

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In Indonesia, all of the students are given the same material. This is not wise because their abilities in comprehending the material are different. Some of them comprehend faster than their other friends. These are the group of students known as the gifted students. Gallagher (1995:11) states that they have the ability to grasp the material easily, and do exercises more quickly than their non-gifted friends do. Further, he states that they are abstract and critical thinkers; therefore, they can easily get bored and frustrated, and will end up becoming the troublemakers and under-achievers if they do not find any challenge.

Considering the fact, the government has decided to launch a special program for the gifted students called the Acceleration Program. The program allows gifted students to finish their study faster. Furthermore, the curriculum and material are supposed to be designed in such a way that it allows them to make use of their abstract and critical thinking because they can do more than just filling blanks in a sentence or answering questions briefly. The regulation of the acceleration program implementation for high school education is arranged in Peraturan Pemerintah No. 29/1990 and is followed up by Keputusan Mendikbud No. 054/U/1992 section 16 (subsection 1) which says that students with astonishing talent and intelligence are able to finish their study earlier if they, at least, have already studied for two years in high school.

In order to ensure the acceleration program works, the school decision makers need to maintain the learners' positive attitude toward the program itself.

In line with it, McDonald (1966:311) states that:

An attitude prepares the individual to be motivated in specific ways. Thus, when an accelerated learner has a positive attitude toward his/her acceleration program (e.g. acceleration class is fun or challenging) they will be motivated in following the program and it will optimize their learning process.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

Based on the background of the study, the problem of this study is:

What is the learners' attitude toward their acceleration class at SMAN 5 Surabaya?

More specifically, this study was intended to answer the following problems.

1. What is the accelerated learners' attitude concerning the affective component toward their acceleration class at SMAN 5 Surabaya?
2. What is the accelerated learners' attitude concerning the cognitive component toward their acceleration class at SMAN 5 Surabaya?
3. What is the accelerated learners' attitude concerning the behavioral component toward their acceleration class at SMAN 5 Surabaya?

1.3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to observe the accelerated learners' attitude toward the acceleration class at SMAN 5 Surabaya.

1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study aims to figure out the accelerated learners' attitude toward their acceleration program at SMAN 5 Surabaya. If the findings are positive, they can be used to bring forward constructive suggestions for other schools that they should have acceleration class in the future. However, if they are negative, they can be used as suggestions to improve the quality of the acceleration class at SMAN 5 Surabaya.

1.5. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study only deals with the accelerated learners' attitude in their acceleration program and focuses on the area of the analysis at SMA 5 Surabaya and the subjects are all of the accelerated learners at SMA 5 Surabaya.

1.6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since the study deals with attitude and acceleration program, the writer finds it necessary to refer to the theory of Educational Psychology. The theory states that positive attitude leads to learning achievement. Woolfolk (1987:478) states that the teaching design method for gifted students should encourage their abstract thinking, creativity, and independence instead of merely expanding the quantity of facts. Briefly speaking, the depth of learning should be emphasized more than the breadth of the learning itself.

1.7. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

To avoid misunderstanding, the writer finds out that it is important to define several key terms in this study. The writer hopes that it can help the readers to understand what this study is trying to present.

a. Attitudes

Attitude is positive or negative views of an “object”: a person, behavior, or event. Research has shown that people can also be "ambivalent" towards a target, meaning that they simultaneously possess a positive and a negative attitude towards it. Unlike personality, attitudes are expected to change as a function of experience (2005).

b. Giftedness

Renzulli, as quoted by Gross (1999:12), developed the Three-Ring Concept of Giftedness as the existence of a relation among three basic clusters of human characters. The clusters covered average general intelligence, high-levels of task commitment, and high level of creativity.

c. Gifted Students

From the Three-Ring Concept of Giftedness developed by Renzulli, it shows that gifted children tend to have strong interaction capacity above average general abilities, high level of task commitment, and high levels of creativity.

According to Javits Definition, as quoted by Gallagher (1995:5), the term of “gifted and talented students” refer to students and children who:

1. give evidence of higher performance capability in such areas such intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity or in specific academic field; and who
2. require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools in order to develop such capabilities fully.

d. Acceleration Program

Clark (1992:84) defines acceleration as “skipping a grade”, which allows the gifted students to jump up to a higher level of class work than her age would ordinarily get. This method is usually considered when a student can work at two or three more level above their friends. Therefore, gifted students in first grade can skip their second grade and go on to the third grade; or they just follow on a subject at a higher level. First grade children, for instance, manage to follow the English class of second grade students.

e. Accelerated Learner

Bragget, as quoted by Evans (2005), describes accelerated learner as one who is moving, or has already moved through a program more quickly than others and is now capable of more advanced thinking; due to this, the accelerated learners understand creative production or more difficult content than others.

1.8. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This thesis comprises of five chapters. Chapter One is Introduction, containing the reason why the writer decides to write this paper, statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, theoretical framework, and definition of the key terms.

The second chapter is the Review of Related Literature. It consists of the Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies.

Chapter Three is the Research Method of this study. It consists of the research design, sample, research instruments, data collecting procedure, and the data analyzing the procedure.

Chapter Four is the Findings of the study. It consists mainly the findings of the study and the interpretation of it.

Chapter Five is the Conclusion and Suggestion. This is the last chapter and it is divided in three sections. They are the conclusions and suggestions and the recommendations for further study.