

Factors Causing Difficulty in Learning Mathematics for Elementary School Students

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRAK

Article history: Received November 10, 2021 Accepted February 16, 2022 Available online February 25, 2022

Kata Kunci: Faktor Kesulitan Belajar, Matematika, SD

Keywords: Learning Difficulty Factors, Mathematics, Elementary School



ABSTRACT

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Kesulitan belajar Matematika ini terjadi karena dipengaruhi oleh dua faktor yakni faktor internal (dalam) dan faktor eksternal (luar). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis factor-faktor penyebab kesulitan dalam belajar matematika pada siswa kelas V sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian *Kualitatif dengan pendekatan Deskriptif kualitatif yang dilakukan dengan 3 tahap:* yakni reduksi data (data reduction), Penyajian data (data display), Simpulan atau verifikasi. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini adalah Guru kelas V dan Siswa kelas V. Alat pengumpulan datanya berupa Observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa mengalami kesulitan pada mata pelajaran matematika yaitu kesulitan dalam menggunakan operasi hitung dengan benar, kesulitan saat memahami bahasa soal dan kesulitan dalam mengerjakan soal yang banyak rumus. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa minat serta motivasi siswa terhadap pelajaran matematika kurang, Sehingga siswa kurang tertarik untuk belajar. kurangnya minat ini mungkin karena anggapan para siswa yang menganggap bahwa matematika adalah pelajaran yang sulit. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian tersebut, guru harusnya lebih memperhatikan kembali kesulitan-kesulitan yang dialami oleh siswa. Guru harus lebih memperhatikan metode yang digunakan dalam mengajar berdasarkan dengan materi yang diajarkan agar siswa tidak cepat bosan.

This difficulty in learning Mathematics occurs because it is influenced by two factors, namely internal and external factors. This study aims to analyze the factors that cause difficulties in learning mathematics in fifth-grade elementary school students. This study uses a qualitative research method with a qualitative descriptive approach which is carried out in 3 stages: namely data reduction (data reduction), data presentation (data display), conclusions (verification). The participants in this study were Class V teachers and Class V students. The data collection tools were in the form of observations, interviews, and documentation. The results showed that students experienced difficulties in mathematics, namely difficulties in using arithmetic operations correctly, difficulties in understanding the language of questions, and difficulties in working on questions with many formulas. It shows that the interest and motivation of students towards mathematics are lacking, so students are less interested in learning. This lack of interest may be due to the students' assumption that mathematics is difficult. Based on the results of these studies, teachers should pay more attention to the difficulties experienced by students. Teachers should pay more attention to the methods used in teaching based on the material being taught so that students do not get bored quickly.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of scientific knowledge and technology includes improved applied science and the improvement of basic science. One form of effort to improve the ability to acquire this basic knowledge is to increase knowledge in mathematics (Khaerunnisa & Pamungkas, 2018; Widodo & Kartikasari, 2017). Learning mathematics can train children's logical thinking skills (E. Y. Sari & Windari, 2019). Mathematics is a subject that is learned at all levels of education, from elementary school to university level (Antara et al., 2020). Mathematics can also be used to analyze and simplify problems. Mathematics subjects are taught in elementary schools to master mathematical concepts, explain the relationship between concepts, and apply algorithmic concepts flexibly, accurately, efficiently, and precisely to solve everyday problems (Riyanto & Gunarhadi, 2017; Sidik & Wakih, 2019). However, mathematics is a complicated subject and is not very interesting for most students. Therefore, a teacher needs to support his students when facing difficulties they are experiencing (Dewi & Agustika, 2020; Matona, Moh Fadly, 2021). However, mathematics is a complicated subject and is not very interesting for most students. Therefore, a teacher needs to support his students. Some students when facing difficulties they are experiencing (Mufarizuddin, 2018). Some students in elementary school have problems learning mathematics, while some other students can learn

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mathematics easily. Mathematics learning activities that only use the lecture method during the learning process can cause students difficulties associating information and cognitive structures. So far, the methods and approaches have not changed how students think abstract mathematics learning is real. As a result, students will have difficulty learning and tend not to like mathematics (Dewi & Agustika, 2020; Dwi & Audina, 2021).

In learning activities at school, a teacher must face several student characters. Some students can participate in learning activities well and smoothly, and some have difficulty learning, especially in mathematics. Learning difficulties are students' inability to master formulas, principles, or problem-solving algorithms even though they have tried to learn them. Students' learning difficulties will greatly affect learning achievement because getting good learning achievement requires good effort by students in learning (Kurniawan & Trisharsiwi, 2016; Mabruroh et al., 2021). There are several characteristics of students who have difficulty learning mathematics; students who have learning difficulties often make mistakes in counting, determine the arithmetic to be used, do not memorize formulas, and have difficulty solving problems. Researchers at SD Negeri 94 Pekanbaru identified the characteristics and problems of learning difficulties in mathematics. Based on the interviews conducted with homeroom teachers for fifth grade at SD Negeri 94 Pekanbaru, he said that most of his students had learning difficulties in mathematics. Students often experience difficulties using arithmetic operations correctly, understanding the language of questions, and working on questions with many formulas. Learning difficulties are a natural condition experienced by students. Learning difficulties are a natural condition experienced by students. If the teacher does not understand the types of learning difficulties experienced by students and the right way to overcome them, the learning difficulties experienced by students will continue to increase and worsen. Learning difficulties can cause delays in the student's learning process. One form of academic-related learning difficulties is learning difficulties in mathematics. Elementary school students often encounter difficulties in learning mathematics (Atiaturrahmaniah et al., 2021; Patricia & Zamzam, 2019). There are symptoms of student learning difficulties in learning mathematics: 1) students have a low academic achievement (scores below average), 2) students achieve inconsistent learning outcomes. With consistent efforts that have been made, 3) slow completion of assignments, 4) unfair attitudes shown by students, and 5) no usual behavior (Hafid et al., 2016).

Learning disability, commonly referred to as learning difficulties, is a condition that interferes and makes it difficult for a person to carry out academic activities well and effectively (Cahyono, 2019; Rosdianah et al., 2019). Two factors cause learning difficulties, namely internal factors (inside) and external factors (outside) (Cahyono, 2019; Sidik & Wakih, 2019). Internal factors that cause learning difficulties are factors that come from within. Internal factors include two aspects, namely physiological aspects and psychological aspects. At the same time, external factors come from outside a person, which includes two aspects of the point of view, namely the surrounding environment (social) and the non-social environment. The most prominent internal factor within a student will determine student difficulty when learning. Internal factors include two points of view, namely physiological related to children's health which includes the lack of healthy sense of sight of students and the condition of students' bodies that are less fit. The next aspect, namely a person's psychological or mental state, can affect the situation when learning activities, such as motivation, interests, talents, and intelligence. While the factors that come from outside the student (External) include two points of view, namely the surrounding environment (social) and the non-social environment (Atiaturrahmaniah et al., 2021; Oktari et al., 2019). Prospective elementary school teachers need to understand the learning difficulties that students often experience. If left unchecked, the learning difficulties experienced by students will hurt the students themselves because interest in learning mathematics will decrease. Mathematics will continue to be a subject that students shun. Students get bored easily and will get bored with math lessons. This study aims to analyze the factors that cause difficulties in learning mathematics in fifth-grade elementary school students. This study is interested in understanding the factors contributing to learning difficulties, especially in fifth grade, a high grade in elementary school. Judging from the information obtained through this research, it is expected that learning difficulties in fifth grade can be reduced so that learning difficulties in mathematics are not sustainable in sixth grade.

2. METHOD

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative type of research. This study focused on learning difficulties in mathematics in fifth-grade SD Negeri 94 Pekanbaru using a qualitative descriptive approach. This study aims to reveal the facts and circumstances that occurred when the research was in progress. Qualitative research is research that seeks to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, etc., holistically, and using descriptions in the form of words and language, in a particular context that naturally by utilizing various

Moleong scientific methods (Audina & Dwi, 2021). This research was conducted at SD Negeri 94 Pekanbaru using qualitative research methods. Data collection in this study was carried out by several techniques: interviews, observation, and documentation. Researchers use observation because they want to know how the attitude and atmosphere in the study are. This study observed mathematics learning in fifth grade, used as initial data. In this study, interviews were conducted to find out things that were not found at the time of observation. Interviews were conducted with fifth-grade teachers at SD Negeri 94 Pekanbaru. And the documentation in this study is used as a complement to the data obtained from observations and interviews so that the results from observations and interviews that have been carried out will be more reliable. The research was conducted with fifth-grade homeroom teachers because teachers play an important role in school learning. The researcher interviewed the fifth-grade homeroom teacher to find out the factors that contributed to the difficulty in learning mathematics and what efforts had been made to overcome the difficulty in learning mathematics. The next subject was fifth-grade students; the subjects were selected based on students identified as having difficulty learning mathematics based on the results of each fifth-grade teacher at SD Negeri 94 Pekanbaru. The grid of instruments used in this study is presented in Table 1.

Indicator	Sub Indicator
Difficulty understanding	Able to understand the material in learning mathematics.
the concept.	
Difficulty in skills	Able to master numeracy skills well.
	Able to master multiplication well.
Difficulty in problem-	Able to solve problems well.
solving	Able to work on story problems correctly.
	Able to work on math problems to completion.
Motivation to learn	Able to encourage students to learn mathematics.
	Able to motivate students to want to learn mathematics.
Sensing ability	Students have problems with their visual abilities.
	Students have problems with their hearing ability.
Teacher teaching	Able to use appropriate and fun learning models in learning mathematics.
variations	
Use of learning media	Able to use engaging learning media to interest students in mathematics learning.
Procurement of remedial	Able to overcome the difficulties experienced by students in learning mathematics.

Table 1. Research Instrument

Data analysis is the activity of organizing, grading, and labeling to obtain findings based on the focus of the problem to be answered. This study uses a qualitative descriptive analysis technique and consists of three steps: data reduction, where the data are summarized and focused on important things and look for themes. The data display is arranging words so that they are arranged into good sentences. Conclusion or verification is looking for data again as the purpose of the findings obtained by Miles & Huberman (Putri et al., 2019).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Observations were made on teaching and learning activities in fifth grade in mathematics. In fifth grade, mathematics learning is not included in thematic learning and is separated from other subjects. The teacher begins the mathematics learning activity by greeting, giving advice, and motivating the students to participate in mathematics learning. Based on the results of my observations, I found that students who had difficulty solving story problems happened because of a lack of interest and lack of effort by these students in clearly understanding the material presented by the teacher. I also found that some students still lacked numeracy skills based on my observations. Not being able to operate multiplication and division arithmetic operations correctly is because there are still students who have not mastered and memorized multiplication. Based on my observations, it is known that the factors that cause difficulties in learning mathematics include students' attitudes towards mathematics, which tend to be negative. It can be seen that there are still students who are just silent when the teacher explains the material. Some students are sleepy during the learning process. It is because the students' interest in mathematics is still low. The low interest of students in learning mathematics is because the teacher only uses the lecture method of learning

and asking questions to students, which makes students bored and afraid when they answer questions given by the teacher. Teachers have tried to overcome difficulties in learning mathematics by always motivating students to be enthusiastic when participating in mathematics learning and paying special attention to students who need to be nurtured.

Based on interviews with fifth-grade teachers, information was obtained about students' understanding of mathematics subject matter. Some students are still constrained to understand the material, such as fractions, and some can understand the material. Students do not want to try and lack interest in student learning. Regarding the understanding of concepts in mathematics learning, it is known that the level of students' ability to capture the material is different. Some students catch fast, and some are slow. Based on the results of interviews with the fifth-grade teacher, he said that the factor causing students' difficulty in learning mathematics was because students did not focus their attention when the teacher was explaining the material being taught, which caused the students not to understand the lesson. Then the teacher also stated that many students still did not memorize multiplication and did not repeat the material taught at home. Poor health was also one of the factors causing students' difficulties in learning. It is known that there are still many students who are still lacking in mastering numeracy skills well. Unable to operate arithmetic operations properly. The teacher also found that many students complained of difficulties in learning mathematics. The cause of students' difficulties in learning mathematics is because students do not master the material well; when the teacher explains the material, many students play, make noise, and disturb their seatmates, and multiplication is still not mastered by students. When having difficulty in solving the questions given by the teacher, students are not active to ask the teacher; most students harbor, he is, indifferent and indifferent to the difficulties he is experiencing. As a result, not many students saw their friend's assignment.

Each individual has a different level of ability or IQ. Teachers motivate students to be enthusiastic in learning mathematics is also different. For students with a high learning ability level, the teacher only motivates them by encouraging them. However, for students with low levels of learning ability, the teacher will provide special guidance such as providing additional hours for the child and giving questions based on the level of ability possessed by the student. When students are appointed to work on the questions on the blackboard, usually, students will feel afraid. The fear experienced by students will grow if the teacher does not motivate the students. Steps that the teacher can take are to encourage the student by saying mom will not be angry and will not punish you if you are wrong in answering the questions that you gave, we are both learning right and wrong here, there is no problem, the most important thing is you have to be brave to go forward to answer the questions that you gave. Based on the results of the interview, it is known that the learning method that the teacher uses is not all students like it. Some students are monotonous, each individual's motivation is different.

According to the teacher's view based on the results of interviews that have been carried out, which makes mathematics lessons less attractive to students because students are afraid of the teacher if the teacher is angry, the child's guts will automatically shrink. They will cause a continuous sense of trauma to the child himself. Then, their instincts and feelings immediately think that mathematics is horror and scary because of the many formulas used and can only be mastered by smart people. When mathematics is not as difficult as imagined by students, if the student pays attention to the teacher's explanation seriously and wants to repeat the material at home, the student will no longer think that mathematics is difficult. Therefore, the teacher increases student interest in learning mathematics by providing motivation, special attention, and additional hours. Based on interviews with students, it is known that not all students can understand the questions well. Because when the teacher explains, the students always tell stories with their friends, which makes the students not pay attention and do not absorb the material that the teacher has conveyed. Even though habits like this will make it difficult for students to work on the questions given by the teacher because they do not master the formula that will be used to answer questions from the teacher, the number of formulas contained in mathematics lessons is one of the reasons why most students do not like mathematics because students feel dizzy with the many formulas.

Discussion

Difficulty learning mathematics

Mathematics is a science that covers all aspects of life. Mathematics is an exact and abstract science that provides many benefits for the sustainability of human life on the other hand mathematics also requires us, especially students, to be able to understand and follow all the rules contained in mathematics to be applied so that many positive things can be applied to life. Mathematics is also a way to make us, especially students, more creative, attentive, critical, innovative, and think logically, carefully, and personally. With mathematics, we are taught to be people who never give up looking for solutions, so there is a sense of satisfaction and pride within us (Antara et al., 2020; Hasibuan, 2018). Learning disability is a condition that

prevents people from learning. Learning difficulties are when students fail to study well (Handayani & Mahrita, 2021; Nganji, 2017). Students with learning difficulties tend to have low interest and motivation in learning mathematics. Students who do not study mathematics show class positivity, and when teachers have the opportunity to ask questions, they tend not to ask questions (Fitrah, 2017; Sidik & Wakih, 2019). Learning difficulties have several characteristics, and students who have learning difficulties often make mistakes when counting and solving story problems (Raharjo et al., 2021).

Based on the observations that have been made during the mathematics learning process, it is known that some students do not focus their attention when the teacher explains the material. Some students talk with their seatmates during the learning process, some are cool to play, and some daydream. The results of this study show that the difficulties experienced by students vary. Namely, students have difficulty using arithmetic operations correctly, students have difficulty understanding the language of questions, and students have difficulty solving problems that have many formulas. It shows less interest and motivation in learning mathematics, so students are less interested in learning. This lack of interest may be due to the assumption that students think that mathematics is a difficult subject (Dipayana et al., 2019; Stohlmann, 2019).

Factors that cause difficulties in learning mathematics

Learning difficulties are often seen in the decline in student learning outcomes and academic achievement. However, student learning difficulties can also be seen from deviant behavior, such as often shouting while studying, disturbing friends, and playing truant. This learning difficulty occurs because it is influenced by internal (internal) and external (external) factors. Based on the results of interviews that have been carried out, the results obtained that there are two causes of difficulty in learning mathematics for fifth-grade students: internal and external factors. Internal factors come from within students, including aspects of attitudes in learning, student interest in learning, student motivation in learning, and aspects of body health. Students' attitudes in mathematics are still low, lack self-confidence, and lack curiosity about learning mathematics, so mathematics is the most difficult and least desirable discipline (Antara et al., 2020; Utari et al., 2019). Student interest strongly influences learning outcomes because there is no attraction for these students to learn.

Motivation can be a driving force in students that guides learning activities. Therefore, motivation motivates students to learn—the role of parents in supporting student learning. Apart from the teacher's motivation, the role of parents in supporting student learning is also important. Motivation is a form of encouragement from students who can interact with the surrounding environment. Learning motivation can stimulate students to increase motivation and desire to do something. Therefore, teachers must provide encouragement or motivation to their students. It allows students to feel excited while learning (Anggraeni et al., 2019; Emda, 2017). Physical health, This physiological factor can cause difficulties for students to learn mathematics. Unhealthy physical conditions can make students easily tired, dizzy, sleepy, and less motivated to learn. Students with health problems may have difficulty concentrating and falling asleep while studying math, possibly due to poor physical condition (Andri et al., 2020).

External factors come from outside of students, including variations of teachers in teaching, use of learning media, and family environment. Variations in teaching, the teacher, is a very important factor that affects student learning success, such as the teacher delivering material too quickly, students are difficult to understand. The teacher does not use learning media when teaching, and some students talk in class, making other students uncomfortable. Some students feel uncomfortable because the teacher does not master the class well (Oktari et al., 2019). From the results obtained through interviews and observations carried out with teachers and fifth-grade students, it is known that teachers do not use certain media or learning methods, which causes students' difficulties in understanding the concepts being taught. The observations and interviews conducted with teachers and students show that teachers have not used concrete learning media optimally. As a result, students have difficulty understanding the material taught by the teacher. Using learning media in the learning process can increase students' new willingness and interest, increase the desire and stimulation when learning, and provide psychological influence on students (Wahyuningtyas & Sulasmono, 2020).

Parental attention is also a factor in students' difficulties in learning mathematics because children do difficult tasks at home without the help of their parents. Parents can not be separated from children's learning outcomes and learning outcomes. Therefore, parents need to be aware always to pay attention and support their children to succeed in their studies. Students whose parents apply good parenting tend to have good habits in everyday life. The applicable parenting model is a democratic parenting style. The application of democratic parenting methods can improve student learning outcomes because the application of democratic parenting methods can help students develop well so that it refers to cognitive skills (Juniarti et al., 2020). From the results of the analysis that has been done, it is known that there are still many students who do not get their parents' attention at home.

Efforts to overcome difficulties in learning mathematics

Students experiencing difficulties in learning, whether it is the help of teachers, parents, or their efforts, must be resolved immediately. Ignoring the difficulties faced by students can lead to more difficulties in understanding the material being taught because the problems students face will always increase. The analysis of efforts to overcome fifth-grade mathematics learning difficulties at SD Negeri 94 Pekanbaru was carried out by analyzing the results of interviews conducted on the subjects in the study. In this case, the researchers did not try to overcome the difficulties of learning mathematics. Still, the researchers described the efforts made and provided suggestions to overcome the difficulties of learning mathematics. The ways that teachers do to overcome students' mathematics learning difficulties are as follows: giving students more practice questions, providing individual explanations for material that students cannot understand, and taking corrective actions for students whose scores do not meet the KKM standard (Y. E. Sari & Windari, 2019). Furthermore, continuous student learning motivation is an effort that teachers can give to students to motivate students when studying and doing homework (Tusturi et al., 2017). Students with learning difficulties work hard at school and home. Children who have learning difficulties need special guidance and treatment. They are not unable to learn. However, they need more attention and guidance to overcome the learning difficulties they experience. Therefore, it takes a teacher who has creativity and knowledge when carrying out his duties as a teacher, mentor, coach, and so on (Utami, 2020). All family members, especially parents such as fathers or mothers, play an important role, especially in achieving the learning achievements of their sons and daughters. Every child needs encouragement to do something and the power to imitate. With the encouragement of parents, children can do something their parents do. Therefore, parents must be a good examples for their children (Malawat, 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

Learning difficulties experienced by fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 94 Pekanbaru in learning mathematics include difficulties when using arithmetic operations correctly, difficulties in understanding the language of questions, and difficulties when solving problems that have many formulas. The difficulties experienced by students are based on evidence obtained through interviews with teachers and students, observations and documentation that has been done. Factors that cause students to have difficulty learning mathematics come from internal (internal) and external (external) factors. Internal factors come from within the students themselves, including student attitudes while studying, student learning motivation is still low, and student body health. While external factors come from outside the students, including the lack of variety in the way teachers teach, the use of learning media that is not maximally used, and the family environment.

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