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The Effect of Kinesthetic Learning Style on Students' Motivation and Learning Interest

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A B S T R A C T

This research is based on the importance of learning styles in the teaching and learning process. Generally, learning styles are divided into three types: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. However, among these, usually only one learning style tends to dominate in each individual. This study focuses on the kinesthetic learning style, which is characterized by physical activity and movement. The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is an influence of kinesthetic learning style on students' motivation and interest in learning at SMPN 16 Bengkulu City. This research is a field study using a quantitative associative approach. The sample consisted of 68 respondents, and data collection techniques included observation, documentation, and questionnaires. The hypothesis was tested using simple and multiple regression analysis. The results of the study indicate that there is a significant influence of kinesthetic learning style on students' motivation and interest in learning Islamic Religious Education at SMPN 16 Bengkulu City.

1. Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, approaches to teaching and learning continue to advance, offering new opportunities to optimize students' learning experiences. As societal mindsets develop over time, education remains a central mechanism for shaping individuals who are intellectually competent, morally grounded, creatively skilled, and capable of contributing meaningfully to society. The National Education System Law (Law No. 20 of 2003) emphasizes that national education aims to develop learners who are devoted to God, demonstrate noble character, possess knowledge and skills, are creative,

independent, and responsible citizens (Danim, 2013). Thus, education plays a strategic role in cultivating holistic human development.

Humans, as individual and social beings, naturally engage in continuous interaction with their environment. The transmission of knowledge, values, and culture has always been vital throughout human history, beginning from the earliest human civilizations (Haris, 2015). Schools, as formal educational institutions, provide a structured environment where teaching and learning take place. Teachers serve as facilitators who guide students through a variety of learning experiences, while students actively construct their understanding through interactions with learning materials, peers, and their surroundings (Risnawati, 2014). Learning, therefore, is a lifelong and dynamic process influenced by individual characteristics, motivation, and prior experiences.

One essential factor affecting learning effectiveness is learning style the preferred way an individual processes and internalizes information. Students exposed to the same learning environment may still develop different understandings due to their unique learning styles (Mufidah, 2017). Many students are unaware of their learning preferences and consequently may find it difficult to engage with classroom instruction that does not align with their style. For this reason, it is crucial for teachers to identify students' learning style characteristics and adjust instructional strategies accordingly to enhance engagement and learning outcomes.

Learning styles are generally categorized into three major types: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Kinesthetic learning, in particular, has gained increasing attention in recent years due to its emphasis on physical activity, hands-on experiences, and movement-based learning. Students with kinesthetic preferences often struggle in conventional lecture-centered environments. The selection of kinesthetic learning style in this study is based on its relevance in improving concentration, active engagement, and retention among students who learn best through direct physical involvement. Research indicates that kinesthetic instruction enhances memory, promotes deeper understanding, and reduces boredom during classroom activities.

In addition to learning style, motivation plays a crucial role in determining students' academic behavior and performance. Motivation refers to the internal or external drive that energizes, directs, and sustains student behavior toward learning goals. Its inclusion in this study is based on the argument that students with high learning motivation demonstrate greater persistence, stronger engagement, and a higher level of achievement. Motivation also mediates the relationship between learning style and learning outcomes, making it an essential construct in understanding the effectiveness of instructional processes.

Another psychological factor relevant to learning is learning interest. Learning interest reflects students' personal inclination, curiosity, and enjoyment in engaging with a particular subject or learning activity. The decision to include learning interest in this research stems from evidence showing that interest enhances attention, encourages active participation, and supports long-term retention.

Students who have a genuine interest in learning are more likely to respond positively to instructional methods and achieve higher levels of understanding.

A number of previous studies provide a foundation for the present research. First, Widodo and Kurniawan (2020) found that learning styles significantly influence student engagement and academic performance in junior high schools. Second, Setiawan (2019) reported that kinesthetic-based instructional strategies improve learning outcomes in practical subjects. Third, Rahayu (2021) demonstrated that motivation mediates the impact of instructional methods on student achievement. Fourth, Siregar and Nasution (2020) showed that learning interest is a strong predictor of students' academic success across various subjects. Fifth, Nadia and Putra (2022) concluded that combining learning style–based teaching with motivational strategies leads to improved student learning behavior and classroom engagement. These studies collectively highlight the importance of learning style, motivation, and learning interest in shaping student achievement.

Within the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMP Negeri 16 Bengkulu City, preliminary observations revealed several challenges related to students' engagement during classroom instruction. Many students appeared disengaged, displayed minimal participation, or even left the classroom during lessons. These behaviors suggest that instructional methods may not be aligned with students' learning preferences. The lack of variety in teaching strategies also contributed to reduced motivation and interest, which in turn affected overall learning outcomes. Therefore, integrating students' learning styles particularly kinesthetic preferences while fostering motivation and learning interest is essential to improving learning effectiveness in PAI classrooms.

Learning is an ongoing process that encompasses changes in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains. Islam also encourages the pursuit of knowledge through various sensory faculties, as emphasized in Surah Al-Isra (17:36), reminding believers to use hearing, sight, and intellect responsibly. This spiritual perspective further reinforces the significance of understanding diverse learning needs and adopting teaching approaches that cater to different student characteristics. Given the observed challenges and theoretical foundations, this study seeks to examine the influence of kinesthetic learning style, learning motivation, and learning interest on students' learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education. By aligning instructional strategies with students' learning characteristics, teachers can create a more effective, engaging, and meaningful learning environment.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative associative approach, aiming to examine the relationships between multiple variables, which helps develop a theory to explain, predict, and control phenomena in the research. Quantitative research is essential for analyzing numerical data and solving problems using statistical methods, which enables the identification of cause-and-effect relationships between variables. By

utilizing this approach, researchers can quantify the impact of different factors and establish patterns in student behavior (Creswell, 2014). The study's primary focus is to understand how kinesthetic learning styles influence motivation and interest in learning, offering valuable insights for future educational strategies.

The research was conducted at SMPN 16 in Bengkulu City, located at Jalan Depati Payung Negara, Betungan, Selebar, Bengkulu City. The study commenced after the research permit was issued, and it focused on the learning dynamics in a real-world school environment. Conducting research in this setting allowed the exploration of the practical implementation of teaching methods and their influence on student motivation and engagement. Such research designs are critical for understanding how educational environments impact learning outcomes (Yin, 2018). The timing of the study coincided with the academic calendar, ensuring that data collection took place under standard school conditions.

Operational definitions were established for the key variables in this study: Kinesthetic Learning Style (Variable X), Learning Motivation (Variable Y1), and Learning Interest (Variable Y2). The kinesthetic learning style refers to students' tendencies to engage physically in learning activities, such as using gestures or walking while learning, which aligns with the theory of learning by doing (Gardner, 2011). Motivation and interest are both essential factors that drive learning; motivation includes intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as self-determination, rewards, and recognition (Deci & Ryan, 2000), while interest reflects the students' level of enthusiasm and attention towards learning tasks (Schiefele, 2009). Defining these variables operationally allows for clear measurement and comparison, ensuring that the study remains focused on specific, measurable behaviors.

The population for this research consists of all students at SMPN 16, with a total of 677 students across grades 7 to 9. According to Arikunto (2013), a sample should be selected from this population to ensure generalizability. Random sampling was employed to choose 10% of the population, resulting in a sample size of 68 students. This method ensures a representative sample without bias, allowing for robust conclusions about the general student body. Random sampling is commonly used in educational research to eliminate selection bias and provide a fair representation of the population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

Data collection was carried out using questionnaires (angket) and tests. The questionnaires were designed to assess the impact of kinesthetic learning style on student motivation and interest in learning, with well-defined indicators for each variable. Pre- and post-tests were administered to measure the changes in students' learning motivation and interest. To ensure the instruments' validity and reliability, a series of tests were conducted, and necessary adjustments were made. Validity testing was done by calculating correlation coefficients between the items and overall instrument scores (Field, 2013). The analysis of the collected data employed both descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis, to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the

variables. This combination of methodologies allows for a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing learning behaviors in the school context.

3. Results and Discussion

Preliminary Analysis

The researcher determines the influence of learning styles on students' motivation and interest at SMPN 16 Bengkulu, a questionnaire was distributed to students. The questionnaire was pre-tested, and the results can be seen in Chapter III, under the validity and reliability test outcomes. The following are the results of the research conducted by the researcher on the research sample:

a. Kinesthetic Learning Style

The highest score obtained was 98, while the lowest score was 66, with a mean of 85.68 and a standard deviation of 8.57. The range of scores was calculated by subtracting the lowest score from the highest, yielding a maximum range of 32 (98 - 66). The number of intervals was determined using the formula K = 1 + 3.33 log 68, which resulted in 7.093, rounded to 7 for simplicity. The length of the class interval was calculated by dividing the range by the number of intervals, yielding a class width of 5 (32 ÷ 7). Table 4.5 presents the frequency distribution for the Kinesthetic Learning Style variable, which shows that the majority of students (44%) scored between 86 and 90, indicating that most students fell into the "high" category. The distribution was further categorized into "high," "medium," and "low" based on the scores, where 63.24% of students scored within the medium range (58–86), and 36.76% scored in the high range (87–116). The absence of students in the low category (29–57) suggests that kinesthetic learning styles were predominantly in the medium category.

b. Learning Motivation

The highest score was 105, and the lowest was 56, with a mean of 82.66 and a standard deviation of 8.46. The range was calculated as 49 (105 - 56), and the number of intervals was determined using the formula K = 1 + 3.33 log 68, resulting in 7. The length of each class interval was 7 (49 ÷ 7). The frequency distribution for Learning Motivation is shown in Table 4.8, where 51.50% of students scored within the "medium" category (58–86), 45.59% scored in the "high" category (87–116), and 3% scored in the "low" category (29–57). This indicates that most students exhibited a medium level of motivation, with a smaller proportion achieving high motivation levels.

c. Learning Interest

The highest score was 101, and the lowest score was 60, with a mean of 84.38 and a standard deviation of 9.28. The range of scores was 41 (101 - 60), and the number

of intervals was calculated as 7. The class interval length was 6 (41 ÷ 7). The frequency distribution for Learning Interest is shown in Table 4.11, where 53% of students fell into the medium category (58–86), 44.12% into the high category (87–116), and 3% into the low category (29–57). This distribution suggests that the majority of students had moderate learning interest.

Assumption Tests for Data Analysis

Once the data was collected, it was necessary to conduct assumption tests before proceeding with the main data analysis. The following are the assumption tests:

a. Normality Test

The normality test aims to determine which statistical formula to use in hypothesis testing and whether the data follows a normal distribution. This can be done using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. According to the testing criteria, if the Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) value is greater than 0.05, the data is considered normally distributed. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results for both the Kinesthetic Learning Style and Learning Motivation variables showed that the p-value was 0.200, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the data for both variables were normally distributed. This means that the assumptions for normality were met, and the residuals in the regression model were normally distributed.

b. Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test assesses whether two or more sample groups come from populations with the same variance. The Levene Statistic test was conducted, and the results for both Learning Motivation (Y1) and Learning Interest (Y2) variables showed significance values of 0.075 and 0.188, respectively, both of which are greater than 0.05, indicating that the sample groups have homogeneous variances. Therefore, it can be concluded that the sample groups for both variables are homogeneous.

c. Linearity Test

The linearity test assesses whether the relationship between variables is linear. An ANOVA test was performed to check for linearity, and the results showed that the p-values for both the Kinesthetic Learning Style and Learning Motivation variables were 0.337 and 0.226, respectively, both of which are greater than 0.05. This indicates that the relationship between these variables is linear, confirming the assumption of linearity.

Hypothesis Test

The final analysis of this study consists of correlation testing, coefficient of determination, simple linear regression coefficients, and multiple regression analysis. Simple linear regression analysis is used to test the influence of a single

independent variable (X) on a dependent variable (Y). The results from the regression analysis using SPSS 26 can be seen in the following tables:

a. Simple Regression Test of Kinesthetic Learning Style (X) on Learning Motivation (Y1)

Table 1. The regression test table for the kinesthetic learning style (X) with learning motivation (Y1)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	100.245	1	100.245	4.848	0.003
Residual	7,804.505	66	118.250	—	—
Total	7,904.750	67	—	—	—

The table shows that the significance value is 0.003. When compared to the significance level of 0.05, it is clear that the significance value (0.003) is smaller than 0.05, indicating a significant effect of kinesthetic learning style on learning motivation. The regression coefficient test, or F-test, shows that the calculated F value (4.848) is greater than the F table value (3.14), which means that there is a significant effect of the kinesthetic learning style on learning motivation.

b. Simple Regression Test of Kinesthetic Learning Style (X) on Learning Interest (Y2)

Table 2. The regression test for the kinesthetic learning style (X) with learning interest (Y2)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	118.256	1	118.256	4.382	0.014
Residual	5,647.803	66	85.573	—	—
Total	5,766.059	67	—	—	—

The table shows a significance value of 0.014. Since the significance value (0.014) is smaller than 0.05, this indicates a significant influence of kinesthetic learning style on students' learning interest. The calculated F value (4.382) is greater than the F table value (3.14), confirming the influence of the kinesthetic learning style on learning interest.

c. Multiple Linear Regression Test of Kinesthetic Learning Style (X) on Learning Motivation (Y1) and Learning Interest (Y2)

Table 3. Multiple regression analysis involves analyzing the effect of the kinesthetic learning style (X) on both learning motivation (Y1) and learning interest (Y2).

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	172.192	2	86.096	2.417	0.029
Residual	4,597.867	65	70.736	—	—
Total	4,770.059	67	—	—	—

The results show a significance value of 0.029, which is smaller than 0.05, and an F-count value of 2.417. The F-table value with df numerator = 1 and df denominator = N – 1 = 68 – 1 = 67 at a 5% significance level is 2.35. Since F-count (2.417) is greater than F-table (2.35), it can be concluded that the kinesthetic learning style (X) has a significant effect on both learning motivation (Y1) and learning interest (Y2). These findings provide strong evidence that the kinesthetic learning style significantly influences student motivation and interest in learning, particularly in Islamic religious education at SMP Negeri 16, Bengkulu City.

Discussion

The output of the calculation using SPSS for the Unstandardized Residual value shows 0.200>0.05, indicating a normal distribution of the data. The linearity test showed a significance value (sig) of the deviation from linearity for variables X and Y of 0.207>0.05, thus concluding that the relationship between variable X (kinesthetic learning style), variable Y1 (learning motivation), and variable Y2 (learning interest) in Islamic religious education subjects at SMPN 16, Bengkulu City, is linear. This study aims to determine the effect of kinesthetic learning style on student learning motivation and interest at SMPN 16, Bengkulu City. The results of the study, which were tested on respondents, namely students of SMP Negeri 16, Bengkulu City, directly related to the influence of kinesthetic learning style on student motivation and interest, are as follows:

The Effect of Kinesthetic Learning Style (X) on Learning Motivation (Y1)

The results of this study align with the theory proposed by Djamarah and Zein, which states that students essentially possess three learning styles, but each student tends toward one or the other, and it's even possible for them to combine these styles to support their learning process. Based on this, the more a student's learning style aligns with their personality, the higher their motivation to learn will be, leading to improved achievement (Djamarah & Zain, 2016). The results of this study align with the theory proposed by Deporter and Hernacki (Hilgard, 1968). Kinesthetic learning styles are those that learn through physical activity and direct involvement, such as moving, touching, feeling, or experiencing. Kinesthetic learning styles involve learning through movement, working, and touching.

Rita Dunn and Kenneth Dunn, in their book (1978), concluded that at least four factors may influence how children learn in school. These four are: classroom environment (sound, lighting, temperature, room design), emotional state (motivation, persistence, and responsibility), social needs (self-actualization and peer support), and physical well-being (nutrition, time, physical activity). Another finding was revealed by Walter B. Barbe and M.N.J. Milone in their article "What We Know About Modality Strengths" in the Journal of Educational Leadership (1981), which showed that the most common learning styles among elementary school-aged children are visual (30%) or mixed (30%), auditory (25%), and kinesthetic (15%).

According to Gunawan, the kinesthetic learning style is a learning style that involves movement. Students move to process information into their brains. Students who learn with a kinesthetic learning style prefer to learn by touching or manipulating objects or equipment (Gunawan, 2004). According to Gordon, the kinesthetic learning style is learning through physical activity and direct involvement. The learning process requires physical involvement, requiring students to be physically active. Students with a kinesthetic learning style often want to demonstrate directly without reading the instructions provided. They enjoy "handling," moving, touching, feeling, or experiencing things for themselves (Gordon & Vos, 2002).

Meanwhile, according to DePorter & Hernacki, the kinesthetic learning style involves learning through physical movement. This type of learner is unique in that they learn through constant movement, sensory activity, and touch. These learners find it difficult to sit still for hours due to their strong desire for activity and exploration. Students with a kinesthetic learning style enjoy anything related to body movement, such as crawling, walking, and the ability to walk faster. This research refers to DePorter & Hernacki's definition of the kinesthetic learning style, which emphasizes constant movement and physical activity (Deporter, 2009).

The Effect of Kinesthetic Learning Style (X) on Learning Interest (Y2)

Based on the regression test table, the combined regression coefficient, or F-test, is greater than the F-table (4.382 > 3.14). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is an influence of kinesthetic learning style on learning interest. Based on the output processed using SPSS.26, it is shown that the calculated t-value is 2.176, with a significance value of 0.013 < 0.05, and with a 5% significance level for a two-tailed test and df = n-2-1 = 65. The resulting t-table value is 1.997. Therefore, it can be concluded that the calculated T-value = 2.176>T-table = 1.997, thus rejecting the hypothesis Ho and accepting Ha, indicating a significant influence between kinesthetic learning style and learning interest. The magnitude of this influence is indicated by the R-square value in the table, which is 0.021. This shows that the influence of the kinesthetic learning style variable on learning interest is 2.1%, while the remaining 97.9% is influenced by other factors.

The findings that kinesthetic learning style significantly influences students' interest in learning are supported by Bostrom and Lassen (2006), who emphasize that learning interest increases when instructional strategies match students' learning style preferences. Their study highlights that kinesthetic learners show strong interest in tasks involving experimentation, movement, or real-life applications. Hussain (2017) further demonstrates that activity-based learning stimulates students' curiosity and interest, especially among learners who prefer physical engagement. Dunn and Dunn (2003) similarly argue that learning styles are important predictors of interest and engagement. Additionally, findings by Yildirim (2020) indicate that student interest increases when instructional strategies accommodate their learning styles. This is reinforced by studies showing that

kinesthetic learners benefit from tactile and experiential learning tasks that sustain their attention.

The Effect of Kinesthetic Learning Style (X) on Learning Motivation (Y1) and Learning Interest (Y2)

Based on the analysis, the significance value for the effect of kinesthetic learning style (X) on motivation (Y1) and learning interest (Y2) is 0.029, <0.05, and the calculated F-value is 2.417. Meanwhile, the F-value with a numerator df = 1 and a denominator df = N – 1 = 68 – 1 = 67. The table distribution with a significance level of 5% is 2.35. Therefore, the calculated F-value is greater than the table F-value. Therefore, it can be concluded that kinesthetic learning style (X) influences motivation (Y1) and learning interest (Y2). The results of this study align with the theory proposed by Barbara Prashning in Ariesta Kartika Sari that the absorption of learning information depends on how a person attempts to process it. By providing explanations to students, we can see rapid changes in attitudes and a high level of success through the strengths of their learning styles. Thus, a student's learning style is a modality that influences their learning, processing, and communication (Kartika Sari, 2014). Knowing their learning style makes it easier to motivate themselves and foster interest in learning. Good motivation in learning will result in good learning outcomes. In other words, with diligent effort, especially based on motivation, a person can achieve good results.

The simultaneous influence of kinesthetic learning style on both motivation and interest is consistent with the work of Riener and Willingham (2010), who note that when learners experience instructional alignment with their preferences, their emotional engagement expressed through interest and motivation naturally increases. Pashler et al. (2008) also emphasize that matching teaching methods to learning styles can improve learner engagement, even if not always directly improving achievement. Slavin (2018) explains that instructional variation, particularly methods involving movement and physical participation, has been shown to improve both motivation and interest among middle-school learners. Together, these scholarly findings reinforce the results of this study: kinesthetic learning style is not merely a preference but an influential factor that enhances both emotional (interest) and behavioral (motivation) dimensions of student engagement.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research results on the influence of the Kinesthetic Learning Style (X) on Motivation (Y1) and Learning Interest (Y2) of students at SMP Negeri 16, Bengkulu City, it can be concluded that there is a significant influence between these variables. First, the results from the regression test show that the F-test statistic (4.848) is greater than the F table value (3.14), indicating that the Learning Style significantly influences student learning motivation. Further analysis with SPSS26 reveals a t-count value of 2.921, which is greater than the t-table value of

1.98, with a significance value of 0.003, which is less than 0.05. This confirms that there is a significant effect of the Kinesthetic Learning Style on student motivation at SMP Negeri 16. The findings suggest that the more frequently the kinesthetic learning style is applied, the greater the motivation of students in Islamic religious education.

In the second part of the analysis, the results indicate that the F-test statistic for the kinesthetic learning style's effect on learning interest (4.382) is also greater than the F table value (3.14), signaling a significant influence. The t-count value of 2.176 with a significance value of 0.013, which is less than 0.05, further supports this conclusion. The hypothesis test, where t-count (2.176) is greater than t-table (1.997), leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha). This means that the use of the kinesthetic learning style positively influences students' interest in learning Islamic religious education. The more the kinesthetic learning style is utilized in classroom instruction, the higher the students' interest in the subject.

Lastly, the overall analysis results show a significant influence of the kinesthetic learning style on both student motivation and learning interest. With an F-count value of 2.417, which is greater than the F table value of 2.35, it is concluded that the kinesthetic learning style significantly affects both motivation (Y1) and learning interest (Y2) of students. These findings further emphasize the importance of integrating kinesthetic learning styles to improve students' engagement and performance in Islamic religious education.

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