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The Effect of Structured Positive Affirmation on Elementary Students' Motivation in Physical Education Learning

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of positive affirmation interventions in improving elementary school students' learning motivation. The method used was a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group design. The study involved 164 fourth-grade elementary school students from 10 schools in the Rancakalong District, consisting of 82 students in the experimental group and 82 students in the control group. The experimental group received positive affirmation interventions before the learning process for 12 meetings, while the control group participated in conventional learning activities. Data were collected using pre-test and post-test questionnaires adapted from the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). The results showed that the experimental group experienced an increase in the mean score from 62.83 to 66.39, while the control group increased from 62.89 to 63.26. The Independent Samples T-Test revealed a significant difference between the two groups with a significance value of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$) and a t-value of 3.433. In addition, the N-Gain analysis indicated that the experimental group achieved a mean N-Gain score of 0.3595 (35.95%), categorized as moderate or fairly effective, whereas the control group obtained an N-Gain score of 0.0108 (1.07%), categorized as low. These findings indicate that the consistent implementation of positive affirmations significantly improved students' learning motivation and active classroom participation in Physical Education learning. The novelty of this study lies in the implementation of a structured affirmation pattern integrated directly into physical education learning routines to strengthen children's self-efficacy from an early age.

Keywords: Positive Affirmation, Learning Motivation, Elementary School, Physical Education, Educational Psychology.

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A. Introduction

Learning motivation is an important factor influencing students' engagement, persistence, and participation in the learning process (Fréchette-Simard et al., 2020). At the elementary school level, motivation plays a strategic role because it shapes students' attitudes toward learning and supports the development of long-term academic behavior (Li et al., 2020). Students with high learning motivation tend to participate actively, demonstrate persistence in completing learning tasks, and show positive attitudes during classroom activities (Citis Ley Flórez López, 2023), Conversely, low learning motivation is often associated with passive participation and low engagement in learning activities (Nadeak et al., 2024). From the perspective of educational psychology, learning motivation is understood as the result of a dynamic interaction between individuals' internal factors and supportive learning environments (Urhahne & Wijnia, 2023).

In the context of Physical Education, Sports, and Health, learning motivation becomes increasingly important because learning activities require students' active physical, emotional, and social involvement (Sitti Rahma et al., 2023). However, many elementary school students still experience psychological barriers during Physical Education learning, such as low self-confidence, fear of failure, embarrassment, and anxiety when performing physical activities (Muhtar et al., 2019). These conditions may reduce students' willingness to participate actively in learning activities and negatively affect their learning motivation. In fact, individuals need to demonstrate confidence in their ability to perform various activities and adapt to existing situations and conditions in order to overcome difficulties and failures in the learning process (Mulya & Lengkana, 2020).

Motivation in physical activity is also closely related to self-determination theory, which emphasizes the aspects of autonomy, competence, and intrinsic motivation in performing physical tasks (Alif, 2016). In Physical Education learning, students who feel psychologically supported and have confidence in their abilities tend to demonstrate higher learning motivation. Physical Education learning not only emphasizes the mastery of motor skills but also requires courage, self-confidence, and students' willingness to participate in physical activities (International & Of, 2022). However, students' motivation levels in Physical Education learning still show significant variation, which may hinder students' engagement and learning experiences (Lestari et al., 2023). Therefore, learning approaches that pay attention to students' affective aspects through positive and continuous psychological support are needed (Cendana & Siswanto, 2022; Ursula, 2024).

The issue of learning motivation in Physical Education can be explained through Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes that intrinsic motivation develops when students' psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and social relatedness are fulfilled (Khalid et al., 2023; Ryan & Deci, 2000). In Physical Education learning, students who receive positive emotional support and feel confident in their abilities are more likely to demonstrate higher motivation and active participation (Urhahne & Wijnia, 2023). Therefore, instructional approaches that strengthen students' psychological aspects are needed to create a more supportive learning environment.

However, several studies have shown that elementary school students' learning motivation in Physical Education has not yet developed optimally. Some students demonstrate enthusiasm and active participation, while others tend to be passive, lack self-confidence, and are reluctant to engage in learning activities (Nadeak et al., 2024; Sitti Rahma et al., 2023). This condition indicates that the

fulfillment of students' psychological needs, particularly in the aspects of competence and emotional support, has not been fully facilitated in daily learning practices (Lestari et al., 2023; Suoth et al., 2022).

One instructional approach that may strengthen students' learning motivation is positive affirmation. Positive affirmation refers to positive verbal reinforcement aimed at encouraging self-confidence, competence perception, and positive self-belief among students (Ursula, 2024). Nevertheless, the implementation of positive affirmation in elementary school Physical Education learning still tends to be sporadic and has not been systematically integrated into teachers' instructional strategies (Fréchette-Simard et al., 2020). In Physical Education learning, positive affirmations can be delivered before, during, and after learning activities to help students feel more confident and emotionally supported during participation in physical tasks (Lestari et al., 2023). The discrepancy between the theoretical framework of Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes psychological support, and the reality of instructional implementation highlights the need for learning approaches that consciously and systematically integrate positive affirmation into Physical Education learning (Urhahne & Wijnia, 2023).

Positive affirmation is aligned with the humanistic learning approach, which emphasizes the importance of supportive communication and the strengthening of students' psychological aspects (Ursula, 2024). Previous studies have reported that positive affirmation and supportive communication contribute positively to students' motivation and classroom engagement (Cendana & Siswanto, 2022; Novi Tari Simbolon et al., 2023). In the context of Physical Education learning, positive affirmations delivered before, during, and after physical activities can create a conducive and enjoyable learning environment, thereby encouraging students to participate actively (Lestari et al., 2023; Sitti Rahma et al., 2023).

However, several limitations remain in previous studies. First, most previous studies examining positive affirmation were conducted in general classroom contexts rather than in Physical Education settings (Azis et al., 2022; Mulyani, M.Pd et al., 2020). Second, many studies used qualitative approaches, resulting in limited quantitative evidence regarding the effectiveness of positive affirmation interventions on students' learning motivation. Second, many studies used qualitative approaches, resulting in limited quantitative evidence regarding the effectiveness of positive affirmation interventions on students' learning motivation. Experimental studies specifically examining the effect of positive affirmation in the context of elementary school physical education are still relatively limited (Nadeak et al., 2024; Suoth et al., 2022). This gap forms the basis for the necessity of conducting the present study.

Based on these gaps, this study aimed to examine the effect of structured positive affirmation interventions on elementary school students' learning motivation in Physical Education learning using a quasi-experimental design. The novelty of this study lies in the implementation of a structured positive affirmation model conducted consistently before the learning process for 12 meetings and integrated directly into Physical Education learning routines. This study is expected to contribute empirical evidence regarding the role of positive affirmation in strengthening elementary school students' learning motivation in Physical Education contexts.

B. Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental method to examine the effect of positive affirmation on elementary school students'

learning motivation in Physical Education learning. The study used a Pre-Test–Post-Test Non-Equivalent Control Group Design involving an experimental group and a control group.

Table 1. Pre-Test–Post-Test Non-Equivalent Control Group Design

Group	Pre-Test	Treatment	Post-Test	Description
Experimental Group	O_1	Positive Affirmation	O_2	Received positive affirmation intervention before Physical Education learning sessions for 12 meetings
Control Group	O_3	Conventional Learning	O_4	Participated in regular Physical Education learning without intervention

Source: Adapted from Abraham & Supriyati (2022)

Table 1 illustrates the quasi-experimental design involving two groups. The experimental group received positive affirmation treatment for 12 Physical Education learning sessions, while the control group participated in conventional learning activities without any intervention. Both groups completed pre-tests and post-tests to measure changes in students' learning motivation before and after the intervention.

The population of this study consisted of elementary school students in the Rancakalong District area. The sample was selected using a cluster random sampling technique involving fourth-grade students from 10 randomly selected elementary schools. Five schools were assigned to the experimental group and five schools to the control group. Each group consisted of 82 students, resulting in a total sample of 164 participants.

The research procedure was conducted in three stages: preliminary, implementation, and final stages. The preliminary stage included problem identification, literature review, and instrument preparation. The implementation stage began with the administration of a pre-test to measure students' initial learning motivation, followed by the positive affirmation intervention conducted during 12 Physical Education learning sessions in the experimental group. After the intervention period, a post-test was administered to evaluate changes in students' learning motivation.

Data collection was conducted using a learning motivation questionnaire adapted from the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) and adjusted for elementary school students. The instrument consisted of 15 items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire measured several aspects of learning motivation, including learning interest, self-confidence, engagement, and attitudes toward learning. Instrument reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha with a minimum criterion of 0.70 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25. The analysis procedures included descriptive statistics, Independent Samples t-Test, and N-Gain analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention on students' learning motivation.

Table 1. N-Gain Score Categories

N-Gain Score	Category
$g \geq 0.70$	High
$0.30 \leq g < 0.70$	Moderate
$g < 0.30$	Low

Source: Hake (1999)

Table 1 presents the N-Gain score categories used to determine the level of improvement in students' learning motivation after the implementation of positive affirmation intervention in Physical Education learning. An N-Gain score of $g \geq 0.70$ is categorized as high, $0.30 \leq g < 0.70$ is categorized as moderate, and $g < 0.30$ is categorized as low. These categories were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention in improving students' learning motivation.

C. Result and Discussion

Result

After the entire research process had been completed, starting from the initial data collection (pre-test), the implementation of the positive affirmation treatment, and ending with the final data collection (post-test), various data describing changes in students' learning motivation during the learning process were obtained. The data were then analyzed using statistical analysis techniques to determine the extent of the effect of implementing positive affirmation on elementary school students' learning motivation in Physical Education learning. The results of the data processing and analysis are presented in the following section.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics Results of Pre-Test and Post-Test

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Experimental Group Pre-Test (Positive Affirmation)	82	52	75	62.83	6.216	38.637
Experimental Group Post-Test (Results of Positive Affirmation)	82	52	75	66.39	5.767	33.253
Control Group Pre-Test (Conventional Method)	82	52	75	62.89	6.124	37.506
Control Group Post-Test (Results of Conventional Method)	82	52	75	63.26	5.924	35.106
Valid N (Listwise)	82					

Based on Table 1, the descriptive statistical analysis showed that each research group consisted of 82 participants. In the experimental group, which received the positive affirmation treatment, the mean pre-test score was 62.83 with a standard deviation of 6.216. After the treatment was administered, the mean post-test score increased to 66.39 with a standard deviation of 5.767. This increase in the mean score indicates that the implementation of positive affirmation had a positive effect on improving the measured outcomes. In addition, the decrease in the standard deviation value indicates that participants' results after the treatment became more stable and evenly distributed compared to before the treatment. Meanwhile, in the control group, which used the conventional method, the mean pre-test score was 62.89 with a standard deviation of 6.124. After

the learning process, the mean post-test score increased to 63.26 with a standard deviation of 5.925. Although there was an improvement, the increase was not as substantial as that of the experimental group. This finding indicates that the conventional method had a smaller effect compared to the use of positive affirmation.

Table 3. Independent Samples T-Test

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Students' Learning Outcomes	Equal variances assumed	.365	.547	3.433	162	.001
	Equal variances not assumed			3.433	161.881	.001

Based on Table 3, the results of the Independent Samples T-Test showed a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.001. This value was lower than the significance level of 0.05 (Sig. < 0.05), indicating that there was a significant difference between the students' learning outcomes in the experimental group and the control group. Furthermore, the analysis showed a t-value of 3.433 with a mean difference value of 3.134. This finding indicates that the average learning outcomes of students in the experimental group were higher than those in the control group. The difference in the mean scores suggests that the implementation of positive affirmation had a positive effect on improving students' motivation or learning outcomes in Physical Education learning.

Table 4. N-Gain Score and N-Gain Percentage

Positive Affirmation

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ngain_ScorePA	81	.00	1.00	.3595	.18871
Ngain_PercentagePA	81	.00	100.00	35.9509	18.87129
Valid N (listwise)	81				

Based on Table 4, the results of the N-Gain score analysis showed that the experimental group, which received the positive affirmation treatment, obtained a mean N-Gain score of 0.3595 or 35.95%, which falls into the moderate or fairly effective category. These results indicate that the implementation of positive affirmation was able to provide a fairly good improvement in students' motivation or learning outcomes in Physical Education learning.

Tabel 5. N-Gain Score dan N-Gain Percent Konvensional

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ngain_ScoreKL	81	-1.00	1.00	.0108	.23921
Ngain_PercentKL	81	-100.00	100.00	1.0793	23.92082
Valid N (listwise)	81				

Based on Table 5, the results of the N-Gain score analysis showed that the control group obtained a mean N-Gain score of 0.0108 or 1.07%, which falls into the low category. These results indicate that conventional learning was not able to provide a significant improvement in students' motivation or learning outcomes.

In fact, several students experienced a decline in learning outcomes, as indicated by the minimum value of -1.00.

Overall, the difference in N-Gain values between the experimental group and the control group indicates that the implementation of positive affirmation was more effective in improving students' motivation or learning outcomes compared to conventional learning.

Discussion

The findings of this study are consistent with Self-Determination Theory, which explains that psychological support and positive reinforcement can strengthen students' intrinsic motivation during the learning process (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In elementary school students, positive affirmation becomes particularly important because children at this developmental stage are highly influenced by external encouragement, emotional feedback, and teacher appreciation. Supportive verbal expressions such as praise, encouragement, and positive reinforcement help students develop feelings of competence and confidence when participating in Physical Education activities. As a result, students become more willing to participate actively and demonstrate greater enthusiasm during learning activities.

Positive affirmation also contributes to the development of students' self-efficacy, namely students' belief in their ability to perform learning tasks successfully. In Physical Education learning, many elementary school students experience fear of failure, embarrassment, and anxiety when engaging in physical activities. Positive affirmations help reduce these negative feelings by creating positive perceptions of students' abilities and learning experiences. When students repeatedly receive supportive and encouraging statements from teachers, they gradually develop stronger confidence in their capacity to complete physical tasks and participate in classroom activities. This condition strengthens students' self-efficacy, which subsequently increases their learning motivation and willingness to engage in learning activities (Cendana & Siswanto, 2022; Novi Tari Simbolon et al., 2023; Ursula, 2024).

In addition, positive affirmation plays an important role in creating emotional safety within the learning environment. Emotional safety refers to students' feelings of being accepted, appreciated, and psychologically secure during the learning process. In Physical Education contexts, emotional safety is essential because learning activities often involve direct physical performance observed by peers and teachers. Students who feel emotionally safe tend to participate more confidently without excessive fear of making mistakes or being judged negatively by others. Therefore, the implementation of positive affirmation helps create a more supportive and enjoyable classroom atmosphere that encourages students to participate actively in Physical Education learning.

The results of the N-Gain analysis further support these findings. The experimental group obtained an average N-Gain score of 0.3595, categorized as moderate or fairly effective, whereas the control group only achieved an N-Gain score of 0.0108, categorized as low. These results indicate that structured positive affirmation interventions were more effective in improving students' learning motivation compared to conventional learning approaches. The improvement occurred because positive affirmation functioned not only as verbal encouragement but also as a psychological reinforcement strategy capable of strengthening emotional comfort, self-confidence, and active participation among students.

The findings of this study also support previous studies reporting that positive communication and supportive classroom interactions can improve students' motivation, engagement, and self-confidence during learning activities

(Cendana & Siswanto, 2022; Novi Tari Simbolon et al., 2023; Ursula, 2024). However, this study extends previous findings by demonstrating that structured positive affirmation integrated consistently into Physical Education learning routines for 12 meetings can effectively strengthen elementary school students' learning motivation. This finding highlights the importance of integrating affective and psychological support into Physical Education learning rather than focusing solely on motor skill achievement.

Overall, this study emphasizes that positive affirmation can serve as an effective instructional strategy to create a more meaningful, active, and emotionally supportive learning environment for elementary school students in Physical Education learning.

D. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that positive affirmation can serve as an effective learning strategy in enhancing students' learning motivation in Physical Education. This study is expected to serve as a reference for Physical Education teachers in integrating positive psychological approaches to create a more active, confident, and enjoyable learning environment for students. Future research is recommended to involve a larger sample size and to examine other variables related to students' affective aspects.

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F. Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in this study.

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