

## FACTORS AFFECTING LOW ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF OPEN UNIVERSITY'S STUDENTS IN INDONESIA

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Article Info	Abstract
<p><b>Keyword:</b> Analysis of the factors Low academic achievement</p>	<p>This research aims to analyze the factors that cause low student academic achievement. To achieve these objectives, this research used a survey design to collect data from respondents. Before the research, the researchers conducted a pre-survey interview technique to several respondents in order to obtain information to formulate a construct that will be analyzed as well as to determine the research instruments. This research was conducted in regional office Denpasar with students from Non-Pendas Program with low academic achievement as the respondents. There were 71 respondents with a response rate of 92.5%. Based on these results, there are some important things that can be concluded: Lack of motivation, lack of study time and no teaching materials are factors which lead to low academic achievement with low impact. Not following the online tutorial, not forming a study group, lack of test preparation and lack of enrichment of the materials are factors which lead to low academic achievement with quite high impact. Not supportive learning situation and the lack of study planning are the factors that lead to low academic achievement with low impact.</p>
Article Info	Abstrak
<p><b>Kata Kunci:</b> Analisis faktor Prestasi akademik rendah</p>	<p>Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan rendahnya prestasi belajar siswa. Untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut, penelitian ini menggunakan desain survei untuk mengumpulkan data dari responden. Sebelum penelitian, peneliti melakukan teknik wawancara prasurvei kepada beberapa responden guna memperoleh informasi untuk merumuskan suatu konstruk yang akan dianalisis serta untuk menentukan instrumen penelitian. Penelitian ini dilakukan di kantor wilayah Denpasar dengan responden mahasiswa Program Non-Pendas dengan prestasi akademik rendah. Ada 71 responden dengan tingkat respon 92,5%. Berdasarkan hasil tersebut, ada beberapa hal penting yang dapat disimpulkan: kurangnya motivasi, kurangnya waktu belajar dan tidak adanya bahan ajar merupakan faktor penyebab rendahnya prestasi belajar dengan dampak yang rendah. Tidak mengikuti tutorial <i>online</i>, tidak membentuk kelompok belajar, kurangnya persiapan ujian dan kurangnya pengayaan materi merupakan faktor penyebab rendahnya prestasi belajar dengan dampak yang cukup tinggi. Situasi belajar yang tidak mendukung dan kurangnya perencanaan studi merupakan faktor penyebab rendahnya prestasi belajar dengan dampak yang rendah..</p>

## **Introduction**

In the entire educational process, learning is the core activity and the key. Psychologically, learning can be interpreted as a process of obtaining changes in behavior to get a new pattern of response required in the interaction with the environment. Action learning process involves various aspects of learning background, types and forms of learning, factors that influence the act of learning, transfer of learning that will determine the success in the process of action learning. In addition, there is another very important aspect in the success of action learning process such as learners' maturity, supportive family environment, conducive school environment, supportive community environment, up to date methods of learning and the availability of learning media and instructional material that is easy to understand.

Thus, there are some problems in the implementation of action learning process for students in the regulation of study time, learning method choice, use of resources/books to learn, how to learn with the group, and exam preparation. Similarly, there are also problems for the tutor/lecturer as the executor of the learning process in preparing the learning materials and choosing the appropriate techniques to achieve the learning goals, which is greatly influenced by the learners' background. If the problems had been anticipated earlier by the tutor/lecturer, learning process can be done optimally.

Open University (UT) as an institution of higher education has a great responsibility in helping students to succeed in their studies. Therefore, UT should provide assistance to students in overcoming the problems arising from the learning activities. Open University (UT) held a Distant Learning System (SBJJ) service, which brings implications of re-structuring the learning process because it is different from the normal "face to face" system in higher education teaching. The distant teaching-learning process applied by UT basically directs student activities to independent study and group learning.

Learning materials are delivered through a package of lessons called modules which consist of printed and non-printed materials. Students learn the material independently. Self-study demands more perseverance, discipline and honesty. In addition to learning, students are also required to conduct their own assessment of their learning progress.

To help students learn independently in order to achieve the optimal learning outcomes, directional guidance is needed. The guidance is the responsibility of the tutor. This process is called a tutorial guidance.

In every New Student Study Orientation (OSMB) activity in the Non basic education Program conducted each semester, students are equipped with self-learning strategies and the formation of study groups to assist students in completing their studies in a timely manner with a good achievement. However, based on the observation on the index value of student achievement each semester, there are many students who still have low achievement (below 2.00). In 2009, there were 127 students who have a GPA of 2.00 to 4.00, and 349 students with a GPA below 2.00. In 2010, there were 86 students with a GPA between 2.00 to 4.00, and as many as 341 students with a GPA below 2.00.

Based on the above background, the following research problems can be identified: (1) What are the factors that lead to low academic achievement in Non-Pendas Program students? (2) To what extent do these factors affect the low academic achievement in Non basic education Program students at regional office Denpasar?.

## **Literature Review**

Learning is the process of obtaining skills and attitudes. People's ability to learn is an important characteristic that distinguishes them from other creatures. Ability to learn is beneficial for the individual and also for the community. For the community, learning plays an important role in forwarding a collection of cultural knowledge to a new generation. It allows the findings and new discoveries based on past developments.

People as both individual and society have an interest to be successful in their study. People who are skilled in independent learning skills will be able to fill in their leisure time and do a new job. They also develop the creative ability in life. Teaching and learning process is the core of the formal education process.

According to Muhammad Ali (1987), there is a difference in understanding learning and teaching that are formulated by experts. This difference is caused by the background of the views and theories held. There are several reasons behind the various understanding. Some of the reasons are: (1) Differences in identifying facts. Basic formulation of a theory is through the fact which is identified by research using a number of subjects as a sample. Different experts carried out research on different objects. These differences lead to different results obtained from the research. (2) Different interpretation of the facts. This difference is generally caused by different background review. Formulating a theory is affected by the interpretation of the facts and also by the amount of facts that can be identified. Thus, the theory was formulated differently. (3) Different terminology used and the connotations of each term. Terminology that is used as the basis of scientific analysis and discussion is often different from one another. Each term has specific connotations. Therefore, the theories resulting from scientific studies vary in line with the different terms and connotations used. (4) Difference of emphasis on certain aspects. In conducting the study of teaching or learning, experts give emphasis to certain aspects. Studies have emphasized the importance of teaching and learning. There is also an emphasis on the aspects of the association (relationship) between the stimulus-response and the importance of cognitive which affected the obtained results.

### *Learning Difficulties*

Difficulty is a particular condition characterized by the existence of obstacles in the activities to achieve a goal, so it requires even harder efforts to overcome that difficulty. Learning difficulties can be interpreted as a condition in the learning process characterized by the presence of obstacles to achieving learning outcomes. These barriers may or may not be realized by the people who experienced it and can be in the form of psychological, sociological, or physiological barriers in the overall learning process. People who have learning difficulty experience obstacles in achieving their learning process, which result in low achievement.

Learning difficulties have a broad understanding and depth, including the sense as learning disorder, learning disfunction (learning process that does not work), under achiever (low learning achievement), a slow learner (slow learning) and so on. According to Ngalim Purwanto (1998), there are four things or categories of learning, namely: (1) Changes in behavior to be better or worse, (2) Changes that occur because of training or experience, (3) Changes that are relatively stable, and (4) Amendments concerning aspects of personality.

Meanwhile, Skinner (1997) states that learning is a process of adaptation or adjustment of behavior that takes place progressively. Adaptation will bring optimal results if given a booster. This is the conditioning basis of Skinner's learning theory, namely that behavior emerges because of the relationship between the stimulus and a response.

With regard to teaching and learning in the classroom, the process of stimulus and response is basically a situation and a process that involve two factors, namely the learning factor of student and the teaching factor of teacher. Interaction between students and teachers and between students and students are categorized into the process of social interaction that occurs in the classroom. Without the interaction between them, the process of teaching and learning will not occur.

Basically, there are two main factors that influence the learning process. They are factors that exist within the organism (individual factors) such as maturity, intelligence, training and motivation and factors that come from outside the individual (social factor) such as family condition, teachers' way of teaching, learning tools, environments and available opportunities.

In the Literature of Educational Psychology (1999), Munawar states that there are at least three groups which are quite popular, learning theory according to science, learning theory according to

psychology associations, and learning theory according to Gestalt psychology. Learning theory according to Life Science Resources considers that the human soul consists of several power which has a specific function such as thinking power, remembering, imagining and so on. Power can be trained through a learning process so that the function will be improved.

Learning theory according to Life Science Association argues that the whole learning is composed of the sum of the parts or elements. In group theory, there are two streams of connectionism. The popular theory and the theory of conditioning. Connectionism theory views that learning is the establishment or strengthening of the relationship between stimulus and response, while the conditioning theory views that learning is the establishment of the relationship between stimulus and response which needs to be supported with certain situations.

In the Life Sciences Gestalt theory of learning, the overall look is an important principle. Children are not viewed as a number of power but as a whole individuals who are dynamic and constantly in a state of interacting with the world around them to achieve their goals. According to this theory, a person will learn if he gets an insight. In this case, the emergence of insight depends on the ability, experience, nature or level of complexity, training, and trial and error. Moreover, learning should be stimulated with problems.

Symptoms of learning disabilities will be manifested either directly or indirectly in various forms of behavior. Manifested behavior is characterized by the presence of certain obstacles. Learning difficulties will be visible in motor, cognitive, and affective aspects in both the process and learning outcomes achieved. Some features of behavior which are the manifestation of learning disability symptoms include: (1) low learning achievement below their potential, (2) results achieved do not correspond with the effort done, (3) slow performance in tasks and learning activities, (4) less reasonable attitude such as indifference, opposition, pretending, and so on, (5) less reasonable emotional symptoms: moody, irritable, angry and so on.

To be able to establish symptoms of learning difficulties and mark the individuals who experience them, it is necessary to benchmark criteria to set limits. These criteria can be used to define boundary where one can be expected to have difficulty in learning. One's learning progress can be viewed in terms of goals to be achieved, place in the group with the same potential, level of learning outcomes achievement if compared with the potential (ability) and in terms of personality.

The occurrence of learning difficulties in a person can be caused by several factors: (1) Factors contained in a person: (a) Physical weakness such as developing nervous system that are not perfect and disability or illness that often brings emotional disturbance, the five senses which are underdeveloped, making it hard to have effective interaction process; (b) Mental weakness; (c) Emotional weakness such as insecurity and immaturity; (d) Weakness caused by wrong habits and attitudes which do not support the learning process such as failure to focus attention and not disciplined in following the learning process; (e) Absence of the necessary basic skills and knowledge such as lack of basic knowledge on the subject learned, wrong habits and ways of working. (2) The factors that are beyond one's self: (a) a uniform curriculum, (b) incompatible teaching standards or system administration, (c) less desirable subject matter, and (d) the weaknesses found in family conditions such as education level and socio-economic status (Sudjana, 1988).

In the distant learning system (SBJJ) held by UT, tutorials or coaching plays an important component to the success of distant learning system as a whole. For those reasons, the management of the tutorial program should be supported with the best and well-planned materials to be used in the tutors' teaching methods. In order for service learning or tutorial guidance to be useful, the system of distant learning and tutorial needs to be well understood by the tutors. In addition, tutors should understand well about the problems faced by students in the learning modules.

Moreover, the distant learning system (SBJJ) requires students to learn independently. Different learning problems become obstacles in the learning process. Such constraints can be barriers to academic problems, such as difficulty in studying the module, difficulty in determining the schedule and learning strategies, difficulties in determining the resource to solve the problems, and possibly

also facing the student. There are also barriers that are psychological such as feelings of isolation, decreased motivation, difficulty in the family and so on.

To help overcome the difficulties faced by students of Non-Pendas, especially academic problems, a student mentoring program or a tutorial is needed. In the tutorials, students can engage in dialogues to express his predicament directly to the tutor or to their fellow students (face to face tutorials). While the contact itself can be done through some sort of media such as: face to face, radio, TV, online etc. A tutor has a role as the facilitator in the distant learning system (SBJJ) learning process and also to help smooth the student learning process in overcoming the learning difficulties that they faced.

**Methodology**

*Research Design*

According to Cooper and Schindler (2006), the research design is a planned activity based on time, research questions, choice of sources and types of information. It is a framework to determine the relationship between research variables and outline the procedures for each research activity. Research design is an effort that involves a sequence of rational choice of decision making.

The research was done to achieve the research objectives that had been established which was to analyze the factors that lead to low academic achievement. This research was an exploratory research that aimed to analyze the factors of the research that was cross-sectional. The scope of the topic of statistical research and environmental research were the field of research. Data to measure each variable were collected using a questionnaire instrument. Research questionnaire contained items that illustrate the declaration of the variables studied. Before conducting the research, researchers conducted a pre- survey on some respondents intended to dig up information in order to design the research instruments.

*Data Analysis Methods*

To analyze the data based on this model, the researchers used descriptive statistics which make use of the mean value of each variable with the help of the software SPSS 16.0 for Windows.

**Discussions**

In this part, the analysis of the research results on the variables is tested. The analysis begins with the data collection phase, the characteristics of respondents, the validity and reliability testing and analysis of the discussion.

*Factors Testing Results*

The results of the analysis of the factors that lead to low academic achievement are presented in Table 1 below:

**Table 1.** Factors Testing Results

No	Factor	Influence
1	Lack of motivation → low academic achievement	low
2	Lack of study time → low academic achievement	low
3	Not having teaching materials → low academic achievement	low
4	Not following the online tutorials → low academic achievement	high enough
5	Not forming a study group → low academic achievement	high enough
6	Lack of test preparation → low academic achievement	high enough
7	Lack of enrichment materials → low academic achievement	high enough
8	Not supportive learning situations → low academic achievement	quite low
9	Lack of study planning → low academic achievement	quite low

### *Research Results*

The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of student responses on the factors that cause low student academic achievement. Before the researchers develop the questionnaire as the instrument to collect the data, the researchers conducted a pre-survey interview technique to some non basic education Program students who have less than 2.00 performance index in their academic achievement for two semesters in a row. The purpose of the interview was to obtain data that lead to low student academic achievement. Conclusions drawn from the interviews with some of the students obtained nine factors that cause low student academic achievement: lack of motivation, lack of study time, no teaching materials, not following the online tutorial, not forming a study group, lack of test preparation, lack of enrichment materials, not supportive learning situation and lack of study planning.

Factors or variables have multiple items or indicators that form them. It is therefore necessary to test the validity by employing the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using the software SPSS 16.0 for Windows. Items that did not meet the statistical requirements in forming the construct or variable were then reduced and not included in the analysis. Reliability test was also conducted to measure the consistency of gauge in measuring a construct or variable. Variables tested reliability is an indicator that an item must have. The high-low effect of these variables is measured by its average value (mean) on descriptive statistics.

From the results of factor analysis, the lack of motivation to learn variable is formed by a single indicator that is "aimed at students attending classes to search for status". In general, if the students' attendance aims to seek status to be recognized by the educated person, they will be motivated to learn. Lack of motivation to learn will cause low mastery of course material that will lead to low academic achievement.

Variable factor of lack of study time is formed by a single indicator that is "I'm very busy with a hobby and do not have time to study". Students who are busy with a hobby that they enjoy doing will lead to less study time that will result in low academic achievement.

Teaching materials in the form of books of the subject matter for students in the Open University modules are the replacement of the face to face (conventional) meetings with the college professors. Lecturers provide lecture materials through the modules which are learned independently by students. If the students do not have the module, they cannot follow the lectures and learned nothing. Modules for Open University students must be self-accessed through the modules and other media. Students who do not have a module then will not be exposed to the lecture material that can result in low student academic achievement. Some of the reasons why the students do not have the materials are that they do not understand how to buy the module on the Internet and where to buy them. regional office Denpasar students need to be informed about where and how to purchase the instructional materials or modules.

In the self-learning system, the learning initiatives come from students. In addition to student self-learning with the teaching materials in the form of modules or other media, the Open University provides learning support services in the form of face-to-face tutorials and online tutorials. Online tutorials can add knowledge and understanding of the subjects taken by students by 30 %. Online tutorials can be done anywhere and anytime as long as there is an internet network. Not following the online tutorial could lead to low academic achievement due to lack of understanding of the material.

Self-learning does not mean learning alone but to learn on their own initiative. They can learn on their own independently and by forming study groups. The benefit of group learning is that one can talk about a problem that cannot be solved alone. Students who form a study group will have a friend who can be invited to learn together, asked for clarification if there are learning difficulties and consulted to. Therefore, students who do not form a study group would lead to low academic achievement.

The end of the semester test is a learning outcome evaluation for students in a semester. To get good test scores and graduate, students would need to be prepared both in terms of the materials and

mentally in advance. Good preparation and strong determination can give confidence to students in the test. On the other hand, students with less preparation for the final test does not have the confidence to get good grades. Therefore, the lack of test preparation can lead to low academic achievement.

In addition to self-study using books or the modules of the subject matter, students can enrich their knowledge by learning from other media such as VCDs, web supplement, radio or other books that are relevant. By enriching their knowledge, they will be able to add insight, understanding and knowledge of a subject being studied. Thus, students with less enrichment can lead to low academic achievement.

In order for someone to learn properly, they will need supportive situations. A place that is too crowded with dim light is not the place to study the materials. It is very difficult for students who are studying in such circumstances to absorb and understand the materials. Therefore, not supportive situation and learning conditions will lead to low student academic achievement.

Reaching a particular destination requires planning. Likewise, by following a lecture, students can achieve maximum results, a good GPA, graduated on time and add some knowledge. With proper planning, they will be more focused in their learning. Therefore, lack of planning can lead to low academic achievement.

## Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to gain a better understanding about the factors that cause low academic achievement to students of Non-Pendas program. As discussed previously, this research attempted to answer the question: What factors cause the low academic achievement in students of Non basic education in regional office Denpasar? How do these factors affect the low academic achievement in students of Non basic education in regional office Denpasar?

To answer the second research question, the researchers conducted a cross-sectional survey to obtain the primary data using questionnaires. The questionnaires are designed from the interviews with several students at the pre-survey. Questionnaires were used to measure students' perceptions of the factors which led to low academic achievement. There are a total of 39 statements used in this study.

The unit of analysis in this research are the individuals of the Non basic education students in regional office Denpasar. The sampling procedure used in this research is the non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling technique.

Based on these results, there are some important things that can be concluded:

1. Lack of motivation, lack of study time and no teaching materials are factors which lead to low academic achievement with low impact.
2. Not following the online tutorial, not forming a study group, lack of test preparation and lack of enrichment of the materials are factors which lead to low academic achievement with quite high impact.
3. Not supportive learning situation and the lack of study planning are the factors that lead to low academic achievement with low impact..

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