

Analysis Of Learning Difficulties In The Microeconomic Theory Course For Students Of The Economic Education Study Program, Pamulang University

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the various learning obstacles experienced by students in the Microeconomic Theory course in the Economic Education Study Program at Pamulang University. The course requires strong analytical skills and a deep understanding of concepts, which often pose challenges for students. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through observations and interviews with students. The findings indicate that learning difficulties are influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include insufficient mastery of basic economic concepts, limited mathematical ability, and low levels of learning motivation. External factors involve the use of predominantly conventional teaching methods, limited utilization of learning media, and a lack of contextual examples in the learning process. Therefore, this study recommends the implementation of more interactive and contextual learning strategies to enhance students' understanding and learning outcomes in the Microeconomic Theory course

Kata Kunci:

Kesulitan Belajar; Teori Ekonomi Mikro; Mahasiswa Pendidikan Ekonomi

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji berbagai hambatan belajar yang dialami mahasiswa pada mata kuliah Teori Ekonomi Mikro di Program Studi Pendidikan Ekonomi Universitas Pamulang. Mata kuliah ini menuntut kemampuan analisis yang kuat serta pemahaman konsep yang mendalam, sehingga sering menimbulkan tantangan bagi mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan pengumpulan data melalui observasi dan wawancara terhadap mahasiswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesulitan belajar dipengaruhi oleh faktor internal dan eksternal. Faktor internal meliputi kurangnya penguasaan konsep dasar ekonomi, keterbatasan kemampuan matematika, serta rendahnya motivasi belajar. Faktor eksternal mencakup penggunaan metode pembelajaran yang masih dominan bersifat konvensional, keterbatasan pemanfaatan media pembelajaran, serta kurangnya penyajian contoh-contoh yang kontekstual dalam proses pembelajaran. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini merekomendasikan penerapan strategi pembelajaran yang lebih interaktif dan kontekstual untuk meningkatkan pemahaman serta hasil belajar mahasiswa pada mata kuliah Teori Ekonomi Mikro.

Introduction

Higher education plays a crucial role in developing students' analytical, critical, and conceptual thinking skills, particularly in economics education. One of the core courses in the Economic Education Study Program is Microeconomic Theory, which aims to provide students with a fundamental understanding of individual economic behavior, market mechanisms, and resource allocation. However, Microeconomic Theory is often perceived as a difficult course because it requires strong analytical abilities, abstract reasoning, and a solid understanding of mathematical concepts (Mankiw, 2020).

The Macroeconomic Theory course is a compulsory subject that must be taken by students. Through this course, students are expected to understand various core concepts of macroeconomics, including major macroeconomic issues, national income, fiscal and monetary policies, the monetary and banking system, goods and money markets, economic growth and development, business cycles, international economics and trade, as well as current economic issues (Hidayati et al., 2024).

Previous studies have shown that lecturers still play a central role as the primary source of learning; therefore, it is necessary to develop teaching materials that are systematically designed by lecturers to help students better understand course content and achieve a shared understanding of the material being studied. In addition, these teaching materials can serve as a guide for both lecturers and students in the learning process (Hidayati et al., 2023).

The quality of students' academic achievement, in addition to being influenced by environmental factors, is also determined by learning intensity, particularly students' ability to use their time efficiently and effectively. Students who possess intrinsic motivation tend to allocate time to study seriously by engaging with learning modules and various supporting learning resources without relying entirely on lecturers. In addition to intrinsic motivation, external factors that can foster learning enthusiasm also play a significant role, one of which is incentive conditions. Unlike motivation, which is related to internal drives that encourage individuals to achieve certain goals, incentives are external stimuli in the form of objects or situations that can fulfill individuals' needs and encourage them to learn (Jamaludin & Kantor, 2016).

The availability of economics textbooks is still highly varied and needs to be aligned with the curriculum of the Economic Education Study Program at Pamulang University. (Hidayati, 2020) states that the world is changing very rapidly, thereby requiring various adjustments within the Indonesian education system. Learning is a conscious effort carried out by educators to guide students to actively interact with various learning resources in order to achieve predetermined learning objectives (Luqmansyah & Hidayati, 2021). In this context, lecturers are required to be innovative and creative in implementing the learning process to enhance students' learning motivation and achieve optimal learning outcomes (Hidayati & Anwar, 2019). Based on this background, this study aims to examine the various learning obstacles experienced by students in the Microeconomic Theory course in the Economic Education Study Program at Pamulang University, focusing on both internal and external factors that influence learning difficulties.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the learning obstacles experienced by students in the Microeconomic Theory course in the Economic Education Study Program at Pamulang University. The qualitative approach was chosen to obtain an in-depth understanding of students' perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to the learning process.

The research participants consisted of students who had taken or were currently enrolled in the Microeconomic Theory course. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the criterion that they had sufficient experience in attending the course and were able to provide relevant information regarding learning difficulties.

Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Observations were conducted to examine teaching and learning activities, including instructional methods, student participation, and the use of learning media. Semi-structured interviews were carried out to gather detailed information on students' learning experiences, perceived difficulties, motivation, and understanding of course material. The interviews allowed participants to express their views freely while ensuring that the discussion remained aligned with the research objectives.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis. The collected data were systematically reduced, categorized, and interpreted to identify recurring patterns and themes related to internal and external factors influencing learning difficulties. To ensure data credibility, triangulation was applied by comparing findings from observations and interviews. The results of the analysis were then described narratively to provide a comprehensive understanding of the learning obstacles encountered by students in the Microeconomic Theory course.

Results

The results of this study indicate that students in the Microeconomic Theory course experience various learning obstacles arising from both internal and external factors. Based on classroom observations and interview data, many students demonstrated difficulties in understanding abstract economic concepts, particularly those related to demand and supply analysis, elasticity, and market equilibrium. These difficulties were often associated with limited mastery of basic economic principles and insufficient mathematical skills.

In terms of internal factors, students reported low learning motivation and a lack of confidence when dealing with complex calculations and theoretical models. Some students expressed that they struggled to connect mathematical formulas with economic concepts, which negatively affected their comprehension and participation during lectures.

External factors were also found to contribute significantly to learning difficulties. Observations revealed that teaching methods were predominantly lecture-based, with limited use of interactive learning strategies and instructional media. Additionally, the lack of contextual examples related to real-life economic situations made it difficult for students to fully grasp the relevance and application of microeconomic concepts.

Overall, the findings suggest that the combination of internal and external factors plays a critical role in shaping students' learning challenges in the Microeconomic Theory course.

These results highlight the need for more interactive and contextual teaching approaches to improve students' understanding and learning outcomes.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that learning obstacles in the Microeconomic Theory course are influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. Students' difficulties in understanding abstract concepts such as demand and supply, elasticity, and market equilibrium are consistent with previous studies indicating that microeconomic theory requires strong analytical thinking and mathematical reasoning, which many students find challenging (Mankiw, 2020).

Innovative learning requires creativity from lecturers. Creativity is needed to support the development of various aspects of learning, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, within the teaching process. A lecturer's creativity is reflected in the ability to design and prepare learning materials that effectively help students understand the subject matter being delivered (Hidayati, 2023).

Factors influencing learning difficulties include students' perceptions of lecturers' teaching skills and their level of participation in the classroom. These conditions may lead to differences in students' understanding of the material, which ultimately affect variations in learning outcomes (Hidayat, 2016).

Previous research conducted by (Marganingsih, 2018) states that both internal and external factors influence learning difficulties; however, students' internal conditions—such as health, interest, motivation, and study habits—are the most determining factors. Although the campus and social environments are relatively supportive, low interest and learning motivation still cause students to experience difficulties in studying Introductory Accounting I.

Similarly, research conducted by Arifin as cited in (Rahayu, 2018) indicates that external factors also influence learning outcomes, including the availability and utilization of facilities and infrastructure in the learning process, such as the role of teachers, learning programs, curriculum, media, teaching materials, as well as teaching methods and techniques.

Overall, the discussion highlights that learning difficulties in Microeconomic Theory cannot be attributed to a single factor but rather emerge from the interaction between students' internal conditions and the learning environment. These findings reinforce the importance of implementing interactive and contextual learning strategies, such as problem-based learning, case studies, and the use of real-world examples, to enhance students' conceptual understanding and learning outcomes. By addressing both internal and external factors, educators can create a more supportive and effective learning environment for microeconomics courses.

Conclusion

This study concludes that students in the Microeconomic Theory course face various learning obstacles influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include limited mastery of basic economic concepts, insufficient mathematical skills, low learning motivation, and lack of confidence in dealing with abstract theories. External factors primarily relate to the dominance of conventional lecture-based teaching methods, limited use of interactive learning media, and the lack of contextual examples in the learning process. The interaction of these factors contributes significantly to students' difficulties in understanding microeconomic concepts. Therefore, the implementation of more interactive and

contextual learning strategies is essential to enhance students' comprehension and improve learning outcomes in the Microeconomic Theory course.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest associated with the publication of this article entitled "Analysis of Learning Difficulties in the Microeconomic Theory Course for Students of the Economic Education Study Program, Pamulang University." The research was conducted objectively without any financial, personal, or institutional influences that could have affected the research process or findings..

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Author Contributions

The author solely contributed to all stages of the research entitled "Analysis of Learning Difficulties in the Microeconomic Theory Course for Students of the Economic Education Study Program, Pamulang University." The author was responsible for conceptualizing the study, designing the research methodology, collecting and analyzing the data, interpreting the results, and writing and revising the manuscript.

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