

## The Learning Pattern of Postgraduate Students: A Case Study of Some Postgraduate Program Students of Yogyakarta State University

D N Yusuf<sup>1\*</sup>, Nasiwan<sup>2</sup>

Fakultas Pascasarjana, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta

**Corresponding Author:** D N Yusuf [yusufdamar.2018@student.YSU.ac.id](mailto:yusufdamar.2018@student.YSU.ac.id)

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### ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to obtain a descriptive description of learning patterns and the driving and inhibiting factors of learning for postgraduate students at Yogyakarta State University (YSU). This study used a qualitative method. The subjects in this study were selected using purposive sampling technique. Data collection was administered through in-depth interview and observation techniques. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusions. The research findings show the following results. First, YSU postgraduate students do not have a fixed or steady frequency, duration and place of study every day. Second, YSU postgraduate students tend to have the characteristics of learning independently but individually. This condition can be formed because it is influenced by internal factors such as the subjective view of students who have their respective views on how to learn effectively and efficiently, and external factors such as the academic atmosphere and learning facilities on campus. Third, for YSU postgraduate students, the motivational aspects of learning and the conditions of the campus environment can hinder and encourage their learning activities

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## INTRODUCTION

For students, learning pattern is a vital thing, because one of the duties of a student is to study. Although every student is very likely to have different learning patterns, this is necessary and important to note. One reason is because each student's learning pattern is likely to be able to influence and support the results of academic achievement scores. This statement is at least reinforced by research conducted by Swandari (2013) which shows the results of the study that the learning patterns of the research subjects have a positive effect on learning achievement.

Roig (2008) explained that learning patterns can affect the success of a student in certain situations. Similar to the statement expressed by Roig, Gagne (in Hardiyanti, 2016) stated that learning patterns are one of the factors that can affect learning outcomes. It should be noted, however, that the learning pattern in higher education is very different from the learning pattern in secondary schools. In general, there are three kinds of learning patterns in tertiary institutions, which are independent learning; learning together; Institutional learning.

Knowledge about learning patterns according to Vermunt (1994) can be seen through an assessment of the learning patterns themselves. While the assessment of learning patterns can be seen through the characteristics or learning methods such as when processing learning materials, character when studying, whether the student has a tendency to need outside motivation or tends to be able to learn independently.

From the explanation above, the learning patterns among postgraduate students also become interesting to reveal. As it is known that postgraduate study levels are higher academically and have a shorter duration of study than students at the undergraduate level. It is also common knowledge that, for students who have experienced postgraduate study, it is certain that in the academic atmosphere, the challenges and achievements that postgraduate students have to go through tend to be different from students at the undergraduate level including differences in course workloads and learning styles that tend to demand more independent learning from students.

However, differences such as course load or learning methods above are of course very subjective and casuistic. It is due to the learning pattern of each student is strongly influenced by various factors, both internal factors such as self-motivation in learning and external factors such as environmental conditions and learning facilities or other factors. For instance, postgraduate students who have activities other than studying, such as working, managing organizations, or taking care of a family, are likely to have a different learning pattern from postgraduate students who do not have a major role outside of just studying.

Hidayah (2016) asserted that various academic problems often make it difficult for students to take the study program they choose. More than that, some of these problems arise from within the students themselves, such as improper study habits, lack of mastery of independent learning, difficulty in completing lecture assignments, making reports, papers, summarizing journals and others. Moreover, if the student does not know the location of the problem in his study,

a learning pattern is needed that can help a person's learning process that is tailored to the conditions of each individual so that it can support their learning achievement.

The result of research related to the learning patterns of postgraduate students is the research conducted by Pardjono et al (2013) on the inhibiting factors for the study of postgraduate students at Yogyakarta State University (YSU). From the results of research conducted by the research team from YSU, among others, it was revealed that one of the factors inhibiting the study of YSU postgraduate students was they could not manage the time between the workload and activities outside campus such as at work.

From the results of research findings that are still related to student learning patterns above, it can at least be concluded that student learning patterns can be influenced by various factors, including external factors such as students who have multiple roles or in other words have roles other than lectures such as work, take care of the family, or in other roles. The findings of the research at least prove that many postgraduate students experience problems in the learning process because they are also caused by various factors.

In general, this descriptive study aims to describe the learning patterns of YSU postgraduate students through the perspective of adult learning theory. This research is also to determine the supporting and inhibiting factors of learning in YSU postgraduate students. Specifically, the research on learning patterns of YSU postgraduate students is focused on the following: Place of study; duration and frequency of study; Characteristics of learning; and Encouraging and inhibiting factors of learning.

This study focused on the learning patterns of YSU postgraduate students who do not have a dual role or in other words only have the role of a student whose main activity is studying. The researcher's consideration in choosing the research subjects of YSU postgraduate students who do not have a dual role is because there are not many studies on learning patterns that use this type of research subject.

Meanwhile, the researcher's consideration in choosing YSU postgraduate as the location of this research, among others, is because it departs from the experiences and observations of researchers who are currently also students at the YSU postgraduate faculty. Therefore, the researcher has the view that there are two external factors that may foster motivation from outside which can influence the learning patterns of YSU postgraduate students.

First, the learning atmosphere at the YSU postgraduate program tends to require independent learning from the students. For instance, if students want to master the material and be able to do lecture assignments well, the learning process cannot only rely on lecture material from lecturers, but students must also be able to find and process course material from various sources such as books, journals and other sources. Second, the learning facilities at YSU, including in the YSU postgraduate faculty, according to the researcher's own experience, it can be said that they already have adequate learning facilities, such as libraries that provide complete reading sources, internet access services (wi-

fi), comfortable class facilities so that can support the learning process and other facilities.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Andragogy: A Brief Description**

Adult education (andragogy) according to UNESCO, Bryson, and Reeves, et al, which is summarized (in Suprijanto, 2012: 14) is education which uses part of its time and without being forced to develop knowledge, skills, and change attitudes in the context of self-development as individual and to increase participation in social, economic and cultural development in a balanced and comprehensive manner. Thus, what is meant by adult learning theory?

Knowles, as quoted by C. Lindeman (in Winarti, 2018: 39) identifies adult learning theory, that some of the main assumptions about adult learners are supported by research which then become the foundation of adult learning theory: a) Adult are more motivated to learning will satisfy. b) Adult orientation to learning is life-centered. c) Experience is the richest source for adults learning. d) Adults have a deep need to be self-directing. e) Individuals differences among people increase with age.

Based on Knowles' analysis of adult learning theory, it can be concluded that adult learning assumptions are very different from learning assumptions, for instance which occurs in children. More specifically, this comparison can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Andragogy: A Brief Description

No	Assumptions	Pedagogy	Andragogy
1	Concept About Self on Students	Students depend on their educators, teachers are fully responsible for determining what to learn, when, how to learn, and what results are expected.	In general, adults are psychologically more in need of self-direction even though in certain circumstances they are dependent.
2	Function of Students' Experience	Experience from teachers owns very big influence, andso does the delivery techniques in the form of lectures, reading assignments and presentation through sight listening media.	Real experience is a source of learning. Therefore, the delivery method is experiment and discussion of problem solving practice.
3	Learning Readiness	They are always ready to learn for the future, therefore, learning activities must be organized in a standard curriculum, and the serving steps have to be the same for all people.	Learning is expected to solve the problem, and learning can help them find what they need to know. Learning programs are arranged according to their life needs and the order of presentation is in accordance with the readiness of students.
4	Learning Orientation	The science which is learned will be useful in the future. Therefore, the curriculum is structured according to a logical sequence.	Learn to improve self ability to develop orientation. Therefore, learning orientation centered activities according to their expectations.

Tisnowati Tamat (In Sunhaji 2013: 3-4)

## METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive study with a qualitative approach that aims to describe, reveal, and explain the learning patterns of YSU postgraduate students. This method is used by researchers because conceptually it pays attention to human behavior (individuals) from the perspective of the individual itself. The data collection technique used in this study was to conduct in-depth interviews and observations.

The interview technique is used to obtain information about the learning patterns of YSU postgraduate students, as well as to determine the driving and inhibiting factors in their learning. The informants in this study were five YSU postgraduate students who were selected using purposive sampling technique. The criteria for informants in this study were 1) active students of the YSU postgraduate program (S2); 2) YSU postgraduate students who do not have multiple roles. The results of the data collected through these interviews were oral data in the form of words. Observations were used to obtain information about the learning environment and facilities, the academic atmosphere, the teaching and learning process of students at the YSU postgraduate program. Analysis of qualitative data in this study used inductive analysis techniques, which was analysis that starts from data and leads to general conclusions. The data analysis steps included: data reduction, unitization and categorization, data display, and conclusion drawing.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research conducted related to the learning patterns of YSU postgraduate students, the following themes were obtained

### **1. Flexibility of Place and Study Schedule for YSU Postgraduate Students**

Most of the YSU postgraduate students who became informants in this study revealed that they often use boarding rooms as a place to study. However, they also use campus facilities such as classrooms and libraries as a place to study, especially when they need references or learning resources such as books or journals. This statement is strengthened based on the observational data in this study, that indeed many postgraduate students at YSU used campus facilities such as classrooms or libraries as places to study or simply to find study references via the internet.

Based on the experience of one of the graduate students, he revealed that contemporary public spaces such as coffee shops are usually used by him and his classmates as a place to study, especially when working on group assignments. However, the places most often used for studying are in their respective boarding rooms. In this study, the researchers found the characteristics of the places they mentioned as places to study, and from that, at least the researchers could take the same elements of the characteristics of the learning places that they tend to like, which is a place to study that is not only comfortable but also has a calm and conducive atmosphere.

Sujarwo revealed that one of the aspects needed in the learning process of andragogy (adult learning knowledge) is to prepare a conducive learning atmosphere, which includes physical arrangement such as a comfortable room, fresh air, sufficient light and so on [15]. Included here is the ease of obtaining

both material learning resources such as books or journals. Because according to him, environmental factors can influence the success of learning [15]. Thus, if you look at some of the statements expressed by the informants in this study, which reveal that you prefer a place to study with a calm and conducive atmosphere, then it becomes natural to refer to the statement of Sujarwo et al, which shows that one of the things that can influence success andragogy learning process includes a calm and conducive climate or environment.

Furthermore, in terms of learning schedules, based on research data, in general, most of them do not seem to have a fixed and regular study schedule pattern. It can be seen from the frequency and duration of their learning time each day which tends to be flexible. Most of them usually only study when there is free time. It means that the conditions of each student such as their daily activities affect the frequency and duration of their studies every day. From the data from interviews with several informants, they revealed that the frequency and duration of their learning tended to increase while working on college assignments.

According to the interview data, there were students who disclosed, and what was disclosed did not seem to be a secret to the general public anymore among students, which is according to him among fellow YSU postgraduate students, the learning pattern is the "overnight speeding system (system kebut semalam)" or in other words, doing college assignments close to the deadline or doing learning activities nearing the midterm or the end of the semester that is something which is common. Usually, the "overnight speeding system" learning pattern is done one time, but it can immediately consume the duration of study time which can be hours. According to one informant, this learning model reduces the frequency of learning every day.

The study schedule for postgraduate students at YSU which tends to be conducted only when it is needed, for instance because they are working on class assignments or doing learning activities when approaching semester exam day. It is because there is a tendency for adult learning methods which, according to Mappa (1994), preferring learning which can be immediately applied, both knowledge and skills learned. For adults, their education is essentially a process of increasing the ability to cope with life's problems that are experienced now. Thus, Knowles (1979) differentiated learning orientation between children and adults, seen from a time perspective which in turn results in differences in the benefits they expect from learning.

## **2. Characteristics of YSU Postgraduate Student Learning Method: Independent-Individual**

Independence in learning, according to one informant's admission, tends to be emphasized since YSU Postgraduate students attend lectures in class. It was confirmed by the data from interviews with several informants, who revealed that even though understanding the course material was strongly influenced by the way the lecturer taught, including when delivering and explaining the material, still the subjective conditions of each student, such as independence in learning could affect the learning process of each student. For instance, based on the experience of one student, he stated that taking notes or reviewing course

material really depends on the awareness and initiative of each individual, which according to him can facilitate mastery of course material. Data from other informants stated that if students want to master the course material, they must at least be able to know the characteristics of the lecturers while teaching.

Furthermore, independence in the learning of YSU postgraduate students can be seen, for instance, from being active in looking for material or lecture references, asking and discussing course materials to lecturers, classmates or other independent learning activities. In addition, if it is observed from the answers of several informants, there is a tendency for lecture assignments from each of these lecturers which can then encourage or spur YSU postgraduate students to study independently, both inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, their independent learning process is supported by campus facilities such as in classrooms or libraries which tend to be adequate.

The characteristics of YSU postgraduate students who tend to have an independent way of learning are in line with one of the assumptions of the concept of andragogy (adult learning knowledge) put forward by Knowles (1970) who stated that an adult tends to have the concept of total dependence towards self-direction. In short, it can be said that if children still have a self-concept that is still dependent on others, while adults already have a self-concept that is already independent. Due to the independence of his self-concept, adults need respect from others as human beings who can direct themselves (self-direction), including in how to learn.

The learning independence of YSU postgraduate students can be indicated to be also driven by external factors such as the YSU postgraduate learning environment which tends to emphasize an independent learning method, for instance, it can be seen from the learning process that requires initiative and awareness of students, for example in how to understand course material course material and other endeavors. Meanwhile, the independent learning of YSU postgraduate students can be concluded to be driven by internal factors such as the subjective condition of each YSU postgraduate student who prefers to choose to study independently for several reasons, one of which is for example being able to adjust their study time flexibly.

However, interestingly, based on the findings from other interview data, on average the informants answered that they preferred and often did independent learning which was done individually rather than independent study which was done in groups. They usually study in groups only for the purpose of doing class assignments that must be done in groups, such as the task of making group papers whose results are usually presented in groups during the lecture process. It means that they do not form study groups whose goal is to discuss the material together.

Several informants stated the reasons why they prefer to study individually, because according to them, learning individually is more flexible than learning in groups. Like the statement of one of the informants who stated that individual learning can be determined independently and not by others. Other informants' reasons, for instance, said that studying individually can further optimize the learning time they have.

The way of learning of YSU postgraduate students who tend to prefer to study individually is in line with the principles of adult learning conveyed by Asmin (2009), that in educational or learning activities, adults are no longer the object of socialization that seems to be shaped and influenced to adjust himself with the desire to hold authority over himself, but the goal of adult learning or education activities is of course more directed at the attainment of establishing his own identity to be himself [1], or to refer to Rogers' term (in Knowles, 1979), learning activities aim at take the individual to become a person or find his identity. In terms of learning or education, it is the process of becoming a person not a process of being shaped which is a process of controlling and manipulating to suit other people; or, to borrow Maslow's term, that learning is a process to achieve self-actualization.

Interestingly, although they prefer to study independently-individually, some of them still admit that learning in groups still has benefits because they can exchange ideas and discuss with other friends including if there is a course material that students do not understand, then studying in groups according to several informants' admissions can help the learning process. Moreover, they usually do it every now and then in the learning process both inside and outside the classroom.

### **3. Dynamics of Learning Motivation for Postgraduate Students of YSU**

Most of the informants in this study said that one of the most dominant factors that could encourage or hinder the learning process was internal factors such as fluctuating learning motivation. The decrease in motivation in learning, according to several confessions from informants, tends to be caused by various factors. For instance, it is influenced by the mood (feelings) learning which is sometimes down, feeling lazy, bored, and other internal factors. As a result of this condition, one of the informants revealed that even though for example he had free time, his condition was not supportive for studying, for example because he was not in the mood to study, he would still not be motivated to do learning activities. Meanwhile, the increase in learning motivation, from the informants' admission, was that it could be due to a genuine willingness to learn from students, and also sometimes because they felt they had a responsibility as a child towards their parents.

Furthermore, according to the confession of one of the informants, he stated that external factors such as a place to study and atmosphere or a comfortable and conducive learning environment (external factors), according to him, can support the learning process which ultimately encourages learning activities. As one of the informants mentioned, for instance, revealed that a comfortable and conducive place to study for him, whose current status as a graduate student, is at the Digital Library of YSU. Other informants also revealed that the academic atmosphere on the YSU postgraduate campus can sometimes motivate him to be excited for studying.

Adults, according to Knowles (1980), tend to have special learning characteristics and are different from the learning characteristics of children. These characteristics according to experts can affect their motivation and learning styles. Hapsari (2005) stated that learning motivation consists of intrinsic

motivation such as a form of learning motivation that exists from within a person and does not need external stimulation. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation is like the urge to learn that comes from outside oneself.

Therefore, it can be seen that there are two characteristics of encouragement and obstacles that usually make these conditions affect the learning motivation of YSU postgraduate students who become informants in this study, which are the internal conditions of students such as fluctuating learning moods, and external conditions such as climate or learning environment which support it or not.

## **CONCLUSION**

YSU postgraduate students tend to have unplanned or unorganized learning patterns on a regular, steady and permanent basis. It can be seen from the frequency and duration of their study time which seems more flexible and can change at any time. In fact, it includes the places or locations they use for learning activities which tend to change. In terms of learning characteristics, they tend to predominantly have an independent learning model by learning individually. These learning characteristics are formed because, among other things, it is influenced by the academic atmosphere at the YSU postgraduate program which tends to emphasize independent learning for students and partly because it is influenced by the interests of each student who prefers individual learning methods. Meanwhile, the internal factors such as fluctuating learning motivation and external factors as the condition of the campus environment for YSU postgraduate students can also affect their learning patterns.

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*Yusuf, Nasiwan*

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