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Students' interest in learning mathematical literacy: What is its role in the mathematical economics course?

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Abstract

This research examines the role of learning interest in students' mathematical literacy in the mathematical economics course. This research was carried out at a private college. The instruments included questionnaires and tests. The data analysis techniques used were the Pearson correlation, regression, and ANOVA tests. The research results show that interest in learning significantly affects students' mathematical literacy in the mathematical economics course. Apart from that, there is a significant difference in the average value of mathematical literacy between students in the low, moderate, and high learning interest categories. Students with a low interest in learning have significant differences in mathematical literacy from students with a high interest in learning. Students with a moderate interest in learning have significant differences in mathematical literacy from students with a high interest in learning. Meanwhile, students with low interest in learning do not significantly differ in mathematical literacy from those with moderate interest in learning.

Keywords

Interest in learning, mathematical economics, mathematical literacy

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Introduction

Indonesia is trying to achieve opportunities as a developed country by 2045, so the government is focusing on increasing the human development index until 2024, as stated in the *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional (RPJMN)*. One effort can be made through higher education because it suits its function for developing abilities and forming a dignified national character and civilization to make the nation's life more intelligent. According to Law No. 12 of 2012 concerning higher education, it is stated that higher education is educational levels after secondary education, including bachelor's, master's, doctoral, professional, and specialist diploma programs, which are organized by universities based on Indonesian culture.

To date, higher education has reached all levels of society and produced professional graduates ready to enter the world of work. The Ministry of Education and Culture has also determined the minimum competency of graduates of study programs at each level of higher education, including undergraduate programs, namely mastering theoretical concepts in certain areas of knowledge and skills in general and specifically solving problems procedurally within the scope of work (Permendikbud Nomor 53 Tahun 2023, 2023). Every graduate at the undergraduate program level must have the ability to solve problems procedurally. This is related to mathematical literacy skills, one of the components of mathematical literacy developed by Purwasih et al. (2018). At level three, students can carry out procedures for solving problems and choose problem-solving strategies. Mathematical literacy is substantive in someone's ability to make considerations and produce mathematically measurable results (Gellert et al., 2013). Therefore, mathematical literacy skills are one of the components needed to develop skills in the 21st century (Rizki & Priatna, 2019).Steen et al. (2007) stated that mathematical literacy uses mathematical knowledge and understanding to face everyday challenges effectively. In other words, people with good mathematical literacy will instinctively have instincts when encountering problems and use mathematical concepts in solving them. According to Marina et al. (2016), students with moderate and low levels of mathematical literacy cannot do so when they encounter problems that require solutions using procedures and planning, not just mathematical formulas.

Many factors influence the level of mathematical literacy skills. These factors can come from within or outside a person. Rahmanuri et al. (2023) revealed that factors that originate within a person are divided into cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions. Cognitive dimensions include intellectual, verbal and numerical abilities. Meanwhile, the non-cognitive dimension consists of a person's self-perception and confidence in their abilities, interests, motivation, self-concept, mathematical disposition, and metacognition. It is also related to a person's values, attitudes, and emotions. These dimensions, both from within and outside a person, can encourage a person to have a strong desire and determination to study and solve mathematics-related problems. External factors are related to a person's environment, including home, school, and community.

Interest in learning is a non-cognitive aspect, which is an internal factor in a person's level of mathematical literacy. Much research has concerned interest in learning and mathematical literacy at primary and secondary school levels. For example, Saraswati et al. (2023) showed that interest in learning significantly affects junior high school students'

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mathematical literacy. Few research studies discuss students' interest in learning and mathematical literacy. To become a competent higher education graduate, success in studying cannot be denied. At the same time, a student must achieve where learning success is greatly influenced by an interest in learning (Bloom & Reenen, 2013).

According to Hanafi et al. (2018), interest in learning is a person's or student's high desire to gain intelligence or knowledge through the learning process at school or through learning activities on the materials provided. Students with a high interest in learning will feel happy and are voluntarily encouraged to focus on following the learning process well from the start to the end; even after learning in class, they will still be interested in learning.

Of course, interest in learning also influences the mathematics learning process of students, one of which is the mathematical economics course. Previously, research had been carried out on the description and study of mathematical literacy skills in this course with the aim that the research results could be used as a basis for determining follow-up learning. This research shows that 15 percent of students are in the high category, 63 percent are in the moderate category, and 22 percent are the low category (Saputri, 2023). Someone with moderate and low mathematical literacy skills cannot solve problems procedurally with planning. Therefore, further research needs to be done on the research question: What is the role of learning interest in students' mathematical literacy skills in the mathematical economics course? Specifically, this research reviews mathematical literacy abilities based on students' level of interest in learning so that they can determine the next steps in improving learning that focuses on increasing mathematical literacy so that we can determine the next steps in improving learning that focuses on increasing mathematical literacy.

Methodology

Research design, site, and participants

This quantitative research uses a descriptive approach to describe the role of interest in learning mathematical literacy skills in the mathematical economics course. This type of research was chosen because researchers systematically describe and assess data using numerical methods through objective measurements and statistical analysis of variables. Quantitative research focuses on a particular population/sample. Data were collected through structured instruments. Furthermore, findings are analyzed through statistical techniques by established hypotheses, equipped with a descriptive approach to provide a suitable formula for answering research questions (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018; Fraenkel, & Wallen, 2007; Sugiyono, 2010). This research was carried out at a private college in Lampung Province for 3 months, with the research subjects were the 1st semester students of the 2023/2024 academic year who had taken the mathematical economics course. These respondents were chosen because they were relevant to the subject criteria when answering research questions. Participants must have been taught the mathematical economics course so that the data on learning interests and mathematical literacy abilities focus on this course. This makes samples an appropriate source for collecting data (Cresswell, & Cresswell, 2018; Johnson, & Christensen, 2010). Thirty-five students were respondents to this research. This number is acceptable for using questionnaire item validity, construct reliability, and correlation analysis

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(Green & Salkind, 2016; Pallant, 2020). The stages in this research are preparation, data collection, data processing, data analysis, and reporting.

The questionnaire: Validity and reliability

The focus of this research is students' interest in learning and mathematical literacy with the following indicators:

Table 1. *Research variable indicators*

Variables	Interest in learning	Mathematical Literacy
Indicators	Feeling happy	Formulate the problem mathematically
	Involvement	Using concepts, facts, procedures, and reasoning
	Interest	Interpret, apply and evaluate the solutions that have been
	Attention	obtained

The data sources in this research were data on interest in learning and mathematical literacy. Data collection techniques in questionnaires determine students' interest in learning, and tests are used to determine students' mathematical literacy levels. The scores on the mathematical literacy test and interest in learning questionnaire from 1 to 5.

The research instrument was first tested for validity and reliability before being used. Priyanto (2010) suggested that before distributing the questionnaire, both the tools underwent validity and reliability tests to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the questionnaire items. The validity test is carried out using the Product Moment Correlation formula so that the calculated r will be obtained and compared with the r table. All items on the mathematical literacy instrument and interest in learning have met r-count > r-table, so the question/statement items are said to be valid. Meanwhile, the Croncach Alpha formula should be used for reliability testing so that a reliability value > 0.60 and ensure that the instrument is reliable (Priyanto, 2010). All question items are valid, and reliable instruments can be used to measure learning interest and mathematical literacy abilities in mathematical economics courses.

Data collection

Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher asked for permission from the campus and coordinated with the lecturer who taught the mathematical economics course regarding data collection. Next, the questionnaire was distributed, but beforehand, the researcher explained to respondents that their participation was confidential and voluntary. It takes approximately 30 minutes to fill out the questionnaire.

Data analysis

Data reduction was first carried out before data analysis was carried out. Data reduction in this research consists of summarizing data on learning interests and mathematical literacy

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and grouping them based on categories. The grouping consists of groups with high, moderate, and low levels. Grouping learning interest and mathematical literacy uses the following criteria.

Table 2. *Criteria for grouping learning interests and mathematical literacy*

Groups	Marks
High	$X \geq \bar{X} + 1SD$
Moderate	$\bar{X} - 1SD \leq X \leq \bar{X} + 1SD$
Low	$X \leq \bar{X} - 1SD$

Where,
$\bar{X}$: Average score
SD : Standard deviation

After the data was reduced, data analysis was conducted to see the role of interest in learning students' mathematical literacy skills in the mathematical economics course. The relationship between students' interest in learning and mathematical literacy abilities will be tested using the Pearson correlation test to see the magnitude of the influence of students' interest in learning and mathematical literacy abilities using the regression test. Taylor (1990) categorized the value of the correlation coefficient r as follows:

Table 3. *Category of correlation coefficient*

Interpretation	Correlation coefficient r
Weak	$r \leq 0{,}35$
Moderate	$0{,}36 \leq r \leq 0{,}67$
Strong	$0{,}68 \leq r \leq 0{,}90$
Very Strong	$0{,}91 \leq r \leq 1{,}00$

Then, the ANOVA test will be used to find out the difference in average mathematical literacy in various categories of learning interest. Before analyzing using these tests, it is necessary to conduct prerequisite tests on data on students' learning interests and mathematical literacy abilities.

Ethical considerations

In conducting this research, ethical considerations were strictly adhered to ensure all students' privacy, confidentiality, and safety. Respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time during data collection and analysis. All responses were kept confidential and used solely for research purposes, and no personally identifiable information was disclosed. Additionally, authorized researchers store data securely and only access it to maintain participants' anonymity and protect their well-being. Additionally, participation in this research did not impact students' course grades, so their academic performance was not compromised.

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Findings

Data from research that had been carried out regarding interest in learning and mathematical literacy in students who have taken the mathematical economics course is summarized in the following table:

Table 4. *Description of learning interest and mathematical literacy results*

Aspects	Variables	
	Interest in learning	Mathematical literacy
Lots of data	35	35
Average value	62.4	17.3714
Maximum value	76	25
Minimum value	40	10
Variance	77.953	19.711
Standard deviation	8.8291	4.4397

Several tests were carried out to answer the problem formulation. The first test is simple linear correlation regression, but a prerequisite test, namely normality, must be carried out before carrying out this test. Because the amount of data is 35, the normality test used is the Shapiro-Wilk test. The normality test results for each variable are presented in the following table.

Table 5. *Normality test results*

Variables	Sig	Decision
Interest in learning	0.160	Normal
Mathematical literacy	0.056	Normal

Based on the results of the normality test in Table 4, the significance value of each variable is greater than the significance value of 0.05 (Sig. > 5%), so it can be concluded that the data for the variable's interest in learning and mathematical literacy are normally distributed. Once it is known that the data is normally distributed, correlation regression testing can be continued. Simple linear correlation regression testing was conducted to see whether interest in learning influences mathematical literacy, the relationship between interest in learning and mathematical literacy, and how much interest in learning contributes to mathematical literacy. The results of this test are as follows.

Table 6. *Regression test results*

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(constant)	3.132	4.914		.637	.528
	Interest in learning	.228	.078	.454	2.925	.006

A. Dependent variable: Mathematical literacy

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Based on Table 6 above, the regression equation is obtained between interest in learning (X) and mathematical literacy (Y), namely with a Sig value = 0.006 < 0.05, which means that interest in learning affects students' mathematical literacy. The correlation test results are displayed in the following table:$Y = 3{,}132 + 0{,}228X$

Table 7. *Correlation test results*

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Std. Error
1	.454	.206	.182	4.01573

a. Predictors: (Constant) interest in learning

Based on Table 7, the R-value = 0.454, meaning that the correlation between interest in learning and literacy is in the moderate category. The R-square is 0.206 or 20.6%, so the contribution of interest in learning to mathematical literacy is only 20.6%. Students' learning interests, which are known from the results of the questionnaire filled out by each student, can be divided into three categories based on the average and standard deviation. The grouping of high, moderate, and low categories is measured from predetermined indicators. The following results are grouping students' learning interests based on predetermined range limits.

Table 8. *Distribution of student learning interests*

Categories	Range	Frequency	Percentages
High	$X \geq 71.10205$	7	20%
Moderate	$53.69795 \leq X \leq 71.10205$	23	65.72%
Low	$X \leq 53.69795$	5	14.28%
	Amount	35	100%

Apart from learning interest results, mathematical literacy results are also grouped into three categories: high, moderate, and low, based on the average value and standard deviation. Data on mathematical literacy results that are measured based on specified indicators are presented in the following table.

Table 9. *Distribution of student mathematical literacy*

Categories	Range	Frequencies	Percentages
High	$X \geq 21.74724$	8	22.86%
Moderate	$12.99561 \leq X \leq 21.74724$	22	62.86%
Low	$X \leq 12.99561$	5	14.28%
	Amount	35	100%

Data on average mathematical literacy scores based on interest groups are presented in bold below.

Table 10. *Average mathematical literacy score based on interest groups*

Information	Average mathematical literacy score
High interest in learning	20.8571
Moderate interest in learning	16.7391
Low interest in learning	15.4

ANOVA testing will be conducted to determine whether there are differences in students' mathematical literacy regarding students' learning interests. However, it is necessary to carry out further prerequisite tests after it is known that the data is normally distributed, namely in the form of a homogeneity test with the following results.

Table 11. *Homogeneity test results*

Levene statistics	df1	df2	Sig.
4.417	2	32	.020

Based on the test results, the Sig value was obtained as 0.02 < 0.05, meaning that the data for the three categories do not have the same variance (heterogeneous). Because the data does not meet the prerequisite test for homogeneity, the ANOVA test that can be used is the Welch ANOVA test with the Post-Hoc Games-Howell test. The ANOVA test results are displayed in the following table.

Table 12. *One-way ANOVA test results*

	Statistics	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	6,540	2	10.799	.014

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

The Sig value results obtained from the test were 0.014 < 0.05, meaning there was a significant difference in the average value of students' mathematical literacy between students in the low, moderate, and high learning interest categories. In detail, the location of the differences can be determined using Post-Hoc testing with the following results.

Table 13. *Post-hoc test results*

	(I) interest in learning	(J) interest in learning	Mean difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Games-Howell	Low	Moderate	-1.33913	1.84219	.756
		High	-5.45714*	1.81382	.048
	Moderate	Low	1.33913	1.84219	.756
		High	-4.11801*	1.32801	.015
	High	Low	5.45714*	1.81382	.048
		Moderate	4.11801*	1.32801	.015

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

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Based on the test results presented in Table 12, not all learning interest groups have differences in mathematical literacy. Students with low interest in learning significantly differ in mathematical literacy from those with high interest in learning (Sig. Value 0.048 < 0.05). Students with a moderate interest in learning also significantly differ in mathematical literacy from students with a high interest in learning (Sig. Value 0.015 < 0.05). Meanwhile, students with low interest in learning do not significantly differ in mathematical literacy from those with moderate interest in learning.

Discussion

Based on the results of regression testing, the Sig value was obtained. (0.006) < 0.05, meaning that interest in learning significantly affects mathematical literacy. This is in line with the results of research (Saraswati et al., 2023) but with different research subjects. Interest in learning plays a role in students' mathematical literacy level. The correlation between these two variables is moderate with a positive relationship. This can be seen from the correlation value of 0.454. This relationship is interpreted as if students have an increased interest in learning, then the students' mathematical literacy skills increase quite a lot, and vice versa. The R-square value shown in the research results is only 0.206. In other words, interest in learning contributes to students' mathematical literacy by 20.6%. These results indicate that other factors have a greater role in mathematical literacy abilities Rahmanuri et al. (2023). Internal and external factors can influence mathematical literacy abilities, so further research is needed to determine the significant factors that influence literacy abilities.

It can be seen from the results of the post-hoc test that significant differences in the average student's mathematical literacy occur between students with low interest in learning and students with high interest in learning students with moderate interest in learning, students with high interest in learning. However, there is no significant difference in mathematical literacy between students with moderate and low learning interests. The average value of mathematical literacy for students with high interest in learning (20.8571) > the average value of mathematical literacy for students with low interest in learning (15.4), meaning that students with high interest in learning have better mathematical literacy skills than students with low interest in learning. In addition, the average value of mathematical literacy for students with high interest in learning (20.8571) > the average value of mathematical literacy for students with moderate interest in learning (16.7391), meaning that students with high interest in learning have better mathematical literacy skills than students with moderate interest in learning. This aligns with Rodhi (2021), that stated that mathematical literacy skills are caused by low interest in learning mathematics.

According to the research results that have been revealed, interest in learning plays a significant role in students' mathematical literacy. It is likely to moderate because interest in learning plays a role in literacy only for the high group compared to the moderate group and for the high group compared to the low group. Meanwhile, students with moderate interest in learning do not have a significant difference in mathematical literacy compared to those with low interest in learning, meaning that interest in learning does not play a role or influence the mathematical literacy of these two groups when compared. This can occur due to other factors that play a greater role in mathematical literacy. Rahmanuri et al. (2023) revealed that internal

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factors and external factors influence mathematical literacy, where internal factors are further classified into cognitive and non-cognitive aspects. Cognitive aspects include intellectual, verbal, and numerical abilities, while non-cognitive aspects include students' perceptions and self-confidence regarding their abilities, interests, motivation, self-concept, mathematical disposition, and metacognition. Indeed, interest in learning is one of the external factors that can influence mathematical literacy. However, it is said that the dominant cognitive aspects are numerical and verbal abilities, while the dominant non-cognitive aspects contribute to mathematical literacy, namely mathematical disposition (Rahmanuri et al., 2023).

In line with this opinion, Riani et al. (2022) showed that numerical and verbal abilities partially and simultaneously influence mathematical literacy. Indrawati and Wardono (2019) stated that numerical ability is an internal factor influencing mathematical literacy. According to him, students can develop new concepts by integrating various basic concepts to solve problems if they have high numerical abilities and learn correctly.Literacy questions are generally story questions where students are asked to formulate, use concepts, interpret, and evaluate, so verbal skills are needed to understand the content of the reading and interpret pretty complex questions. They also give rise to many verbal interpretations by having verbal skills. A good one helps understand the meaning and create mathematical models to solve these problems.

According to the non-cognitive aspect that is more dominant in influencing students' mathematical literacy than interest in learning is a mathematical disposition (Rahmanuri et al., 2023). Attitudes like seeing the use of mathematics and curiosity and interest in mathematics show a tendency known as a mathematical disposition. Sulasdini and Himmah (2021) showed that students who have a high disposition can complete mathematical literacy questions up to level 5, students who have a moderate disposition can reach level 4 of mathematical literacy, and students who have a low disposition are only able to complete mathematical literacy at level 1.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research concludes that interest in learning plays a significant role in students' mathematical literacy in mathematical economics courses. This can be seen from the interest in learning, which significantly influences students' mathematical literacy in the mathematical economics course. The correlation between students' interest in learning and mathematical literacy in the mathematical economics course is moderate ($r = 0.454$). The contribution of interest in learning to students' mathematical literacy was 20.6%.

Apart from that, there is a significant difference in the average value of students' mathematical literacy in the mathematical economics course between students with low, moderate, and high learning interest categories. Students with low interest in learning significantly differ in mathematical literacy compared to students with high interest in learning. Students with a moderate interest in learning have significant differences in mathematical literacy with students with a high interest in learning. Meanwhile, students with low interest in learning do not significantly differ in mathematical literacy from those with moderate interest in learning.

The recommendation that can be given is that it is hoped that other researchers can carry out further research related to students' mathematical literacy by involving students' numerical abilities,

verbal abilities, and mathematical dispositions so that they can find the most significant factors that influence students' mathematical literacy in the mathematical economics course.

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