Conference Paper

Academic Resilience and Subjective Well-Being amongst College Students using Online Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) that is currently spreading in Indonesia has prompted the government to implement various prevention efforts to limit its spread. One of the sectors affected by this pandemic is the education sector, owing to the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan) of the Republic of Indonesia instruction to higher education institutions to implement the Study from Home (SFH) policy. This causes abrupt changes and considerable pressures on college students both internally and externally, which might trigger negative emotions, including stress in undergoing Study from Home (SFH). This study aims to explore the correlation between academic resilience and the subjective well-being of college students experiencing online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study uses a literature review to collect data, focusing on theoretical studies, and the references used are inseparable from scientific literature. The results show that resilience is crucial in online learning to maintain and improve the students’ subjective well-being. Students with a high level of resilience tend to have a high level of subjective well-being as well, meaning that they are able to regulate their emotions better in addition to controlling internal pressures caused by online learning.

Keywords: Academic resilience, subjective well-being, online learning, COVID-19

1. Introduction

The world is currently facing COVID-19 pandemic. This virus is widely-spread across various countries, one of which is Indonesia. The government has introduced a number of initiatives to limit the spread since the beginning of the pandemic. The citizens are encouraged to implement social and physical distancing, which is to keep a safe space between individuals and to reduce unnecessary activities outside the home (Widyaningrum, Putri, & Wilopo, 2020). The education sector is also affected by this pandemic, pursuant to the Circular Letter of the Directorate of Higher Education of the
Ministry of Education and Culture Number 1 of 2020 on Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Prevention in Higher Institutions. The letter mandates the higher institution to alter the learning activities into online learning system, or distance learning, and recommends the student to study from home.

Since this policy was promulgated, all levels of education in Indonesia, especially universities, started to implement distance or online learning so that learning activities can be conducted as per usual. According to (Purwanto et al., 2020), this paradigm is considered new, meaning that not all students are accustomed to online learning activities. Consequently, the students face a number of challenges and difficulties, especially regarding adaptation to the new learning method that is less effective than that of face-to-face learning. A study by Ph, Mubin, & Basthomi (2020) showed that 55.8% of college students were stressed during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the online learning process related to the competitive academic pressure overwhelmed them with more lesson contents and less leisure time. Albeit those challenges and difficulties in online learning, the students are still obliged to follow the government's policy. In other words, they must adapt and survive in this condition, which might trigger an increase in negative emotions, such as stress that further causes a low level of subjective well-being on students.

An individual's subjective well-being is one's perception of past events and their experiences, consisting of cognitive and affection evaluations towards life and the representation of well-being (Karni, 2018). Diener et al. (as cited in Putri & Suprapti, 2014) define subjective well-being as the perspectives or feelings of someone who feels satisfaction in their lives, with positive affect and no negative affect. In other words, an individual has a high level of subjective well-being when they have a more positive affect and satisfaction in their lives compared to their negative affect. Furthermore, Fitriana (2018) explained that subjective well-being is a measurement of how well one's condition is at a particular time. Subjective well-being can also be viewed as a theory that comprises one's morale, satisfaction in life, satisfaction in a particular aspect, and differences between positive and negative affect.

Resilience is one of the quintessential factors in achieving subjective well-being (Erniati & Sari, 2018). Resilience per se is an individual's process in surviving in the face of adversity or other conditions that cause the individual to feel depressed, miserable, or traumatized. Reivich and Shatte (as cited in Saputra, 2020) believe that resilience is the capacity of giving healthy and productive responses in facing challenging events to control the pressure. It can be defined as a concept that describes an individual's capabilities in overcoming and adapting to difficult times, meaning that resilience might
determine one's success and failure in life (Jackson & Watkin, 2004, as cited in Mufidah, 2017). For students, academic resilience is of paramount importance. According to Wang and Gordon (as cited in Utami, 2020), learners with academic resilience can change a challenging environment into a source of motivation by maintaining hopes, orienting themselves with goals, and having problem-solving skills. Ergo, based on various reviews explained above, students who have the capacity to become resilient might also have high subjective well-being in facing online learning challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, research from Roellyana and Listiyandini (as cited in Sari, Aryansah, & Sari, 2020) explains that students with high resilience feel more optimistic, and they have beliefs that things will be better.

Based on the explanations above, the researchers intend to conduct a literature review entitled “Academic Resilience and Subjective Well-Being on College Students in Online Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic”.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Academic Resilience

Resilience is the ability to adapt and overcome difficult times at hand (Amelasasih, Aditama, & Wijaya, 2019). Resilience is the ability to adapt to risks, difficulties, and some monumental adverse events constructively and positively (Dunn, Uswatte & Elliot, 2009 as cited in Compton & Hoffman, 2013). Meanwhile, according to Hendriani (2018), resilience is an individual’s ability to cope with stress and learn from negative emotional experiences. In the context of higher education, students are expected to be resilient in facing academic challenges, which are commonly called academic resilience (Gizir as cited in Sari & Indrawati, 2017).

Academic resilience is the ability of a student to get on its feet, survive, or adapt to the pressure and challenging conditions in the academic field (Sari & Indrawati, 2017). Martin and Marsh (as cited in Sari & Indrawati, 2017) explain that students who carry out academic resilience are students who can face four conditions, namely setbacks, challenges, adversity, and pressure in the academic context. Based on this explanation, academic resilience is very useful in facing the challenges of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2.2. Subjective well-being

A state of well-being is what most people, including students, want, especially during the pandemic, where students are required to study online. According to Karni (2018) states that subjective well-being is a person’s perception of experiences or events that have occurred in his/her life, which consists of cognitive evaluation and affect for life and presenting them in psychological well-being. Schwartz & Strack (as cited in Mirakustia, 2013) defines subjective well-based cognitive and affective aspects. Meanwhile, Diener (as cited in Ningtyas, Tentama, & Situmorang, 2018) defines subjective well-being as an individual’s assessment of their life with cognitive aspects (including life satisfaction) as well as positive emotional aspects (pleasant feelings) and negative emotional aspects (unpleasant feelings). Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that subjective well-being depends on an individual's feelings of pleasure and satisfaction, doing positive social interactions, which is the result of evaluating life experiences both cognitive and affective.

According to Diener (as cited in Akhyar et al., 2019), a person with a high level of subjective well-being will feel satisfied with their life and feel happy, interested, enthusiastic, and active. They will very rarely feel negative emotions, such as sadness or anger. William C. Compton (as cited in Karni, 2018) identifies that the subjective well-being index in individuals consists of two main variables, namely happiness and life satisfaction.

Miyers, Diener et al. (as cited in Mirakustia, 2013) stated that several factors impact subjective well-being, namely (1) self-esteem, (2) self-control over experiences, (3) openness; sociable individuals can build positive relationships with others as well as get reciprocity from others so that they get high well-being, (4) optimism; in hopes that good things will occur, (5) healthy social relationships; consisting of social support and emotional intimacy that can increase self-esteem, successful coping with stress, better health, and minimal psychological problems, (6) emotional intimacy, (7) social connection and support; in which social support can improve subjective well-being. This finding is supported by research from Goodwin and Plaza (as cited in Mirakustia, 2013) that social relationships are perceived as life satisfaction, (8) Understanding the meaning and purpose in life.
2.3. Study from Home (SFH)

Since the World Health Organization (WHO) (“WHO Director-General’s Opening Remarks at the Media Briefing on COVID-19,” 2020) affirmed that there had been cases of COVID-19, this outburst has become an issue for all countries in the world. WHO states that the COVID-19 pandemic is not just a health problem, but the pandemic can be a multi-sectoral problem. One of the sectors that were severely disrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic was education.

In education, the government has encouraged studying to be done from home to prevent transmission of the virus (“SE Mendikbud,” 2020). Study from Home (SFH) is meant to be learning that is done online and at home. According to Putranti (2013), online learning is a form of distance learning using internet facilities to communicate online.

According to Setiawan (2020), the advantages of online learning include: being able to expand access to education for the general public and business because a flexible scheduling structure can reduce the impact of many time and place constraints, handing over some activities outside the location reduces institutional capacity constraints arising from the need for infrastructure buildings, and there is the potential to increase access to more flare-ups from diverse geographic, social, cultural, economic and experiential backgrounds. However, on the other hand, distance learning also has its disadvantages, including barriers to effective learning such as household distractions and unreliable technology, inadequate interaction between students and teachers, and the need for more experience. On account of these shortcomings, students can experience stress (Novitasari, Kurniawan, & Kanita, 2020).

3. Method

3.1. Type of Research

This study uses a library research method. The literature study is related to theoretical studies and the references used are inseparable from scientific literature (Sugiyono, 2012). Therefore, in conducting a literature study, one must determine the appropriate literature search criteria.
3.2. Research Stages

Research using the literature study method begins by determining the topic and scope that will be the focus of the research. The author must also be able to describe the urgency of the research topic that he wants to study. Furthermore, the writer can determine the formulation of the problem and the goals to be achieved.

The second stage is to conduct a literature search process using keywords that are relevant to the research topic. After the literature is collected, a literature selection process is then carried out to facilitate the analysis process.

The third stage is writing. The writing process begins with combining points of information from various literatures into one unified whole. After that, the next step is to find new evidence-based points that can become the findings of the analysis. The author is also required to include various literature sources that have been used in the reference list. The final step is to write an abstract and determine keywords.

3.3. Literature Collection Method and Selection Criteria

The search was conducted using the help of software "Harzing’s Publish and Perish" on Google Scholar. The keywords used were academic AND student resilience, subjective well-being, and a combination of academic resilience and subjective well-being.

The criteria established for conducting literature selection are articles written scientifically and relevant to the research topic, articles can be accessed in full, and articles are prioritized by the latest. The literature that has been obtained and meets the selection criteria is 31 Google Scholar.

4. Results and Discussion

The spread of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19), which occurs in Indonesia, makes the Government make various efforts to prevent the spread of the virus. One of the examples is in the sector of education; the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud) instructs universities to carry out Study from Home (SFH) by issuing a circular regarding preventing the spread of the COVID 19 in universities. Study from Home (SFH) is conducted in the form of online learning as an alternative to the efforts made by universities in carrying out Government orders in preventing the spread of COVID-19.
According to Putranti (2013), online learning is long-distance learning by using internet facilities so that students and educators can communicate with each other online. In the online learning process, there are various learning media used, such as WhatsApp group, Google Classroom, Telegram, Zoom, Google Meet, Youtube Streaming, and others. Based on the results of research conducted by Widiyono (2020) on 186 respondents of PGSD UNISNU students, 94.62% of students used WhatsApp group media, 3.23% of students used Telegram group, 1.61% of students used Google Classroom applications and 0.54% of the rest used other applications. The online learning method that has been conducted due to the COVID-19 pandemic has some advantages and disadvantages.

The change of learning method previously conducted directly and face-to-face into online learning due to the COVID-19 makes students need to adapt themselves. Furthermore, the uncertainty of when the COVID-19 will end makes students experience pressure from their campus which requires them to remain productive. The sudden changes and pressure encountered by students both internally and externally can trigger negative emotions, including stress. In addition, the learning process with online media is more tiring and dull due to the decline of direct interaction both with lecturers and with friends, which leads to frustration and stress (Muslim, 2020). Sari (2020) revealed that based on 70 first-year student respondents of the Nursing Study Program at Stikes Karya Husada Kediri, there were 23 students (32.86%) who experienced mild stress, 27 students with a presentation of 38.57% who experienced a moderate level of stress, and as many as 20 students (28.57%) who experienced severe stress. The same results can also be found in the study conducted by (Harahap, Harahap, Universitas Medan Area, Indonesia, Harahap, & SMA Negeri 1 Sidamanik, 2020) which shows that out of 300 students, there were 39 UINSU students with a presentation of 13% experienced high category stress, 225 students (75%) had moderate academic stress levels, and 36 students (12%) experienced stress in the low category. These previous studies indicate that students can experience mild, moderate, and severe stress. The negative emotions, including stress, which arises among the students, can lead to low Subjective Well-being (Kusumaningrum, 2020).

Diener (as cited in Ningtyas, Tentama, & Situmorang, 2018) defined subjective well-being as an individual’s assessment of their life with cognitive aspects (including life satisfaction), as well as positive emotional aspects (pleasant feelings) and negative emotional aspects (unpleasant feelings). Meanwhile, according to Coon & Mitterer (2006), subjective well-being is a general life satisfaction which consists of a lot of positive emotions and relatively few negative emotions experienced by an individual. Based on research conducted by Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith (1999), the components of subjective
well-being include positive emotions, low or no negative emotions, and life satisfaction. Diener (as cited in Akhyar et al., 2019) mentioned that a person with a high level of subjective well-being would feel satisfaction in life and has positive emotions such as happiness, attentiveness, interest, passion, enthusiasm, activeness and rarely feel negative emotions such as sadness or anger, including stress. Therefore, subjective well-being is an indicator of students’ mental health. If students have a high level of subjective well-being, they will be active, enthusiastic, and have other positive emotions in performing online learning. Besides, they can also minimize negative emotions, including stress.

According to Diener (as cited in Erniati & Sari, 2018), one of the elements in achieving subjective well-being is resilience. Resilience is the ability to constructively and positively adapt to risks, difficulties, and several monumental adverse events (Dunn, Uswatte & Elliot, 2009 as cited in Compton & Hoffman, 2013). Meanwhile, Hendriani (2018) argued that resilience is an individual’s ability to do stress coping and bounce back from negative emotional experiences. Furthermore, (Yıldırım & Tanrıverdi, 2020) stated that resilience is an essential determinant of life satisfaction. Someone who demonstrates resilience will be stronger and have a way to improve his/her mindset and knowledge that he/she has in overcoming the problems. Bonanno (2004) also stated that strong individuals have positive characteristics in an optimistic attitude, self-improvement, resilience, have the right coping strategies, and experience little psychological problems, such as depression, stress, PTSD, and so on. Thus, students need to demonstrate resilience during online learning in this pandemic. Resilience that is important for students is academic resilience.

Academic resilience is the ability of a student to rise, survive, or adapt in the face of pressure and challenging conditions in the academic field (Sari & Indrawati, 2017). Academic resilience allows students to face adversity or negative emotions to adapt to online learning during the pandemic of COVID-19, which also leads to improved mental health. Academic resilience can change stressful events into opportunities for growth and allows individuals to obtain personal benefits (Santhosh & James, 2013, as cited in Oyoo, Mwaura, & Kinai, 2018).

Several studies suggest a positive relationship between resilience and subjective well-being in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first comes from research conducted by Kirmani, Sharma, Anas, & Sanam (2015) about the correlation of expectations, resilience, and subjective well-being. This study revealed a significant positive correlation between resilience and subjective well-being on students, with a correlation value (R) of +0.42 and significant <0.01. This finding is also supported by
Amelasasih, Aditama, Wjiaya (2019) on 53 psychology faculty-student respondents at Universitas Muhammadiyah Gresik. This study found a significant positive correlation between academic resilience and Subjective Well-being with a correlation value (R) of 0.73. Besides, another study conducted by Yıldırım & Arslan (2020) also showed a positive correlation between resilience and subjective well-being (r = 0.53, p < 0.001).

All previous studies that have been mentioned above show that in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary to have resilience in maintaining and improving students’ subjective well-being. Students with high resilience will be more capable of regulating emotions, which is the ability to remain calm in stressful conditions, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides, when the students can control the pressure that arises because of online learning, they can become more optimistic, more empathetic, as well as capable of analyzing the conditions that they encounter logically and accurately. Furthermore, self-efficacy can make it easier for students to complete assignments to achieve the expected results that they want, even in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic and reaching out. In addition, students who have good resilience abilities can maintain good physical and mental health conditions even though they are under stress, especially during online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, students can adapt to the learning system in college which has changed from the face-to-face method into online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If the students’ resilience ability is high, the subjective well-being of students is also high. Therefore, students tend to have more positive emotions, lower negative emotions, and high levels of life satisfaction.

According to William C. Compton (as cited in Karni, 2018), the subjective well-being index consists of two main variables: happiness and life satisfaction. To achieve life satisfaction, one of the factors that influence subjective well-being is social support. Yıldırım & Tanrıverdi (2020) mentioned that resilience is closely related to social support and life satisfaction. The results of their research indicate that there is a positive correlation between social support and life satisfaction. This also shows that social support is vital for students to improve resilience in supporting online learning during the pandemic of COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic requires students to do Study from Home (SFH), making them spend most of their time at home. Besides, the reduced intensity of meetings with friends and lecturers also makes social relations and social support to decline. Therefore, to have high resilience abilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, students need to get support in the form of love and support from their family so that their subjective well-being will also improve.
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