

*Do Psychology Students Enjoy The Lecture In Class?
Relationship With Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction
(Competence, Relatedness, and Autonomy)*

Hermin Nurbaity Asri, Airlangga University, Indonesia
Iwan Wahyu Widayat, Airlangga University, Indonesia

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Abstract

Flow is an experience of pleasure and enjoyment in doing an activity, characterized by total absorption which entangles awareness and action. Flow is an important asset for college students in carrying out their academic activities. When students experience a flow condition, they will enjoy and get an optimal learning experience. Student motivation also increases and affects better learning outcomes, and prevents students from boredom and academic stress. In fact, not all learners can get a flow experience. An effort that can be made to build flow in the classroom is to allow for autonomy, giving freedom and control to the learner. Autonomy is one of three components of the Basic Psychological Needs (BPN's) that need to be satisfied so individuals can function and grow optimally. This study aims to determine the relationship between flow in the academic and satisfaction with BPN's (competence, relatedness, and autonomy) in college students. Subjects were 292 undergraduate students in the faculty of Psychology, Airlangga University. The data was collected online right before the pandemic using the Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction at Work Scale and The Flow Inventory for Students. Analysis using spearman's rho shows a positive relationship between satisfaction with BPN's and flow in the academic, with an all significance level 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). The correlation coefficient of the three basic needs were 0.480 (competence), 0.310 (relatedness), and 0.416 (autonomy). Thus, the higher student satisfaction with BPN's followed by higher flow in the academic.

Keywords: Basic Psychological Needs, Undergraduate Students, Flow

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Introduction

Student attendance in a lecture which mostly done inside the class has been known to be the most important thing. Attendance in class has become the first predictor in accomplishing or achieving in college, more than the time spent studying, learning skills, and exam scores (Montgomery, 2015). Following learning in class allows students to understand the material in-depth, increasing knowledge and/or skills, also developing that knowledge and/or skills which in turn will lead them to accomplish the expected academic achievement. But in reality, many students do not attend lectures in class due to various reasons. They feel that their presence is not noticed by lecturer, feel that class is boring and useless, going out with friends, and not in such a good mood (Galichon & Friedman, 1985; Dobkin, Gil, & Marion, 2007; Friedman et. al., 2014; Montgomery, 2015; Rijavec & Miljkovic, 2015).

According to Csikszentmihalyi (cited in Norman, 1996), when an individual not getting a pleasant experience from the activity that they were doing, they would feel bored, not enjoying the ongoing activity, difficult to concentrate, and prefer to do other things that more pleasant. On the other hand, individuals who experience pleasant from the activity and enjoying those activities would be willing to do these activities for a long time and also involving themselves totally in those activities. They do this because they want to obtain and feel pleasure and enjoyment. These enjoyment experiences were also known as flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014a). Those experiences could be built by oneself or the environment, including lecturer and parental support (Csikszentmihalyi, 1985, cited in Csikszentmihalyi, 2014a).

Flow referred to a subjective condition when a person is fully absorbed only in things that were done until they forget about time, fatigue, and other things (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014a). The flow was considered as an important modal for a student in doing an academic activity such as following lectures, studying, and doing assignments (Yuwanto et. al., 2013). According to Yuwanto et. al. (2013), when students experienced flow condition, they will be enjoyed and obtained an optimal experience in the learning process, easier in understanding material, receiving information, comprehending material in-depth, thinking clearly, and think more smoothly and creative. Moreover, student motivation will increase which could lead to more optimal learning results, better performance, more productive, produce regularity in carrying out activities, open possibility to develop their skills, and preventing students from academic burnout and stress in doing academic activities.

Bakker (2008) stated 3 main characteristics of flow, namely absorption, enjoyment, and intrinsic motivation. Absorption referred to the situation in which concentration was fully absorbed to the ongoing activity. Individuals who experienced flow can then forget everything that is around them and feel that time seems to pass quickly. Enjoyment denoted to a condition in which an individual felt comfortable and happy with the activities that were carried out. The pleasant feeling will make individuals have a positive assessment of their performance quality. Intrinsic motivation referred to motivation in doing activities based on motivation from within oneself and for the sake of oneself. A person who experiences flow would be motivated to experience pleasure and satisfaction inherent in the activities undertaken (autotelic) instead of based on an external reward (Yuwanto et. al., 2013).

Csikszentmihalyi (2014a) stated that freedom and control by students were some of the alternatives that could be carried out by lecturer in order to build flow condition among students in the class. Giving control and freedom means that lecturer provides challenges

which in accordance with the abilities of each student. Related to this, autonomy constituted of attitude toward the learning process, in which students felt ready to take and have the responsibilities to make their own learning process (Dickinson, 1995). Autonomy has been known as one of the basic psychological needs based on self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

SDT explained the theory of behavior development and individual personality which focuses on the influence of social-contextual conditions that can support or hinder development through satisfying basic psychological needs consisted of competence, relatedness, and autonomy. Competence needs in learning refer to the capabilities to learn the learning process or course materials (Kusurkar, Ten Cate, Van Asperen, & Croiset, 2011). Moreover, relatedness needs to explain to the needs in feeling connected, supported, and take care with and by other people (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, cited in Johnston & Finney, 2010). This relatedness also points the neediness of individual of care, help, and real existence of people around them. Lastly, autonomy needs refer to the needs to feel that one's behavior and result obtained are self-determined or caused by oneself, as opposed to being influenced or controlled by external forces (deCharms, 1968, cited in Johnston & Finney, 2010).

Satisfaction towards these needs related closely to vitality and intrinsic motivation, while on the other hand need-frustration or feeling for removal or deprivation of basic need could demotivate, resulting in someone to functioning passively and bring out other behavior as compensation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In SDT, students feeling and behavior closely depend on social factors such as lecturer's attitude (Reeve, 2009; Oga-Baldwin, 2015), how lecturers behaving toward their students will affect students experience in fulfilling their basic psychological needs.

The importance of lecturer support toward fulfilment of basic psychological needs and its relation to increasing positive experience among students have encouraged the author to conduct further research related to this matter.

Method

Participants

The subject criteria are undergraduate students in semesters 1-8 of the Faculty of Psychology, Airlangga University class of 2015-2018, male or female, and attended classes in the last 1 year.

Participants joined in this study consisted of 292 undergraduate students. There 80,5% of participants were women (235 participants) and the rest of 19,5% were men (57 participants). Moreover, 99% of participants were in age 18-23 years old.

Instruments

Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction Scale used in this study is translated and adjusted from Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction at Work Scale published in Self-Determination Theory official website (selfdeterminationtheory.org) which consisted of 20 items representing 3 needs namely competence (6 items), relatedness (8 items), and autonomy (6 items). Reliability of each needs were 0,796, 0,890, and 0,775 respectively.

The Flow Inventory for Student (LIS) is used in this study to measure flow in the academic field, the scale consisted of 10 items and compiled by Yuwanto, Siandhika, Budiman, and Prasetyo (2011). Trial results of this scale by Yuwanto et. al. (2011) on 306 students showed KMO results for 0,844 (more than 0,5), Bartlett's Test for 0,000 (lower than 0,05), and reliability for 0,765.

Data collection

Data collection was carried out on May 4-8, 2019. During the time of data collection, researchers distributed questionnaires online through chat applications, Line and Whatsapp, as well as Instagram. Questionnaires were made with Google Form. Through the chat application, researchers distributed questionnaires, either personally or by distributing them to groups in which there were Active Students of the Faculty of Psychology, Airlangga University class of 2015-2018, according to the specified criteria. The distribution and the reception of responses stopped after the number of samples exceeded the required minimum.

Data analysis

Analysis Data Technique used in the current study was non-parametrical statistic techniques by Spearman's Rank (rho) using SPSS statistical program version 22.0 for Windows.

Results and Discussion

Results

Data analysis results showed a coefficient correlation between satisfaction on basic psychological need competence and flow in the academic of 0,480. Coefficient correlation score between satisfaction on basic psychological need relatedness and flow in the academic of 0,310. Lastly, a coefficient correlation between satisfaction on basic psychological needs autonomy and flow in the academic of 0,416.

Table 1: Results of Correlation Test

	<i>Flow in the academic</i>	
	r_{xy}	Sig. (2-tailed)
<i>Competence</i>	0,480	0,000
<i>Relatedness</i>	0,310	0,000
<i>Autonomy</i>	0,416	0,000

Based on results, high satisfaction on basic psychological needs namely competence, relatedness, and autonomy were followed by higher flow in the academic among students, and vice versa. According to Cohen categorization (1998, in Pallant, 2016), every basic psychological need satisfaction such as competence, relatedness, and autonomy have a moderate positive correlation to flow in the academic.

Discussion

Although flow could occur in various activities, not everyone could achieve flow (Yuwanto et. al., 2011) since flow experience tend to be dynamic (Schmidt, 2010). At a certain time, an activity can no longer build flow because someone has improved their skills while the challenges faced have not changed or a challenge is too difficult while one's skills have not

increased (Afifah, 2018). These conditions could result an individual to experience boredom or anxiety (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014a).

Based on data analysis results, 3 basic psychological needs namely competence, relatedness, and autonomy found to had a positive correlation with the flow in the academic. This result showed that the higher students' satisfaction to their 3 basic psychological need will be followed by the high flow in the academic and prevented students from anxiety and boredom. In addition, this finding was in line with SDT believe that certain environmental factors were responsible for influencing and maintaining students' motivation in the classroom. The influence was known to be not directly but mediated by satisfaction towards basic psychological needs and environmental factors have known to be the most influential to a supported situation in the classroom were lecturers (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

The current finding also supported by Jang, Reeve, Ryan, and Kim (2009) which stated that fulfilment of 3 basic psychological needs could increase pleasant learning experience and decreased anxiety. Niemiec and Ryan (2009) also found that class contexts which supported satisfaction to competence, relatedness, and autonomy needs tend to encourage students to be motivated intrinsically. Moreover, Jang et. al. (2009) revealed that three basic psychological needs to be important and needed by Asian students, which in this study found that satisfaction toward basic psychological needs among students played an important role to supported flow in the academic. According to Maulana, Helms-Lorenz, Irnidayanti, and van de Grift (2016), support toward these three basic needs were just as important as supporting students' motivation in Indonesia, and lecturers' support found to be the strongest factors influencing pleasure, challenges, and happiness for students to be involved and interested in the learning process.

Results from the current study also in accordance to flow key model characteristics to contemporary theory namely interactionism (Magnusson & Statin, 1998, cited in Csikszentmihalyi, 2014a), in which flow not only focused on human and abandoned contexts but emphasized dynamics that were built between human with the environments (person-environment interaction). Through activities that gave various opportunities to act and interact to the environment, individuals could build and spread their flow experience (emergent motivation). On the other hand, an environment that prevents individuals from increasing their skills, understanding, and mastery of a task or activity could also prevent the fulfillment of competence needs (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In fact, feeling competent known to be a very important initial condition for intrinsic motivation and intrinsically motivated actions (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014b).

According to Ryan and Deci (2017), the needs of relatedness were not only made a person physically accepted but also left them with a feeling of worth and meaningful for others. When students felt that their lecturer cared and pay attention to them, they tend to show higher academic effort (Urda & Schoenfelder, 2006, cited in Maulana et. al., 2016). Students will feel a sense of belonging and these feelings were a strong predictor to intrinsic motivation among learners (Baumiester & Leary, 1995, cited in Maulana et. al., 2016). Ryan and Deci (2011, cited in Ryan & Deci, 2017) stated that these needs were so important as part of an understanding individuals' tendency to internalized values and behaviors from cultures that exist around them. By the feeling of connected, individuals would be interested in everything that other person's belief, behavior, and what other person expected from them which resulted in individual to took a position to behave in a way that ensured acceptance and involvement.

When people around students provide support and encouragement as opposed to giving distraction, it could encourage involvement for individuals to reach flow. Support to autonomy needs also known to motivate students intrinsically (Deci & Ryan, 1985, cited in Maulana et al., 2016). Reeve and Jang (2006) found that support toward students' autonomy related to students' enjoyment, involvement, and performance which resulted in students functioning positively in learning activities. Black and Deci (2000) revealed that students who rated their lecturer as supportive to autonomy showed to have autonomous self-regulation, interest, enjoyment, and decreased anxiety. Other than that, autonomy support directly predicted higher students' performance. Andersen (2004 cited in Schmidt, 2010) stated that flow in class caused by autonomy, interest, and balance between lecturer and students' role in the learning activity.

The current study also found that competence and autonomy needs have a stronger relationship to flow in the academic rather than relatedness needs. These results were in line with a study conducted in Western countries by (Caleon, Tan, Wui, Leen, & King, 2016). Chirkov (2011, cited in Maulana et al., 2016) revealed that most of the determinants consider autonomy needs will not excel in Eastern cultural contexts due to the high value of obedience to authority, strict discipline, and hierarchy system (the existence of authoritarian model between young and old age). Meanwhile, Chirkov found that based on their study, generally speaking, support to autonomy needs not only important in numerous Western cultural contexts (e.g. Belgium, England, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, and United States of America), but also in several non-Western cultural contexts (e.g. South Korea, Singapore, Pakistan, and Taiwan).

Conclusion

Based on data analysis it could be concluded that there was a correlation between satisfaction on basic psychological needs (competence, relatedness, and autonomy) with the flow in the academic. Students' higher satisfaction toward three basic psychological needs will be followed by a higher flow in the academic. Therefore, the lecturer needs to support students' satisfaction on their basic psychological needs to build their flow experience in class. Lecturer could upgrade their role and involvement directly to students during learning activity in class, provide the broadest opportunity for students to take advantage from learning activities in class as an effort to find knowledge and improved skills, minimize demands and pressure, provide support, help, and guidance during learning process in class while continuing to provide appropriate challenges to increase students' skills and build good interpersonal relationship with them.

Limitations

Study data were retrieved by online which resulted in network disruption on several students when filling out the questionnaire. Moreover, when filling out questionnaire students were able to choose lecturer or course they would like to rate. Consequently, students might choose lecturers or course that they liked and memorable or that were not very liked according to their choice.

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Contact email: hermin.nurbaity.asri-2020@psikologi.unair.ac.id