Assessing Students' Interest in Historical Learning Themes and Materials

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Abstract. This research aims to identify students' interest in historical learning themes and materials. This study uses quantitative methods of descriptive analysis. The data collection techniques used are interviews and the dissemination of questionnaires. The sample in this study was 102 high school tenth graders in Bondowoso District. The results of this study showed that the historical themes that students were interested in were the theme of tracing early civilizations in the Indonesian Archipelago based on 72% latent interest indicators, 57% interest actualization, 57.5% Text-Based Interests, 44% Task-Based Interests, 55.5% Knowledge-Based Interests and the historical material that students are interested in based on interest indicators consisting of 28% latent interest, namely historical material about getting to know ancient humans, actualization interest by 18.5% and Text-Based Interest of 16.5% which is historical material about Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms, Task-Based Interest by 12% which is historical material on the development of Technology and Knowledge-Based Interests by 16.5% which is historical material about knowing ancient humans. The reason students choose a theme based on the results of the interview because it is called easy to understand and enjoyable to learn.

1. Introduction

Learning history is one of the essential lessons in the world of education and is very necessary for students to form a sense of nationalism, historical awareness and academic prowess. According to Moh, the purpose of learning history, which is the basis for teachers, is to create a national character that loves the country and has a national spirit. Ali (2008) learning history aims to (1) awaken and develop and maintain the national mood, (2) realize national ideals, (3) study national history and world history, and (4) awaken the younger generation regarding the standards of the nation and the nation's struggle in realizing an ideal.

History learning orientation emphasizes mastery of knowledge as required by Competency Standards and Basic Competencies. The teacher tries to complete the entire material that students will study without considering whether the objectives of learning history have been achieved. The orientation of history learning at the Senior High School level aims to gain an understanding of historical knowledge and understanding and foster historical thinking. According to Isjoni, understanding science is an understanding that brings the acquisition of facts and mastery of historical ideas and rules.

Historical learning is a subject that is considered unattractive, difficult, dull, and so disliked by students. Problems in historical understanding that affect the interest of students include teacher strategies in teaching that are not optimal and do not use learning media. It is led to students' interest in low historical learning. The problem is caused by a lack of adequate learning facilities in the classroom or schools, so teachers only use books as a medium in historical learning. The role of a teacher is very influential and plays an essential role as a facilitator in learning. Teachers are required to be able to package historical learning materials well, exciting and fun. Lee's research shows that successful teachers are professional teachers and have good charisma and can play an important role in learning to make students happy and enjoy attending class lessons and listening to teachers when explaining.

Problems in historical learning that affect the interest of students are the perceptions of students who consider history to be subjects that have a lot of material to memorize so that it feels burdened, and the addition of hours of history subjects in the 2013 curriculum which causes students to feel bored and bored. According to Fernandez (2018), 70% of students think bore in history learning.
which causes students not to be enthusiastic about taking history learning, and it becomes challenging to learn history [1].

Historical themes and materials are the most essential parts that students must master to meet the established competency standards. Historical themes and materials specified for learning activities should support the achievement of core and basic competencies and the achievement of expected competency indicators. There are 3 (three) themes in history textbooks for 10th-grade high school, namely (1) Tracing the early civilizations in the Indonesian Archipelago; (2) Traders, Rulers and Poets in the Classical Period (Hinduism and Buddhism); and (3) Islamization and cultural cross-cutting in the Archipelago. Meanwhile, the historical material in the history textbook consists of 15 materials, including (1) Before getting to know writing; (2) The formation of the Indonesian Archipelago; (3) Knowing ancient humans; (4) The origins of the distribution of the ancestors of the Indonesian nation; (5) The lifestyle of the Praaksara community; (6) Technology development; (7) Indian cultural influences; (8) Kingdoms during the Hindu-Buddhist era; (9) Establishment of the Nusantara network through trade; (10) Acculturation of Nusantara and Hindu-Buddhist culture; (11) The arrival of Islam to the Archipelago; (12) Islam and inter-island trade networks; (13) Islamic kingdoms in Indonesia; (14) Acculturation and development of Islamic Culture; and (15) Archipelago Integration Process.

Interest is the initial key to learning because interest can motivate students to learn or get a correct and complete understanding of concepts, events so that students' learning enthusiasm is drastically increased and better [2]. Students who are interested in participating in the learning process feel happy and tend to participate in learning, and their attention is fully focused on these activities [3][2][4]. Students' interests can be seen from the level of attention in the classroom and in learning the material.

Factors that influence interest can be divided into 2, namely factors from within and factors from outside. Internal factors that affect a person's interest are interest, pleasure and attention[2][3][9], while external factors that affect one's interests are family, teachers and peers[2][8][10].

Interest is very important in the learning process because interest is very influential in learning outcomes. Interest is said to be important because it becomes a driving force in students' efforts to learn. The interest of students in learning history can be seen from their tendency to pay attention to the learning process. According to Yu-Je Lee stated that if someone is interested and feels happy to participate in an activity, then they tend to participate and fully pay attention to the activity [2].

2. Methods

This research is quantitative research with a descriptive statistical analysis method. This research was conducted in two senior high schools in the Bondowoso district. This study aims to identify students' interest in history learning themes and materials. The number of samples used was 102 participants. The sample involved in this study were students in class ten. The number of samples is determined based on the Slovin formula:

\[ n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \]

Information:
- \( n \) = Sample
- \( N \) = Population
- \( e \) = level of error
Sampling in this study was carried out at a confidence level of 90% or an error level of 0.1 (10%) so that the sample size can be calculated as follows:

School A:  
\[ n = \frac{140}{1 + 140 (0.1)^2} \]  
\[ n = 58.33 \]

School B:  
\[ n = \frac{80}{1 + 80 (0.1)^2} \]  
\[ n = 44.4 \]

The following table shows the number of samples involved in this study.

**Table 1. Sample Description**

| No. | Demographic Data | Total |
|-----|------------------|-------|
| 1   | Gender           |       |
|     | *Male*           | 45    |
|     | *Female*         | 57    |
| 2   | School name      |       |
|     | Tamanan State High School | 58 |
|     | Grujugan State High School | 44 |

The study used questionnaires and interviews to collect data. Instruments developed with reference to interest indicators submitted by Schraw & Lehman (2001) consist of (1) latent interests; (2) the realization of interest; (3) text-based interests; (4) Task-based interests; (5) knowledge-based interests [5].

![Figure 1. Components of Interest according to Schraw & Lehman](image-url)
Interest is liking and deliberate involvement in cognitive activities, which have an important role in the learning process to determine what is chosen to learn and how well to learn this information [5]. Personal interest is characterized by an intrinsic desire to understand a particular topic that persists over time or is long term or is a cognitive and affective quality that the individual carries from one place to another. Situational interest is an interest that is influenced by certain situations and is spontaneous, temporary and environmentally activated[7] [12][14][16]. Situational interest appears to emerge from novelty, curiosity or prominent information content [5][14], this plays a role in attracting attention [13][15] and can facilitate the development of individual interests that serve to sustain the interest[11][6][16]. According to Flowerday (2004) states that personal interest is positively correlated, and personal interest increases situational interest [6][7].

Latent interest refers to a long-term orientation in a particular direction which is assumed to be an individual's intrinsic characteristic that guides cognitive engagement. Interest actualization is a motivating topic to determine the style of one's involvement in a particular activity. Text-based interest is information material to be studied, such as a text that influences interest. For example, a coherent text is more attractive to readers, such as a information-complete text. Task-based interest refers to a text source that can change the coding instructions or the reader's goals that affect interest. Knowledge-based interest refers to the interest generated because of relevant prior knowledge [5].

The validity and reliability of the instruments in this study were the instruments used in this study were declared valid and reliable.

### Table 2. Instrument Validity

| Cases       | N  | %  |
|-------------|----|----|
| Valid       | 31 | 100.0 |
| Excluded    | 0  | 0   |
| Total       | 31 | 100.0 |

Based on the $r$ table value distribution table with a significance level of 5% and the value of $N = 31$, then $r$-table = 0.355, the research instrument can be said to be valid if the value $r_{count} > r$-table. The instrument in this study, the calculated $r$-value of each item, is greater than the $r$ table value of 0.55.

### Table 3. Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|--------------------------------------------|------------|
| 0.640                                      | 20         |
| 0.760                                      | 20         |

Based on the above table, it can be seen in the alpha based on a standardized column of 0.760, which means that the test items as a whole can be declared reliable

### Table 4. Instrument

| No. | Indicator          | Description                                      | Item Number |
|-----|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1   | Latent Interest    | Themes and materials that make you excited about doing assignments | 1           |
|     |                    | Themes and materials that make you interested in doing assignments | 2           |
| 2   | Interest Actualization | Themes and materials that you have worked on by self-study | 3           |
|     |                    | Themes and materials that you have worked on with group study | 4           |
| 3   | Text-Based Interest | Interesting themes and materials to read in historical texts | 5           |
3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Description of Student Interest Data on Historical Themes

The data on historical themes in this study were obtained from the results of questionnaires for the two schools in Bondowoso Regency. The data from the questionnaire results were obtained to determine the themes most interested in by students, then the data was used as data in the form of percentages, and the average was searched based on interest indicators, namely latent interest, actualized interest, text-based interest, task-based interest and knowledge-based interest.

Historical themes consist of (1) Tracing the early civilizations in the Indonesian Archipelago; (2) Traders, Rulers and Poets in the Classical Period (Hinduism and Buddhism); (3) Islamization and cultural cross-cutting in the Archipelago.

Table 5. The average number of historical themes that are of interest to students

| No. | Historical Theme                                                                 | F   | %   |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| 1   | Tracing the early civilizations in the Indonesian Archipelago                      | 59  | 58.03|
| 2   | Traders, Rulers and Poets in Classical Times (Hinduism and Buddhism)              | 27  | 26.57|
| 3   | Islamization and Cross-Culture of the Archipelago                                 | 16  | 15.40|
Tracing the early civilizations in the Indonesian Archipelago that were in demand by class X (Ten) high school students. The reasons for students choosing this theme were based on the results of the interview. Namely, The theme is easy to understand and interesting to learn because in this theme, there are historical materials that have generally been studied by students. The theme consists of several historical materials including 1) Before getting to know writing, 2) The formation of the Indonesian Archipelago, 3) Knowing early humans, 4) The origins of the distribution of the Indonesian Ancestors, 5) The Life Style of Praaksara Society and 6) Technological Development. This is also supported by previous research conducted by Gültekin, et al. (2011) with the title "The topics students have difficulty in understanding and learning in history course" states that 76.6% of students consider the theme of early civilization easy on the grounds why students like historical themes about early civilizations or ancient civilizations, namely because of this theme. considered attractive by students, a sense of interest arises because students always wonder that in the early civilization there were too many years and how they moved stones without technology, so that it encourages students to find out about the theme of the history of early civilizations by means of reading from various sources such as encyclopedias and watching films related to the theme [1].

The research also supports this finding conducted Nugroho Arifin Suryo (2014) explained that the theme Tracing the early civilizations in the Indonesian Archipelago consists of several materials arranged chronologically by describing the evolution of the earth which is divided into several periods from the time before the existence of life to new ancient times marked by technological developments. Based on this, the historical theme of tracing the early civilizations in the Indonesian Archipelago which consists of several materials arranged chronologically can make it easier for students to study historical material in this theme.[19].

A theme was less attractive to students, namely theme 3 about Islamization and Cultural Cross-cutting in the Archipelago at 15.4%. These findings can be linked to previous research conducted by Gültekin, et al. (2011) stated that there were 67.1% of students who considered the theme of Islamic history difficult and explained that 76% with a frequency of 99 students stated that the reason they considered the theme difficult was that the theme had a complex sequence of events or periods so that students considered the theme difficult [1].

3.2. Description of Student Interest Data on Historical Materials
The tenth-grade historical material consists of 15 historical materials including (1) Before getting to know the writing; (2) Establishment of Indonesian islands; (3) Know ancient humans; (4) The origin of Indonesian ancestors; (5) Infrastructure lifestyle; (6) Technology development; (7) Influence of Indian culture; (8) Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms; (9) Establishment of Nusantara network through trade; (10) Indonesian acculturation and Hindu-Buddhist culture; (11) The arrival of Islam to the Archipelago; (12) Islam and inter-island trade networks; (13) Islamic kingdoms in Indonesia; (14) Acculturation and development of Islamic Culture; (15) Island Integration Process.
Table 6. The average amount of historical material that students are interested in

| No. | Historical Material                                               | F   | %    |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|
| 1   | Before getting to know writing                                   | 10  | 8.5% |
| 2   | The formation of the Indonesian Archipelago                      | 8   | 7.5% |
| 3   | Getting to know early humans                                     | 17  | 15.4%|
| 4   | The distribution of Indonesian origins ancestors                 | 8   | 8.4% |
| 5   | Style of Life of Praaksara Society                               | 11  | 11.3%|
| 6   | Technological development                                        | 6   | 6.3% |
| 7   | Indian Cultural Influences                                       | 4   | 4.4% |
| 8   | Kingdoms in the Hindu-Buddhist Period                            | 13  | 13.3%|
| 9   | The establishment of the Nusantara network through trade         | 5   | 5%   |
| 10  | Acculturation of Nusantara and Hindu-Buddhist Culture            | 4   | 4.4% |
| 11  | The arrival of Islam to the Archipelago                          | 6   | 5.7% |
| 12  | Islam and the inter-island trade network                         | 1   | 1.3% |
| 13  | Islamic kingdoms in Indonesia                                   | 5   | 4.5% |
| 14  | Acculturation and Development of Islamic Culture                 | 2   | 2.4% |
| 15  | Nusantara Integration Process.                                   | 2   | 1.6% |

Based on figure 3, the 102 students who chose Material 3, 15.4% were about Knowing Early Humans. Historical material about knowing ancient humans is one of the materials that students are interested in from 15 existing historical materials. This material is included in the historical theme tracing the early civilizations in the Indonesian Archipelago. The historical theme is a theme that is of interest to students. That mattershowto the synchronization between historical themes and materials that are of interest to students. This finding supported by research conducted by Nuryana (2018) which explains that there are 70.7% of students who can receive the material of early human life well. The use of documentary film media of ancient human life material makes students understand the material clearly and broadly [20].

Historical material about Islam and inter-island trade networks and the process of integration of the Archipelago is historical material that is less attractive to students, this historical material is included in the historical theme of Islamization and cultural cross-cutting in the Archipelago. The historical theme is a historical theme that is less attractive to students. This shows the synchronization
between the themes and materials that are less attractive to class X students. This finding supported by the results of interviews with students about the problems faced when studying historical material, students said that the teacher only explained or lectured without using learning media so that students had difficulty understanding the material described. These problems cause students not to be enthusiastic about taking history lessons and it becomes challenging to learn history so that they are not interested in studying the historical material. This is also supported by previous research conducted by Gültekin, et al. (2011) which explains that there are reasons that cause students to have difficulty learning the material, namely 52 students or 39.6% stated that media such as pictures or photos, videos, films etc. are not used during the learning process, besides that There are also 61% saying that the reason that historical material has a long sequence of events but is explained in a short time causes students to experience difficulties in learning the material [1].

4. Conclusions
Research on students' interest in history learning themes and materials can be concluded that students' theme most interested is the historical theme "Tracing the early civilizations in the Indonesian archipelago" and historical material that most students are interested in is historical material "knowing ancient humans". Meanwhile, the historical theme that is less attractive to students is Islamization and cultural cross-cutting in the archipelago. Students are less interested in Islam and inter-island trade networks and the process of archipelago integration.

Research on students' interest in history learning themes and materials can be concluded that students' theme most interested is the historical theme "Tracing the early civilizations in the Indonesian archipelago" and historical material that most students are interested in is historical material "knowing ancient humans". Meanwhile, the historical theme which is less attractive to students is historical material "Islamization and cultural cross-cutting in the archipelago" and historical material that students are less interested in, namely historical material "about Islam and inter-island trade networks" and "the process of archipelago integration".

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