

THE IMPACT OF PEER ENVIRONMENT AND LEARNING MOTIVATION ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN SOCIAL STUDIES SUBJECTS FOR GRADE VII AT SMP PGRI JATI UWUNG TANGERANG CITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

This study aims to determine (1) the effect of the peer environment on academic achievement in Social Studies (IPS) in grade VII at SMP PGRI Jati Uwung, Tangerang City during the Covid-19 pandemic; (2) the effect of learning motivation on academic achievement in Social Studies (IPS) in grade VII at SMP PGRI Jati Uwung, Tangerang City during the Covid-19 pandemic; and (3) the effect of the peer environment and learning motivation on academic achievement in Social Studies (IPS) in grade VII at SMP PGRI Jati Uwung, Tangerang City during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research is quantitative in nature. The variables in this study consist of the dependent variable Academic Achievement (Y), and the independent variables Peer Environment (X1) and Learning Motivation (X2). The population in this study consists of 190 grade VII students, with the sample taken using the Slovin formula with an error level of Alpha 0.05, resulting in 129 respondents. The sampling technique used is simple random sampling. The data collection techniques include interviews, document analysis, questionnaires, and documentation. The data quality methods used in this study include validity and reliability tests. The data analysis methods employed include descriptive analysis, normality test, linearity test, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, regression analysis (simple linear regression, multiple linear regression), partial t-test, and simultaneous F-test. The results of the analysis show that: (1) There is a significant positive effect of the peer environment on academic achievement, meaning that the better the peer environment, the better the academic achievement; (2) There is a significant positive effect of learning motivation on academic achievement, meaning that the better the learning motivation, the better the academic achievement; (3) There is an effect of the peer environment and learning motivation on academic achievement in Social Studies (IPS) in grade VII at SMP PGRI Jati Uwung during the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that there should be a good peer environment and an improvement in learning motivation, both from the students themselves and the teachers, to encourage students to improve their learning ability and achieve better academic results.

Keywords: *Peer Environment, Learning Motivation, Learning Achievement.*

Introduction

Education is a deliberate and conscious process of human interaction with the environment aimed at developing all aspects of potential, both physical (health) and spiritual (thoughts, feelings, actions). This process fosters positive changes and continuous progress in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains to achieve life goals (Ahmadi, 2014: 28). Education serves as a crucial means to enhance the quality of human resources, preparing the younger generation as future leaders capable of navigating advancements in science and technology. Schools play a central role in this process, as they are essential to teaching and learning activities. According to Dimiyati (2013: 47), learning is a complex action and behavior carried out by students, experienced only by the learners themselves. The students are the ones who determine whether the learning process happens or not".

Education is a key means of improving the quality of human resources and must be effectively organized and managed to foster human potential. Schools play a vital role in maximizing educational opportunities, serving as environments where students can strive for optimal academic performance. Student academic achievement not only reflects their abilities and success in school but also serves as a benchmark for assessing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

Based on Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 about National Education System, it is stated that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and a learning process so that students can actively develop their potential to have spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills necessary for themselves, society, the nation, and the state.

At the beginning of 2020, the world was shocked by the arrival of the coronavirus, which entered Indonesia in March. Due to the virus, the learning process at schools was disrupted. The government took various measures to prevent its spread, one of which was through the Ministry of Education and Culture's Circular Number 3 of 2020 on the Prevention of COVID-19 in Educational Institutions. The educational problem in Indonesia at that time was the implementation of online learning. This is in line with Circular Number 15 of 2020 on the guidelines for conducting learning from home during the COVID-19 emergency. The goal of home-based learning during the COVID-19 emergency was to safeguard students' right to education, prevent the spread of the virus within educational institutions, and address the psychosocial needs of educators, students, and parents. This learning concept is not easy to

implement due to many limitations in terms of facilities and the resources that need to be provided.

According to Slameto (2013: 71), the influences from peer groups are more quickly absorbed into a student's mind than we expect. Good friends can positively impact students, while negative friendships may lead to harmful effects. Despite its importance in shaping students' behavior and growth, the peer environment is often overlooked by both teachers and parents.

Damsar (2011: 74) describes the peer environment as interactions among individuals of similar age and social standing. The surrounding environment, especially peers, has an impact on students in their later life. Students with diligent friends tend to become diligent themselves, while students with naughty friends tend to exhibit negative behaviors because peer interaction strongly influences students. For students who are unable to choose good friends, this can lead to undesirable behavior. Peers contribute significantly to the learning process by enhancing cognitive abilities, acting as sources of information, facilitating discussions and problem-solving, offering opportunities for collaborative learning, encouraging the expression of opinions, and strengthening reasoning skills. This can positively influence the student's learning.

The peer environment is a group outside the family setting, consisting of playmates, schoolmates, and others (Hetherington & Parke in Desmita 2010: 145). Interactions with peers can have both beneficial and adverse effects. On the positive side, peer interaction offers new experiences and aids students in developing social skills and adapting to their environment. On the other hand, the negative impact of peer interaction is that it can change the values taught in the family and can lead to declining academic performance if students form friendships with the wrong peers.

Based on interviews with a teacher at SMP PGRI Jati Uwung, regarding peer environment in terms of study buddies, discussion partners, and sharing opinions during school learning activities, the research on peer environment suggests that to measure the peer environment, indicators such as social interaction within peer groups, individual involvement in interactions, peer support, and helping each other in learning should be used. As stated by Slameto (2013: 71), these indicators include: social interaction in the peer environment, individual involvement in interactions, peer support, acting as study partners, and boosting students' self-esteem.

A phenomenon experienced by students during online learning from home, as mentioned in interviews, is that students face difficulties in exchanging ideas and discussing with friends during online learning. Students must complete their tasks on their own without discussion with peers. During online learning, teachers only provide material and occasionally conduct discussions via Zoom, but students do not fully understand the material. When discussions are conducted through Zoom, not all students participate, and internet connection issues disrupt the learning process. Some students may also copy their friends' homework. They wait for friends to finish their tasks and then share them via WhatsApp to copy. This results in delayed task submissions, which often exceed the deadlines set by the teacher. Peer influence plays a significant role in students' learning behavior. If a student has diligent friends who submit their work on time, the student is likely to follow that pattern as well.

Another factor influencing academic performance is learning motivation. Learning motivation refers to the internal drive within students that initiate learning activities, sustains their progress, and guides them toward achieving specific learning objectives (Sardiman A.M., 2010: 75). Students' failure to achieve optimal academic performance can also be influenced by internal conflicts that make students withdraw from their environment, leading to a lack of motivation to perform well. Learning motivation also affects academic performance. It is the strength within a person that drives them to engage in learning activities, whether from internal or external sources. External factors can stimulate motivation, but they ultimately grow within the individual. According to Sardiman (2014), students with strong motivation will have a lot of energy to engage in learning activities. Students with high motivation will exert more effort and not easily give up in striving for better academic achievement.

Learning motivation is the tendency of students to actively engage in learning activities, fueled by the goal of achieving outstanding academic performance (Clayton Alderfer in Hamdu, 2011: 10). It is considered a psychological drive that influences and directs behavior, including learning habits. Motivation is a key factor in the teaching and learning process, significantly impacting academic achievement. Highly motivated students are more likely to put forth their maximum effort to attain optimal learning results. In contrast, even a student with high intelligence may fail if their motivation is weak. Academic achievement will be optimal if motivation is high. Therefore, if a student experiences failure in learning, it may not entirely be the student's fault but rather the teacher's failure to provide the right motivation to encourage learning in that subject. According to Uno (2014: 23), the indicators of learning motivation encompass the desire to succeed, the drive and necessity to learn, aspirations and

future objectives, rewards associated with learning, active engagement in learning activities, and a supportive learning environment.

Based on interviews with teachers, an issue that emerged during the online learning process at SMP PGRI Jati Uwung is that many students lacked enthusiasm during online learning at home due to the absence of encouragement and support from peers. Students felt less motivated and sluggish when completing their tasks, as they were working independently at home. They also struggled to focus during online lessons due to various distractions, such as unstable internet connections that disrupted Zoom discussions. Other distractions included notifications from apps that led students to delay their tasks and prioritize checking their notifications instead.

Academic performance refers to the learning outcomes achieved by students, showing their understanding of the material taught, developed through knowledge or skills to reach achievements, which are indicated by grades or raw scores. According to Arifin (2012: 12), academic achievement differs from learning outcomes; academic achievement refers to knowledge aspects while learning outcomes encompass the development of character, attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

Winkel in Hamadi (2011: 138) explains that academic achievement is a manifestation of the success an individual has attained. Therefore, academic achievement represents the peak of a student's efforts and accomplishments in their learning journey. There are specific criteria, as Harahap in Hamadi (2011: 138) defines "academic achievement in education as an evaluation of the student's progress in mastering the lessons presented and the values contained in the curriculum."

Academic achievement is a measure of a student's success in learning, which can be evaluated through the National Examination. Based on the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 4 of 2018 about the assessment of learning outcomes by educational units and the assessment of learning outcomes by the government, it is stated that the national examination is a nationwide activity that measures the achievement of graduation competencies for certain subjects based on graduation competency standards.

Methods

This study employs a quantitative approach. As explained by Sugiyono (2017: 15), quantitative methods involve presenting data in numerical form and analyzing it through

statistical techniques. The research follows an associative methodology, which, according to Sugiyono (2017: 55), aims to determine the influence or relationship between two or more variables. This study aims to determine whether there is an influence between the independent variables, namely the peer environment (X_1) and learning motivation (X_2), on the dependent variable, which is academic achievement (Y) in Social Studies for grade VII students at SMP PGRI Jati Uwung during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Results and Discussion

In this study, the researcher investigated the impact of the peer environment on learning achievement in Social Studies (IPS) among grade VII students at SMP PGRI Jati Uwung during the COVID-19 pandemic. To analyze this, the researcher used simple linear regression analysis. The results of the study indicate that based on the output table of the Model Anova, a significant value of $0.000 < 0.05$ (5%) was obtained, so H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted. This means that the peer environment influences learning achievement in Social Studies for grade VII students at SMP PGRI Jati Uwung during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the output Coefficients^a, the values obtained were $\beta_0 = 69.459$ and $\beta_1 = 0.864$. Therefore, the regression equation is $\hat{Y} = 69.459 + 0.864 X_1$, meaning that the contribution of the external effect of X_1 on Y is constant at 69.459, and for every increase of one unit in X_1 , the value of Y increases by 0.864. Additionally, based on the Model Summary output, it is known that the contribution of the peer environment variable to learning achievement is 0.441 or 44.1%, with the remaining 55.9% influenced by other factors.

The output of the simple regression coefficient indicates that the peer environment positively affects the learning achievement in Social Studies for grade VII students at SMP PGRI Jati Uwung. The constant value of the regression equation is 69.459, which means if the peer environment (X_1) is valued at 0, the learning achievement (Y) is positive at 69.459. The regression coefficient of the peer environment variable (X_1) is 0.864, meaning that for every increase of 0.864 in the peer environment, the learning achievement will improve. In conclusion, it can be stated that a positive peer environment leads to better student learning achievement, while a negative peer environment results in poorer achievement. Therefore, teachers and parents should be mindful of the peer environment surrounding students to help enhance their learning outcomes.

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the peer environment has an impact on learning achievement. This shows that the peer environment allows students to easily collaborate and solve problems together. Through conversations and debates with peers, adolescents learn to freely express their ideas and feelings while developing problem-solving skills. This study supports research conducted by Singgih Tego Saputro, et al. (2012) titled “The Influence of Study Discipline and Peer Environment on the Learning Achievement of Accounting Education Students, Class of 2009, Faculty of Economics, Yogyakarta State University”, which found that there is a positive and significant effect of study discipline on the learning achievement of accounting education students, as indicated by the t-value (7.780) > t-table (1.984), with a coefficient of determination of 0.345, meaning that 34.5% of learning achievement is influenced by study discipline. This study also supports research by Fitriani (2020) titled “The Influence of Self-Concept and Peer Environment on Mathematics Learning Achievement of Grade VIII Students at SMPN 1 Salomekko,” which found that there is an impact of self-concept and peer support on mathematics learning achievement, amounting to 16.3%.

In this study, the researcher also examined the influence of both the peer environment and learning motivation on the learning achievement of grade VII students in Social Studies at SMP PGRI Jati Uwung during the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher used multiple linear regression analysis. The results showed that based on the multiple linearity test, the significant value from the Anova model was $0.000 < 0.05$, which means H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, indicating that there is an effect of both the peer environment and learning motivation on learning achievement. Based on the output Coefficientsa, the values obtained were $\beta_0 = 69.404$, $\beta_1 = 0.884$, and $\beta_2 = 1.365$. Therefore, the regression equation is $\hat{Y} = 69.404 + 0.884 X_1 + 1.365 X_2$, meaning that the contribution of the combined influence of X_1 and X_2 on Y is constant at 69.404, and for every increase of one unit in X_1 and X_2 simultaneously, Y will increase by 0.884 and 1.365, respectively. Based on the output Model Summary, the contribution of the peer environment and learning motivation variables to learning achievement is 0.652 or 65.2%, with the remaining 34.8% influenced by other factors.

With a positive regression coefficient of 0.884 for the peer environment variable (X_1) and 1.365 for the learning motivation variable (X_2), It can be concluded that a better peer environment and higher learning motivation contribute to improved student learning achievement. Conversely, if the peer environment and learning motivation are lacking,

students' learning achievement tends to be lower. Therefore, the peer environment and learning motivation must be considered and improved to enhance students' learning achievement.

This study supports research by Rizal Novandi, et al. (2012) titled “The Influence of Learning Motivation and Peer Environment on the Learning Achievement of Financial Accounting Students in Class XI AK at SMK Negeri 7 Yogyakarta, 2011/2012 Academic Year,” which states that there is a positive and significant influence of learning motivation and the peer environment on the learning achievement of students, with $R_y(1,2) = 0.642$, $R^2_y(1,2) = 0.412$, and $t\text{-calculated} (34.648) > t\text{-table} (3.09)$. Additionally, this study also supports research by Haikal Firmansyah, et al. (2019) titled “The Influence of E-learning Utilization, Peer Environment, and Learning Motivation on Learning Achievement in Accounting for Class X Accounting Students at SMK Hidayah Semarang”. The study found a positive and significant impact of e-learning utilization, peer environment, and learning motivation on student learning achievement, both collectively and individually.

Conclusion

Based on the data description, data analysis, and interpretation of the research results on the influence of peer group environment (X1) and learning motivation (X2) on the academic achievement of seventh-grade IPS students at SMP PGRI Jati Uwung during the COVID-19 pandemic. In conclusion, the peer group environment has a relatively strong and positive correlation with the academic achievement of IPS students. This means that a better peer group environment leads to better academic performance, while a poor peer group environment results in lower academic achievement. Therefore, it is essential for both teachers and parents to pay attention to the peer group environment to improve students' academic outcomes.

The impact of learning motivation on the academic achievement of seventh-grade IPS students at SMP PGRI Jati Uwung during the COVID-19 pandemic is also shown to have a strong and positive correlation. This suggests that higher learning motivation leads to improved academic performance among students. Conversely, the worse the learning motivation, the worse the academic achievement. Therefore, learning motivation should be carefully monitored and improved in order to enhance students' academic performance.

The combined impact of the peer group environment and learning motivation on the academic achievement of seventh-grade IPS students at SMP PGRI Jati Uwung during the COVID-19 pandemic shows a strong and positive correlation. This means that improved peer

group environment and higher learning motivation contribute to better academic achievement. On the other hand, a poor peer environment and low learning motivation lead to lower academic performance. Therefore, both the peer group environment and learning motivation must be carefully considered and improved in order to boost students' academic performance.

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