

RELIGIOUS BROTHERS' EMOTION REGULATION TO PURSUE WELL-BEING IN ONLINE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Effective learning is supported by a conducive environment. However, pandemic situations with their demands have changed the learning system from face-to-face to a virtual learning environment, which in some ways affects the emotions of the students. This study aimed to investigate the way undergraduate students regulate their emotions to pursue well-being in online learning challenges. Two research questions were proposed, namely (1) how do the undergraduate students manage their emotions to cope with the online learning challenges; and (2) what factors did they find facilitative to cope with the challenges? Qualitative research was utilized through semi-structured interviews. The respondents were two first-year and two fourth-year undergraduate students from 2 private universities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The result indicated that community context as an ecological perspective provides security, trust, and meaningful activities that help its members cope with their negative emotions to pursue well-being in online learning. Furthermore, the school context played a crucial role in facilitating the learning goals through various supports and strategies. The lecturers and future researchers are expected to emphasize and develop more empirical studies concerning the importance of self-regulation of emotion to attain well-being in online learning challenges.

Keywords: Online learning; Regulation of emotion; Religious brothers; Well-being

ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran yang efektif didukung oleh lingkungan yang kondusif. Namun, situasi pandemi dan tuntutan telah mengubah lingkungan pembelajaran dari tatap muka menjadi pembelajaran virtual, yang berdampak pada emosi siswa dalam beberapa hal. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki cara mahasiswa sarjana mengatur emosi mereka untuk mengejar kesejahteraan dalam tantangan pembelajaran online. Dua pertanyaan penelitian diajukan, yaitu (1) bagaimana mahasiswa sarjana mengelola emosi mereka untuk mengatasi tantangan pembelajaran online; dan (2) faktor apa saja yang mereka temukan fasilitatif untuk mengatasi tantangan pembelajaran online? Penelitian kualitatif digunakan dalam studi ini melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur. Respondennya adalah dua mahasiswa sarjana tahun pertama dan dua mahasiswa sarjana tahun keempat dari 2 universitas swasta di Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa konteks komunitas religius sebagai perspektif ekologis memberikan keamanan, kepercayaan, dan kegiatan yang bermakna yang membantu anggotanya mengatasi emosi negatif mereka untuk mengejar kesejahteraan dalam pembelajaran online. Selain itu, konteks universitas memainkan peran krusial dalam memfasilitasi tujuan pembelajaran melalui berbagai dukungan dan strategi. Para dosen dan peneliti masa depan diharapkan untuk menekankan dan mengembangkan studi yang lebih empiris mengenai pentingnya regulasi emosi untuk mencapai kesejahteraan dalam tantangan pembelajaran online.

Introduction

Learning is one of the most vital aspects of our ecosystem for preserving and improving our quality of life since it is the process of obtaining new knowledge, skills, beliefs, attitudes, and preferences (Richard Gross, 2010). The value of an ecological perspective to learning is that it encourages us to understand learning and development as a comprehensive and profound process that connects us to other people, material resources in our surroundings, life events and situations, and the things we want or need to do and achieve (Jackson, 2016).

Based on this ecological approach, it is proven that learning is enhanced by the systems, for instance, how school is managed, how problems are solved, and so on, to support the learning process by guaranteeing effective and efficient use of available resources in the school system (Usman, 2016). To exemplify, Osher, Bear, Sprague & Doyle (2010) claimed that the learning environment is improved for instructors who use an ecological approach, giving room for students to share their load within a supportive, dynamic system.

Besides, home context is also of great value that supports students' academic performances. Parents or community members play a significant role in one's learning process, which is not only the duty of educational institutions. In today's online learning environment, parents' role in aiding their children in using technology while studying from home is critical, particularly in terms of preserving and developing desire to continue learning (Rizaldi, Nurhayati, Fatimah & Amni, 2021).

This study is set to investigate how brother-undergraduate students manage to deal with their emotions during online learning due to Covid-19 Pandemic. These undergraduate students lived as Catholic brothers in a religious community. The life of religious brothers in a community as a unique ecosystem - a typical learning ecology that consists of male adults who agreed to follow a certain way of life, as opposed to a secular lifestyle in general.

On the one hand, from a Bourdieuan perspective, members of the community develop a certain habitus, which characterizes consecrated life- "the total gift of self to God" (Arumi, 2015:5) by living out the evangelical counsels for the service of neighbor. Habitus refers to how people perceive and react to the social environment around them. It includes socially established habits, talents, and dispositions. People with comparable origins and opportunities are more likely to have these attitudes (Bourdieu, 1977). On the other hand, community members also interact with the wider communities, in the framework of their apostolic duties and in social life in the community, especially for those who are studying education to prepare their ministry.

Thus, members of the community still must balance the spiritual life as members of a particular community, and social life as students and as apostolic workers. Under normal circumstances, things have been going relatively well. However, the situation has changed due to the impact of

the pandemic in which the community members are forced to limit themselves. Even internal relationships in the community must follow strict health protocols. In addition, the limited number of computers, weak Internet connection, a lack of skills in utilizing technological tools, limited time, etc., also bring some impacts on learning achievements.

This study has two limitations. The first is that it deals mainly with the investigation of the interplay between the institutional system of schooling (of two different school cultures) and the home support among first and fourth-year students. Second, it conducted an in-depth investigation of a small number of research participants, which did not allow generalizations to be made.

To stress the point, this study was conducted for two major purposes. The primary purpose is to investigate the way the brother-undergraduate students manage to deal with their emotions and to uncover the elements that help them while online learning due to Covid-19 Pandemic. The second is to strengthen the empirical data on pursuing well-being by the catholic religious brothers and sisters.

Previous studies presented the various aspects of attaining well-being, but not about the regulation of emotion in online learning. To have it proven, some of the current research studies (from 2016 to 2021) are investigated. First, the study conducted by Campbell & Vitullo (2016) revealed that the well-being of the religious communities is gained through their religious values and practices, reinforced by social ties and norms that affect so many aspects of human flourishing. Second, the study proceeded by Cnaan & Heist (2018) discovered that congregations' well-being is enhanced by service as a primary source of mutual support and bonding social capital for their members. Third, the study held by Valadez (2019) indicated that the well-being of Christian Brothers is pursued by providing a high-quality education infused with a strong sense of Catholic virtue, such as a commitment to social justice, emphasized the role of community building, and so on. Another research by Büssing, Beerenbrock, Gerundt & Berger (2020) found that religious brothers and sisters achieved well-being during the spiritual crises is through a comprehensive assessment of the triggers. Lastly, Boonstra (2021) found that the well-being of the brothers of the 'Common Life' was attained through maintaining close personal ties with their lay visitors to communicate their message not merely through important readings but by examples of how to read them.

To fill the gap of the previous studies, this study made use of a qualitative approach attempts to emphasize the role of emotion regulation to cope with the online learning demands to pursue well-being by the Piarist religious brothers in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. To guide this research, two research questions were proposed: (1) how do the Piarist brother-undergraduate students manage their emotions to cope with the online learning challenges; and (2) what factors did they find facilitative to cope with the online learning challenges in attaining well-being?

To address those questions, some reviews of literature are consulted.

Self-regulation of emotion

Self-regulation of emotion, according to Koole, Dillen & Sheppes (2011: 23), is wide and extensive, encompassing the control of particular emotions like anger and fear, as well as global mood states, stress, and various affective responses. Therefore, emotion, or the 'affective' component, is critical to students' online learning, because emotion in emotion regulation refers to students' attempts to redirect the natural flow of their emotions in the difficult situation they confronted.

Online learning in higher education

Online learning refers to the practice of learning through the internet. It is the most recent development in distance education, which began in the mid-1990s with the broad adoption of the internet and the World Wide Web (Kentnor, 2015). The majority of online learning takes place through a learning management system (LMS), which is a software application used to administer, and deliver educational courses at a college or university (Ellis, Ryann, 2009). Its functions include distributing and maintaining various types of information, such as video, courses, and papers.

Well-being: A determination of the quality of life

According to Seligman (2011), well-being refers to positive feelings, being interested in an activity, having good connections with other people, finding significance in one's life, and a sense of progress in the pursuit of one's goals. In addition, Crisp (2017) claimed that well-being, often known as wellness, prudential value, or quality of life, refers to what is intrinsically significant to a person.

Research method

Research design

This study used a case study from the qualitative research paradigm to explore brother-undergraduate students' emotional intelligence, which was thought to be a dynamic process. By incorporating a small number of participants in the case study technique, the researchers were able to dig deeper into the data within a specific setting (Ebneyamini & Sadeghi Moghadam, 2018). The researchers decided on a case study technique after examining contextual factors that were directly related to the study's focus (Yazan, 2015), namely the undergraduate students' self-regulation of emotions in coping with online learning challenges.

Data collection procedure

In gathering data, the interviews were transcribed by preparing some open-ended questions about the challenges in online learning and factors that support the learning process to pursue well-being. The interview results were arranged in the form of extracts that presented the challenges and factors which facilitated the undergraduate students' success in online learning. The multiple readings on the transcripts were done to obtain a full understanding/comprehension. Ideas were thematically categorized.

Participants

The participants of this study were four catholic religious brothers who are studying education in two different private universities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Two among the participants were first-year and the other two were fourth-year. These differences aimed to identify the different levels of emotion regulation in both home and school context.

Data collection methods

The semi-structured interview was utilized in this study because it is best suited for small groups and is used to investigate unique scenarios that give greater insight into perceptions and opinions (Laforest, 2009). The fundamental goal of a semi-structured interview is to challenge preconceived notions about a topic or to expose fresh information about it (Gavora, 2006). A sample of interview questions is provided in the table below.

Table 1. Samples of Interview Questions

No.	Aim	Contexts	Interview Points	Questions
1.	To discover some ways of coping with negative emotions	Home context	Communal activities	1) What are the common activities in the community that help you cope with your negative emotions in online learning?
			Individual activities	2) What are the individual activities you did/do to cope with your negative emotion in online learning?
			Spiritual guidance	3) How do you find spiritual guidance, in terms of managing your negative emotion? Please indicate, in what sense it helps?
2.	To identify the support-system of online learning goals	School context	Other supporting aspects	4) Besides the communal and individual activities in the community, what more factors do you find facilitate your online learning challenges?
			The schools' support system	5) What factors (internal and external) in the university do you find facilitate to cope with the online learning challenges?

Data analysis procedures

The data gathered during the interview was transcribed. The researchers used open code to analyze the data. Furthermore, the interview transcript was divided into a series of relevant components in order to identify specific associated categories related to the Piaget

brothers' well-being while learning online. The categories were reorganized and re-examined in order to make meaningful connections with the conceptual framework used in this study.

Results and discussions

Results

The emotion regulation of four brother-undergraduate students in facing online learning challenges has been established as a result of the recurrence of the patterns. These patterns are divided into two categories: ways to cope with the negative emotions and the support-system of both community and the school where they live and study.

Ways to cope with the negative emotions

Communal activities

Participant number 1 stated that as a first-year student, he feels worried because the lessons were not delivered well and often times he got lost of focus. But, joining the community activities and apostolic work, he was able to manage his negative emotions that motivated him to re-focus.

"I experienced that playing sport, pedaling a bike r, and singing together, enabled me to reduce my anxieties and refresh my positive feelings. Besides, my presence in the apostolate areas was really helped me overcoming my negative emotions."

Participant number 2 expressed that as a first-year student, the biggest challenge for him in the online learning is the ability to understand the message delivered, especially in English. His skill in using technological tools is also still limited. But the community activities and the help of his co-brothers enabled him enjoying learning.

"For me, the formation that was given by my master, community encouragements and support, enabled me to balance my emotion regarding the online learning demands. Besides, there are some activities that help me release my tensions, namely helping hand of my co-brothers, movie viewing, community prayer, and house cleaning."

Participant number 3 acknowledged that as a fourth-year student, who prepared his teaching practicum and thesis proposal, he experienced

some degree of negative emotions. But, the various activities prepared by the community, helped him to cope with those negative emotions.

“Praying, sharing Gospel, watching movies and working together helped me managed my negative emotions.”

Participant number 4 said that as a fourth-year student who prepared his final task, has a difficulty with the time duration, limited interaction, limited internet connection and the responsibility in the community has no connection to the school demands. However, participating in the community activities, his negative emotional burnouts were released.

“The activities prepared by the community that help me managed my negative emotions are community recreation, sports, prayers, and community recollection and spiritual retreats.”

Personal activities

Participant number 1 (first year) argued that the personal activities are more helpful for him to overcome his negative feelings and saturations, compared to the communal activities since they last longer.

“I enjoy more the personal activities to cope with my negative emotions, such as exploring my talents through compose poems and songs, playing the guitar or the piano. Besides, faithful to my personal prayer, read spiritual books, meditation, and personal walking, are other powerful means to balance my emotions.”

Participant number 2 (first year) expressed that his personal activities are really important because it is more on the private times and specific situations.

“Personal prayer time, afternoon walk-taking or jogging and read spiritual readings are some of my personal activities that help me cope with my negative emotions.”

Participant number 3 (fourth year) said that his feelings of preoccupying by many tasks affected him in the online learning achievements. But, these negative feelings were overcome when he was doing some personal activities.

"The personal activities that I did/do to cope with my negative emotions to face online learning demands are doing exercises, reading books, faithful to my personal prayers and have enough rest."

Participant number 4 (fourth year) stated that sometimes the conflict between individual schedule and community's timetable creates tensions and led him to feel bad. However, he still values most the personal activities that help him manage well his emotions.

"The personal activities I did to cope with negative emotions were playing the musical instruments, bicycling, personal prayer, play games."

Spiritual guidance

Participant number 1 (first year) realized that spiritual guidance directed by a master is crucial to his faith-deepening and self-actualization.

"The spiritual direction helps me to clarify my doubts and deepened my faith in God which leads to a proper self-actualization. Through this activity I am helped to be more opened."

Participant number 2 (first year) stated that oftentimes he abandoned his personal projects and commitments; and therefore, spiritual guidance is a way of reminder to be refocused on the priorities.

"Spiritual guidance for me is really important as a reminder to be faithful to my personal schedules and projects."

Participant number 3 (fourth year) valued spiritual guidance as a way to cope with his negative emotions and weaknesses under the light of God's Words.

"I got strength by the words of God through the sharing of my brothers in the community. Besides, having individual conference with my formator helped me to express my emotions in a good way."

Participant number 4 (fourth year) expressed that spiritual guidance is crucial to be guided to see things clearly with the help of the master, without any prejudices and blaming.

"The spiritual guidance is necessary that helps me to see the situation objectively that leads me to the releasing of tension and negative emotions."

Factors that support the online learning challenges

Besides the community and personal activities, there are some supporting factors that are being considered:

Participant number 1 (first year) perceived both community and schools as ecologies of learning support in various aspects that facilitated his self-growth and online learning success.

“Community has provided the learning tools and fraternal love. While from the school’s context, group discussions, creativity from the lecturers, quota gratis, et., helped me to achieve the online learning goals.”

Participant number 2 (first year) believed that the community trust and the collaborative learning system are two different factors that facilitated his online learning achievements.

“The community trust is a powerful support in my online learning development, such as discipline, advices, fraternal love, help me feel secure and calm down my negative perceptions to face the online learning challenges well. While from the school’s system, the support from my classmates helped me cope with the difficulties in using technological tools.”

Participant number 3 (fourth year) valued highly the community support and the Learning management system as intertwined factors that facilitated his online learning success.

“In the community, there is a trust given to serve in cooking, do marketing. While from the school, the group discussion, google meet, quizzes, reflections, provided quota and LMS, etc., facilitated me to cope with my online learning challenges.”

Participant number 4 (fourth year) believed that both community and school context helped him in terms of learning flexibility and learning strategies.

“Other factors in the community that I found facilitated to cope with my online challenges are: the changeable environment, the accommodation of individual differences, an atmosphere of brotherly support and trust. While from the school, the peer supports have a

positive influence, the LMS is helpful and the lectures were approachable.”

Discussions

The significance of community life in brothers' emotion regulation

The researchers found that joining the community's social, spiritual-physical activities is helpful to maintain the balance in the religious brothers' emotion to face the online learning demands. The value of religious brothers' communal activities, such as apostolate, community bonding, build relationship with other people in the society or in campus were grounded on the idea of self-giving to others (Asiain, 2018:38). Therefore, it is certain that the community's training aids the religious brothers in balancing their emotions and confronting the problems of online learning in a peaceful manner.

Second, the individual activities also helped the religious brothers manage their negative emotions during online learning situation. Precisely, exploring their talents through composing poems and songs, playing musical instruments, faithful to personal prayer and spiritual reading, meditation, and personal walking, play games, rest, etc., help them release their negative emotions to attain well-being. All of these are very important for self-transformation, especially prayer life. Anderson and Nunnelley (2016) found that regular private prayer is linked to significant improvements in depression, optimism, coping, and other mental health disorders including anxiety. Therefore, to overcome negative emotions, private prayer is crucial, since “prayer is a dialogue of love” (Asiain, 2018: 56).

Finally, spiritual direction (one-to-one relationship with spiritual director) and sharing problem to a close friend help the religious brothers release their tensions. This kind of dialogue is categorized as authentic listening which leads to a deep discernment to make some proper decisions since authentic listening involves an attitude of humility (Gonzalez, 2019).

The significance of both community and school system

The study' findings revealed several community and university supports which the religious brothers received during their online learning process. On one hand, the community brotherly support and

acceptance, accommodating the differences in community, the value of mutual trust are emphasized. All these virtues are drawn from the call to live in fraternal love which is defined as a welcoming, responsible, benevolent, caring, and respectful attitude toward all people; it's a love that's not exclusive and welcomes everyone (Arumi, 2015:153).

On the other hand, the school in which the brothers are studying provided them the Learning Management System (LMS) and quota internet to facilitate their online learning activities. In addition, the atmosphere of peer learning and interesting lessons are significant support system in which the brother-undergraduate students received from their respective university in which they belonged. Without those basic equipments, the online learning process will not be possible.

Conclusion

This research was conducted to answer the question "how do the religious brothers manage their emotions to cope with the online learning challenges; and what factors did they find facilitative the learning process? The findings revealed that community context as an ecological perspective provided security, trust and interesting activities that help its members cope with their negative emotions to pursue well-being in online learning. Besides, the school context played an important role to facilitate the learning outcomes, through different supports and accommodations. The pedagogical implications of this study grounded in the awareness of teachers, instructors, community leaders, students, and researchers to give more attention to the importance of emotion regulation in academic development. As regards, teachers and lecturers are expected to emphasize the importance of designing and implementing teaching processes that provide students with effective strategy on how to regulate one's emotion to meet the online learning challenges. Then, it can be a tool that opens a new horizon for the students to regulate their emotions in order to achieve well-being in online learning. Finally, this study could be a reference for future researchers to develop more empirical studies concerning the importance of self-regulation of emotion to attain well-being in online learning demands.

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