



JOHNI DIMYATI

A Study of Education History on Gifted Children: Research on Their Learning Achievement as They Started Their School Under Seven

ABSTRACT: A child with a high intelligence or a talented child was deemed able to distinguish between behaviors and to have a high learning ability. In contrast, another child having a low intelligence would always fail in all areas. This conventional view believed that intelligence is an ability that can be used to solve all problems in life. Among Indonesian society, especially among those involved in the basic education, there is a questionable belief that when a young child of less than 7 years starts to enroll a primary school he/she cannot study well. Based on the theoretical frame, this research proposes a hypotheses: "A gifted child does not experience any problem of academic achievement and the disorders of mental hectic and brain fatigue when he/she starts the primary school before seven". This is a longitudinal study using documentation and observation for the data collection. The observation carried out by following the educational experience of the subjects studied in a fairly long period of time. Three subjects were studied. All of them started their elementary education under sever years old. They joined kindergarten under 5 years, and one of them even started his experience of learning when he was still so young, 3-year-old. The method of analysis data used a qualitative descriptive. The research results prove that the hypothesis proposed is accepted or proven, meaning that gifted children starting their elementary school before seven will not have problems in the academic achievement and do not suffer the disorders of mental hectic and brain fatigue, provided they are given education appropriate to their talents.

KEY WORDS: Longitudinal study, gifted children, intelligence, elementary education under sever years, and not have problems in the academic achievement.

INTRODUCTION

The *Hadiths* of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu 'Alaihi Wassalam* or Peace Be Upon Him) recommend that parents in educating their children have to adjust to the development of science and technology and it must go with the era. He has warned that the

science and technology will always change. Therefore, it is not good and wise if parents educate their children in a way they were treated as they were young (Mukhtar *et al.*, 2013; and Suryosubroto, 2004).

The concept of Islamic education does not prohibit young children to learn reading and

About the Author: Johni Dimiyati is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Letters UMP (Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto), Jalan Raya Dukuhwaluh, Purwokerto City, Central Java, Indonesia. For academic purposes, the author can be contacted via mobile phone at: +6285643534732 or via e-mail at: kristian.topz@gmail.com

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writing, even if they are still very young. Islam considers that education and learning must have been started since the child is still in the womb. Based on such the educational concepts of lifelong learning, parents have educated and taught their young to read and write from their early childhood (Mariyana, 2005).

It shows that the children starting their early education can succeed and they do not suffer a mental hectic or mental disorder. They also do not show any symptoms of brain fatigue as it is proved by their consistency of learning achievement at the grade of 4-6 years. Such a theory of mental hectic and brain fatigue, due to a too-early education, seems to be no longer valid for them (*cf* Mutiah, 2010; Janice, 2013; and Suryabrata, 2013). The children of today have changed and found a different atmosphere; they have adapted to the development of modern science and technology and culture. The parents only need to adapt their education style, according to their condition and needs.

As parents find a special gift in their child, they have to provide him/her with an appropriate learning. It is no use to prevent the child from learning at school, even if he/she is still under age. Their calendar age is not a right gauge to determine their readiness for school. It is their mental age which will be the determinant.

Based on the universal law, each human is different in many ways. One aspect still receiving no much attention is the talent (Sylvia, 1997; and Mukhtar *et al.*, 2013). The education community has not positioned gifted children at a right place. They are not provided with a necessary access for developing their talent. They are forced to hold up their willingness to start their learning until they are considered "ready", 7 years old. An idea says that forcing them to start the education before the age will result in a mental hectic and brain fatigue (Ellah, 2005).

Indonesian government, with their various regulations, has not provided the special services for the gifted children. The gifted would even be neglected; they are not allowed to join the elementary school only due their young age. Many talented children have fled abroad for the school there, and they do not

want to go back home to his/her country. As a result, the abundant natural resources in our country cannot be used for the advancement of science and technology and the welfare of society, because the gifted men do not like to stay home.

Problem Statement. Based on the background, this study proposes a problem statement, as follows: "Is it true that gifted children under 7 years old, if they starts a primary education, will suffer from mental hectic, brain fatigue, as indicated by the good achievement in first three years, and the poor achievement in the next three years?"

Research Objectives. The aim of this study is to conduct a long-term observation and recording on the gifted children as research subjects. These are to collect the data of learning achievement, a disorder of hectic mental, and the brain fatigue, due to the early start of primary education, under 7 years old.

THEORITICAL REVIEW

The concept of intelligence or giftedness has drawn much controversy. It includes the basis of intelligence or talent; whether it is a biological inheritance, heredity, or the environmental factors. John W. Santrock (2007) said that intelligence is human being's most precious belonging. He, further, defines intelligence as an ability to solve problems (Santrock, 2007).

Another expert argues that intelligence is a capacity to adapt and to learn the experiences. Elqorni (2015) mentions that the gifted children is the interaction of three human natures, consisting of a general ability at higher than average, high commitment to the task, and creativity. A gifted child is the one who have the skill to combine and develop these three natures, and are able to apply in any valuable or meaningful action (Elqorni, 2015).

Adi Saputra (2012) explains the indicator of learning success in the gifted child as follows: (1) has a high success level of learning; and (2) shows the optimum talents and interests. Meanwhile, the outcome of a gifted child includes: faith and devotion to the God; high motivation and commitment for achievement and excellence; high interest in reading and writing; high discipline; and high

artistic sense (Saputra, 2012).

According to K.A.H. Heller (2004) and Elqorni (2015), a concept of giftedness can be seen from four dimensions of interrelated multi-factors: talents, performance, personality, and environment. The study of E.S. Schaefer & R.Q. Bell (1958); U. Bronfenbrenner (1979); and Elqorni (2015) concluded explicitly that genetic factor has a major stake to an individual's competence and talent.

P.N. Levett (1995) and Elqorni (2015) stated that all pregnant women should understand the importance of good nutrition for the baby; and it must be prevented from any contamination or the influence of X rays.

A gifted child has an excellent neuron systems which enables him/her to reach a high level of cognition. In a younger age than others, according R.H. Swassing (1985) and Elqorni (2015), a gifted child is able to read and this ability continues to consistently evolve and they are able to use an advanced vocabulary.

Howard Gardner (2003) and John W. Santrock (2007) proposed eight types of child intelligence: verbal, mathematical, spatial, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intra-personal, and naturalist intelligence (Gardner, 2003; and Santrock, 2007). Triyono (2005) argues also that every child has a different level of intelligence. Some children have a high intelligence in some areas, and others may have a more complete combination of intelligence (Triyono, 2005).

Howard Gardner (2003) and Triyono (2005), then, suggested the teachers to avoid the standardized tests. They required that teachers to be more rigid and careful in observing the children. For this, a teacher should record the behavior and habits of children and make a conclusion of the profile of children's abilities (Gardner, 2003; and Triyono, 2005).

RESEARCH METHOD

Type of Research Approach. The approach in this study is a longitudinal study. In the implementation, the researcher records the students' thinking ability or their learning achievement from the first year to the end/the graduation (Arikunto, 2006). The observation

and recording are done consecutively every school year.

The recording of learning outcomes is done each year. For example, for an elementary student, the recording has to be done from the first to the sixth graders continuously (Arikunto, 2006). A longitudinal approach has an advantage, due to the analysis on the same subjects, the consistent internal factors will lead into a relatively consistent result (Sudjana, 2007).

Subjects, Place, and Time of Research. The subjects in this study are three persons. The place is the schools they went to. First, the subjects with code "A" joined TK (*Taman Kanak-kanak* or Kindergarten) Pertiwi in Dukuhwaluh village, Kembaran District, Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia, then went to an elementary school in the same village. His junior and senior high schools were done in Purwokerto. He enrolled a medical faculty in UGM (Gadjah Mada University) in Yogyakarta, and took a postgraduate program in UI (University of Indonesia) in Jakarta, and pursued his doctorate in Songla University in Thailand, with an education time of 1983 to 2015.

The second subject with the code "B" started his kindergarten in Slinga Village, Kaligondang, Purbalingga District, Central Java, Indonesia, and then he went to an elementary school at SD/MI (*Sekolah Dasar/ Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* or Islamic Elementary School) Istiqomah, Sambas, Purbalingga, also in Central Java, the time of 2008 to 2015.

Third subject of the code "C" joined a kindergarten at UMP (Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto) Campus in Central Java, Indonesia, then continued in an Islamic kindergarten in Thailand. After that, he started his primary school in the country, but then should move to an elementary school in Purwokerto, SD (*Sekolah Dasar* or Elementary School) Al-Irsyad al-Islamiah, in Purwokerto, the time of education are between 2010 to 2015.

Data Collection and Analysis Techniques. The techniques of data collection are observation, documentation, and interview. The instrument of observation is used to observe the daily activities once in three months. Observation is considered more effective if the information

Table 1:
Personal Identity

Name	Code "A"
Place, Date of Birth	Purwokerto, 4 September 1981.
School	SD (Elementary School) Dukuhwaluh 1 Tahun 1985.
<i>Names of parents:</i>	
Father	Johni Dimyati.
Mother	Umi Chotimah.
<i>Parents' Job:</i>	
Father	Lecturer of Kopertis VI, Dpk UMP Purwokerto.
Mother	Hospital of RSUD Margono Sukarjo, Purwokerto.
Parents' residence	Jalan Tegal Mulya I No.7, Ledug, Kembaran, Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesia.

Table 2:
Recapitulation of His Academic Learning Achievement in Elementary School

No	Grade/Semester	Average Scores		Predicate
		Number	Letter	
1	Grade I / Semester 1	88	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade I / Semester 2	90	A	Very satisfactory
2	Grade II / Semester 1	90	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade II / Semester 2	89	A	Very satisfactory
3	Grade III / Semester 1	98	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade III / Semester 2	95	A	Very satisfactory
4	Grade IV / Semester 1	93	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade IV / Semester 2	91	A	Very satisfactory
5	Grade V / Semester 1	87	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade V / Semester 2	90	A	Very satisfactory
6	Grade VI / Semester 1	94	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade VI / Semester 2	95	A	Very satisfactory
Average Score		91.7	A	Very satisfactory

Table 3:
Recapitulation of His Academic Learning Achievement in Junior High School

No	Grade/Semester	Average Learning Achievement		Predicate
		Number	Letter	
1	Grade I / Semester 1	89	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade I / Semester 2	90	A	Very satisfactory
2	Grade II / Semester 1	90	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade II / Semester 2	95	A	Very satisfactory
3	Grade III / Semester 1	98	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade III / Semester 2	95	A	Very satisfactory
Average Score		92.8	A	Very satisfactory

Table 4:
Recapitulation of His Academic Learning Achievement in Senior High School

No	Grade/Semester	Average Scores of Learning Achievement		Predicate
		Number	Letter	
1	Grade I / Semester 1	85	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade I / Semester 2	89	A	Very satisfactory
2	Grade II / Semester 1	90	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade II / Semester 2	95	A	Very satisfactory
3	Grade III / Semester 1	98	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade III / Semester 2	95	A	Very satisfactory
Average score		92.0	A	Very satisfactory

Table 5:
Recapitulation of His Academic Learning Achievement in Bachelor, Medical Faculty of UGM (Gadjah Mada University) in Yogyakarta, 1999-2003

No	Grade /Semester	Average Scores of Learning Achievement		Predicate
		Number	Letter	
1	Year I / Semester 1	4	A	Very satisfactory
	Year I / Semester 2	4	A	Very satisfactory
2	Year II / Semester 1	4	A	Very satisfactory
	Year II / Semester 2	4	A	Very satisfactory
3	Year III / Semester 1	4	A	Very satisfactory
	Year III / Semester 2	4	A	Very satisfactory
4	Year IV / Semester 1	4	A	Very satisfactory
	Year IV / Semester 2	4	A	Very satisfactory

Table 6:
Recapitulation of His Academic Learning Achievement in Master, Medical Faculty of UI (University of Indonesia) in Jakarta, 2007-2009

No	Grade /Semester	Average Scores of Learning Achievement		Predicate
		Number	Letter	
1	Year I / Semester 1	4	A	Very satisfactory
	Year I / Semester 2	4	A	Very satisfactory
2	Year II / Semester 1	4	A	Very satisfactory
	Year II / Semester 2	4	A	Very satisfactory

Table 7:
Recapitulation of His Academic Learning Achievement in Doctorate, Medical Faculty of SU (Songla University) in Thailand, 2011-2015

No	Grade /Semester	Average Scores of Learning Achievement		Predicate
		Number	Letter	
1	Year I / Semester 1	4	A	Very satisfactory
	Year I / Semester 2	4	A	Very satisfactory
2	Year II / Semester 1	4	A	Very satisfactory
	Year II / Semester 2	4	A	Very satisfactory
3	Year III / Semester 1	4	A	Very satisfactory
	Year III / Semester 2	4	A	Very satisfactory
4	Year IV / Semester 1	4	A	Very satisfactory
	Year IV / Semester 2	4	A	Very satisfactory

Note: (1) Granted a scholarship from UGM, or Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, in the third year; (2) Granted a scholarship for the master degree from UI, or University of Indonesia in Jakarta; (3) Granted a scholarship for the doctorate degree from SU, or Songla University in Thailand; and (4) The average scores of the learning achievement from elementary to his doctorate degree is very satisfactory.

taken is natural conditions and facts, a natural learning outcomes research subjects in a natural situation (Sukardi, 2009).

Through observation techniques, observation does not only record the data, but also considers the assessment in a graded scale. It will be effective if the observation is done using an observation sheet (Arikunto, 2006). Observation applied is the structured one. It is an observation that has been systematically designed on what to observe, when and where

it will be, and whom to observe (Sugiyono, 2008).

Documentation technique is used as an instrument to collect the learning achievement of the subject in the school they go. The document is the instrument to collect the data or the variables in the form of notes, transcripts, academic scores, letters, and others (Dimiyati, 2014).

In this study, the documents used as a data source are the academic scores, the subjects' learning achievement. Interviews are used to

Table 8:
Personal Identity

Name	Code "B"
Place, Date of Birth	Purbalingga, Central Java, 16 October 2013.
School	MI (Islamic Elementary School) Istiqomah, Sambas, Purbalingga. Enrolled on 12 July 2010.
<i>Names of parents:</i>	
Father	Bayu Eko Prabowo.
Mother	Anika R. Sofri.

Table 9:
Recapitulation of His Academic Learning Achievement in Elementary School

No	Grade/Semester	Average Scores		Predicate
		Number	Letter	
1	Grade I / Semester 1	86	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade I / Semester 2	91	A	Very satisfactory
2	Grade II / Semester 1	91	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade II / Semester 2	92	A	Very satisfactory
3	Grade III / Semester 1	90	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade III / Semester 2	92	A	Very satisfactory
4	Grade IV / Semester 1	86	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade IV / Semester 2	90	A	Very satisfactory
5	Grade V / Semester 1	87	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade V / Semester 2	88	A	Very satisfactory
Average Score		89.3	A	Very satisfactory

Note: Educational Background: (1) On June 15, 2006, attended a kindergarten/AB in the Slinga village, Kaligindang, Purbalingga, Central Java, at the age of 2 years 8 months; (2) On July 12, 2010, started his primary at SD/MI, or Islamic Elementary School, Istiqomah, Sambas, Purbalingga, at the age of 6 years 9 months; and (3) The average of learning achievement = 89.3 = A, very satisfactory.

Table 10:
Personal Identity

Name	Code "C"
Place, Date of Birth	Purwokerto, Central Java, 14 January 2007.
School	SD (Elementary School) Al-Irsyad al-Islamiyah 02 in UMP (Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto) Campus, Central Java.
<i>Names of parents:</i>	
Father	Amin Fatoni, S.Si., M.Si., Ph.D.
Mother	Mekar Dwi Anggraeni, Nes.S.Kep., M.Kep., Ph.D.
<i>Parents' jobs:</i>	
Father	Lecturer at the UNSOED (University of Soedirman) in Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia.
Mother	Lecturer at the UNSOED (University of Soedirman) in Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia.
Residence	Perum Griya Satria Indah II Blok I No.7 Sumampir, Purwokerto Utara, Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesia.

draw the data of obstacles and problems the subjects have along the education process, including classroom teachers, principals, and the parents of the subjects. In the interview, a direct contact is required the information will be more clearly revealed (Dimiyati, 2014).

In general, the data analysis includes

three stages: (1) preparation; (2) tabulation; and (3) the application of the data according to the research approach (Arikunto, 2006). *Preparatory stage:* the researcher conducted check the subjects and complete their identity; check the completeness of data, i.e. seeing the completeness of the pages in the documents

Table 11:
Recapitulation of His Academic Learning Achievement

No	Grade/Semester	Average Scores		Predicate
		Number	Letter	
1	Grade I / Semester 1	-	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade I / Semester 2	-	A	Very satisfactory
2	Grade II / Semester 1	91	A	Very satisfactory
	Grade II / Semester 2	92	A	Very satisfactory

Note: Educational Background: (1) On June 15, 2010, attended a kindergarten at the Campus of UMP, or Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto, in Central Java, Indonesia, at the age of 3 years 5 months; (2) On December 2010, moved to Thailand, on January 2011 to January 2013, attended a kindergarten in Thailand, and on 2013, moved back to Indonesia; (3) On July 15, 2013, started his primary at SD, or Elementary School, Al-Irsyad al-Islamiyyah, at the age of 6 years 6 months; and (4) The average of learning achievement = 98 = very satisfactory.

Table 12:
Working Table for the Discussion on the Learning Achievement Scores

No	Code	Average Score of Learning Achievement					
		Primary	Junior High	Senior High	S-1	S-2	S-3
1	Subject "A"	91.7 Very satisfactory	92.8 Very satisfactory	92.0 Very satisfactory	A Very satisfactory	A Very satisfactory	A Very satisfactory
2	Subject "B"	89.3 Very satisfactory	-	-	-	-	-
3	Subject "C"	98.0 Very satisfactory	-	-	-	-	-

and their contents and cross-checking with the research data; and check the content of the instrument of data collection, and the inappropriate data will be immediately discarded.

Tabulation stage: this tabulation activities, among others, include scoring the items need to be scored; codifying the items; changing the type of data based on the analysis techniques used; and providing the coding in connection with the use of computers (Arikunto, 2006).

Data application according to the research approaches: the data are adjusted to their type, i.e. discrete, ordinal, interval, and ratio. The selection of the formula will be used to analyze the data according to the research data. *Data analysis of descriptive research:* the collected data are grouped into two, qualitative data of words and symbols, and the quantitative data of numbers (Arikunto, 2006).

This study applied an analysis technique of qualitative descriptive data, i.e. the research data will be analyzed using certain criteria from the quantitative data of numbers into

categories of very satisfactory, satisfactory, good, fair, bad, and poor.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From a long process of research activities, employing the instruments of observation and documentation, it comes to the data of the subjects and their learning achievement as follows.

First, data of learning achievement development of the subject "A", as shown in table 1, table 2, table 3, table 4, table 5, table 6, and table 7.

Second, data of learning achievement development of the subject "B", as shown in table 8 and table 9.

Third, data of learning achievement development of the subject "C", as shown in table 10 and table 11.

Based on the series data above, the information can be summarized like the following table 12.

The figures of the learning achievement scores in the three subjects of reflect a

consistency. Subject "A" began to attend an elementary school at the age of 4; along his course, he was able to finish on time and obtained a very satisfactory score. In the run, he did not experience any psychological and physical disorders. Similar finding was also proved in his high schools. After attending college, he showed more consistency; he always had a very satisfying scores until his doctorate degree.

The search on the learning development of subject "B" shows that he started his kindergarten at the age 2 years and 8 months, and he attended his primary school at 6 years and 9 months. Along the education process from the first to fifth graders, he has never experienced psychological and physical disorders. His learning achievement in the study is proved to be consistent with an average score of 89.3, very satisfactory.

The subject "C" enrolled his kindergarten in the age of 3 years and 5 months. After a semester, he moved to Thailand and joined a Thailand Islamic kindergarten age 4 years. He attended the school for two years. Then, he returned to Indonesia, and started his primary school at SD (Elementary School) Al-Irshad al-Islamiyah at Campus of UMP (Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto) at the age of 6 years and 6 months. Along the run in the primary school, he can follow the lessons well, has not experienced any psychological and physical disorders. His learning achievement is consistent with the average score of 98.0, very satisfactory.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis in the previous section, it can be concluded that all three subjects in the study had attended their primary school before 7 years. Their learning achievement scores show a consistent level of very satisfactory. Parts of the figures indicate a little bit fluctuation, but the decreased score is still at the same predicate of very satisfactory.

The notion among the society saying that too early start on the primary education, under 7 years old, will create a mental hectic and brain fatigue is not true. Their learning score is always good from the first year to the end. They are not only good in their first three

years. This means that gifted children are ready to attend their primary school before seven.

Based on the conclusion, this study proposes the following suggestions: (1) for the society, the gifted children should be given an opportunity to develop their talent. We should not treat them according to our will. It is not wise to prevent them going to school only due to their young age; (2) for the education communities of kindergarten and elementary school, they have to facilitate the learning process for the gifted children to maximize their learning achievement. This will have a good result of their academic achievement which will be a pride for the educators, parents and the society in general; and (3) for the government as the authority of the education policy, they should be wiser in applying the rule of minimum age for school enrollment. The age should not be an absolute screening in recruiting new students; their mental readiness should be put as the priority. Thus, the rule will not neglect the good potentials among the gifted children.¹

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¹**Statement:** Herewith, I have declared that this paper is my original work; so, it is not product of plagiarism and not yet be reviewed as well as be published by other scholarly journals.

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Pupils of Elementary School in Indonesia
(Source: Photo Album of ASPENSI, 20/5/2012)

The notion among the society saying that too early start on the primary education, under 7 years old, will create a mental hectic and brain fatigue is not true. Their learning score is always good from the first year to the end. They are not only good in their first three years. This means that gifted children are ready to attend their primary school before seven.