

## **Understanding Learning Difficulty Issues Based on Psychology in Primary School Age Students**

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### *Abstract*

Learning difficulties are a problem that can arise anywhere and can be experienced by anyone. Learning difficulties are not always caused by low intelligence, but can also be caused by non-intelligence factors. Parenting has a role in children's development, including their personality and also in their learning process. This research was conducted to find out the causes of learning difficulties experienced by school-age children. The method used is qualitative research, with an explanatory case study. The subject in this study is a 10-year-old school-age child. The data collected in this research is by using interview, observation, intelligence test (CFIT test), and graphic test. The results showed that the learning difficulties experienced by the subject were not only caused by intelligence factors, but also influenced by the parenting received by the subject in the family. The subject has an intelligence level below average, which puts him in the category of slow learners. In addition, permissive parenting and excessive attention from family members, especially the grandmother, also contributed to the subject's learning difficulties.

**Keyword;** Learning Difficulty Issues, Psychology, Primary School Age

### *Abstrak*

*Kesulitan belajar merupakan masalah yang dapat muncul di mana saja dan dapat dialami oleh siapa saja. Kesulitan belajar tidak selalu disebabkan oleh faktor intelegensi yang rendah, tetapi juga dapat disebabkan oleh faktor non-intelegensi. Pola asuh orang tua memiliki andil dalam perkembangan anak, termasuk kepribadiannya dan juga dalam proses belajarnya. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui penyebab kesulitan belajar yang dialami anak usia sekolah. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif, dengan studi kasus eksplanatoris. Subjek dalam penelitian ini adalah seorang anak usia sekolah yang*

*berusia 10 tahun. Data yang dikumpulkan dalam penelitian ini adalah dengan menggunakan metode wawancara, observasi, tes inteligensi (tes CFIT), dan tes grafis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesulitan belajar yang dialami oleh subjek selain disebabkan oleh faktor inteligensi, juga dipengaruhi oleh pola asuh yang diterima oleh subjek dalam keluarga. Subjek memiliki tingkat intelegensi di bawah rata-rata, yang menempatkannya dalam kategori anak lambat belajar (slow learner). Selain itu, pola asuh yang permisif dan perhatian yang berlebih dari anggota keluarga, khususnya nenek, juga berkontribusi pada kesulitan belajar yang dialami subjek.*

**Kata kunci:** Masalah Kesulitan Belajar, Psikologi, Usia Sekolah Dasar

## **INTRODUCTION.**

Learning is an essential process in every type and level of education (Tusturi et al., 2017). Every student comes to school to learn in order to become a knowledgeable person. Most of a student's time should be used for learning, both at school and at home. "No day without learning" is a suitable expression for students. Each individual is different, which leads to differences in learning behavior among students (Nurfadhillah et al., 2022). The learning activities of each individual do not always run smoothly; sometimes smoothly, sometimes not, sometimes quickly understand, sometimes difficult. The spirit of learning also varies; sometimes high, sometimes difficult to concentrate (Porta & Todd, 2024)

Every student can achieve satisfactory learning achievement if they study well. However, in the field, there are obstacles that make some students have difficulty learning. This problem can occur in cities and villages, and is not always due to low intelligence. Although IQ is very influential on learning success, a high IQ does not guarantee learning success (Papanthymou & Darra, 2022).

Slow learner is a form of learning difficulty caused by low intelligence. Slow learners often face difficulties in education, even though they are not mentally retarded. They simply have slower learning abilities compared to their peers. These barriers include understanding and using language, speaking and writing which can affect thinking, reading, counting and speaking skills. Therefore, they need special education services tailored to their abilities and potential.

In general, there are two factors that cause learning difficulties in children: internal factors and external factors (Rahmawati et al., 2021). Internal factors include intelligence and physiology, while external factors include the family and community (social) environment. In this case, the family environment focuses more on how to educate children in the family.

According to (Budiyanto, 2019), troubled children often stem from parental misbehavior and the negative stigma society places on delinquent children. Parenting strongly influences children's development, including the formation of personality and the learning process. The family is the first institution in a child's life, where he learns and identifies himself as a social being. The family provides the basis for the formation of children's behavior, character, morals, and education (Putri et al., 2021).

Parents are the main and first educators for children. They are called the first educators because they provide the first education to children, and the main educators because education from parents becomes the basis for children's future development. Therefore, proper parenting is necessary so that children can grow and develop optimally (Utomo et al., 2021). However, many parents today are busy working so they pay less attention to the needs and development of children, especially in terms of learning. As a result, children are often cared for by other people, even though they are still family members. In fact, the role of parents is very important for children's development. (Simanjuntak et al., 2023) states that the social environment that most influences learning activities is parents and students' families. Parental traits, family management practices, family tensions, and family demographics (the location of the house) can all have a positive or negative impact on learning activities and the results achieved by students.

Every parent would not want to have a child with a physical or mental disability. However, many parents do not realize that their children have special barriers to learning. In fact, some parents cover up their children's limitations because they are embarrassed and do not want their children to experience discrimination. Not many parents are willing to acknowledge their children's learning disabilities, especially if they have to get special treatment. As a result, parents often force their children to achieve like their peers who do not have barriers.

Learning is a process that begins from the moment a person is born until the end of life, which is now known as life-long education. Every child, without exception, has the right to learn and receive education. This right is not only reserved for bright and accomplished children, but also for those with learning difficulties. Education that is tailored to the abilities

of each individual is very important, as mandated by Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that “every citizen has the right to an education”. Thus, everyone, wherever they are and whenever they are, can and should continue to learn.

This research focuses on primary school children who face barriers in reading and writing, who often fall behind their classmates in the teaching and learning process. According to (Ziadat, 2021), learning is not an independent activity, but is influenced by various factors. Slameto and Suryabrata divide the factors that influence learning into two main categories: internal factors and external factors (Sari et al., 2020).

Internal factors include physiological and psychological aspects. Physiological factors include health conditions and the five senses that affect learning ability. Psychological factors include intelligence, interest, talent, motivation and other cognitive abilities. For example, children with high interest and motivation tend to be more successful in learning than those with low interest. Mental health and emotional calmness also play an important role in learning success.

External factors include the family, school and community environment, as well as instrumental factors such as the curriculum, education program, school facilities and the quality of teachers. The family environment is the first and foremost in children's education, because this is where children first receive education. The attitude of parents, the atmosphere of the house, and the economic situation of the family can greatly affect children's learning activities. For example, a busy or tense home atmosphere can interfere with children's concentration on learning. Conversely, good support and guidance from parents can increase children's motivation and learning achievement.

In addition to internal and external factors, there are also specific factors that affect slow learners. According to (Ananda & Wandini, 2022), slow learners have characteristics such as an intelligence level that is slightly lower than average, learning abilities that are below average, and intellectual weaknesses that affect academic rather than social areas. They often struggle in all subjects and require special guidance to complete basic education. In addition, they prefer concrete activities to abstract learning, and their motor development is slow.

(Polo-Blanco & González López, 2021) classify the causes of learning difficulties into two broad categories: internal and external factors. Internal factors include physical conditions such as illness, unhealthiness, or disability, as well as psychological conditions such as intelligence level, talent, interest, motivation, mental health, and learning type. For

example, children with low intelligence tend to have more difficulty in learning than children with high intelligence.

External factors include family conditions, such as the way parents educate, the relationship between parents and children, the home atmosphere, and the family's economic situation. The school environment also has a big influence, including the quality of teachers, educational facilities and the curriculum used. In addition, the influence of mass media and the social environment, such as peers and community activities, can also affect a child's learning process.

If all these factors are favorable, children will find it easier to achieve satisfactory learning outcomes. On the other hand, if there are factors that are not supportive, children may experience learning difficulties. Learning difficulties are conditions in which children cannot learn as they should, which can occur anywhere, both in urban and rural environments. This difficulty is not always caused by low intelligence, but can also be caused by non-intelligence factors, such as low motivation, lack of interest, or an unfavorable learning environment. Therefore, it is important for parents, teachers and the community to create a supportive environment and give special attention to children who experience learning difficulties so that they can still achieve their maximum potential

## **METHOD RESEARCH**

This research used a qualitative method with an explanatory case study approach. Explanatory case studies aim to provide an in-depth explanation of a series of events, focusing on the questions “how” and “why” (Sugiyono, 2013). The research was conducted by verifying the results of interviews and observations conducted on the subject and significant others, namely individuals who are close to and understand the subject's condition.

This method is considered appropriate because it allows researchers to observe learning difficulties more specifically. Significant others are very important because the subjects are children who experience barriers to learning. Significant others in this study include parents or close family caregivers, school teachers, and other individuals who have known the subject for a certain period, such as neighbors or other relevant community members who are willing to participate in the research.

This case study focuses intensively on one specific object, namely children with learning disabilities, to understand the causes of difficulties and find aspects that need to be improved (Sainio et al., 2023). The purposive sampling technique was used to determine the

sample with certain considerations, in accordance with predetermined criteria. The criteria for subjects in this study were students aged 6-12 years who were identified as having mild learning disabilities, such as reading and writing difficulties, and their parents or guardians who were willing to participate.

Data collection was conducted through interviews with a general guideline approach, which provided flexibility for subjects in providing answers. Interview guidelines help researchers ensure all relevant aspects are covered (Ramadhan & Usriyah, 2021). Interviews were conducted with subjects and significant others to gain a more comprehensive perspective. In addition, observation was used to record and pay attention to the subject's activities and interactions in their natural environment (Wahyu Pramita et al., 2023). Observations were conducted in conjunction with the interview process to get a direct picture of the subject's behavior.

This study also used tests to measure various aspects of the subject's ability. Intelligence tests, such as the CFIT, were used to determine the subject's level of intelligence, while the HTP (House Tree Person) graphic test was used to see the child's position in the family and the family's acceptance of him (Sugiyono, 2013).

Data analysis was conducted using pattern matching technique, which compares empirical patterns with predicted patterns or alternative predictions. This technique helps strengthen the internal validity of the research by looking for similarities in patterns between the data obtained and the predictions made (Sa'o, 2016).

The credibility of the research was maintained through triangulation, which involves using multiple sources of data, theories, and methods to gain a more complete understanding (Ramadhan & Usriyah, 2021). Data triangulation was conducted by collecting information from subjects and significant others, theory triangulation by using various theoretical perspectives, and methodological triangulation through interviews, observations, and tests.

Dependability of the research was achieved through coherence, openness, and discourse (Rong & Mononen, 2022). Coherence is achieved by ensuring the methods used are capable of producing the data needed, while openness involves the use of multiple methods to achieve the research objectives. With this approach, the research is expected to provide an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the learning difficulties experienced by children, and the factors that influence them.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The subject in this study is a 10-year-old child who has undergone a series of tests to assess his intelligence level using the CFIT test tool. The test results showed that the subject's intelligence level was 76, which is in the below average or borderline category. Children who fall into this category are known as slow learners, which are those who have difficulty in learning because their intelligence level is lower than that of typical children, but still higher than the retarded group. Although they have the ability to take care of themselves and are able to complete a small amount of work with great effort, they still have certain skills that can exceed their level of intelligence.

This situation was exacerbated by the lack of attention and guidance from parents who were busy working. As a result, the subjects developed introverted personalities and craved for attention. This situation was exacerbated by excessive affection from family members other than parents, which made the subject feel small, dependent, and lacking in mental strength. The subject became more self-oriented, disliked being ordered around, and had difficulty placing themselves in various situations, which ultimately resulted in low motivation to learn.

Additional psychological tests using the HTP graphic test revealed that the subject had sensitive, irritable, and impulsive feelings. The lack of parental attention and role in the subject's life had resulted in increased self-centeredness, where the subject was more self-oriented as a way to attract attention. This attitude hindered the subject's ability to make effective social contacts and adjust in his social environment. Therefore, the subject is in dire need of guidance and direction in carrying out daily activities to help develop his social skills and increase his learning motivation.

Thus, to support the subject's development and learning, it is important for parents and family to be more involved and provide balanced attention. In addition, support from teachers and the school environment is also needed to create conducive learning conditions, which can help subjects overcome barriers to learning and develop their potential. A holistic and consistent approach in providing attention, guidance, and emotional support will greatly benefit the subject's psychological and academic development.

## **Discussion**

In the world of education and learning, when we pay attention to children in the classroom, we will see a lot of individual differences. Even children with almost the same age background, will show very diverse appearances, abilities, temperaments, interests, and attitudes (Marom et al., 2022). As seen from the subject who has differences with friends his age. Based on the results of the psychological examination and the results of the diagnosis, it is known that the subject's IQ level is below average with a score of 76. With this IQ level, the subject is classified as a slow learner, so the subject has difficulty learning. Slow learners have an IQ that ranges from 70-90 (Permatasari et al., 2023). With such conditions, their learning ability is slower than their peers, so they need more special attention and handling.

One of the factors causing learning difficulties experienced by subjects is a low IQ level, that the level of intelligence (IQ) greatly determines the level of learning success of students. This means that the higher the intelligence ability of a student, the greater the chance of success. Conversely, the lower the intelligence ability of a student, the less chance of success. The statement is also clarified by Ahmadi and Supriyono (2004), that children with high IQ can solve all the problems faced. Normal children (90-100) can finish elementary school on time. Those who have an IQ of 110-140 (intelligent) and 140 and above (genius), can complete college education. Those who have an IQ of less than 90 are classified as mentally weak, and it is these children who have many learning difficulties.

Intelligence level is one of the internal factors causing learning difficulties experienced by the subject. There are two factors that can cause learning difficulties, namely internal factors or from within humans themselves, and external factors or from outside humans (Igbo & Omeje, 2014). Internal factors include physiological factors, such as illness, unhealthiness, or disability, as well as psychological factors, such as intelligence, talent, and interest. External factors include family factors, school factors, and mass media and social environment factors. The combination of these factors can affect how children learn and develop. Lack of attention from the family or adequate support from the school environment can worsen a child's situation who is already facing challenges from internal factors such as low IQ. Therefore, it is important for educators and parents to understand and identify the factors that can affect children's learning ability, so as to provide appropriate and effective interventions.

The learning difficulties experienced by the subject are mainly seen in reading and writing skills. This is in line with the statement that children with learning difficulties tend



to have impairments in one or more basic psychological abilities that include understanding and using language, speaking, and writing, which in turn can affect thinking, reading, counting, and speaking skills(Waskitoningtyas, 2016). However, with consistent effort, the subject can gradually overcome these obstacles. On the other hand, the subject is a child who gets more attention from his family, especially from his grandmother, considering that both parents work. Children who are overly served and spoiled tend not to be tenacious in trying to achieve something. They quickly abandon difficult tasks and demand more immediate gratification without serious effort. Learning for them is something very boring, because it is considered “unpleasant”, “must think”, “tired”, and so on. They tend to rely on others and lack a sense of responsibility(Ramadanti et al., 2022).

This situation was evident when the subject preferred to play rather than study. The family, especially the grandmother of the subject, cannot impose their will on the subject. As revealed during the interview activities, if the subject does not want to do something, even if it is learning, then the family cannot force him. This kind of parenting will produce the characteristics of children who are impulsive, aggressive, disobedient, spoiled, less independent, self-willed, less confident, and less socially mature. Weak and indulgent parents are not willing for their children to struggle to learn, suffer, or try hard. As a result, children do not have the ability and willingness, and are so dependent on parents that they are lazy to try and complete school assignments, which leads to decreased academic achievement(Ramadanti et al., 2022)

In this context, it is important to understand that over-indulgent parenting can hinder the development of independence and responsibility in children. Subjects who experience learning difficulties and receive excessive attention from the family without emphasis on effort and independence tend to have low motivation to learn and high dependence. To help subjects overcome their learning difficulties, there needs to be a change in the family approach, especially in terms of providing support that encourages independence and hard work. This support can be in the form of setting a consistent study schedule, giving responsibilities that are appropriate to the age and ability of the child, and providing positive reinforcement when the child shows effort and achievement in learning.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis, diagnosis, and discussion previously described, it can be concluded that the subject is classified as a slow learner, so he has difficulty in learning. Learning difficulties experienced by the subject are caused by several factors. The main internal factor is the low level of intelligence of the subject, which is below average with an IQ score of 76, which puts the subject in the slow learner category. External factors that also influence are the way of educating or parenting applied by parents to the subject. Parents who pay less attention to the needs and development of the subject because they are busy working, making the subject get more education and attention from other family members, especially his grandmother. However, the grandmother gave excessive and permissive attention to the subject, which ultimately hindered the development of the subject's independence and responsibility in learning.

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