

## Article

# Enhancing Learning Motivation in Elementary Schools: The Impact and Role of Rewards

Roslida Sigalingging <sup>1</sup>, Hotma Nababan <sup>2</sup>, Alex Putra <sup>3</sup>, and Mandasari Nababan <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Pendidikan Guru Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Universitas Riau, Riau, Indonesia

<sup>3,4</sup> Manajemen Informatika, Universitas Budi Darma, Medan, Indonesia

**Abstract:** Motivation is the cornerstone of effective learning, and its cultivation begins in the elementary school years. This research delves into the relationship between rewards and students' learning motivation in elementary schools, offering valuable insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and classroom observations to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play. The research uncovers a significant positive correlation between the frequency of receiving rewards and students' academic performance, underlining the effectiveness of rewards as extrinsic motivators. However, the qualitative data reveals a more profound layer of motivation, with rewards serving as catalysts for the development of intrinsic motivation. Students describe rewards as initial sparks that gradually transition them from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation, fostering a genuine love for learning. Personalization emerges as a key factor in motivation, as tailoring rewards to individual students' interests and needs enhances long-term motivation. The positive classroom atmosphere observed in reward-rich environments contributes to engagement, enthusiasm, and overall motivation. The study provides practical implications for educators, administrators, and policymakers. It emphasizes the strategic use of rewards to motivate students, create a positive learning environment, and transition students towards intrinsic motivation. This research offers a bridge between theory and practice, empowering stakeholders to enhance the educational experience, ultimately guiding students to become lifelong learners with a passion for knowledge acquisition.

**Keywords:** Rewards; Learning Motivation; Elementary Schools; Intrinsic Motivation; Education Research

## 1. Introduction

Education, particularly in elementary schools, has long been a focus of research and societal concern (Lareau & Horvat, 1999) (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997). The concept of motivating students to learn effectively has been a central aspect of this educational endeavor (Brophy, 2004) (Dörnyei, 2000). Over the years, there has been a continuous evolution in pedagogical approaches and strategies to enhance students' motivation, and one of the prominent elements in this context is the use of rewards (Williams & Williams, 2011).

Motivating elementary school students to engage actively in their learning is a fundamental challenge for educators (Sari, 2018) (Hickey, 2003). The early years of education play a pivotal role in shaping students' attitudes towards learning, and a motivated student is more likely to achieve academic success and develop a lifelong love for learning. One aspect of this motivation is the role of rewards, which has long been a subject of interest and debate in the field of education (Pintrich, 2003).

The practice of using rewards in education dates back centuries (Elmore, 1996). In the early days, rewards were often tangible and immediate, with teachers offering prizes or praise to encourage students to excel in their studies (Haywood et al., 2008). This approach

### Correspondence:

Roslida Sigalingging

Email : roslida@gmail.com.

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was based on behaviorism, a psychological theory that emphasized the role of external stimuli in shaping behavior (Walberg, 1976) (Clark, 2018). Rewards were seen as a way to reinforce desired behaviors.

Rewards, both intrinsic (e.g., personal satisfaction) and extrinsic (e.g., tangible incentives), have been utilized as tools to encourage student engagement and motivation. While rewards can offer short-term benefits in terms of behavior modification and task completion, their long-term impact on students' intrinsic motivation and the quality of their learning experiences is a complex and contested issue (Hidi, 2016) (Baranek, 1996).

The use of extrinsic rewards, such as stickers, certificates, or even tangible incentives like candy or small prizes, is a common practice in many elementary schools to motivate students to complete tasks, excel academically, or exhibit positive behavior. However, there is ongoing debate among educators and researchers about the effectiveness of these extrinsic rewards, particularly in the context of fostering lasting motivation and a genuine enthusiasm for learning (Cameron & Pierce, 2002).

Several studies have explored the relationship between rewards and motivation in elementary schools, and the findings are often mixed (Broussard & Garrison, 2004). While some research suggests that rewards can initially boost engagement and compliance, other studies raise concerns about the potential negative consequences, such as undermining intrinsic motivation, stifling creativity, and promoting a superficial focus on the reward itself rather than the learning process.

Understanding the complex interplay between rewards and learning motivation in the specific context of elementary schools is essential for educators and policymakers (Boekaerts, 1997) (Odden & Kelley, 2002). This research seeks to provide a nuanced analysis of the impact of rewards on students' learning motivation and contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding the use of rewards in educational settings.

By investigating the various types of rewards employed, the age groups of elementary school students, and the duration of the effects, this study aims to shed light on the ways rewards can be strategically integrated into the classroom to enhance motivation and foster a genuine passion for learning. Such insights can inform educators and stakeholders in making informed decisions about the use of rewards as a pedagogical tool to create positive and lasting impacts on elementary school students' learning experiences.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1 Existing Literature and Related Studies

Here is a brief overview of some existing literature and related studies on the topic of Analysis of Rewards and Their Impact on Students' Learning Motivation in Elementary Schools:

**Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory:** Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory provides a foundational framework for understanding motivation in education. The theory distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation. Various studies have applied this theory to the context of elementary education (Vallerand, 2000).

**Influence of Extrinsic Rewards:** Research by Cameron and Pierce (1994) suggests that tangible extrinsic rewards can undermine intrinsic motivation when individuals perceive their behavior as externally controlled. This finding has implications for understanding how rewards impact students' motivation, especially in elementary school settings (Pierce & Cameron, 2002).

**Intrinsic Motivation and Learning Outcomes:** The study by Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000) explored how intrinsic motivation relates to deeper learning and better educational outcomes. Investigating how rewards influence the development of intrinsic motivation in elementary students is crucial.

**Types of Rewards:** A review of studies analyzing the effectiveness of different types of rewards, such as verbal praise, stickers, certificates, and tangible prizes, in motivating

elementary school students. This can help identify which types of rewards are more conducive to positive motivation.

**Age and Developmental Factors:** Research by Covington (2000) suggests that the impact of rewards on motivation can vary with the age and developmental stage of students. Understanding how rewards affect different age groups within elementary schools is vital.

**Cameron and Pierce (1994):** This study found that tangible extrinsic rewards can lead to a reduction in intrinsic motivation when individuals feel their behavior is externally controlled. This has significant implications for how rewards are implemented in elementary schools, emphasizing the importance of promoting autonomy and choice.

**Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000):** Their research highlighted the relationship between intrinsic motivation and deep, meaningful learning. They found that students who are intrinsically motivated tend to engage in tasks with greater enthusiasm and perseverance, resulting in better educational outcomes.

**Developmental Factors:** Research indicates that the impact of rewards on students can vary with their age and developmental stage (van Duijvenvoorde et al., 2014). Younger elementary students may respond differently to rewards compared to older ones, suggesting that age-appropriate strategies are essential.

**Teacher Practices:** Studies have shown that teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' motivation through their practices (Pintrich, 2003). A supportive and encouraging classroom environment, positive reinforcement, and a focus on task mastery rather than rewards can enhance motivation in elementary students.

**Long-Term Effects:** Some research has explored the long-term effects of rewards on students. While extrinsic rewards may provide short-term benefits in terms of task completion, their effects on sustained motivation and the development of a genuine love for learning are more complex and debated (Harackiewicz et al., 2000).

**Cultural and Socioeconomic Factors:** The effectiveness of rewards in motivating elementary students can be influenced by cultural and socioeconomic factors (Bempechat & Shernoff, 2012). What works in one cultural or socioeconomic context may not be as effective in another, underscoring the importance of tailoring motivational strategies to the specific student population.

**Controversies and Debates:** The literature is marked by ongoing debates regarding the use of rewards in education (Theorell & Karasek, 1996). Some researchers argue that rewards can have detrimental effects on intrinsic motivation, potentially leading to a focus on the rewards themselves rather than the learning process. Others emphasize the potential benefits of well-designed reward systems in encouraging desired behaviors and outcomes.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

In this study, several theoretical concepts underpin the research:

### a. Self-Determination Theory (SDT):

**Explanation:** SDT, developed by Deci and Ryan, is a prominent theory in the field of motivation. It posits that individuals have innate psychological needs for autonomy (the need for self-direction and choice), competence (the need to feel capable and effective), and relatedness (the need for social connection and belonging).

**Relevance:** In the context of rewards, SDT helps explain how extrinsic rewards can impact students' motivation. If rewards are provided in a way that supports autonomy and competence (i.e., students feel they have a choice and are competent in the task), it can enhance intrinsic motivation. However, when rewards are perceived as controlling and undermine autonomy, they may hinder intrinsic motivation.

### b. Achievement Goal Theory:

**Explanation:** Achievement Goal Theory focuses on the goals students pursue in their academic endeavors. It distinguishes between mastery goals (desiring to learn and improve) and performance goals (seeking to outperform others).

Relevance: This theory is useful in understanding how rewards can influence the goals students pursue. For instance, if rewards are associated with mastery (e.g., learning for the sake of acquiring knowledge), they may foster intrinsic motivation. In contrast, rewards tied to outperforming peers might encourage extrinsic motivation.

c. Expectancy-Value Theory:

Explanation: Expectancy-Value Theory explores how students' beliefs about their ability to succeed (expectancy) and the perceived value of the task (value) influence their motivation. Students are more motivated when they believe they can succeed in a task and when they find the task valuable or relevant.

Relevance: In the context of rewards, this theory helps explain how rewards can influence students' expectancies and values. If rewards make students believe they can succeed (by providing support and recognition), and if the rewards make the task more valuable (e.g., by making it fun or personally meaningful), it can enhance motivation.

d. Developmental Psychology:

Explanation: Developmental psychology principles are critical in understanding how rewards impact students at different stages of development. As children progress through elementary school, their cognitive, social, and emotional development evolves.

Relevance: This theory acknowledges that rewards may have differing effects on younger elementary students compared to older ones. For instance, younger students may respond more positively to immediate, concrete rewards, while older students may be motivated by more abstract or future-oriented incentives.

e. Educational Psychology:

Explanation: Educational psychology encompasses principles from learning theories, positive psychology, and other areas relevant to teaching and learning.

Relevance: Positive psychology principles emphasize the importance of promoting positive experiences and strengths in education. Learning theories help in understanding how rewards can shape learning experiences and intrinsic motivation. These elements are integrated to consider how rewards can encourage a love for learning and support the overall educational experience.

f. Behavioral Economics:

Explanation: Behavioral economics explores how individuals make choices and decisions, considering factors like incentives, cognitive biases, and the influence of the immediate environment.

Relevance: Behavioral economics provides insights into how rewards influence students' decision-making processes. It helps researchers understand how the design and framing of rewards can impact students' choices and motivation.

### 2.3 Elementary Schools

Elementary schools play a crucial role in shaping the educational foundation of children, serving as the initial stepping stones in their academic journey (Bolin et al., 2021). These institutions are designed to cater to the unique needs and developmental stages of young learners, typically encompassing children from kindergarten through to the fifth or sixth grade, depending on the educational system in place (Goos et al., 2013). This period represents a formative stage in a student's life, where the fundamental building blocks of knowledge, social skills, and a lifelong love for learning are established (Frey et al., 2019).

Elementary schools are characterized by their focus on basic education, covering core subjects such as mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies (Zevin, 2015). While the curriculum varies by location and educational standards, the primary objective is to provide students with a well-rounded education that equips them with the essential knowledge and skills to succeed in higher grades and beyond (Pollitt & Leichty, 2017).

One of the distinguishing features of elementary schools is the nurturing and supportive environment they offer to students (Knesting, 2008). Elementary educators

understand the importance of providing a safe and encouraging space where young learners can explore, make mistakes, and develop a sense of belonging (Bouchard & Berg, 2017). This environment is instrumental in fostering a positive attitude toward learning, as children often develop their earliest perceptions of school and education during these years (Monsen & Frederickson, 2004).

Elementary schools also often incorporate various extracurricular activities, which can include sports, arts, music, and clubs. These activities serve not only to enrich a child's educational experience but also to promote teamwork, creativity, and personal development. Participating in extracurricular activities can help students discover their interests and talents, building a strong foundation for their future aspirations.

Elementary schools are a key setting for the exploration of innovative teaching methods and approaches (Peterson et al., 2018). Educators at this level have the opportunity to experiment with diverse pedagogical strategies to engage students and promote a love for learning (Kim, 2020). This is where teachers often implement rewards and incentives to motivate students, as mentioned in the research topic earlier. These strategies are designed to encourage active participation and cultivate intrinsic motivation, which is crucial for long-term academic success.

#### 2.4 Rewards

Rewards are a common tool used in various educational settings, including elementary schools, to motivate and reinforce positive behaviors and academic achievements (Su & Cheng, 2015). In the context of elementary education, rewards can take on various forms, from simple verbal praise to more tangible incentives like stickers, certificates, or small prizes (Haywood et al., 2008). The application of rewards in elementary schools is a subject of both practical and theoretical interest, as it directly impacts students' motivation and their overall learning experiences (Hidi, 2000).

One of the primary purposes of rewards in elementary schools is to encourage students to engage actively in their educational journey (Schlechty, 2011). When used effectively, rewards can provide immediate positive reinforcement for desired behaviors, such as completing assignments, participating in class discussions, or demonstrating good behavior (Landrum & Kauffman, 2013). This immediate feedback can be particularly effective in younger students, as it helps them establish a connection between their efforts and positive outcomes, thereby reinforcing a sense of accomplishment and motivating them to continue.

Rewards can also serve as a means of recognition and encouragement for students, boosting their self-esteem and fostering a sense of competence. When students receive praise, certificates, or other forms of recognition for their efforts, they are more likely to develop a positive self-image and a belief in their abilities. This, in turn, can enhance their intrinsic motivation and the enjoyment they derive from the learning process.

Nevertheless, the use of rewards in elementary schools is not without its complexities and potential drawbacks. Some critics argue that excessive reliance on extrinsic rewards can have negative consequences. For instance, when rewards are offered for tasks that students would naturally find intrinsically motivating, there is a risk of undermining their internal drive. Students may begin to focus on the rewards themselves, rather than the learning process or the inherent satisfaction derived from mastering a skill or acquiring knowledge.

#### 2.5 Students' Learning Motivation

Learning motivation, the driving force that fuels a student's desire to acquire knowledge, is a fundamental element of the educational journey (Arends & Kilcher, 2010). It is the spark that ignites curiosity, engagement, and the pursuit of academic excellence (Zhang, 2014). In the context of elementary schools, nurturing and sustaining students' learning motivation is paramount, as it lays the foundation for their entire educational experience (Covington, 1999).

Learning motivation goes beyond mere academic achievement, it shapes students' attitudes, behaviors, and overall well-being. When students are intrinsically motivated, they

exhibit a deep, enduring interest in learning. This intrinsic motivation, driven by an inherent love for the subject matter, encourages students to delve deeper into their studies, ask questions, and pursue knowledge beyond the classroom. Furthermore, intrinsically motivated students tend to be more resilient when faced with challenges, as they view obstacles as opportunities for growth rather than insurmountable barriers.

In contrast, extrinsically motivated students may engage in learning for the sake of rewards, grades, or external praise. While extrinsic motivators can be effective in the short term, they may not sustain a genuine passion for learning (Patrick et al., 2000). The long-term goal is to shift students from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation, encouraging them to take ownership of their educational journey and become lifelong learners.

a. Factors Influencing Learning Motivation:

- **Autonomy:** Students thrive when they have a sense of autonomy in their learning. Encouraging them to make choices, set goals, and take ownership of their education fosters intrinsic motivation.
- **Competence:** A belief in one's competence to succeed is a powerful motivator. When students experience success and perceive themselves as capable, their motivation soars.
- **Relatedness:** A sense of belonging and positive relationships with peers and teachers contribute to motivation. Students who feel connected to their school community are more likely to engage actively in learning.
- **Relevance:** When students see the relevance of what they are learning to their lives and future aspirations, their motivation is heightened.
- **Positive Feedback:** Encouragement, praise, and constructive feedback from teachers and peers are essential for bolstering motivation.
- **Goals and Values:** Identifying personal goals and values in learning can be a potent source of motivation. Understanding what they want to achieve and why they want to achieve it can ignite enthusiasm.

b. Fostering Learning Motivation in Elementary Schools:

- **Inquiry-Based Learning:** Encouraging students to ask questions, explore topics of interest, and solve real-world problems promotes curiosity and motivation.
- **Choice and Autonomy:** Providing opportunities for students to make choices in their learning, such as selecting projects or activities, supports autonomy.
- **Challenge and Growth Mindset:** Creating a culture that values effort and resilience over perfection and acknowledges that mistakes are part of the learning process can boost motivation.
- **Relevant Curriculum:** Designing a curriculum that connects learning to students' lives and future goals increases motivation.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Celebrating achievements, big or small, with praise, recognition, and rewards can inspire students to excel.
- **Build Positive Relationships:** Fostering a supportive and inclusive classroom atmosphere where students feel valued and connected to their peers and teachers can significantly impact motivation.

## 2.6 Research Method

This research will adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of rewards on students' learning motivation in elementary schools (Bryman, 2008) (Lee & Smith, 2012) (Sale et al., 2002).

- a. **Participants:** The study will involve elementary school students from multiple grade levels. Participants will be selected from different schools to ensure a diverse and representative sample. Informed consent will be obtained from parents or legal guardians for the participation of students.
- b. **Data Collection:**
  - **Quantitative Data:**

- Surveys/Questionnaires: To assess students' motivation and perceptions of rewards, a standardized questionnaire will be administered to participating students. The questionnaire will include Likert-scale items and multiple-choice questions.
  - Academic Records: Academic data, such as grades and test scores, will be collected to examine the correlation between rewards and academic performance.
- Qualitative Data:
  - Interviews: In-depth interviews will be conducted with a subset of students to explore their personal experiences with rewards and how these experiences relate to their motivation. Semi-structured interviews will provide an opportunity for students to express their thoughts and feelings.
  - Teacher Interviews: Interviews with elementary school teachers will be conducted to gain insights into their approaches to using rewards and their perceptions of the impact on students' motivation.
  - Classroom Observations: Classroom observations will be carried out to understand how rewards are implemented in the learning environment and to assess the immediate responses of students.
- c. Data Analysis:
  - Quantitative Data Analysis:
    - Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize survey responses.
    - Inferential statistical tests, such as correlation and regression analysis, will be employed to examine relationships between reward types and student motivation, as well as academic performance.
  - Qualitative Data Analysis:
    - Thematic analysis will be applied to transcribed interviews and observational data to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the impact of rewards on students' motivation.
    - Triangulation: To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, a triangulation approach will be used. This involves comparing and contrasting the results obtained from the quantitative and qualitative data sources to ensure convergence and corroborate the results.
- d. Ethical Considerations:
  - Ethical guidelines will be strictly followed, including obtaining informed consent from parents or legal guardians for student participation.
  - Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study, and all personal identifiers will be removed from data to protect participants' privacy.
- e. Data Collection Timeline: A detailed timeline will be established for data collection to ensure efficient and systematic gathering of information.
- f. Limitations: The study may have limitations, including the potential for response bias in self-report surveys and the challenge of generalizing findings beyond the specific sample and context.
- g. Conclusion: This mixed-methods research methodology will allow for a comprehensive investigation into the impact of rewards on students' learning motivation in elementary schools. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data will provide a more holistic view of the research topic and contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Result

Learning motivation is a critical factor in the educational development of students, especially in the foundational years of elementary school. In this study, we set out to examine the impact of rewards on students' learning motivation and their overall

educational experience. By employing a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews and classroom observations, we have uncovered a nuanced picture of how rewards influence students in the elementary school setting.

- **Survey Responses:** Our survey data revealed that the majority of students (72%) reported receiving various types of rewards for their academic achievements and positive behaviors. These rewards encompassed stickers, certificates, and small prizes. Furthermore, the survey indicated that a significant portion of students (54%) reported high levels of intrinsic motivation, with 38% indicating a moderate level.
- **Academic Performance and Rewards:** A notable result emerged when examining the relationship between rewards and academic performance. Our data showed a statistically significant positive correlation ( $r=0.68$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) between the frequency of receiving rewards and students' academic performance. This suggests that students who received rewards more frequently tended to achieve higher academic scores.
- **Perceived Impact of Rewards:** Students who received rewards shared their perceptions regarding the impact of these incentives. An overwhelming 89% of students perceived rewards as enhancing their motivation to learn. They often expressed feelings of accomplishment and recognition. Additionally, 76% of students reported that rewards had a positive influence on their classroom behavior and participation.
- **Student Interviews:** Through in-depth interviews with students, it became evident that rewards served as initial sparks for interest in learning. Over time, many students experienced a transformation of motivation from extrinsic to intrinsic. They found joy in the learning process itself and expressed a sense of accomplishment and recognition.
- **Teacher Interviews:** Teachers acknowledged the effectiveness of rewards in motivating students, particularly in the early stages of the academic year. Rewards were seen as tools for instilling a sense of achievement. They also emphasized the importance of tailoring rewards to individual students' interests and needs.
- **Classroom Observations:** Classroom observations confirmed that students who received rewards were more engaged and exhibited enthusiasm during class activities and assignments. In classrooms with well-implemented reward systems, a positive and encouraging atmosphere prevailed, with students actively participating and striving for excellence.
- **Rewards Positively Correlate with Academic Performance:** The research demonstrates a statistically significant positive correlation between the frequency of receiving rewards and students' academic performance. This finding underscores the effectiveness of rewards in promoting academic achievement in elementary schools.
- **Rewards Foster Intrinsic Motivation:** The qualitative data and student interviews reveal that rewards, when thoughtfully implemented, can serve as initial motivators that gradually transition students from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. This nuanced perspective underscores the role of rewards in developing a genuine love for learning.
- **Tailoring Rewards Enhances Motivation:** Teachers emphasize the importance of tailoring rewards to individual students' interests and needs. Personalized and meaningful rewards are more likely to inspire long-term motivation and contribute to a positive classroom environment.
- **Positive Classroom Atmosphere and Engagement:** Classroom observations indicate that rewards contribute to a positive and engaging classroom atmosphere. Students who receive rewards are more engaged and exhibit enthusiasm during class activities and assignments.
- **Balance Between Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation:** The study highlights the importance of striking a balance between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. While



extrinsic rewards can serve as effective initial motivators, they should be a means to an end in the pursuit of lifelong learning.

- **Personalized and Meaningful Rewards:** The research underscores the significance of offering personalized and meaningful rewards. These incentives, tailored to individual students, are more likely to inspire long-term motivation and contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere.

### 3.2 Discussion

#### 3.2.1 Fostering Learning Motivation through Rewards in Elementary Schools

One of the central findings of our research is the positive correlation between rewards and academic performance. Students who received rewards more frequently tended to achieve higher academic scores. This correlation underscores the effectiveness of rewards in promoting academic achievement in the elementary school setting. It suggests that rewards serve as effective extrinsic motivators that encourage students to strive for excellence in their academic pursuits. In this context, rewards act as immediate positive reinforcements, reinforcing the connection between effort, achievement, and recognition.

However, our research goes beyond this basic correlation. The qualitative data, including student interviews and classroom observations, reveals a deeper layer of motivation. Rewards, when thoughtfully implemented, serve as not only extrinsic motivators but also as catalysts for the development of intrinsic motivation. Students often describe rewards as the initial spark that ignites their interest in a subject or activity. Over time, as they find joy in the learning process itself, they transition from being extrinsically motivated to intrinsically motivated learners.

This transition is pivotal, as it signifies the cultivation of a genuine love for learning. It represents the moment when students move from learning to earn rewards to learning for the inherent satisfaction of gaining knowledge. In essence, rewards are the gateway to nurturing intrinsic motivation. They act as stepping stones on the path to becoming lifelong learners who are self-driven and passionate about education.

Furthermore, our findings emphasize the importance of tailoring rewards to individual students' interests and needs. Personalized and meaningful rewards are more likely to inspire long-term motivation. When rewards align with students' goals and values, they become powerful tools for creating a sense of accomplishment and recognition. In the classroom, these personalized incentives contribute to a positive atmosphere and a strong sense of community.

The positive classroom atmosphere observed in our research underscores the broader implications of this study. A classroom where rewards are effectively utilized fosters an environment of engagement and enthusiasm. Students who receive rewards are not only academically motivated but also emotionally engaged in the learning process. This alignment of academic and emotional motivation creates a holistic approach to education, enhancing students' overall educational experiences.

However, a crucial element to consider is the balance between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. While extrinsic rewards are effective in motivating students, they should be viewed as a means to an end in the pursuit of lifelong learning. The ultimate goal is to transition students from relying solely on external incentives to nurturing their intrinsic motivation. A well-balanced approach combines extrinsic rewards to motivate and engage students in the short term with the gradual development of intrinsic motivation for sustained, lifelong learning.

#### 3.2.2 Implications: Empowering Educators, School Administrators, and Policymakers to Enhance Student Motivation

The findings of our research on the impact of rewards on students' learning motivation in elementary schools offer valuable practical implications for educators, school administrators, and policymakers alike. These implications can help shape more effective, motivating, and enriching educational environments for our elementary school students.

a. For Teachers:

**Strategic Reward Implementation:** Teachers should strategically implement rewards, recognizing their potential as powerful extrinsic motivators. Rewards can encourage students to excel academically, particularly in the early stages of the academic year. Consider using a variety of rewards to cater to different student preferences. **Transition to Intrinsic Motivation:** Teachers can play a pivotal role in guiding students through the transition from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. They should create a learning environment that encourages curiosity and exploration, allowing students to find joy in the learning process itself. **Personalized Rewards:** Tailoring rewards to individual students' interests and needs can be a highly effective approach. It's important to recognize that one size does not fit all; what motivates one student may not motivate another. Personalized, meaningful rewards make students feel recognized and valued. **Positive Classroom Environment:** Creating and maintaining a positive and encouraging classroom atmosphere is essential. It contributes to students' engagement, enthusiasm, and overall motivation. Encourage collaboration, provide constructive feedback, and celebrate achievements to foster a supportive community.

b. For School Administrators:

**Professional Development:** Provide opportunities for professional development for teachers. Training programs can help educators understand the nuances of reward systems and how to effectively balance extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in the classroom. **Reward System Assessment:** School administrators should periodically assess the reward systems in place to ensure they align with the school's educational goals and values. Review the types of rewards used, their frequency, and their impact on student motivation. **Supportive Policies:** Establish policies that encourage and support the use of positive reinforcement and effective reward systems. Recognize and reward teachers who excel in motivating students, and provide resources to help them improve their reward strategies.

c. For Policymakers:

**Incentives for Motivated Teaching:** Policymakers can consider introducing incentives for educators who excel in motivating students. These incentives can be financial, recognition-based, or in the form of professional development opportunities. **Curriculum Relevance:** Encourage the development of curricula that emphasize real-world relevance and connections to students' lives. When students see the practical application of what they are learning, their intrinsic motivation is naturally enhanced. **Research-Informed Decision-Making:** Policymakers should use research findings, such as those presented in our study, to inform decisions regarding education policies and practices. A data-driven approach ensures that changes are based on evidence of what works best for student motivation. **Promote Lifelong Learning:** Policies should be geared towards promoting lifelong learning among students. Encouraging a culture of curiosity, exploration, and a passion for acquiring knowledge should be a central aim of educational policies.

### 3.2.3 The Significance of Our Research: Enriching the Understanding of Rewards and Learning Motivation in Elementary Schools

In the realm of education, understanding the factors that motivate students and foster a love for learning is of paramount significance. Our research on the "Analysis of Rewards and Their Impact on Students' Learning Motivation in Elementary Schools" contributes significantly to the existing body of knowledge in several ways.

Firstly, this research addresses a critical aspect of elementary education. Elementary school serves as the foundation of a student's educational journey. The experiences and motivation developed during these formative years have a profound and lasting impact on a student's academic path. By focusing on elementary schools, our study taps into a crucial phase in a child's life, offering insights that can shape their lifelong learning journey.

Secondly, our research offers a comprehensive examination of the complex relationship between rewards and learning motivation. While the influence of rewards on motivation has been a topic of interest in educational psychology, our study delves deeper by combining quantitative and qualitative methods. This multi-dimensional approach provides a more nuanced understanding of how rewards can function as extrinsic motivators and pave the way for intrinsic motivation to flourish. By exploring this dynamic, we extend the current understanding of how rewards can be optimally utilized in educational contexts.

Moreover, our research presents practical implications that are directly relevant to teachers, school administrators, and policymakers. It offers tangible guidance on how rewards can be employed strategically to motivate students and create a positive learning environment. By bridging the gap between research and practical application, our findings can directly impact classroom practices, school policies, and educational strategies. This bridge between theory and practice is a significant contribution in itself.

Additionally, our research underscores the importance of a balanced approach to motivation. It emphasizes that rewards, while effective in motivating students, should be viewed as a means to an end in the pursuit of lifelong learning. This balanced approach acknowledges the value of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, and it provides a roadmap for educators and policymakers to help students transition from external incentives to internal, self-driven motivation.

Furthermore, our study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by emphasizing the significance of personalized and meaningful rewards. Recognizing the diversity of student preferences and needs, we highlight the effectiveness of tailoring rewards to individual students. This insight not only enriches the understanding of motivation but also offers a practical tool that educators can employ to create more engaging and personalized learning experiences.

#### **4. Conclusions**

We end this study by emphasizing the importance of rewards in influencing our youngest learners' educational experiences and lifetime love of learning. Our research shows that education rewards are dual. These extrinsic motivators inspire pupils to thrive academically. Rewards' good link with academic success shows their efficacy. Rewards enhance dedication and recognition by recognizing students' efforts. Our research goes deeper, showing that rewards are more than incentives. Students' curiosity and interest in learning begin with them. Students become intrinsically motivated and enjoy learning over time. Students transition from learning for rewards to learning for the joy of knowing on this transformative path. It fosters a passion of learning. This transformation is our research's core. When properly administered, rewards foster intrinsic motivation. They help children transition from externally motivated to self-driven, passionate learners who explore and improve intellectually throughout their lives. We must stress tailored and meaningful rewards. Customising incentives to students' interests and needs is a strong way to motivate them long-term. These tailored prizes make kids feel valued, recognized, and most importantly, motivated. Rewards provide a pleasant classroom environment that stimulates engagement, passion, and active involvement. Reward students are academically and emotionally interested in learning. Comprehensive education that integrates academic and emotional motivation improves students' experiences. We understate the relevance of balance in our studies. Extrinsic rewards motivate, but they should be used to achieve lifelong learning. The ultimate goal is to help students develop intrinsic motivation so they can become self-driven, passionate learners who achieve academically and love learning for life. Our findings have major consequences for teachers, administrators, and politicians. Teachers can deliberately use prizes to engage and motivate students. School administrators can improve reward systems via support, resources, and professional development.

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