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THE ROLE OF TEACHERS' TEACHING STYLES IN STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN MATHEMATICS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Education quality is closely related to the effectiveness of teachers' teaching styles in the learning process. This study aims to explore the role of teachers' teaching styles in enhancing students' motivation to learn mathematics in elementary school. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through classroom observations and in-depth interviews with a fourth-grade teacher and eight fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 060792 Medan Timur. The findings indicate that teaching styles that actively involve students, consider students' psychological conditions, and connect mathematical concepts to real-life situations significantly contribute to increased learning motivation. In addition, positive teacher–student interactions and the creation of a safe and supportive classroom environment encourage students to participate more actively and confidently in mathematics learning. The use of contextual teaching approaches, group practices, and interactive activities was found to reduce students' boredom and foster independent learning. This study concludes that appropriate and varied teaching styles play an important role in motivating elementary school students to learn mathematics. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to apply flexible and student-centered teaching styles to create meaningful and engaging mathematics learning experiences.

Keywords: *teaching style, learning motivation, mathematics learning*

ABSTRAK

Kualitas pendidikan sangat dipengaruhi oleh efektivitas gaya mengajar guru dalam proses pembelajaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran gaya mengajar guru dalam meningkatkan motivasi belajar matematika siswa sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi pembelajaran di kelas dan wawancara mendalam dengan seorang guru kelas IV serta delapan siswa kelas IV di SD Negeri 060792 Medan Timur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa gaya mengajar guru yang melibatkan siswa secara aktif, memperhatikan aspek psikologis siswa, serta mengaitkan materi matematika dengan kehidupan sehari-hari mampu meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa. Interaksi yang positif antara guru dan siswa serta penciptaan lingkungan belajar yang aman dan suportif juga mendorong siswa untuk lebih percaya diri dan aktif dalam pembelajaran matematika. Penerapan pendekatan kontekstual, kegiatan praktik kelompok, dan aktivitas interaktif terbukti dapat mengurangi kebosanan siswa dan meningkatkan kemandirian belajar. Dengan demikian, variasi gaya mengajar guru memiliki peran penting dalam meningkatkan motivasi belajar matematika siswa sekolah dasar.

Kata kunci: *gaya mengajar, motivasi belajar, pembelajaran matematika.*

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in shaping human resources and supporting national development. One of the key factors determining the quality of education is the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process in classrooms. In elementary schools, teachers hold a strategic position as facilitators who influence not only students' cognitive development but also their motivation and attitudes toward learning. Mathematics, as a fundamental subject taught at all levels of education, is often perceived by students as difficult and abstract, which may lead to low learning motivation if not delivered appropriately.

Learning motivation is widely recognized as an essential determinant of students' academic success. Students with high motivation tend to be more engaged, persistent, and willing to overcome learning difficulties. Conversely, low motivation often results in passive participation, avoidance of tasks, and unsatisfactory learning outcomes. Previous studies have emphasized that teachers' teaching styles—covering instructional strategies, classroom interactions, and personal approaches—significantly influence students' motivation and engagement in learning (Cahya, 2020; Hartati et al., 2023).

In mathematics learning, teaching styles that are monotonous and teacher-centered may reduce students' interest and motivation. In contrast, student-centered approaches that involve active participation, contextual learning, and supportive classroom environments have been shown to enhance students' motivation and understanding. Therefore, examining how teachers' teaching styles contribute to students' motivation in learning mathematics is essential to improving the quality of elementary education.

The Problem of the Study

Despite the importance of motivation in mathematics learning, many elementary school students still demonstrate low motivation, characterized by lack of enthusiasm, avoidance of mathematical tasks, and anxiety toward mathematics lessons. One contributing factor is the teaching style applied by teachers, which may not always align with students' psychological needs, learning characteristics, or real-life contexts. Although teachers are expected to apply varied and engaging teaching styles, in practice, instructional approaches often remain conventional and less interactive. This situation raises a critical question regarding how teachers' teaching styles are implemented in elementary classrooms and how they influence students' motivation to learn mathematics.

Research's State of the Art

Previous research has extensively discussed the relationship between teaching styles and students' learning motivation. Studies by Hartati et al. (2023) and Sinaga et al. (2024) found that variations in teaching styles positively affect students' motivation and engagement in mathematics learning. Cahya (2020) also reported that interactive and student-centered teaching styles help reduce students' boredom and enhance learning motivation. Moreover, Rahmah and Pardi (2023) emphasized that teaching styles play an important role in improving students' learning outcomes in mathematics.

However, most existing studies predominantly employ quantitative approaches to measure the influence of teaching styles on motivation using statistical analysis. While these studies provide valuable evidence of correlation or influence, they often lack in-depth explanations of how and why certain teaching styles motivate students, particularly from students' and teachers' lived experiences. Qualitative insights into classroom interactions, contextual teaching practices, and psychological considerations remain relatively limited, especially at the elementary school level.

Novelty, Research Gap, and Objective

The novelty of this study lies in its qualitative exploration of teachers' teaching

styles and their role in enhancing students’ motivation to learn mathematics in an elementary school context. This research addresses the gap in existing literature by providing in-depth descriptions of teaching practices, teacher–student interactions, and classroom environments that contribute to students’ learning motivation.

The research gap identified in this study is the limited number of qualitative studies that focus on elementary students’ motivation in mathematics learning from a contextual and experiential perspective. Many prior studies emphasize measurable outcomes rather than exploring the instructional processes behind motivational changes.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to analyze the role of teachers’ teaching styles in motivating elementary school students to learn mathematics. Specifically, this study aims to describe teaching styles that foster student engagement, examine how teacher–student interactions influence motivation, and identify instructional practices that create supportive and meaningful mathematics learning experiences.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore the role of teachers’ teaching styles in motivating elementary school students to learn mathematics. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows an in-depth understanding of teaching practices, classroom interactions, and students’ learning experiences within their natural context. This design is appropriate for examining perceptions, behaviors, and instructional processes that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurements.

Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at SD Negeri 060792 Medan Timur. The participants consisted of one fourth-grade homeroom teacher and eight fourth-grade students. The teacher was selected due to her direct involvement in teaching mathematics, while the students were chosen to represent diverse learning characteristics and levels of learning motivation. All participants voluntarily agreed to take part in the study.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Observations were conducted during mathematics lessons to examine teaching styles, teacher–student interactions, and students’ responses to instructional activities. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the teacher and students to obtain deeper insights into teaching strategies, students’ learning motivation, and their perceptions of the mathematics learning process. This flexible interview format allowed participants to freely express their experiences and viewpoints.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Interview transcripts and observation notes were carefully examined to identify recurring patterns and themes related to teaching styles and students’ learning motivation. The identified themes were then interpreted to provide meaningful explanations of how teaching styles contribute to motivating students in mathematics learning.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, triangulation of data sources was applied by comparing information obtained from observations and interviews. Member checking was also conducted by confirming the interview results with participants to ensure the accuracy of the data. These strategies enhanced the credibility and reliability of the research findings.

Research manuscripts reporting large datasets deposited in a publicly available database should specify where the data have been deposited and provide the relevant accession numbers. If the accession numbers have not yet been obtained at the time of

submission, please state that they will be provided during review. They must be provided before publication.

Interventional studies involving animals or humans, and other studies that require ethical approval, must list the authority that provided approval and the corresponding ethical approval code.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study indicate that teachers' teaching styles play a significant role in enhancing elementary school students' motivation to learn mathematics. Teaching styles that actively involve students in the learning process, consider students' psychological conditions, and relate mathematical concepts to real-life situations were found to increase students' interest and engagement during mathematics lessons. These findings support the view that motivation is not solely an internal factor within students but is strongly influenced by instructional practices and classroom environments.

Active student involvement emerged as a key factor in motivating students. When teachers applied interactive methods such as group discussions, contextual learning activities, and problem-solving practices, students showed greater enthusiasm and participation. This result is consistent with previous studies suggesting that student-centered learning approaches promote higher motivation and engagement compared to teacher-centered instruction (Cahya, 2020; Hartati et al., 2023). By involving students directly, teachers enable them to take ownership of their learning, which strengthens intrinsic motivation.

Another important finding relates to the psychological dimension of teaching. Teachers who demonstrated supportive attitudes, provided encouragement, and created a safe learning atmosphere were more successful in motivating students. A positive emotional environment reduces students' anxiety toward mathematics, a subject often perceived as difficult. This finding aligns with Sinaga et al. (2024), who emphasized that emotional support and positive teacher–student relationships contribute significantly to students' learning motivation.

The relevance of learning materials also played a crucial role in increasing motivation. Contextual teaching approaches that connect mathematics to students' daily lives helped students perceive mathematics as meaningful and useful. This supports the argument that learning becomes more motivating when students understand the practical value of the content they study (Rahmah & Pardi, 2023). Through real-life examples, students were able to better comprehend abstract mathematical concepts and remain engaged throughout the learning process.

Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of teacher–student interaction in fostering motivation. Teachers who understood students' individual characteristics and applied flexible teaching strategies were able to create more inclusive and supportive classrooms. Such interactions encourage students to express their ideas, ask questions, and participate actively, which contributes to sustained motivation and improved learning experiences.

Overall, the findings confirm that varied and student-centered teaching styles are essential for motivating elementary school students in mathematics learning. By combining interactive methods, psychological support, and contextual learning, teachers can create meaningful and enjoyable learning environments that enhance students' motivation. These results reinforce existing literature while providing qualitative insights into how teaching styles influence students' motivation in real classroom contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that teachers' teaching styles play a crucial role in motivating elementary school students to learn

mathematics. Teaching practices that actively engage students, address their psychological needs, and relate mathematical concepts to real-life situations were found to enhance students’ interest, confidence, and participation in learning. In addition, positive teacher–student interactions and a supportive classroom environment contribute to reducing students’ anxiety and increasing their learning motivation. These findings indicate that student-centered and contextual teaching styles are more effective than monotonous, teacher-centered approaches in fostering motivation in mathematics learning. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to apply varied, flexible, and interactive teaching styles to create meaningful and engaging mathematics learning experiences for elementary school students.

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