

# The Study of College Students Subjective Well-Being Experiencing Online Learning: Examining the Role of Emotional Regulation and Social Support

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## ABSTRACT

This study uses a quantitative approach that aims to examine the role of emotional regulation and social support on the subjective well-being of students experiencing online learning as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research subjects were obtained through purposive sampling and amounted to 271 college students in Indonesia, consisting of 87 men and 184 women. The data collection instruments used in this study were the emotional regulation scale, the social support scale, and the subjective well-being scale of students. The results of the multiple regression analysis test proved that emotional regulation and social support played a significant role ( $p = 0.00$ ) in the subjective well-being of students ( $R = 0.679$ ). The results showed that the higher the emotional regulation and social support contribute to the higher level of student's subjective well-being. In this study, it was found that the emotional regulation giving effective contribution of 28,6% and social support contributing 17,5% to the college students subjective well-being.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected many human lives and massively demanded adjustments, including the education sector. This demand also has an impact on the welfare of individuals involved in the world of education with the emergence of Online Learning policies, including college students. The results of a study by [1] stated that the pandemic had an impact on the academic lives of 97% of college students, which was manifested in student's anxiety related to

delays and academic achievement, as well as on-time graduation.

The results of a preliminary study conducted by researchers showed that the problems experienced by college students experiencing Online Learning were divided into academic and non-academic problems. The academic problems faced include adjusting to the online lecture system, lack of motivation to learn, connection problems, and excessive assignments making it difficult to rest. In addition, college students also have difficulty finding a forum for discussion related to academic difficulties, both

discussions with lecturers and with peers. Meanwhile, the non-academic problems faced are feelings of loneliness due to limited social access. The presence of anxiety, reduced motivation to learn, difficulty resting, limited discussion forums, and feelings of loneliness in students indicate low subjective well-being. These various indications of low subjective well-being indicate that college students' assessments of their subjective well-being and things that can contribute to improving students' subjective well-being are important to study further.

The reason why good subjective well-being is essential for students is because according to [2], subjective well-being can be the reason individuals have good health and a longer life. This is because subjective well-being can affect behavioral health, the immune system, and the human cardiovascular system. However, [3] findings stated that college students actually have lower levels of subjective well-being and life satisfaction than adults in general.

[2] defines subjective well-being as an individual's assessment of their own life, the extent to which individuals evaluate their current life as a good, satisfying, and desirable situation; or conversely, bad, unsatisfying, and undesirable. that indications of the high or low subjective well-being of a person can be seen from the frequency of the individual experiencing feelings of happiness and how often the individual experiences unpleasant emotions. This indicates that individuals need to be accompanied by the ability to manage emotions so that individuals can get more feelings of happiness and can overcome negative emotional stress so that they can live their lives more positively to get higher subjective well-being. The individual's ability to manage these emotions is hereinafter referred to as emotional regulation.

[4] define emotion regulation as the process by which individuals influence the emotions they experience, how they express them, and how those emotions affect their behavior. In this context, they emphasize that emotion regulation includes a variety of strategies that can be applied at various points in the emotional process, both before

emotions arise, when emotions are already present, and after emotions are expressed. Emotion regulation focuses not only on reducing negative emotions, but also on increasing positive emotions. This shows that emotion regulation is an important aspect of mental health and overall well-being. Online Learning, which has been an impact felt since the COVID-19 pandemic until now, has triggered limited social access for students, which then disrupted students' social lives. The findings of a preliminary study on feelings of loneliness and limited discussion forums with peers as a result of limited social access indicate that students basically need attention and support from their social environment. This is in line with the findings of [5] that social support is positively correlated with self-efficacy, sleep quality, and mental health; and negatively correlated with anxiety, stress, depression, and psychological distress.

College students as individuals in early adulthood need to pay attention to their socio-emotional conditions in order to grow into happy individuals. [6] stated that early adulthood individuals in terms of socio-emotions have a need for affection, intimacy, fostering social relationships, developing communication skills, getting married, and building a harmonious family. Therefore, the fulfillment of socio-emotional matters that can support students in being able to meet their developmental needs is important to explore, especially to be able to find out its relationship with students' subjective well-being. A study on subjective well-being in students was previously conducted by [7] who examined the role of wisdom on the subjective well-being of undergraduate students who were in early adulthood and were working on their thesis. A study with a related topic was also conducted by [8] who examined the relationship between emotional regulation and subjective well-being of final year students. Research on the contribution of social support to subjective well-being was previously conducted by [9] who examined social support and subjective well-being in students from out of town.

Several previous studies presented above have similarities and connections with the research conducted by the researcher. However, previous studies did not test the variables of emotional regulation and social support together as predictors of subjective well-being. In addition, based on several studies that were able to be summarized by the researcher, there were differences in research with the topic of subjective well-being studied in this study, both in terms of phenomena in the field, the predictor variables studied, research respondents, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that underlies this study. Based on the explanation of the phenomena discussed above, this study intends to further examine the role of emotional regulation and social support on the subjective well-being of students who experience Online Learning as an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are three hypotheses proposed in this study, namely (1) Emotional regulation and social support together play a role in the subjective well-being of students who experience Online Learning; (2) Emotional Regulation plays a role in the subjective well-being of students who experience Online Learning; and (3) Social support plays a role in the subjective well-being of students who experience Online Learning.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 *Subjective Well-Being*

[10] explains that subjective well-being is a person's perception and affection towards their life experiences. [2] further defines subjective well-being as an individual's assessment of their own life, the extent to which the individual evaluates their current life as a good, satisfying, and desirable situation; or conversely, negative and undesirable. Individuals who have high subjective well-being can be identified through life satisfaction, often feel happy, and feel little negative emotions. On the other hand, individuals

who have low subjective well-being have indications of being dissatisfied with their lives, rarely feel happy, and often experience negative emotions, such as anxiety, anger, and even depression [11]. This means that besides being related to cognitive assessment, subjective well-being is also related to human emotional reactions regarding how to live a positive life [12].

[11] explained that subjective well-being consists of three main components that are interrelated with each other and can be seen through indicators that represent each component. The three main components referred to by [11] are life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. [10]; [12] explained that the factors that contribute to influencing a person's subjective well-being can vary, even including things that are unexpected and sometimes not felt by humans, including subjective satisfaction, income, demographic variables (age, gender, race, occupation, education, religion, marriage and family), behavioral factors (social contact, life events, activities), personality, and biological influences.

### 2.2 *Emotional Regulation*

[14] define emotion regulation as a series of heterogeneous processes that regulate existing emotions, and the process can occur automatically or controlled, consciously or unconsciously, and have an effect on the process of producing emotions. Thompson himself in 1994 previously, had stated that emotion regulation describes an individual's ability to monitor,

evaluate, and modify intensive emotional reactions to achieve a goal by involving intrinsic and extrinsic processes. Emotion regulation involves changes in the dynamics of emotions, from the time of emergence, magnitude, duration, and how the changes balance behavior, experience, or physiological responses. Therefore, emotion regulation can influence, strengthen, or maintain emotions, depending on the individual's goals.

[14] states that there are three aspects of emotional regulation, including being able to regulate emotions well, being able to control emotions consciously, with little effort, and automatically, and being able to overcome stress from the problems faced. The process of emotional regulation is divided into five continuous stages, namely situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation.

### 2.3 Social Support

In general, there are two broad approaches to social support that can be seen in individuals. First, the situation-specific approach where social support is associated as coping with certain stressful events. Second, the developmental approach where social support is seen as a contributor to the development of personality and social aspects of individuals [15].

[16] define social support as support received by those closest to the individual, including family support, friendship support, and support from

significant others around the individual. Family support can be in the form of assistance in finding alternative solutions to problems, making decisions, or emotional support. Support obtained from the circle of friends can be in the form of assistance in daily activities, a place to share stories, or help provide information. Meanwhile, the support given by significant others can be in the form of a feeling of comfort or a feeling of being more appreciated as an individual.

## 3. METHODS

### 3.1 Research Design

This study uses a quantitative method with a survey research design. The data in this study are sourced from primary data obtained directly from responses to several statements answered by university students in Indonesia, both state and private, who experience online learning as research participants. Because this study targets students throughout Indonesia who are doing online learning, data collection is carried out by filling out questionnaires distributed online using Google Form.

### 3.2 Participants

The participants of this study were college students in Indonesia aged 18-25 years who experienced Online Learning. The determination of the age criteria for participants in this study refers to the provisions of the age of early adulthood according to [6]. The participants of this study were 271 Indonesian college students, both state and private universities, obtained through purposive sampling. Participants were mostly dominated by women (67.9%) and Undergraduate (D4 / S1) students (80.8%). Detailed demographic data of the research participants can be seen as follows.

Table 1. Description of Participants

Category	N	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Men	87	32,1
Women	184	67,9
<b>Educational Background</b>		
Diploma (D3)	37	13,7
Undergraduate (D4/S1)	219	80,8
Postgraduate	15	5,5
Total	271	100

### 3.3 Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study were the Student Subjective Well-Being Scale, the Emotional Regulation Scale, and the Social Support Scale. Before being used for research, the three measuring instruments were first tested to ensure that the measuring instruments could consistently and accurately measure the variables referred to in the study. The testing of the measuring instruments was conducted on 50 students in Indonesia outside the research sample.

#### 1. Subjective Well-Being Scale

Subjective well-being in this study was measured using the Subjective Well-being Scale which was adapted from a scale

compiled by [17] which consists of 3 subscales with a composite reliability coefficient of 0.939. The scale is structured based on aspects that facilitate subjective well-being proposed by [10], namely life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. The scale compiled by [17] consists of three subscales, namely the Life Satisfaction Subscale, and the Positive Affect Subscale and Negative Affect Subscale. Assessment of statements on the Life Satisfaction Subscale refers to summated ratings with a score of 1-5. Scores 1 (very dissatisfied), 2 (not satisfied), 3 (so-so), 4 (satisfied), and 5 (very satisfied). Meanwhile, the assessment of item statements on the Positive Affect Subscale and Negative Affect Subscale can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Positive Affect and Negative Affect Subscale Statement Assessment

Answer Options	Item score	
	Negative Affect	Positive Affect
The least	5	1
A little	4	2
Normal	3	3
Pretty much	2	4
Very much	1	5

The Positive Affect Subscale in its presentation is combined with the Negative Affect Subscale so that it has 56 items, while the Life Satisfaction Subscale consists of 26 items. However, after the scale trial was conducted, there were 11 items that fell on the Positive Affect Subscale, 3 items fell on the Negative Affect Subscale, and 2 items fell on the Life Satisfaction Subscale, so that the number of valid items remaining was 42 items on the Positive Affect and Negative Affect Subscales and 24 items for the Life Satisfaction Subscale. The reliability coefficient of the Positive Affect Subscale was 0.920, the

reliability coefficient of the Negative Affect Subscale was 0.972, and the coefficient of the Life Satisfaction Subscale was 0.957. The reliability test of the composite score of the subjective well-being scale of students showed a reliability coefficient of 0.963.

#### 2. Emotional Regulation Scale

The measurement of emotional regulation in this study used the Emotional Regulation Scale modified from the Emotional Regulation Scale compiled by [18] with a reliability coefficient of 0.915. The Emotional Regulation Scale was compiled by

referring to aspects of [14]'s emotional regulation, namely 1) being able to regulate positive and negative emotions well; 2) being able to control emotions consciously, with little effort, and automatically; 3) being able to

overcome stress from problems faced. The score assessment for each answer choice on the Emotional Regulation Scale can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Emotional Regulation Scale Item Statement Assessment

Answer Options	Item score	
	<i>Favorable</i>	<i>Unfavorable</i>
Very suitable	5	1
Suitable	4	2
Neutral	3	3
Not suitable	2	4
Totally not suitable	1	5

The Emotional Regulation Scale originally had 22 items, but after the scale was tested, 5 items were dropped, leaving 17 items with a scale reliability coefficient after the test of 0.925.

### 3. Social Support Scale

The social support variable in this study was measured using the Social Support Scale adapted from the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) compiled by [16] which has been translated and modified in [19] study with a reliability coefficient of 0.858. This scale is based on aspects of social support by [16], namely parental support, friend support, and support from significant others. The assessment of statements on the Social Support Scale uses summated ratings with a score of 1-5. Value 1 (Totally not suitable), 2 (not suitable), 3 (neutral), 4 (suitable), and 5 (very suitable). This scale originally had 12 items, and after being tested, 1 item was dropped, leaving 11 items. The reliability coefficient of this Social Support Scale after being tested was 0.879.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis techniques used in this study are simple and multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis is used to test the first hypothesis, while simple regression is used to test the second and third hypotheses.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Results

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using two types of regression analysis, namely multiple regression, and simple regression. The first hypothesis was tested using the simultaneous F test. In the F test, the results of the multiple regression analysis were obtained which the significance value of the p-value obtained is 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). In addition, the F-count value is 114.800 and the F-table value is 0.051; it is known that the F-count is greater than the F-table ( $114.800 > 0.051$ ). Both results indicate that the regression model can be trusted to predict the role of emotional regulation and social support as predictor variables for subjective well-being as a criterion variable. Thus, the first hypothesis in this study is accepted.

Furthermore, to find out how big the relationship is between the two independent variables together with the dependent variable, it can be seen through the multiple correlation coefficient (R) value which ranges from 0 to 1, where the closer it is to 1, the stronger the relationship that occurs. In the results of this study, the multiple correlation coefficient (R) value obtained was 0.679. This value indicates that there is a strong relationship between emotional regulation and social support with the subjective well-being of students who do online learning.

In addition, the results of the R square value calculation showed 0.461 or 46.1% which is the percentage of effective contribution of emotional regulation and social support to the subjective well-being of

students who experience online learning. This means that there are still 53.9% of other variables that can also play a role in the subjective well-being of students who experience online learning outside of this study.

After knowing that the first hypothesis is accepted, then to answer the second and third hypotheses in this study a simple regression analysis test was conducted. The results of the simple regression analysis of the emotional regulation variable with subjective well-being obtained a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) with a regression coefficient value (B) of 8.633 so that the second hypothesis stating that emotional regulation plays a role in the subjective well-being of students who experience online learning is accepted. In addition, the results of a simple regression analysis of the social support variable with subjective well-being also obtained a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) with a regression coefficient value (B) of 7.352. Thus, the third hypothesis stating that social support plays a role in the subjective well-being of students experiencing online learning is accepted.

Based on the results of simple regression analysis, it is also known that both emotional regulation and social support have positive regression coefficient values (B) so that it can be said that emotional regulation and social support play a positive role in the subjective well-being of students who experience online learning. This means that the higher the emotional regulation of students and the social support they receive, the higher the subjective well-being of students who experience online learning.

The results of the calculation of the effective contribution of each independent variable to the subjective well-being of students experiencing online learning show that emotional regulation has an effective contribution of 28.6%, while social support contributes 17.5%, so it is known that the total effective contribution provided by emotional regulation and social support to the subjective well-being of students experiencing online learning is 46.1%. The results of the

calculation of the relative contribution of emotional regulation to subjective well-being are 62%, while social support has a relative contribution of 38%.

## 4.2 Discussion

The results of this study prove that the first hypothesis in this study is accepted, namely that emotional regulation and social support together play a role in influencing the subjective well-being of students who experience online learning ( $p < 0.05$ ;  $R = 0.679$ ). These results indicate a strong relationship that combines emotional regulation as an internal factor and social support as an external factor in predicting the subjective well-being of students who experience online learning.

Emotional regulation skills play a role in helping students manage their emotional responses to challenging situations, such as online learning that requires them to deal with stress alone. In addition, with good emotional regulation, students can reassess the situation and see it from a more positive perspective so that they are better able to cope with stress, anxiety, or feelings of loneliness that arise due to limited access during online learning. This is in line with research by [20] which explains that effective emotional regulation in students is carried out by adjusting emotional responses in dealing with difficult situations during the pandemic so that it has an impact on reducing negative emotions and helping to increase their emotional stability, where students can then be more objective in solving academic and personal problems so that their well-being and life satisfaction increase.

In addition to emotional regulation skills, social support in online learning situations also plays a role in overcoming psychological stress experienced by individuals during difficult times when facing academic stress amidst limited social access to interact with peers. [16] explained that the components of adequate social support can be identified through adequate family support, friendship environment, and support from people who are important to the individual. Research on emotional regulation and social

support with subjective well-being was previously conducted by [21] which stated that there was a significant relationship between emotional regulation and social support with subjective well-being. This finding explains that individual emotional regulation in dealing with situations will be easier when assisted by positive social relations and receiving good support from people around the individual. Therefore, students who have strong social networks and positive social interactions are likely to have improved subjective well-being along with strengthening their sense of connectedness and involvement in their academic and social environments.

The results of this study also confirm the second hypothesis that emotional regulation plays a significant role in influencing the subjective well-being of students experiencing online learning ( $p=0.000$ ;  $B=8.633$ ). This finding indicates that emotional regulation plays an important role in responding to negative emotional stress that arises as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Emotional regulation can play a role in maintaining emotional stability so that students are not overwhelmed in dealing with emotional stress that arises from academic demands or the personal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic experienced by students. This is in line with the findings of [20] who showed that it is important for an individual to actively control emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this study further highlights more specifically the role of emotional regulation in students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The activity of taking the time to regularly assess emotions can help prevent individuals from being overwhelmed by stress and dysfunctional emotional pressure, thereby allowing individuals to achieve good subjective well-being.

In addition to internal factors within the individual, external factors that can predict subjective well-being were also examined in this study, namely social support. The results of the analysis in this study confirmed that social support plays a significant role in influencing the subjective well-being of students who experience online

learning ( $p = 0.000$ ;  $B = 7.352$ ), which proves that the third hypothesis is accepted. The results of this study also strengthen previous research conducted by [22] which stated that social support predicts the subjective well-being of Duzce University students, especially in terms of life satisfaction. Previous research that also explains the relationship between social support and subjective well-being is the results of the study by [23] which proves that social support positively affects the subjective well-being of individuals with various age ranges.

[16] explained that the components of adequate social support can be identified through adequate family support, friendship environment, and support from people who are important to the individual. The study by [24] found that social support obtained from friends plays a major role in the subjective well-being of individuals in terms of advice and emotional support, while family support contributes to the subjective well-being of individuals when they feel that their family is there to provide assistance. Similar research results were previously found by [25] which stated that one of the strategies of individuals in reducing negative emotions in themselves is to seek emotional support from others to make themselves feel better. A series of studies that have been conducted previously are also strengthened by the results of this study that social support plays a role in life satisfaction and as a determinant of mood evaluation that can predict the subjective well-being of individuals.

The findings of this study also show that emotional regulation contributes more (28.6%) to determining students' subjective well-being than social support (17.5%). Things that can explain the difference in why emotional regulation contributes more than social support are independence in regulating emotions and limited social access. [14] explains that an individual's ability to respond to something depends on how well the individual is able to control emotions and respond to an emotional condition, so that when they find the same situation later, the emotional regulation carried out by the individual occurs more automatically and



does not take as much energy as when the individual first faced the situation. This indicates that the ability to regulate emotions is actually a skill that can be learned and developed by individuals, even in situations where access to social support is limited.

In contrast to social support, where the extent of support depends on the individual's access to social networks. [16] explained that the components of adequacy of social support can be identified through adequacy of family support, friendship circles, and support from people who are important to the individual. However, during online learning situations, many students have difficulty building social relationships with their circle of friends due to limited social access that is far from peers. This then has an impact on the adequacy of social support obtained by students, thus affecting their subjective well-being, which is in line with [12] which states that the amount of increase in subjective well-being in each individual can vary depending on the dynamics of social contact experienced by each individual.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the two independent variables studied in this study, both emotional regulation and social support, both play a significant role in predicting the subjective well-being of students who experience online learning. The effective contribution provided by emotional regulation and social support to the subjective well-being of students is 46.1%, with the proportion of emotional regulation being 28.6% and social support contributing 17.5%.

Based on the research findings, there are several suggestions that can be conveyed,

both for students, universities, and for further researchers.

For students, it is hoped that students can further develop their emotional regulation skills. Emotional management can be done by maintaining emotional stability, and adjusting emotional reactions in responding to problems that arise. In addition, it is also important to increase the acquisition of social support from the student's environment, both support from the family environment, friends, and people who are important to students. This can be done by maintaining harmonious relationships with family at home, as well as fostering relationships with peers and people who are important to students.

Suggestions for the university as an educational institution, it is hoped that this research can be a reference for developing programs that can improve students' subjective well-being. In addition, the university can also consider holding a periodic monitoring program for students' subjective well-being so that lecture activities can run optimally. This can be done through the student affairs department or psychology service unit owned by the university.

As for suggestions for academics and further research, it is hoped that this study can be a reference as well as a stimulation for further research on other variables that can contribute to subjective well-being, either with the same scope, context, or subject, or different. Some of them can be the effectiveness of interventions related to emotional regulation or social support on subjective well-being, or further exploration related to aspects of emotional regulation or social support that play a more dominant role in subjective well-being.

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