

STUDY ON THE OBSTACLES OF 2ND SEMESTER COLLEGE STUDENTS IN ASKING QUESTIONS DURING THE LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract: Asking questions is an effective way to increase students' critical thinking, but some 2nd semester students still experience obstacles in asking questions during the learning process. This study aims to find out the obstacles of 2nd semester students in asking questions during the learning process. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The subject of the study is a 2nd semester student of Elementary School Teacher Education, PGRI Silampari University. The data collection technique used questionnaire and observation techniques. Data analysis was carried out using the miles and Huberman models, which consisted of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The results of this study show that the main obstacles come from personal barriers, such as shyness, lack of confidence, fear of negative judgments, and difficulty in formulating questions. On the other hand, social barriers such as peer influence and a less supportive classroom environment have not been proven to be major barriers. Academic barriers also contribute, especially related to a lack of understanding of the material. On the other hand, the constraints of lecturers were considered not to be found in this study. Many students argued that lecturers were quite transparent, provided a space for discussion, and quickly answered questions asked by students. This study concludes that students' courage to ask questions is greatly influenced by mental readiness, active study habits, and critical thinking skills that need to be continuously developed through learning methods that support participation, confidence, and courage to ask questions.

Keywords: *2nd Semester College College Students, Obstacles, Asking Questions*

INTRODUCTION

College Students are individuals who are in a higher education environment in developing their abilities to actively participate in the learning process. College Students have academic responsibilities such as completing assignments, presentations, discussions, and participating in UTS and UAS. In carrying out these obligations, it is not uncommon for them

to experience anxiety, especially due to changes in the learning environment in conditions (Novitria and Khoirunnisa 2022). These changes are experienced by first-semester College Students. When entering the world of lectures as a new student, a person automatically begins to adjust to various new demands and responsibilities in the campus environment (Novita 2022).

The success of College Students in higher education is determined by their learning process, both through group learning and independently (Daulay 2021). However, in the process of self-adjustment and the implementation of academic responsibilities, College Students often face various obstacles that can affect their active participation in learning. Some of the problems that arise include: College Students are not responsive to questions asked by lecturers, their ability to ask questions is still limited to simple and theoretical questions, and the questions asked do not reflect the integration between old knowledge and new information obtained (Kurnia 2022).

These obstacles also apply to elementary school teacher education College Students, one of which is questioning skills. Questioning skills are important skills that College Students need to have, especially in discussion activities as part of the learning process. This ability serves as a means of feedback to deepen the understanding of the material (Ana Fitriana, Nikki Tri Sakung 2022). Critical thinking skills start from the ability to read and understand deeply. Thinking is basically the process of asking questions, both internally in the heart and verbally as learning takes place. By asking questions, a person is actually activating his critical thinking skills (Rofiq 2024).

Asking questions is an effective way to stimulate College Students' critical thinking skills. Low-level questions serve to measure basic understanding, while high-level questions encourage College Students to think more deeply, analyze, and evaluate the information obtained (Hakiki et al. 2025). However, not all College Students feel confident to ask questions. Some of them are afraid to ask questions when they have difficulty understanding the material, because they are worried that they will look less capable and laggard than their friends who are more actively participating in learning (Desriyati and Rahmi 2021).

One of the reasons why College Students are reluctant to ask questions or speak in public is low confidence and motivation. Lack of confidence makes College Students not dare to convey ideas or thoughts that they actually have (Nomate 2024). Based on a survey conducted on 20 2nd semester college students, it was found that as many as 14 people agreed with the

statement "students are embarrassed to ask if there is material that I don't understand," 1 "strongly agreed and 5 other people admitted to being hesitant. These findings show that some students still experience obstacles in asking questions during the learning process. Such shame and uncertainty reflect problems in terms of confidence and courage to actively participate, which can ultimately affect the process of understanding the material as a whole.

Research conducted by (Ramadani et al. 2023) It shows that many College Students are still not actively asking questions during presentations because they feel anxious, afraid of being judged negatively, lack of understanding of the material, and have not mastered the skills of asking questions well. Some plan questions in advance, while others ask questions directly or are even reluctant to ask because they feel that the questions are not important. Another obstacle faced is limited access to learning resources and lack of language skills, especially because the habit of using language is not standard. In fact, questioning skills are important to encourage understanding, participation, and quality of learning. According to (Meillynia 2022) In his research, it was stated that this circumstance caused other participants to lose the opportunity to respond to a problem or question.

Based on this presentation, it is important to delve deeper into the obstacles faced by 2nd semester students, especially in asking questions during the learning process. According to the results of the initial survey, "I am embarrassed to ask if there is material I do not understand." This statement shows that there are obstacles that are the main cause of student inactivity in asking questions. Therefore, this research was conducted to answer the question: what affects the difficulty of students in asking questions of 2nd semester students in asking questions during the learning process. This study aims to find out what factors affect the difficulty of 2nd semester students in asking questions during the learning process. The results of this research are expected to help in the creation of learning methods that encourage students to participate actively. In particular, it helps increase the courage to ask questions as part of critical thinking skills.

METODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Descriptive qualitative research is one of the approaches in qualitative research that aims to develop theories based on data findings collected directly from the field (Fauzi dkk 2022). This approach was chosen with the aim of

describing and understanding in depth the obstacles experienced by 2nd semester College Students in asking questions during the learning process.

The subject of this research is a 2nd semester student in the PGSD study program at PGRI Silampari University. The selection of subjects was carried out by *purposive sampling*. *Purposive sampling* is the selection of data samples that are carried out based on certain criteria or considerations (Abdussamad 2021). The subject criteria are active College Students who have attended lectures for at least one semester. This research was carried out on the campus of PGRI Silampari University, in the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year.

The data collection technique in this study uses questionnaire and observation techniques. Questionnaire is a method of data collection that is carried out by giving written questions to respondents to answer. Meanwhile, observation is used as a data collection technique when the research focuses on human behavior, work processes, or natural phenomena, especially if the number of respondents is not too large (Hasan 2022). The analysis technique in this study uses *the Miles and Huberman model* (Abdussamad 2021), which consists of three stages, namely: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

RESEARCH RESULT

This research aims to identify the obstacles faced by 2nd semester College Students in asking questions during the learning process. Based on the information obtained from the questionnaire and supported by the results of observations made on 2nd semester College Students of Elementary School Teacher Education, PGRI Silampari University. The results and discussion will be divided into 3 stages, namely, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. The data is reduced and continued to the data presentation stage. In presenting this data, the researcher explained why the findings occurred based on the researcher's view of the respondents as 2nd semester College Students. The researcher grouped it into 4 obstacles as follows.

a. Personal Barriers

Personal factors have proven to be the most significant obstacle to College Students' courage in asking questions. Based on the results of the questionnaire, it was found that 27 respondents gave an answer of "yes" and 4 respondents "strongly agree" to the statement "I feel embarrassed to ask questions in front of friends." Overall, 31 College Students or about 62% of the total 50 respondents stated that shame was the main barrier. The results of the

observations confirmed this information, where only 9 out of 33 College Students were seen actively asking questions during study activities, while most preferred not to speak or show uncertainty.

In addition to shyness, low self-confidence is also a very important barrier. A total of 25 respondents said they "agreed" that they felt doubtful about the questions to be asked. This indicates anxiety or concern that their questions will be seen as unintelligent or inappropriate. This phenomenon is also seen during the learning process: some College Students seem to want to ask questions, but then lower their hands before they get a chance, which indicates that there is doubt in them.

The fear of poor judgment is also quite large. The statement "I am worried if my question is considered irrelevant or erroneous" received "doubtful" responses from 22 College Students, and "agreed" responses from 14 College Students. This shows that the majority of College Students feel uneasy when faced with possible criticism of their questions or if the questions are considered meaningless, even though they do not feel pressured by the social environment overall.

The difficulty in formulating questions clearly is also a challenge faced. A total of 20 College Students expressed "hesitation" and 19 others "agreed" with the statement that they had difficulty making questions. These barriers are technical but greatly affect active participation, as College Students may understand the material but lack the skills or confidence to ask questions correctly.

At its peak, the inactivity of College Students can be seen from the statement "I choose not to say anything rather than ask when I don't understand", which received "agree" responses from 14 College Students and "strongly agree" from 20 College Students. With a total of 34 out of 50 respondents or 68%, this shows that the culture of not speaking is still a strong habit when College Students face confusion or difficulty in understanding the material. These personal barriers contribute significantly to the low level of interaction between College Students and lecturers in learning activities.

b. Social Barriers

Unlike personal barriers, social barriers do not appear to be the main factor preventing College Students from asking questions. Most respondents did not feel pressure from the social environment, as seen from the 37 college College Students who chose the "disagree"

option on the statement "I feel intimidated by a friend's reaction if I ask." This shows that most College Students don't feel worried about judgment or coercion from classmates.

A statement stating, "I feel that the classroom atmosphere is not supportive enough to ask questions," also shows the same thing. A total of 26 College Students expressed disagreement, while only 1 student voted to agree. This shows the view that the classroom atmosphere is actually quite open and supportive of interactions, including questions, although most College Students remain passive.

However, there are signs that some College Students are still thinking about social views. A total of 17 College Students expressed "agree" and 4 "strongly agreed" to the statement "I don't want to be seen as too active or stand out in class." While this is not a major barrier, the data shows that certain social norms encourage some College Students to refrain from verbally expressing active participation. In other words, even though they don't get direct pressure from peers, there are indirect concerns about how they are perceived by others in the class.

c. Academic Barriers

The academic aspect also affects the courage of College Students to ask questions. In the statement "I feel that I don't understand the material so I don't know what to ask", there are 19 respondents who voted "agree" and 13 respondents who voted "strongly agree". This shows that mastery of the material is an important requirement to be able to ask questions. If College Students do not understand the concepts described, then the intention to ask questions will be minimal, because they themselves do not know which aspect to ask.

The statement "I have not been able to connect the material presented with my experience" was also agreed by most respondents. A total of 15 individuals said "agreed" and 16 individuals "strongly agreed". This obstacle is related to the ability to think reflexively and applicatively, which still needs to be improved in College Students.

d. Obstacles from Lecturers

The last aspect is the constraints that come from the lecturer, which turns out to be the factor with the least influence. Most College Students argue that lecturers do not prevent them from asking questions. In the statement "The lecturer's teaching method makes me hesitate to ask", there were 23 College Students who voted "strongly disagree" and 18 College Students voted "disagree". The same is also seen in the statement "I feel that

lecturers are not open to questions from College Students," where 19 respondents gave a "strongly disagree" answer and 24 respondents answered "disagree."

Observations in the classroom also indicate that teachers provide opportunities for discussion, clearly open question and answer sessions, and respond to College Students' questions with a supportive attitude. This statement emphasizes that the obstacles in asking questions are not caused by the lecturer, but rather caused by internal factors from the College Students themselves.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of data from questionnaires and class observations, it can be concluded that the main obstacles faced by 2nd semester College Students in asking questions during the learning process mostly come from the internal factors of the College Students themselves. Personal barriers such as shyness, lack of confidence, fear of negative judgment, and difficulty in formulating questions are the main factors that hinder College Students' active involvement in questioning activities. Many College Students tend not to speak even if they do not understand the material being taught, which indicates a passive culture in their learning environment.

Social barriers, such as the influence of classmates or a less supportive classroom environment, have not been proven to be significant barriers. Most students feel that the atmosphere in the classroom is very open and does not cause feelings of pressure. Nonetheless, there is a tendency to avoid overactive imagery, which indicates the presence of unspoken social pressures. Academic barriers also play a role, especially related to a lack of understanding of the material and limitations in connecting theory to personal experience. Students who do not understand the material often have difficulty asking appropriate and meaningful questions. In this study, no obstacles were found from lecturers. The majority of students are of the opinion that lecturers have been sufficiently transparent, provide opportunities for discussion, and are responsive to questions asked by students. This statement shows that the role of lecturers actually contributes to the creation of an interactive learning atmosphere.

Overall in this study, it can be concluded that students' courage to ask questions is greatly influenced by mental readiness, active study habits, and critical thinking skills that need to be continuously developed through learning methods that support participation, confidence, and

courage to ask questions. The implications of these findings suggest that lecturers need to implement more interactive and supportive learning strategies, such as small group discussions, problem-based learning, or guided questioning techniques. For further research, research should be expanded to include students from different courses and semesters, as well as learn more about how lecturers' teaching styles and specific intervention strategies can increase students' courage to ask questions

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