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Analysis of Learning Difficulties of History Education Students in Quantitative Research Methodology Courses

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Abstract. The Quantitative Research Methodology course is a compulsory course in the History Education Study Program that requires analytical and logical thinking skills, as well as skills in processing and interpreting statistical data. However, in practice, there are still students who have difficulty understanding statistical concepts, developing research instruments, and analyzing quantitative data. This condition is reflected in the distribution of student grades in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 Academic Year, which shows that most students are in the middle grade category and there are still low achievements. This problem indicates that there are learning obstacles that need to be studied systematically. This study aims to describe the level and factors causing student learning difficulties in the Quantitative Research Methodology course. The method used is qualitative descriptive with 22 students as research subjects. The research instrument is a Likert scale questionnaire consisting of 15 statements covering aspects of interest, motivation, basic abilities, mastery of material, learning models, the role of lecturers, classroom conditions, and learning resources. The data are analyzed through percentage calculations and classified into low, medium, and high categories. The results of the study indicate that the level of learning difficulties experienced by students is in the moderate category, with an average of 72%. The dominant factors stem from the learning model and the role of lecturers, accompanied by students' basic abilities and learning resources.

Keywords: *History Education; Learning Difficulties Analysis; Learning Strategies; Quantitative Research Methodology; Statistical Skills.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Quantitative Research Methodology is a course that is logical, systematic, and analytical in nature as it discusses scientific procedures in designing research, developing instruments, collecting data, processing data statistically, and drawing conclusions based on hypothesis testing. This course not only requires conceptual understanding but also technical skills and precision in using formulas and data analysis tools (Damanik et al., 2025). In the context of the History Education Study Program at Gorontalo State University, mastery of quantitative research methodology is an important part of preparing students to write proposals and theses based on empirical research. This ability also supports the professional competence of prospective history teachers in conducting educational research in schools.

Quantitative Research Methodology contains abstract and procedural concepts, such as independent and dependent variables, operational definitions, population and sample, sampling techniques, instrument validity and reliability, prerequisite tests for analysis, and descriptive and inferential statistical analysis techniques. These concepts are interrelated, so understanding them requires gradual and in-depth mastery. The low learning outcomes of students in this course indicate that there are still obstacles in understanding the relationships between these concepts. Learning quantitative research methodology is not enough just by memorizing

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research steps or statistical formulas, but also requires the ability to reason, analyze, and interpret data accurately and logically (Muhajirin et al., 2024).

The Quantitative Research Methodology course is offered as a compulsory course with a weight of 2 credits and is usually placed in the middle semester as preparation before students compile their research proposals. Ideally, students should already have basic knowledge of research methodology from previous courses. This initial foundation is expected to serve as a basis for understanding quantitative approaches in a more practical manner. However, based on initial observations in the History Education Study Program at Gorontalo State University, many students still have difficulty understanding statistical concepts, developing research instruments, and determining appropriate data analysis techniques.

These learning difficulties are also clearly reflected in the distribution of passing grades for students in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, with a total of 22 students. Of these, only 2 students received an A and 1 student received an A-. Furthermore, 3 students received a B+, 6 students received a B, and 3 students received a B-. Meanwhile, 1 student received a C+, 5 students received a C, and 1 student received an E. This distribution of grades shows that most students are in the middle grade category and there are still students who have not reached the expected competency standards. This condition provides evidence that many students still experience difficulties in following the Quantitative Research Methodology course, resulting in suboptimal learning outcomes.

One factor contributing to this difficulty is students' perception that courses related to numbers and statistics are difficult and complicated. History Education students generally tend to be interested in narrative, descriptive, and qualitative studies, so quantitative approaches are often considered irrelevant to their discipline. This perception affects students' motivation to learn and their level of engagement in the lecture process. As a result, students tend to be passive and lack confidence when dealing with statistical data analysis. (Maysani & Pujiastuti, 2020; Aisyah & Sumo, 2025).

Learning difficulties are a condition characterized by obstacles that prevent the optimal achievement of learning objectives. Factors that influence learning difficulties can be internal or external. Internal factors include basic numerical abilities, academic readiness, motivation, interest, and attitude toward the course. External factors include the learning strategies used by lecturers, evaluation methods, the use of learning media, and the academic environment. In the context of the Quantitative Research Methodology course, these factors need to be analyzed comprehensively to determine the main sources of students' learning difficulties (Khaddafi et al., 2025).

Previous studies have shown that students in various study programs experience difficulties in learning statistics and research methodology courses. These studies found that students generally have difficulty understanding basic statistical concepts, operating data analysis software, and interpreting statistical test results. Several studies also show that poor basic mathematical skills and lack of practical training are the dominant factors causing learning difficulties. This study is similar to previous studies in that it focuses on analyzing the factors that cause learning difficulties among students and identifies the internal and external aspects that affect learning outcomes in quantitative and analytical courses (Nurdianto et al., 2020; Mendrofa & Surbakti, 2023).

However, this study differs significantly from previous studies. Whereas previous studies were generally conducted in exact science or general education programs and focused on statistics courses in general, this study specifically examines the learning difficulties of students in the History Education Study Program in the Quantitative Research Methodology course. This study also considers the scientific characteristics of history, which are more dominant in qualitative and interpretive approaches, so that the analysis of learning difficulties is contextualized with the background of the students' academic discipline. Thus, this study not only identifies general obstacles but also relates them to the academic characteristics of History Education students.

In addition, this study seeks to examine the relationship between the learning process in the classroom and student learning outcomes in greater depth. It not only examines student abilities, but also evaluates the learning strategies applied, the intensity of practical exercises, and the effectiveness of the use of learning media. This approach is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the learning difficulties of students in the Quantitative Research Methodology course.

Low student learning activity is also an indicator of learning difficulties. The lecture process, which is still centered on the lecturer and does not provide opportunities for direct data processing practice, can cause students to lack skills in applying the concepts they have learned. In fact, this course requires continuous practice, discussions on data interpretation, and intensive guidance in designing research. The evaluation of learning outcomes, which shows significant variations in scores, further confirms the gap in understanding among students (Taufik & Nuraini, 2018; Fazariah et al., 2024).

Based on the above description, it is important to analyze the learning difficulties experienced by students in the History Education Study Program in the Quantitative Research Methodology course. This study aims to identify the types of learning difficulties experienced

by students and the factors that influence them. The results of this study are expected to serve as a basis for formulating more effective learning strategies that are tailored to the characteristics of History Education students, thereby improving the quality of learning outcomes and the students' readiness to conduct quantitative research independently.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study was a qualitative descriptive method, which is a research approach that presents data as it is and analyzes the results of student response questionnaires with qualitative explanations (Nurrisa et al., 2025). This research was conducted in the History Education Study Program, Faculty of Social Sciences, Gorontalo State University. The choice of research location was based on the consideration that the researcher is a lecturer in that study program and therefore understands the academic conditions and learning processes that take place. The research subjects were students in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year who were enrolled in the Quantitative Research Methodology course.

The instrument used to obtain information about students' learning difficulties in the Quantitative Research Methodology course was a questionnaire compiled using a Likert scale with 15 written statements. These statements covered indicators of difficulty in understanding statistical concepts, research instrument development, data analysis, interpretation of results, as well as motivational factors and learning strategies. The questionnaires completed by students were then examined and analyzed by calculating the frequency of respondents' answers to each statement. The data was then processed by determining the percentage of the most dominant answers or the mode of student answers (Waruwu, 2023).

The questionnaire results were then calculated as percentages and analyzed descriptively using the following interpretation criteria: scores of 25–50 were categorized as low difficulty, scores of 50–75 as medium difficulty, and scores of 75–100 as high difficulty. Through this analysis, it is hoped that a clear picture can be obtained regarding the level and form of learning difficulties experienced by students in the History Education Study Program in the Quantitative Research Methodology course.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the results of the analysis of learning difficulties experienced by students in the History Education Study Program in the Quantitative Research Methodology course as a whole, the data summary is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of the Results of the Analysis of Student Learning Difficulties

Aspects	Score Obtained (%)
Number of Students	22
Lowest Score	55
Highest Score	88
Average	72

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the average learning difficulty score of students is 72%, which is in the moderate category. The highest score obtained is 88%, which is in the high category, while the lowest score of 55% is still in the moderate category. Of the 22 respondents analyzed, most students were in the moderate learning difficulty category. This shows that students in the History Education Study Program experience considerable obstacles in understanding and mastering Quantitative Research Methodology material (Haq et al., 2025).

Learning difficulties are conditions characterized by certain obstacles that prevent learning objectives from being optimally achieved. In the context of this study, the phenomenon of learning difficulties is reflected in the uneven academic achievements of students and the existence of obstacles in understanding statistical concepts, preparing research instruments, and quantitative data analysis (Soesilo et al., 2024; Rahmah et al., 2025).

Furthermore, to identify the factors that influence learning difficulties, an analysis was conducted based on several indicators, namely student interest, learning motivation, lecturer learning strategies, learning models/approaches, mastery of statistical concepts, learning resources, and classroom conditions. The results of the analysis for each aspect can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Percentage of Student Difficulties in Mastering the Quantitative Research Methodology Course

Aspects	Average Scores (%)	Criteria
Student Interest	71%	Moderate
Student Motivation	69%	Moderate
Lecturer Learning Strategies	75%	Moderate
Learning Model/Approach	77%	High
Mastery of Statistical Concepts	73%	Moderate
Basic Numerical Skills	66%	Moderate
Learning Resources	60%	Moderate
Classroom Conditions	64%	Moderate

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that learning difficulties influenced by student interest aspects were at 71% in the moderate category. The learning motivation aspect was 69%, which was also in the moderate category. The lecturer learning strategy aspect obtained a percentage

of 75% (moderate category), while the learning model or approach aspect showed a figure of 77%, which was in the high category. This indicates that the learning approach used is still one of the factors that significantly influences student difficulties.

The aspect of mastery of statistical concepts obtained a percentage of 73% (moderate category), indicating that students still experience difficulties in understanding quantitative concepts. Basic numeracy skills scored 66% (moderate category), indicating limitations in calculation and numerical analysis abilities. The learning resources aspect scored 60% and classroom conditions 64%, both of which fall into the moderate category.

Overall, the results of this analysis indicate that students' learning difficulties in the Quantitative Research Methodology course are at a moderate level, with several indicators approaching the high category, particularly in terms of the learning approach. These findings indicate the need to improve learning strategies, increase practical data analysis exercises, and strengthen student motivation and interest so that the learning process can run more effectively and learning outcomes can improve.

Discussion

Based on the results of the study, the level of learning difficulties experienced by students in the History Education Study Programme in the Quantitative Research Methodology course is generally in the moderate category. However, there are several aspects that show a significant influence on the emergence of these difficulties, particularly in terms of the model/learning and the role of lecturers. These findings indicate that learning difficulties are not a single phenomenon, but rather the result of complex interactions between internal student factors and external factors in the learning process.

In terms of interest, the research results show a moderate category. This indicates that students do not yet have a strong interest in the quantitative approach. Theoretically, interest is a relatively stable tendency to pay attention to and engage in a particular activity. If interest in a course is low, then students' attention and involvement in the learning process will also decrease. This condition is in line with the research by Sihombing et al., (2024), which states that low interest in learning is one of the main causes of students' difficulties in understanding analytical and conceptual courses. In the context of History Education students, a greater interest in qualitative approaches may influence their perception of quantitative courses, resulting in statistics-related material being considered difficult and uninteresting (Haviz & Maris, 2018; Rahmi et al., 2020; Dewi et al., 2025).

In addition to interest, learning motivation is also in the moderate category. Motivation plays an important role as a driver of learning activities (Fernando et al., 2024; Widila et al., 2025). Without strong motivation, students tend to make less effort to understand complex material. Fauzizah et al., (2025) explain that motivation is closely related to the goals to be achieved. If students do not yet realise the urgency of mastering quantitative research methodology in writing their thesis or developing their professionalism as prospective history teachers, their drive to explore the material will be less than optimal. These findings reinforce previous research stating that intrinsic motivation has a significant effect on students' academic achievement (Nur Iliza & Hanif, 2025).

In terms of students' basic abilities, this study shows that limitations in numerical abilities and statistical understanding are one source of difficulty. This is consistent with Nurhikmayati, (2017) research, which confirms that weak basic mathematical skills can hinder understanding of material that requires calculation and numerical analysis. Although previous research was conducted in the context of chemistry learning, its relevance is still evident in this study because quantitative research methodology also requires mathematical logic and statistical data interpretation skills (Amanda et al., 2024). Thus, the difficulty of History Education students in understanding statistics cannot be separated from their previous academic background, which did not emphasise numerical aspects.

Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that mastery of the material is at a moderate level. Quantitative Research Methodology material is systematic, hierarchical, and interrelated. If students do not understand basic concepts such as research variables or sampling techniques, they will encounter difficulties in the data analysis and interpretation stages. This condition is in line with the opinion of Fatma et al., (2026), who stated that abstract and complex material requires deep conceptual understanding and continuous practice. In this context, the lack of direct practice in data processing can increase students' difficulties.

The learning model or approach aspect shows a fairly high influence on learning difficulties. This indicates that the learning strategies applied have a significant contribution to the level of student understanding. Jamaludin et al., (2023) state that a learning model is a conceptual framework designed to manage learning experiences systematically so that learning objectives are achieved. If the learning approach still predominantly uses lecture methods and minimal practice, students tend to have difficulty understanding applied material such as statistical analysis (Ariga, 2025). This finding is in line with the research by Susanti et al., (2024), which confirms that less varied learning methods can reduce the effectiveness of the learning process.

In addition to learning models, the role of lecturers is also an important factor in influencing students' learning difficulties. Research results show that teaching quality has a significant contribution to student understanding. Lestari et al., (2024) state that the quality of teachers or lecturers is one of the dominant factors in determining learning success. Mastery of the material, the ability to explain concepts in simple terms, and a good interpersonal approach greatly determine the level of success of students in understanding the material (Widiartha et al., 2023). In quantitative research methodology learning, lecturers not only act as conveyors of material, but also as mentors in data analysis practice.

The learning environment or classroom conditions were also rated as moderate. An unfavourable environment can affect students' concentration and participation. Lestari & Siswanto, (2024) explain that a supportive learning environment will have a positive impact on motivation and learning outcomes. If the classroom atmosphere is monotonous or interaction is limited, students tend to be passive and less actively involved in the learning process (Febriani et al., 2025).

Meanwhile, the learning resources aspect received the lowest percentage, although it is still in the moderate category. The availability of easy-to-understand references, applicable modules, and the use of statistical software greatly help students in understanding abstract concepts. Limitations in the use of learning resources can increase the level of difficulty for students (Pandiangan et al., 2025).

When linked to the research by Wandani et al., (2025) & Annaurotin et al., (2025), learning difficulties can also be caused by ineffective time management and slow reading habits. In the context of this study, some students showed difficulties in allocating time to understand statistical material that requires repeated practice. This shows that individual factors also play a role in determining learning success.

Overall, this discussion shows that student learning difficulties in the Quantitative Research Methodology course are a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by the interaction between interest, motivation, basic abilities, learning models, the role of lecturers, the learning environment, and learning resources. These findings reinforce previous theories while providing a contextual picture of the challenges of quantitative learning in the History Education environment. Therefore, there is a need for innovative learning strategies that are more applicable, contextual, and tailored to student characteristics in order to minimise learning difficulties and optimise academic achievement.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the level of learning difficulty of students in the History Education Study Programme in the Quantitative Research Methodology course is in the Moderate category. This shows that most students still experience obstacles in understanding quantitative concepts, particularly in terms of basic numerical skills, statistical understanding, and data analysis application. These difficulties are reflected in the results of questionnaire analysis and student grade distribution, which show that academic achievement is not yet fully optimal.

The factors that influence student learning difficulties include internal and external factors. Internal factors include student interest, motivation, and basic abilities, which are still in the moderate category. Meanwhile, external factors include learning models or approaches, the role of lecturers, classroom conditions, and the availability of learning resources. Among these factors, learning models and the role of lecturers have a relatively higher influence on the emergence of learning difficulties. This indicates that learning strategies that lack variety and minimise data analysis practice can increase students' comprehension barriers.

Thus, efforts to minimise learning difficulties in Quantitative Research Methodology courses need to be made through more applicable and contextual learning innovations, increased practical data processing exercises, and strengthening student motivation and interest. In addition, lecturers need to develop more interactive learning approaches that are relevant to the characteristics of historical science so that students can understand the importance of quantitative competence in educational research. These efforts are expected to improve the quality of learning outcomes and students' readiness to conduct quantitative research independently.

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