

Have a Good Mental Health by Maintaining Your Emotion Regulation

Surya Caroline W.¹ Herlie William J.¹ Andangsari Esther W.^{1,2*}

¹Psychology Department, Faculty of Humanities, Bina Nusantara University, West Jakarta 11480, Indonesia

²Research Interest Group Cross Cultural Communication, Bina Nusantara University, West Jakarta 11540, Indonesia

*Corresponding author. Email: esther@binus.edu

ABSTRACT

Having a good quality of mental health is an important aspect that someone should have in order to help them function well in daily activities such as work, social life, etc. One of the important aspects that someone should have to have a good quality of mental health is a good emotional well-being which marked by the balance of positive emotions over negative emotions. In this era, emotional well-being is closely related to social media use which is categorised as an emotion-eliciting situation. Therefore, it is important to have a good emotion regulation strategy in order to have good emotional well-being which in turn will improve the quality of one's mental health. This study aims to explain the role of cognitive reappraisal method as one of the emotion regulation strategies. The results showed that cognitive reappraisal is a significant predictor for positive mental health, which in turn will help someone to have a good quality of emotional well-being and a good quality of mental health.

Keywords: cognitive reappraisal, emotion regulation, mental health, positive mental health

1. INTRODUCTION

Mental health is one of the important assets in human beings. Having good mental health, helps people to function well in daily activities. Despite the massive growth of research conducted on mental health, most of them are linking mental health toward psychopathology. As the study of mental health develops, researcher suggests that there are two further concepts of mental health model, which is psychopathology and positive mental health, both of which can be related but have different dimensions [1]. These two concepts could be seen as contradictory, if someone has a high level of psychopathology, then they will show bad positive mental health and vice versa [2]. According to Keyes [3], positive mental health is the highest level of subjective and psychological well-being. Mental health are divided into three different model which is emotional, psychological, and social well-being [1][2]. First, emotional well-being, which involves the balance of positive over negative emotions and the presence of life satisfaction. Second, psychological well-being, which involves experience of self-acceptance, personal growth, autonomy, purpose in life, a sense of mastery, and positive relations with important others that results in healthy mental health. Third, social well-being, which involves on how optimal a person can be on functioning in their community life since they are embedded in social structures and communities.

Emotion plays an important role in maintaining someone's mental health. According to Nykliček et al. [4], emotion is a basic human functioning that has an adaptive value enhancing someone's effectiveness in pursuing goals in general. Emotion could be regulated by emotion regulation that plays a role in determining the right response. Gross [5] suggested that emotion regulation refers to a process in which a person could regulate their emotion, when they had it, and how they experience and express the emotion. Emotion regulation is closely related to mental health. In the process of regulating emotion, psychological well-being also plays an important role [4]. In adulthood, emotion regulation is required in a wide variety of situations such as at work, sports, and shopping, intimate relationships, and even when alone [6]. The main purpose of emotion regulation is to help people maintain their positive emotion rather than negative emotion [5]. With the presence of positive emotions, the likelihood that one will drift unhealthy emotion regulatory strategy (e.g. substance) will be lower [6].

According to Gross and John [7], emotion regulation strategies are divided into two type which is cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Cognitive reappraisal is a form of change in cognitive aspect of a person that involves how does one perceive a potentially emotion-eliciting situation that could possibly has an emotional impact [7]. For example, when someone is reading some news on updated government policy which they think that it does not make sense, they tend to recheck

with the other source to find if it is valid or not. Expressive suppression, a form of response that inhibits a certain expressive behavior related to emotion [7]. For example, when someone is in a state of anger or sadness, they tend to keep their emotions within themselves rather than to show or share it with others on social media.

According to Gross [5], emotion regulation is a process for someone to regulate their emotion, when they had it, and how they experience and express it either voluntarily or involuntarily. Emotion regulation strategy could be used intrinsically (managing oneself emotion) or extrinsically (managing others emotion) [8]. Individuals who are using cognitive reappraisal as their strategy to regulate emotion will be likely to have more positive over negative emotions, having good relationships with others, and good well-being [7], or called as adaptive emotion regulation strategy [9]. In the other hand, individuals who are using expressive suppression as their strategy to regulate emotion will be likely to have more negative over positive emotions, having less emotional relationships with others, and low well-being [7], or maladaptive emotion regulation strategy [9].

Research conducted by Gross [7], shows that suppression methods has several disadvantages that reappraisal methods does not have. Suppression method reported to shows memory impairment for social information and has the potential to undermine the social functioning of a person greater than reappraisal [7]. Thus, this study are focused to the reappraisal method over the suppression method.

Emotion regulation plays an important role on someone's mental health when using social media. Basically, humans are social beings who need other people to interact and help each other. Mentally healthy individuals will perceive social media as a place to connect with friends, old friends, family, and a place to express themselves. According to Kemp [10], total numbers of social media users within the age range of emerging adulthood reaches 30% of the total 170 million active users of social media in Indonesia. This is because in this developmental stage, individuals are very active and have skills in using internet-based technology.

With the fact that the use of social media is always associated with addiction and psychopathology, there are also many positive impacts that we can take and learn from social media. Social connection has been proved to foster meaning and purpose in life, which, in turn, improves mental health and psychological well-being [11]. It is important to have a good strategy on regulating our emotion when using social media. A good strategy on regulation emotion could help someone to be mentally healthy when using social media. As stated before that cognitive reappraisal strategy will increase the likelihood of someone to have more positive emotions and it is proven to be an adaptive emotion regulation strategy [9]. Therefore, this study was conducted and focused to examine the role of cognitive reappraisal as an adaptive emotion regulation strategy on positive mental health, with the hypotheses tested as follow:

H1: Cognitive reappraisal is a significant predictor for positive mental health on emerging adulthood social media users.

2. METHOD

2.1. Participants

This research was conducted as non-experimental quantitative research, with non-probability sampling technique. The participants were 339 people, ranging from 18-25 years old ($M=21$, $SD=1.80$), which is categorized to emerging adulthood and an active social media user (See Table 1).

2.2. Instrument & Data Analysis

This study was conducted using an online survey platform, which participants were instructed to complete two parts of questionnaire. First, Positive Mental Health Scale (PMH-Scale) constructed by Lukat et al. [12], consist of 9-items and with internal reliability ranging from $\alpha=0.84$ to $\alpha=0.93$. Second, Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) constructed by Gross and John [7], consist of 10-item divided into two dimensions (cognitive reappraisal and expressive submission). This study used the Indonesian adapted version scale [13], which is consist of 15 items (8 items for cognitive reappraisal dimension, and 7 items for expressive suppression dimension). In line with the hypothesis, this study only focuses on the cognitive reappraisal method. The internal reliability for this questionnaire in this study was ranging from $\alpha=0.790$ to $\alpha=0.794$. The hypotheses (H1) were analyzed using linear regression method.

3. RESULT

More than 90% of the participants showed the increasing duration on social media use during pandemic (see table 1). The significant difference of total male and female participants might be in accordance with the results of the study conducted by Weisberg, DeYoung, and Hirsh [14] that women were reported to have a higher agreeableness personality on the Big Five personality traits. It is understood relating on social distancing and almost all the activities execute via online system during this pandemic. Interestingly, most of the participants express negative emotion during this situation. It became the emergence of this study.

Table 1 Participant’s Demography

Variable	Aspects	N	%
Gender	Female	279	82.30
	Male	60	17.70
	Total Participants	339	100
Increased duration on social media during pandemic			
	Yes	309	91.15
	No	30	8.85
The most common emotion during pandemic			
	Madness	30	8.85
	Fear	65	19.17
	Burn out	132	38.94
	Sad	69	20.35
	Surprised	10	2.95
	Happy	33	9.74

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Cognitive Reappraisal	44.08	6.34	29.00	56.00
Positive Mental Health	26.56	4.65	16.00	36.00

Table 3 Regression Result

	Sum of Squares	df	F	Level of Significance
Cognitive Reappraisal→Positive Mental Health	928.96	338	49.11	< 0.001
	R	R ²	T	Level of significance
Cognitive Reappraisal→Positive Mental Health	0.36	0.13	7.01	< 0.001

As presented above on table 3, we can conclude that H1 was proven significantly. This suggest that cognitive reappraisal is an effective strategy as an emotion regulation strategy that can help people to have a better positive mental health.

Based on the results, it suggests that cognitive reappraisal strategy on regulating emotion has a significant role on positive mental health. The result of hypothesis testing H1 is in line with the result of the previous research conducted by Gross and John [7]. The success of cognitive reappraisal on regulating one’s emotion will lead to low negative emotions and high positive emotions which in turn will improve one’s positive mental health [15]. People with good emotion regulation will be able to develop,

express, and sustain positive feelings and drive them to do more productive things [6]. This results is also in line with latest research conducted by Megias-Robles et al., [16] which suggests that a greater use of cognitive reappraisal were associated with higher emotionally intelligent abilities which will help individuals to be able to modulate their emotions from the beginning of the generative process.

Most of the emerging adulthood in this study have increase duration on social media use (table 1). It is showed that the need for social interaction that is facilitated through social media, makes emerging adulthood use social media a lot during the pandemic. This can help strengthen the quality of their emotional regulation because friendship and

intimate interpersonal relationships are part of the take-and-give way of their emotional regulation process [6]. The author realized that increase number of social media could give negative side for the emerging adulthood, such as trigger negative emotion, but cognitive reappraisal emotion regulation strategy could decrease the negative emotion experience [17].

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the result, it can be concluded that cognitive reappraisal as effective emotion regulation strategy, has proven effective to enhance mental health. Emerging adulthood whose also social media users, can take advantage the cognitive appraisal strategy for prevent their mental health. They can reappraise their mind and action before executed it. Expressing their feelings on social media cannot be guaranteed to be an effective behavior to regulate their emotions.

This study has some limitations, first, in terms of measuring cultural factor. Emotional processes are considered flexible and adaptive according to the specific context in which they occur. As a result, patterns of emotional output are thought to vary according to the cultural context. In this case, culture can regulate emotional situations by shaping the quality and dynamics of certain habits and patterns of social interaction by providing experiences and emotional expressions that are consistent with models of culture and the self-related [18]. Second, there is no measurement revealed to online behavior related to the trigger of negative emotional experience from social media exposure. Therefore, the authors suggest that in future studies it is necessary to measure cultural factors or contextual settings and online behavior in a study.

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