

EXPLORING LEARNING BARRIERS AND STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN UNIVERSITY BASKETBALL CLASSES: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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Abstract: This study aims to explore learning barriers and student participation in basketball practice courses within the Sports Science Study Program at Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta (UPY). A qualitative phenomenological approach was employed, utilizing observation and in-depth interviews with one lecturer and six students who had completed the basketball course in the 2024 academic year. The research was conducted in January 2025 and analyzed using a thematic analysis method. The findings reveal that the course was implemented in accordance with the Semester Learning Plan through a cooperative learning model. However, several barriers were identified, including lack of student focus, delayed task submissions, unexplained absences, and low learning motivation among students with limited interest in basketball. Differences in prior playing experience also influenced students' participation levels. The lecturer actively provided feedback and implemented game-based learning, yet further innovation toward more adaptive and engaging learning models is needed to enhance student motivation and learning outcomes.

Keywords: Sports Learning, Basketball, Learning Barriers, Student Participation, Qualitative Study

INTRODUCTION

Sports education in higher education institutions plays a crucial role in developing students' overall competencies not only in the physical domain but also in cognitive, affective, and social aspects. Engagement in sports activities enables students to enhance coordination, self-confidence, teamwork, and strategic thinking in competitive situations. Practical sports courses in universities, particularly basketball, play a significant role in fostering students' technical skills, tactical understanding, and sportsmanship. However, in practice, student participation in such courses is not always optimal. Some students face challenges in mastering basic techniques, maintaining consistent attendance, or actively participating in class activities. A study by Wang et al. (2024) investigating students' motivation in basketball courses found that the integration of a tactical games-based learning model can improve students' motivation and participation.

Various inhibiting factors influence participation and the effectiveness of sports learning, particularly at the higher education level. Previous research (Alsubaie, 2021) suggested that students' participation in sports activities is influenced by motivation, available facilities, and the teaching methods employed. A systematic review by Ferreira Silva et al. (2022) found that university students often face barriers such as lack of time, low motivation, and limited access to appropriate facilities—factors that significantly reduce their physical activity levels. Similarly, a study conducted in Qatar by Chaabna et al. (2022) reinforced these findings, highlighting that external barriers such as inadequate facilities and internal barriers such as low motivation contribute to low levels of student participation in physical activities. In addition, recent studies on physical activity barriers among university students have identified academic workload, busy schedules, and inflexible class or training timetables as exacerbating factors (Brown et al., 2024).

Social and cultural aspects (e.g., gender perceptions, feelings of embarrassment, or social norms) can also pose challenges, particularly for specific student groups, indicating that proposed solutions should be sensitive to local contexts and learner characteristics. Qualitative studies in various university settings across different countries have emphasized the importance of environmental and cultural aspects as both barriers and facilitators of participation (Burton et al., 2021). Psychological factors such as low self-efficacy and limited pre-college sports experience are also critical determinants influencing student participation in basketball learning. Students who perceive themselves as technically incompetent or lacking prior experience in sports often tend to withdraw from activities due to fear of making mistakes or performing poorly in front of their peers.

The study by Ouyang et al. (2019) revealed that self-efficacy is closely correlated with students' participation in sports; individuals with low confidence tend to reduce their engagement in physical activities. Environmental factors also play a significant role. Su and Liu (2025) emphasized that support from physical education lecturers can enhance students' motivation to learn sports, which in turn strengthens their self-efficacy. Students who feel supported are more confident in attempting new skills, even when there is a risk of making mistakes.

In the context of sports activities in general, student participation is not merely about attendance but also involves how actively they engage in performing fundamental techniques, teamwork, mental involvement (strategy), and emotional engagement (motivation and appreciation for sports). Low levels of active participation can negatively affect learning outcomes in practical courses. Nevertheless, there has been limited research specifically exploring learning barriers and student participation in university-level basketball classes in Indonesia, particularly from a qualitative perspective. This preliminary study aims to explore the perceptions of lecturers and students regarding the barriers they experience in basketball learning and participation. The findings are expected to serve as a basis for designing more effective, engaging, active, and creative learning models.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the experiences of students and lecturers in conducting basketball courses within a higher education setting. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore the meanings and subjective experiences of participants related to the learning process, encountered challenges, and the dynamics of interaction occurring throughout the course. The research was conducted in the Sports Science Study Program at Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta (UPY).

The research subjects consisted of one lecturer who taught the basketball course and six students from the Sports Science Study Program at Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta (UPY) who had completed the course during the 2024 academic year. According to Guest et al. (2006), data saturation is typically achieved after six to twelve interviews; therefore, the number of participants in this study was considered sufficient to obtain rich and diverse qualitative data. The student sample comprised three male and three female students. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, considering gender representation, level of participation in the course, and prior experience with basketball. Some participants had experience playing basketball since high school, while others had no prior experience and were introduced to the sport through this course. This variation in experience was intentionally included to provide a more comprehensive understanding of learning barriers and student participation in university-level basketball instruction.

Data were collected using three main techniques: participatory observation, semistructured in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted directly during both theoretical and practical sessions to record patterns of interaction, participation, and learning dynamics. Interviews were carried out with the lecturer and students to explore their perceptions, learning experiences, and the challenges they encountered during the course.

Documentation was obtained from the Semester Learning Plan (RPS), lecturer's teaching notes, and students' reflective journals during the course.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis procedure included: (1) transcribing the results of interviews and observations,

(2) assigning codes to relevant meaning units, (3) grouping the codes into main themes, and

(4) interpreting the thematic meanings based on the research context and supporting theories. This process aimed to identify patterns of experience and meanings embedded in the practice of basketball learning at the higher education level.

To ensure data trustworthiness, this study employed source triangulation by comparing information obtained from both lecturers and students, conducting member checking by confirming the interpretation results with participants, and engaging in peer debriefing with fellow researchers to review the consistency and objectivity of interpretations. Through these procedures, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive and valid depiction of learning barriers and student participation in university-level basketball classes.

RESULTS

1. Learning Process of the Basketball Course

Based on the observation results, the basketball course in the Sports Science Study Program at Universitas

PGRI Yogyakarta (UPY) was conducted face-to-face through a combination of theoretical and practical sessions. The course implementation followed the Semester Learning Plan (RPS), which emphasized mastery of basic techniques and understanding of basketball game rules. The learning model commonly applied was the cooperative model, utilizing lectures, demonstrations, and assignments. The lecturer explained concepts gradually, demonstrated the movements, and then guided students to practice according to the given instructions. When errors or limitations were identified among students, the lecturer immediately provided direct feedback, either individually or in groups.

This approach aligns with the principles of *active learning* (Bonwell & Eison, 1991), in which the lecturer acts as a facilitator who fosters students' active engagement in the learning process. Furthermore, the continuous provision of feedback reflects the practice of *formative assessment* (Black & Wiliam, 1998), which helps students understand their progress and identify areas for improvement. The course was conducted at the Mandala Krida Basketball Court, which was equipped with supporting facilities such as basketballs, cones, whistles, and strategy boards. Despite the availability of adequate facilities, several challenges were still identified during the learning process.

2. Lecturer's Perspective on Learning Effectiveness and Challenges

Interviews with the course lecturer revealed that the implementation of the basketball course had been carried out in accordance with the existing curriculum and the Semester Learning Plan (RPS). Assessment was conducted individually and continuously, taking into account each student's progress from the beginning to the end of the course. Thus, the evaluation process emphasized not only the final outcomes (outputs) but also the learning process and individual development.

However, several challenges were frequently encountered, including students' lack of focus during explanations, delays in submitting assignments, unexcused absences, and the presence of passive students during practical sessions. The lecturer also emphasized that student attendance had a significant impact on the effectiveness of the learning process. Students who were frequently absent tended to experience difficulties in following subsequent materials, thereby hindering the achievement of learning outcomes.

This condition highlights the importance of students' internal motivation in participating in coursework (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Students with low motivation tend to be less active and easily lose concentration during learning activities. These findings are consistent with the study by Sari and Nugroho (2021), which reported that learning motivation and attendance significantly contribute to students' learning outcomes in practical sports courses. The lecturer further emphasized that although the cooperative learning model was relatively effective, there is a need for more contextual and innovative instructional approaches to enhance motivation, engagement, and minimize challenges encountered during practical sessions.

3. Students' Perspectives on Learning Experiences

Interviews with students indicated that the basketball course was conducted in accordance with the course contract. Students perceived the learning process as systematic and aligned with the objectives outlined in the Semester Learning Plan (RPS). Most students felt that the cooperative learning model facilitated their understanding of basketball techniques and game strategies. However, several students were found to be less engaged in the course, particularly those without prior background or specific interest in basketball. These students reported difficulties in mastering basic techniques and understanding game strategies.

Interestingly, most students stated that game-based learning was the most enjoyable part of the course. The game-based approach was perceived as capable of enhancing enthusiasm, challenge, and learning motivation. This finding aligns with Metzler (2011), who explained that a game-centered approach can improve students' tactical awareness and emotional engagement in sports learning. Similarly, Wang et al. (2024), in their study on student motivation in basketball courses, found that the integration of tactical games-based learning models can enhance students' motivation and participation.

However, group activities were sometimes disrupted by the absence of team members, leading to an imbalance of tasks and delays in completing learning activities. This reinforces the findings of Rink (2010), who noted that the effectiveness of team-based learning in physical education is strongly influenced by the consistency of attendance and the active engagement of each group member.

The findings of this study indicate that the cooperative learning model currently implemented has functioned effectively in achieving the fundamental learning objectives. Nevertheless, further pedagogical innovation is required to make basketball learning at the university level more contextual—focusing not only on technical mastery but also on enhancing motivation, active participation, and meaningful learning experiences.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that basketball learning at Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta (UPY) has been implemented systematically and oriented toward developing students' practical skills. The use of the cooperative learning model proved effective in enhancing student interaction and strengthening active engagement throughout the learning process. These findings support the theory of *active learning* proposed by Bonwell and Eison (1991), which emphasizes that students' direct involvement in learning activities can improve knowledge retention and skill acquisition.

The provision of direct feedback by the lecturer also reflects the effective application of *formative assessment* principles to optimize the learning process. Black and Wiliam (1998) emphasize that formative evaluation helps students understand their learning progress and provides direction for improvement in subsequent sessions. Effective learning in higher education involves careful planning, implementation, and evaluation, with an emphasis on student participation, appropriate teaching methods, and a conducive learning environment (Faizah & Kamal, 2024).

Nevertheless, the findings of this study also identified several obstacles in the learning process, particularly those related to student motivation and attendance. Students with low interest in basketball tended to be passive, unfocused, and less enthusiastic in participating in practical sessions. This aligns with the Self-Determination Theory proposed by Deci and Ryan (2000), which states that students' intrinsic motivation increases when their needs for competence, autonomy, and social relatedness are fulfilled. When the learning environment fails to support these needs, learning participation tends to decline.

Furthermore, the finding on the importance of student attendance supports the study by Sari and Nugroho (2021), which demonstrated that attendance and active engagement have a significant influence on learning outcomes in sports practice courses. Active learning can enhance students' engagement in attitudinal and skill-based aspects such as questioning, expressing opinions, and experimenting (Halifah et al., 2019). In this context, students who are frequently absent lose opportunities to receive feedback, rehearse skills, and collaborate with peers.

From the students' perspective, the most engaging instructional approach was *gamebased learning*. Light (2008) found that game-based learning models not only emphasize technical skill acquisition but also promote the cognitive, emotional, and social development of learners. This approach enhances students' enjoyment, motivation, and self-confidence in participation (Metzler, 2011).

Furthermore, both lecturers and students agreed that innovative teaching models need to be developed at the higher education level. The integration of *student-centered learning* (Biggs & Tang, 2011) and *experiential learning* (Kolb, 1984) represents a relevant alternative for sports education. Through these approaches, students learn from direct experience, engage in self-reflection, and connect theoretical concepts with practical applications. Murni (2021) emphasized that lecturers are not only required to prepare accurate teaching materials but also to optimally facilitate the implementation of the learning process. Similarly, Asyafah (2019) argued for the importance of developing effective learning models, noting that well-designed instructional models significantly support the achievement of learning objectives and provide meaningful learning experiences for students.

Thus, the findings of this study confirm that although the cooperative learning model currently applied has effectively supported the achievement of fundamental learning outcomes, there remains a need for adaptive, reflective, and contextual innovations in teaching practices.

Such innovations are essential to enhance students' motivation, participation, and overall learning achievement. García-Carrión (2022) emphasized that the diversity of learners is accompanied by equally diverse needs, thereby necessitating the development of learning models that are more inclusive and capable of accommodating different learning styles and needs. Similarly, Fung (2023) argued that instructional models should be continuously developed to promote active student engagement and motivation in the learning process, as these factors play a crucial role in determining learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings of this phenomenological study indicate that the implementation of basketball courses at Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta has been conducted in accordance with the established curriculum and intended learning outcomes. The cooperative learning model applied has effectively facilitated student engagement and the mastery of fundamental skills, although several challenges remain—particularly those related to motivation, attendance,

and uneven participation. Instructors play a crucial role in providing formative feedback and fostering a supportive learning environment, while students require more interactive and contextualized learning approaches. Therefore, the development of basketball learning models in higher education should focus on adaptive, experience-based, and enjoyable innovations that enhance students' cognitive, psychomotor, and affective learning outcomes in a balanced manner.

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