

Factors that Prevent Students from Understanding Sociology Conceptual Material

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ABSTRACT: Learning materials for sociology are frequently presented as concepts. These ideas are difficult for many pupils to grasp. This essay examines the factors that contribute to students' struggles with concept comprehension from the perspective of instructional design. The literature review method was employed in the investigation. According to the study's findings, the following factors contributed to students' inability to comprehend sociology concept material: 1) a predominance of lecture-based learning; 2) a lack of emphasis on the learning process; 3) less appealing learning media; 4) a lack of variety in the use of learning resources; and 5) a lack of success with the learning model.

KEYWORD: Difficulty, Understanding, Concept Material.

INTRODUCTION

Learning materials for sociology are frequently presented as concepts. Concepts are abstractions that include several facts (Barr et al., 1997). A concept is a group of items with similar qualities or traits that are represented as a unit of meaning. Sagala (2005) describes the idea as a thought's fruit that is born in the form of a definition. The concept, on the other hand, can be broadly characterized as a scientific term that expresses an idea, understanding, or general thought about something or the characteristics of objects, events, symptoms, or terms that express the relationship between a symptom and other symptoms, such as social interactions, institutions, or events. Social, Social System, Social Change, and Social Structure (Wulansari, 2009). Concepts serve as cognitive components that aid in information simplification and summarization (Hahn & Ramscar, 2001).

All subject-related concepts must be understood by students. Understanding the idea as a goal has long been emphasized in sociology courses, beginning in 2006. The goal of studying sociology is for students to comprehend sociological concepts like socialization, social groups, social structures, social institutions, social change, and social conflict to promote social integration, according to Permendiknas No. 22/2006 regarding Process Standards. They must comprehend these ideas rather than memorization.

In actuality, concepts are challenging for students to comprehend. Although they can accurately respond to one question, they struggle to respond to subsequent questions of the same weight. The identical question is answered differently by students (Björklund & Pramling, 2017 in Radiusman, 2020). They are unable to draw

the essential connections between questions and replies because they are unfamiliar with certain terminology used in questions (Liu & Lesniak, 2005).

Students studying sociology have struggled to relate the discipline's abstract ideas to the complex social processes that exist (Baeng et al., 2022). Because many students are capable of providing excellent memorization of a teaching material but pupils do not grasp it, the sociological learning process faces a gap between reaching academic criteria and performance standards (Satnawati, 2015). Students think of sociology as a rote topic with several abstract notions that are challenging to remember and comprehend (Sztajn, 2003). They focus more on their information and commit different ideas to memory (Nur, 2020).

Many students receive bad grades or poor learning outcomes as a result of not understanding or not understanding the topic. They struggle to understand concepts, which results in poor learning performance (Aryani & Sugiyem, 2017). Their ratings fall short of the minimal completeness standard. This fact is discussed in practically every sociology class. Studying this issue is interesting. The researcher attempts to uncover the causes of these students' difficulties in comprehending the concepts that the teacher is trying to teach them in terms of the element of learning implementation through a particular examination.

METHODS

Library research, namely a sequence of tasks connected to techniques of collecting library data, reading and taking notes, and managing writing materials, is used to investigate the reasons why students struggle to comprehend sociology content (concepts) (Zed, 2014). Written works were studied, covering the findings of both published and unpublished studies (Embun, 2012). Several sources, including journals, books, documents, and the internet, are used to gather information or data.

RESULTS

According to research, lectures, assignments, boring learning tools, unappealing media, and limited teaching resources are frequently used to teach sociology concepts, which makes it difficult for students to comprehend.

3.1 Consistent Lecture-Based Learning

Lectures are a common method used by teachers to implement sociological learning. At every grade level, this approach is used in many schools (Aini & Junaidi, 2021). The lecture method continues to be a common teaching strategy, despite the use of other techniques by certain professors. The teacher has implemented several strategies to enhance the learning process, including the use of discussion techniques, assignments, and repeating portions of the subject that are challenging for most pupils to comprehend. However, some of these techniques are not applied properly, which results in poor student learning outcomes (Yonanda et al., 2018). The educational procedure is still mostly traditional (Pareira, 2015).

The lecture method of teaching typically places more emphasis on the teacher than the students throughout the active stages of the learning process. Students become apathetic as a result of the lecture method's activity steps because they feel awkward, uncomfortable, or fearful when participating in them. As a result, they are less likely to ask questions, respond to questions, or record their thoughts on a subject employing lectures as a teaching strategy. In addition to being inactive, kids are unable to build their ideas on a subject (Adilah, 2017).

According to professionals who can be gathered, the lecture technique has the following drawbacks: 1) Lack of opportunities to discuss problem-solving and developing courage in expressing opinions; 2) because it depends on one direction, the process of knowledge absorption is ineffective; 3) lack of space for students to develop creativity; 4) teachers who lack creativity will result in situations where classes are monotonous; 5) the teacher's inability to deliver effective speeches will quickly bore students; 6) it is very difficult to

determine the level of understanding; 7) Students quickly forget what has been spoken; and 8) reading is not encouraged (Wirabumi, 2020).

As demonstrated by the difficulties that students have while taking part in lecture-based learning, this approach has limitations. Students who feel that the delivery of the material is inadequate since there is so much of it. They're also exhausted and bored because this method is so boring. Not many of them lack concentration or comprehend the information the teacher is trying to explain. According to Sanjaya (2011), lectures are frequently perceived as a boring teaching strategy by instructors who aren't good speakers. Even when pupils are physically present in the classroom, it frequently occurs that, mentally, they are not following the learning process at all, their minds are wandering, or they are tired because the teacher's speaking style is boring.

It is quite challenging to determine whether or not every student has understood the material being covered in a lecture. Even if pupils have the chance to ask questions but none do, it doesn't necessarily mean that they all understand (Sanjaya, 2011). The challenges of using the lecture approach in education include keeping students' interest and getting them to understand the concepts being taught (Wahab, 2009). Sanjaya (2011) further noted that the amount of content that students can learn through lectures will be constrained to what the teacher has mastered. Because what the teacher offers is what he is strong at, this deficiency is the one that stands out the most. As a result, what students learn will also be influenced by what the teacher knows. Additionally, verbalism might develop from lectures that don't include demonstrations (Sanjaya, 2011; Popham & Baker, 2008). The lecture process is most likely to be the cause of the "disease" known as verbalism. As a result, when presenting, the teacher only uses verbal language and the students only use their auditory skills. It is understood that each student has unique skills, such as the capacity to hear and retain information well.

3.2 Less process emphasis on the learning methodology.

Process learning is a method of instruction that emphasizes the activities, processes, and creativity of students as well as their physical, mental, and social involvement in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes and their application to real-world situations to accomplish goals. According to Sagala (2013), the process method gives students the chance to take part in the discovery or construction of a notion as a process skill. The development of attitudes and values that emphasize participating students actively and creatively in the process of achieving learning objectives as well as the discovery and development of facts and concepts depend on the growth and development of process skills.

Students' critical thinking abilities are needed for process learning. Unfortunately, most students find it difficult to respond to questions categorized as reasoning during the learning process. Implementation of learning process skills is medium (56%) or at 56% (Sriningsih, 2019).

The standard (conventional) approach and the process skills acquisition approach are distinctly distinct from one another. The teacher just gives pupils knowledge in the traditional method that concentrates on giving concepts, information, and facts to help students understand. The way the teacher teaches is unpopular with the students (Uno, 2021).

3.3 Choosing and Using Less Interesting Learning Resources.

Learning media contributes to making the educational system more engaging. The lessons that the teacher presents will be the students' main emphasis. Students can eventually comprehend the study material adequately based on these advantages.

Teachers employ a variety of learning tools during classroom activities. Teachers that teach sociology frequently use PowerPoint (PPT). The PPT can either be merged with or without images. Some instructors only employ student activity sheets in their classes.

It is not very effective to choose and employ PPT in learning to accomplish objectives. Some people even contend that PPT serves teachers more so than it does students. PPT aids teachers in understanding the material they teach. PPT often isn't of interest to students. Students thus do not fully comprehend the subject matter. Students prefer watching videos over reading the explanation. When taught through the senses of sight, students comprehend concepts more quickly. Dale (1969) asserts that the sense of sight has a bigger influence—75%—than the other senses combined—13% for hearing and 12% for the other senses. In actuality, according to Baugh (Arsyad, 2011), the senses of sight, hearing, and other senses account for about 90% of a person's learning outcomes. The remaining 5% come from other senses.

The Cone of Experience hypothesis can be used to explain why PPT is either absent or ineffective in helping students meet their learning goals. According to Dale (1969), the process of acquiring knowledge and learning experiences is similar to an inverted cone. The concrete portion of the cone is at the bottom, while the abstract portion is on top. The more abstract something is, the higher it is; the more concrete something is, the lower it is. Finding an understanding or learning experience will be simpler if it is taught in an ever-more-concrete manner; on the other hand, it will be harder if it is taught abstractly.

Learning through all the senses is the most tangible experience. Students are presented with actual objects/objects up close. While symbols or letters are used to access the most abstract experiences. The letters contain relatively little media. As a result, the use of PowerPoint, which is primarily done by professors, does not significantly increase students' grasp of the subject. Learning is tough for students to assimilate.

3.4 Learning resources are not yet used in a variety of ways.

Student textbooks are the main type of learning resource used in sociology classes. Some educators use two or three textbooks, while others use just one. The teacher extracts the information from the student textbook, reviews it, and then explains it to the class. Unsuitable use of textbooks (Suparya et al., 2022). Only by using the examples in the book as a learning resource, the teacher can convey comprehension. This is seen when a teacher assigns material on the effects of social change; but, due to the theoretical nature of the material, pupils have trouble comprehending what social change entails. The teacher only explains what social change is and gives examples of it, but these examples are wholly unrelated to the actual knowledge of the students. The instructor should give specific instances of societal change that students might be deemed to have gone through (Asmur, 2011).

A few teachers already use the internet as a learning resource, but students and teachers in other places are unable to. They lack the infrastructure needed to use the internet. Schools in rural areas frequently encounter this. Even schools with internet access face challenges. The following are some of the internet's drawbacks for students. Students are unable to solve problems creatively because of their misunderstandings, which make the internet the only source of information; they are also unable to be independent in completing assignments if they do not use the internet; and they are unable to comprehend a text clearly because the text's title and content are out of sync, confusing students (Safitri et al, 2019).

Social events are a vital source of knowledge for sociology students. Every school must have a vibrant community and a range of extracurricular activities. The best learning will always link the content to the school's student body's social environment. Unfortunately, some educators lack the necessary expertise to effectively use social events as a learning resource. Many social events are used in education as a supplement to the explanation of the content, not as the primary trigger.

3.5 Students have not been helped by learning models to comprehend concepts.

While some teachers have incorporated learning models into their lessons, these models are insufficient to ensure that pupils fully comprehend the topic. The learning paradigm being employed tends to make pupils memorize concepts or content rather than guiding them in the process of understanding. There isn't a class assignment that is more creative (Pareira, 2015).

In addition, very few different learning models are still used in the classroom to implement learning. This can be a result of the teacher's lack of proficiency with current learning paradigms. Mastering learning models is essential for instructors to advance their professional skills, and it is in keeping with the competency-based curriculum (Asmur, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Several factors contribute to students' struggles with the application of sociology concept material. The first reason is that lectures are the primary form of instruction. When lectures are used, pupils become apathetic. They are unable to grow intellectually. If the lecture is boring, this could get worse. The second factor is the learning strategy which is less process-based. The teacher only assigns homework that concentrates on teaching concepts, knowledge, and facts to help students understand. Most students' learning processes frequently leave them unable to respond to queries categorized as reasoning. The adoption of less appealing learning media is the third reason. Powerpoint is a common form of educational media (PPT). Because PPT is so abstract, it has relatively little value as a medium. PPT serves mostly as instructional material. Utilizing learning resources that are not yet diverse is the fourth cause. More student textbooks are used in the process of teaching. The examples in the book serve as the teacher's only means of knowledge; experiences or day-to-day activities of the pupils are not acceptable sources of learning for the teacher. The fifth reason is that the teaching strategy did not aid students in comprehending the idea. The learning paradigm being employed tends to make pupils memorize concepts or content rather than guiding them in the process of understanding. There isn't a more creative class assignment.

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