

Conference Paper

The Analysis of the Difficulty in Learning Economics Subject Experienced By Students of Favored State Senior High Schools in City of Malang

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Abstract

Education need to have the ability to improve students' potentials, namely religion spiritual power, self-management, personality, intelligence, virtuous morals, as well as skills needed by learners and society. Teachers carry an important role to resolve problems related to learning difficulties. The result of the research that was done through interview shows that the types of learning difficulties found in students of favored state senior high schools in the City of Malang are the lack of understanding in receiving information and concept understanding problem. Hence, the solution suggested to solve the problems are: collecting materials taken from compulsory economics textbook and electronic books; asking the teacher regarding the materials that are not yet fully understood; increasing the frequency of exercises in LKS (School's Exercise Book), or other sources; making summaries, schemes, and notes to ease the comprehension of economics materials' basic concept; and scheduling studying time outside the school, and at home as well as providing more studying media at home.

Keywords: Learning difficulty, economics subject, learning outcome

1. Background of the Study

Education needs to have the ability to improve students' potentials, namely religion spiritual power, self-management, personality, intelligence, virtuous morals, as well as skills needed by learners and society. To improve all these potentials, each learner possesses different capability. Some learners might be able to achieve it without any difficulty, while relatively, some other students meet several restrictions. Common learning difficulties found in the learners are the lack of interest to study, the tendency to give up easily, and the tendency to oppose the teachers. Thenceforth, it is important for the teachers to actively participate in solving these problems.

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Teachers' role in solving the said problems are by diagnosing the cause of the learning difficulties that are often suffered by learners. A test could be given to diagnose these learning difficulties. The test implemented by the teachers is called diagnosis test. To discover the concrete reason behind the learning problems and how to solve the problem, it is important to classify the learning difficulty level in a smaller scope. This will be very beneficial in giving the best and fastest solution to solve the problem. If an incorrect, delayed solution is given, the quality of graduated students may be highly affected. In senior high school level, 39.6% students out of 231,945 students scores under 55, whereas in vocational high school level, 44.2% students out of 199,446 students scores under 55 [11].

These learning difficulty problems arise from several reasons. These reasons are often divided into two, namely internal and external factors. Internal factor is explained as factor that comes from the individual, in which in this case, the factor comes from the learners themselves. Internal factor includes the individual's IQ, talent, emotion, health, ability to concentrate, characteristics and others. The external factor, on the other hand, means factor that comes outside the individual, for example the individual's family, social factor, and the society surrounding the individual. Other than the factors mentioned above, learning difficulty may also arise from the topics of the subject. Economics subject for example, contains a lot of new terms, concepts of curves, and calculation that often cause difficulties in learning for learners.

Economic subjects are a part of the subjects taught in school that studies the behavior of individuals and society in order to fulfill humans' infinity needs in life through the limited number of resources. Economic subjects aims the learners to have the following abilities: (1) Applies a number of economic concepts related to events and economic issues with daily life, specifically in the scope of individual, household, society and country, (2) Showing curiosity to several economic concepts that are needed to deepen understanding towards economics as a science, (3) Establishing wise, rational, and responsible attitude by bearing the knowledge and skill of economics, management, and accounting that are beneficial to self, household, society as well as the country, and (4) Making responsible decisions about the economic social values in a pluralistic society both in the international and national scale. (Permen 22 Tahun 2006- Standar Isi/Standar Kompetensi Dasar SM).

The characteristics of economics subject can certainly cause learning difficulties for students. The problems described above are often found in the City of Malang. Malang is the second largest city after Surabaya in East Java. The population counts more than 800 thousand inhabitants. Malang is famous for its motto of Tri Bina Citra, namely

City of Education, City of Tourism, and Industrial City, which reflects the economic potential of the City of Malang. A lot of private sectors have been continually growing through the opening of a business field by Malang citizens, in which the education sector, mostly from public school and high school in the City of Malang, also took part in the growth, that is from public school and high school that exists in Malang. With the good accreditation of the school along with affordable living cost, a lot of parents send their children to study in Malang.

The availability of adequate infrastructure is supported by environmental factors that are conducive to economic and investment activities, namely the ease of business, qualified education, supportive society, and political and governance stability. The conditions described above become the sole reason for the researchers in choosing Malang as the city to conduct the research. The focus of this research are: (1) Types of difficulty in studying economic subjects found in students of favored high school in Malang, (2) Solution in handling learning difficulty in studying economic subject found in students of favored high school in Malang

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Review

2.1.1. Learning and Teaching

Several learning theories cited by experts (Slameto, 2010:9-14) are:

1. Gestalt

Koffka and Kohler from Germany stated that the important part of learning something comes from the very first phase of adapting and receiving the correct response that could solve the problems. It is important to know that learning is not about repetition, but understanding and gaining more insights.

2. J. Bruner

Learning does not change an individual's behavior. However, it is important to modify the school's curriculum so that it allows learners to study more and easier.

3. Piaget

Intellectual development happens in every simplest process such as seeing, touching, naming things, and others. Adaptation is a set of changes that happen in an individual from interacting with things in the world.

4. R. Gagne

Gagne mentions two definitions:

- a. Learning is a process to receive motivation in science, skill, habit, and behavior;
- b. Learning is the mastery of certain science or skill gained from instruction.

Learning, development, and education are interesting subjects to learn. Learning itself is actually knowing and understanding many things so that the things learned can be applied in everyday life. Along with learning activities, changes will eventually occur to learners. Through learning, students are expected to have positive changes in these aspects: intellectual, attitude and behavior, and psychomotor. These three symptoms are closely related to learning. Learning is an attempt to make students learn. On the other hands, teaching can help students in gaining more information, ideas, skills, values, ways of thinking, and ways of learning. The learning process is a long process of series of enforcement done by both teachers and students as a mutual party that is done in educational situations to achieve certain goals. Teaching is done by the learners. Its purpose is not meant for learners to obey. Teaching is an effort made by teachers to help learners in doing their learning activities. The purpose of teaching is the realization of the efficiency and effectiveness of learning activities the learners are taking.

2.1.2. Learning Difficulties

Learning is a process of knowing and understanding many things that can be applied in everyday life. Learning may bring changes to learners. Positive changes expected to occur in students include; aspects of intellectual, attitude, and behavior, and psychomotor. Learners may achieve these positive changes through a good learning experience, a learning experience that is free from obstacles or interruptions, that come from either the learners him/herself (internal) and outside the learners (external).

The process of acquiring learning experiences that took place in the classroom does not always run smoothly. There are students who experience temporary learning difficulties, meaning that they only have problems with certain parts of the subject. For example, in studying concept/subject A, the learner does not experience any problem and does not fail the daily test. Meanwhile, in studying concept/subject B fails to achieve the learning goals. In addition, a learning difficulty that is permanent also exists. These learning difficulties are experienced by students in almost every subject.

In this case, the learners will have difficulty in achieving the learning goals in almost every subject.

From the illustration above, we can conclude that learning difficulties are a condition in which learners are unable to learn properly due to several obstacles. In addition, the general meaning of learning difficulties can also be incorporated into any case of learners who experience obstacles in the learning process. Learning difficulties can occur due to factors related to their behavior, academic, health factors, or even due to a combination of behavioral, academic and health factors at the same time. The "Learning Difficulties" term is often associated to individuals who suffer neurological disorders, such as mental illness, Autism Spectrum Disorder (Autism, Asperger Syndrome, PDDNOS), Down Syndrome, Rett Syndrome, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, Hearing Loss, Cerebral Palsy, and other syndromes. These "Learning Difficulties" are found in individuals who have lower than average intelligence/intelligence quotient (IQ score <90).

From some description of the definition and types of learning difficulties can be seen specifically about the indications of student learning difficulties are:

1. Learning Exercises

Indicating learners' learning difficulty can be done through analyzing learners' speed in finishing exercises given by teachers. Learners tend to neglect the given homework, or sometimes they would often cheat and copy their friends' work. This also happens to learners when they are given school work.

2. Learning attitude

Students are often being apathetic and even neglect the activity in the class. What important for the learners are that they attend the class, they sit down and pay attention to their teachers speaking in front of the class. They are also reluctant in writing the subject's topic even though it is necessary. Teachers even need to remind the learners first for them to start writing their notes.

3. Defiant behavior

Difficulties in understanding the lessons are often associated with defiant behavior. The examples of defiant behaviors are: asking for permission to go out of the class frequently, annoying their friends, coming late to the class, or even skipping classes.

4. The learners' mood

Students with learning difficulties often show discomposure in participating lessons. They are easily offended by their friends, often feeling drowsy, and show lack of enthusiasm in learning.

5. Learning result

A poor learning result is the accumulation of all the indications mentioned above. Learners will experience difficulties in achieving the goal if a sudden daily test is given.

Differentiated by the source of the problems, learners' learning difficulty is divided into two: 1) internal learning difficulty and 2) external learning difficulty. Learning difficulty that comes from within the learner is usually harder to overcome. To overcome it completely, a lot of time investment from teachers and parents are needed. The internal factor can be described as the factor that comes from the individual itself, meaning it comes within the learner him/herself. External factor, on the other hand, is the factor that does not come from the individual. These are the internal factors that may affect learners:

1. Health problem

Learners who often have problems with their health will have difficulties in keeping up with the lesson. They might even have difficulties in receiving and understanding the topics being taught by the teachers. Handling this kind of problem will need the help of the learners' parents

2. Organ defect

Take for example if a learner has the problem with his/her hearing or vision. The learner will have difficulties hearing to the teacher's explanation or reading the notes written by the teachers on the board.

3. Concentration

Learners' power in concentrating may also affect their learning. Learners who have short attention span may not learn as much as those who have a longer attention span.

4. Defiant Behaviour

Defiant or disobedient learners tend to have more difficulties in learning, for example, learners who often skip classes or come late to the class. Further discussion related to internal factor is as follows:

(a) Poor intelligence or low IQ

- (b) Discrepancy between the learner's skill and the subjects being taught
- (c) Mentally unstable
- (d) Lack of learning activities. Learners are often being lazy instead of studying.
- (e) Bad studying habit. The purpose of studying is to memorize, not to understand the subject. Hence learners might find difficulty in applying the subject to other subjects.
- (f) Difficulty in adapting to new environment
- (g) Personal background
- (h) Irrelevant subject being learned and the learners' purpose of life
- (i) Educational background
- (j) Learners' tenacity in studying does not correspond the demanded studying time.
- (k) Physical condition. A mild disability such as hearing loss, loss of vision, and psychomotor disorder, or even serious disorders such as blindness, deafness, or physical body defects.
- (l) Poor health
- (m) Inordinate sexual intercourse
- (n) Lack of understanding and basic competencies related to the subjects being learned.
- (o) Lack of motivation in studying,

Oemar Hamalik also gave out several additions to internal factors that may affect learners:

- (a) Having no distinct life purpose
- (b) Lack of interest towards the subject
- (c) Poor health management
- (d) The competence to follow the class and understand what is being taught
- (e) Studying habit
- (f) Lack of language proficiency

Other than the factors mentioned above, the learners' mental health and the knowing what type of learners they are (whether they are visual or motoric learners or even the mix of both) also need to be taken into account. A specific type of learner is hardly found as in most cases, the learners are the mix of both type.

An external factor that comes from family, school environment may also cause learning difficulties. The list below is the said external factors:

1. Family factor, several factors that family may become the reason for learners' learning difficulty are as follows:

- Inaccessibility of supporting learning tools and media that halt children from studying
- Less money Spent for education
- Unavailability of private study room for children
- Family economic condition that is either too low or too high
- Family's poor health condition
- Inadequate attention from family
- Unsupportive family habit
- Unfair parent treatments to each child
- Children need to support their family.

2. School factor

- Teacher's bad personality
- Incompetent teachers (low understanding of the subjects being taught and monotone teaching method implementation)
- Teacher-students disharmonious relationship
- Teacher sets a standard that exceeds learners' capability
- Teacher is unable to diagnose the learners' difficulty in learning
- Poor teacher's competence in teaching
- Lack of media that support the learning and teaching
- School library's service that is not suitable and less preferred by the students
- School's facility that does not comply to the sanity regulation and is not taken care of
- Unpleasant school atmosphere
- Non-functioning counselling
- Administration and leadership. This factor is related to selfish teacher and authoritative headmaster

- Less disciplined school and less school time.

3. **Society factor**, this factor usually interferes learners in this aspect:

- Mass media, such as cinema, TV, newspaper, magazines, etc.
- Social environment, such as social peer, neighbors, and community activities.

a. **Economics as a Subject**

1. Characteristics of Economics Subject

According to the great dictionary of Economics, economics is defined as the science of economics which studies the principles of production, distribution, and use of goods and property, such as finance, industry, and trade; the study of human endeavors to meet their needs.

According to Dasim Budimansyah (2003: 1) "Economics is the science or art of human efforts to meet the needs of life that varies and developed with existing resources through the choice of production, consumption, and distribution activities. Based on the opinion above, the subjects of economics can be defined as a subject taught in schools that study human efforts to meet the needs. Economics subjects also have some characteristics.

2. Characteristics of Economics Subject Teaching

Characteristics of economics can be defined as the characteristics of economic teaching. Characteristics of economic learning cannot be separated from the steps of economic teaching. The steps of teaching Economics by Dasim Budimansyah (2003: 25-43) are as follows:

1. Identify economic problems
2. Pick a problem for class review
3. Gather information on the issues to be studied

2.2. Previous Research

Previous researcher

Previous research that are relevant to the current research are as follows:

1. In Ismail's research entitled "*Diagnosis Kesulitan Belajar Siswa Dalam Pembelajaran Aktif di Sekolah*" that uses pre-test, diagnostic test, interview, and observation data collection method and technique, the research result shows that:

- a. Learner's learning difficulty need to be found out and solved as soon as possible. Hence, it is important to diagnose beforehand for the learners to attain the expected learning outcomes.
 - b. The identification of learners' learning difficulty by using steps mentioned above are implemented to gain the learners' profile information related to the basic materials, the learners' basic knowledge, indicator achievement, the mistakes that learners' often make, and the ability to solve questions that require sentence comprehension. Other information taken are those related to the learners' studying habit, physical and emotional weakness, family condition, the teacher's method of teaching, etc.
2. A research entitled "*Analisis Kesulitan Belajar Akuntansi pada Materi Jurnal Penyesuaian (Studi Kasus pada Siswa Kelas XI IPS di SMA Negeri 1 Pakusari Tahun Ajaran 2013-2014)*" that was executed by Melisa Wulandari, Sutrisno Djaja, Pudjo Suharso by using interview, observation, and document data collection method and techniques shows:
 - a. Difficulty while learning accounting subject in grade XI of IPS class is found. The difficulty is found while teaching the chapter about adjusting journal entry.
 - b. The learning difficulty is caused by the lack of basic knowledge and skills upon the materials being learned. It is in the form of lack of understanding and skills in analysing, calculating and recording transaction data; lack of students' interest in learning of adjusting journal materials; low concentration level; less attractive teaching methods, as teachers are more fond of giving students assignments; as well as incomplete learning media such as class inventory, unavailability of viewers and inadequate amount of accounting textbooks.
 3. Another research entitled "*Barriers to increasing the physical activity of people with intellectual disabilities*" implemented by Luke Cartwright, Mery Reid, Richard Hammersley with qualitative data collection method that was done through interview shows these results:
 - a. The three interferences found that is related to intellectual troubles through the involvement of physical activity are:
 - i. Active lifestyle acquisition from the guardians;
 - ii. Activity limitation due to the fondness of hiring caregiver and resource limitation;
 - iii. Communication difficulty between the guardian and caregiver

- b. These interferences are derived from the assumption made by both paid and caregiver families. Hence, there is a potential to improve the activities by changing attitudes, improving communication and reconceptualizing activities as an integral in everyday life, rather than exercising as additional that needs the specific source.
4. A research done by Ali Murtadlo entitled "*Kesulitan Belajar (Learning Difficulty) dalam Pembelajaran Matematika*" by using qualitative data collection method and technique that was done through observation and interview shows results as follows:
 - a. Difficulties in learning mathematics are inevitable. Learners that experience difficulty in learning mathematics is shown by the delay in the improvement of the subject. A learner might have one or more learning difficulties.
 - b. Teacher and parents have the same responsibility to help learners in overcoming their learning difficulties. Becoming a counselor that could understand, motivate, and give the solution to the learners is very important for the learners who are suffering several learning difficulties.

3. Research Method

Metode yang digunakan yaitu analisis Deskriptif Kualitatif. Penelitian studi kasus adalah studi yang mengeksplorasi suatu masalah dengan batasan terperinci, memiliki pengambilan data yang mendalam, dan menyertakan berbagai sumber informasi. Penelitian ini dibatasi oleh waktu dan tempat, dan kasus yang dipelajari berupa program, peristiwa, aktivitas, atau individu. Sumber data dalam penelitian ini berasal dari informan dan dokumen.

The analysis of the difficulty in learning economics subject experienced by students of favored state senior high schools in the City of Malang uses Qualitative Descriptive research design. The case study research is a study that explores a specific problem with a limited and precise scope with in-depth data collection, completed with additional information from various resources. This research is limited by time and place, and the case being studied covers programmes, events, activities, or individuals. The source of this research comes from supporting informants and documents.

The data is collected from (1) Observation and (2) Interview. The data is analyzed through these procedures: data reduction through summarizing the data, filtering the

main data, focusing on significant data, specifying the theme and pattern, and omitting data that are insignificant for the research. Afterwards, the data are displayed in tables, graphics, pie charts, pictograms and other equivalent data display. After the presentation of the data, the data will then be organized and arranged into a pattern of connection that could make it easier to understand the data. The third procedure is to make a conclusion and verification. The initial conclusion is temporary, and will later change if supporting evidence are found in the next data collection phase.

4. Result and Discussion

The research was executed in Senior High School 1, 4 and 5 City of Malang through interviews towards 5 respondents that comes from the mentioned three schools. The qualification of the respondents are the age,

4.1. Types of learning difficulties in studying economics subject found in students of favored senior high school in City of Malang

This research implemented interview and observation regarding basic concept of economics understanding. The basic concept of economics discusses scarcity, the problem of choice, the definition of economics, differences between microeconomics and macroeconomics, needs and wants a concept, differences between the principle of economics, economic motives, and the purposes of economics, the concept of needs, concept of commodity and service, and economic measures. The first topic is the basic topic that the learners need to understand completely, as lack of understanding of the said topic they might cause more difficulties while studying the next topics. Hence, the basic concept of economics is the first topic that could help learners understand the following topics. It is important to make sure the learners have no misconception towards the topic.

R1 experience difficulty of understanding the concept. By looking at the educational background of R1 that came from a favored junior high school, the learner has no trouble in understanding the whole basic concept of economics. However, the problem arises when the basic concept is applied to daily life and is associated with economic terms of economics basic concept. Thence, the learning difficulty suffered by R1 is the lack of comprehension in accepting information.

R2 often confuses the motives of economics, principles of economics and purposes of economics. This causes R2 to have difficulties in differentiating the three terms in everyday life. R2 is also a graduate of a favored junior high school. Hence, we can conclude that R2 suffers difficulty in understanding concept.

R3, on the other hand, does not come across any difficulty as R3 thought the topic of the basic concept of economics is an easy topic. This then helped R3 to understand the concept of the topic better. R3's ability to understand all the information given is befitting to the fact that R3 graduated from one of the best junior high schools.

R4 also confuses between microeconomics and macroeconomics. This causes R2 to have difficulty in differentiating the terms in everyday life. R2 is a graduate of the private junior high school in the City of Malang. Hence, we can conclude that the difficulty experienced by R2 is a conceptual understanding problem.

R5 has problems related to five needs classification concept. R5 has difficulty in differentiating needs based on its intensity (primary, secondary, and tertiary needs), time (present time and the future), characteristic (subjective and objective), form (material and immaterial), and class (individual and group). When told to describe the differences between primary and present needs, as well as secondary and tertiary needs, R5 will get more confused. As R5 comes from a common junior high school, it is possible for R5 to have difficulty in understanding the concepts. Hence, we can conclude that R5 suffers the conceptual understanding problem.

Generally, the learning difficulties experienced by the respondents are a conceptual understanding problem. This is in line with Ali Murtadlo's research, "Kesulitan Belajar (Learning Difficult) dalam Pembelajaran Matematika" that shows that learning difficulty is inevitable while studying mathematics. Learners who experience difficulties in studying mathematics is shown by the delay in the improvement of the subject. A learner might have one or more learning difficulties. Learners might have one or more learning difficulties.

4.2. Suggested solutions to solve learning difficulties in studying economics subject found in students of favored senior high school in City of Malang

From the learning difficulties identified from each of the respondents, the researchers suggest these solutions overcome the problems.

To overcome the difficulty experienced by R1 who has trouble in understanding and gaining information, R1 made attempt to collect materials that come from the required

economics textbook as well as from e-books. R1 is also willing to ask the teacher if the topic being discussed is difficult. This helps R1 to gain more information and help understanding basic concepts of economics.

R2 who has difficulty in understanding the concept tried to solve the problem by reading more reference books and asking the teachers about topics that are not understood yet. R2 also work on exercises, R2 also writes notes, summaries, and schemes to help understand the basic concept of economics easier.

R3 who has no difficulty in understanding the basic concept of economics still tries the best in studying by reading a lot of books and making a complete note from class. R3 is also a disciplined learner who arrange the studying time in the home and at school. This helps R3 a lot in gaining more new information.

R4 who has a problem in understanding concept tries to overcome it by reading more reference books and actively asking the teacher for things that are not understood yet. R4 also joins a private course outside school time to improve R4's knowledge over basic concept of economics.

Similar to R1, R5 also has problems in understanding and gaining more information. Hence, R5 tries to collect materials from the required economics textbook, e-books, and LKS (School's exercise book) R5 also actively participate in the class and ask the teacher regarding topics R5 hasn't understood yet. R5 is also trying to improve the learning media in the home. This surely will help R5 in gaining more new information and understanding the basic concept of economics better.

Generally, the solution that is given to overcome learning difficulties are:

- v. collecting materials taken from compulsory economics textbook and electronic books
- vi. Asking the teacher regarding the materials that are not yet fully understood
- vii. Increasing the frequency of doing exercises in LKS (School's Exercise Book), or other sources
- viii. Making summaries, schemes, and notes to ease the comprehension of the basic concept of economics
- ix. Scheduling studying time outside the school, and at home
- x. Providing more studying media at home.

This is in line with the research done by Luke Cartwright, Merie Reid, and Richard Hammersley entitled "Barriers to increasing the physical activity of people with intellectual disabilities" which says that the potential to increase activities is needed.

5. Conclusion

Based from the explanation above, it could be concluded that the types of difficulties in learning found in favorite State Senior High School of Malang City are the lack of understanding upon receiving new information and disruption in understanding concepts. Hence, the solution suggested to solve the problems are: collecting materials taken from compulsory economics textbook and electronic books; asking the teacher regarding the materials that are not yet fully understood; increasing the frequency of exercises in LKS (School's Exercise Book), or other sources; making summaries, schemes, and notes to ease the comprehension of economics materials' basic concept; and scheduling studying time outside the school, and at home as well as providing more studying media at home.

Henceforth, the suggestion given through having this research is for the teachers to participate actively in solving the problem of learning difficulty though giving the remedial program and giving additional materials. Teachers may also implement variations of learning methods to make the students understand the materials given easier.

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