

The contribution of emotional intelligence and achievement motivation to the grit of scholarship recipients

Febriyanti Rossanti¹, Mulawarman Mulawarman²

1. Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang-Indonesia

2. Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang-Indonesia

Corresponding Email: mulawarman@mail.unnes.ac.id

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the contribution of emotional intelligence and achievement motivation to grit among scholarship recipient students, with a comparison between science (exact) and non-science (non-exact) fields. Using an ex post facto design, the participants were 350 scholarship recipients at Universitas Negeri Semarang selected through proportional stratified random sampling. Data were collected using the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS), Achievement Motivation Scale, and Grit Scale for Children and Adults (GSCA). Data analysis employed multiple linear regression. The results showed that emotional intelligence significantly contributed to grit ($\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.05$), while achievement motivation demonstrated a stronger contribution ($\beta = 0.712$, $p < 0.05$). Simultaneously, both variables explained 62.8% of the variance in grit. In addition, science students exhibited higher levels of grit compared to non-science students. These findings indicate that grit among scholarship recipients is shaped by emotional and motivational factors as well as academic context, highlighting the importance of counseling interventions that strengthen emotional regulation and achievement motivation.

Introduction

Students are often involved in community activities and campus organizations as agents of change, characterized by critical thinking, innovation, and empathy towards social issues that drive change (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2023). This social role is accompanied by complex academic, social, and emotional demands, making non-cognitive qualities, such as grit a key factor. Grit is understood as perseverance and consistency in maintaining effort and long-term motivation despite obstacles (Duckworth et al., 2007). Several studies confirm that grit is a stronger predictor of academic achievement, learning engagement, and resilience in the face of adversity than IQ (Credé et al., 2017; Datu et al., 2023; Styowati & Situmorang, 2022; Thomas, A. M., & Zolkoski, 2020). Its two components, perseverance of effort and consistency of interest, are important assets in achieving big goals, including applying for and maintaining scholarships.

Scholarship programs, whether based on academic achievement, educational assistance, or research, are designed to support access to and continuity of study, but they carry high

expectations, such as maintaining a minimum GPA, participating in self-development, and completing studies on time (Kusumaningrum, D., 2022). Scholarship recipients are required to maintain consistent motivation to study despite facing pressure or temporary failure (Rahmawati, N., & Setiawan, 2023). Perseverance and consistency enable students to meet academic standards and achieve career development plans; however, in reality, some recipients experience burnout, decreased motivation, and delayed graduation (Dalla & Kewuel, 2023; Muhibbin & Wulandari, 2021; Rahmawati, N., & Setiawan, 2023). A lack of grit increases the risk of failure even when financial support is available.

Financial support is closely tied to emotional intelligence, which plays a crucial role in helping students manage negative emotions such as anxiety and stress, maintain focus, and view pressure as a challenge (Dewi & Yusri, 2023; Fatchurrahmi & Urbayatun, 2022; Permata et al., 2024). Referring to Salovey and Mayer's theory (1997), several components are highlighted, namely perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions (Bru-Luna et al., 2021). Good emotional intelligence supports stress coping, optimism, and perseverance (Ibrahim et al., 2025; Nurjuwita et al., 2023), while low emotional intelligence makes it difficult for students to manage priorities and stress, resulting in suboptimal scholarship opportunities (Herut et al., 2024; Jiang et al., 2025). However, some scholarship recipients still experience a decline in motivation due to socioeconomic and academic adaptation challenges (Shengyao et al., 2024; Ullah et al., 2023), indicating a gap between financial support and emotional readiness. This is related to persistence and emotional intelligence, which can help students manage burnout, frustration, and disappointment when faced with obstacles and maintain optimism and motivation to keep trying (Ibrahim et al., 2025; Nurjuwita et al., 2023). However, there are conflicting findings. Students who have received scholarships tend to experience a decline in motivation and academic engagement, resulting in a decrease in their GPA, which is one of the scholarship's requirements. This is because these students feel unable to adapt to their surroundings and the curriculum, and they experience challenges in transitioning from different socioeconomic backgrounds. There are also students who use the money unwisely (Rahmawati, N., & Setiawan, 2023; Shengyao et al., 2024; Ullah et al., 2023).

In addition to persistence and emotional intelligence, achievement motivation is a main driver for students to maintain academic performance. It correlates with a focus on excellence, innovation, and academic contribution. Achievement motivation is consistent with responsibility and gratitude by optimizing available opportunities (Firoozi, 2022; Islamiati & Marzuki, 2024). McClelland defines it as an internal drive to achieve standards of excellence, overcome challenges, and succeed. This is characterized by both the hope of success and the fear of failure (Octafiani Br. Sinulingga et al., 2025; Saputra et al., 2025). Achievement motivation develops through learning experiences and a supportive environment (Nuis et al., 2023; Ummah, 2019; Wuestman et al., 2023). This process strengthens persistence among scholarship recipients (R.-U.-N. Awan et al., 2023). Studies in Indonesia also show that scholarships increase motivation to achieve (Marita & Prayogi, 2024; Misro et al., 2022; Rosida, 2022; Septianti, 2018). However, most studies have not examined resilience against academic obstacles in depth.

These dynamics are also influenced by the context of the field of study. Students of exact sciences, such as mathematics, physics, and engineering, usually face a competitive learning environment, have busy schedules, and receive objective assessments. In contrast, non-exact science students emphasize in-depth analysis, originality, and often encounter subjective assessments (Marshall & Galey-Horn, 2024; Navarro et al., 2025). These differences likely affect how emotional intelligence and achievement motivation contribute to persistence, though comparative research is still limited. Field findings further show that many scholarship recipients are not active in campus development programs or that there are inaccuracies in target distribution (Aidah, 2022; Mulyaningsih et al., 2022). This indicates that financial

support alone does not ensure perseverance or academic success. Additionally, low self-expectations pose a further challenge.

Several studies focus on the persistence of students alone, but the contribution of emotional intelligence and achievement motivation needs to be instilled in scholarship recipients so that students can control their level of stress resistance when faced with pressure. There are limitations to studies related to the differences between the persistence of students in the exact sciences and non-exact sciences, as well as the relationship between emotional intelligence and achievement motivation and persistence, which are still rarely studied. Therefore, this study aims to examine the contribution of emotional intelligence and achievement motivation to persistence in scholarship recipients and whether there are differences between students in the exact sciences and non-exact sciences. These conditions emphasize the need for research that examines the contribution of emotional intelligence and achievement motivation to the persistence of scholarship recipients by comparing students in the exact and non-exact sciences. This approach has the potential to provide a comprehensive understanding of the motivational and emotional dynamics of scholarship recipients as well as practical recommendations for university policies and counseling (Ain et al., 2021; R.-N. Awan et al., 2011; Zhao et al., 2024).

Methods

Research This study uses an ex post facto design to explore the contribution of emotional intelligence and achievement motivation to grit. The purpose of ex post facto research is to test hypotheses to examine the causal relationship between dependent variables (emotional intelligence and achievement motivation) and independent variables (grit).

This study covers a population of scholarship recipients at Semarang State University aged 18-22 years, numbering approximately 5,300 students distributed across nine faculties, divided into exact and non-exact faculties. The sample in this study was determined using the Slovin formula, resulting in a sample of 314 students. Sampling was conducted using proportional stratified random sampling with a 5% proportion for each faculty according to the theory of Issac and Michael. The sample criteria included 1) active scholarship recipients, 2) students in semesters 1-7, and 3) willingness to complete the research instrument.

In the data collection process, we used an emotional intelligence scale adapted from Abasimi's (2023) research, which refers to Salovey and Mayer's (1997) theory, namely the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS), which includes several indicators, namely perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions. This scale consists of 33 items with a reliability test showing a Cronbach alpha value for the SEIS subscale ranging from 0.60 to 0.70 with an overall EI coefficient of 0.85. This measurement aims to measure the ability of scholarship recipients to recognize, manage, and express emotions well. This measurement is carried out to obtain data on students' emotional intelligence; if it is high, then the individual is good at managing themselves, and vice versa. As for achievement motivation, the data collection process used an achievement motivation scale adapted from Abasimi's (2023) research based on McClelland's theory, which includes the indicators of Hope of Success and Fear of Failure, consisting of 10 items (AMS; Lang & Fries, 2006), with a Cronbach alpha reliability test value of 0.71. Based on the results of the reliability and validity tests of the measuring instrument, it was found that the alpha coefficient of this measuring instrument was 0.809. Meanwhile, in the validity test, all items had corrected item-correlation scores ranging from 0.209 to 0.657. This scale is used to measure students' drive to achieve success standards, overcome challenges and obstacles, and gain satisfaction through their achievements. Finally, the data collection process uses a grit scale adapted from Wahidah's (2019) research based on Duckworth's (2007) theory, namely the Grit Scale Child and Adult (GSCA), which covers two aspects, namely Perseverance of effort and Consistency of Interest. Grit is measured using the

GSCA with 12 items, which has a reliability value of 0.809, while the overall validity test of the items ranges from 0.209 to 0.657. The purpose of this scale is to describe an individual's ability to remain persistent and focused on long-term goals and be prepared to face obstacles.

All data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. This study used descriptive statistics to interpret the contribution of Emotional Intelligence and Achievement Motivation to the grit of Scholarship Recipients. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to explain the relationship between variables and the extent of the independent variables' influence on the dependent variables. All instruments were adapted to the Indonesian student context and tested for content validity through expert judgment and Cronbach's alpha for reliability. A questionnaire was used to collect respondent data in this study, which was then analyzed using statistical prerequisite tests using SPSS.

Results

A total of 350 students from Semarang State University are distributed across 9 faculties, divided into 5 exact sciences faculties and 4 non-exact sciences faculties.

Table 1 Description of Emotional Intelligence, Achievement Motivation, and Grit

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Emotional Intelligence	350	131,10	13,31
Achievement Motivation	350	36,99	5,96
Grit	350	50,50	6,68

Based on the data, the emotional intelligence of scholarship recipients had an average of 131.10 with a score range of 50 to 165, indicating that the emotional intelligence of respondents was at a moderate level ($M=131.10$, 13.31), which shows that many students still have difficulty regulating their emotions. In terms of achievement motivation, students have an average of 36.99 with a score range of 20 to 50, indicating a moderate level of achievement motivation ($M=36.99$, 5.96), which illustrates that students have a fairly strong internal drive to achieve academic success. Meanwhile, student grit had an average of 50.5 with a score range of 24 to 72, indicating that the respondents' persistence was at a moderate level ($M=50.50$, 6.68), which illustrates that the majority of respondents were able to persevere and be consistent in their efforts to face academic demands relatively well. This analysis also shows a difference in the average level of grit between exact and non-exact students, where exact students have higher persistence scores than non-exact students. This shows that academic demands that are structural, technical, and problem-solving oriented in the exact field can encourage the formation of stronger perseverance.

The analysis conducted was a classical assumption test consisting of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, followed by regression analysis. Normality: Kolmogorov-Smirnov showed that the three variables were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$) with a value of 0.081, which was greater than the significance level of 0.05. Linearity: The Compare Means analysis shows that both independent variables have a linear relationship with grit. Multicollinearity: The tolerance values of the independent variables are both 0.994, and the VIF values of the independent variables are both 1.006, indicating that there is no multicollinearity. Heteroscedasticity: The residual scatterplot shows that the residual points are scattered without forming a specific pattern, indicating that there are no signs of heteroscedasticity. Testing the effect of variables on persistence using multiple regression analysis shows that both variables simultaneously affect persistence. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Contribution of Emotional Intelligence and Achievement Motivation to Grit

Variabel Independen	R	R Square	β	sig	F	B	Std. Error	t
Constant	0,792	0,628		0,580	292,368	1.374	2,478	0,554
Emotional Intelligence (X1)			0,298	0,000		0,150	0,016	9,069
Achievement Motivation (X2)			0,712	0,000		0,798	0,037	21,676

After undergoing data analysis, the results show that emotional intelligence has a significant effect on grit ($\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.05$), with emotional intelligence explaining 62.8% of the variance in grit ($R^2=0.628$). Achievement motivation has a significant effect on grit ($\beta = 0.712$, $p < 0.05$), with emotional intelligence explaining 62.5% of the variance in grit ($R^2 = 0.625$). Achievement motivation shows a relatively greater contribution than emotional intelligence.

Discussion

In addition, research findings indicate that emotional intelligence positively and significantly predicts grit among scholarship recipients. This explains that scholarship recipients are able to recognize, understand, and manage their emotions well and are better able to withstand academic pressure. It is not uncommon for students to experience academic fatigue due to responsibilities and performance pressures in the world of lectures. Therefore, high emotional intelligence in students indicates that it can be a buffer against academic fatigue, which will certainly affect their academic performance (Octaviani et al., 2023). There is a relationship between emotional regulation ability and academic perseverance, which shows that an individual's ability to understand, regulate, and manage their emotions is positively correlated with the grit and academic resilience strategies of students. In line with other studies, this also shows a relationship between emotional intelligence and grit (Abdelshafy et al., 2025; Omer & Sharma, 2022; Xu & Hong, 2025).

The positive and significant influence of achievement motivation on student grit identifies that the internal drive to achieve is a dominant factor in maintaining consistent academic effort. Students with high achievement motivation tend to set clear and challenging goals, demonstrate persistence in completing academic tasks, and view obstacles as part of the goal achievement process. Achievement motivation not only encourages students to begin learning activities but also to maintain these efforts in the long term despite facing difficulties. The findings of this study are in line with (Azmi Luthfia et al., 2025; Hamdy Helal & Abohashem Hassan, 2025), which state that achievement motivation shows a relationship with grit.

The simultaneous contribution of emotional intelligence and achievement motivation to grit explains that it cannot be explained by just one factor alone. Emotional intelligence is useful in managing students' emotions in facing academic demands, and achievement motivation acts as an internal factor that maintains effort in the long term. Based on Table 2, both contribute to grit. However, achievement motivation contributes more to the grit of scholarship recipients. Previous research has also revealed that grit is a multidimensional construct influenced by non-cognitive factors (Credé et al., 2017). The multidimensional construct of grit is one that involves consistency of interests and perseverance of effort, which goes beyond mere sincerity of effort on the part of students. Other strong predictors that influence academic achievement, namely consistency, self-efficacy, and self-esteem, also play a role in maintaining motivation when obstacles arise (Jati Setiya Ningrum & Mulawarman, 2024; Neroni et al., 2022).

The results of the study also show differences in the level of grit among scholarship recipients between exact and non-exact faculties because persistence also needs to be

understood as being influenced by psychological interactions and the character of the educational environment. Exact faculties have structural, analytical, and problem-solving demands, so students tend to maintain consistent perseverance of effort because mistakes in one stage will have an impact on academic results. Therefore, it has the potential to shape grit in continuous efforts. Meanwhile, students in non-exact faculties have more flexible academic characteristics, critical reflection, and ideas with subjective assessments, so grit tends to support consistency of interest. Another study also suggests that the learning context greatly influences how students deal with pressure and challenges that arise when achieving academic goals. This can correlate with academic background, such as exact and non-exact students (Isnaeni Mas'uda & Sukma Adi Galuh Amawidyati, 2024). Differences in the field of study characteristics can affect the level of grit among scholarship recipients. This is in contrast to research (Fun et al., 2022), which explains that when comparing study programs, no differences in grit were found. However, there are differences in the level of persistence when viewed from the origin of the university, which includes public and private universities.

Conclusion

This study aims to identify the contribution of emotional intelligence and achievement motivation to grit among scholarship recipients. The results of the study can be concluded that emotional intelligence and achievement motivation play an important role in increasing student grit. Both variables, either separately or simultaneously, contribute positively to grit. In addition, this shows that there are differences in the level of grit between exact and non-exact students, indicating that the context of the field of study also influences the formation of persistence. These findings show that student grit is a multidimensional construct formed through the interaction of emotional, motivational, and academic context factors, so its development needs to be done comprehensively.

Based on field research findings, guidance and counseling services in higher education institutions are advised to develop programs that focus on improving students' emotional intelligence and motivation to achieve, as an effort to strengthen academic grit, especially for available scholarship programs. These guidance services can be directed towards strengthening emotional regulation skills, managing academic stress, and improving scholarship programs. These efforts are expected to help students increase their perseverance, consistency, and resilience in facing academic demands.

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Author Contributions Statement

FR and MM developed the research design and research flow. FR collected data, managed data analysis, and prepared the initial draft. MM supervised, interpreted data, and critically revised the manuscript. Both authors approved the final version of the manuscript for submission.

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