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Original Article

# Cognitive Distortion While Attending Online Class: Study On Banjar College Student

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Abstract. Online learning has begun to take place in Indonesia since March 2020 simultaneously in all educational institutions due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 outbreak. Sudden changes make it difficult for students to process information and lead to various patterns of thinking errors which are known as cognitive distortions. This study aims to reveal the patterns of cognitive distortions that students have during the online lectures. The research design used is a phenomenological qualitative design. Analysis of cognitive distortions was collected through in-depth interviews and document studies to 8 Banjar ethnic students. The results of the study found that there were 3 cognitive distortions, namely: (1) catastrophizing; (2) all-or-nothing thinking; and (3) should statements. The effects of these cognitive distortions include feeling lazy, bored, afraid, uncomfortable, drowsy, shaking, and heart palpitations. In the context of student behavior, students also tend to neglect lectures, access social media, sleep, and go to hang out with friends. Further research is needed to explore student's cognitive distortions in post-Covid-19 pandemic situation or with diverse populations.

Keywords: Cognitive Distortion, Banjar College Student, Online Class, Covid-19.

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# Introduction

At the beginning of 2020, the world was shocked by a global disaster in the form of an outbreak which was then widely referred to as the Covid-19 pandemic. The spread of Covid-19 is so fast, that since January 2020 WHO has declared the world to be in a global emergency regarding the corona virus (Iswari, Saragi, Sirait, & Putra, 2020). In Indonesia itself, the Government has declared a disaster emergency status from February 29, 2020 to May 29, 2020 related to the corona virus pandemic with a total time of 91 days (Koesmawardhani, 2020). Following the government's policy in suppressing the spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia, all educational institutions from early childhood, elementary, junior high, high school, to higher education are prohibited from carrying out face-to-face learning. In this policy, teaching and learning activities (KBM) are moved at home, but still have to be controlled by teachers or lecturers and parents using distance learning (Zaharah, Kirilova, & Windarti, 2020). This is a system change that occurs suddenly and requires every driving element and education person to adapt quickly, including students.

Reality shows that the dynamics of learning in Indonesia are currently disrupted by the Covid-19 outbreak which has an impact, including; (1) schools are transferred to homes through an online learning process; (2) there is a transformation of technology-based learning media through the use of WhatsApp Group, Zoom, Google Classroom, WebEx, YouTube,

and TV channels (TVRI); (3) adjustment of learning methods; (4) adjustment of learning evaluation for determining standard of grade promotion and graduation; and (5) demands for collaboration between parents of students at home as a substitute for teachers controlling children's learning (Mansyur, 2020). Online learning/lectures have turned out to be a solution as well as opening up new problems among students.

Although there are studies that reveal that online classes have helped students stay positive and motivated to learn (Gautam, Imteyaz, & Alam, 2021), the negative psychological impacts obtained from online learning are also quite common. Students also feel quite heavy pressure during online learning during the Covid19 pandemic (Lubis, Ramadhani, & Rasyid, 2021). Such a long time makes virtual activities also turn into new stressors (Yuwono, 2020). The magnitude of the cognitive load when processing the amount of information that enters through cyberspace has been found to contribute to social media fatigue (Rahardjo, Qomariyah, Mulyani, & Andriyani, 2020). If this continues, it will cause uncontrollable stress. Such excessive fear, anxiety or stress can have serious emotional consequences for some individuals (Bystritsky, Khalsa, Cameron, & Schiffman, 2013).

A similar psychological impact was also found in a study which showed that (1) students were getting bored with online learning after the first two weeks of studying from home, (2) there was considerable anxiety in research subjects whose parents had low income, because they had to buy quotas for their children, can afford, to participate in online learning, (3) changes in mood or mood occur because there are too many tasks and are considered ineffective by students (Irawan, Dwisona, & Lestari, 2020).

Even more, Banjar people characteristically like to live a relaxed life filled with laughter and do not like life and processes that are considered complicated but want a superior life (Setiawan, & Rachman, 2018). This character makes Banjar people tend to look for the easiest way to achieve something. When it comes to online learning, Banjar students have a tendency to ignore the learning process itself and think about ending it immediately. However, when the situation is not in accordance with the wishes, it often appears stress on Banjar students.

Excessive stress conditions usually also cause physiological effects and often most people don't like these physiological effects (Lin & Huang, 2014). In other words, negative physiological effects such as easily tired, easily drowsy, body shaking, headaches, difficulty sleeping, and so on are the consequences of negative thoughts that are continuously maintained by a person. These maintained negative thoughts are known as cognitive

Cognitive distortion in the view of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), is a thinking error that continues to occur consistently in individuals (Beck, 2011). Cognitive distortion can generally be understood through a schema that explains the relationship between an external event/situation, automatic thoughts that arise because of it, mood/emotional reactions, behavior, and physiological reactions (Yusuf, 2016). Simply put, when a person has cognitive distortions, the way his mind responds to an external event/situation that befalls him will be negative, and this affects the formation of his mood, behavior, and physical condition related to the event/situation. Adolescents often experience problems in self-actualization, including thinking errors known as cognitive distortions (Pepe & Santoso, 2016).

Scientists have focused their research on how cognitive distortions result in various emotional problems, such as sadness, and hopelessness, and even depression (Williams, and Goodwin, 2010; Zhang, Li, & Zou, 2011). These negative emotions of course also have a negative effect on learning and learning. Students who experience negative emotions generally tend to be lazy in carrying out various activities, especially academic activities. Negative moods will trigger more bad energy in students because they lack concentration and do not focus on the material given by the instructor during his attendance in class. Students feel very sad and only think about factors that make their mood bad, so that the learning process will be disrupted (Febrillia, & Warokka, 2011).

Cognitive distortion was also found to have an impact on student procrastination behavior. The existence of thinking errors in responding to assignments given by the lecturer results in procrastinating behavior which in turn raises new problems (Lestari, 2018), and procrastionation found getting worse among college students when covid-19 pandemic situation (Miswanto, 2022). In addition, cognitive distortions also have a significant impact on problematic internet use in students. Instead of prioritizing the internet for online learning, students tend to prioritize using the internet for other things, such as social media, entertainment, and games that actually lead to addiction (Kalkan, 2012; Celic, & Odaci, 2013).

Regarding these problems, mapping of cognitive distortion patterns is important because it is an initial effort in problem assessment according to the cognitive-behavioral counseling model. By understanding the faults of thinking in individuals, counselors can help provide strategies to educate and train clients to overcome these thoughts (Capuzzi, & Stauffer, 2016).. Therefore, based on this rationale, the researcher aims to analyze cognitive distortions in Banjar students in attending online lectures during the Covid-19 pandemic. The results of this study are expected to be a basic framework in understanding student problems related to online learning.

# Method

This study uses a qualitative phenomenological design. We seeks to understand the meaning of a negative automatic thought that crosses the respondent's mind that affects their mood, behavior, and physiological reactions when undergoing online learning activities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### **Participants**

This research takes the background of online learning/lecture in the scope of higher education. Thus, this includes a number of universities in the South Kalimantan area. Participants in this research are college students from 3 Universities in South Kalimantan, which is Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari, and Universitas Islam Kalimantan Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari.

# **Sampling Procedures**

Subjects who will be used as respondents/informants in this study were determined by purposive sampling. Eight students from different study programs were selected based on the following criteria: (1) status as students currently pursuing higher education; (2) born in the Banjar tribe; both parents are Banjar people or have a strong lineage as Banjar Tribe; (3) have been or are still involved in online lectures; and (4) have a tendency to maintain cognitive distortions as evidenced by high scores (4-7) on more than 5 statements on the Cognitive Distortion Scale (CDS).

# **Materials and Apparatus**

In qualitative study, researcher himself is the instrument. Researchers performed several data collection procedures. such as interviews, and document studies. Some of the tools used by researchers are interview guide sheets, and document study guidelines. The interview guide was built based on the standard questioning technique in exploring automatic thoughts in CBT counseling which was modified according to the purpose of the study. The questions include:

- 1. How have you experienced the implementation of online lectures?
- 2. How do you feel/mood while attending online lectures?
- 3. What do you usually do when the feelings/moods you mention arise?
- 4. Are there any physical reactions you experience/feel when you attend online lectures? If so, what was the physical reaction like?
- 5. What is the first thought that comes to your mind when you hear the word online lecture, or when you are about to do an online lecture?
- Regardless of whether the thought is right or wrong, what does that thought mean to you?

In addition, the researcher collected related documents, such as documents about personal, family, history of physical and mental illness, as well as the results of the cognitive distortion scale (CDS) questionnaire that was adapted from Covin, Dozois, Ogniewicz, & Seeds (2011).

#### **Procedures**

The implementation of this research follows the stages proposed by Moleong (2018), where qualitative research is divided into 3 main stages, which consist of (1) the pre-field stage; (2) the field work stage; and (3) data analysis stage.

The pre-field stage consists of 7 sub-stages, where researchers need to: (1) develop a research design; (2) selecting the field; (3) take care of licensing; (4) explore and assess the field; (5) selecting and obtaining informants; (6) prepare research tools; and (7) consider research ethics. Meanwhile, in the field work stage, the researcher took the following actions: (1) understanding the research background and self-preparation; (2) enter the field; and (3) collect data. Finally, the researcher carried out data analysis activities whose techniques will be described in a special sub-chapter regarding it.

# **Design or Data Analysis**

In analyzing the data of this study, the researcher uses the data analysis model of Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014), which divides the stages of qualitative data analysis into 3 stages, namely: (1) data condensation; (2) data presentation; and (3) drawing conclusions or verifying data. The following is a further explanation of the three stages:

- 1. Data condensation, data obtained by researchers in the field through interviews, and document studies are sorted by summarizing, selecting and focusing data on things that are in accordance with the research objectives. At this stage the researcher condenses the data by sorting it out. Categorize and create abstractions from field notes, interviews and documents.
- 2. Data presentation, carried out after the data has been condensed or summarized. Data obtained from interviews, and document studies were analyzed and then presented in the form of interview notes, and document notes. The data that has been presented in the form of interview notes, and documentation notes are coded with data to organize the data, so that researchers can analyze quickly and easily. The data from the interviews were coded W, while the data from the documents were coded D. Then the research subjects were coded S, accompanied by a two-digit number sequence according to table 5.1. Thus, the results of the interview with the subject with the initials A.M. coded S01, the result of an interview with the subject with the initials T.F. coded S02, and so on. Furthermore, regarding coding related to the question theme, there are 6 question themes, namely: (a) Online Lecture Experience (coded: PKD); (b) Feeling/Mood Reaction (coded: RPM); (c) Behavioral/Action Reaction (coded: RPT); (d) Physiological Reaction (coded: RFS); (e) Automatic Thoughts That Appear

(coded: POM); and (f) Meaning of Automatic Thoughts (coded: MPO). As for giving the code related to sentence lines, it consists of 3 digit numbers according to the sequence of sentence lines in the interview transcript. Thus, if, for example, in presenting the results of the study, the researcher refers to a statement in the interview transcript of the third subject, where the answer is the theme of automatic thinking, and is taken from the second sentence, the code generated is: S03/W1/POM-002.

3. Conclusion Drawing or Data Verification, at this stage, the researcher makes conclusions that are supported by strong evidence at the data collection stage. Conclusions are answers to the formulation of problems and questions that have been expressed by researchers since the beginning.

# **Results and Discussion**

The results showed that Banjar students experienced at least 3 types of cognitive distortions during online lectures. The three types of cognitive distortions are: (1) catastrophizing; (2) all-or-nothing thinking; and (3) should statements. In the catastrophizing cognitive distortion, Banjar students tend to predict negative things about online learning, such as thinking that they will have difficulty learning online, thinking they cannot understand the material, thinking that online lectures are not effective at all, thinking that the value/outcome of online learning is obtained not optimal, or think negatively before voicing an opinion on an online space. This pattern is common in both male and female students.

Meanwhile, the pattern of all-or-nothing thinking, and should statement, is more experienced by male students. In the cognitive distortion of all-or-nothing thinking, male students tend to think that if online learning is not effective, then all lectures carried out will be in vain. Whereas in the should statement pattern, students tend to think that online lectures should be carried out more creatively, innovatively, and facilitating, it is a disaster if online lectures are not carried out as they should think.

Table 1 below shows the data evidence which states that these students have the cognitive distortions referred to.

Cognitive Distortion		Data Prove
Catastrophizing	1.	"The first thought that comes to mind is "looks like it's going to be hard." Difficult to understand the material. I think, later if there is an assignment, UTS, or UAS it will be slower to do it. I'm worried the course grades will affect the final grade." (S08/W1/POM-032 – 035).
	2.	"So it was like I was thinking, "wouldn't you be able to understand, won't you?" like that. More inclined to think, "can't understand" sir. Because I am the type of person who is easier to understand face to face, sir." $(S05/W1/POM-041-044)$ .
	3.	"that thought, maybe "it looks like this is going to be hard"." $(S01/W1/POM-072-073)$ .
	4.	"The laziness is probably because I've been thinking "oh, this lecturer looks like he's going to have a lot of lectures, a lot of stories." So it's like being lazy, I see" (S02/W1/POM-028 $-$ 030).

- "... when I go through WA, I often think this way, "this must be a lot of people don't pay attention to." (S02/W1/POM-034 – 035).
  - 6. "... Oh, later on the exam will be difficult. So I can't answer, sir. If you can't answer, it will affect your score, your points could be low, sir..." (S02/W1/MPO-037 – 039).
- "... At the very least, I am lazy because I think "I will ask again later", so there are questions. It's because there is a lecturer who is rich, asking." (S03/W1/POM-024 – 026).
- "... If young lecturers are sure to be asked to make questions or be asked to conclude, so I think more about anticipating making questions/conclusions. If asked, I am afraid that it will not match the expectations of the lecturer even though the lecturer does not blame it." (S04/W1/POM-047 – 051).
- "For example, if I don't understand a material point, I'm afraid that when I mention/ask about that point, my other friends will understand, and that will make the lecturer repeat the explanation again. And that will eventually make friends bored over and over again..." (S05/W1/POM-031 – 035).
- 10. "I'm afraid there are some lecturers who when asked like that even ask back, "why don't you understand, does that mean you didn't pay attention when I explained earlier?"..." (S06/W1/POM-034 -036).
- "I often think that, "the lectures are the same." It means that lecturers should also be able to think creatively how to teach them, if they end up online again, it will be the same as before. If I think about it, why don't lecturers think about other things, for example offline lectures or all that stuff, for example, for example, I want to hang out if I'm in the same city..." (S07/W1/POM-032-037).
- "If that's all, for me, I'm sorry, I can do it myself. Even without the direction of the lecturer, we can do that, so if we take online lectures, it's roughly like us, no one else can study like we can..." (S07/W1/MPO-042-045).

# "Like more thinking that 'ah, it can be reasonable' ..." (S01/W1/MPO-065)

- "... Then, it means that the lecture is useless if you don't understand anything. Yes, it's actually not too useless, you can still get the title, but the knowledge can't be maximized. That's where I think it's useless. It feels like a complete waste of time." (S05/W1/MPO-047-051).
- S05's statement is also supported by the results of filling out the cognitive distortion scale which shows a fairly high score (8/14) on the all-or-nothing thinking pattern (S05/D1/SDK-019).
- "... Because right, mathematics is actually more of a concept, to the point. When the concept has been explained, that's it, there's no need to complicate it.... If there are too many explanations, sometimes there will be misconceptions, between the first, second, and subsequent explanations, it creates contradictions. At first I was able to understand the initial explanation, when it was too
- Based on the cognitive distortion scale filled in by the subject,

scattered..." (S01/W1/MPO-085 – 096).

long to explain online, then my previous understanding was

# All-or-Nothing Thinking

# Should Statements

should statements are the type of cognitive distortion that gets the highest points with a score of = 10/14 (S01/D1/SDK-018 – 020), even in the mental health history questionnaire, S01 also admits that he has a tendency to anxiety and learning stress (S01/D1/DDS-013 – 014).

- 3. "To me, it feels like pressuring me when I ask a question, sir. Should have asked first, what and where do not understand. If it is directly judged like that, it will give the impression that the lecturer accuses me of not understanding the material from beginning to end...." (S06/W1/MPO-038 041).
- 4. "...lecturers should also be able to think creatively, that's how they teach, if they end up online again, it's the same as before. If I think about it, why don't lecturers think about other things, for example offline lectures or all that..." (S07/W1/POM-033 036)

Cognitive distortions experienced by students during online learning, if analyzed, appear to have an influence on feelings, behavior, and physiological reactions. The impact obtained is generally a negative impact, and this is a chain. In other words, when these cognitive distortions appear repeatedly in students, it will automatically cause negative feelings. Negative feelings will then produce maladaptive behavior, or even uncomfortable physiological reactions. Based on the data presented in table 2, the cognitive distortions of Banjar ethnic students in undergoing online learning in general have 4 impacts as follows:

- 1. Situation: online learning in lectures / asynchronous presentation of material → Cognitive distortion: Catastrophizing → Emotional reactions: lazy, bored → Physiological reactions: drowsiness, headache → Behavioral reactions: ignoring lectures, opening social media, lying down/sleeping.
- 2. Situation: online learning through question and answer / discussion → Cognitive distortion → Catastrophizing Emotional reactions: fear → Physiological reactions: shaking, heart palpitations ignoring lectures, opening social media.
- 3. Situation: online learning lectures / asynchronous presentation of material → Cognitive distortion All-or-Nothing Thinking → Feeling reactions: unmood, bored, uncomfortable → Physiological reactions: sleepy, absent → Behavioral reactions: ignoring lectures, hanging out with friends to study together.
- 4. Situation: online learning through lectures / asynchronous delivery of material → Cognitive distortion Should Statements → Feeling reactions: unmood, bored, uncomfortable → Physiological reactions: drowsy, absent → Behavioral reactions: ignoring lectures, hanging out with friends to study together

The results of this study have revealed 3 types of cognitive distortions that are generally experienced by Banjar students when participating in online learning. Some of the patterns found include catastrophizing, should statement, and all-or-nothing thinking. In the catastrophizing pattern, students often think that online learning will be ineffective, making it difficult for them to understand the lecture material, and having an impact on decreasing their achievement. Those who maintain this pattern generally assume that what happens next is a disaster and they will not be able to get through (Beck, 2011). This finding is in accordance with research conducted by Fatimah and Mahmudah (2020) which states that in dealing with online lectures, students often experience excessive anxiety. Fear of failure is a major source of stress among undergraduate students (Bataineh, 2013). Other studies have also revealed that the highest stressor that affects students is the uncertainty they feel about their exams, end of semester, and assessment (Moawad, 2020).

Especially for male students, apart from experiencing catastrophizing, they also maintain a cognitive distortion pattern of should statement and all-or-nothing thinking. Cognitive distortions of all-or-nothing thinking and should statements usually appear when individuals face situations that do not match their expectations (Pepe & Santoso, 2016). Male students do experience more cognitive distortion patterns than women because in terms of brain structure and psychological development phases, males and females have clear differences (Amin, 2018).

Male students in learning something or solving a problem they will be happier when they find something that is direct practice, especially one that requires them to be hands-on. Not so with girls. They will enjoy the learning process and can understand something or solve a problem in ways that promote "persuasive" and communal communication by studying together, reading, relaxed discussions, formulating a common understanding, presentations, lectures, and so on (Amen, 2018). As is known, online learning is currently presenting more material asynchronously, and delivering theory through the use of WhatsApp Group, Zoom, Google Classroom, WebEx, Youtube, and TV channels (Mansyur, 2020). This is why the online learning process makes male students more depressed than female students.

Academic stress originating from these cognitive distortions, of course, has an impact on the emergence of various reactions both emotionally, physiologically, and behaviorally in students. The reactions caused are generally negative and ultimately affect students' online learning motivation. Correlation analysis indicates that academic stress has a negative relationship with learning motivation. Thus, it can be said that the higher the academic stress, the lower the learning motivation, conversely, the lower the student's academic stress level, the higher the student's learning motivation when taking online lectures during the COVID-19 pandemic (Sujadi, 2021).

The emotional reactions experienced by Banjar ethnic students when studying online were found to be bored, lazy, unmood, uncomfortable, and afraid/anxious. This finding is similar to the findings of other studies which suggest that (1) students have started to get bored with online learning after the first two weeks of studying from home, (2) there is considerable anxiety in research subjects whose parents have low income, because they have to buy quotas to be able to study at home, capable, to participate in online learning, (3) a decrease in mood occurs due to too many tasks and is considered ineffective by students (Irawan, Dwisona, & Lestari, 2020). Fatimah and Maheasy (2020) also revealed an increase in laziness and a decrease in motivation to learn. This negative mood certainly has a negative effect on learning (Febrilia & Warokka, 2011).

Physiological effects were also found to occur due to too much screen time during online learning. Students admit that they feel tired, they experience physical pain such as headaches, shoulder pain, eyesore, and others (Syahputri, Rahma, Setiyana, Diana, & Parlindungan, 2020). The findings are also in line with the findings of this study, where several Banjar ethnic students who underwent online lectures also stated that they experienced physical reactions from fatigue to drowsiness, headaches, even body shaking and heart palpitations.

Interestingly, the behavioral reactions due to cognitive distortions experienced by Banjar ethnic students also varied. Some of them expressed that they did not want to be active in lecture activities and tended to ignore them. One study found that weak attentional control was indeed associated with cognitive distortions (Booth, et al., 2019). Other students revealed that they prefer to access social media when online lectures are held, instead of paying attention to the material. Even though accessing social media too often will affect the emergence of depression, anxiety and stress (Budury, Fitriasari, & Sari, 2020). This may be a paradoxical

effect, where behavior that is intended to reduce academic stress, can actually lead to the emergence of other stressors.

Some male students who have cognitive distortion should statements finally try to solve the problem by gathering with their friends to take online lectures together. This is seen as a student's effort to keep away from boredom and depressive thoughts, in this pandemic, students are trying to overcome the negative effects that arise (Chandra, 2021). Indeed, research findings suggest that the community dimension is associated with higher student self-efficacy and a sense of shared responsibility, while also being associated with lower academic stress (Procentese, Capone, Caso, & Donizzetti, 2020). However, this actually has the potential to cause crowds during the pandemic which has been banned by the Indonesian government since the enactment of social restrictions (Koesmawardhani, 2020). When referring to problem solving analysis skills, male students tend to make mistakes in designing problem solving. This is because men are less careful and thorough in planning settlements so that it affects the next step, namely carry out the plan (Aini, 2017).

# **Conclusions**

During Covid-19 Pandemic, Banjar tribal students were found to be experiencing academic stress, where the source of the stress was cognitive distortions that affected emotional reactions (mood), physiological, and maladaptive behavior. With the phenomenological study conducted, it was found that 3 types of cognitive distortions and 4 different impacts on emotional, physical, and behavioral reactions in Banjar students in attending online lectures depended on the learning method applied by the lecturer. The three types of cognitive distortions are: (1) catastrophizing; (2) all-or-nothing thinking; and (3) should statements. While the impact of these cognitive distortions in general is a feeling of laziness, boredom, fear, discomfort, drowsiness, shaking, and palpitations. In the context of student behavior, students also tend to neglect lectures, access social media, sleep, and go to hang out with friends.

However, this research has several limitations, including the subject of research that only comes from the faculty of education. The findings may have differences if the characteristics of the research subjects are broader. In addition, this study only explores data regarding the experience of students participating in online learning in general. Further exploration of various situations in online learning seems necessary to find other patterns of cognitive distortion.

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