



## Adaptation and Psychometric Evaluation of an Emotional Engagement Scale Indonesian Secondary Education

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to adapt and conduct a preliminary psychometric evaluation of an Emotional Engagement Scale for junior high school students in Indonesia. Emotional engagement is considered an important dimension of student engagement, particularly in supporting students' academic participation, emotional well-being, and classroom inclusion. However, standardized instruments specifically measuring emotional engagement among Indonesian junior secondary school students remain limited, particularly for heterogeneous and inclusive educational settings. This study employed a preliminary psychometric validation design involving 50 seventh-grade students selected through purposive sampling. The adaptation process followed cross-cultural procedures, including forward translation, synthesis, back translation, expert review, readability testing, and pilot testing. Item validity was assessed using Corrected Item–Total Correlation, while reliability was evaluated through Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency analysis. Results indicated that six out of seven items demonstrated acceptable validity, while one item was excluded due to inadequate psychometric performance. The final six-item scale demonstrated good internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.821$ ). These findings suggest that the adapted instrument has potential utility in assessing students' emotional engagement within Indonesian secondary education contexts. Nevertheless, further psychometric studies involving larger samples and factorial analyses are recommended to strengthen construct validity.

**Keywords:** *emotional engagement, psychometric analysis, scale adaptation, junior high school student*

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## I. Introduction

Student engagement constitutes a critical factor in determining the quality of learning experiences and educational outcomes. Within the field of educational psychology, student engagement is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing behavioral, cognitive, and emotional dimensions (Fredricks et al., 2004). Among these three dimensions, emotional engagement is particularly salient, as it pertains to students' affective responses to the school environment, including feelings of safety, comfort, being valued, social connectedness, and a sense of school belonging (Skinner et al., 2009). High levels of emotional engagement have been demonstrated to correlate positively with enhanced learning motivation, psychological well-being, academic achievement, and active student participation in learning activities (Wang & Eccles, 2012; Quin, 2017).

At the junior high school level, emotional engagement assumes increasing significance, as students are navigating the early adolescent developmental stage, characterized by substantial biological, emotional, and social changes. During this period, the need for social acceptance intensifies, and sensitivity to school-related experiences becomes more pronounced (Santrock, 2020). When students perceive themselves as accepted, safe, and valued within the school environment, they tend to demonstrate more optimal learning engagement and exhibit a lower risk of academic and psychosocial difficulties. Conversely, low emotional engagement may elevate the risk of academic boredom, diminished learning motivation, and school disengagement (Wang & Holcombe, 2010).

Previous research has established a close relationship between emotional engagement and the quality of students' learning experiences. Shen et al. (2024) found that teacher emotional support enhances positive academic emotions, which in turn strengthen students' academic engagement. Other studies have similarly reported that students who maintain positive emotional connectedness with their schools tend to experience better psychological well-being and lower levels of academic

burnout (Quin, 2017; Iswinarti & Surahman, 2022). Consequently, the measurement of emotional engagement is essential for mapping students' affective conditions within the school setting.

In Indonesia, research on student engagement has progressed; however, the majority of studies have concentrated either on engagement as a general construct or have emphasized behavioral and cognitive dimensions over the emotional dimension. Several studies have employed instruments such as the School Engagement Scale (Insani & Savitri, 2020), adapted versions of the Online Student Engagement Scale (Lathifaturrohman & Yunikawati, 2022), and multidimensional measures of student engagement in both in-person and online learning contexts. Nevertheless, these instruments have generally not specifically evaluated emotional engagement as a distinct construct, particularly among junior high school students in face-to-face learning settings. Moreover, several of the instruments used exhibit psychometric limitations, notably the minimal reporting of construct validity and cultural appropriateness for the Indonesian population.

The scarcity of instruments specifically designed to measure emotional engagement among Indonesian junior high school students indicates an empirical gap that warrants attention. To date, there remain limited emotional engagement instruments that have been adapted through systematic cross-cultural procedures and subjected to psychometric testing with Indonesian junior high school populations. Given this, valid and reliable instruments are indispensable for assisting teachers, school counselors, and researchers in understanding students' affective conditions and in designing educational interventions grounded in students' actual needs (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021).

Furthermore, the need for emotional engagement instruments has become increasingly relevant within the contexts of inclusive education and special education. Contemporary school environments are growing more heterogeneous, including the presence of students with special needs, who face a heightened risk of encountering barriers to social and emotional connectedness at school. Research indicates that students with special needs in inclusive settings often experience challenges related to perceived acceptance, emotional safety, and social connectedness with the learning environment (Koster et al., 2010). Therefore, emotional engagement instruments hold significant potential as initial assessment tools to identify the emotional conditions of students in both regular and inclusive classroom settings.

This study selected the Emotional Engagement scale because this instrument specifically evaluates students' affective experiences regarding the school environment, including feelings of safety, appreciation of one's opinions, comfort at school, and sense of school belonging. In comparison to relatively lengthy multidimensional engagement instruments, this scale is considered more practical for use in school-based assessment contexts and more aligned with the developmental characteristics of junior high school students. Furthermore, this study adhered to a systematic cross-cultural adaptation procedure based on the international instrument adaptation guidelines proposed by Beaton et al. (2000), which encompass forward translation, synthesis, back translation, expert review, readability testing, and preliminary psychometric evaluation.

Accordingly, this study offers novelty in two principal aspects. First, it provides an emotional engagement measurement instrument specifically adapted for Indonesian junior high school students using a systematic cultural adaptation procedure. Second, it extends the potential utility of the emotional engagement instrument within heterogeneous and inclusive educational settings. Consequently, this study aims to adapt and evaluate the initial psychometric characteristics of the Emotional Engagement scale among Indonesian junior high school students by examining item validity and internal consistency reliability.

## II. Method

### A. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a preliminary psychometric validation study design, aimed at adapting and evaluating the initial psychometric characteristics of the Emotional Engagement scale among junior high school (SMP) students in Indonesia. This design was selected because the study focuses on the cross-cultural adaptation process of the instrument and the evaluation of its preliminary psychometric quality through item validity and internal consistency reliability testing, rather than merely describing phenomena via a descriptive survey.

The instrument adaptation process followed the cross-cultural adaptation guidelines developed by Beaton et al. (2000), which encompass several systematic stages, namely forward translation, synthesis of translated versions, back translation, expert review, readability testing, and pilot testing. This approach was chosen to ensure linguistic, conceptual, and cultural equivalence between the original instrument and the Indonesian version, thereby enabling its appropriate use with the Indonesian junior high school student population.

Furthermore, this study is categorized as a pilot study, as it aims to evaluate the initial performance of the adapted instrument prior to more comprehensive psychometric testing employing larger sample sizes and advanced factor analyses. According to DeVellis and Thorpe (2021), initial validation studies may be conducted to identify item quality, internal consistency, and potential measurement issues before progressing to more complex construct validation stages. In preliminary psychometric studies, a sample size of 5–10 respondents per item remains acceptable for preliminary testing purposes (Hair et al., 2019). Given that this instrument consists of seven items, a participant sample of 50 students was considered adequate for initial psychometric testing purposes.

#### *B. Population, Sample, or Research Subjects*

The population of this study comprised seventh-grade junior high school students participating in face-to-face learning at their respective schools. The selection of seventh-grade students was based on considerations of early adolescent development namely, the phase during which emotional experiences related to school begin to develop significantly and emotional connectedness to the educational environment assumes increasing importance.

The research sample consisted of 50 seventh-grade students selected through purposive sampling, a technique in which participants are chosen based on specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The inclusion criteria for participants were as follows: (1) actively enrolled seventh-grade students, (2) regularly participating in face-to-face learning, (3) capable of independently comprehending questionnaire completion instructions, and (4) having obtained school permission to participate in the study.

Purposive sampling was employed because this study constitutes an initial instrument validation study (pilot psychometric study) aimed at evaluating item performance within the relevant target population prior to broader-scale instrument testing. Accordingly, the principal focus of this study was not population generalizability, but rather the preliminary evaluation of the adapted instrument's psychometric characteristics.

#### *C. Data Collection*

The instrument utilized in this study underwent linguistic and cultural adaptation stages in accordance with standard procedures. The instrument comprised seven items, each representing aspects of students' emotional engagement, such as feelings of safety, comfort, pride in school, and the desire to remain within the school environment. All items were constructed in the form of positively worded statements. Instrument quality was assessed through content validity evaluations conducted by educational psychology and linguistics experts. The synthesis of translated versions was reviewed to ensure semantic equivalence with the Indonesian junior high school student context. Following the initial pilot testing, no significant comprehension difficulties were identified among students. The research materials, consisting of printed questionnaires, were distributed directly to students with researcher-provided instructions to maintain consistency in completion.

Content validity of the instrument was evaluated through review by three experts, comprising two educational psychology lecturers with competencies in psychological assessment and instrument development, and one bilingual (Indonesian–English) linguist experienced in academic translation. Evaluations were conducted using a 1–4 rating scale (1 = not relevant, 2 = somewhat

relevant, 3 = relevant, 4 = highly relevant) and were analyzed using a descriptive Content Validity Index (CVI) approach to assess item content relevance. In addition to quantitative assessments, the experts also provided qualitative feedback regarding readability, language structure, and cultural relevance of the items for junior high school students. The synthesis of translated versions was re-examined to ascertain conceptual equivalence with the original instrument, and the pilot testing results indicated no significant comprehension difficulties among students.

Data collection procedures were conducted within classroom settings at times mutually agreed upon with the respective schools. The researcher was physically present to provide instructions, explain completion procedures, and ensure active student participation throughout the questionnaire administration process. Data collection was carried out in a single session to maintain uniform participant conditions and to minimize potential external bias.

#### *D. Data Analysis*

Data analysis was performed using SPSS software. Validity testing was conducted by examining the correlations between item scores and total scores using the Pearson correlation technique. Items were considered valid if the correlation coefficient was significant at the 5% level ( $p < 0.05$ ). Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to assess the internal consistency among items. The instrument was deemed reliable if the Alpha value exceeded 0.7, in accordance with general standards for psychological scale reliability testing.

#### *E. Research Procedures*

The research procedures commenced with document preparation and school permission procurement. Following the acquisition of institutional approval, the researcher coordinated with teachers to determine the schedule for questionnaire administration. Subsequently, the researcher provided instructions to students regarding the appropriate method for responding to each item on the scale. After the questionnaires were collected, data were processed to conduct validity and reliability analyses. The results of these analyses were used to determine the extent to which the adapted scale can be employed accurately and consistently within the context of Indonesian junior high school students.

### **III. Results and Discussion**

#### *A. Results*

The adaptation process of the emotional engagement instrument for students was conducted through five systematic stages, following the cross-cultural adaptation principles proposed by Beaton et al. (2000), with adjustments made to the specific context of direct research involving seventh-grade junior high school students.

##### *1. Translation into Indonesian*

The initial adaptation stage involved translating the Emotional Engagement scale from English into Indonesian by two independent translators. The first translator had a non-psychology background, whereas the second translator possessed a background in educational psychology. Both demonstrated adequate linguistic competence, as evidenced by standard TOEFL/IELTS scores. The translations were carried out independently, with no knowledge of each other's results, in order to maintain objectivity. The outcomes of both translations were subsequently submitted to an educational psychology lecturer who served as the synthesis expert. This expert comprehensively reviewed both versions and performed a synthesis based on semantic appropriateness, cultural context, and language structures comprehensible to seventh-grade junior high school students.

## 2. Translation Synthesis

Following the completion of the two translated versions, a synthesis process was undertaken to consolidate and select the most appropriate word equivalents. The expert reviewer compared the two translators' results on an item-by-item basis. Evaluations were conducted with respect to semantic aspects, linguistic style, cultural appropriateness, and comprehensibility for students aged 12–13 years. Overly complex sentences were simplified without diminishing conceptual meaning. Terminology adjustments were made; for instance, the term "engaged" was rendered using more familiar expressions such as "terlibat aktif" (actively involved) or "senang berada di sekolah" (enjoy being at school). This synthesis produced an initial Indonesian version ready for further review.

## 3. Expert Review and Linguistic Feasibility

Situational The subsequent stage involved substantive validation of the synthesized version. The expert lecturer who had been involved in the preceding stage provided additional in-depth feedback regarding readability, grammar, and sentence structure. Furthermore, a psychological review was undertaken to ascertain whether each statement genuinely represented the intended emotional engagement construct. The outcome of this stage was a final Indonesian version deemed linguistically and psychologically appropriate for junior high school students. The researcher also sought informal opinions from several teachers to ensure that the instrument's language was comprehensible within the secondary school context.

## 4. Back-Translation into English

The final Indonesian version was then back-translated into English by two additional independent translators. One translator had a background in English language education, while the other came from the field of psychology. Neither translator was shown the original version of the instrument. This procedure was implemented to ensure that the back-translation results genuinely reflected the Indonesian interpretation that had been developed. Subsequently, the back-translation outcomes were compared with the original version to assess semantic equivalence, semantic accuracy, and cross-version consistency. The evaluation results indicated that the majority of items demonstrated high semantic equivalence, with minor corrections made to grammatical structures to maintain alignment with the original meaning.

Tabel 1. Examples of Synthesized Items from Translation Results

| Original Item                            | Final Indonesian Adaptation                         | Adaptation Consideration                                                             |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I feel safe in this school               | Saya merasa aman di sekolah ini                     | Adjustment to natural language structure appropriate for junior high school students |
| My opinions are respected in this school | Pendapat saya dihargai di sekolah ini               | Use of more familiar and easily comprehensible terminology                           |
| I am never bored in class                | Saya tidak pernah merasa bosan di kelas             | Simplification of sentence structure                                                 |
| I am an important part of this school    | Saya merasa menjadi bagian penting dari sekolah ini | Contextual meaning adjustment to students' school experiences                        |

Tabel 2. Results of Item Validity Testing for Emotional Engagement

| No | Item Statement                                                                 | Corrected Item-Total Correlation | Sig. (2-tailed) | Status      |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1  | I feel safe in this school                                                     | 0.697                            | 0.000           | Valid       |
| 2  | I feel that my opinions are valued in this school                              | 0.613                            | 0.000           | Valid       |
| 3  | If I could choose a junior high school again, I would still choose this school | 0.829                            | 0.000           | Valid       |
| 4  | I never feel bored when at school                                              | 0.511                            | 0.000           | Valid       |
| 5  | I never think about transferring to another school                             | 0.701                            | 0.000           | Valid       |
| 6  | I feel that I am an important part of this school                              | 0.248                            | 0.082           | Tidak Valid |
| 7  | Overall, I feel happy attending school here                                    | 0.729                            | 0.000           | Valid       |

Tabel 3. Results of Reliability Testing for the Emotional Engagement Scale

| Original Item                          | Value |
|----------------------------------------|-------|
| Cronbach's Alpha                       | 0.821 |
| Number of Items After Validity Testing | 6     |

### 5. Back-Translation into English

Following the cross-cultural adaptation process and initial readability testing, the subsequent step involved the quantitative evaluation of the instrument's preliminary psychometric characteristics through internal item validity and internal consistency reliability testing. Validity testing was conducted using item-total score correlation analysis (corrected item-total correlation) to assess the contribution of each item to the overall emotional engagement construct. The analysis results indicated that six of the seven items demonstrated significant correlation values ( $p < 0.05$ ), with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.511 to 0.829. Meanwhile, Item 6 ("I feel that I am an important part of this school") did not meet the internal validity criteria, as it exhibited a correlation value below the minimum threshold ( $r = 0.248$ ) and a significance level exceeding 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ); consequently, this item was eliminated from the final instrument.

Subsequently, the instrument's reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to assess internal consistency among items. The analysis results demonstrated that following the elimination of Item 6, the alpha value increased to 0.821, indicating good reliability ( $\alpha > 0.80$ ). These findings suggest that the remaining items possess adequate internal consistency in measuring emotional engagement among seventh-grade junior high school students. Nevertheless, construct validity in this study remains limited to corrected item-total correlation analysis and has not yet encompassed factor structure examination through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) or Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Therefore, the validity results in this study are more appropriately interpreted as preliminary internal validity evidence, while the factor structure of the instrument requires further investigation in future research employing larger sample sizes.

## *B. Discussion*

The findings of this study indicate that six of the seven items on the emotional engagement scale demonstrated significant validity and high internal reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.821. This consistency suggests that the majority of statements within the scale are capable of accurately measuring emotional engagement among junior high school students. These results reinforce the findings of Rahmania and Royanto (2021), who developed a similar measurement instrument for university students. Through cultural and age-appropriate adjustments, the present study has successfully extended the application of this instrument to a lower educational level and to the context of in-person learning.

One significant finding of this study was the invalidity of Item 6, namely "I feel that I am an important part of this school." From a developmental perspective, seventh-grade students are in the early adolescent phase, during which they are still undergoing the process of social identity formation and the development of a sense of belonging to broader environments (Santrock, 2020). In contrast to other items that describe concrete emotional experiences, such as feeling safe or comfortable at school, the concept of "being an important part of the school" is more abstract and necessitates more complex social reflection. This may lead students to interpret the item variably or to have not yet developed sufficiently stable psychological experiences to evaluate their position within the school community.

In addition to developmental aspects, cultural factors may also have contributed to the low validity of this item. Within collectivistic cultural contexts such as Indonesia, junior high school students tend to interpret their relationship with the school through direct interpersonal experiences, such as being accepted by peers, feeling comfortable with teachers, or enjoying the learning atmosphere, rather than through explicit self-assessment as an "important part" of the institutional school. Consequently, this item may have been linguistically and conceptually less aligned with how students understand emotional attachment to school. This finding suggests the need for redactional adjustments or a re-exploration of the meaning of sense of belonging within the Indonesian junior high school student population.

The results of this study further support the importance of emotional engagement within the broader educational context, including students' psychological well-being and the prevention of academic difficulties. Shen et al. (2024) demonstrated that emotional support from teachers contributes to the enhancement of positive academic emotions and student engagement in the classroom. In a similar vein, Dharmayana et al. (2012) found that students' emotional competence plays a role in the relationship between social interaction quality and academic achievement. Low emotional engagement has also been associated with an increased risk of academic burnout and school disconnection (Pratiwi & Aulianti, 2024), as well as vulnerability to psychological distress resulting from low peer social support (Kusumapратиwi & Meilinda, 2024). Accordingly, this instrument holds potential as an initial assessment tool to assist teachers and school counselors in identifying students' emotional conditions and designing more appropriate psychosocial interventions.

Insani and Savitri (2020) asserted that emotional engagement exerts a long-term influence on academic motivation and students' reflective abilities. This finding opens up the potential for utilizing the scale not only as a one-time evaluative tool but also as an early indicator of students' sustained academic readiness. Putri, Savitri, and Rohinsa (2023) found that self-regulation ability plays a role in maintaining students' emotional and cognitive engagement. Therefore, this scale may be employed in the planning of programs aimed at strengthening students' emotional literacy through guidance and counseling services.

Furthermore, these findings align with the research of Lathifaturrohman and Yunikawati (2022), who developed a conceptual framework of emotional engagement in online learning, emphasizing the importance of affective aspects in encouraging active participation. Although the present study was conducted within an in-person learning context, the fundamental principles of emotional engagement remain relevant, particularly in fostering a conducive classroom climate. Supportive school environments, as demonstrated in the study published in *Jurnal Psikologi Udayana* (Dharmayana et al., 2012), are capable of enhancing overall student engagement across emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions.

In sum, this study contributes to the development of a valid and reliable emotional engagement measurement instrument within the Indonesian educational context. Supported by a number of national and international studies, this instrument has proven effective in capturing the emotional experiences of junior high school students. Regular utilization of this instrument in schools may enhance the effectiveness of student well-being programs and assist schools in establishing a more inclusive learning climate that is responsive to the emotional needs of learners.

#### IV. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the results of the cross-cultural adaptation process and preliminary psychometric testing, it can be concluded that the adapted Emotional Engagement scale demonstrates adequate preliminary psychometric characteristics for use with junior high school students in Indonesia. The findings indicate that six of the seven items met the criteria for internal validity and exhibited good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.821. These findings suggest that the instrument is capable of capturing students' emotional experiences regarding the school environment, including feelings of safety, comfort, respect for one's opinions, and emotional connectedness to the school. Accordingly, this instrument holds potential for use as an initial assessment tool to map the emotional engagement conditions of junior high school students, as well as to support understanding of the importance of affective aspects in the learning process and student well-being at school.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations, particularly the relatively small sample size and the fact that construct validity testing remained limited to corrected item-total correlation analysis without factor structure examination through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) or Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Therefore, future research is recommended to involve larger participant samples, more diverse educational levels, and more comprehensive psychometric analytical approaches to strengthen the construct validity evidence of the instrument. From a practical standpoint, this instrument may be utilized by teachers, school counselors, and educational administrators as a routine assessment tool to identify students experiencing declines in emotional engagement, thereby enabling psychosocial interventions and student well-being programs to be designed more precisely and supporting the creation of a more inclusive and supportive school environment.

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