

## The effect of emotional intelligence and peers on independent learning

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### Abstract

This study aimed to determine the effect of emotional intelligence on learning independence, the influence of peers on learning independence, and the influence of emotional intelligence and peers on the learning independence of students. This study was designed as a causal research and quantitative approach. The population of this research was 549 students with a sample of 231 students. The sampling technique used was proportionate stratified random sampling. Methods for collecting research data included questionnaires and documentation which were analyzed using t-test and F-test with Statistical software for Windows program. The results showed that there was an influence of emotional and that there is an influence of emotional intelligence and peers on the independent learning of students. The results are discussed in detail in this study.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence; independent learning; learning independence; peers

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the most significant human need because it is one of the methods for developing human resources. Education is a type of guidance from educators to students with the goal of pupils becoming able to carry out their tasks without the assistance of others (Purnomo, 2019; Hidayat & Abdillah, 2019). Educators, as education distributors, must be aware of the best and most appropriate learning activities for students (Solfema & Wahid, 2018). Education is obtained from family, community, and school. Formal education seeks to enhance pupils' cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor capacities (Ananda & Maksum, 2021).

Learning is the primary activity of education in schools (Slameto, 2013). Learning is a student activity that seeks to modify and gain an understanding of behavior via experience and contact with the environment (Yolanda & Ahmad, 2019; Eryadini, 2021; Zakso & Agung, 2021). Ginting (2021) defines learning as a process of acquiring knowledge, detecting connections, and combining existing knowledge to produce new knowledge. Schools, as government-established formal learning institutions, are mandated to assess the success of the learning process through student learning outcomes (Litasari & Pustikaningsih, 2018). Learning success is an outstanding accomplishment in the pursuit of quality education.

Students must have an independent learning attitude to achieve optimal learning outcomes in schools (Sriyono, 2015; Nurkholis et al., 2018). Learning independence is a self-directed learning activity that does not rely on others (Opelt & Schwinger 2020; Budiyanı & Sujarwo, 2019; Zahirah & Usman, 2020). According to Suciati (2016) learning independence is a student's endeavor to carry out teaching to carry out teaching and learning activities with the initiative to grasp materials and skills so that they can be used to solve challenges encountered. Students who can develop independent learning will be able to make their own judgments about how to manage their learning activities, such as managing their study time, preparing the content to be studied, and reviewing the material that has been presented (Jayadi et al., 2020).

In Indonesia, student learning independence is rated as poor (Sriyono, 2015; Puspitasari et al., 2019; Rikizaputra et al., 2021). According to the findings of Sriyono's (2015) research in the South Jakarta area, student learning independence is poor, with an average of 53.54 percent. The problem of learning independence is also reflected in the case data of child complaints from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), which shows that the number of children who drop out of school has increased from 67 in 2019 to 1463 in 2020 (KPAI, 2020).

Independent learning is influenced by both internal and external variables. Retnowati (2011) divides the factors that can influence learning independence into two categories. First, internal factors, or characteristics of a person that influence learning independence, include emotional intelligence, age, and gender (Hiluf & Alemu 2024). Second, there are external elements, which are environmental influences that determine a person's independence, such as family, school, peers, and society.

Emotional intelligence is one of the internal characteristics that might impact independent learning (Chang & Tsai 2022). According to Suciati (2016), emotional intelligence can influence student learning independence and hence boost learning achievement. According to Baharuddin & Wahyuni (2015), emotional intelligence is the ability to arrange emotions to get the best results. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to effectively control emotions, to be self-motivated, to be resilient in the face of pressure, to not exaggerate pleasure, and to cooperate and empathize with others (Sinarti & Sari, 2017; Zahirah & Usman, 2020; Goleman, 1998). Emotionally intelligent people may consider their sentiments as well as feelings for others, and they are aware of their talents and flaws, resulting in great self-confidence (Ferrer, 2012).

Emotional intelligence can be fostered through education that focuses on building fundamental emotional intelligence abilities such as expressing, understanding, and controlling emotions, as well as applying these skills to address everyday situations (Eryadini, 2021; Thomas et al., 2024). According to Aunurrahman (2016), previous studies have shown that emotional intelligence can improve students' enthusiasm for learning and aid them when they enter the world of employment. Thus, emotional intelligence can influence students' excitement for learning and self-confidence, making it critical to develop student learning independence.

Peers, in addition to emotional intelligence, are environmental elements that can influence independent learning (Namaziandost et al., 2024). Peers, according to Susanto (2018), can influence an individual's level of learning independence. According to Santosa (2006), a peer is a youngster who has and experiences similarities based on needs and goals to be reached. Peers are children or adolescents who are of the same age or maturity level (Santrock, 2017; Mujiyati & Adiputra, 2018; Yunalia & Etika, 2020). Peers will have an impact on student development both positively and negatively. Peers' positive impact will teach pupils to adapt, to implement and accept responsibility, and to behave in a socially acceptable manner (Lim, 2023).

While under the negative influence, pupils would mimic their friends' bad behavior, such as absenteeism, breaking regulations, and creating noise in class (Hakim & Yusmansyah 2017). Because of the encouragement that peers provide, pupils are more willing to address issues (Moldes et al., 2019; Irwansyah & Asrida, 2021). Peers can also be used as good role models in this regard; for example, if students become friends with children who are ambitious and work hard to attain high academic goals, someone will be inspired to follow them in order not to be isolated from their friends (Filade et al., 2019).

Researchers discovered the phenomenon of independent learning in SMP Negeri 2 Susut students. The results of the researchers' initial observations of students and interviews with the Counseling Guidance Teacher at SMP Negeri 2 Susut on August 25, 2021, and October 7, 2021, demonstrate it. Students only learn when directed by the teacher, indicating that student learning independence is still not optimal. When the teacher is absent from class, many pupils miss out on valuable learning opportunities. As a result, pupils will become less responsible and active participants in their learning. Students' emotional intelligence is still low, based on various factors that can affect independent learning. Low emotional intelligence can be seen in students who prioritize having fun over learning, as many students use their time to play rather than study, so the assignments given by the teacher are forgotten and collected late. Aside from emotional intelligence, peer influence can contribute to poor learning independence. Students are happy to mimic their friends' habits because the teacher's tasks will begin when their friends begin working. Students frequently wait for replies from their peers, even though those answers are not always correct.

### **1.1. Purpose of study**

The study's objective was to determine the effect of emotional intelligence on SMP Negeri 2 Susut students' learning independence, the influence of peers on SMP Negeri 2 Susut students' learning independence, and the influence of emotional intelligence and peers on SMP Negeri 2 Susut students' learning independence.

## **2. METHODS AND MATERIALS**

This study employs both causal research and a quantitative approach. Previous studies focused on its negative impacts.

### **2.1. Participants**

The study population consisted of 549 students from SMP Negeri 2 Susut with a sample size of 231 students. Following that, a sampling technique, proportionate stratified random sampling, was used, in which the sample was obtained proportionally and had non-homogeneous members.

## 2.2. Data collection tool

Questionnaires and documentation are two methods for gathering research data. The questionnaire's goal is to collect information regarding emotional intelligence, peers, and independent learning. Before being used for data collection, the questionnaire must first pass a validity and reliability test to establish the appropriateness of the instrument used, whilst the documentation intends to get the number of pupils at SMP Negeri 2 Susut.

## 2.3. Analysis

The first assumption test used to analyze the data is the normality test, which determines whether the data used already has a normal distribution, the multicollinearity test, which determines the presence or absence of similar independent variables, and the heteroscedasticity test, which tests residual differences using the Glejser test. Second, hypothesis testing for t-test and F-test analysis was performed. The calculation results were tested using SPSS For Windows 25.0 calculation results.

## 3. RESULTS

The first hypothesis is to examine the impact of emotional intelligence on self-directed learning. The t-test, as indicated in Table 1, can be used to determine the effect of emotional intelligence on the learning independence of SMP Negeri 2 Susut students.

**Table 1**  
*Results of t-test of emotional intelligence variables (X1) on learning independence (Y)*

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>			t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	<b>14,184</b>	2,218		6,395	0,000
Emotional Intelligence	0,449	0,045	0,591	11,096	0,000

a. Dependent Variable: Learning Independence

The significance of the emotional intelligence variable is 0.000 < 0.05, as shown in Table 1, hence H0 is rejected. It can be stated that emotional intelligence has an impact on student learning independence. The second hypothesis is to test the influence of peer variables on student learning independence at SMP Negeri 2 Susut can be seen using the t-test shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*Results of t-test of peers (X2) on learning independence (Y)*

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>			t	Sig.	
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	21,656	2,369		9,142	0,000
	Peers	0,355	0,049	0,429	7,193	0,000

a. Dependent Variable: Learning Independence

Table 2 shows the significant value of the peer variable is 0.000 < 0.05, so, H0 is rejected. It can be concluded, that there is an influence of peers on student learning independence. The third hypothesis is to test the effect of emotional intelligence and peers on independent learning which can be determined using the F test as shown in the following table.

**Table 3**  
*F Test results of the effect of emotional intelligence and peers on independent learning*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5090,204	2	2545,102	68,285	0,000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	8497,947	228	37,272		
Total	13588,151	230			

a. Dependent Variable: Independent Learning

b. Predictors: (Constant), Peers, Emotional Intelligence

Table 3 shows that the significant value of the emotional intelligence and peer variables is  $0.000 < 0.05$ , indicating that  $H_0$  is rejected. The magnitude of the influence of emotional intelligence and peers on the learning independence of SMP Negeri 2 Susut students, can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
*Coefficient of determination (Adjusted R Square)*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0,612 <sup>a</sup>	0,375	0,369	6,105055

a. Predictors: (Constant), Peers, Emotional Intelligence

The adjusted R Square value in Table 4 is 0.693. This value reveals that emotional intelligence and peers influence 69.3 percent of SMP Negeri 2 Susut students' learning independence, while other factors influence 30.7 percent. Furthermore, beta coefficient analysis can be used to determine the regression equation between the influence of emotional intelligence variables and peers on independent learning, as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5**  
*Coefficient of determination (Beta Coefficient)*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	10,779	2,455		4,391	0,000
Emotional Intelligence	0,423	0,051	0,502	8,330	0,000
Peers	0,150	0,050	0,182	3,016	0,003

Table 5 describes the emotional intelligence variables and peer variables that influence SMP Negeri 2 Susut students' learning independence, while the regression equation results are as follows.

$$\hat{Y} = 10,779 + 0,423 X_1 + 0,150 X_2$$

Description:

$\hat{Y}$  = Independent Learning

$X_1$  = Emotional Intelligence

$X_2$  = Peers

#### 4. DISCUSSION

According to the findings of the first hypothesis, emotional intelligence has a beneficial effect on learning independence. The level of learning independence will be higher if the level of emotional intelligence is high. However, if emotional intelligence is low, learning independence decreases. Emotional intelligence is demonstrated by students' capacity to follow learning successfully even when they face challenges and dislike the teachings taught, are always sure to complete school tasks, and are encouraged to work on challenging questions as motivation to continue to achieve.

Furthermore, students with emotional intelligence respect and support others, are easy to get along with, and like working on group assignments together so that problems do not interfere with learning activities. It will encourage the level of independence of student learning with the ability of emotional intelligence. The findings of this study are confirmed by Suciati's (2016) stance, which states that emotional intelligence can influence learning independence, resulting in increased student learning achievement. According to Retnowati (2011), internal aspects of emotional intelligence, specifically, can impair learning independence.

The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of Pasaribu (2020) and Badriyah (2021), who discovered an impact of emotional intelligence on learning independence. Furthermore, the second hypothesis' results are recognized to have peer influence on learning independence. When peer influence is high, learning independence increases; when peer influence is low, learning independence decreases. Peers are a very close environment to pupils. Students and their friends frequently participate in cooperative activities at school and in the community, which might have an impact on the level of autonomous learning. Peers' influence can inspire students to work together to study subject matter so that they do not rely on instructor explanations, remind each other about school assignments among friends to minimize delays in collecting assignments, try to accept recommendations, and be open to accepting something new.

Moreover, students might use their peers as inspiration when their friends do awesome work; students will aim to be more active than their friends to obtain similar results. The influence of peers will boost students' independent learning. The findings of this study are confirmed by Susanto's (2018) opinion that the level of learning independence can be influenced by peers. According to Retnowati (2011), external factors from peers might affect the extent of learning independence. The findings of this study are also consistent with the findings of Saragih (2020) and Siregar (2019), who discovered a peer influence on autonomous learning.

According to the findings of the third hypothesis, there is a correlation between emotional intelligence and peer impact on student learning independence. The greater the level of emotional intelligence and peer support, the greater the level of learning independence. However, if emotional intelligence and peer support are declining, so will learning independence. Emotional intelligence and peers must be adequately considered so that pupils' learning autonomy grows. Students' emotional intelligence can be observed in their capacity to follow learning well even when they face challenges and dislike the teachings taught, to constantly believe in accomplishing school tasks, and to always feel challenged to work on challenging questions as motivation to continue to achieve. Furthermore, students with emotional intelligence respect and support others, are easy to get along with, and like working on group assignments together so that problems do not interfere with learning activities.

Aside from emotional intelligence, peer influence can encourage students to work together to learn the subject matter so they don't rely on teacher explanations, remind each other about school assignments between friends to avoid delays in collecting assignments, accept suggestions, and have an open attitude to accept something new. Moreover, students might use their peers as inspiration when their friends do great things; students will aim to be more active than their friends to obtain similar results. The influence of peers will boost students' independent learning. Encourage students to work together to study the material presented by the teacher, to remind each other about school assignments, motivate students to be more active than their friends to get better grades, to accept suggestions, and to have an open attitude to accept something new to increase their learning independence.

Thus, learning independence is influenced by a variety of factors, both internal to the individuals and external to their environment. The findings of this study support Retnowati's (2011) argument that numerous elements that can influence the level of learning independence can be classified as internal and external factors. Peers are an extrinsic component, while emotional intelligence is an intrinsic factor.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, the conclusions drawn by the author. First, emotional intelligence has a positive effect on SMP Negeri 2 Susut pupils' independent learning. Second, peer influence has a positive effect on SMP Negeri 2 Susut pupils' learning independence. Third, emotional intelligence and peers have a positive influence on SMP Negeri 2 Susut pupils' independent learning.

The following recommendations are made based on the results, comments, and conclusions presented by the researchers. First, learners are required to improve their emotional intelligence so that they may solve learning challenges on their own and choose classmates who can provide positive support as their learning independence grows. Second, teachers are supposed to be able to promote students' emotional intelligence in school activities so that pupils remain interested and motivated to finish the tasks assigned. Furthermore, teachers must be able to guide pupils in developing positive peer relationships to support learning activities. Third, other researchers can utilize this research as a source and reference to create new works and broaden the scope of this research.

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