

## **Analysis Of Basic Understanding Of Economics For New Students Of The Economic Education Study Program University Of Jambi**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Understanding the basic economics concepts is very important for students of the Economics Education Study Program because it is the basis for understanding advanced economics courses and applying them in education. However, variations in the educational background of new students often cause differences in mastery of these concepts. This type of research is qualitative descriptive with a questionnaire data collection approach. This research is expected to be used as a reference for the level of conceptual difficulty for new students so that study programs can plan better educational programs. Students will quickly pay off their understanding by applying a more interactive and case-based teaching method. Create a special orientation program, in this case, a kind of assignment or resume for new students during sapamaru activities, so that they can more easily adapt to differences in previous educational backgrounds and conduct periodic curriculum reviews to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant to the needs of students from various academic backgrounds because many of them also want to become professional teachers and successful young entrepreneurs.

### **KEYWORDS**

Understanding Economics, New Students, Economic Education

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## **1. Introduction**

In addition to the challenges faced by new students in understanding the basic concepts of economics, another factor that affects understanding is the pedagogical approach applied by lecturers in delivering material. According to Slavin (2014), learning that involves concept-based methods and concrete applications tends to be more effective in helping students build a deep understanding. This is especially important in the field of economics, which not only presents theories but also demands analysis of real phenomena in society. Lecturers in the Economics Education Study Program need to adjust teaching methods to various student backgrounds so that the material can be optimally understood by all students, regardless of previous education.

Furthermore, basic knowledge of economics is not only beneficial in an academic context, but also has a major role in shaping people's understanding. Beggs (2017) stated that students who understand

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economics well are better prepared to face economic challenges in real life, both as citizens and as professionals. In other words, this basic understanding equips students to analyze economic policies, understand financial issues, and provide relevant solutions to various economic problems. For prospective educators, this ability is very important because they are expected to be able to explain economic concepts to the younger generation in an interesting and easy-to-understand way.

The importance of understanding economics for prospective teachers in the Economics Education Study Program is also closely related to increasing economic literacy among students. Research shows that economic literacy in Indonesia is still relatively low compared to developed countries (Saputra & Sari, 2020). Economics education students, who will later become teachers, are expected to have solid knowledge so that they are able to improve economic literacy in society through the learning process. That way, economic education is a means to empower people to better understand the economic conditions and challenges they face on a daily basis.

In an effort to achieve good graduate quality, it is important for universities to understand the needs and academic backgrounds of new students, especially those who have diverse variations in their educational origins. Brown and Atkins (2018) emphasized that understanding the educational background can help institutions design a curriculum that is more responsive and in accordance with student needs. At the University of Jambi, the economics education study program has the opportunity to evaluate the curriculum and ensure that all students, regardless of background differences, can achieve the expected learning goals.

This research is expected to identify gaps in basic understanding of economics based on students' educational backgrounds, as well as provide input for more effective learning strategies. Thus, this research is not only beneficial for the academic development of students, but also for lecturers in improving more inclusive teaching methods. As stated by Reigeluth (2013), effective learning must adapt methods and materials based on the level of initial understanding of students, which can be very diverse in multidisciplinary study programs.

From an institutional perspective, the University of Jambi has an important role in improving the competence of students of the Economics Education Study Program, not only in understanding economic concepts, but also in forming critical and analytical thinking skills that are urgently needed in the world of education (Johnston, 2019). Given the importance of this role, this research is expected to be the basis for the development of a more comprehensive and adaptive curriculum and pedagogical approach for new students in the economic education study program.

## **2. Method**

The phenomenological approach is used in this study to study and understand the experiences of individuals who directly experience certain phenomena (Herdiansyah, 2015). This descriptive research surveyed the research subject, namely new students of the Economics Education Study Program for the 2024-2025 academic year. The purpose of this study is to provide an overview of the level of basic understanding of economics among new students of the Economics Education Study Program, University of Jambi.

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The data collection technique used is a questionnaire through . According to Sugiyono (2017), a questionnaire is a data collection technique by providing a set of questions or written statements to respondents to answer. The respondents in this study are new students, who are the main source of information. According to Prastowo (2019), respondents are also referred to as research subjects in qualitative studies, namely individuals who provide direct information to researchers. The source of data in this study is primary data, namely data obtained directly from respondents (Sugiyono, 2019).

The sample in this study consisted of 85 new students of the Economics Education Study Program. The validity test of the data was carried out to ensure the reliability of the data in this qualitative research. According to Lincoln & Guba in Sugiyono (2019), there are several criteria for validity tests, namely , transferability, , and . The educational background of new students who are the subject of the research is very diverse. From the data obtained, there were 48 students from Social Sciences High School (56.5%), 6 from Science High School (7.1%), 1 from MA majoring in Religion (1.2%), 20 from vocational schools majoring in non-technical majors (23.5%), and 10 from vocational schools majoring in engineering (11.8%). This variation is important to analyze because it has the potential to affect students' basic understanding of economics.

The questionnaire in this study is designed to measure students' basic understanding of economic concepts such as economic definition, law of demand and supply, scarcity, and the concept of opportunity cost. The results of this study are expected to provide a clear picture of the basic understanding of economics by new students.

By knowing the level of student understanding, departments and faculties can more easily design learning plans that suit student needs and develop data-based learning methods. From the selection of the data, it is then presented and finally a conclusion is drawn in the form of a short and concise sentence statement, but contains a broad meaning. The results of this study can also be the basis for future research that can explore the factors that influence students in choosing economics education as a study program or their motivation in choosing this major

### **3. Funding and Discussion**

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Overall, this study provides an idea that there are differences in basic economic understanding among new students based on their educational background. Therefore, it is necessary to make improvements in curriculum design and more inclusive teaching methods. This will not only help improve theoretical understanding, but also prepare students to apply economics in a practical context in the world of work. So it is hoped that the department and faculty can design a more effective learning program to improve the basic understanding of economics for new students. This is important to ensure that students not only understand the theory, but can also apply it in real-life situations in the world of work.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The results of this study show that the basic understanding of economics among new students of the Economics Education Study Program varies greatly and is influenced by their educational background. Students from high schools majoring in social studies generally have a better understanding of economics compared to those from high schools majoring in science or engineering vocational schools. This condition underscores the importance of paying attention to the differences in the academic background of new students in designing effective curriculum and teaching methods. This adaptive approach to the background is expected to be able to overcome the understanding gap that occurs, so that all students can achieve a solid understanding in economics, regardless of the origin of their previous education.

One way that can be taken to overcome these differences is to implement a more inclusive and interactive teaching approach. For example, a case-based teaching method can be an option, as it allows students to not only learn economic theory, but also apply it to real-life situations. Case-based teaching requires students to analyze problems, find solutions, and understand the relevance of economic concepts in various contexts. This is expected to equip them with useful analytical and problem-solving skills, both in the academic environment and in the world of work later.

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In addition, it is also important to design an orientation program aimed at new students (sapamaru) specifically for the field of economics, focusing on basic materials related to economics. The program may include activities such as reading assignments or resume assignments related to basic economic concepts. This approach not only helps students adjust to the new academic environment, but also provides them with a better understanding of the fundamentals of economics, especially for those who do not come from social studies backgrounds. This kind of orientation program will be very useful in providing a solid foundation of economic knowledge from the beginning of the lecture period.

Not only orientation programs, periodic curriculum evaluations also need to be carried out to ensure that the material presented is always relevant to economic development and student needs. A flexible and adaptive curriculum will allow teaching to be adapted to the diverse characteristics of new students. By updating teaching materials and learning methods, lecturers can accommodate differences in learning needs among students, including those who are motivated to become young entrepreneurs or have other career aspirations in economics.

In addition, the development of data-based learning methods can also be an important strategy. Through the collection and analysis of data related to student performance and understanding, study programs can adjust teaching methods and materials more accurately according to the real needs of students. This data can also be used to identify areas that need reinforcement or deepening, so that the learning process becomes more effective and efficient.

This research is expected to be a valuable input for the department in optimizing the learning process and helping new students achieve a more comprehensive understanding of economics. Moreover, the results of this study can also be the basis for further research to explore other factors that affect students' basic understanding of economics, such as motivational factors, learning styles, or even family support. These findings are expected to make a positive contribution to efforts to improve the quality of economic education that is more inclusive and responsive to student needs.

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