



ANALYZING LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OF LOWER PRIMARY STUDENTS IN THE DIGITAL ERA FOR SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the learning difficulties experienced by lower primary school students in the digital era and to recommend effective learning strategies to support sustainable education. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach using observation and interview techniques involving ten students from class II B at SDN 1 Bendogerit. The findings reveal that students' learning difficulties are caused by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include low concentration and lack of interest in certain subjects, while external factors involve an uncondusive classroom environment and limited parental involvement in the learning process. Classroom noise and the fast pace of teaching were identified as major obstacles to students' understanding. Additionally, students expressed a need for more interactive and contextually relevant teaching methods. The study recommends the implementation of effective classroom management, gradual and ability-based instructional strategies, and increased parental engagement. These findings are expected to assist schools and educators in creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that promotes students' optimal development, particularly in efforts to achieve the goals of sustainable basic education in the digital age.

Keywords: Learning Difficulties; Student Challenges; Difficulty Factors

1. Introduction

Basic education plays a crucial role in shaping students learning abilities. At this stage, students are expected to acquire fundamental skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, three essential foundations for progressing to higher levels of education. However, not all students succeed in achieving optimal learning outcomes. Learning difficulties often present significant challenges, especially during the primary school years. These obstacles can hinder the attainment of educational goals and create a gap between expectations and students' academic performance (Yolanita & Ruswendi, 2024). This phenomenon has become a significant concern, considering its substantial impact on students' overall academic performance.

According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, students at this age are in the concrete operational stage, where they begin to think logically but still require support from concrete experiences (Khotimah & Agustini, 2023). A mismatch between students' cognitive needs and the way they process information can lead to difficulties in understanding the material. Furthermore, Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) also emphasizes that guidance from adults or more capable peers is essential for students to overcome learning difficulties (Titin Mariatul Qiptiyah, 2024).

There are various factors that can contribute to students' learning difficulties. These difficulties can be categorized into two types: internal and external factors. Internal factors relate to the students' personal conditions, such as health, motivation, talent, interest, intellectual ability, and memory capacity. On the other hand, external factors involve environmental influences, including the role of teachers, parental support, the quality of educational facilities, and peer interactions (Anggraeni, 2020).

The results of observations and interviews with students of class II B at SDN 1 Bendogerit revealed several factors influencing their learning difficulties. Among the identified challenges were internal factors such as lack of motivation, difficulty in concentrating, and low interest in certain subjects. In addition, external factors also played a role, including an unsupportive classroom environment and limited parental attention. These findings indicate that students' learning difficulties are influenced by the interaction between individual factors and environmental conditions, both at home and at school.

This study holds significant importance, considering that learning difficulties can lead to decreased self-confidence, increased stress levels, and a substantial decline in academic achievement. The objective of this research is to comprehensively identify the factors contributing to learning difficulties and to find effective solutions within the local school context. In addressing learning challenges, it is essential to emphasize the need for an active relationship between students and their learning environment. Furthermore, support from teachers and parents plays a crucial role in the success of the students' learning process.

A thorough understanding and analysis of the causes of learning difficulties is expected to contribute meaningfully to improving the quality of education. The findings of this research will assist educators and parents in designing more comprehensive and responsive learning strategies and support systems, enabling all students to reach their full academic potential.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach, which is a research method that relies on narratives and verbal descriptions to explain and understand the meaning behind various phenomena, symptoms, and specific social situations. In this approach, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, responsible for interpreting and assigning meaning to the phenomena, symptoms, and social contexts under investigation. Therefore, it is crucial for the researcher to master relevant theories to analyze the gap between theoretical concepts and actual conditions (Marinu Waruwu, 2023). The qualitative descriptive method was applied to present an overview of the data obtained from the informants.

This research was conducted at SDN 1 Bendogerit during the 2024/2025 academic year, involving ten students from class II B as the research subjects. The main focus of the study was to analyze the factors contributing to learning difficulties among students. To collect the data, the researcher used observation and interview methods. Throughout the research process, the researcher acted as the primary instrument, supported by several tools such as interview guides and observation guides to gather information related to the learning difficulties experienced by the students.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Result

The results of this study were obtained through data analysis by conducting interviews with ten second-grade students of class II B at SDN 1 Bendogerit. The analysis of the interview results considered various factors, including the students' personal conditions as well as the influence of their social, school, and home environments.

Table 1. Student Interview Results

Question Average Student	Response
Do you often feel sick, tired, or dizzy while studying?	"No"
Do you often feel sleepy in class?	"No"
Do you find it difficult to concentrate in class?	"Yes"
Do you feel unmotivated to study because the lessons are too	"No"

difficult?	
Are you uninterested in certain subjects?	“Yes”
Is the classroom too noisy that it makes it difficult for you to learn?	“Yes”
Does the teacher explain too quickly, making it hard for you to understand the material?	“Yes”
Do your parents lack motivation to support your learning?	“Yes”
Do you often fail to complete assignments due to lack of guidance at home?	“Yes”
Do you find it difficult to study at home due to the lack of a comfortable space?	“No”

Based on the interview results, the second-grade students at SDN 1 Bendogerit experienced several obstacles in their learning process. Physically, the students did not often experience problems such as sickness, fatigue, or dizziness while studying. However, many of them found it challenging to maintain concentration in class. In terms of interest and motivation, some students expressed low interest in certain subjects, although they did not find the lessons too difficult and thus remained enthusiastic. The classroom environment also played a significant role, where a noisy atmosphere and the teacher's fast-paced instruction often became barriers for the students. Additionally, family support was deemed insufficient, particularly in terms of motivation and guidance for completing assignments at home. Although students did not face difficulties related to learning facilities at home, such as having a comfortable study space, the main issue lay in the lack of parental support in their learning process.

Another major challenge often faced by students was classroom noise. This condition can be a primary barrier in the learning process, as loud sounds disrupt concentration and make it difficult for students to understand the material being taught. With the number of students reaching 29 in one class, the atmosphere becomes even noisier and poses an added challenge, especially for those who need more focus while studying. Therefore, efforts to create a more conducive classroom environment are essential so that students can learn with focus and reach their best potential.

This research shows that second-grade students at SDN Bendogerit 1 face various challenges in the learning process, both related to internal factors such as concentration and interest in learning, and external factors such as parental support and the classroom environment. Generally, students did not experience physical barriers like sickness, fatigue, or dizziness while studying. However, they encountered difficulties in maintaining concentration in class, mainly due to the overly noisy classroom and the teacher's fast-paced teaching methods. Parental support also emerged as an issue, where some students felt they lacked motivation and guidance to complete homework assignments.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Internal Factors in Learning Difficulties

a. Physical Condition and Health Support

Based on the interview results, most students answered "No" to the first question, indicating that their physical condition is generally not a hindrance to the learning process. This signifies that students are in reasonably good health to participate in learning activities. Even though most students did not experience health problems, it is important to remember that structured physical activities play a role not only in maintaining physical health but also in supporting the emotional balance needed for effective learning. Therefore, schools should conduct regular health checks and organize light physical activities to ensure students' fitness is maintained. Besides maintaining physical condition, integrating well-planned physical activities can help improve concentration, reduce stress, and assist students in managing their emotions during the learning process. With these steps, schools can create a holistic learning environment where physical, emotional, and

intellectual aspects support each other to achieve optimal learning outcomes (Riyanto & Mudian, 2019).

b. Sleep Habits and Learning Energy

For the second question, students also answered "No" indicating that their sleep habits are likely sufficient, and they do not experience drowsiness during learning. This suggests that students have sleep routines that support their learning activities. Additionally, teachers can incorporate physical activities, short games between lessons, and ice breaking activities to refresh the atmosphere (Zuhaery et al, 2024). Ice-breaking activities can provide new energy for students and help them become more actively involved in the learning process. By creating an interactive and engaging learning atmosphere, students can have a more meaningful and effective learning experience. This approach provides opportunities for teachers to organize a dynamic learning environment, keeping students focused and motivated to understand the material more deeply (Harianja & Sapri, 2022).

c. Parental Role in Supporting Healthy Habits

Parental roles are crucial in monitoring their children's behavior. Support from parents is key to helping children develop healthy habits, including maintaining regular sleep patterns, adequate nutrition, and effective time management. Parents should also monitor gadget use to prevent excess and help children manage their study time in a structured manner (Ervina Anatasya et al., 2024). With proper supervision at home, children can start their school day in optimal physical and mental condition, allowing them to learn more effectively. Therefore, collaboration between school and parents is very important to create a supportive environment for children's overall growth and development (Khusniyah et al., 2023).

d. Concentration Challenges and Learning Focus

For the third question, most students answered "Yes" indicating that concentration is a major challenge for them. This can be linked to external disturbances, such as classroom noise or unengaging learning material. Student-centered learning plays an important role in enhancing learning motivation (Mazna et al., 2024). Methods like group discussions or educational games can attract students' attention and make them more focused on the material being taught (Citrawati Lestari et al., 2023). Additionally, creating a distraction-free classroom environment is key to building a space conducive to student concentration. When the learning environment is calm and engaging, students tend to concentrate more easily and absorb information effectively. Moreover, encouraging students to observe their surroundings can enhance balance in the learning process (Wulandari, 2020). Thus, learning becomes more meaningful.

e. Perception of Learning Difficulty and Delivery Method

For the fourth question, students answered "No" indicating that they do not find the lessons too difficult. However, this could also mean that their barriers lie not in the difficulty level of the material but in how it is delivered. Teachers can simplify learning materials to make them easier to understand, and using visual aids or teaching props can make learning more interesting and easier to grasp. Visual aids can help simplify complex concepts, allowing students to understand the material more effectively. Even if the material is not too difficult, creative delivery methods, such as breaking lessons into smaller steps, can increase interest and focus and create a more interactive and meaningful learning experience (Pandiangan et al., 2018).

f. Lack of Interest in Certain Subjects

For the fifth question, students' responses of "Yes" indicate that some subjects are less appealing to them. This highlights the importance of applying creative and relevant teaching approaches to increase student interest. Teachers need to identify subjects that are less preferred and adjust teaching methods to be more engaging and aligned with student interests. One strategy is to integrate stories or creative activities directly related

to the lesson content. For example, presenting material through narratives or using educational games can make the learning process more enjoyable and relevant to students' daily lives.

Project based learning approaches, combined with the use of visual aids such as pictures or videos, can significantly increase student engagement. This method allows students to apply their knowledge in more real-life situations, thereby deepening understanding through direct experience (Budi et al, 2021). Furthermore, visual media helps simplify complex concepts, making the learning process more engaging and helping students better understand the material.

To enhance learning effectiveness, teachers can insert light physical activities or ice-breaking sessions between lessons. These activities not only refresh the atmosphere but also help maintain student focus and motivation throughout the learning process. With this approach, it is hoped that an interactive and enjoyable learning environment can be created, ultimately improving student interest and comprehension of the material taught (Putri et al., 2017).

3.2.2 External Factors in Learning Difficulties

a. Classroom Noise and Learning Environment

Most students answered "Yes" to the sixth question, indicating that classroom noise is a major barrier to creating a conducive learning atmosphere. This condition demands that teachers take strategic steps in managing the classroom environment to optimally support the learning process. A comfortable learning environment can enhance students' concentration and comfort, allowing them to focus on the material being taught (Latief et al., 2023). One essential step is implementing effective classroom management, such as establishing class rules with students, arranging seating based on individual needs, and controlling noise sources within the classroom.

Good classroom management not only includes physical aspects but also the development of a culture of mutual respect and shared responsibility. Teachers act as facilitators in creating a supportive classroom atmosphere by building effective communication and giving attention to each student. Additional strategies such as involving students in creating class rules and building structured routines can help reduce distractions and foster a calm environment. Thus, good classroom management not only addresses noise but also increases student enthusiasm during the learning process (Kurni & Susanto, 2018).

b. Teaching Speed and Instructional Strategy

For the seventh question, most students answered "Yes" indicating that fast-paced teaching methods are not always effective, especially for young learners who need more time to understand concepts. Teaching strategies play a vital role in supporting students' academic success. The use of well-planned strategies can make the learning process more focused, structured, and engaging. As the key drivers, teachers need to be strategic in designing and implementing instruction (Izzatunnisa et al, 2024). Teachers can apply a gradual teaching approach, such as providing time for questions after each segment of material, to ensure students truly understand what is being presented.

c. Parental Involvement and Home Support

For the eighth question, most students answered "Yes" indicating a lack of parental involvement. Parental involvement can significantly impact students' enthusiasm and academic achievement (Achmad Marzuki & Setyawan, 2022). Teachers can organize parenting programs or short training sessions for parents to enhance their involvement in their children's education. Teachers can also provide regular student progress reports to encourage better communication between teachers and parents. Strengthening this collaboration is essential, especially in addressing learning difficulties of lower primary students in the digital era for sustainable education.

d. Homework Guidance and Independent Study

For the ninth question, students answered "Yes," confirming that parental guidance is highly necessary in helping students complete their assignments, especially for elementary school-aged children who still require intensive supervision. In this context, parents play a critical role as the main companions in the home learning process. Schools can also contribute by offering additional learning programs or tutoring services outside class hours for students who need assistance. Teachers can provide simpler and clearer assignment guidelines to help students become more independent.

Parental involvement in children's learning has a significant impact on improving academic performance. Parents who actively engage in monitoring and supporting their children's learning process, including homework completion, create a more structured and supportive learning environment. Therefore, collaboration between schools and parents should be continuously strengthened through intensive communication and collaborative programs. This approach not only helps students complete tasks more effectively but also builds positive study habits both at home and at school (Thalib & Istiqamah, 2021).

e. Home Facilities and Emotional Support

For the last question, the average student response of "No" indicates that physical facilities at home, such as a study space, are not the main issue in supporting the learning process. This shows that most students already have adequate study spaces, but other factors like emotional and social support from family are more crucial. This support includes parental attention to the child's learning needs, motivation, and creating a conducive study environment at home. This aspect demonstrates that learning success is influenced not only by physical facilities but also by supportive social and emotional interactions.

Teachers can offer suggestions to parents on improving the quality of support, such as providing a more focused and distraction-free study area. Parents can also be involved in their child's study habits by helping them create a consistent study schedule. With collaboration between schools and parents, students can not only benefit from existing study spaces but also gain emotional support that strengthens their learning motivation (Warwey & Santoso, 2023). This indicates that a combination of a good environment and social support from the family can foster high student motivation and learning outcomes.

A comprehensive strategy is needed to create a supportive learning environment. Teachers should consider more adaptive teaching methods, such as using better classroom management techniques to reduce noise and providing enough time for students to understand the material (Juniar & Putri, 2023). From the family side, parental awareness regarding their role in supporting the child's learning process needs to be increased, both through verbal motivation and direct involvement in learning activities at home. Non-academic factors such as the learning environment and parental role significantly impact student learning outcomes (Arwen, 2021).

Understanding the relationship between environment, motivation, and learning outcomes enables educators to create more effective interventions to enhance students learning experiences (Damayanti et al, 2021). This research also opens space for further studies on the specific influence of various social environment elements in improving the quality of basic education. The suggested approach includes improvements in teaching methods, the creation of a conducive learning environment, and enhanced parental involvement. With this comprehensive solution, the challenges faced by students can be minimized, allowing them to learn more effectively and with greater focus.

This study reveals that learning difficulties experienced by primary school students

4. Conclusion

are triggered by various factors, both internal and external. Internal factors include a lack of concentration and low learning interest, while external factors consist of classroom noise, fast-paced teaching delivery, and limited parental support. Although students are generally in good physical condition, the main challenges they face lie in an unconducive learning environment and teaching approaches that are not fully aligned with their needs.

To address these issues, a comprehensive strategy is required, involving improved classroom management, the application of more interactive and engaging teaching methods, and strengthened parental involvement in supporting students' learning at home. Strong collaboration between teachers and parents is a key element, particularly in fostering an effective and sustainable learning process amidst the challenges of today's digital era.

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