Difficulty Factors for Fourth Grade Students in Thematic Learning

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A B S T R A C T

Obstacles found during this learning process can come from the teacher, the school environment, or the students themselves. This study aims to analyze the factors that cause students to have learning difficulties. This research uses descriptive qualitative research. The subjects of this study were one principal, two teachers, and 20 students. This research uses interview, observation, and documentation data collection techniques. Data collection methods are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The study results are the difficulty factors experienced by students come from within and outside the students themselves. Inside students include the enthusiasm and interest of students in learning, student intelligence, student body, and mental conditions. From outside the students themselves, namely the student’s environmental conditions, relationships with friends, parents, and teachers, classroom conditions, advice and infrastructure, learning media, and difficulties in learning materials. Two factors that cause students to experience learning difficulties greatly influence student learning success. Students who are in elementary school have not been able to overcome the problems experienced, therefore students need to get more attention from teachers and parents to overcome the learning difficulties they are experiencing.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is something that Indonesian citizens must accept without exception. From a very young age to adulthood, anyone must receive formal education to be ready to face the future that will come (Kadi & Awwaliyah, 2017; Sinoho, 2011; Winata & Friantini, 2018). Learning is an activity that can be done psychologically or physiologically. Psychological activities are mental processes, such as thinking, concluding, listening, understanding, studying, comparing, differentiating, expressing, analyzing and other mental activities (Abbas & Yusuf Hidayat, 2018; Aji, 2020; Pratiwi et al., 2021). Physiological activities are activities in the process of application or practice, for example, conducting an experiment or experiment, doing exercises, making a product, appreciating, and so on (Halbatullah et al., 2019; Nasution & Suharjana, 2022).
The learning process has an important role in learning activities and it is hoped that each learning process can run well to achieve the expected learning objectives (Baturba & Baturba, 2020; Junedi et al., 2020; Wulansari et al., 2018). However, every process that is being implemented will not run smoothly as expected because there are various obstacles (Junedi et al., 2020; Wahyono et al., 2020). Obstacles found during this learning process can come from the teacher, the school environment, or the students themselves. Among the obstacles that exist in the learning process, the obstacles that are often encountered are obstacles from students, one of which is learning difficulties (Jundu et al., 2019; Rachmat & Krisnadi, 2020; Rigianti, 2020). Internal factors and external factors can cause factors that affect learning difficulties in students. Based on the researcher's interview with the teacher of class 4A at SDN 177 Pekanbaru, it was found that around ten students were in class IV.A had difficulty understanding the material presented by the teacher and got low scores and did not quite reach the KKM. One of the reasons students get a low level of achievement or learning outcomes compared to other students in thematic learning theme six sub-theme 1. With the obstacles faced by students, this is where the role of the teacher is expected to be able to assist students in overcoming the learning difficulties they are experiencing.

Internal factors that cause low student learning outcomes include physiological and psychological factors. Physiological factors, namely physical conditions in general, influence the student's learning process (Gabriely et al., 2020; Koldestam et al., 2021). Physically fresh children will learn differently from children who feel tired. Children who experience unhealthy mental health can harm their learning process (Bruin, 2019; Cluley et al., 2020; Riyanto & Gunarhadi, 2017). External factors that affect student learning outcomes are family, school environment, and living environment (Ikbal et al., 2019; Winarni et al., 2021). One of the factors of learning difficulties is the atmosphere in the family that does not support learning activities, such as: noise at home, lack of attention from parents, unavailability of learning equipment, lack of family economy so that children's learning facilities cannot be provided (Jannah & Umam, 2021; Kurniati et al., 2020; Setiawati et al., 2017). In addition, school environmental factors that are less supportive in the learning process will result in learning difficulties in children, such as: noise, bad smells and so on (Mardliyah et al., 2021; Priatna, 2016). Difficulties in learning experienced by students at school must be a concern for both parties, both teachers and parents (Nani & Evinna, 2019; Widyaningrum & Hasanudin, 2019). There are several cases of learning difficulties. The existence of learning difficulties in a student can be detected by students' mistakes in assignments and test questions. An error is a deviation from the correct answer on an item. It means that students' difficulties will be detected through incorrect answers to a question.

These learning difficulties can be found at any level of education, from elementary school students, high school students to university students (Abbas & Yusuf Hidayat, 2018; Winarti, 2021). Learning difficulties are deficiencies that do not appear outwardly. Disabilities in learning cannot be recognized in a different physical form with people who do not experience learning difficulties. This learning difficulty is not always caused by low intelligence factors (mental disorders), but can also be caused by other factors outside of intelligence (Budiyono, 2018; Oktadiana, 2019). A high IQ does not guarantee successful learning. Thus, learning difficulties are a condition of the learning process marked by certain obstacles in achieving learning outcomes (Azis, 2019; Handayani et al., 2021). Therefore, efforts to prevent or minimize and solve learning difficulties through the diagnosis of learning difficulties are very necessary. Students who have learning difficulties often find it difficult and slow in completing the tasks given by the teacher and are slow in understanding the material presented by the teacher, therefore students who experience these obstacles require more attention and treatment. The teacher's role is to provide special handling and more attention to students who have difficulties in learning than students who do not experience difficulties in learning (Rofia, 2015; Rusmawan, 2013). There are several efforts that teachers can make in overcoming student learning difficulties, including, First, identification, namely activities directed at finding students who have learning difficulties (Izaak et al., 2016; D. R. Utari et al., 2019). Second, diagnosis is the determination of the data processing results about students who have learning difficulties and the types of learning difficulties experienced by students (Abbas & Yusuf Hidayat, 2018; Winarti, 2021). Third, prognosis refers to planning or program preparation which is expected to help overcome the problem of student learning difficulties. Fourth, provide assistance or therapy.

For now, the learning process at the elementary school level has used the 2013 curriculum using a scientific approach and each related lesson content will be united by a theme and this learning is called thematic learning (Arum & Walyudy, 2016; Mawardi et al., 2019; Ningsih & Mahyuddin, 2021; Weriyanti et al., 2020). Thematic learning is an integrated learning model that uses a thematic approach that involves several subjects and raises a theme to provide a meaningful experience to students (Khoeriyah & Mawardi, 2018; Wardani & Syofyan, 2018). Integrated learning itself is a learning system that allows students, both individually and in groups, to actively explore and discover scientific concepts and principles in a holistic, meaningful, and authentic way (Mawardi et al., 2019; Nikmah et al., 2019; Rofiq et al., 2019). Thematic
learning has the following characteristics: student-centered; provide hands-on experience; segregation of subjects is not so clear but relevant; prepare concepts from various subjects in a learning process; and is flexible and related to the real world. Other research findings state that a scientific approach can help students learn (Jaedun & Nuryadin, 2017; I. T. Putri et al., 2020). Other research also states that integrated learning can increase student activity (Mawardi et al., 2019; Puspitawati & Marwadi, 2017). There is no study on the factors that cause students to engage in thematic learning. This study has several objectives, such as to analyze the factors that cause students to experience learning difficulties in thematic learning on theme 6 sub-theme 1 and the role of teachers in overcoming learning difficulties in thematic learning on theme 6 sub-themes. 1 content of Indonesian lessons experienced by students.

2. METHOD

The researcher used a qualitative research type with a descriptive approach in this study. Qualitative research produces findings that cannot be achieved using statistical procedures or quantitative methods. The location of this research is SD Negeri 177 Pekanbaru, Bukit Raya District, Pekanbaru City, Riau. The implementation of this research starts from design, research, implementation, data analysis and making research reports. The subjects and objects in this study were the principal, 2 4th grade teachers, 10 grade IV.A students and 10 grade IV.B students at SD Negeri 177 Pekanbaru. Data collection techniques used in this study include: interviews. An interview is a meeting between two or more people to exchange information and ideas through question and answer to construct meaning in a particular topic. Researchers used interviews to dig up information about learning difficulties experienced by students in learning theme 2, sub-theme 1, the content of the Indonesian language lesson. Sources of information in this interview activity are class teachers and students in grades IVA and IV.B SD Negeri 177 Pekanbaru. In implementing the interview technique, the researcher has made a list of questions beforehand, so it doesn’t take time to look for questions. The researcher only needs to record the answers from the interviewees. At the end of the documentation, during this research activity, it will be documented using photos which include the activities of researchers, teachers and students. The research instruments are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research instrument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Sub Indicator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal factor</td>
<td>1. Students' interest and enthusiasm in learning</td>
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<td>2. Readiness of students in the learning process</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Student intelligence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Student's body and mental condition</td>
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<td>5. Student habits when studying</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Student interest in learning materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning difficulty factor</td>
<td>1. Student environmental conditions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Parents' attention to the learning process</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Relationship with parents and surroundings</td>
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<td>4. Relationships with teachers and friends at school</td>
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<td>5. Media and teaching materials as supporting tools in the classroom during the learning process</td>
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<td>6. Condition of classrooms and school environment</td>
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<td>7. Material difficulties in thematic lesson content</td>
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The data analysis method uses the analytical model of Miles and Huberman. In general, data analysis in this study was carried out through the following stages; first data collection: recording all phenomena found in the field either through observations, interviews, and documentation conducted with the principal, teachers, and students to obtain interview data and documentation. Second, data reduction: reviewing notes from observations, interviews and documentation studies, and separating data that are considered important and unimportant, this work is repeated to check for possible misclassifications. Third, data presentation: describing data that has been classified by taking into account the focus and objectives of the research; and fourth, making conclusions: making a final analysis in the form of a research report.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

To see the learning difficulties experienced by students, researchers conducted interviews and observations with principals, teachers and students. and the results of the interview are as follows. All
students always come with a healthy body condition. If students feel sick before going to school, the students have permission with the class teacher. If a student suddenly feels sick during the learning process, the teacher will direct the student to the UKS, and if he feels not strong, the class teacher will call the student’s parents to pick up the sick student. 20 students revealed that they sometimes feel bored and uninterested during the learning process, to relieve boredom, 19 students distract by drawing, writing, talking to friends or just scribbling in books. In comparison, 1 student remains focused on the teacher’s explanation. 13 students sometimes feel sleepy when the learning process is in progress, and to overcome the drowsiness 4 of them drink to increase body freshness and 16 of them ask permission to wash their faces so that the drowsiness disappears. The principal, teachers and all students revealed that the condition of the school and classroom conditions were always kept clean and the students also felt comfortable when studying in class. Facilities, infrastructure and learning media are available in schools, and supporting tools that teachers can use are infocus projectors. However, in the use of these media and tools, of course, it is necessary to see whether the learning process requires it or not. 2 teachers revealed that the use of this infocus projector is often to assist teachers in the learning process that involves images such as science lesson content. However, they often do not use learning media for other lesson content because they see the condition of time during the short learning process.

The headmaster and 2 teachers revealed that the 2013 curriculum is very suitable for the character of the students, where the 2013 curriculum is all student-centered learning and the teacher only provides guidance and becomes a facilitator. 2 teachers also revealed that there were no difficulties experienced by teachers while delivering learning materials and the lesson plans used were also simpler. According to the principal and 2 teachers, there were a few difficulties, namely developing material for students because the material was too short and the time factor. Current learning is shorter, it is also difficult for students to absorb learning material if the lesson content is combined into a theme. According to the teacher, the learning process is more effective and students are easier to understand if the lesson content is not combined as in the 2006 curriculum (KTSP). 17 out of 20 students said they could understand the material during the thematic learning process, 15 out of 20 students revealed difficulties in thematic learning of Indonesian language content in Theme 6 sub-theme 1 poetry material. 9 students revealed that they lacked focus and found it difficult to distinguish between lines and stanzas, while the other 10 students revealed that they found it difficult to compose a poem because they still found it difficult to put their thoughts into a poem. The principal and two teachers revealed that the relationship between the teacher and the teacher and the teacher and students was well established. Fifteen students revealed that they were not familiar with other teachers and only familiar with the teacher who taught them. One of them was the classroom teacher. Seventeen students said they were familiar with their classmates and other classes because they were easy to get along with, while the other three students felt embarrassed to hang out and only got along with their close friends.

Eighteen students who have learning difficulties will ask the teacher if there are things that are not understood, and the teacher will repeat in explaining the material until the student understands the material presented. 19 students who have difficulty will also ask friends, so if there are friends who are having difficulties, he will help friends, and if he can’t help, he will ask the teacher. Fifteen students revealed that they often communicated with their parents at home, such as asking for activities while at school and helping with assignments. Five students were rarely asked about their activities at school. They were rarely helped with assignments. Two students would be angry if they didn’t do assignments independently. Headmaster and teachers revealed that some students had slightly deviant behavior, but for grades IV A and IV B during this semester, there were no students who had problems. However, to deal with students who are a little problematic, teachers and principals take the same action, which is to approach first and explore what causes these students to behave a little problematic, it could be because of the family environment, classroom environment or playing environment outside of school. Furthermore, the teacher will give directions and subtle reprimands so that students do not take slightly detrimental actions to other students. Seventeen students will more easily understand the learning material if the teacher explains it in front of the class, while the other three students will more easily understand the material if the teacher writes it on the blackboard because if they only listen to the teacher’s explanation, it will not last long in their minds. Meanwhile, 2 teachers revealed that students would be more interested if the teacher explained the material.

Discussion
Every learning process that is carried out will not go according to plan due to various obstacles. Constraints that may be encountered in this learning process can come from the teacher, from the school environment and outside the school or from the students themselves. Factors causing particular learning difficulties are internal and external factors (Husein, 2020; Widyaningrum & Hasanudin, 2019). Internal
factors include lack of teacher motivation, student intelligence, lack of interest in class participation because they do not use teaching aids (Abbas & Yusuf Hidayat, 2018; Nani & Evinna, 2019). At the same time, external factors include the inability of teachers to deal with children’s learning difficulties, lack of parental motivation and lack of reading support books. Students come to school with a healthy body condition, if students feel sick before going to school the students will ask permission from the class teacher. Health problems in school children is one of the causes of decreased ability to reason and focus on one’s attention, as well as the low achievement of school children because they have difficulty focusing attention on the subject being studied, another negative impact caused by health disorders is reduced immunity, causing the body to be susceptible to infection, illness, as well as critical thinking skills also decrease (Faidiban & Sombuk, 2019).

There are also students who feel bored and uninterested during the learning process in the class. The learning carried out tends to be centered on the teacher who only uses the teacher’s speaking ability in explaining and conveying the material, without being accompanied by learning media, it can cause students to feel lazy and bored in participating in learning (Apriliani & Radia, 2020; Fitra Surya, 2017; Nurlaily et al., 2019; Pucangan et al., 2018). To relieve boredom, students distract by drawing, writing, talking to friends or just scribbling in books, and some students stay focused on the teacher’s explanation. Students sometimes feel sleepy during the learning process. To overcome the drowsiness, there are students who drink to increase body freshness. Some students ask permission to wash their faces so that the drowsiness disappears. Sleepiness becomes an obstacle for students who are participating in the teaching and learning process in the classroom, impacting productivity, creativity, and student learning outcomes that are not optimal (Pramana et al., 2020; Zarkasi & Taufik, 2019). School conditions and classroom conditions are always kept clean and students also feel comfortable when studying in class. The surrounding environment also influences teaching and learning activities. Concentration of the brain can not be separated from the environment (Puspitasari et al., 2019; Yusuf et al., 2018). If the environment is clean and comfortable, it can increase the concentration of students’ brain work so that the concentration of thinking is broader. Vice versa, if the environment is dirty and uncomfortable, it can reduce the concentration of brain work so that the concentration of thinking will decrease.

Facilities, infrastructure and learning media are available in schools, and supporting tools that teachers can use are infocus projectors. The absence of educational facilities and infrastructure in the education process will fail in the education process (Basuki, 2017; Miski, 2015; Wahyono et al., 2020). It must be avoided by all parties involved in the world of education. One way for teachers to increase student interest in learning in the classroom can be done by using learning media and interesting supporting tools for each material to be delivered (Fartina et al., 2019; Gever et al., 2021; Rahmat et al., 2019). Learning media has an important role to increase the learning interest of elementary school students, especially in low grades, because low grade students are not yet able to think abstractly, so the material taught by the teacher needs to be visualized in a more real/concrete form (Gading & Kharisma, 2017; Muslihatun et al., 2019; Nataliya, 2015; Sukmanasa et al., 2017). And the psychological science of learning media is very helpful in the psychological development of children in terms of learning. Learning media is anything that can be used to channel the sender’s message to the recipient so that it can stimulate the thoughts, feelings, concerns, and interests of students to learn (Atmoko et al., 2017; Krissandi, 2018; Tafonao, 2018; Wardani & Syofyan, 2018). In addition, the use of media in the learning process can also provide meaningful experiences for students (Hakim & Windayana, 2016; Hest et al., 2021). In using these media and tools, of course, it is necessary to see whether the learning process requires it or not. However, for now, the learning process often does not use learning media because it sees the condition of the time during the short learning process.

The 2013 curriculum fits the students’ character because the ongoing learning process is required to be student-centred and the teacher only provides guidance and becomes a facilitator (Andriani & Rusman, 2019; Astatin & Nurcahyo, 2016; Krissandi, 2018). Teachers have an important role as a source of information, advice and knowledge for students. There are nine roles in teaching and learning activities are: informer, organizer, motivator, director, misiator, transmitter, facilitator, mediator, evaluator (Darmadi, 2016; Rahmawati & Suryadi, 2019). The teacher does not experience difficulties while delivering learning materials. The lesson plans used are also simpler, but only find it difficult to develop the material to students because the material is too short and the current shorter learning time factor. Students find it difficult to absorb learning material if the lesson content is combined into a theme. According to the teacher the learning process is more effective and students are easier to understand if the lesson content is not combined as in the 2006 curriculum (KTSP). Another problem in thematic learning is the difficulty of teachers being creative in teaching material by the theme used. The implementation of thematic learning is not by the lesson plans that have been made and not following the learning stages (Mawardi et al., 2019; Nasution, 2019).
Students can understand the material during the thematic learning process, and some students stated that they had difficulty in learning thematic content of Indonesian poetry material. Some of the inhibiting factors for students who have difficulty in writing and composing poetry include: the difficulty of students in expressing their ideas or ideas in the form of poetry, learning activities that are less varied so that students’ interest and enthusiasm in learning is less and the results are not optimal. The relationship between school residents is well established and the relationship between students and teachers. A good communicative climate in interpersonal relationships between teachers and teachers, teachers and students, and students and students is a condition that allows an effective teaching and learning process to take place, because each person is allowed to participate in activities in the classroom according to their respective abilities (Hendriana & Kadarisma, 2019; Huda, 2020). So that a pleasant social and emotional situation arises in each person, both teachers and students in carrying out their respective duties and responsibilities (Iswardhany & Rahayu, 2020; Sucia, 2017). Students who have learning difficulties will ask the teacher if things are not understood. The teacher will explain the material until the student understands the material presented. Students who have difficulty will also ask friends and vice versa. In learning, asking is a form of delivering content/learning points that are not yet known or as a response to the teacher in learning which is put forward in the form of questions (Indriani et al., 2018; Nurdiansyah et al., 2019). More than that, asking questions is also a measuring tool in thinking because asking questions can help create ideas and increase mastery of physical concepts and phenomena. The act of asking questions and seeking answers is the key to active learning.

When at home, students and parents often establish communication, such as asking for activities while at school and helping with assignments. Parents and teachers have an important task in raising students’ enthusiasm for learning to achieve the future expected by students. Parents are one of the determining factors for children’s success in the learning process (Karima & Kurniawati, 2020; Pranata, 2014; Suastariyani & Tirtayani, 2020). Attention parents or families in educating and providing motivation to learn, have an active role that can be a source of new enthusiasm for children, so that children are more motivated and enthusiastic in learning (Hartanto & Yuliani, 2019; Mahmudi et al., 2020; Prabowo et al., 2020). However, some students rarely communicate with their parents at home. The family environment has a great influence in shaping a child’s personality. It is in this family environment that the first to provide life support because it is parents who nurture, look after, and educate. The good or bad of a child’s personality really depends on how his parents educate (Jannah & Umam, 2021; D. K. Putri et al., 2020; Warif, 2019).

Of course, every school has some students who have slightly deviant behavior. The forms of student delinquency such as: hiding friends’ belongings, fighting, truant or absent from school without explanation, being nosy with friends, noisy in class, talking inappropriate things. In dealing with slightly problematic students, the teacher and principal take the same action, which is to approach first and explore what causes the student to behave a little problematic. It could be because of the family, classroom, or playing environment outside of school. Furthermore, the teacher will give directions and subtle reprimands so that students do not take slightly detrimental actions to other students. Children have developmental tasks in accordance with the development of their respective ages, therefore elementary school teachers need to understand the characteristics and problems experienced by elementary school age students, so that teachers can carry out various preventive activities so that students do not get distracted in their learning (Darmadi, 2016; Santos & Andrean, 2021). If a teacher has understood the problems that exist in students, then the teacher will be able to provide appropriate services to children who experience these problems (Palunga & Marzuki, 2017; Pitaloka et al., 2021; Yestiani & Zahwa, 2020). The right services will make it easier for children to develop effectively (Darmadi, 2016; Utari et al., 2020). After understanding a lot of the problems experienced by his students, the teacher will make it easier for him to carry out his duties as educators.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research that has been done, learning difficulties are caused by internal factors experienced by students, namely students’ enthusiasm and interest in learning, student intelligence, student body and mental conditions, and external factors, namely student environmental conditions, relationships with friends, parents and teachers, classroom conditions, learning tools and learning material difficulties. Students who are in elementary school have not been able to overcome the problems and difficulties experienced fully, therefore students need to get more attention and treatment from teachers, parents and the surrounding environment so that students can overcome the learning difficulties they experience.
5. REFERENCES


