



Interest and Motivation of Elementary School Students Toward Swimming Learning

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Abstract: Swimming is one of the learning materials in physical education that contributes to students' physical fitness, motor development, and self-confidence. However, the effectiveness of swimming instruction is strongly influenced by students' interest and motivation in participating in learning activities. This study aimed to analyze the interest and motivation of fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students toward swimming learning at SD Negeri 106789 Tanjung Gusta in 2024. This research employed a descriptive quantitative design. The participants consisted of 60 students selected using cluster sampling from grades IV, V, and VI. Data were collected using validated and reliable questionnaires measuring students' interest and motivation toward swimming lessons. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages. The findings revealed that students' interest in swimming learning was categorized as very good, with an achievement percentage of 94.94%. Meanwhile, students' motivation toward swimming learning was categorized as good, with a percentage of 66.70%. These findings indicate that although students demonstrate a high level of interest, there is still room to improve learning motivation through more engaging instructional strategies, adequate facilities, and varied teaching methods. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to develop innovative learning approaches to maintain students' enthusiasm and improve learning outcomes in physical education, particularly in swimming instruction.

Keywords: Interest; Motivation; Swimming Learning; Physical Education; Elementary School

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INTRODUCTION

Physical education plays an important role in developing students' physical fitness, motor skills, cognitive abilities, and social attitudes. One of the essential learning materials in physical education at the elementary school level is swimming, which not only improves physical fitness but also develops water safety skills and self-confidence (Sari, A. M., Tantri, A., Ramadan, R., & Karo, A. A. P. K., 2025).

Students' success in swimming lessons is influenced by several factors, particularly interest and learning motivation. Interest encourages students to actively participate in learning activities, while motivation drives them to persist in achieving learning objectives. Students with high interest and motivation generally demonstrate better participation and learning outcomes than those with lower levels of engagement.

Recent studies have emphasized the importance of motivation in physical education. Sary et al. (2025) found that elementary school students with higher learning motivation participated more actively in swimming lessons and demonstrated better engagement throughout the learning process. Likewise, Fadilah et al. (2025) reported that students' interest in swimming lessons differed between rural and urban schools, although high learning interest consistently contributed to positive learning experiences.

Swimming instruction also contributes to improving students' awareness of water safety. Lee et al. (2025) explained that students' perceptions and learning attitudes significantly influence water safety awareness after participating in swimming education. In addition, Martinus et al. (2024) demonstrated that game-based swimming instruction effectively improves beginners' swimming skills and increases students' enthusiasm during physical education classes.

Learning motivation itself is affected by various instructional factors. Educational innovations such as augmented reality (Cetintav & Yilmaz, 2023), educational robotics (Selcuk et al., 2024), collaborative professional development for teachers (Cojorn, 2024), and appropriate learning media (Hasibuan & Usman, 2024) have been shown to improve students' motivation and learning outcomes. Furthermore, Budianto et al. (2024) reported that external factors, including students' social media use, also influence learning motivation.

Within the context of physical education, the selection of teaching strategies is equally important. Kurniawan et al. (2025) demonstrated that practice teaching styles significantly improved elementary school students' learning outcomes in gymnastics, while Tanjung and Syaleh (2024) showed that game-based learning models effectively enhanced students' sprint learning achievement. These findings indicate that innovative teaching strategies can also be applied to swimming instruction to increase students' motivation and participation.

Although previous studies have investigated students' interest, motivation, and learning outcomes in physical education, limited research has specifically examined the combination of students' interest and motivation toward swimming learning among elementary school students in SD Negeri 106789 Tanjung Gusta. Therefore, this study aims to analyze students' interest and motivation toward swimming learning in order to provide empirical evidence for improving the quality of physical education learning.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to describe the level of students' interest and motivation toward swimming learning without testing causal relationships between variables. The descriptive approach was considered appropriate because the study focused on presenting factual information regarding students' responses to swimming instruction.

The research was conducted at SD Negeri 106789 Tanjung Gusta, Medan, from May to June 2024. The population consisted of 315 students enrolled from Grade I to Grade VI. The research sample comprised 60 students from Grades IV, V, and VI selected using the cluster sampling technique, considering that these students had participated in swimming learning activities.

The study investigated two independent variables, namely students' interest and students' motivation toward swimming learning. Interest refers to students' tendency to pay attention to and enjoy swimming lessons, while motivation refers to the internal and external factors that encourage students to participate in swimming learning activities.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on indicators of students' interest and learning motivation. Before being distributed to respondents, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability. The reliability analysis showed a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.753 for the interest instrument and 0.797 for the motivation instrument, indicating that both instruments were reliable for data collection.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis. Students' responses were tabulated, grouped according to score intervals, and converted into percentages using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

- P = Percentage
- F = Frequency
- N = Total number of respondents

The results were then interpreted using predetermined classification criteria ranging from Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, and Very Poor.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The analysis of questionnaire responses showed that students generally demonstrated a high level of interest in swimming learning. Most respondents were classified in the Fair to Good category based on score distribution, while only a small number of students were categorized as having low interest.

Table 1. Distribution of Students' Interest Toward Swimming Learning

Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)
>61	0	0
58-60	16	26.67
55-57	42	70
53-54	0	0
<52	2	3.33
Total	60	100

Overall analysis indicated that students' interest toward swimming learning reached 94.94%, which falls into the Very Good category.

Students' motivation toward swimming learning showed relatively positive results although slightly lower than their level of interest.

Table 2. Distribution of Students' Motivation Toward Swimming Learning

Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)
>107	3	5
98-106	11	18.33
89-97	32	53.33
80-88	11	18.33
<79	3	5
Total	60	100

The overall percentage of students' motivation was 66.70%, indicating that students' motivation toward swimming learning was categorized as Good.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that students' interest in swimming learning was categorized as very good (94.94%), while learning motivation was categorized as good (66.70%). These findings support the study conducted by Sary et al. (2025), who concluded that higher learning motivation positively influences students' participation during swimming lessons.

The results are also consistent with Fadilah et al. (2025), who reported that students with stronger interest in swimming learning demonstrated greater enthusiasm and participation regardless of school location. Similarly, Lee et al. (2025) emphasized that positive learning attitudes developed through swimming instruction contribute to improved water safety awareness among elementary school students.

The present findings further support Martinus et al. (2024), who found that game-based approaches effectively improve students' swimming skills and learning engagement. This suggests that teachers should integrate more enjoyable and student-centered activities into swimming lessons.

Beyond swimming education, previous educational research has consistently shown that innovative instructional methods improve students' motivation. Cetintav and Yilmaz (2023) demonstrated that augmented reality enhances students' motivation and self-regulated learning. Likewise, Selcuk et al. (2024) found that educational robotics significantly improves students' learning motivation and achievement.

Teacher competence also contributes to students' learning experiences. Cojorn (2024) highlighted that collaborative professional development enables teachers to foster higher-order thinking skills through more effective instructional practices. In physical education contexts, Hasibuan and Usman (2024) emphasized the importance of developing appropriate learning media, while Kurniawan et al. (2025) and Tanjung and Syaleh (2024) demonstrated that practice teaching styles and game-based learning models significantly improve learning outcomes in elementary school students.

Overall, the present study reinforces previous findings that students' interest and motivation remain essential determinants of successful physical education learning. Therefore, teachers should continuously develop engaging instructional strategies and provide supportive learning environments to maximize students' participation and learning outcomes in swimming lessons.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the interest and motivation of Grade IV, V, and VI students toward swimming learning at SD Negeri 106789 Tanjung Gusta in 2024. Based on the findings, students' interest in swimming learning reached 94.94%, indicating a Very Good category. This result demonstrates that most students enjoy swimming lessons and show positive attitudes toward participating in learning activities.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research. The research was conducted independently without any commercial or financial relationships that could influence the study's findings..

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