What do Graduate Students in Theology Feel in School?

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Abstract This study explored two domains of academic emotions—positive emotions (enjoyment, hope and pride) and negative emotions (anger, anxiety, shame, hopelessness, and boredom) and their relations to academic control and achievement. The Academic Emotion Questionnaire AEQ (Pekrun et al., 2005) was given to (*N*=100) graduate students in theology (Loyola School of Theology of Ateneo de Manila University, Maryhill School of Theology and Theology and Religious Education Department of De La Salle University). There was a goodness of fit. Hopelessness, boredom, anger and anxiety loaded. Positive emotion and negative emotion were negatively correlated. At the end, some suggestions were given on how to help students increase their sense of academic control vis-à-vis their academic goal and promote positive academic emotions resulting to better score performance.

Keywords: academic control, positive and negative academic emotions, academic goal

Introduction

In counseling, counselors try their very best to determine what the client feels but it is seldom asked how students feel in school. This is also true with educational research (Pekrun & Frese, 1992; Schutz & Lanehart, 2002), students' emotions are seldom considered. In fact, emotions can facilitate or impede students' self-regulation of learning and performance (Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002). The question is: which emotions are facilitative in the teaching and learning situation and which ones tend to impede?

This study explored how graduate students in theology feel in school and its relation to their performance. Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) said that there is a relationship between students' goals and emotions. Mastery goals are positively related to students' positive affect (Linnenbrink, 2005; Wolters, Yu, & Pintrich, 1996). When students have positive emotions, they tend to perform better while when they have negative emotions, they tend to perform poorly. Performance-avoidance goals are positively related to students' test anxiety (Elliot & McGregor, 1999; McGregor & Elliot, 2002). The results of the study can be helpful on how to enhance the students' performance.

Emotions

Moods unlike e*motions* have lower intensity and have no specific referent (Pekrun, 2006; Rosenberg, 1998). Emotions, on the other hand, have specific affective, cognitive,

physiological and behavioral elements (Scherer, 2000). For example, anxiety can include feelings like tense and uneasy (affective), worries (cognitive), impulses to escape from the situation (motivational), and peripheral activation (physiological) [Scherer, 2009]. The motivational component was added in 2009, to which Scherer (2009) said that anxiety test instruments had neglected.

Having knowledge about these aspects of emotions can help improve the teaching and learning situation. As a result, students can be motivated to achieve more.

Achievement Emotions

Studies on emotions related to achievement outcomes are called achievement emotions. They are emotions like fear of failure, or pride and shame following performance feedback (Folkman& Lazarus, 1985; Weiner, 1985; Zeidner, 1998). Achievement emotions are both related to achievement activities and/or outcomes (Pekrun, 2006). Some examples are enjoyment or boredom during teaching and learning, and anger due to demands of teaching and learning process (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun et al., 2010). The achievement emotions help the students perform better. It is important that teachers return the papers, projects and other outputs of students so that they get feedback on their performance.

As already stated, there are two types of achievement emotions: *activity emotions* (ongoing achievement-related activities) and *outcome emotions* (outcomes of these activities) [Pekrun et al., 2002; Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2006a]. Enjoyment, boredom, frustration, and/or anger as a result of teaching and learning situation, are examples of activity-related achievement emotions (Pekrun et al., 2002, 2010). Pekrun (2006) also included anticipatory emotions (e. g., hope for success, anxiety of failure) and retrospective emotions (e.g., pride or shame experienced after achievement feedback).

The positive emotions like pleasant/enjoyment were also differentiated from negative emotions like unpleasant/anxiety (Pekrun, 2006; Feldman, Barrett, & Russell, 1998; Pekrun et al., 2002; Linnenbrink, 2007). These positive and negative academic emotions motivate the students to achieve more.

Control-value Theory of Achievement Emotions

Pekrun (2006; Pekrun et al., 2007) used control-value theory as a framework for defining emotions, constructing scales, and validating the instrument. The theory says that achievement emotions and goals happen when the person feels (appraisal) in control or extinguished when the person feels out of control [Skinner, 1996]. "Value appraisals" (Pekrun, 2006) relate to the subjective importance of achievement-related activities and outcomes. When the value appraisal is high, the person strives harder resulting to high grades (outcome) and when value appraisal is low, there is less efforts resulting to low grades. Another word for this is "academic control" (Perry, Hladkyj, Pekrun, & Pelletier, 2001). If the students perceive that they have more control then they perform better. They can be positively influenced giving the assessment rubrics earlier will help the students have academic control and can result to better performance. However, there are also mediating mechanisms responsible for these effects, including students' motivation, strategy used, and regulation of learning (Pekrun, 1992b, 2006).

Attributional Theories of Achievement Emotions

The attributional analysis of achievement motivation states that persons who are high in achievement motivation: (1) have high achievement related activities, (2) persist despite of failure and continue goal activities, and (3) choose difficult tasks more frequently (Weiner & Kukla, 1970; Weiner et al., 1971). Every success achieved is a source of pride and increase self-confidence. The feedback and encouragement given to the students are valuable. Weiner (1980) said that thoughts determine what we feel and feelings determine what we do.

Process Model of Perceived Control

The perceived control model distinguishes three different sets of beliefs: (a) certain potential causes can produce outcomes, (b) one has access to potential causes, and (c) one can produce desired outcomes (Skinner, Chapman, & Baltes, 1988). The learning environment and the teachers' behavior are determinants of student's perceived control in school performance (Crandall & Crandall, 1983; Deri, Schwartz, Sheinman, & Ryan, 1981; Lamb & Skinner, 1991; Connell & Wellborn, 1991). Teachers can enhance students' motivation in school and can bring about better performance.

Effects of Emotions on Learning and Performance

Pekrun (2006) further stated that positive emotions like enjoyment, hope, and pride promote motivation with positive effects on performance. On the other hand, negative emotions such as hopelessness and boredom have negative effects on performance. Consequently, teaching and learning should promote positive emotions (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun et al., 2002b). Classrooms that are characterized by enjoyment of teaching and learning can promote positive development and achievement (Frenzel, Goetz, Lu, Pekrun, & Sutton, 2009). On the other hand, emotions like anger, anxiety, and shame results to avoidance of failure and have beneficial consequences for most students (Boekaerts, 1993; Hembree, 1988; Pekrun, 2006). Needless to say that a right amount of anger, anxiety and shame can also promote performance.

Pleasant emotions are positively related with learning related motivation, self-regulatory efforts, activation of cognitive resources, and performance (Ashby, Isen, & Turken, 1999; Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun et al., 2002a). Thus, a desirable goal of teaching is to enhance students' positive achievement emotion that is balanced by the negative achievement emotion.

Achievement Emotions in Culture

Culture is usually ignored in studies. Zang and Cross (2011) observed that Americans tend take a positive view of successes, and a common adage is "If it feels good, do it," which reflects the tendency to persist on those things one does well. On the other hand, the Chinese tend to take a positive view of failures, and personal losses. They need not mean the end of one's dreams. For Filipinos, the common adage is, "Nasa tao ang gawa, nasa Diyos ang awa" (Effort is on people; mercy is on God.). The control-value theory of achievement emotion seems to be embedded even in the Philippine culture.

In the theology of grace, it says: "God loves us first." This brings us to the perceived control model, where the three sets of beliefs are all satisfied: (a) certain potential causes can produce outcomes, (b) one has access to potential causes, and (c) one can produce desired outcomes (Skinner, Chapman, & Baltes, 1988).

Achievement Emotion Questionnaire (AEQ)

There had been different versions of the original Achievement Emotion Questionnaire (AEQ). Some had been specific for a particular subject like Mathematics (Frenzel, Thrash, Pekrun, & Goetz, 2007; Pekrun, Goetz, Frenzel, Barchfeld, & Perry, 2011). It was also tried for cross-cultural usability and produced similar findings (Frenzel, Thrash, et al., 2007; Pekrun et al., 2010; Titz, 2001). Even with younger students, the instrument was also successful (Frenzel, Pekrun, et al., 2007; Frenzel, Thrash, et al., 2007; Lichtenfeld, Pekrun, Stupnisky, Reiss, & Murayama, 2010).

Present Study

This study focused on what graduate students in theology feel in school. The original version of AEQ was used. It was hypothesized that since most of them just go through the motion of studying theology (case of seminarians) to become priests, many of them will have negative emotions in school. However, the right amount of negative emotions (beneficial consequence) will also be helpful for students. This study will be helpful to determine how to improve the teaching and learning situation for the graduate school students in theology.

Method

Research Design

The descriptive cross-sectional design was used in this confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The data were collected from the participants at a single point in time. Data were compared and analyzed across the variables of interest in a relatively brief period of time (Johnson, 2001). It is exploratory because it tested a model (see figure 1) where there are two latent variables (positive emotions and negative emotions) and eight academic emotions were investigated (manifest variables—positive: enjoyment, hope, pride; and negative: anger, anxiety, shame, hopelessness, boredom).

Participants and Procedure

The participants were 100 graduate students in theology (N=93 males and N=7 females). A further breakdown resulted to (N= 89 seminarians, N=2 priests, N=3 religious sisters, N=2 ex-seminarians, and N=4 lay persons). They are from 3 theological schools in Metro Manila (Loyola School of Theology\LST of Ateneo de Manila University; Maryhill School of Theology\ MST; and Theology & Religious Education\TRED of De La Salle University) where the researcher is teaching. In terms of nationality (N=20 foreigners, and N=80 Filipinos). They are all students in (pastoral) counseling. Their ages varies (M= 31.87 years; *Mode=33, SD*= 5.76) with the youngest at 24 and the oldest at 49.

Measure

The Academic Emotion Questionnaire AEQ (Pekrun et al., 2005) was administered to graduate students in theology. This instrument is comprised of 75 items that is designed to measure each of the eight academic emotions. This instrument measured three positive or pleasant academic emotions (enjoyment, hope, pride) and five negative or unpleasant academic emotions (anger, anxiety, shame, hopelessness, boredom). The participants responded to a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly agree). The model's CFIs are above .95 and RMSEAsbelow .05 are thought to indicate good fit.

Statistical Analysis

To examine the reliability and constructive validity of this instrument to graduate students in theology, a descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients were computed.

To test for construct validity of the scale, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used. More specifically, two-factor (CFA) latent constructs of positive academic emotions and negative academic emotions were computed. Under the positive academic emotion were three manifest constructs: enjoyment, hope, and pride. Under the negative academic emotion were five manifest constructs: anger, anxiety, hopelessness, boredom, and shame. For additional test construct validity, zero-order correlations among the manifest variables were computed. Evidence for construct validity would be shown if the positive academic emotions are positively correlated with each other and the negative academic emotions are also positively correlated with each other.

Results

The Cronbach's alpha values for each scale of AEQ were calculated. Each reliability estimate ranges from 0.84 to 0.94. They were all acceptable and were presented in Table 1. The last column showed the original version Cronbach's alphas (from 0.77 to 0.92) of AEQ (Pekrun et al., 2005). It is noticeable that the present study had higher values. Both had the original 75-item test. The overall Cronbach's alpha for the academic emotions of this study is high at 0.94.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients

Academic Emotion	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha for original version[a]
Enjoyment	1.87	4.59	0.84	0.77
Hope	1.90	2.84	0.84	0.77
Pride	2.32	3.38	0.84	0.75
Anger	3.86	5.29	0.91	0.86
Anxiety	3.42	7.51	0.92	0.84
Shame	3.42	7.53	0.91	0.86
Hopelessness	3.86	6.61	0.93	0.90
Boredom	3.76	7.02	0.94	0..92

[a]*FromPekrun, Goerts, and Perry (2005)*

Establishing Construct Validity through Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In Table 2, the fit indices of the study met the baseline criteria for bet fit (χ^2=314, FMSEA= 0.09, MDFI= 0.93, PGI= 0.96, APGI, BCFI= 0.940). All are within acceptable range (Bryne, 2001).

Table 2
Goodness of Fit Indices

RMSEA	MDFI	PGI	APGI	χ^2	BCFI
0.088	0.929	0.965	0.933	314.62	0.940

A zero-order correlation was obtained between the eight manifest variables (see Table 3). The construct validity would be supported if the three kinds of positive academic emotions are positively correlated with each other, and if the five kinds of negative academic emotions are positively correlated with each other. The zero-order correlations supported this assumption.

Table 3
Zero-order Correlations among the Eight Manifest Variables

|		Inter-Item Correlation Matrix							
			2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Positive	1. Enjoyment	----							
Academic	2. Hope	.617***	----						
Emotions	3. Pride	.375***	.453***	----					
Negative	4. Anger	-.406***	-.392***	-.129***	-----				
Academic	5. Anxiety	-.278***	-.324***	-.027	.644***	-----			
Emotions	6. Shame	-.115***	-.193***	-.090	.545***	.682***	-----		
	7. Hopelessness	-.206***	-.318***	-.164***	.639***	.583***	.691***	-----	
	8. Boredom	-.352***	-.361***	-.229***	.620***	.651***	.589***	.737***	----

***p<.001

In terms of factor loading (see Table 4), none of the positive academic emotions loaded. However, four of the negative academic emotions loaded (anger= 2 of 9, anxiety= 2 of 11, hopelessness= 4 of 11, boredom= 3 of 11). This showed that for the graduate students in theology, the negative academic emotions are more felt. The academic emotions of hopelessness and boredom top the negative academic emotions

Table 4
Factor Loading

5A. I get annoyed about having to study.	.71
9A. After extended studying, I'm so angry that I get tense.	.70
Anxiety (2 out of 11)	
2AX. I get tense and nervous while studying.	.71
9AX. When I have to study, I start to feel queasy.	.71
Hopelessness (4 out of 11)	
1HL. I feel hopeless when I think about studying.	.71
2HL. I feel helpless.	.73
3HL. I feel resigned.	.75
4HL. I'm resigned to the fact that I don't have the capacity to master this material.	.73
Boredom (3 out of 11)	
1B. The material bores me.	.73
2B. Studying for my courses bores me.	.77
10B. The material bores me so much that I fell depleted.	.74

Figure 1
Confirmatory Factor Analysis
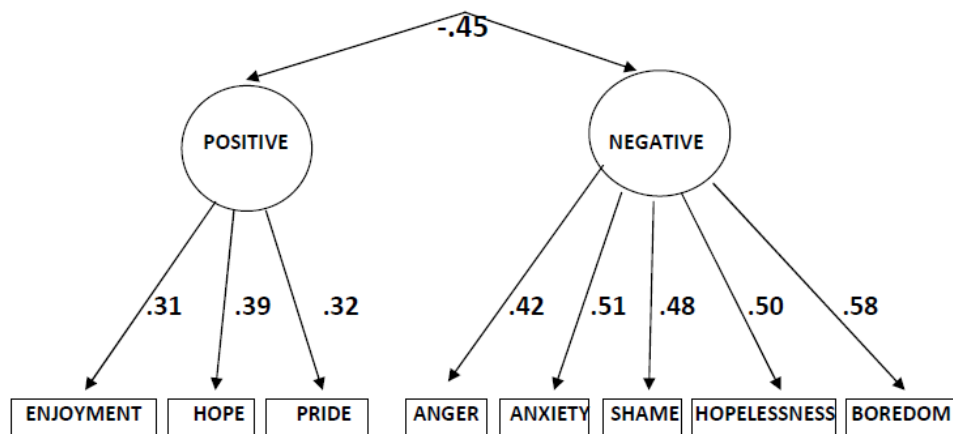
The positive academic emotions are negatively correlated to negative academic emotions.

Discussion

It was hypothesized that since most of the graduate students in theology just go through the motion of studying theology (case of seminarians) to become priests, many of them will have negative feelings in school. It was confirmed in the study that the graduate students in theology generally have the negative academic emotions of anger, anxiety,

hopelessness, and boredom. Their achievement goal (Maehr, 1989) is priesthood and not necessarily on getting high grades. Although many of them do get high grades probably due to their appraised control value or academic control (Perry, Hladkyj, Pekrun, & Pelletier, 2001).

There are four formation areas for future priests: community life, prayer life, apostolic life, and academic life. Looking at attributional analysis of achievement motivation (Weiner, & Kukla, 1970; Weiner et al., 1971), their source of motivation is more on the achievement goal of priesthood that motivate them to continue in spite of formation-linked difficulties/challenges, being academic as one of them.

Knowing that academic life is just one aspect of formation, those who teach them in the schools of theology can continue to motivate them to produce desired outcomes (Skinner, Chapman, & Baltes, 1988). Since the learning environment and the teachers' behavior are determinants of student's perceived control in school performance (Crandall & Crandall, 1983; Deri, Schwartz, Sheinman, & Ryan, 1981; Lamb & Skinner, 1991; Connell & Wellborn, 1991), the school community relations can be improved. A better environment can be created where the school can really become a second home. Second, teachers can also effect motivation in school by witnessing to what they are teaching. Since many of them are also priests, they can make Christ incarnate. A priest is an "Alter Christus" (another Christ). Lastly, teachers should emphasize student responsibility and autonomy via homework assignment (Trautwein, Niggli, Schnyder, &Lu, 2009).

There are some recommendations to help graduate theology students have more positive academic emotions and improve their performance:

1. The quality of instruction can be improved for clarity, structure and presentation. This will increase their sense of control and consequently their positive academic emotions.
2. It is important that the academic materials are matched according to the capability of the students. In this way, their perceived academic control is improved that will result to an increase in positive academic emotions and better performance. A good screening process will help process.
3. More classroom interactions (Krapp, 2005), intra-school and interschool interactions that can meet the students' need for social relatedness can increase positive academic emotions and decrease academic boredom.
4. Giving students more autonomy and cooperative learning will help students have self-regulation and will increase their perception of academic control resulting to positive academic emotions.
5. Frequent and immediate feedback can have attributional impact on their control appraisals and outcome emotions. Feedback can center on how the students can improve to boost their sense of control rather than contributing to academic anxiety and hopelessness.

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Appendix
Academic Emotions Questionnaire (AEQ)

___ Male or ___ Female   Age: ____

School: _____

Direction: Pls. indicate how you typically feel, after having studied. Encircle the number of your choice.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1E. I look forward to studying.	1	2	3	4	5
2E. I enjoy the challenge of learning the material.	1	2	3	4	5
3E. I enjoy acquiring new knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
4E. I enjoy dealing with the course material.	1	2	3	4	5
5E. Reflecting on my progress in coursework makes me happy.	1	2	3	4	5
6E. I study more than required because I enjoy it so much.	1	2	3	4	5
7E. I am happy about the progress I made that I am motivated to continue studying.	1	2	3	4	5
8E. Certain subjects are so enjoyable that I am motivated to do extra readings about them.	1	2	3	4	5
9E. When my studies are going well, it gives me a rush.	1	2	3	4	5
10E. I get physically excited when my studies are going well.	1	2	3	4	5
1H. I have optimistic view toward studying.	1	2	3	4	5
2H. I feel confident when studying.	1	2	3	4	5
3H. I feel confident that I will be able to master the material.	1	2	3	4	5
4H. I feel optimistic that I will make good progress at studying.	1	2	3	4	5
5H. The thought of achieving my learning objectives inspires me.	1	2	3	4	5
6H. My sense of confidence motivates me.	1	2	3	4	5
1P. I'm proud of myself.	1	2	3	4	5
2P. I'm proud of my capacity.	1	2	3	4	5
3P. I think I can be proud of my accomplishments, I am very motivated.	1	2	3	4	5

Cont. Appendix

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4P. Because I want to be proud of my accomplishments, I am very motivated.	1	2	3	4	5
5P. When I solve a difficult problem in my studying, my heart beats with pride.	1	2	3	4	5
6P. When I excel at my work, I swell with pride.	1	2	3	4	5
1A. I get angry when I have to study.	1	2	3	4	5
2A. Studying makes me irritated.	1	2	3	4	5
3A. I get angry while studying.	1	2	3	4	5
4A. I'm annoyed that I have to study so much.	1	2	3	4	5
5A. I get annoyed about having to study.	1	2	3	4	5
6A. Because I get so upset over the amount of material, I don't even want to begin studying.	1	2	3	4	5
7A. I get so angry I feel like throwing textbook out of the window.	1	2	3	4	5
8A. When I sit at my desk for a long time, my irritation makes me restless.	1	2	3	4	5
9A. After extended studying, I'm so angry that I get tense.	1	2	3	4	5
1AX. When I look at the books I still have to read, I get anxious.	1	2	3	4	5
2AX. I get tense and nervous while studying.	1	2	3	4	5
3AX. When I can't keep up with my studies, it makes me fearful.	1	2	3	4	5
4AX. I worry whether I'm able to cope with all my work.	1	2	3	4	5
5AX. The subject scares me since I don't fully understand it.	1	2	3	4	5
6AX. I worry whether I have properly understood the material.	1	2	3	4	5
7AX. I get so nervous that I don't even want to begin to study.	1	2	3	4	5
8AX. While studying, I feel like distracting myself in order to reduce anxiety.	1	2	3	4	5
9AX. When I have to study, I start to feel queasy. (ill)	1	2	3	4	5
10AX. As time runs out, my heart begins to race.	1	2	3	4	5

Cont. Appendix

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11AX. Worry about not completing the material makes me sweat.	1	2	3	4	5
1S. I feel ashamed.	1	2	3	4	5
2S. I feel ashamed about my constant procrastination.	1	2	3	4	5
3S. I feel ashamed that I can't absorb the simplest of details.	1	2	3	4	5
4S. I feel ashamed because I am not as adept as others in studying.	1	2	3	4	5
5S. I feel embarrassed. About not being able to fully explain the material to others.	1	2	3	4	5
6S. I feel ashamed when I realize that I lack ability.	1	2	3	4	5
7S. My memory gaps embarrass me.	1	2	3	4	5
8S. Because I have had so much troubles with the course material, I avoid discussing it.	1	2	3	4	5
9S. I don't want anybody to know when I haven't been able to understand something.	1	2	3	4	5
10S. When somebody notices how little I understand, I avoid eye contact.	1	2	3	4	5
11S. I turn red when I don't know the answer to a question relating to the course material.	1	2	3	4	5
1HL. I feel hopeless when I think about studying.	1	2	3	4	5
2HL. I feel helpless.	1	2	3	4	5
3HL. I feel resigned.	1	2	3	4	5
4HL. I'm resigned to the fact that I don't have the capacity to master this material.	1	2	3	4	5
5HL. After studying, I'm resigned to the fact that I haven't got the ability.	1	2	3	4	5
6HL. I'm discouraged about the fact that I'll never learn the material.	1	2	3	4	5
7HL. I worry because my abilities are not sufficient for my program of studies.	1	2	3	4	5
8HL. I fell so helpless that I can't give my studies my full efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
9HL. I wish I could quit because I can't cope with it.	1	2	3	4	5

Cont. Appendix

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10HL. My lack of confidence makes me exhausted before even I start.	1	2	3	4	5
11HL. My hopelessness undermines all my energy.	1	2	3	4	5
1B. The material bores me.	1	2	3	4	5
2B. Studying for my courses bores me.	1	2	3	4	5
3B. Studying is dull and monotonous.	1	2	3	4	5
4B. While studying this boring material, I spend my time thinking of how time stands still.	1	2	3	4	5
5B. The material is so boring that I find myself daydreaming.	1	2	3	4	5
6B. I find my mind wandering while I study.	1	2	3	4	5
7B. Because I'm bored, I have no desire to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
8B. I would rather put off this boring work till tomorrow.	1	2	3	4	5
9B. Because I'm bored, I get tired sitting at my desk.	1	2	3	4	5
10B. The material bores me so much that I fell depleted.	1	2	3	4	5
11B. While studying, I seem to drift off because it's so boring.	1	2	3	4	5