

Managerial Strategies of Institution toward Student's Emotional Dynamic during COVID-19: A Preliminary Finding from Thematic Content Analysis Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many changes in the learning process on campus to be virtual based. One consequence of the situation has a significant influence on emotional patterns and psychological conditions of students becoming unstable. This study was conducted to explore the emotional dynamics that occur in students and see how strategies and effective management carried out by the campus to deal with the condition of these students. The thematic content analysis method was used in this study, involving a sample of 40 students and 5 staff and lecturers on campus through open surveys and semi-structured interviews. The results showed that the majority of respondents experienced various negative emotions during this pandemic and made their learning processes not optimal. The strategic steps taken by the campus include (1) routinely providing assistance through seminars and outreach to strengthen the psychological condition of students; (2) not many giving burdensome activities and tasks, as well (3) always communicating with students' parents at home in controlling the learning process during a pandemic. These results provide preliminary information about the importance of psychological interventions and other reinforcement activities for students which will be explained further in this paper

Keywords

COVID-19, Institutional Management, Managerial Strategies, Student's Emotional Dynamic, Thematic Content Analysis

Introduction

The world community is troubled by the outbreak of a pandemic known as COVID-19. Various efforts to prevent the transmission and spread of COVID-19 are carried out in order to withstand the surge of positive patients, for there has not any medicine or vaccine been found until now. Currently, the number of patients with COVID-19 continues to increase. The current global effort to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus is to provide an appeal for the community to conduct social distancing or self-quarantine designed to reduce interactions between individuals (Stier et al., 2020). The effectiveness of this program depends on individual compliance and how the community maintains cleanliness (Oosterhoff & Palmer, 2020).

However, social distancing itself can have various impacts on several aspects of people's lives, one of which is psychological impact (Griffiths, 2020). Various psychological reactions arise in the community, including anxiety, fear,

panic, anger, and depression (Meng et al., 2020). In fact, many studies have mentioned how psychological conditions affect the body's immunity. Negative feelings such as anxiety, fear, and depression can reduce a person's immune system (Kim & Su, 2020). Immunity is an important factor in protecting the body and eliminating viruses (Shi et al., 2020).

Besides the calls for physical distancing, the government also orders to close public places that may invite crowds, such as airports, tourist attractions, and malls. In the field of education, many countries make an appeal not to carry out learning activities in schools or colleges for a while. UNESCO estimates that as many as 107 countries have given orders for school closures regarding the COVID-19 pandemic (Viner et al., 2020). More than 370 million participants temporarily do not attend school activities carried out in schools due to the increasingly massive spread of the virus that can be transmitted through droplets and various physical contacts. Schools and colleges have eventually implemented

distance learning through online media (Dingel & Neiman, 2020).

Distance learning provides a variety of impacts, including learning materials that are still delivered to students, indirectly continue to interact between students with one another or lecturers with students (Markova, Glazkova, & Zaborova, 2017). E-learning can improve students' ability to analyze, synthesize and build their critical thinking skills on problems and is very useful in preparing students to apply theory in the practice field when sessions or opportunities for practice come (Lee, Song, & Hong, 2019). The process of adaptation to the new learning model can in turn become a new problem for students' lives and of course cause various psychological impacts (Hodges et al., 2020). About 24.9% of students in China experience anxiety due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is due to economic stressors and academic delays that are positively related to the level of anxiety symptoms of Chinese students during the pandemic (Cao et al., 2020). Universities have an important role in supporting students and accommodating their health, education, and safety needs. During the pandemic, actions taken by the university significantly affected the mental health and well-being of the students (Zhai & Du, 2020). It can cause acute stress among some students due to lack of time for adjustment (Meng et al., 2020).

Emotion becomes a characteristic related to students' involvement in the E-learning model (Regan, 2003). Based on previous studies, it is found that negative emotions have potential to arise during E-learning activities as a result of students' lack of preparation for the system, therefore teachers play an important role in managing the students' negative emotions. It is because negative emotions experienced by students can negatively affect both the affective and behavioural dimensions of the students' involvement in learning (Errico & Cerniglia, 2016). This also affirms that emotion is an important characteristic in influencing students to adjust to the E-learning model (Fatahi, 2019). Emotion has an important role in life, such as giving signals to others as a form of information (Grooz & Muaoz, 2019), being an important role in decision making (Raver, 2004), and it has also been found that emotions are strongly correlated with physical health (Smith & Weish, 2019).

The purpose of this study is to explore the emotional conditions felt directly by students during online learning process. The researcher assumes that the excessive and uncontrolled online learning process will have negative impacts on the students' emotional stability. In addition, this study is strengthened by the perspective of stake holders, which in this case is how the campus provides anticipatory steps, or which effective managerial strategies are used to anticipate the conditions experienced by the students.

Methods

This study uses qualitative approach with thematic analysis method, in which the analysis focuses on identifying themes and behaviors (Amrullah et al., 2018; Tae et al., 2019). Thematic analysis is one way of analyzing data in order to identify patterns or find themes through the data that has been collected by the researcher. This method is very effective when a study is to be explored in detail using qualitative data in which it must find the relation of patterns in a phenomenon and explain the extent to which a phenomenon occurs through the perspective of the researcher.

The data is collected by distributing open questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires are distributed through Google Forms consisting of four questions to students who are studying at a faculty of psychology in Bandung. The data is collected by using purposive sampling technique, in which the sampling is adjusted to the characteristics and needs of the study. Open questionnaires aim to obtain which kind of emotions are felt by the students during the online learning process. The interviews are conducted on five faculty staff consisting of one head of study program, three lecturers, and one laboratory assistant. The types of questions and interview guidelines are based on the data collection model by Ramdani, Prahastuti, & Prakoso (2019). The questionnaire contains questions about emotions and effectiveness felt by the students during online lectures, while the interview contains questions about how the lecturers see psychological and emotional conditions during online lectures and how the institution organizes and optimizes online lectures.

Furthermore, the raw data in the form of the description of the open questionnaire and the results of the interview transcript are collected and put in order. The researcher reads all the data results by observing and giving meaning to each data. The researcher needs to understand the patterns or ideas from the data obtained to understand the contents of the data. The researcher validates to ascertain whether the results of the categorization obtained can be justified or not by asking expert's judgment outside the researcher whose task is to provide an objective assessment of the results of the researcher's categorization.

Results

The results of the preliminary study show that the total respondents involved are 40 student respondents (28 female and 12 male) and 5 faculty staff (4 female and 1 male). All respondents receive an ethical statement indicating that they are willing to follow the research process. Furthermore, the researcher describes the types of emotions felt by the students during the virtual learning process (see figure 1).

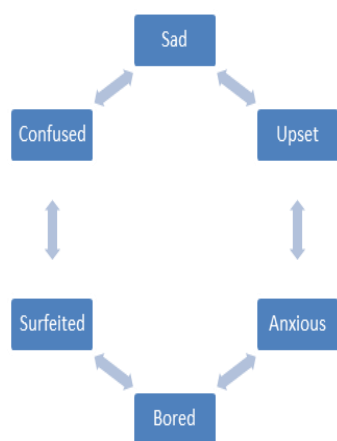


Figure 1. Variation in Students' Emotions

Based on Figure 1, it can be explained that the variations in emotions that occur in the students during the online lecture process are negative. Almost all of the students convey their negative emotional situation. Most of them feel emotions that are manifested in the form of sadness, upset, anxiety, boredom, surfeit, and confusion. Descriptively, nearly 30 respondents felt negative emotions during online learning and the remaining 10 felt normal but some felt fine. However, it shows a very large number of

negative emotions that are felt. Thus, these results indicate that it is negative emotions that occur in most study respondents. Next, the researcher presents the results of the categorization of the interview activities conducted on the faculty staff respondents (see table 1).

Table 1. Categorization of the Faculty's Managerial Strategy

Guideline	Symbol	Description
1.) What is your perspective on seeing the current pandemic?	P.1	Impacts the world of education
	P.2	Impacts physically and psychologically, requires readiness and adaptation
	P.3	Impacts the whole world and is systematic
	P.4	Impacts physical and psychological health and demands adaptation
	P.5	Activities are limited due to health protocols
2.) How is the impact on campus learning?	I.1	Triggers the development of campus learning methods
	I.2	The learning process is conducted online
	I.3	Lecturers are not ready for online learning
	I.4	Impacts all educational levels and demands adaptation to technology
	I.5	Limitation of academic services and postponement of practicum
3.) How do you see students' psychological condition during this pandemic?	E.1	Bored, stressed, and losing motivation
	E.2	Anxious due to un-readiness
	E.3	Surfeited and lonely
	E.4	Worry, anxiety and depression
	E.5	Feeling heavy due to many assignments
4.) What are the efforts made by the campus to deal with these conditions?	S.1	Providing internet data packages, sharing sessions, and psychological service units
	S.2	Minimizing assignments and agreeing on learning methods with students
	S.3	Reducing assignments and standardizing the methods
	S.4	Information and provision of psychological service units
	S.5	Providing internet data packages, support, and

		learning from various media
	F.1	Adapting to the condition
	F.2	and following government direction
	F.3	Following government
	F.4	direction for the learning
5.) How will this learning process be like in the future?	F.5	process and performing health protocols
		Providing comfort and standardized learning methods
		Following government decision
		Minimizing assignments and maximizing media use

Note. P (Perspective), I (Impact), E (Emotion), S (Strategies), & F (Future).

Based on the results of the categorization in table 1, it is found that question number 3 produces a categorization that supports the results in Figure 1. The emotional situations felt by the students are linear with what the faculty staff sees during the online learning process. It means that the two results agree that the majority of the students feel more negative emotions than positive emotions. Meanwhile, in questions number 4 and 5 (see table 1), the results of the categorization are then summarized into three major strategies which include routine assistance, reduction of the workload, and intensive communication with parents.

Discussions

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The results of this study indicate that the condition of online learning has a very big impact on psychological changes and situations of the students who experience it. The study explains that the change in learning, which is originally done directly before turning into virtual learning, has become stimulus that determines the psychological condition of the respondents to be unstable. These results are in line with several previous studies which show that a bad condition that occurs suddenly allows a person to experience emotional instability and psychological conditions that worsen if not anticipated from the start (Ramadhana, 2020; Restauri & Sheridan, 2020).

The researcher assumes that the emotional instability felt by the students is caused by several things that are directly related to COVID-19. First, there is anxiety that arises as individuals with the occurrence of this kind of pandemic. This has become worries for the individuals to stay healthy and avoid the virus. Second, a significant and sudden change in the lives of the individuals is certainly giving shock, especially for those who are psychologically and physically unprepared to face the pandemic condition. Specifically, the next factor is the heavy burden that is received by the respondents due to great and continuous pressures,

especially related to lecture assignments that are considered too heavy and not in accordance with the condition the students feel at home. Theoretically, the factors described are supported by previous studies which also explain that the occurrence of COVID-19 triggers the emergence of other stress-causing factors (Cao et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020; Odriozola-González et al., 2020; Ullah & Amin, 2020).

The results of the semi-structured interview (see table 1) support previous studies which also explain the effects of COVID on learning process (Warsihna et al., 2020). The sudden change makes all parties must be adaptive in responding and behaving in accordance with their abilities. In this preliminary research, the faculty is responsively open and attentive to the many students who experience negative emotions during the online lecture process. Various methods are used to provide convenience and comfort for all parties who feel the impact of COVID and online learning, one of which is for the students. Activities that are routinely carried out by the campus to respond to psychological conditions felt by the students include (1) providing services and routine assistance in student activities; (2) reducing the burdens of lectures which are tailored to the ability of the students themselves; and (3) communicating routinely and interactively with the parents of the students.

Factually, some of the activities undertaken by the campus to respond to the psychological condition of these students are also strengthened by previous studies that mention the importance of providing psychological intervention for students (Prakoso et al., 2020). Rapid anticipation by a university in various ways will maintain the mental health of all parties to remain optimal (Papadopoulou et al., 2020). In addition, good social support through counseling programs and planned seminars will help strengthen the psychological condition of students in dealing with COVID-19 (Kaparounaki et al., 2020; Viswanathan et al., 2020). Moreover, by not burdening students with burdensome tasks and demands, campus will be able to reduce the proportion of stress that occurs during the online lecture process. Other studies also reinforce that the role of parents as a support system for their children will help in controlling the emotional

regulation of the students to be more entertained and happier because there are figures of parents who accompany and provide great support for the optimization of online lectures (Ramadhana, 2020).

Conclusion

Therefore, the results in this preliminary study provide important information for education providers that there is emotional instability which tends to lead students to negative emotional conditions due to the weight of the burden faced and anxiety about COVID-19. In addition, the faculty has preventively provided socialization and assistance, and has decreased lecture burden to the respondents so that it is expected to be able to maintain the emotional stability of the respondents. Future studies are expected to be conducted with quantitative approach to ascertain what psychological variables are disturbed and can be strength for students to face this virtual lecture. The researcher also assumes that the approach is not only carried out by the campus itself, but also supported by the role of parents as controlling figures and significant persons for the students during the learning process at home.

Acknowledgement

This preliminary study is a first step undertaken as a form of research collaboration between the University of Langlangbuana Bandung and the Faculty of Psychology of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Thank you to all those who have contributed to this research.

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