

The correlation between major-selection interest and students' listening skills in lectures

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Abstract

Interest in selecting the appropriate major can support universities in producing superior graduates. This interest can be reflected in students' listening skills in lectures. This study is mixed-methods research that aims to analyze the relationship between listening skills and interest in choosing students' majors in the context of lectures. The data collection technique used questionnaires and interview guidelines that were analyzed with a concurrent mixed methods model. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between listening skills and interest in choosing a major in students. The low listening skills of students do not directly determine students' interest in choosing a major, but tend to be influenced by various personal conditions, environment, and teaching-learning processes.

Keywords

Interest, Listening skills, Lectures, University student

Introduction

In the context of higher education, students' listening skills are closely related to academic participation, especially in the context of lectures. Listening skills are the main foundation for students in understanding the various lecture materials delivered by lecturers. Listening is also the beginning of a person to be able to analyze the meaning of the communication process, which is very much needed by students [1]. Even, [2] it reveals that listening is not just absorbing what we hear, but also combining it with the knowledge we have before, so that listening becomes an active activity to create meaning that is passed through from five stages, namely listening, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. These skills not only greatly support students' academic participation, but also support self-development and readiness to face future challenges.

Listening plays a very important role as part of academic communication, especially in the context of lectures. Communication established during lectures not only takes place in one direction, but also involves two directions. These interactions can be established through listening skills. This listening skill allows students to understand concepts and

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scientific arguments conveyed through class discussions or questions and answers so that constructive scientific dialogue is created. Moreover, the form of lecture activities in general, namely group presentations, is the key to understanding other people's opinions, providing relevant feedback, and maintaining an effective communication flow. So, listening is not just a passive activity, but an essential component in the academic process that supports the success of learning in higher education. In line with this, [3] found that listening is not a difficult skill for students, but rather the most important skill for their academic success which involves drawing conclusions, learning new words from context, connecting ideas, identifying and summarizing important parts of the text, in short, learning from the text.

In the context of majoring in selection, students who have a high interest in a particular field usually show listening skills that are more focused on material relevant to their interests. As found by [4] that the better the listener's attention, understanding, and intention, the better they listen to the speaker. In addition, the quality of listening skills is also influenced by many factors, such as psychological factors, internal factors, and external factors [5]. Thus, the process of choosing a major needs to be considered as an important factor so that students can learn according to their interest tendencies which are directly connected to their listening skills in lectures which ultimately leads to a better understanding of the material.

The choice of major cannot be separated from interest. Interest itself according to [6] is a form of intrinsic motivation characterized by three main components, namely affection, knowledge, and values. Affection is related to positive feelings in engagement with objects of interest. The knowledge or cognitive component appears in the tendency of individuals who want to learn more about the object of interest. Meanwhile, the value component can be seen from the relationship between the object and the individual self through giving personal meaning to the object. Thus, interest in choosing a major is a combination of components of affection, knowledge, and values that can encourage students to choose a major that they like, want to learn more about, and are considered meaningful for their personal development and goals. In addition, these three components of interest not only affect the choice of major, but also encourage students to be more motivated to study or academic activity to understand the lecture material in depth. Moreover, [7] found that if we ignore the suitability of a person's interests in predicting their academic achievement, we can have a hard time recognizing who actually has the potential to succeed in a particular major. Therefore, one's interests should be considered so that the choice of major and prediction of its success is more relevant and increases learning satisfaction.

The above description provides an understanding that academic success is not only relevant to a person's interests, but also the mastery of certain skills in the classroom, one of which is listening skills. Even active listening skills can help students build strengths and areas they need to improve [8]. [9] It was also found that active listening was a significant predictor of academic achievement in college classrooms, so listening

became an important factor in their success. Listening skills are the main capital of students in attending lectures and have been proven to have a positive correlation with academic success [10]. Thus, listening skills fully contribute to students' academic success as well as their competency development.

Although students' interest in major selection is believed to play a role in shaping their motivation and learning strategies in lectures, the relationship between major-selection interest and listening skills is still rarely studied in depth. Previous studies have only examined the relationship between general interest and listening skills for certain foreign language learning in the classroom [11], [12], [13], [14], [15], [16], [17], [18], [19]. In fact, some of the studies that have been studied previously are more interested in listening [17], [20], [21], [22], [23]. In addition, the previous studies only used one research method, quantitative method or qualitative method. There has been no research that uses *mixed methods* as conducted in this study.

Not only that, there has been no specific study that examines the relationship between students' choice of majors and listening skills in the classroom. In fact, if examined further, the interest in choosing a major not only reflects the student's momentary interest in a field of study, but also plays a role as a long-term motivational factor. Meanwhile, listening skills are influenced by many factors, ranging from external and internal factors to individuals. Thus, low listening skills in students are not necessarily because they are not interested in their majors on campus. In addition, if this is not studied in depth, then educators and researchers will not have a scientific basis to understand the extent to which students' interest in choosing a major affects their ability to listen effectively. This can hinder the development of learning strategies that are in accordance with the characteristics and interests of students. Furthermore, educational institutions experience limitations in empirical data in making various academic decisions, such as curriculum changes, teaching methods, or guidance systems that are relevant to student interests. As a result, learning theory and practice become stagnant because they do not get new input from research results that pay attention to affective and cognitive aspects at the same time. Therefore, this study explores these aspects that can help lecturers and the campus in designing more effective learning strategies, as well as being the basis for education policy makers in designing academic mentoring or counseling programs that are more targeted.

Based on the background description above, the author formulates the problem that is the main focus of this research. The problem formulation is written to clarify the direction of the research regarding the relationship between students' interest in choosing a major and their listening skills during lectures. The formulation of the problem to be studied is what is the relationship between the interest in choosing a major and the ability to listen to students in lectures?

Method

This study uses mixed methods, which is a research approach that combines quantitative and qualitative methods in a balanced manner to obtain a comprehensive understanding of research problems. The mixed methods design used is a concurrent mixed methods design that combines quantitative and qualitative simultaneously in the process of data collection and analysis [24]. Furthermore, [24] describes that this type of mixed methods compares, combines, or interprets the results of data obtained from quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain more comprehensive conclusions. The following is presented an image of concurrent mixed methods design applied in this study (Figure 1).

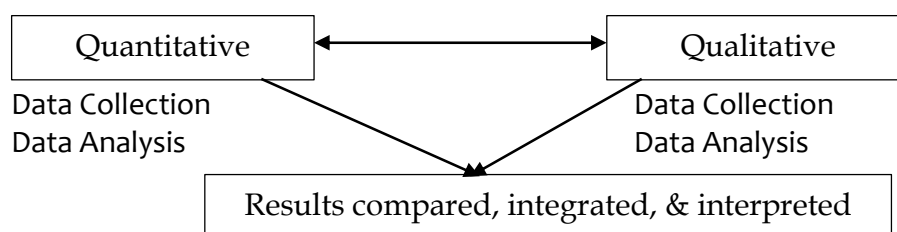


Figure 1. Concurrent mixed methods design

Quantitative approach

A correlational approach is used in this quantitative research. This approach was chosen to find out the relationship between the type of interest in choosing a major (one's own will versus the influence of others) and students' listening skills in lectures.

The research population is all students at the Universitas Muhammadiyah Magelang. The researcher selected the sample using the purposive sampling technique, with the criteria of students who had participated in the researcher's lecture for one semester. The number of samples used in this study was 64 students.

This study uses data collection techniques in the form of two types of questionnaires. The first questionnaire was used to collect data on the interest of choosing a major and consisted of two choices, namely one's own will and the influence of others. The second questionnaire was used to collect self-assessment data related to listening skills in lectures. This second questionnaire includes aspects of involvement, recording, distraction, understanding, evaluation, interest, motivation, response, attendance, and material structure. These ten aspects are measured using the Likert scale, namely Strongly Agree, Agree, Doubt, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The scoring is:

- Strongly Agree : 5
- Agreed : 4
- Skeptical : 3
- Disagree : 2
- Strongly disagree : 1

The data obtained through the instruments of the two questionnaires above were tested for normality with Kolmogorov-Smirnov because the number of samples was > 50 . Then, if the data obtained is normally distributed, the researcher uses the biserial point correlation analysis (rpb) technique. If the data obtained by the researcher is not normally distributed, the researcher uses the Spearman correlation data analysis technique. The calculation of data analysis uses the SPSS 27 application. The hypotheses proposed by this study are:

H₀ : There is no significant relationship between the interest in choosing a major and the student's listening skills in lectures

H₁ : There is a significant relationship between the interest in choosing a major and the student's listening skills in lectures

If the p-value (Sig.2-tailed) < 0.05 then H₀ is rejected and If the p-value (Sig.2-tailed) ≥ 0.05 then H₀ is accepted.

Qualitative approach

The qualitative approach in this study uses a qualitative descriptive design that aims to explore in depth the views and experiences of participants through interviews with open-ended questions. This approach was chosen so that researchers can understand the context and reasons behind quantitative findings in more depth.

Interviews conducted with participants were conducted purposively which were then analyzed thematically by identifying, grouping, and interpreting themes that emerged from the interview transcripts.

Data integration

Data integration is the last stage carried out in this study. Quantitative findings provide information about the strength and direction of the relationship between variables, while qualitative findings provide context and explanation of these relationships. Thus, both approaches contribute in a balanced way in answering the research questions.

Results

Before the author describes the results of this correlational research analysis, the data obtained were tested for normality using Kolmogorov-Smirnov. The following is presented the results of the analysis of the normality test of research data.

Table 1. Normality test results

Interest	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Listening	Self-Will	.154	27	.101	27	.147
	Influence of Others	.110	37	.200*	.958	37

Based on Table 1, the value of sig. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov table shows the numbers 0.101 and 0.200 which are $> \alpha (0.05)$, so it can be said that the research data is distributed normally. Because the data is normally distributed, the researcher then analyzes the

data using the biserial point correlation analysis technique. The following is presented the results of the biserial point correlation analysis on the relationship between interest in choosing a major and students' listening skills in lectures.

Table 2. Correlations analysis results

		Listening	Interest
Listening	Pearson Correlation	1	.014
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.911
	N	64	64
Interest	Pearson Correlation	.014	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.911	
	N	64	64

Table 2 shows that the Pearson Correlation value is only 0.014. The number is very small and positive, which means that the relationship between listening skills and interest is very weak, and there is almost no meaningful relationship between the two variables. Then, the value of Sig. (2-tailed) shows the number 0.911. This shows that the significance value (p-value) is greater than α (0.05), so statistically indicating that the relationship is not significant. This means that there is not enough evidence to state that listening skills correlate with interest in choosing a real major. Based on the results of the biserial point correlation analysis, it can be stated that H_0 is accepted, which means that there is no significant relationship between the interest in choosing a major and the student's listening skills in lectures.

The results of this study show that students' listening skills level does not have a significant influence or relationship on the interest in choosing the major they take. Other factors such as intrinsic motivation, environmental influence, perception of job prospects, or interest in the field of study seem to play a greater role in determining the interest in choosing a major.

Theoretically, although listening skills can contribute to the understanding and absorption of information in the learning process, the results of the study show that these skills are not directly related to students' tendency to choose a major. The results of interviews with students show that some of the things that hinder them from listening to the material in lectures are not their interest in choosing a major, but some of the following things:

Internal factors (in the student)

Students admitted that physical fatigue was the cause of their not listening well. Physical fatigue has a serious impact on listening skills, such as not focusing optimally during lectures, getting tired easily, having difficulty understanding the material and even not being interested in attending lectures. In addition, negative habits also trigger students not to listen optimally, such as attending lectures while opening their cellphones or chatting with friends so that they are just physically present.

External factors (environment and classroom situation)

Students admitted that external factors that were obstacles to them when listening to lectures also came from outside, including noise from outside the classroom, class air conditioning not working, wifi not being smooth, and mobile phone notifications that could distract them during the lecture process.

The factors that influence the course

In addition to internal and external factors, the factor of lecturers teaching courses is also important for student performance in listening. The way lecturers deliver too quickly, using language or accents that are difficult to understand, and the lack of use of learning media have an impact on students' low listening performance.

Discussion

The data obtained from the quantitative and qualitative methods above show that listening skills do not have a direct relationship with students' tendency to choose a major. Obstacles in listening skills are more caused by many factors, both internal and external factors. Internal factors such as physical fatigue and negative habits can reduce students' focus which directly leads to low listening performance. These findings are in line with [25] which found that demanding listening activities can cause noticeable physical fatigue, although listening is not usually considered physical activity. The participants in the study described that physical fatigue can make it difficult for them to listen. Thus, listening intensively in difficult circumstances can be just as tiring as physical activity because it requires a lot of mental effort and concentration to understand the information heard.

External factors such as uncondusive classroom conditions and disturbances from outside the classroom also affect listening concentration. As found by [26], one of the problems in listening to understanding is the physical condition or environment in which listening activities take place, such as noise. Moreover, listening skills require more concentration and attention. Students who have good listening comprehension skills will quickly grasp information, knowledge, and ideas from the sources they hear [27]. On the other hand, these external factors affect the individual's internal factors, such as the individual's metacognitive awareness of listening. Metocognitive awareness directly exerts a positive influence on listening skills which are significantly influenced by personal knowledge [28]. The metacognitive listening strategy itself can improve the efficiency of listening comprehension and information processing [29]. This metacognitive awareness plays an important role for individuals in dealing with listening tasks [30]. Thus, external factors that can worsen students' listening performance can also affect internal factors in students, such as their metacognitive awareness when listening.

Listening is the process of interpreting messages that requires active participation in communication between participants and speakers [31]. In fact, listening may have a

more significant role in students' academic achievement compared to reading skills or overall academic competence [32]. This is because the listening process is an activity to interpret the knowledge conveyed in lectures. In the academic context, lecture materials are increasingly presented in a hybrid manner allowing students to play the text to listen several times. This is done so that they are able to understand in depth related to the material being explained [33]. Unlike the lecture systematics that are carried out synchronously, students only get one opportunity to understand the material. This situation can provide quite difficult problems for students who have weak self-efficacy because they struggle to overcome pressure and anxiety that ultimately affect listening comprehension [34]. Therefore, listening is an active process whose understanding is influenced by the frequency of material delivery and students' psychological factors, such as self-efficacy.

In addition, factors from lecturers, especially the way of delivering material and the lack of use of learning media, also worsen students' listening skills. This is in line with [35] that some factors that can affect a person's listening skills can come from the speaker, such as the speaker's speaking speed that there is no opportunity to ask the speaker to repeat his speech. In addition, [36] explained that lecturers need to adjust learning methods and media so that a positive learning attitude can appear in students during lectures. Institutions and policymakers also need to encourage lecturers to adopt active teaching practices in lectures [37]. Thus, improving students' listening skills requires attention from various aspects, not only from individual students but also from the learning environment and teaching methods of lecturers.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that H_0 is accepted, which is shown from the Pearson Correlation value of 0.014 with a significance of 0.911 which means that there is no significant relationship between listening skills and interest in choosing a major in students. This study also found that students' low listening skills were not related to their interest in the chosen major, but were more likely to be influenced by other factors, such as (1) internal factors which included fatigue, lack of focus, and negative habits; (2) external factors such as less supportive classroom conditions; and (3) lecturer factors, including less effective material delivery styles. Thus, although listening is an important skill in the learning process, this ability does not directly determine students' interest in choosing a major, but tends to be influenced by various personal conditions, environment, and the teaching-learning process.

Although this study provides empirical evidence by combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, it is limited by its correlational design, which can only identify relationships, not causality. Therefore, future research should use a causal design and include mediator variables, such as learning motivation, perceptions of job prospects,

and learning quality, to better explain factors influencing students' major selection interest and listening skills.

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