



Interest in Students with Disabilities in Participating in Physical Education Learning

Harum Mita Maharani¹, Aam Ali Rahman^{2✉}, Dewi Susilawati³

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia¹²³

History Article

Received April 2026

Approved April 2026

Published vol 13 no 1 2026

Keywords

Disabilities Students; Learning Interes; Physical Education

Abstract

This study aims to describe the level of interest of students with special needs in participating in physical education learning at special needs school, identify the factors that affect these interests, and describe the form of student participation during the learning process. This study applies a qualitative approach through case research methods. The number of participants in this study was 10 students with disabilities between the ages of 11 and 16, selected by purposive means. The data collection method included observation, an image-based questionnaire with an easy scale, and semi-structured interviews with Physical education, sports and health teachers. Data were analyzed descriptively for observation and questionnaires, as well as thematic analysis for interviews. The results of the study show that the interest of disabled students in participating in physical education learning in general is included in the medium to high category. The observation results showed that 50% of students had high interest, 30% moderate, and 20% low. The results of the questionnaire showed that the indicators of interest and attention tended to be high, while student activities were diverse. The main factors that affect students' interests include adaptive learning strategies, the use of learning media, the emotional bond between teachers and students, and a pleasant learning atmosphere. The interest of students with special needs in physical education learning is relatively good and is influenced by various internal and external factors. Overall, the study concludes that the interest of students with special needs in physical education is relatively good and is shaped by a combination of internal and external factors, especially effective teaching approaches and supportive learning conditions.

How to Cite

Maharani, H. M., Rahman, A. A., Susilawati, D. (2026). Interest in Students with Disabilities in Participating in Physical Education Learning. *Journal of Physical Education, Health and Sport*, 13 (1), 513-519.

✉ Correspondence Author:
E-mail: alirahman@upi.edu

INTRODUCTION

Learning activities are also an essential solution. Providing a wide selection of accessible and engaging sports and game activities for students with disabilities will increase their engagement (Nugroho & Lubis, 2021). One method that can be integrated is "Play Therapy", where play activities can provide a fun experience and reduce the obstacles that students with disabilities may feel (Nugroho & Lubis, 2021).

The lack of interest of children with disabilities in participating in physical education learning at special needs school, greatly affects the achievement of the success of learning goals. Then the lack of understanding of the level of interest of disabled students in participating in physical education can cause teachers to have difficulty in designing the right learning methods. If students do not have a high interest, then their participation will be low, and the learning objectives will not be achieved to the maximum. Therefore, this research needs to be conducted to find out how interested students with disabilities are in physical education learning, so that it can be used as a basis for consideration in the preparation of more effective and fun learning strategies in the special needs school environment.

Many systems used to classify the visually impaired, including the WHO and the ICD (International Classification of Diseases) and the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-2000, use intelligence test scores to measure the level of children with disabilities. The classification can be seen in the IQ score below:

Disability Rate	Skor Tes Intelegensi
Light grahita tuna	IQ 50-55 sd. 70-75
Moderate grahita tuna	IQ 35-40 sd. 50-55
Tuna grahita severe (payah)	IQ 20-25 sd. 35-40
Heavy Stubbornness	IQ below 20-25

Figure 1. Classification of the disabled according to ((Krebs, 2005) in Susilowati, D. (2021)).

One of the important influencing factors that affect the success of the learning process, including in Physical Education learning, is the interest in learning. The success of the learning process, including in physical education learning, is the willingness to learn. For students with

disabilities, intellectual weakness is often an obstacle to understanding instructions, adjusting to motor skills, and actively participating in physical activity. The lack of interest of children with disabilities in participating in physical education learning at special needs school, greatly affects the achievement of the success of learning goals. Then the lack of understanding of the level of interest of disabled students in participating in physical education can cause teachers to have difficulty in designing the right learning methods. If students do not have a high interest, then their participation will be low, and the learning objectives will not be achieved to the maximum.

Therefore, this research needs to be conducted to find out how interested students with disabilities are in physical education learning, so that it can be used as a basis for consideration in the preparation of more effective and fun learning strategies in the special needs school environment. Improving training for physical education teachers is an important step to ensure the effectiveness of the learning process. Education for teachers that focuses on inclusive learning methodologies and approaches can improve their ability to adapt teaching to the specific needs of students with disabilities (Jauhari et al., 2020). With well-trained teachers and a deep understanding of inclusive education, students with disabilities are expected to feel more welcome and excited to actively participate in physical education activities.

Research by Rahmania and Basuki shows that the interests of students with disabilities can be influenced by how active they are in the physical learning process. The results of the survey showed that around 56.25% of students with disabilities showed activeness in the classroom, which is highly dependent on the teaching methods and interactions provided by the teacher (Nida & Rahmania, 2021). In addition to the teaching factor, other research shows that the use of the right method can increase students' interest. For example, Kurnia and Septiana's research proves that the implementation of small games as a warm-up can significantly increase students' interest in participating in physical education lessons (Kurnia & Septiana, 2020). Ryan & Deci (2020) states that Students' interest in sports plays a crucial role in determining the degree of engagement, effort, and ultimately, the learning outcomes in physical education (Keolahragaan et al., 2025).

Therefore, from these problems, 3 problem formulations are created, namely: 1). What is

the level of interest of students with disabilities in participating in physical education learning at special needs school? 2). What are the factors that affect the interest of students with disabilities in participating in physical education learning at special needs school? 3). What is the form of involvement of disabled students in physical education learning activities at special needs school?

The purpose of this study is to describe the level of interest of students with disabilities in participating in physical education learning at special needs school. This research also aims to identify the factors that affect these interests and describe the form of involvement of students with disabilities during the learning process. The results of this research are expected to be the basis for physical education teachers in designing learning strategies that are more interesting, according to needs, and able to increase the active participation of students with disabilities.

This research is focused on students with disabilities who are studying at special needs school, especially those who participate in physical education learning. This research covers aspects of students' interest in participating in physical education learning, which includes factors that affect these interests, both from within the student and from the learning environment.

This research offers novelty in how to measure the interest of students with disabilities in physical education learning that is more comprehensive than previous research. In the study by (Nida & Rahmania, 2021) which focused on the level of student activity in learning (around 56.25% of active students), this study not only assessed activeness but also combined three main aspects of interest, namely interest, attention, and activity through a combination of observations, visual questionnaires, and in-depth interviews. The findings of this study indicate that 50% of students fall into the high-interest category, supported by data from various instruments, thus presenting a more comprehensive picture compared to previous studies that used more one type of instrument. Another update lies in the analysis of factors that affect interest in a more in-depth and contextual way.

Previous research, such as that conducted by (Kurnia & Septiana, 2020), has only highlighted that small games can increase students' interest, without analyzing the relationships between factors in a systematic way. This study shows that adaptive instructional strategies (demonstration, imitation, and hands-on practice) are the main factors that are interrelated with motivation,

psychological state, and management of student saturation. The study even mapped the relationship through thematic analysis (concept maps and hierarchical graphs), thus not only explaining "what" influences interest, but also "how" these factors are interrelated.

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative approach and case study method to gain a deep understanding of the interest of students with disabilities in participating in physical education learning at special needs school. This strategy was chosen because it provides an opportunity for researchers to directly understand students' behaviors, interactions, and responses in the actual learning context. The study involved 10 students with disabilities who were selected purposively, with the criteria of being 11–16 years old and active in physical education learning. Participants consisted of students with mild and moderate levels of disability grahita tuna, so that they could provide a more comprehensive insight into students' learning interests. Data collection methods include observation, questionnaires, and interviews.

Observations were made directly during learning activities to observe indicators of interest such as focus, interest, feelings of happiness, participation, and reactions to activities. The questionnaire instrument in this study uses the Frequency Scale developed by (Zaka, 2016) to measure students' interest in participating in Physical Education, Sports, and Health Physical education, sports and health learning. The questionnaire utilizes image-based questionnaires on a simple scale (often, sometimes, rarely) to make it easier for students to respond according to their cognitive abilities. This tool has been tested for its validity and reliability, and is declared eligible for use. In addition, semi-structured interviews are conducted with physical education teachers to obtain information about learning strategies and factors that affect students' interests. To maintain the validity of the data, this study uses a triangulation technique. The technique was carried out by comparing the data from observations, questionnaires and interviews. According to (Perspectives, n.d.), triangulation in qualitative research aims to improve the validity of data by comparing various sources of information so that research results become more credible and trustworthy.

Data analysis in this study was carried out through three techniques, namely observation, questionnaire, and interview. Observational

analysis used a scoring system for each item with the categories of frequent (3), sometimes (2), and rarely (1). The total score was obtained from the sum of five indicators, namely attention, feelings of pleasure, interest, active engagement, and response to challenges, with a score range of 5–15. The determination of categories uses the interval formula according to Sugiyono (2019) (Dan, n.d.), so that the categories of high (12–15), medium (9–11), and low (5–8) are obtained. Furthermore, the questionnaire analysis was carried out by giving the same score to each answer (3, 2, 1) with instruments that had been adjusted to the characteristics of the disabled students and tested first. Scores are calculated per indicator, namely interest (items 1–2), attention (items 3–4), and activity (items 5–6), with the categories of high (≥ 5), medium (3–4), and low (≤ 2). Meanwhile, the analysis of interview data uses a thematic approach, namely through the process of coding, sorting, and grouping data to find patterns or themes that are meaningful in depth (Braun et al., 2008).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Observation Results

Students	Total score	Category
A	12	Height
B	6	Low
C	13	Height
D	11	Medium
E	14	Height
F	12	Height
G	10	Medium
H	15	Height
I	7	Low

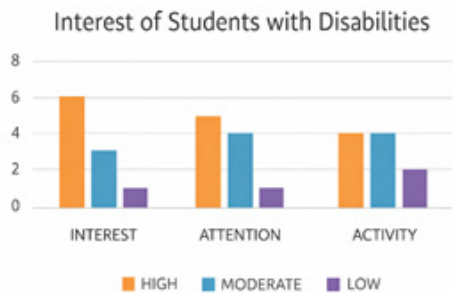


Figure 2. Bar Chart of Questionnaire Results

The low-interest category was obtained by two students, namely student B with a score of 6 and student I with a score of 7. The score shows that a small percentage of students still lack interest in participating in physical education.

on learning. This can be seen from the relatively lower involvement compared to other students. If we look at the distribution of categories, it can be concluded that: 5 students (50%) have a high interest, 3 students (30%) have a moderate interest, 2 students (20%) had low interest.

The following is an overview of the interest of disabled students in participating in physical education learning in the form of word cloud:



Figure 3. Word Cloud Interests

Based on the word cloud results of interviews with Physical education, sports and health teachers at special needs school, it can be seen that some of the words that appear most often are related to the interest of disabled students in participating in physical education learning. The most dominant words in the diagram include learning, children, students, the disabled, Physical education, sports and health, teachers, media, strategies, activities, and practices. The words learning and children appear most prominently in the diagram, which shows that the learning process is the main focus in efforts to increase the interest of students with disabilities at special needs school.

When students feel a positive experience in learning activities, their interest in the activity will increase. In physical education learning, positive experiences can arise through play activities, varied movement activities, and social interaction with peers. Physical education learning requires teachers to use methods that are in accordance with the student's conditions and supported by adequate facilities and infrastructure (Jurnal, 2024). This is in accordance with the conditions found in this study, where students with disabilities seem more enthusiastic when learning involves hands-on practical activities compared to verbal explanations that are too long.

Based on Figure 4. Hierarchy Chart Interest obtained from the results of interview analysis, several main categories related to the interest of

disabled students in participating in physical education learning at special needs school. The diagram shows that the most dominant factor comes from the adaptive instructional strategies used by teachers in the learning process. This strategy includes the use of imitation methods, demonstration methods, and hands-on learning methods. The imitation method is carried out by students imitating the movements exemplified by the teacher, while the demonstration method is carried out by directly demonstrating certain techniques or movements so that students can more easily understand the material. In addition, the hands-on learning method is also used to provide clear and simple instructions to students. The use of concrete and visual learning strategies makes it easier for students with disabilities to understand learning activities so that they can increase their interest in participating in physical education activities. In addition to learning strategies, learning differentiation is also an important factor that affects students' interests.



Figure 4. Hierarchy Chart of Interests

Learning differentiation is carried out through modification of learning methods and materials that are adjusted to the abilities and conditions of students with disabilities. Teachers plan learning by considering the needs and characteristics of students so that the activities provided are not too difficult or too easy. These findings show that students' interests are not only formed naturally, but develop through the learning experiences provided during the learning process.

On the other hand, research by Jaleha et al. Noting that collaboration between teachers and families in implementing contextual and relevant learning methods can increase the educational effectiveness of children with disabilities, strengthen their confidence and trigger greater interest in (Net et al., 2023).

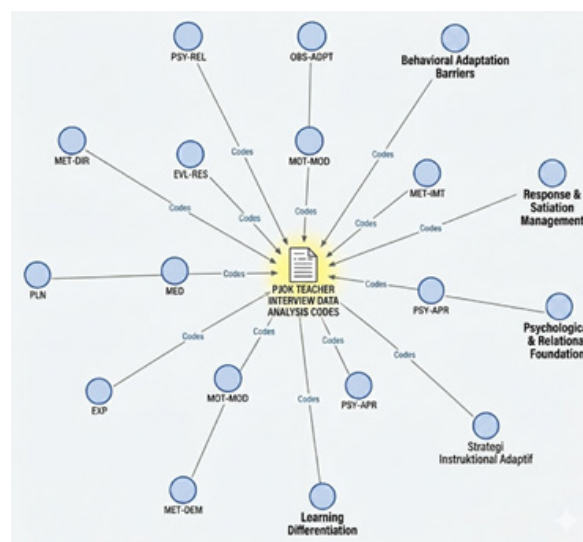


Figure 5. Concept Map of Interests

The first relationship can be seen between learning planning (PLN) and adaptive instructional strategies and learning differentiation. Good learning planning is the basis for teachers to determine methods, forms of activities, and learning adjustments according to the characteristics of students with disabilities. From this planning, an adaptive learning strategy emerges, where teachers adjust the difficulty level of movements, the way of delivering instructions, and the form of activities carried out. This strategy is also related to learning differentiation because each student with disabilities has different abilities so that learning needs to be adjusted so that all students can participate in activities well. This is in line with the opinion of (Shields & Synnot, 2016) who stated that learning physical activity for children with special needs will be more effective if adjusted to the characteristics of students' abilities and supported by a positive and fun learning environment.



Figure 6. Comparison Results

Based on the comparison **Figure 6**, it can be seen that there are two main indicators that are compared in influencing the interest of students with disabilities in participating in physical education learning, namely adaptive instructional strategies and student response and saturation management. Both indicators came from the results of coding interview data which was then analyzed to see the factors that play the most role in increasing the involvement of students with disabilities during the learning process. In line with the research of (Azmi et al., 2025) which states that students with disabilities tend to have a higher interest in PE learning if activities are presented in the form of varied, interactive, and game-based activities. Physical activities that involve simple games are able to foster students' intrinsic motivation so that they participate more actively in learning.

These findings are in line with the opinions of (Kamaruddin et al., 2023) who stated that students' interest in physical education learning is influenced by several aspects, such as student enthusiasm, learning methods used, variations in learning processes, and the achievement of learning objectives designed by teachers. Harmonious relationships can also increase the motivation and interest in learning of students with disabilities. Ekawati et al., (2024) who stated that the interests of students with special needs are greatly influenced by the way teachers deliver materials and the availability of supporting learning media.

According to (Susilawati et al., 2025) explained that increased student motivation can be seen through active involvement and higher participation in every physical learning activity. Based on the results of observations and questionnaires that have been carried out on disabled students at special needs school, most of the students showed quite good involvement in physical education learning activities. This can be seen from the presence of students who are able to follow the teacher's instructions, participate in practical activities, and show enthusiasm when participating in the physical activities given. Widiastuti and Winaya explain that child-friendly teaching should be tailored to their unique needs, which can increase their interest and participation (Rozi et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

Students with disabilities typically show a moderate to high interest in engaging with physical education in special schools. This is evident in the findings from observations, surveys,

and interviews, which show that the majority of students exhibit interest, focus, and active engagement during the educational experience. This interest is shaped by various key factors, such as adaptable learning approaches, the incorporation of captivating educational materials, learners' mental states, constructive teacher-student relationships, and a nurturing and pleasant educational atmosphere. The teacher plays a crucial role in creating learning activities that cater to the needs of students with disabilities, allowing them to grasp instructions more effectively and feel at ease participating in activities. Student engagement is clear through their active participation in hands-on activities, their capacity to adhere to instructions, and the display of positive emotional reactions during classes. However, a minority of students continue to exhibit minimal interest and need individualized support and customized strategies. The interest of disabled students in physical education is influenced by adaptive learning strategies, the use of engaging media, psychological conditions, and the good relationship between teachers and students.

REFERENCES

- Azmi, F., Syukriadi, A., & Monika, R. (2025). Adaptasi dan Inovasi Strategi Pembelajaran PJOK Berbasis Bahasa Isyarat dan Visual di Sekolah Luar Biasa : Praktik Guru di Provinsi Aceh. 6, 1434-1439.
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2008). Using thematic analysis in psychology Using thematic analysis in psychology. 0887(2006).
- Dan, K. (n.d.). No Title.
- Ekawati, F. F., Rahayu, T. W., Satyawan, B., Kardiyanto, D. W., & Wijanarko, B. (2024). Peningkatan Kompetensi Guru Pjok Dalam. 8(1), 233-242.
- Jauhari, M. N., Mambela, S., & Zakiah, Z. (2020). Dampak Pandemi Covid-19 Terhadap Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran Penjas Adaptif Di Sekolah Luar Biasa. *STAND : Journal Sports Teaching and Development*, 1(1), 63-70. <https://doi.org/10.36456/j-stand.v1i1.2594>
- Jurnal, S. P. O. R. T. (2024). Sport , Physical Education , Organization , Recreation , Training ISSN 2620-7699 Kesiapan Guru Penjas Menghadapi Kurikulum Merdeka Di Sekolah Dasar Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Kampus Sumedang Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Kampus Sumedang Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Kampus Sumedang Abstrak Keywords : Physical Education Teacher Readiness , Independent Curriculum Jurnal of S . P . O . R . T , Vol . 7 , No . 1 , Maret 2023 Sport , Physical Education , Organization , Recreation , Training ISSN 2620-7699. 7(1), 54-62.
- Kamaruddin, I., Susanto, N., Hita, I. P. A. D., Pratiwi, E. Y. R., Abidin, D., & Laratmase, A. J. (2023).

- Analysis of the Influence Physical Education on Character Development of Elementary School Students. *At-Ta'dib*, 18(1), 10–17. <https://doi.org/10.21111/attadib.v18i1.9749>
- Keolahragaan, I., Makassar, U. N., Pendidikan, I., & Majalengka, U. (2025). *Journal of Physical Education and*. 5(2), 55–72.
- Kurnia, D., & Septiana, R. A. (2020). Implementasi Permainan Kecil Sebagai Bentuk Pemanasan Terhadap Minat Siswa dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Jasmani. *Physical Activity Journal*, 2(1), 90. <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.paju.2020.2.1.3302>
- Net, W. W. W. P., Jaleha, S., Hufad, A., & Aprilia, I. D. (2023). Home-based learning for children with moderate intellectual disabilities: Collaboration between teacher and family. *Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction*, 13(4), 106–112. <https://doi.org/10.47750/pegegog.13.04.13>
- Nida, A., & Rahmania, N. (2021). Survei aktivitas belajar anak tunagrahita dalam pembelajaran pendidikan. *Survei Aktivitas Belajar Anak Tunagrahita Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan*, 1, 20–28.
- Nugroho, A., & Lubis, A. E. (2021). Model Estafet Games untuk Siswa Tunagrahita. *Jurnal Ilmu Keolahragaan Undiksha*, 9(3), 143. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jiku.v9i3.34643>
- Perspectives, C. (n.d.). The Role of Triangulation in Qualitative Research : 101–103. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-3306-8.ch006>
- Rozi, F., Shidiq, A. A. P., & Rahman, A. Y. (2021). Aspek Aman, Imun, Dan Iman Pada Pembelajaran Pendidikan Jasmani Di Iain Salatiga Selama Pandemi Covid-19 [the Aspects of Safety, Immunity, and Faith in Physical Education Learning At Iain Salatiga During the Covid-19 Pandemic]. *Polyglot: Jurnal Ilmiah*, 17(1), 145. <https://doi.org/10.19166/pji.v17i1.2908>
- Shields, N., & Synnot, A. (2016). Perceived barriers and facilitators to participation in physical activity for children with disability: A qualitative study. *BMC Pediatrics*, 16(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12887-016-0544-7>.
- Susilawati, D. (2021). Pendidikan Jasmani Adaptif. CV Salam Insan Mulia Jl. Mekarsaro No 82 A jl Kiara Condong Bandung Indonesia 40253 Anggota APPTI.
- Susilawati, D., Suherman, A., & Rahman, A. A. (2025). Implementasi Teknologi dalam Pembelajaran Penjas untuk Meningkatkan Motivasi dan Partisipasi Siswa Kerangka Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) menekankan perlunya guru mengintegrasikan aspek pedagogik, konten, dan teknologi untuk menghasilkan. 5(3), 225–231.
- Zaka, Q. (2016). Minat Siswa Berkebutuhan Khusus Tunagrahita Dalam Mengikuti Pembelajaran Pendidikan Jasmani Di Slb-C Yayasan Pendidikan Luar Biasa Demak Tahun 2016. 1–60.