

Community Engagement, Love Of Learning, And Religious Practice As Predictors Of Elementary Students' Self-Confidence: Evidence From Indonesia's Seven Habits Framework

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Abstract

Self-confidence is a foundational non-cognitive competency for children's academic and social development, yet international assessments continue to show Indonesian students trailing global benchmarks, prompting renewed policy attention to character-based, non-cognitive habit formation alongside cognitive instruction. This study tested whether community engagement, love of learning, and religious practice -- three of the habits foregrounded in Indonesia's national Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children framework -- jointly and individually predict the self-confidence of Grade 5 elementary students. Using an ex post facto, associative quantitative design, data were collected via Likert-scale questionnaires from all 34 Grade 5 students (saturated sampling) at a public elementary school and analyzed with multiple linear regression in IBM SPSS Statistics 26. All three predictors significantly and positively predicted self-confidence: community engagement ($B = 0.274$, $t = 2.093$, $p = .045$, standardized beta = .281), love of learning ($B = 0.452$, $t = 2.449$, $p = .020$, standardized beta = .363), and religious practice ($B = 0.559$, $t = 2.294$, $p = .029$, standardized beta = .321). Love of learning emerged as the dominant predictor on the standardized metric. Together, the three variables significantly predicted self-confidence, $F(3, 30)$

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= 26.187, $p < .001$, explaining 72.4% of its variance ($R\text{-squared} = .724$; adjusted $R\text{-squared} = .696$). Diagnostic testing confirmed normally distributed residuals, no multicollinearity (tolerance $> .42$, VIF < 2.4 for all predictors), and no heteroscedasticity. The findings suggest that cultivating children's self-confidence benefits from a holistic, habit-based approach that integrates social, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions rather than any single intervention, with implications for character-education policy in comparable elementary school systems worldwide.

Keywords: Community Engagement; Love of Learning; Religious Practice; Self-Confidence; Character Education.

INTRODUCTION

Self-confidence -- the belief in one's own abilities and judgment -- is widely regarded as a foundational non-cognitive competency that enables children to participate actively in learning, voice their opinions, and cope with academic and social challenges. Education systems worldwide face growing pressure to develop such competencies alongside literacy and numeracy, particularly as international assessments continue to show developing-country school systems trailing global benchmarks; the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment places Indonesian students' mathematics, science, and reading performance well below the international average (OECD, 2023). This gap is not purely cognitive: students who lack confidence in their own abilities are less likely to participate actively in class or persist through difficulty, compounding the learning gaps that assessments record.

In response, Indonesia's Ministry of Education has promoted the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children, a national character-education framework that includes community engagement, love of learning, and religious practice among the habits children are encouraged to internalize (Universitas Negeri Surabaya, 2025). The framework assumes such habits jointly cultivate resilient, confident learners, yet quantitative tests of this assumption -- particularly ones examining several habits jointly rather than in isolation -- remain scarce. At a public elementary school in a regency of South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia, preliminary observation found that approximately 20-30% of Grade 5 students displayed low self-confidence, reflected in reluctance to speak in front of the class and hesitance to voice opinions. This study therefore examined whether community engagement, love of learning, and religious practice -- individually and jointly



-- predict Grade 5 students' self-confidence, addressing four questions: does each habit predict self-confidence on its own, and do the three habits, taken together, significantly predict it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-Confidence as a Developmental Outcome

Self-confidence is conceptualized as a student's belief in their own competence, expressed through optimism, objectivity, responsibility, and rational judgment when facing learning tasks (Djaali, 2013). Educational-psychology accounts converge on the view that self-confidence is not innate but develops through accumulated experience and mastery, meaning it is amenable to influence by the habits and environments schools and families cultivate (Sudjana, 2000; Wahab & Rosnawati, 2021), underlying this study's premise that habit-formation programs are a plausible lever for building children's self-confidence.

Community Engagement and Love of Learning as Character Habits

Community engagement refers to students' capacity to interact, cooperate, and participate in social, cultural, and civic activities, cultivating mutual respect, tolerance, and a sense of shared responsibility (Universitas Negeri Surabaya, 2025). Love of learning, meanwhile, denotes a sustained, enthusiastic pursuit of new knowledge and skills; community-based learning-revitalization programs have shown that when this habit is deliberately cultivated, it strengthens learners' independence and willingness to engage with new material (Nur'aeni, 2019). Learning-theory perspectives argue that habitual, self-directed engagement with learning builds the cognitive mastery from which self-efficacy, and by extension self-confidence, is drawn (Wahab & Rosnawati, 2021).

Religious Practice and Prior Findings

Religious practice is understood as the consistency with which an individual carries out devotional activities in accordance with their faith, a form of religiosity theorized to strengthen ethical, moral, and spiritual values and to provide a stable sense of life purpose (Abdul Rahman Shaleh & Wahab, 2004). Within Indonesia's Seven Habits framework, religious practice is treated as being formed jointly with community engagement and love of learning rather than as an isolated behavior, with qualitative evidence suggesting that families and schools that coordinate on all seven habits report stronger character outcomes for children (Aisyah Nur Jannah et al.,



2025). A separate strand of research on elementary students' learning habits and attitudes has linked them to achievement-relevant outcomes (Haybi Septiani, 2020; Riwahyudin, 2015), but quantitative work that integrates social, intellectual, and spiritual habits as joint predictors of self-confidence specifically remains limited, motivating the present study's combined regression approach.

METHOD

Research Design and Participants

This study used a quantitative, ex post facto associative design, which examines cause-effect relationships among variables as they naturally occur, without experimental manipulation (Widarto, 2013). Data were collected during the 2025/2026 even semester at a public elementary school in a regency of South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The population comprised all Grade 5 students at the school; because a saturated sampling technique was applied, all 34 students in the population served as the study sample.

Instruments and Data Analysis

Four closed-ended, five-point Likert questionnaires measured community engagement (6 items), love of learning (6 items), religious practice (5 items), and self-confidence (5 items), for 22 items in total. Item validity was assessed through Pearson product-moment item-total correlation against the critical r-table value of .282 for $n = 34$ at $\alpha = .05$ (Arikunto, 2005; Umar, 2013), with every item across all four instruments found valid. Reliability, assessed through Cronbach's alpha, likewise met the accepted threshold of .60 for all instruments ($\alpha = .777$ for community engagement, .667 for love of learning, .605 for religious practice, and .824 for self-confidence). Prior to hypothesis testing, classical assumption testing covered residual normality (One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test), multicollinearity (tolerance and variance inflation factor, VIF; Ghozali, 2013), and heteroscedasticity (visual inspection of the standardized residual scatterplot; Ghozali, 2019). Hypotheses were then tested through multiple linear regression, evaluated via the t-test for each predictor's partial effect, the F-test for the simultaneous effect, the coefficient of determination (R-squared; Sudijono, 2006; Sugiyono, 2012) for explained variance, and comparison of standardized beta coefficients to identify the dominant predictor, all computed in IBM SPSS Statistics 26 (Priyatno, 2010).



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION***Classical Assumption Testing***

Residuals were normally distributed: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov significance values exceeded .05 for all four variables (community engagement = .060, love of learning = .076, religious practice = .068, self-confidence = .103), and the normal probability plot showed data points following the diagonal. Multicollinearity testing showed tolerance values of .511, .420, and .470 and VIF values of 1.958, 2.379, and 2.126 for community engagement, love of learning, and religious practice respectively, all comfortably within the accepted thresholds (tolerance > .10, VIF < 10), supporting the three predictors' joint entry into a single regression model. The standardized residual scatterplot showed no systematic pattern, indicating no heteroscedasticity.

Regression Results and Hypothesis Testing

Multiple linear regression, entering community engagement (X1), love of learning (X2), and religious practice (X3) simultaneously, is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Multiple Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-8.675	3.687	-	-2.353	.025	-	-
Community Engagement (X1)	0.274	0.131	.281	2.093	.045	.511	1.958
Love of Learning (X2)	0.452	0.185	.363	2.449	.020	.420	2.379
Religious Practice (X3)	0.559	0.244	.321	2.294	.029	.470	2.126

Table 2. Model Summary and Simultaneous (F) Test

R	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	F	df	Sig.
.851	.724	.696	26.187	3, 30	<.001



All three predictors significantly and positively predicted self-confidence. Community engagement had a significant partial effect ($t = 2.093$, $p = .045 < .05$), supporting the first hypothesis; love of learning likewise had a significant partial effect ($t = 2.449$, $p = .020$), supporting the second hypothesis; and religious practice also significantly predicted self-confidence ($t = 2.294$, $p = .029$), supporting the third hypothesis. Comparing standardized beta coefficients -- the appropriate metric for ranking predictors measured on different item scales -- love of learning was the dominant predictor ($\beta = .363$), followed by religious practice ($\beta = .321$) and community engagement ($\beta = .281$). Tested simultaneously, the three variables significantly predicted self-confidence, $F(3, 30) = 26.187$, $p < .001$ (Table 2), supporting the fourth hypothesis; the model explained 72.4% of the variance in self-confidence ($R\text{-squared} = .724$; adjusted $R\text{-squared} = .696$), leaving 27.6% attributable to factors outside the model.

DISCUSSION

Community engagement's significant, positive effect indicates that students embedded in socially supportive, cooperative environments -- where mutual respect and shared participation are normalized -- carry that sense of security into the classroom, reducing social anxiety and encouraging them to speak up and participate (Universitas Negeri Surabaya, 2025), plausibly lowering the threshold at which students feel safe expressing themselves at school (Sudjana, 2000).

Love of learning's status as the dominant predictor is consistent with evidence that habitual, self-directed engagement with learning builds cognitive mastery and independence (Nur'aeni, 2019; Wahab & Rosnawati, 2021), and with prior findings linking elementary students' learning habits and attitudes to achievement-relevant outcomes (Haybi Septiani, 2020; Riwahyudin, 2015). Students who enjoy learning master material more thoroughly, directly reducing the anxiety of being questioned or called to the front of the class, while the positive reinforcement such mastery attracts further reinforces a sense of being valued.

Religious practice's significant contribution aligns with the view that religiosity strengthens ethical and spiritual grounding and provides a stable sense of purpose (Abdul Rahman Shaleh & Wahab, 2004), consistent with the Seven Habits framework's premise that spiritual habits reinforce character alongside social and intellectual ones (Aisyah Nur Jannah et al., 2025). That all three habits remained significant when entered jointly, together explaining nearly three-quarters of the variance in self-confidence, supports treating them as



complementary rather than substitutable levers: social belonging, intellectual mastery, and spiritual grounding each appear to address a distinct psychological need underlying a confident learner, reinforcing the case for holistic, multi-habit character-education policy rather than single-domain interventions (OECD, 2023; Universitas Negeri Surabaya, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study found that community engagement, love of learning, and religious practice each significantly and positively predicted the self-confidence of Grade 5 elementary students, both individually and jointly. Love of learning was the dominant predictor on the standardized metric, followed by religious practice and community engagement, and the three variables together explained 72.4% of the variance in self-confidence. These findings support Indonesia's Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children framework's underlying premise that social, intellectual, and spiritual habits jointly, rather than singly, cultivate confident learners, with plausible relevance to character-education policy in other elementary school systems seeking to complement cognitive instruction with non-cognitive habit formation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers and schools are encouraged to integrate all three habits into daily routines rather than treating them as separate programs -- for instance, pairing cooperative, community-oriented activities with structured opportunities for self-directed learning and consistent, age-appropriate religious or moral practice. Parents can reinforce this integration at home by modeling and encouraging the same three habits consistently. Future research should extend this associative design with larger, multi-school samples and consider longitudinal designs capable of testing whether habit formation causally precedes gains in self-confidence over time.

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