dimension of non-academic abilities to academic achievement. To test more complex relationship mechanisms, path analysis or simple structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to examine the roles of mediators such as learning motivation and self-regulation with the assistance of Jamovi software (Cleary & Kitsantas, 2017; Ghelichli et al., 2020; Subhaktiyasa et al., 2025). The analytical approach used in this study enables the researchernot only to determine whether a relationship exists, but also to understand how that relationship is formed, thereby giving the research findings theoretical significance and practical implications regarding the relationship between non-academic skills and improved academic performance among elementary school students in Bima. The following research flowchart illustrates the sequence and direction of the research procedures.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Non-Academic Abilities and Academic Achievement Among Elementary Students in Bima

The emphasis on non-academic skills such as emotional intelligence, social skills, motivation to learn, and self-regulation serves not merely as a supplement but as a psychopedagogical foundation that influences students' engagement, perseverance, and the quality of their learning process. Theoretically, students who are able to manage their emotions, interact positively, possess intrinsic motivation, and are capable of regulating their learning process tend to demonstrate more optimal and stable academic performance (Mega et al., 2014; Ye et al., 2024). However, the relationship between these dimensions is not always linear or uniform; rather, it is influenced by the learning environment, individual characteristics, and the dynamics of classroom interactions. Therefore, examining the relationship between non-academic abilities and academic achievement is important not only to identify the strength of the relationship statistically, but also to understand how each dimension contributes to shaping student learning success in a more comprehensive and contextual manner. Based on a normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, a significance value of 0.110 was obtained, indicating that the data are normally distributed (Sig. > 0.05). The normality of the residuals in this study was examined using a Normal Q-Q Plot of Standardized Residuals. β , as shown in Figure 2.

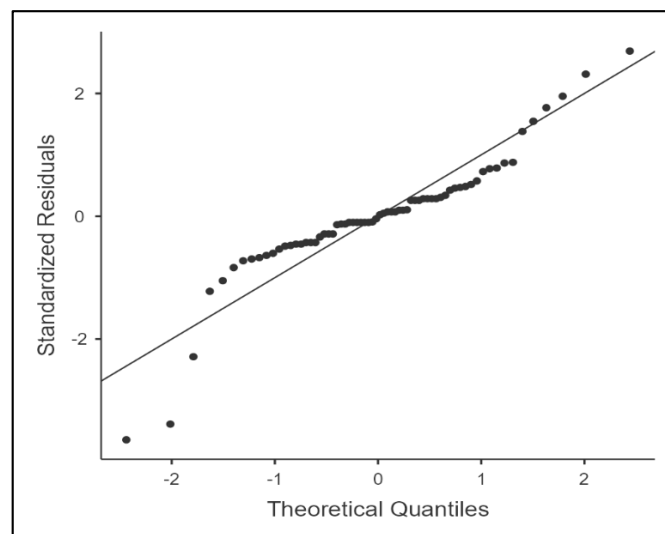


Figure 2. Results of the Normality Test for Academic Achievement

Based on the Q-Q plot, it can be seen that most of the residual points lie around the diagonal line, indicating a theoretical normal distribution. This suggests that the distribution of the model's residuals tends to follow a normal distribution pattern. Although there are a few points that deviate slightly from the diagonal line at the tails of the distribution, these deviations remain within reasonable limits and do not indicate a pattern of extreme deviation. In general, the pattern of data points on the graph indicates that the regression model residuals are distributed relatively along the diagonal line, so it can be concluded that the assumption of normality of residuals in the regression model can be considered satisfied. Thus, the linear regression model used in this study is suitable for further analysis. The results of the multiple regression analysis can be seen in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Multiple Regression Analysis of Non-Academic Abilities

Model Fit Measures						
Overall Model Test						
Model	R	R ²	F	df1	df2	p
1	0.725	0.525	17.439	4	63	<.001

The multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of non-academic abilities comprising character learning, social relationships, emotional well-being, and learning motivation on the academic achievement of elementary school students. Based on the regression analysis results, a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.725 was obtained. This value indicates that, collectively, the non-academic ability variables have a fairly strong relationship with students' academic achievement. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.525 indicates that 52.5% of the variation in students' academic achievement can be explained by the variables of character learning, social relationships, emotional well-being, and learning motivation collectively. The remaining 47.5% is influenced by other factors outside the variables analyzed in this study.

Furthermore, the results of the Overall Model Test showed an F-value of 17.439 with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. These results indicate that the regression model used in this study is statistically significant; thus, it can be concluded that non-academic ability variables simultaneously have a significant effect on students' academic achievement. This finding indicates that students' non-academic abilities are one of the key factors contributing to their academic success in elementary school. Enhancing students' learning character, social relationships, emotional well-being, and learning motivation has the potential to improve their academic achievement; therefore, non-academic factors require attention in efforts to enhance the quality of instruction and student learning outcomes. The results of this study are also consistent with several other research findings, which suggest that students who are able to manage their emotions, interact positively, possess intrinsic motivation, and regulate their learning do indeed tend to demonstrate higher and more consistent performance, as these non-academic foundations underpin learning emotions, strategies, and sustained perseverance (Feraco et al., 2022; MacCann et al., 2019; Zhoc et al., 2018). However, this study supports the view that non-academic skills serve as a foundation that regulates emotions, fosters motivation, facilitates social relationships, and guides learning regulation. Through these mechanisms, engagement and perseverance increase, which are consistently associated with more optimal and stable academic achievement.

3.2 Dominant Non-Academic Factors Among Elementary Students in Bima

Identifying the most dominant dimensions of non-academic abilities that influence elementary school students' academic achievement constitutes a crucial step toward understanding the psych pedagogical mechanisms underlying academic success. Not all components of non-academic abilities contribute equally; therefore, a more fine-grained analysis is required to disentangle the relative roles of specific dimensions, such as learning character, motivation, social skills, and emotional well-being. This approach is essential to avoid oversimplification that treats non-academic abilities as a single, homogeneous construct (Khoirunikmah et al., 2022; Shuib, 2018). By examining empirically dominant predictors, this study not only reinforces the robustness of the correlational patterns but also offers a more precise basis for developing contextually grounded instructional interventions. Based on the

Model Coefficients table obtained from the multiple linear regression analysis, the estimated coefficients for each variable are presented as follow Table 2.

Table 2. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Non-Academic Abilities

Model Coefficients - Learning Achievement				
Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	15.981	8.561	1.867	0.067
Character_Learning	0.234	0.079	2.981	0.004
Social_Relationship	0.172	0.066	2.591	0.012
Emotional_Wellbeing	0.161	0.093	1.722	0.090
Learning_Motivation	0.182	0.079	2.296	0.025

The data reveal the contribution of each dimension of non-academic abilities to the academic achievement of elementary school students. The analysis results indicate that character learning is the dimension of non-academic abilities that contributes most significantly to students' academic achievement. This is evidenced by a regression coefficient of 0.234 with a significance level of $p = 0.004$ (< 0.05). This coefficient value indicates that a one-unit increase in the character learning variable is followed by a 0.234-unit increase in student academic achievement, assuming all other variables remain constant. Besides character learning, the learning motivation variable also showed a significant contribution to academic achievement, with a regression coefficient of 0.182 and a significance level of $p = 0.025$. These findings indicate that students' learning motivation plays a crucial role in supporting their academic success. Meanwhile, the social relationship variable also made a significant contribution with a regression coefficient of 0.172 and a significance level of $p = 0.012$. This indicates that students' ability to build positive social relationships also supports improved academic achievement. Furthermore, the emotional well-being variable had a regression coefficient of 0.161; however, it did not show a statistically significant effect on academic achievement, as its p-value was 0.090 (> 0.05).

Nevertheless, the positive direction of the coefficient indicates that emotional well-being still tends to contribute to improvements in students' academic achievement, even though its influence is not as strong as that of other non-academic ability dimensions. The results of this study indicate that non-academic abilities generally have an impact on the development of elementary school students' academic achievement within the school environment. This finding is further supported by several previous studies, such as: (1) social-emotional maturity is strongly correlated with academic achievement; more mature students demonstrate higher levels of motivation, self-esteem, and problem-solving skills, resulting in higher grades; (2) students with high socio-emotional skills are more motivated, confident, and capable of solving learning problems; and (3) elementary school students demonstrate learning motivation that is positively related to and simultaneously promotes the development of socio-emotional skills and school performance (Chiappetta-Santana et al., 2022; Olguin et al., 2024). Thus, at the elementary school level, the most prominent non-academic abilities are evident in learning motivation and related constructs (self-concept, self-esteem, self-motivation), as well as social and socio-emotional skills. These abilities operate by enhancing motivation, self-regulation, self-confidence, and problem-solving skills, which together explain why some students achieve higher academic performance.

3.3 Differences in the Relationship Between Non-Academic Skills and Achievement

The background of students, school culture, the quality of pedagogical interactions, and the emotional climate of the classroom can shape different patterns of relationships. The relationship between non-academic skills which encompass aspects of motivation, social relationships, and emotional well-being varies depending on student characteristics and the context of the elementary school (Due et al., 2026; Indriani, 2021). This approach is important for avoiding overgeneralization and for recognizing that the effectiveness of non-academic factors in influencing academic achievement is context-dependent, thus requiring adaptive intervention strategies tailored to the specific needs of each learning environment.

Based on the results of multiple linear regression analyses conducted separately for each sample school, this study aimed to identify differences in the relationship between non-academic abilities and student academic achievement across the three sample schools: School A, School B, and School C. This approach allowed the researchers to examine variations in the contribution of non-academic abilities to academic achievement within the context of different school characteristics. The data is as follow Table 3.

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis at Three Elementary School

School_ID	R	R ²	Categori	Dominant Variable
A	0.812	0.659	Very Strong	Emotional Wellbeing
B	0.847	0.847	Very Strong	Learning Motivation
C	0.711	0.505	Strong	Emotional Wellbeing

The results of the analysis indicate that the strength of the relationship between non-academic abilities and student academic achievement varies across schools. At School A, a correlation coefficient of $R = 0.812$ was obtained, with a coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.659$. These values indicate that the relationship between non-academic abilities and academic achievement falls into the “very strong” category. Substantively, these results indicate that 65.9% of the variation in student academic achievement at School A can be explained by the dimensions of non-academic abilities analyzed in this study, while the remaining 34.1% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. Based on the regression coefficient analysis, the emotional well-being dimension emerged as the most dominant variable influencing student academic achievement at the school. This indicates that students’ emotional states, such as self-confidence, comfort in learning, and emotional regulation skills play a significant role in their academic success at School A.

The analysis results for School B show a correlation coefficient of $R = 0.847$ and a coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.847$, indicating a very strong relationship between non-academic abilities and student academic achievement. These values indicate that approximately 84.7% of the variation in student academic achievement at School B can be explained by the non-academic ability variable, so the contribution of non-academic ability to academic achievement at this school can be said to be very significant compared to other schools. The analysis results also show that learning motivation is the most dominant dimension of non-academic ability in influencing student academic achievement at School B. This finding indicates that student learning motivation such as the drive to achieve good academic results, perseverance in learning, and the desire to understand course material is a key factor supporting students’ academic success in that school environment.

Meanwhile, at School C, a correlation coefficient of $R = 0.711$ was obtained, with a coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.505$, indicating a strong relationship between non-academic abilities and student academic achievement. Quantitatively, these results indicate that approximately 50.5% of the variation in student academic achievement at School C can be explained by non-academic ability dimensions, while the remaining 49.5% is influenced by other factors not analyzed in this study. The regression analysis also revealed that emotional well-being is the most dominant variable influencing student academic achievement at this school. These findings suggest that students' emotional well-being plays a crucial role in supporting their engagement in the learning process and the achievement of academic performance. Overall, the results of this study indicate that the patterns of relationships between non-academic abilities and student academic achievement are not entirely uniform across all schools. Although all schools showed a strong to very strong relationship between non-academic abilities and academic achievement, the most dominant dimension of non-academic abilities differed across school contexts. At School A and School C, the dimension of emotional well-being was the most dominant factor influencing students' academic achievement. Conversely, at School B, the most dominant dimension was learning motivation.

These findings indicate that the learning environment and students' psychosocial characteristics at each school can influence the dimensions of non-academic skills that most contribute to student academic achievement. Therefore, efforts to strengthen students' non-academic skills in elementary schools need to take into account the characteristics of the school environment as well as students' developmental needs, so that strategies for developing students' competencies can be designed in a more contextually appropriate and effective manner. The results of this study also indicate that the development of students' non-academic skills must take into account the context and characteristics of each school, so that strategies for strengthening students' competencies can be tailored to the needs and conditions of different learning environments. These findings are further supported by results from other studies revealing that a positive school/classroom climate (warm teacher-student relationships, peer support, a sense of safety, and belonging) is associated with the development of non-cognitive skills such as cooperation, responsibility, and self-regulation (Erdem & Kaya, 2023; Zynuddin et al., 2023). Findings from other studies also indicate that school climate influences academic expectations, identification with the school, and self-efficacy, which serve as psychosocial pathways to achievement. In some contexts, a sense of belonging and relationships with teachers are the primary drivers of motivation; in other contexts, classroom discipline or the academic learning environment (academic pressure) plays a more decisive role in shaping students' learning outcomes within the school setting (Maxwell et al., 2017; Podiya et al., 2025; Zysberg & Schwabsky, 2020). Thus, the learning environment and psychosocial characteristics not only influence students' non-academic abilities but also determine which dimensions are most critical to student achievement in the school setting.

4. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that non-academic abilities constitute a significant factor in explaining variations in the academic achievement of elementary school students, contributing 52.5% of the explained variance ($R^2 = 0.525$). These findings strengthen the theoretical perspective of holistic education, which emphasizes the importance of non-cognitive dimensions including character learning, learning motivation, social relationships, and emotional well-being as fundamental psychopedagogical components supporting academic success. Furthermore, the findings reveal

that the contribution of non-academic dimensions is multidimensional and unequal in magnitude. Character learning emerged as the strongest predictor of academic achievement, followed by learning motivation and social relationships, whereas emotional well-being did not demonstrate a statistically significant effect within the aggregate model. This indicates that non-academic abilities should not be conceptualized as a single homogeneous construct, but rather as interconnected dimensions with varying levels of influence on students' academic performance.

This study contributes to strengthening the non-cognitive skills framework by providing empirical evidence grounded in the context of elementary education in Indonesia, which has been relatively underrepresented in the global literature. Findings regarding variations in relationship patterns across schools point to the proposition that the relationship between non-academic abilities and academic achievement is contextual and mediated by learning environment factors, thereby challenging the assumption of universality in many previous educational models. In terms of novelty, this study has examined correlational relationships and identified dominant dimensions as well as contextual variations across educational institutions, thereby providing a more granular approach to understanding the mechanisms of non-academic factors on learning outcomes. However, the correlational design limits causal inferences, so the interpretation of results must be contextualized appropriately. The implication is that the development of educational policies and practices needs to shift toward an approach based on contextual differentiation, rather than generalization, by prioritizing the strengthening of non-academic skills as a core strategy for sustainably improving the quality of basic education, particularly for elementary school students.

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