

Sub Theme: Building Resilience

First Year Undergraduates' Emotional Stability, Motivation, and Online Learning Skills during COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This main objective of the study was to examine the relationships between emotional stability, motivation, and online study skills among first-year undergraduate students who were engaged in online learning from their respective homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 159 students who were studying online from their respective homes from one public university in the east coast of Malaysia were selected in the study. They were selected through purposive sampling method and need to answer two sets of instruments, i) the Learner Personality Profile and ii) Online Learning Skill through an online survey. Both instruments consisted of 60 items and 30 items respectively and were measured based on a five-point Likert scales. The Learner Personality Profile scale was (1) Never, (2) Rarely, (3) Sometimes, (4) Very Often, and (5) Always responses, while the Online Learning Skill scale consisted of (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (4) agree, and (5) Strongly Agree responses. The findings of the study showed that both male and female students reported low levels of emotional stability scores (mean=2.20 and mean=2.19 respectively). However, female students reported higher level of motivation scores (mean=3.90) than male students' scores (mean=3.61) based on a three-level range of mean scores (low=1.00 to 2.33, average=2.34 to 3.67, and high=3.68 to 5.00). Female students also reported higher level of online study skills scores (mean=3.90) than male students' scores (mean=3.61). The correlation analyses showed significant relationships between online study skills and emotional stability, and between motivation and emotional stability. Interestingly, the study reported that the motivation variable did not act as a mediating factor in the relationship between online study skills and emotional stability based on the multiple-regression analysis.

Keywords: *online learning, study skill, motivation, emotional stability, personality, COVID-19 pandemic*

Introduction

The COVID-19 global outbreak had made world news headlines after the novel coronavirus was discovered in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and declared a pandemic on 30 January 2020 by the World Health Organisation. It was thoroughly unexpected that the pandemic would hit the world so seriously and culminate in the introduction of various new norms in society. For instance, wearing a mask and social distancing became mandatory at the workplace and in social places. It had a tremendous effect on all aspects of human life, including education. Inadvertently, the COVID-19 global pandemic had triggered a substantial impact on global education and forcing the closure of educational institutions around the world in order to break the chain of the deadly virus. Approximately 1.5 billion students worldwide were impacted when schools, colleges and universities had to be closed in order to break the chain of the fatal COVID-19 virus (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2020).

Universities around the world were most hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. They had to drastically change their teaching and learning approaches and activities due to suit the new norm of tertiary learning. Mandatory physical classroom classes had to be replaced with fully online lectures. This unprecedented situation resulted in a paradigm shift for learning institutions and brought about the practices of new norms in higher education settings. For health and safety reasons, universities across the globe, including in Malaysia, were left with no option but to switch from the traditional mode of teaching and learning to the new mode of online teaching and learning.

Interestingly, online teaching and learning which instantly became a necessity during the COVID-19 pandemic offered a flexible way for the transmission of knowledge. The unfortunate reality of the new learning environment have caught many educational institutions, educators, and students by surprised. The higher education institutions' drastic shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on students, teachers, and learning outcomes (Kumar et al., 2021). Majority of them were not well prepared for this new learning environment. Students were no longer required to be physically present on campus to attend lectures and seminars, work in laboratories, and present or submit their academic work. Lecturers and professors who are the main figures on campus were no longer required to be present in their physical classes or labs. Instead, they were asked to deliver their lectures and supervisions from their respective homes. As the result of this new online learning mode, various online learning platforms with a variety of capabilities and strategies were employed by educational institutions in order to facilitate learning (Carter et al., 2020). Teaching methods have changed at higher education institutions, including direct online lectures, audio and video recordings, online materials and blended learning (Favale et al., 2020).

There is no definite answer or clear prediction as to when the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected higher education systems around the world for more than two years now, is likely to end. However, it has accelerated the importance of acquiring high-speed internet connection for teaching and learning. Universities became more well-prepared with the new online learning mode. They need to ensure that the teaching and learning activities are not disrupted, and all their students could access their learning materials online and be able to take active part in online learning activities during the pandemic and beyond.

Although online education has become an unexpected opportunity to achieve various benefits such as time savings and the ability to complete theoretical courses in the curriculum within the time frame specified, it has also faced several challenges. Malaysian university students, particularly those who had recently enrolled, were also impacted by the drastic shift away from the traditional mode of tertiary education. Several studies have reported mixed reactions from students towards the shift from face-to-face learning to online learning. While some students reported positive attitude and views towards online learning, others struggled with the changes (Che Ahmad Azlan et al., 2020; Gurbuz, 2014; Sad et al., 2014). Other related studies reported that many new students struggled in their first

few months and could not adapt well to the new circumstances (Ngampornchai & Adams, 2016; Safwana Nur Widad et al., 2020).

Studying in a university setting and living on campus after secondary school is the goal of most students. For some, setting foot on campus for the first time is a dream come true. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the current batch of new undergraduates were deprived of this opportunity. The rapid transmission of infections and sharp rise in the number of cases forced universities across the globe to close their campuses indefinitely to students, lecturers, and administrative staff. In Malaysia, classes were not allowed to operate during the movement control order (MCO) period imposed by the government. This is the first time in the history of Malaysian academia that students who obtained places in public and private universities were barred from registering physically on campus. Unlike their seniors, all academic activities and programmes such as attending classes and orientation activities for new students had to be conducted fully online.

Recent studies of first-year university students reported that changes in their learning experiences due to the COVID-19 pandemic would have a negative effect on their academic performance (Talsma et al., 2021). The transition from school to university is a challenging endeavor for many fresh undergraduates. It became more challenging when they had to suddenly switch from classroom learning to online learning. The latter requires them to have internet access and learning tools such as laptops and smartphones. Several studies have reported that technological requirements for online learning have put much pressure on students, parents, and schools (Kunjukunju et al., 2020). Many students felt pressured when they could not afford high-specification smartphones, laptops, or computers for their online learning classes. They became even more demotivated when they could not access online classes due to poor internet connection at home (Ahmed & Reddy, 2020; Clark & Mayer, 2016; Moore & Kearsley, 2005). New students reported that they needed more coaching and guidance from their lecturers on how to use the online system during their first year of studies effectively. According to Zuhail (2017), online tutors and lecturers must also acquire technological skills in order to make online classes effective. Cater et al. (2012) reported that students who lacked computer skills tended to experience higher levels of stress than those with good computer skills. They became more stressed and emotionally disturbed, and demotivated if they had no one to turn to when facing with difficulties during the online study (Albritton, 2003; Holcomb et al., 2004; Irizarry, 2002; Kemp, 2002; Sarker et al., 2020; Wang & Newlin, 2000).

The COVID-19 pandemic's profound effects are being felt most acutely in the education settings. The pandemic presents both a challenge and an opportunity for education. Many countries around the world are trying to continue teaching and learning through alternative channels, the majority of which are conducted online. The primary impediments to universal online education in developing countries are a lack of adequate internet speed, computers, and mobile data costs, as well as the family's financial situation and the students' mental health, all of which are associated with the digital divide (Sifat, 2021). Additionally, psychological distress is more prevalent when there is a lack of security and physical presence while studying (Phutela & Dwivedi, 2020). It is undeniable that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the lives of millions of people all over the world, and this has had a profound impact, including among students. The students are experiencing a decrease in the amount of content they are exposed to and the skills they learn, which has a knock-on effect on their emotional and mental well-being (Morgan & Simmons, 2021). Hence, during this difficult period, the resilience, emotional wellbeing, and motivation of students and the education system are several critical factors to be addressed during the pandemic crisis.

Literature Review

Online learning became the new approach in universities around the world with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, online learning was not the mainstream way of learning in the school system. The sudden transition in the mode of learning took many students, parents, and teachers by surprise. They had not expected the switch to online learning to happen so quickly. For

some students, the switch affected their readiness, emotional stability, and motivation. Sandybayev (2020) reported numerous studies on the stress and emotional instability this caused among students. Students reported having trouble adjusting to the new way of learning and feeling stressed. Earlier, Thomas (2012) and Amantha and Al-Samarraie (2019) had stated that numerous studies had been conducted to understand more about emotional stability as a factor which influenced the success of students under difficult stress conditions and having to adapt to a new method of learning. Without doubt, this approach is gaining popularity among schools, colleges, and universities, and is expected to be the main approach in teaching and learning for many years to come since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before the pandemic struck, students in secondary schools, colleges, and universities had to be physically present in their respective educational settings and attend face-to-face classes. School students spent most of their time at school. Malaysian primary and secondary school students in particular spent six to seven hours per day at school. They had to adhere to the traditional school system from their first day of primary school until their last day of secondary school. Apart from being a routine for 11 years, their attendance was also mandatory and part of school regulations. In addition, they had to take part in co-curricular activities after school sessions (Ana et al., 2020).

The rise of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic also led to a rise in telecommunication usage. Students now spend more time in front of screens, tablets, and smart phones because of the rise in technology. More worrying, the increase in exposure to smart devices and screens has been reported to increase stress and burnout levels (Phutela & Dwivedi, 2020). Studies on personality traits showed extroverted personalities were found to be more prone to telecommunication burnout whereas introverts were found to be more prone to telecommunication stress (Rahil Meymandpour & Zahra Bagheri, 2017). Hence, academic stress related to their ability to succeed in this new environment has becoming a particular source of concern for students in higher education. Although the number of students enrolled in online courses has increased over the past several years, the vast majority of students are still unfamiliar with the concept of distance learning. Students' psychological well-being is greatly influenced by their emotional stability, which has a direct impact on all aspects of their academic lives (Hernández-Torrano et al., 2020).

To utilise an online learning system, students must be proficient in the use of a computer or other smart device (Mohd Nurfikri & Teng, 2020; Chung et al., 2020). According to a study by Chinaza and Ke Yu (2019), two-thirds of new undergraduate students in Cameroon were unfamiliar with online learning, and 17% did not own a computer. The majority of students at African universities used only word processing, email, and web browsing. As a result, these students lacked computer literacy and suffered from online learning anxiety.

Emotional stability could be related to the ability to master computer skills in order to undertake online learning. This stability could be affected by Information Technology (IT) phobia caused by low computer literacy and conservatism. A study conducted by Sandybayev (2020) reported that 70% of the total respondents of first-year students experienced serious stress in online learning. Their stress level decreased when they rose to seniority in their studies. The majority of third-year students found e-learning useful and of significant benefit. They proposed that the higher institution create technology awareness, motivate learners, and help them change their behaviour to reduce stress and IT phobia (Holcomb et al., 2004; Bhuasiri et al., 2012). As a result, it clearly shows that emotional stability, which is linked to emotional resilience, has a significant impact on a person's mental health and social adaptation, particularly in stressful situations (Zhang et al., 2020). Emotional resilience is more likely to result in emotionally focused coping, which is associated with an individual's emotional efforts during stressful situations. This adaptive mechanism reestablishes and maintains normal emotional levels in the aftermath of significant events.

Online learning can be enjoyable for those who adapt, and motivation is a factor in assisting students in enjoying online learning and acting as a catalyst for learning. Motivated students are likely to take on challenges and are willing to learn new things which could lead to academic success (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Sandybayev, 2020). According to Bekele (2020) and Shahzad et al. (2020), there is a reciprocal relationship between learning and motivation, which has been researched countless times for the traditional education setting. Studies by Al-Rahmi et al. (2018) and Tinto (1975) indicate that lack of motivation contributes to higher dropout rates. Dropout rates are higher in online education settings than traditional settings, which suggests that motivation is one of the main factors in online learning (Hartnett, 2016; Palanisamy & Balogun, 2017; Harandi, 2015). This could be explained by the pandemic's cumulative stress and anxiety, which could easily demotivate and disengage students from their studies, as previous research has demonstrated that negative emotions can impair learning (Chiu et al., 2021).

On the other hand, studies conducted by Harandi (2015) and Serebryakovaa et al. (2016) concluded that motivated students are more likely to succeed in online learning. It was found that students could perform better academically outside the traditional classroom setting when the online delivery is as effective as face-to-face teaching (Harandi, 2015). It has been reported that online learners can be inspired by the performance of their peers during online learning activities, which indicates that universities can motivate their students by integrating digital technology into their teaching system and providing solutions for all concerns related to online learning. (Hew et al., 2020).

In order to maintain the emotional stability and motivation of students, specifically first-year undergraduates, their online learning skills have to be enhanced so that the learning activities could be conducted smoothly and without interruption. Thus, online lecturers and tutors should be technologically savvy and possess strong communication skills in order to motivate students and assist them in remaining calm while learning online. Without adequate technological skills, the learning process may be disrupted, resulting in reduced access to learning materials and academic distress for students.

Ideally, new undergraduate students should be provided with basic digital skill training so that they can become more fluent with the relevant digital technology prior to their online learning. The digital skills competency will inadvertently boost the level of students' confidence that will lead to better performance during online learning activities. They need to be familiar with a variety of online learning tools such as email, social media, live class interaction, and feedback provision (Easton, 2003). In addition, students' understanding could be enhanced when continuous assessments and feedback on students' online learning skill are consistently conducted by the university (Darabi et al., 2006).

Research Objectives

This study examined the relationships between emotional stability, motivation, and online study skills among first-year undergraduate students who were engaged in online learning from their respective homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were three main objectives that have been identified as follows:

- i. To measure the level of emotional stability, motivation, and online study skills among the new first-year undergraduates.
- ii. To measure the relationships between the emotional stability, motivation, and online study skills among the first-year undergraduates.
- iii. To measure the mediating effects of motivation on the online study skills and emotional stability among the first-year undergraduates.

Research Method

Data were collected through online surveys. Two sets of online questionnaires, Online Learning Skill and Learner Personality Profile, were distributed in the format of Google Forms to the respondents through email and WhatsApp. Respondents were given one week to answer those questionnaires and the returned questionnaires were analysed using SPSS software.

A total of 159 first-year full-time registered students at a public university on the east coast of Malaysia participated in this study. These students were currently studying online from home from 14 different states in Malaysia during the COVID-19 pandemic. They were enrolled during the September 2020 intake and were in the fourth week of their first semester when the study was being conducted. They were chosen through the purposive sampling method whereby the researcher specifically chose a batch of new students undertaking a degree course in counselling at the university. Table 1 provides the gender breakdown of the respondents. Of the 159 respondents, 135 were females (85%) while 24 were males (15%).

Table 1

Gender of Respondents

Gender	n	%
Male	24	15
Female	135	85

Two sets of instruments were used in this study. The first instrument, the Learner Personality Profile, measured nine personality traits. It contained 60 items measured on a five-point Likert scale: (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) very often, and (5) always. For the purpose of this study, only two out of the nine traits were chosen i.e., motivation and emotional stability (Table 2). The second instrument, Online Learning Skill, measured three constructs. It contained 30 items measured on a five-point Likert scale: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha reliability values for both instruments were reported at 0.93 and 0.95 respectively. In the Online Learning Skill instrument, only the study skill construct was used. Table 2 showed one selected construct under the Online Learning Skill instrument and two selected constructs highlighted in bold under the Learner Personality Profile.

Table 2

Instruments and Constructs Chosen in the Study

Instrument	Online Learning Skill	Learner Personality Profile
	Study Skill*	Motivation*
	Literacy Skill	Emotional Stability*
	Living Skill	Extraversion
Construct		Intrinsic
		Adaptability
		Accountability
		Self-Directed

Table 2 summarises the two instruments (Online Learning Skill and Learner Personality Profile) and three constructs chosen in the study (study skill, motivation and emotional skill) which are highlighted in bold.

Findings

This section reports the findings of the study based on the three research objectives mentioned earlier.

Study Skills

Table 3 summarises the respondents' learning skills. The assessment of learning skills included three constructs, which are study, literacy and life skills. Respondents were required to indicate their level of learning skills frequency in the questionnaire. The frequencies were reported on a five-point Likert scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree.

Table 3

Mean Scores of Respondents' Study Skills Based on Gender

Learning Skills	Gender	n	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Level
Study Skills	Male	24	3.61	.665	Average
	Female	135	3.88	.421	High
Literacy Skills	Male	24	3.64	.599	Average
	Female	135	3.82	.483	High
Learning Skills	Gender	n	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Level
Life Skills	Male	24	3.65	.459	Average
	Female	135	3.94	.475	High

Table 3 summarises the mean scores of respondents' study skills based on gender. The mean score on the study skill construct was 3.61 for male students and 3.88 for female students. In summary, the female students had a higher level of study skills than the male students.

Range of mean Scores

The interpretation of the mean score was adapted from Landell (2013) on the three levels of frequency (low, average, high) of learning skills as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Interpretation of Mean Score

Range of mean score	Frequency
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1.00 – 2.33	Low
2.34 – 3.67	Average
3.68 – 5.00	High

Study Skills Mean Scores of Male and Female Students

Table 5

Comparison of Mean Scores between Male and Female Students

Learning Skills Constructs	Gender	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Results
Study Skills	Male	3.61	-2.597	157	.010*	Significant difference
	Female	3.88				

*Significance at level 0.01

Table 5 presents a summary of the *t*-test on the study skill constructs of the male and female students' mean scores. The independent-samples *t*-test showed a significant difference in the study skill construct, whereby $t(157) = -2.597$, $p = 0.10$, two-tailed. In summary, the female students reported a higher level of learning skills than the male students.

Personality Constructs of Respondents

Table 6 summarises the respondents' motivation and emotional stability. These two constructs were chosen from the other seven personality constructs not reported in the study. These constructs were openness, self-effectiveness, adaptability, accountability, self-direction, cross-culture, and resiliency. The respondents were required to indicate their level of personality frequency in the questionnaire. They indicated this frequency based on a five-point Likert scale: (1) Never, (2) Rarely, (3) Sometimes, (4) Very Often, (5) Always.

Table 6

Personality Construct of Respondents

Personality Constructs	Gender	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
Motivation	Male	24	3.077	.4148	Average
	Female	135	3.375	.4171	Average
Emotional Stability	Male	24	2.196	.7257	Low
	Female	135	2.186	.8961	Low

Based on the participants' responses, the data were analysed and the mean score of each personality construct was shown in Table 6. It presents the summary of means for the personality constructs by comparing the mean score of the male and female students. It was evident that the motivation and emotional stability constructs reported average and low mean scores. The mean scores for the two constructs were between 2.186 and 3.375. The standard deviations for both constructs

were relatively similar for both male and female students. On average, female students reported a higher mean score than male students on the motivation construct (mean = 3.375).

Table 7

Comparison between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Students on Motivation and Emotional Stability Constructs

Personality Constructs	Gender	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Results
Motivation	Male	-3.233	157	.001*	Significant difference
	Female				
Emotional Stability	Male	.054	157	.957	No significant difference
	Female				

*Significance at level 0.01

Table 7 presents a summary of the *t*-test for the personality constructs by comparing the mean scores of the male and female students. An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis that there was no significant difference in the motivation and emotional stability constructs between the male and female students. The test was significant for motivation $t(157) = -3.233$, $p = .001$.

Correlation between Learning Skills and Personality

Table 1

Correlation between Learning Skills and Personality Constructs

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5
Learning Skills	-				
Study Skills	0.84*	-			
Personality	0.50*	0.36*	0.42*	0.57*	-
Motivation	0.45*	0.38*	0.35*	0.52*	0.69*
Emotional Stability	-	-0.30*	-0.25*	-0.24*	0.13

*Significance at level 0.01

Table 8 presents a summary of correlation between learning skills and two personality constructs (motivation and emotional stability). The correlation between learning skills and personality scores was found to be statistically significant, $r(157) = .50$, $p < .01$, two-tailed. The results suggest that students who scored high in learning skills tend to rate themselves as having the study skills. In general, the results suggest that students who scored high on the personality construct tend to rate themselves as motivated with the exception of emotional stability.

Motivation as a Mediation Effect between Study Skills and Emotional Stability

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual mediation model to investigate whether the motivation construct has an effect on the relationship between study skills and emotional stability. Motivation and study skills acted as the dependent variables while emotional stability acted as the independent

variable. A multiple regression analysis conducted reported a negative result ($p = 0.783$) whereby the motivation construct did not have an effect on the relationship between study skills and emotional stability. Therefore, it could be concluded that motivation is not a mediating factor in the relationship between study skills and emotional stability.

Figure 1

Conceptual Mediation Model

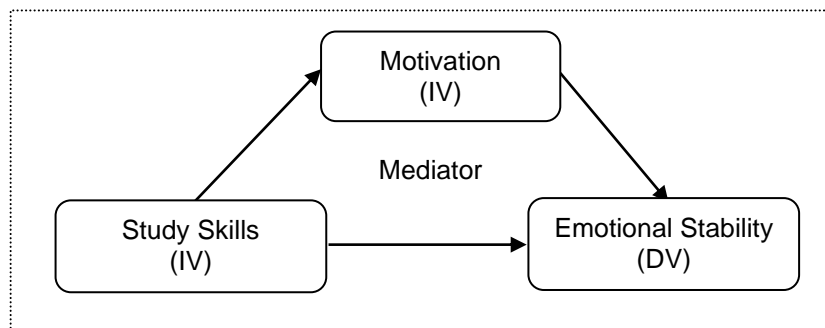


Table 9 reports the result analysis using multiple regression to investigate whether the motivation construct could be a mediating factor towards the relationship between study skills and emotional stability. The result $p = .783$ showed that there was no interaction between the motivation construct and study skills that would affect emotional stability.

Table 9

Multiple Regression Analysis

Emotional Stability	Coefficient	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	<i>F</i>
Model with mediation effect						
Constant	5.06	1.18	.240	0.10	0.08	5.61
Study Skill	-0.92	-0.82	.413			
Motivation	-0.15	-0.12	.909			
Interaction	0.09	0.28	.783			

Discussion

This timely study answered three research questions. It found that female students were more motivated and internet savvy than male students in undertaking online learning. However, both male and female students reported experiencing some emotional issues in studying online at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. It could be due to several reasons, such as stress, fatigue, lack of focus, low self-confidence, and incompetence in studying online. Other studies reported that the learning situation at home, internet connectivity, tutor-student relationship, readiness of the subject matter, content, technical infrastructure that support online learning, and students' personality contributed to students' emotional wellbeing (Ahmed & Reddy, 2020; Minghat et al., 2020).

The study reported a significant relationship between motivation and emotional stability, and online study skill and level of emotional stability. Female students reported a higher level of motivation than male students in studying online at home. However, both male and female students reported a low level of emotional stability in learning online. Despite the significant relationship

reported between motivation and emotional stability among male and female students, motivation was not a mediating factor which contributed towards the relationship between online study skill and emotional stability among first-year undergraduates.

Five recommendations are highlighted in this study. Firstly, the university needs to facilitate and provide active engagements with students during online learning. Secondly, the university needs to look into students' readiness to engage in the online learning mode. The study reported that new students had some issues with online study skills since many of them were not ready for online learning when the COVID-19 pandemic began. Thirdly, university counsellors must provide counselling, guidance, and intervention programmes for students who experience emotional turmoil during online learning at home. Students could seek guidance and counselling if they experience symptoms of stress or depression. Fourth, the university's centre of student learning could provide a more student-friendly learning system, especially for those who lack online study skills. Finally, online instructors or lecturers can facilitate a better online learning experience for new students. The university needs to ensure that its online lecturers are well-trained in using the online learning system and possess a high level of online teaching and learning competency. Apart from digital technological knowledge, they need to be student-friendly and demonstrate good communication and coaching skills. The implementation of these five recommendations by the university will be timely and provide more student-centric online teaching and learning activities for new undergraduate students who undertake online learning from home.

Conclusion

This study outlined three specific objectives. Firstly, to measure the level of emotional stability, motivation, and online study skills of first-year undergraduates. Secondly, to measure the relationship between emotional stability, motivation, and online study skills of the first-year undergraduates. Thirdly, to measure the mediating effects of motivation on the online study skills and emotional stability of the first-year undergraduates. The survey method was used to collect data from 159 first-year registered undergraduates pursuing an undergraduate degree in counselling. Selected through the purposive sampling technique, these first-year undergraduates were engaged in online learning at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic and movement control order imposed by the government. The study revealed interesting findings about the current state of online study skill, motivation level, and emotional stability of new first-year undergraduates who were learning online at home. For example, the motivation variable did not affect the students' state of emotional wellbeing during online learning. The high or low levels of motivation had no direct impact on these students' level of emotional wellbeing. In addition, the motivation variable did not mediate the relationship between online study skills and emotional wellbeing. However, it would be valuable for the university to further investigate the level of emotional stability, motivation, and online study skills of new undergraduate students from other academic programmes of studies who studied online during the COVID-19 pandemic and post COVID-19. The findings have provided valuable information to the university about its students' level of emotional wellbeing, motivation, and online study skills who were engaged in online learning. In conclusion, the findings of the current study have added to the field of knowledge in the areas of counselling, educational psychology, e-learning, and higher education.

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