MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

Forum Kajian Pendidikan Keagamaan NTT
Jalan Elt Tari, KM 9, Desa Naiola, Kecamatan Bikomi Selatan, Kefamenanu
Home Page: https://multidisciplinaryjournal.ejurnal.org/index.php/mdj

OPEN ACCESS

The Impact of Habitual Reflection at the End of Learning Activities on the Emotional Regulation Skills of Grade VIII B Students at SMP Negeri 2 Kupang

Gregorius Yosep Mario Djay Weti[1)], Antonius I. N. Tukan[2)] Aloysius E. Monteiro[3)]
STIPAS Keuskupan Agung Kupang[1,2,3)]
gregoriusweti@gmail.com[1)], nginotuakn@gmail.com[2)], monteiro.louis13@gmail.com[3)]

Abstract

This study examines the impact of habitual reflection implemented at the end of learning activities on the emotional regulation skills of Grade VIII B students at SMP Negeri 2 Kupang. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the research collected data through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Findings indicate that consistent engagement in reflective practices contributed to enhanced emotional awareness, improved behavioral control, and the emergence of moral and spiritual insight. Teachers played a central role by guiding structured reflection, fostering emotionally supportive classroom environments, and modeling authentic emotional expression. Although several students faced difficulties such as limited emotional vocabulary and fear of vulnerability, targeted interventions and differentiated support helped mitigate these barriers. The study concludes that reflection serves as a practical and sustainable pedagogical tool for promoting emotional maturity alongside academic development. As students became more adept at articulating emotional experiences, they demonstrated growth in self regulation, empathy, and resilience, contributing to a more harmonious and reflective classroom culture.

Keywords: Emotional Regulation Skill, Habitual Reflection, Learning Activities.

Introduction

Education serves not only to impart knowledge but also to shape character and personality. In modern educational settings, emotional development must be considered alongside cognitive advancement (Dogham et al., 2025; Haag et al., 2024). While cognitive development often dominates educational discourse, neglecting the emotional dimension can result in an incomplete understanding of student growth (Zheng et al., 2023). Emotional maturity enables learners to navigate challenges, collaborate effectively, and sustain motivation over time. Therefore, cultivating emotional intelligence together with intellectual skills is essential for nurturing balanced individuals who can thrive in complex and demanding real-world environments (Mertens et al., 2022).

The Indonesian national education framework emphasizes the formation of dignified citizens through spiritual, intellectual, as well as emotional growth. This includes nurturing emotionally intelligent learners who demonstrate responsibility and maturity (Teonata & Iswanto, 2021). Such a vision corresponds with global educational trends that advocate for the development of learners who are well rounded and capable of making meaningful contributions to society. By integrating emotional and spiritual development into the curriculum, Indonesia's education system seeks to instill fundamental values such as empathy, discipline, and self-awareness (Akbari et al., 2025).

Despite national policies that promote inclusive and holistic education, emotional issues among students remain widespread. Emotional instability can impede academic performance and weaken interpersonal relationships (Edara, 2023). These emotional challenges often appear subtly, for example through student withdrawal from group tasks or persistent difficulties with concentration during lessons. Without timely intervention, such problems may worsen and result in ongoing academic underachievement or behavioral disruptions (de la Barrera et al., 2021). As a result, schools must implement proactive strategies that embed emotional support within everyday instructional practices (Santos et al., 2021).

When incorporated into the learning process, reflection becomes a powerful transformative tool. It provides students with the opportunity to review their experiences, recognize their emotional responses, and adjust their reactions to both academic and social challenges (Schlosser & Paetsch, 2023). Through reflection, learners begin to internalize lessons more deeply, moving beyond surface-level comprehension. This process fosters both critical thinking and emotional insight (Arvatz et al., 2025). It also helps learners connect their personal experiences with academic content, thereby deepening engagement and strengthening their ability to regulate their emotions effectively (Pazhooyan et al., 2024).

Emotional regulation, as a key component of emotional intelligence, significantly influences classroom behavior, decision making, and social interaction (De Neve et al., 2023). Reflection exercises conducted at the end of each lesson can encourage greater self-awareness while enhancing emotional control. Consistent reflection not only improves emotional clarity but also fosters classroom harmony and a stronger sense of individual responsibility. As students become more skilled at identifying and managing their emotional states, they are better prepared

to engage constructively with peers, comply with classroom expectations, and make more thoughtful choices.

At SMP Negeri 2 Kupang, emotional issues are frequently observed among Grade VIII B students. Teachers report behaviors such as classroom disruptions, inattentiveness, and recurrent interpersonal conflicts, all of which suggest inadequate emotional regulation. These persistent issues reveal a significant shortfall in current pedagogical practices, especially in meeting students' socio-emotional needs. If such concerns remain unaddressed, they may negatively impact the classroom environment and hinder both individual learning and group academic progress.

Although these students demonstrate sufficient intellectual capacity, their academic difficulties are often linked to anxiety, frustration, or disengagement. These symptoms point to deficiencies in emotional competence rather than in cognitive ability. The disparity between intellectual potential and emotional self-management suggests that academic interventions alone may not suffice. Consequently, educational approaches must address students' emotional needs by equipping them with practical tools to recognize, express, and regulate their feelings effectively throughout the learning process.

To address these concerns, teachers at the school have implemented reflection activities conducted at the end of each lesson, aiming to improve student self-control and behavior. Nevertheless, the impact of these practices on emotional regulation remains uncertain and calls for systematic evaluation. Although initial anecdotal evidence indicates some positive behavioral changes, a thorough assessment is required to determine the long-term effectiveness of such interventions. Insights from this evaluation may contribute to broader educational practices that prioritize emotional development within the standard curriculum.

Engaging in reflective practices may help students reinterpret classroom experiences in a constructive manner. Through guided introspection, learners can start identifying their emotional conditions and adopt appropriate strategies for managing them. As they participate in regular reflection, students begin forming coherent narratives about their academic and emotional experiences. This process not only enhances self-understanding but also promotes the use of proactive coping mechanisms. As a result, emotional resilience and academic perseverance are strengthened.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. It focused on the reflective habits implemented at the end of learning sessions among Grade VIII B students at SMP Negeri 2 Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara Province. Data collection involved semi structured interviews with teachers and students, supplemented by classroom observations and document analysis. The selection of informants was purposive, prioritizing individuals directly involved in implementing or experiencing reflection practices. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data, allowing researchers to identify patterns and meanings related to emotional development.

To support the rigor and structure of the analysis, NVivo software was employed to manage and code the qualitative data. The software enabled systematic organization of interview transcripts, observation notes, and student journal entries into categorized nodes, representing emergent emotional and behavioral themes. Through NVivo's query and visualization features, such as coding matrices and word frequency outputs, researchers were able to trace connections across data sources and identify recurring patterns with greater consistency. This digital analytic process enhanced transparency and reduced subjectivity by allowing the coding framework to be reviewed and refined throughout the analysis.

Research Findings

This section presents the key findings derived from qualitative data analysis, highlighting the students' perceptions and experiences related to reflective learning practices. Through thematic coding of interview responses and visualization of keyword frequency, several core themes emerged, each reflecting distinct yet interconnected aspects of how reflection is understood, facilitated, and experienced within the learning environment. The analysis not only reveals the students' conceptual grasp of reflection but also illustrates the role of teachers, emotional outcomes, and the challenges encountered in sustaining reflective habits. Each theme is elaborated below in accordance with the data visualizations and thematic structures obtained.

1. Understanding the Concept of Reflection

The first theme centers on students' interpretations of reflection. Most participants perceived reflection as a process of articulating personal experiences and sharing them with others. Others, however, viewed reflection as a medium for character formation, particularly in fostering the courage to perform and take initiative. These findings are substantiated by the word

cloud visualization, in which “reflection” and “experience” emerged with the highest frequencies, appearing 30 and 17 times respectively.



Figure 1. Word Cloud of Dominant Word Frequencies

2. Teachers’ Role in Establishing Reflective Habits

Reflective practices introduced by teachers were manifested in various forms, including oral sharing of experiences in front of the class, small group discussions, collaborative evaluations, and completion of reflection sheets. These patterns are illustrated in the crosstab visualization, which highlights “group discussion” and “reflection sheet” as the most frequently coded themes in responses to the second interview question. The findings underscore the critical role of teachers in cultivating a reflective and collaborative classroom atmosphere.

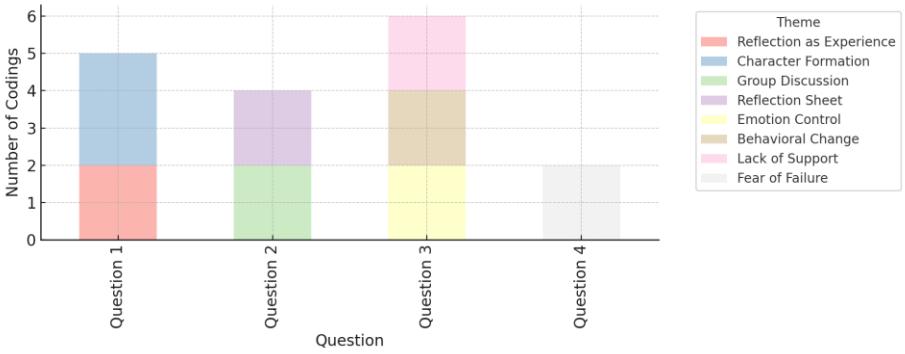


Figure 2. Crosstab of Theme Distribution by Question

3. Emotional Impact of Reflection

A prominent theme revealed the influence of reflection on students’ emotional regulation. Interview data indicated improvements in students’ ability to control anger, increased openness in social interactions, and heightened enthusiasm for learning. This theme recorded the highest score in the bar chart visualization, with “emotion” appearing 24 times, followed by the sub themes “emotional control” and “behavioral change,” each coded in three distinct instances. The

hierarchical structure further indicates that “Emotional Impact of Reflection” comprises four interrelated sub nodes.

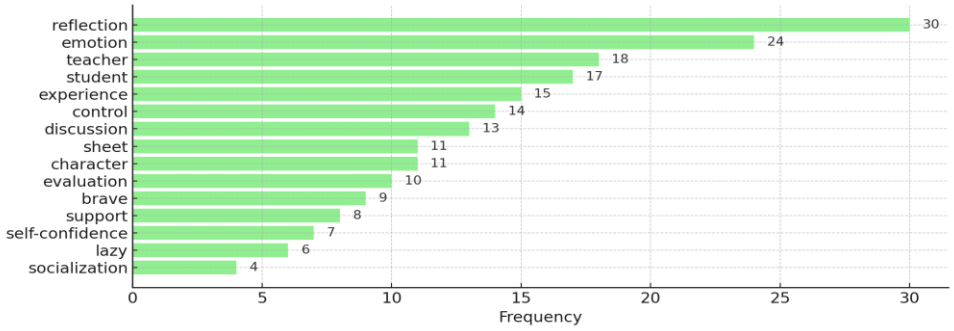


Figure 3. Bar Chart of Main Topic Frequencies

4. Challenges in Emotional Regulation

Conversely, students reported several difficulties in managing emotions independently. Key obstacles included limited parental support, low self confidence, fear of failure, and susceptibility to environmental influences. These concerns were prominently represented in the crosstab diagram, where the themes “lack of support” and “fear of failure” emerged frequently in responses to the fourth question. Such findings reinforce the importance of emotional support as a critical factor in the success of reflective learning processes (as referenced in Visual Figure 2).

5. Structured Forms of Teacher-Guided Reflection

Teachers did not merely promote reflection as a general practice but also guided students through pedagogically structured approaches. These included prompting with reflective questions prior to learning activities, facilitating group discussions, conducting open class reflections, and organizing joint evaluations at the conclusion of each session. The hierarchical diagram reveals that “Teacher-Guided Reflection” is divided into four primary sub themes, each contributing to the development of a systematic reflective culture within the classroom environment.

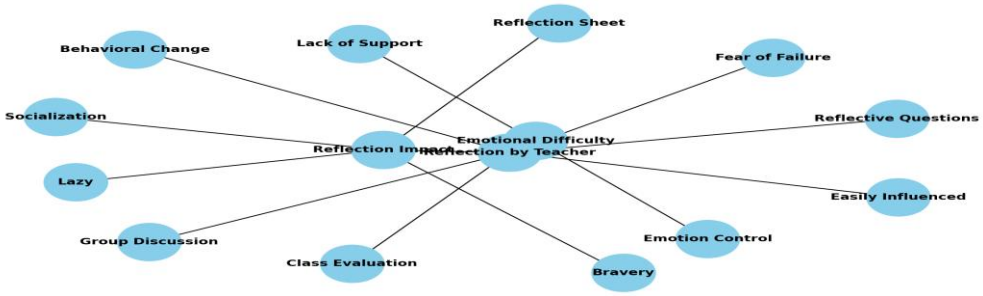


Figure 4. Hierarchical Structure of Teacher-Guided Reflection Nodes

6. Evaluation of Reflection Outcomes

Teachers evaluated the outcomes of reflective practices by observing students' daily behaviors, maintaining records in behavior logbooks, and gathering reports from fellow educators. Although this theme registered a lower score relative to others, its presence remains significant as it reflects the teachers' efforts to incorporate qualitative assessments in monitoring students' emotional development. Moreover, the findings suggest a need for more systematic observational instruments to support the effective evaluation of reflective processes (as shown in Visual Figure 3, which illustrates the low frequency of the evaluation theme).

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that implementing reflection activities conducted at the conclusion of each lesson among Grade VIII B students at SMP Negeri 2 Kupang played a pivotal role in enhancing their emotional regulation. Many students perceived reflection not only as a means to revisit learning experiences but also as an opportunity for personal development and character formation. This interpretation suggests that reflection was internalized not merely as a routine procedure. Rather, it became a meaningful process of self exploration and emotional articulation, as noted by Gómez-León (2025).

To facilitate this internalization, teachers implemented various structured reflective activities. These included group discussions, collaborative evaluations, and the completion of written reflection sheets. Such varied methods helped establish a classroom environment that supported emotional engagement. Teacher involvement proved to be vital in maintaining reflective participation, especially when consistent prompts and emotional support were provided (Rodríguez et al., 2022). These conditions formed the basis for cultivating a psychologically safe learning atmosphere.

Student engagement in reflective practices produced emotional benefits, which were evident in improved emotional vocabulary, increased openness in communication, and more constructive classroom behavior. Learners who regularly participated in guided reflection exhibited enhanced control over negative emotions such as anger and anxiety. These outcomes reinforce previous research findings indicating that habitual reflective practice supports emotional clarity, self awareness, and resilience (Koçak & Terzi, 2023).

Despite these advancements, a portion of students encountered significant challenges in regulating their emotions. Recurrent barriers such as insufficient parental support, low self

confidence, and fear of failure restricted emotional development. These difficulties not only diminished students' engagement in reflective activities but also underscored the need for broader emotional support systems within and beyond the school context (Zyusifa & Affandi, 2021). Addressing these constraints is essential for ensuring equitable benefits from reflection for all learners.

In response to such barriers, teacher-guided reflective practices served as a compensatory mechanism. Through targeted reflective questions and structured group evaluations, educators provided opportunities for students to explore and express their emotions meaningfully. These efforts contributed to the cultivation of a reflective classroom culture that simultaneously promoted emotional awareness and behavioral insight (Anggraini & Widyastuti, 2022). As a result, reflection evolved from a passive routine into a dynamic learning strategy that fostered emotional growth.

Although promising, the process of evaluating students' emotional development remained challenging. Teachers relied on qualitative tools such as behavioral journals and informal peer feedback to monitor emotional progress. While these approaches lacked formal standardization, they offered practical insights into the emotional trajectories of students. Accordingly, the findings emphasize the need for systematic and reliable evaluation instruments to measure emotional development more accurately (Doulougeri et al., 2016). Until such tools become widely available, teacher observation remains a critical resource for affective assessment.

In addition to internal development, reflection also prompted visible behavioral changes in classroom dynamics. Students displayed greater composure, improved focus, and increased collaboration during group activities. These observable behaviors suggest that emotional regulation extended beyond individual control and positively influenced peer interaction and group cohesion (Haag et al., 2024). In this regard, reflection functioned as a bridge connecting personal insight with social responsibility.

A key indicator of such progress was the gradual expansion of students' emotional vocabulary. Initial reflections were limited to basic expressions such as "sad" or "happy," while later entries incorporated more nuanced terms like "embarrassed," "anxious," and "relieved" (Edara, 2023). This lexical refinement enabled more precise emotional expression and supported the development of metacognitive awareness essential to reflective practice.

The deepening of emotional language was facilitated by teachers' adaptive strategies. By adjusting reflection prompts to align with students' developmental levels, educators encouraged more sincere and context-specific responses. Questions such as "What emotion did I feel most today?" guided students toward articulating specific emotional events rather than providing generalized answers (Rodríguez et al., 2022). This pragmatic approach helped normalize emotional discourse within academic settings.

Moreover, students' reflections began to demonstrate connections between emotional experiences and moral values. Many entries described actions reflecting patience, responsibility, or perseverance during classroom tasks. These examples indicate that reflection extended beyond emotional regulation to support moral reasoning and ethical awareness. This relationship enriches the developmental potential of reflection by linking emotional insight to character development.

In some cases, students framed their emotional experiences using spiritual language. Expressions of gratitude, prayer, and faith based perseverance appeared in several journal entries, suggesting that personal belief systems influenced emotional interpretation. This spiritual dimension added meaning to the reflective process, showing that emotional growth was shaped not only by cognitive and social contexts but also by individual values and faith perspectives.

Nevertheless, not all students demonstrated equal readiness to engage in reflective activities. Some experienced difficulty in articulating emotions due to limited vocabulary or discomfort with self expression. These students required differentiated support such as visual scaffolds, teacher modeling, or peer dialogue to participate effectively. Such targeted interventions are necessary to ensure inclusivity in emotional learning.

In addition, teacher authenticity played a decisive role in advancing reflective growth. Educators who shared personal emotional experiences provided models of vulnerability that helped establish trust and encourage reciprocal honesty among students (Haag et al., 2024). This openness reshaped teacher-student relationships and affirmed that reflection is a relational and shared pedagogical process.

In conclusion, the routine integration of reflection conducted at the end of each lesson has proven beneficial in supporting students' emotional regulation. Notable improvements were observed in emotional literacy, behavioral adaptability, and interpersonal conduct. With consistent guidance from teachers, well designed reflective prompts, and a supportive classroom

environment, students developed the capacity to engage in meaningful self reflection. Therefore, reflection emerged as a powerful pedagogical strategy that promotes both emotional maturity and academic preparedness.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

This study has several limitations. While the qualitative design offers valuable insights into students' emotional development, its findings are not easily generalizable beyond the Grade VIII B context at SMP Negeri 2 Kupang. The absence of standardized tools for measuring emotional regulation limited the ability to quantify progress, resulting in a reliance on journal analysis and behavioral observation. Variations in teacher facilitation styles may also have influenced student engagement, contributing to inconsistency in implementation.

Future research should adopt mixed methods that combine qualitative insights with quantitative measures to assess emotional development more comprehensively. Longitudinal studies are recommended to explore the sustained impact of reflective practices across different educational levels. Additionally, researchers are encouraged to develop and validate instruments that reliably capture changes in emotional vocabulary, self awareness, and behavior. Investigating the roles of cultural and spiritual factors may also deepen understanding of how students internalize emotional experiences in diverse learning contexts.

Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm that the integration of structured reflection at the end of learning activities significantly enhances students' emotional regulation. Students who regularly participated in guided reflection displayed improved emotional expression, greater behavioral control, and increased empathy toward peers. Teachers' consistent facilitation of reflective prompts, classroom discussions, and open evaluations created a psychologically safe environment where students could articulate their emotions meaningfully. These outcomes suggest that reflection is not merely an evaluative exercise but a transformative process that fosters self awareness, emotional clarity, and character development.

Despite the benefits, disparities in student readiness highlight the need for differentiated support mechanisms. Barriers such as low self confidence and external emotional stressors must be addressed through continued teacher engagement, peer collaboration, and potentially the inclusion of family support systems. As a pedagogical strategy, reflection holds the potential to bridge academic content with emotional and moral learning. Future efforts should focus on

refining evaluative tools, expanding implementation across diverse contexts, and reinforcing the role of reflection as an integral component of holistic education

Acknowledgement

The authors wish to convey their profound appreciation to the principal, teachers, and students of SMP Negeri 2 Kupang for their cooperation and willingness to engage in this research.

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Funding

This research was not supported by any specific grant from public institutions, commercial entities, or non profit organizations.

References

1. Akbari, A., Torabizadeh, C., Nick, N., et al. (2025). The effects of training female students in emotion regulation techniques on their social problem-solving skills and social anxiety: A randomized controlled trial. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health, 19*, 3. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-025-00860-1
2. Anggraini, A., & Widyastuti, W. (2022). The relationship between emotion regulation and academic stress in class XII high school students. *Academia Open*, *6*(June). https://doi.org/10.21070/acopen.6.2022.2618
3. Arvatz, A., Peretz, R., & Dori, Y. J. (2025). Self-regulated learning and reflection: A tool for teachers and students. *Metacognition and Learning*, *20*, 15. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11409-025-09415-3
4. de la Barrera, U., Mónaco, E., Postigo-Zegarra, S., Gil-Gómez, J. A., & Montoya-Castilla, I. (2021). EmoTIC: Impact of a game-based social-emotional programme on adolescents. *PLOS ONE, 16*(4), e0250384. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0250384
5. De Neve, D., Bronstein, M. V., Leroy, A., et al. (2023). Emotion regulation in the classroom: A network approach to model relations among emotion regulation difficulties, engagement to learn, and relationships with peers and teachers. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 52*, 273–286. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-022-01678-2
6. Dogham, R. S., Elcokany, N. M., Ghaly, A. S., et al. (2025). Emotional intelligence and reflective thinking: A synergistic approach in nursing education. *BMC Nursing*, *24*, 548. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-025-03175-w
7. Doulougeri, K., Panagopoulou, E., & Montgomery, A. (2016). (How) do medical students regulate their emotions? *BMC Medical Education, 16*, 312. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-016-0832-9

8. Edara, I. R. (2023). Analysis of students' emotional patterns based on an educational course on emotions management. *Education Sciences, 13*(7), Article 757. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13070757

9. Gómez-León, M. I. (2025). Serious games to support emotional regulation strategies in educational intervention programs with children and adolescents: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Heliyon, 11*(7), e42712. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2025.e42712

10. Haag, A. C., Bagrodia, R., & Bonanno, G. A. (2024). Emotion regulation flexibility in adolescents: A systematic review from conceptualization to methodology. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 27*, 697–713. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-024-00483-6

11. Koçak, L., & Terzi, E. (2023). The mediating role of emotion regulation in the relationship between self-compassion and subjective well-being in school in secondary school students. *Journal of Family Counseling and Education, 8*(1), 87–106. https://doi.org/10.32568/jfce.1296134

12. Mertens, E. C., Deković, M., van Londen, M., et al. (2022). Parallel changes in positive youth development and self-awareness: The role of emotional self-regulation, self-esteem, and self-reflection. *Prevention Science, 23*, 502–512. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-022-01345-9

13. Pazhooyan, M., Fathali Lavasani, F., Edalati Shateri, Z., et al. (2024). Reflective functioning and emotion regulation in adolescents with a history of sexual offending: A comparative study with a non-offending control group. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health, 18*, 109. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-024-00802-3

14. Rodríguez, S., González-Suárez, R., Vieites, T., Piñeiro, I., & Díaz-Freire, F. M. (2022). Self-regulation and students well-being: A systematic review 2010–2020. *Sustainability, 14*(4), 2346. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14042346

15. Santos, A. C., Simões, C., Cefai, C., Freitas, E., & Arriaga, P. (2021). Emotion regulation and student engagement: Age and gender differences during adolescence. *International Journal of Educational Research, 109*, 101830. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2021.101830

16. Schlosser, A., & Paetsch, J. (2023). The role of emotion and reflection in the development of student teachers' self-efficacy when analyzing video lessons. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*, Article 1080883. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1080883

17. Teonata, S., & Iswanto, R. (2021). Perancangan media pembelajaran regulasi emosi melalui jurnal refleksi. *de-lite: Journal of Visual Communication Design, 1*, Article 4788. https://ojs.uph.edu/index.php/DE-LITE/article/view/4788

18. Zheng, J., Lajoie, S., & Li, S. (2023). Emotions in self-regulated learning: A critical literature review and meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*, Article 1137010. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1137010

19. Zyusifa, R., & Affandi, G. R. (2021). The relationship between emotion regulation and academic stress in class XII students of vocational high school accounting department. *Academia Open, 4*, Article 10.21070/acopen.4.2021.2741. https://doi.org/10.21070/acopen.4.2021.2741