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The Relationship Between Learning Interest and Learning Outcomes Among Students of the Buddhist Religious Education Study Program at STAB Maitreyawira Pekanbaru: A Mixed-Methods Study

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Abstract

Based on observations of the learning outcomes of 12 students in the Buddhist Religious Education Study Program at STAB Maitreyawira on July 1, 2025, it was determined that there is a need to improve both learning outcomes and interest in learning. This study employs a mixed-methods approach and was conducted between July and September 2025 within the Buddhist Religious Education Study Program at STAB Maitreyawira. Data collection techniques included questionnaires, interviews, documentation, and observation. The population and sample for this study consisted of 44 students from the 2024 and 2025 cohorts of the Buddhist Religious Education Study Program at STAB Maitreyawira. The study concludes that the quantitative and qualitative findings complement one another; the quantitative results demonstrate a significant relationship between interest in learning and learning outcomes, while the interviews and observations provide insight into students' experiences regarding the development of their interest in learning and their engagement in the learning process factors that ultimately enhance learning outcomes. Furthermore, the novelty of this research lies in findings that broaden the understanding of the relationship between interest in learning and learning outcomes by integrating academic reward stimuli with student engagement in interactive learning.

Keywords: Learning Interest, Learning Outcomes, Studi Mixed Methods

INTRODUCTION

Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning environment and process that enables students to actively develop their potential cultivating intelligence, noble character, and the skills necessary for themselves, society, and the nation. A university is one example of an educational institution; within it, lecturers carry out their respective duties either individually or collaboratively to achieve shared goals. A primary responsibility of lecturers is to conduct learning evaluations to determine student learning outcomes. These learning outcomes are linked to students' interest in learning.

One such institution is STAB Maitreyawira, which offers two undergraduate (S1) study programs: Buddhist Religious Education and Buddhist Business and Management. In the Buddhist Religious Education program, lecturers conduct learning evaluations each semester to assess student performance and determine learning outcomes. These outcomes are related to the students' interest in learning.

Based on observations of the learning outcomes of 12 students in the Buddhist Religious Education program at STAB Maitreyawira on July 1, 2025, it is evident that there is a need to improve both student

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learning outcomes and their interest in learning. Given these observations, research is required to examine the relationship between learning interest and learning outcomes among students of the Buddhist Religious Education program at STAB Maitreyawira Pekanbaru, utilizing a mixed-methods approach.

Furthermore, we will discuss the concept of "interest in learning." Hidayati et al. (2024) state that interest is a persistent tendency within an individual to feel drawn toward a specific field or subject, accompanied by a sense of pleasure in engaging with it. This enduring interest fosters a sense of enjoyment, which motivates the individual to pursue that field. Additionally, "interest in learning" is defined as an individual's inclination or attraction toward learning activities encompassing both emotional and cognitive aspects which encourages active participation, engagement, and enthusiasm throughout the learning process. Wahyuni et al. (2023) state that a psychological factor that helps determine the success of the educational process is students' interest in learning. Furthermore, Laili et al. (2024) note that students' interest in learning the core of their educational journey shapes the psychological dynamics that influence how they respond to, interact with, and internalize knowledge. Additionally, Liora et al. (2023) define interest in learning as a capacity possessed by students to achieve optimal learning outcomes through their engagement in learning activities.

Next, the researcher will discuss learning outcomes. Triyani et al. (2023) state that learning outcomes are the achievements attained by students following learning activities, resulting in measurable and observable changes in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Similarly, Susanty and Marsofiyati (2024) explain that learning outcomes refer to the abilities acquired by students after undergoing a learning experience, which are manifested through changes in behavior. For instance, an individual who previously did not grasp a certain concept comes to understand it after participating in the learning process.

Rahmawati et al. (2024) state that learning outcomes are what students achieve or acquire through their efforts or cognitive processes; these are manifested as the mastery of knowledge and fundamental skills applicable to various aspects of life, which become evident in an individual through the demonstration of attitudes, knowledge, and basic competencies. Furthermore, Ahong and Hosan (2024) note that learning outcomes emerge following behavioral changes resulting from the learning process and experiences changes deemed to enhance knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes throughout the course of instruction.

Student learning outcomes serve as the primary indicator for assessing educational success. Each student attains a different level of achievement during the learning process, which is influenced by various internal and external factors. Learning outcomes are evaluated through periodic academic assessments. The grades obtained by students reflect their level of understanding of the subject matter (Davis & Lee, as cited in Fedrianto et al., 2025).

Handayan (Aziza et al., 2025) asserts that a conducive school environment can optimally support the improvement of student learning outcomes. Additionally, Marpaung (as cited in Sitorus, Merry Crismest Sari, Simamora, & Danis, 2025) states that learning outcomes are a crucial indicator for evaluating the effectiveness of an educational process, as they reflect a learner's level of understanding and ability to master the competencies taught encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Finally, Oktavia et al. (2025) define learning outcomes as the level of success achieved in the learning process, determined through assessments and expressed in the form of numerical grades. Fitria et al. (2025) state that learning outcomes are manifestations of learning behavior, typically observed as changes in attitudes, perceptions, abilities, skills, and habits. The affective, cognitive, and psychomotor aspects significantly influence students' learning outcomes. Progress in these three areas determines the extent of the learning outcomes achieved by students following the instructional process.

Sari, as cited in Gustiana et al. (2025), notes that learning outcomes can be measured through various forms of assessment, including tests, assignments, projects, and the observation of student behavior. From a cognitive perspective, learning outcomes reflect the degree to which students understand the concepts, facts, or theories taught. In the psychomotor domain, learning outcomes are assessed based on a student's ability to perform specific skills. Meanwhile, in the affective dimension, learning outcomes encompass changes in the attitudes, interests, or values internalized by students. Furthermore, Mutaqin et al. and Pattiasina et al., as cited in Putri & Darmawan (2026), state that learning outcomes reflect the knowledge, attitudes, and skills acquired by students throughout the learning process. These outcomes also serve as a measure of a student's readiness to pursue higher levels of education. Additionally, Ratnawati et al. (2023) define learning outcomes as the results of assessments conducted on students after they have participated in a learning process over a specific period. Finally, Sutikno et al. (2024) state that learning outcomes are the academic results achieved by students during their time in the classroom. These outcomes are influenced by factors such as attendance, the completion of assignments, student engagement, and examination grades.

The novelty of this research lies in its examination of the relationship between learning interest and student learning outcomes within the context of Buddhist higher education specifically, the Buddhist Religious Education Study Program at STAB Maitreyawira Pekanbaru using a mixed-methods approach. Unlike previous studies, which have largely focused on the relationship between learning interest and academic outcomes within general education settings using quantitative methods, this study integrates quantitative analysis with a qualitative exploration of students' learning experiences. This integration allows the research not only to identify the connection between learning interest and learning outcomes but also to gain insight into how academic recognition and interactive learning relate to these variables.

Another novelty aspect of this study is its use of a mixed-methods design to examine the relationship between learning interest and student learning outcomes, with a specific focus on academic recognition in the form of point-based rewards and interactive learning experiences. Moving beyond studies that treat learning interest merely as an individual factor linked to academic achievement, this research explores how student engagement through asking and answering questions, expressing opinions, challenging statements, and participating in discussions contributes to meaningful learning experiences. These aspects are analyzed to understand how academic interaction fosters the development of learning interest and how this, in turn, relates to student learning outcomes. Furthermore, the research context students in the Buddhist Religious Education Study Program at STAB Maitreyawira Pekanbaru provides an empirical perspective on learning interest and outcomes within a Buddhist higher education environment. By integrating quantitative and qualitative data, this study aims to provide not only statistical evidence regarding the relationship between these two variables but also an in-depth explanation of the learning experiences that underpin this connection.

METHODS

Mixed methods is a research approach that combines two primary forms of inquiry quantitative (based on numbers, statistics, and generalization) and qualitative (based on narratives, meaning, and contextual depth) within a single research endeavor (Creswell & Inoue, 2025). The novelty of this research lies in its use of a mixed-methods approach with an explanatory sequential design. This design integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches in a sequential manner, aiming to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between learning interest and academic achievement among students in the Buddhist Religious Education Study Program at STAB Maitreyawira Pekanbaru. The quantitative approach is employed to examine the relationship between learning interest (X) and academic achievement (Y), while the

qualitative approach is used to delve deeper into students' learning experiences, the factors that foster learning interest, and the learning phenomena that help explain the results of the quantitative analysis.

The novelty of this study is found in the application of an explanatory sequential design to investigate the link between learning interest and academic achievement not merely through statistical data, but also by exploring the actual experiences of students throughout the learning process. This research places particular emphasis on academic recognition such as the awarding of points and student engagement in academic activities, including the confidence to ask questions, provide answers, express opinions, offer counterarguments, and cultivate curiosity regarding course material. These two aspects serve as the primary focus for a deeper exploration of how learning experiences relate to students' learning interest and academic achievement.

The study was conducted from July to September 2025 within the Buddhist Religious Education Study Program at STAB Maitreyawira Pekanbaru, located at Jalan Bukit Barisan III No. 99, Riau Ujung, Tampan Village, Payung Sekaki District, Pekanbaru, Riau. In the quantitative phase, the research population consisted of all students from the 2024 and 2025 cohorts of the Buddhist Religious Education Study Program at STAB Maitreyawira, totaling 44 students. The entire population was included in the sample using a total sampling technique (saturated sampling). A pilot test of the learning interest questionnaire was conducted with 30 students from the 2023 cohort of the Buddhist Religious Education Study Program at STAB Maitreyawira, who were not included in the main research sample. Quantitative data were collected through a learning interest questionnaire, interviews, observations, and the documentation of academic grades as supporting data. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to determine the direction, strength, and significance of the relationship between students' learning interest and their learning outcomes.

In the qualitative phase, data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews and observations of the learning process. Informants were selected purposively based on variations in their levels of learning interest and academic achievement, ensuring a comprehensive overview of learning experiences across students with different characteristics. The interviews were designed to explore students' interest in course materials, their level of attention during instruction, their engagement in academic activities, their study habits, and the factors that contributed to their academic outcomes. Observations were carried out to gain direct insight into students' learning behaviors and interactions during the course, specifically in relation to their learning interest and academic achievement.

The qualitative data were analyzed through a process of data condensation, data presentation, and the drawing and verification of conclusions. The validity of the data was strengthened through methodological triangulation, comparing findings from interviews, observations, and relevant documentation. Subsequently, the quantitative and qualitative results were integrated during the interpretation phase. The quantitative findings were used to demonstrate the statistical relationship between learning interest and academic achievement, while the qualitative findings provided an explanation of the learning experiences and conditions that offer a deeper understanding of this relationship. This integration of both approaches is intended to provide a more holistic understanding of the connection between learning interest and student academic achievement within the context of Buddhist higher education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following section presents a discussion regarding the relationship between learning interest and the learning outcomes of students in the Buddhist Religious Education study program at STAB Maitreyawira Pekanbaru. The discussion begins with an analysis of the regression significance between

learning interest (X) and learning outcomes (Y). To determine the degree of significance of the simple regression equation, tests for significance and linearity were conducted using the F-test, as presented in the following table:

Table 1. ANOVA Table for the Significance and Linearity Test of the Regression between Learning Interest (X) and Learning Outcomes (Y)

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.652	1	11.652	5.06	.000[b]
	Residual	7413.257	42	176.506		
	Total	7424.909	43			

a. Dependent Variable: Learning Outcomes

b. Predictors: (Constant), Learning Interest

Based on the result where F-calculated (5.06) > F-table (4.07) at a significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected. Consequently, the research hypothesis which posits a significant relationship between learning interest and learning outcomes is accepted. This indicates that there is indeed a significant relationship between learning interest and learning outcomes.

Table 2. Model Summary for X and Y

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.760[a]	.610	.592	3.285

a. Predictors: (Constant), Learning Interest

Based on the data in Table 2, the relationship between learning interest and learning outcomes yields a correlation coefficient of 0.610. This indicates a strong relationship between learning interest and learning outcomes. This is in accordance with the guidelines for interpreting correlation coefficients, as presented in the table below:

Table 3. Guidelines for Interpreting Correlation Coefficients

Coefficient Interval	Level of Relationship
0,80 - 1,000	Very strong
0,60 - 0,799	Strong
0,40 - 0,599	Strong Enough
0,20 - 0,399	Low
0,000 - 0,199	Very Low

Riduwan (2010, p. 136)

Table 4. Results of the t-test for X and Y

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	72.596	77.318		.939	.353
	Learning Interest	.112	.436	.040	2.107	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Learning Outcomes

To test the significance of the correlation between learning interest (X) and learning outcomes (Y), a t-test formula was applied. The calculated t-value (t-count) was 2.107, while the t-table value for a two-tailed

test with 42 degrees of freedom (df) at a significance level (α) of 0.05 was 2.018. Since the calculated t-value (2.107) is greater than the t-table value (2.018), it can be concluded that a significant relationship exists. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. In short, there is a significant relationship between learning interest (X) and learning outcomes (Y). This finding offers a novelty insight: learning interest is meaningfully linked to students' academic achievement. A higher level of learning interest tends to correspond with better learning outcomes, provided the correlation is positive.

These quantitative results are further explained through student interviews. Based on the interviews and observations, a new insight emerged: students' learning interest is linked to academic rewards provided by the lecturer specifically, the awarding of points during the course. Students reported that their learning outcomes improved due to these points. The points encouraged students to be more active and fostered their interest in learning, as they were motivated to accumulate as many points as possible to achieve higher academic results.

This finding contributes a new theoretical perspective a key novelty of this study by demonstrating that the awarding of points acts as a learning stimulus, which cultivates interest and ultimately influences learning outcomes. Thus, the primary novelty of this research is that the relationship between learning interest and learning outcomes is not merely a matter of a student's intrinsic interest in the course material; rather, an academic reward system in the form of points can also stimulate learning interest and, consequently, enhance student learning outcomes. Another novelty aspect explored in this study is student engagement in interactive learning specifically, the willingness to ask and answer questions, express opinions, offer counterarguments to responses or statements, and cultivate curiosity regarding course material. Such activities demonstrate that the learning process does not merely consist of the transmission of information from lecturer to student; rather, it involves academic interaction that provides students with opportunities to think critically, present arguments, and develop their own understanding independently.

This phenomenon is significant because students require learning experiences that provide them with the space to express their thoughts and satisfy their curiosity regarding the subject matter. When lecturers offer students opportunities to ask questions, provide answers, engage in discussions, and challenge statements, students gain the space to participate intellectually in the learning process. Such experiences can contribute to the development of a student's interest in learning, as they move beyond being mere recipients of information to becoming active participants in the construction of their own knowledge.

Another novelty aspect of this study lies in its attempt to link these learning experiences to student learning outcomes. The research seeks to determine whether students with a higher interest in learning also demonstrate better academic outcomes, while simultaneously exploring the experiences that help explain this relationship. Through a quantitative approach, the study identifies the direction, strength, and significance of the correlation between interest in learning and learning outcomes. Furthermore, a qualitative approach is employed to delve into students' experiences specifically, the factors that enhance their interest in learning and their level of engagement during the course.

Thus, the novelty of this research lies not only in examining the relationship between two educational variables but also in deepening the understanding of "interest in learning" through the lenses of academic rewards and interactive learning experiences. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings allows for a more profound comprehension of the link between interest in learning and learning outcomes, particularly within the context of Buddhist higher education at STAB Maitreyawira Pekanbaru.

The study's novelty is further underscored by its integration of quantitative evidence demonstrating a significant relationship between interest in learning and learning outcomes with qualitative insights into how students cultivate their own academic engagement during their coursework. Interview results reveal that

the awarding of points by lecturers serves as an external stimulus, encouraging students to increase their active participation and strive for higher academic achievement. This stimulus relates to an orientation toward academic achievement cultivated during earlier stages of education through healthy competition where students strive for academic recognition. Such recognition can be earned by actively participating in coursework, for instance, through presentations, asking questions, or providing answers.

Consequently, this study contributes a more contextual understanding of the relationship between learning interest and academic outcomes among students of Buddhist Religious Education, by integrating correlational findings with the students' actual experiences throughout the learning process. In this way, the quantitative and qualitative results complement one another: the quantitative findings demonstrate a significant relationship between learning interest and academic outcomes, while the interview data offer insight into the students' experiences specifically how their learning interest develops and how their engagement in the learning process ultimately enhances their academic performance.

Presented below are three previous studies, which will be analyzed in the following paragraph to demonstrate the novelty of the current research. First, the study by Aminingtyas & Wardhani (2023) found a positive correlation between learning interest and children's cognitive learning outcomes. Second, Romdhon et al. (2023) identified a significant relationship between learning interest and student learning outcomes in mathematics among fifth-grade students at SD Atikah Musadad. Third, Babang et al. (2023) found a significant relationship between learning interest and student learning outcomes in physical education (PJOK) at SDN Naikoten 2 Kupang.

Based on these three prior studies, it is evident that learning interest has a positive and significant relationship with learning outcomes, both in early childhood education and primary school settings. Aminingtyas and Wardhani (2023) examined the relationship between learning interest, motivation, and children's cognitive learning outcomes through the use of the "Rumah Belajar" (Learning Home) portal. Romdhon et al. (2023) investigated the link between learning interest and mathematics learning outcomes among primary school students, while Babang et al. (2023) explored the relationship between learning interest and learning outcomes in physical education. Although all three studies share a common focus on the relationship between learning interest and learning outcomes, the present study differs in terms of educational level, subject characteristics, learning context, and research approach.

The novelty of this research lies in its development of a deeper understanding of the relationship between learning interest and university students' learning outcomes through a mixed-methods approach integrating quantitative analysis of these relationships with a qualitative exploration of the students' learning experiences. Specifically, interview findings reveal that the awarding of points by lecturers serves as an external stimulus, encouraging students to participate more actively in lectures, strive to earn points, and achieve higher learning outcomes. Thus, this study does not merely examine whether a relationship exists between students' interest in learning and their academic outcomes; it also explores the experiences and academic motivators associated with that interest. The study posits that a student's interest in learning is not solely rooted in an intrinsic fascination with course material but can also be fostered by external stimuli specifically, academic rewards in the form of points. This perspective serves as a contextual contribution to understanding the link between learning interest and academic achievement among students in the Buddhist Religious Education Study Program at STAB Maitreyawira.

Another novelty aspect addressed in this research is the engagement of students in the Buddhist Religious Education Study Program at STAB Maitreyawira within an interactive learning environment. This includes their willingness to ask and answer questions, express opinions, offer counterarguments to statements or responses, and cultivate curiosity regarding the course material. Such activities demonstrate that the

learning process is not limited to the one-way transmission of information from lecturer to student; rather, it involves academic interactions that empower students to think critically, construct arguments, and develop their own understanding independently.

CONCLUSIN

Based on the hypothesis testing and research findings, this study concludes that there is a significant relationship between learning interest (X) and learning outcomes (Y) among students of the Buddhist Religious Education Study Program at STAB Maitreyawira Pekanbaru. The quantitative findings demonstrate that students' learning interest is associated with their academic achievement, while the qualitative findings provide further insight into the factors that shape and stimulate this interest, particularly external academic rewards in the form of points awarded by lecturers. The interview results reveal that academic points serve as an external incentive that encourages students to participate more actively in lectures, accumulate achievement points, ask questions, respond to questions, express opinions, and critically challenge statements during classroom discussions. Such interactive engagement provides opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of course materials and may contribute to better learning outcomes, although the awarding of points does not automatically guarantee academic improvement. The novelty of this study lies in extending the understanding of the relationship between learning interest and learning outcomes by highlighting academic point-based rewards as an external stimulus that can encourage students' learning motivation and intellectual engagement. This perspective suggests that learning interest should not be understood exclusively in terms of students' intrinsic curiosity toward learning materials but also in relation to their responses to academic reward systems implemented by lecturers. By integrating quantitative evidence of the significant relationship between learning interest and learning outcomes with qualitative insights into students' experiences of academic rewards and classroom participation, this mixed-methods study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of student learning. These findings offer practical implications for lecturers in designing participatory learning strategies, implementing constructive reward systems, fostering healthy academic competition, and creating interactive learning environments that encourage active student involvement while supporting the achievement of educational objectives.

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