

## Teachers' attitudes in addressing learning difficulties in junior high school

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**Abstract:** The professional attitude of the teacher can be seen mastery of the material, structure, concepts, and scientific mindset that supports the subject being taught, mastery of the competency standards subjects taught, mastery of competency standards and basic competencies of the subjects taught, development of subject matter competency standards and basic competencies of the subjects taught, creative development of the subject matter covered creative, continuous professional development, and utilisation of information and communication technology for self-development. This research uses with descriptive qualitative approach that is a literature study that uses journals and other literature as the main object of research. as the main object of research. The results and discussion in this study are professional attitude of teachers in dealing with student difficulties can be overcome in various ways, namely Teachers as managers of instruction, meaning as managers of teaching, using media and methods in learning, providing spirit and motivation to learn students provide remedial and enrichment programmes.

**Keywords:** Junior high school; learning difficulties; teacher's professional attitude.

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### Introduction

Teachers have a very important role in determining the success of education, in the teaching and learning process, teachers have the duty to encourage, guide and provide learning facilities for students to achieve goals (Tripusa et al., 2018), especially at the junior high school level. At this stage, students are in transition from basic education to a more complex level, both in terms of cognitive and emotional development. The role of the teacher is not only as a material deliverer, but also as a companion and facilitator who helps students face various learning challenges. One of the challenges that often arises at the junior high school level is student learning difficulties. Learning difficulty is a condition in learning that is characterized by certain obstacles to achieving learning outcomes (Cahyono, 2019).

Some of the factors that influence learning difficulties include: Internal factors: cognitive limitations, attention disorders, or emotional problems. External factors: inappropriate teaching methods, pressure from the family environment, or an unfavorable classroom atmosphere. The impact of student learning difficulties is significant. Not only does it affect academic achievement, but also self-confidence and motivation. If not addressed properly, this can cause students to fall behind their peers, leading to potential dropouts. Junior high school students' learning difficulties are caused by internal factors, such as talent, intelligence, interest, and motivation, as well as external factors, such as family support, school environment, and teaching methods. Low interest in learning can worsen students' understanding of the material (Amalisholeha et al., 2023; Akmal & Fitriani, 2024). If left untreated, the impacts include low academic performance, loss of motivation, and deviant behavior

(Sari, 2022). The solutions are remedial teaching, increased motivation, and a conducive learning environment (Sari, 2022).

In these problems, the professional attitude of teachers is a key element in overcoming student learning difficulties. Professional teachers have the ability to: Identify symptoms of learning difficulties early on, create learning strategies that suit student needs, Provide empathetic and personalized guidance. According to the standards of teacher professionalism in the Minister of National Education Regulation No. 16/2007 on Standards for Academic Qualifications and Teacher Competencies, this regulation regulates the standards of academic qualifications that must be met by a teacher and the competencies that must be mastered. These academic qualifications and teacher competencies apply nationally, namely pedagogic competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence. But on the other hand, according to the community, teacher competence is still low. This is indicated by the fact that there are still teachers teaching who are not in their field (mismatch), weak mastery of the subject area, lack of familiarity of prospective teachers with the school situation (Umasugi et al., 2014).

Previous research includes some important findings. Saputri (2023) revealed that students' learning difficulties are influenced by internal factors, such as low motivation, and external factors, such as lack of parental support. Social studies teachers take an active role by using an individualized approach, varied learning methods, and providing additional motivation to students.

Nurfadillah (2023) explained that students face learning difficulties in social studies due to low interest in learning and difficulty understanding the material. Teachers try to overcome this through tutoring, applying interesting learning methods, and regular evaluations to monitor student progress.

Meanwhile, Yohanes (2021) found that teachers overcome learning difficulties by using strategies such as group guidance, individualized approaches, and variations in learning methods. These strategies are effective in improving students' understanding of social studies material.

The purpose of this study is to analyze in depth how teachers can develop professional attitudes in dealing with student learning difficulties at the junior secondary school level. This research focuses on a literature-based approach that aims to provide a comprehensive overview of various cases of learning difficulties and the strategies applied in the context of junior secondary school education.

## **Method**

This research uses a literature study method with a qualitative descriptive approach that is a literature study (library research) that uses journals and other literature as the main research object. Library research or often called library studies, defined by Zed (2014: 3) is a series of research activities related to library data collection methods, then reading and recording and processing the research material.

In an effort to improve the quality of education in junior high schools (SMP), one important factor that needs to be considered is the attitude of teachers in dealing with learning difficulties experienced by students. Learning difficulties in junior secondary schools can be cognitive, emotional or social and require special attention from teachers. This research focuses on three main categories: education, educational psychology and educational management. From an educational perspective, this research aims to explore how teachers can play a role in overcoming the various learning difficulties that hinder the teaching and learning process in junior secondary schools. Meanwhile, from an educational psychology perspective, this research aims to understand the impact of teachers' attitudes on students' learning motivation and psychological development. Finally, from an educational management perspective, this study will analyze the strategies and approaches applied by teachers in managing classes with the challenges of learning difficulties.

The first step in the literature study is to identify the research objective, which is to understand teachers' attitudes in dealing with students' learning difficulties and their impact on students' academic

achievement and character development in junior high schools. The next step is to determine relevant literature sources. Some sources that can be used include education journals, pedagogy books and articles that discuss the role of teachers in overcoming learning difficulties. For example, Sulaiman (2019) revealed that the factors that cause student learning difficulties include environmental, family and cognitive aspects that need to be considered by teachers in developing the right approach.

Furthermore, in this analysis, the classification of learning difficulties is an important step. Such difficulties may include various aspects, such as concept understanding problems, emotional difficulties that affect concentration, or social barriers that interfere with interaction with peers. In this regard, it is important to refer to Sulaiman's (2019) research that identified various external and internal factors that affect students' learning ability.

Then, the teacher's attitude in overcoming learning difficulties becomes the main focus in the analysis. Being patient, empathetic, adaptive to teaching methods, as well as providing constructive feedback proved effective in helping students overcome their difficulties. Utami (2018) in her research shows that positive attitudes and good communication skills from teachers greatly influence students' academic success. Teachers' open and supportive attitudes create a safe and pleasant learning environment, which can reduce students' anxiety and fear.

The impact of teacher attitudes on student learning achievement also needs to be evaluated. Based on Sari's (2017) research, it was found that teachers who show a caring and active attitude in paying attention to students' learning needs can increase students' motivation and reduce the difficulties they face. With a more inclusive and personalized approach, teachers can provide appropriate attention to students' individual needs, leading to better academic achievement.

Finally, the conclusion of this analysis shows that teacher attitudes play a very important role in overcoming learning difficulties in junior secondary schools. Teachers who are patient, empathetic and adaptive to students' learning needs can significantly improve students' learning success. Therefore, the suggestion for teachers and schools is to continue to improve pedagogical competence, communication, and patience in assisting students who face learning difficulties, so that they can develop optimally.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Sub-Case 1: Identification of Learning Difficulties of Class VIII Students of SMPN 3 Kota Bima on the Material of Diversity of Living Things for the 2020/2021 Academic Year (Suryani et al., 2021)**

In case 1, the researcher provides the results of data analysis on the factors that influence the learning difficulties of class VIII students of SMPN 3 Kota Bima, namely based on 10 indicators of learning difficulties, it is obtained that the facilities and infrastructure indicator 52.38% answered always indicating that the main factor influencing it, the learning method indicator 47.61%, motivation 46.61%, interest indicator 42, 86%. Indicators of subject matter and learning media both 38.09% become supporting factors in student learning difficulties, so overall it appears that external factors are the main obstacle why students find it difficult to learn in the material of the diversity of living things in class VIII SMPN 3 Kota Bima. In dealing with cases of student learning difficulties due to external factors, the professional attitude of the teacher that can be taken is to provide enthusiasm and motivation for student learning (Ulul Azmi et al., 2019), in the factor of lack of facilities and infrastructure, the professional attitude of the teacher that can be done is to make a learning media, for example LKPD.

After the existence of student learning difficulties due to external factors, students are given learning outcome test questions used to determine the forms of learning difficulties experienced by students. The results of data analysis show that scientific naming 40.15% moderate category is the most form of difficulty experienced by students. Scientific naming in this case is related to students

not knowing the Latin name of a living thing, students find it difficult to write Latin names according to the rules of writing correctly, students find it difficult to distinguish between names and ways of writing. Data from the analysis of multiple choice tests with scientific naming indicators (questions 1,2,3, and 4) showed that the percentage of student learning outcomes only reached 40.15%. Thus, it can be seen that students in grade VIII of SMPN 3 Kota Bima have difficulty learning the classification of living things on scientific naming indicators.

While the difficulty of mastering the concept of 34.46% also affects the ability of students to understand the material due to the coverage of quite a lot of material and students' interest in reading and making summaries is lacking or even unwilling. Another difficulty of the term component in this case relates to the meaning of class-order-familygenus-species. Data from the analysis of multiple choice tests with term indicators (questions 8, 9 and 10) that the percentage of student learning outcomes only reached 25.39%. Based on the results of this percentage, it is included in the low category, meaning that students experience learning difficulties in the classification of living things on the term indicator.

With the case of student learning difficulties caused by internal factors, namely difficulties in memorizing scientific names and mastering concepts, the professional attitude of teachers that can be done is to change or use media and methods in learning (Ulul Azmi et al., 2019). One of them can use the jigsaw learning model. The jigsaw learning model is a variation of the cooperative learning model which consists of several members in one group. Each member is responsible for mastering a certain part of the learning material and is able to teach that part to other members in the group. This learning model is implemented by forming small groups consisting of 4-6 students loaded heterogeneously, where each member contributes information, experiences, ideas, attitudes, opinions, abilities, and skills they have to jointly improve the understanding of all members, so that they also have to work together, have positive interdependence, and are responsible for the completion of the part of the subject matter that must be learned, and can convey the material to other group members (Pratiwi & Lisnawati, 2023). By using this learning model, students can memorize a scientific name and master the concept of the material easily because of the help of their groupmates and guidance from the teacher.

### **Sub-Case 2: Learning Difficulties of Junior High School Students regarding Mathematical Connection Ability on Statistics Material (Rani & Reni, 2021)**

In case 2, the researcher presented the results of interviews with mathematics teachers and written test results, students who had high mathematical connection skills were 2 students, students who had moderate mathematical connection skills were 4 students, and students who had low mathematical connection skills were 1 student. students experience various difficulties in developing their mathematical connection skills. These difficulties were divided into three main categories: difficulty understanding concepts, difficulty applying principles, and difficulty solving verbal problems. Students with high mathematical connection ability only experienced minor errors such as encoding errors (not writing the final conclusion). However, students with medium ability often make errors in writing formulas (transformation errors), algebraic processes (process skills errors), and conclusions (encoding errors). Students with low mathematical connection ability had difficulty in all aspects, including reading the problem (reading error), understanding the problem (comprehension error), and errors in transformation and process.

The factors that cause these difficulties consist of internal and external factors. Internal factors include students' lack of interest in math because it is considered difficult, as well as lazy learning habits that hinder understanding of the material. External factors include the teacher's teaching methods that are too fast so that students have difficulty understanding concepts, a classroom

atmosphere that is not conducive because of the crowded atmosphere, lack of family attention, and the influence of unsupportive social friends.

To overcome these problems, teacher professionalism is very important. Teachers must identify student difficulties appropriately and provide appropriate learning solutions, in the factor of students' lack of interest in mathematics because it is considered difficult because the teacher's teaching is too fast in explaining, teachers can change or use media and methods in learning (Ulul Azmi et al., 2019) by using effective learning methods students will be more interested in learning, for example differentiated learning. On the factor that the classroom atmosphere is not conducive, teachers can carry out Classroom Management. Teacher function by Gagne in (Syah, 2008:251) Teacher as manager of instruction, meaning as a teaching manager. This function requires the teacher's ability to manage (organize and control) all stages of the teaching-learning process (Ulul Azmi et al., 2019). In the factor of lack of family attention and the influence of friends and lazy learning habits, the professional attitude of the teacher that can be taken is to provide enthusiasm and motivation for student learning (Ulul Azmi et al., 2019) and advice for students.

### **Sub-Case 3: Analysis of the Factors of Student Learning Difficulties in Biology Science Subjects in Class VII (Ndruru, 2023)**

In case 3, the researcher explained that learning difficulties originating from students, namely from a physiological point of view, students experience health problems so that they can break the concentration of students in participating in the learning process, for example, fever or have diseases / abnormalities in the senses, for example, minus or plus eyes, making it difficult to pay attention to the writing / images in front of the class. Student learning difficulties are also caused because the facilities and infrastructure in the school are lacking or incomplete facilities and infrastructure in the school still do not use learning media tools such as infokus, laboratory space that does not yet exist and learning tools that are still incomplete.

Student learning difficulties can be seen from student learning outcomes influenced by their families. This is because students are not facilitated to study at home, students have difficult family situations so that learning concentration decreases, and as many students lack attention or support from parents in the learning process at home. Not only the family environment, but the surrounding community conditions such as the existence of mass media, namely the presence of the internet, games, television which makes attention tend to play and relax so that lessons are neglected so that it can affect student learning outcomes.

To overcome these problems, as well as the two previous cases, the professional attitude of teachers that can be taken is by changing or using media and methods in learning and providing enthusiasm and motivation for student learning, as well as providing remedial and enrichment programs. According to Ahmad and Widodo Supriyono (2004: 152-153) Remedial teaching or remedial teaching is a form of teaching that is healing or correcting, or in short teaching that makes it better (Ulul Azmi et al., 2019).

### **Sub-Case 4: Analysis of Difficulties in Learning Science in Students of SMP Negeri 1 Rambang (Yunarti, 2021)**

In case 4, the researcher describes the results of his interviews, the first is the interest factor which causes students to have difficulty learning because science lessons have many formulas so it is difficult to memorize, difficult to understand and understand the explanation, and they are not good at this lesson, science lessons are only in the form of terms that make headaches lazy to learn science lessons, they are better off spending time learning something else and playing with friends. Second, motivation in learning and understanding science lessons is still lacking based on the questionnaire given by students, most students are not excited because of their lack of interest in science lessons and also lack of concentration during science learning.

Learning habits, based on research shows that the learning habits of students who have difficulty learning science lessons are classified as poor. Based on the questionnaire given, students never study at home and only partially study when the next test is due. This irregular learning habit has an impact on student learning outcomes. The last learning difficulty factor is intelligence, based on the results of research that students cannot work on the questions given. Based on interviews, students tend to prefer to cheat on student work rather than doing their own work. The reason students cheat is because science lessons are difficult, have numbers and formulas that make them dizzy and based on the questionnaire given it is difficult to learn the formula for science lessons so it is difficult to understand.

To overcome this problem, as well as the three previous cases, the professional attitude of teachers that can be taken is by changing or using media and methods in learning, for example using the learning cycle-5E learning method. The Learning Cycle model is a learning model consisting of 5 stages, namely Interest Generation, Exploration, Explanation, Development and Evaluation. The Learning Cycle model is a learning model that accommodates students to build their own concepts in a fun and interesting way because students are actively and directly involved, so that learning will be more meaningful. With this, a learning model that can make it easier for children to understand the concepts in the material to be taught and trigger students to think actively in learning is the Learning Cycle learning model. Learning Cycle is a student-centered learning model which is a series of activity stages (phases) organized in such a way that students can master the competencies that must be achieved in learning by playing an active role (Astuti & Veryani, 2024).

As well as providing enthusiasm and motivation for student learning, as well as providing remedial and enrichment programs. According to Ahmad and Widodo Supriyono (2004: 152-153) Remedial teaching or remedial teaching is a form of teaching that is healing or correcting, or in short teaching that makes it better (Ulul Azmi et al., 2019).

#### **Sub-Case 5: Analysis of Junior High School Students' Difficulties in Participating in Online Learning for Mathematics and Science Subjects During the Covid-19 Pandemic (Covid- et al., 2022)**

In case 5, researchers explained that technical difficulties in online learning are a situation where students cannot participate in learning because students' technical needs are not met. The technical difficulties experienced by students consist of 3, namely the limitations of supporting devices for online learning, for example not having a cellphone or laptop and limited specifications of supporting devices, unstable internet networks (in some there is no cellular network) and limited internet quota.

Adaptation Difficulties Learning rules from home make new experiences for students, where students must be able to learn independently. This makes students have to work on themselves to be able to adapt to changes in the learning process. Online learning requires self-regulated control, namely personal responsibility, independence and perseverance.

Based on the results of interviews, information was obtained about teacher unpreparedness in implementing online learning, namely the limited study of material explained by teachers using the Google Meet application and using learning videos through the WhatsApp application, the duration of face-to-face using Google Meet is still lacking, the appearance of the material is less attractive, limited interaction in online classes, and limited teacher ability to operate the applications used.

To overcome these problems, the professional attitude of teachers that can be taken is to prepare online learning (make lesson plans, LKPD), as well as provide enthusiasm and motivation to learn to students and parents so that parents can also help the student learning process, and provide remedial and enrichment programs. According to Ahmad and Widodo Supriyono (2004: 152-153)

Remedial teaching or remedial teaching is a form of teaching that is healing or correcting, or in short teaching that makes it better (Ulul Azmi et al., 2019).

From the five cases discussed, the main causes of learning difficulties come from internal factors, such as lack of motivation, interest in learning, poor study habits, and physical or psychological constraints. External factors such as inappropriate teaching methods, limited facilities and infrastructure, unconducive classroom atmosphere, and lack of family support are also significant contributors. In online learning situations, additional difficulties arise from limited technological devices and the unpreparedness of both students and teachers.

The proposed solutions emphasize the importance of teachers' professional attitude, including adaptation of learning methods, effective classroom management, as well as providing motivation and remedial programs. Teachers are also expected to be able to present interesting and interactive learning through relevant media. Family support, a conducive learning atmosphere, and improved learning facilities are also an important part of overcoming student learning difficulties. With a combination of these strategies, students are expected to improve their understanding and learning outcomes optimally.

### **Conclusion**

Teachers play a critical role in addressing the learning difficulties students face at the junior secondary level, a period during which students often encounter cognitive, emotional, and social challenges. According to the literature, teacher professionalism is a crucial factor in helping students overcome these obstacles. Professionalism in teaching is demonstrated through pedagogical competence, empathy, creativity in designing learning strategies, and the ability to foster effective communication with both students and parents. Teachers who exhibit these qualities can significantly reduce the barriers students face in the learning process, ensuring that educational outcomes are more equitable and effective for all students.

Student learning difficulties can arise from various internal factors, such as cognitive and emotional challenges, as well as external factors like family support and school conditions. In this context, professional teachers are not only expected to understand the root causes of these difficulties but also to implement individualized strategies that cater to the unique needs of each student. However, the literature also highlights that the implementation of professional attitudes by teachers can be hindered by challenges such as insufficient specialized training, lack of institutional support, and the complex nature of students' learning difficulties. Therefore, continuous professional development, the provision of adequate learning resources, and collaboration between schools, families, and communities are essential to support teachers effectively. This research underscores the importance of enhancing teachers' professional attitudes as a strategic approach to optimizing learning for junior secondary students, particularly those facing learning difficulties, with the aim of creating a more inclusive educational environment.

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