

## **Exploring the Relationship Between Reward Systems and English Learning Motivation: A Mixed-Methods Approach in an Indonesian Islamic High School**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to explore the impact of rewards on students' motivation to learn English, framed within an extrinsic motivation theoretical perspective. A mixed-methods research design was employed, combining quantitative data from questionnaires with qualitative insights from interviews. The sample consisted of 20 eleventh-grade students from one of the Islamic High School at MAS Al Mustaqim in Kubu Raya, selected through purposive sampling, with 5 students also participating in in-depth interviews. Quantitative analysis revealed that 75% of students strongly agreed that rewards such as praise and gifts significantly increased their motivation, with teacher influence being particularly impactful. Additionally, 75% of students agreed that receiving stationery as a reward for correct answers further enhanced their motivation. Interview data supported these findings, highlighting positive perceptions of rewards and increased enthusiasm for learning. The study concludes that extrinsic rewards can effectively boost students' motivation to learn English.

### **Keywords**

Learning, Motivation, Rewards

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Improving English proficiency is crucial for students, especially because English serves as a key tool for acquiring knowledge and accessing global resources. Mastery of English can significantly enhance students' abilities, particularly in understanding and utilizing modern technology, which predominantly operates in English (Andayani, 2022). For Indonesian students, this means that learning English is essential to effectively engage with and understand technological advancements.

Success in learning English is heavily dependent on motivation, which is a critical factor in achieving educational goals. Without motivation, the learning process becomes less effective, and students may struggle to reach their desired outcomes (Rahman et al., 2019). A lack of motivation can lead to disengagement, making the learning experience unpleasant and even boring.

Motivation is an influential factor in the teaching-learning process. The success of learning depends on the high or low motivation of students. One of the strategies that the teacher uses with students in learning activities is using a reward. Rewards are one way to build student motivation in learning (Chen, 2022). It is one of the efforts of the teacher to make students more active in doing something to improve or maintain the achievement that is achieved. According to (Mabruri, 2016), generally appreciation has a positive influence on human life and can encourage someone to improve his behavior. The reward is part of the strengthening, which is reinforcing. One of the tasks of the teacher besides teaching and learning activities is encouraging students later students always learn well and be vibrant in the learning environment.

Reinforcement is the teacher's feedback as a form of appreciation to reinforce desired behavior. The provision of strengthening to improve the learning outcomes of civics subjects can be done by the teacher when the lesson takes place which is giving praise when students correctly answer questions asked by the teacher. Providing reinforcement or appreciation can have a positive effect on students, as it encourages students to improve their activities or business. In everyday life, we often hear the term "gift" or "punishment". Giving a reward is a positive response, while punishment is a negative response. Whether receiving a reward or punishment will have a psychological impact on a person's behavior (Niswaty et al., 2017).

Some previous studies have investigated extrinsic rewards and motivation in learning English. A study from (Kasyulita & Armelida, 2019) whose aimed to find out the eight grades students' motivation in learning English after given rewards at the SMPN 3 Rambah. The study found that students' motivation in learning English can be improved well by the support from the neighborhood and after given rewards in learning English. The second study from (Lubis et al., 2020) whose aimed to find out of reward and punishment used by teacher in English Foreign Language classroom. The findings indicated that the teacher use some kinds of rewards in teaching English, such as verbal rewards, non verbal rewards, reward by coming close to students, rewards with touch, gifts, reward with fun activities. Whereas, the kinds of punishment given by teachers to students in English foreign language classroom are preventive punishment

and repressive punishment. Another study from (Maulana & Budianto, 2022) which also discussed about providing rewards to junior high school students in learning English. The findings indicated that the types of rewards used by teachers in learning English in junior high school are praise and non-verbal. They also conclude that the reward is a form of teacher appreciation for consistent student achievement in learning.

The previous studies mentioned above have identified various types of rewards and punishments used by teachers in teaching English. However, the methods and samples used in this study differ from those in earlier research. Additionally, this study specifically focuses on understanding how different types of rewards influence student motivation in learning English.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Motivation is a critical factor in the learning process, significantly influencing students' success or failure, particularly in language acquisition. Understanding motivation is essential for educators to foster effective learning environments. Brown & Lee (2015) explains that motivation can be categorized as global, situational, or task-oriented, indicating its multifaceted nature (p. 170). In the context of language learning, motivation is pivotal because it impacts how well students learn, how persistent they are, and their overall satisfaction with their progress (Alisoy, 2023)

Motivation can be broadly divided into two types: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to the drive to engage in a learning activity for its inherent satisfaction and personal interest. (Chen, 2022) describes intrinsic motivation as originating from within the individual, driven by a genuine desire to learn or achieve something for its own sake. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is influenced by external factors such as rewards, grades, or recognition. (Alisoy, 2023) notes that extrinsic motivation is fueled by external incentives or pressures, which can impact students' engagement and performance.

The primary aim of implementing rewards in an educational setting is to enhance extrinsic motivation. When students receive rewards, it not only acknowledges their achievements but also increases their awareness and motivation to continue performing well. (Anderman & Anderman, 2020) define a reward as “a real or emotional benefit given to or received by students for participating in or completing an activity.” This definition highlights that rewards serve as a form of recognition for students' efforts and accomplishments.

Rewards can also play a role in strengthening the teacher-student relationship. By using rewards, teachers can create a positive environment that reflects care and appreciation for students' progress. (Chen, 2022) distinguishes between two types of reward systems: tangible and intangible. Tangible rewards, or external reward systems, include physical items like stickers, small toys, or other incentives. Intangible rewards, or internal reward systems, involve verbal praise, positive feedback, and fostering a sense of achievement and a strong teacher-student rapport.

According to (Rahardjo & Pertiwi, 2020) extrinsic motivation is crucial as it often stems from social pressures or rewards, which can drive individuals to learn a second language. The application of a reward system can significantly impact students' responsiveness and motivation, potentially leading to improved academic performance and a greater commitment to their learning objectives (Chen, 2022)

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of rewards on student motivation. According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2023), quantitative research involves investigating social or human problems through testing theories with measurable variables and statistical analysis to assess the validity of predictive generalizations. In this study, a descriptive quantitative design was used to describe and analyze the attributes of the phenomenon under investigation, specifically focusing on students' perceptions of rewards and their motivation to learn English (Nassaji, 2015).

The study was conducted with eleventh-grade students from one of the Islamic High School, namely MAS Al Mustaqim Kubu Raya, specifically in the XI IPS 1 class, using purposive sampling to select a total of 20 participants. Data were collected through two primary instruments: questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire, adapted from Aksa (2018), included 20 items utilizing a Likert scale to assess students' perceptions of how rewards influence their motivation to learn English. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were previously established by other researchers.

Additionally, qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 5 students. These interviews, lasting approximately 20 minutes each, aimed to provide deeper insights into students' views, beliefs, and attitudes towards the rewards system and its impact on their motivation. (Edwards & Holland, 2013) describe semi-structured interviews as a key qualitative method that allows for a flexible and in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives. This mixed-methods approach enabled a thorough examination of the research question from both quantitative and qualitative angles. To analyze the data from the questionnaire, the writer used computer software statistical analysis, which is Microsoft Excel to calculate the result in the form of a percentage with the following formula:

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

**Figure 1. Formula to calculate the percentage**

Where:

P = Percentage

*f* = The frequency of items

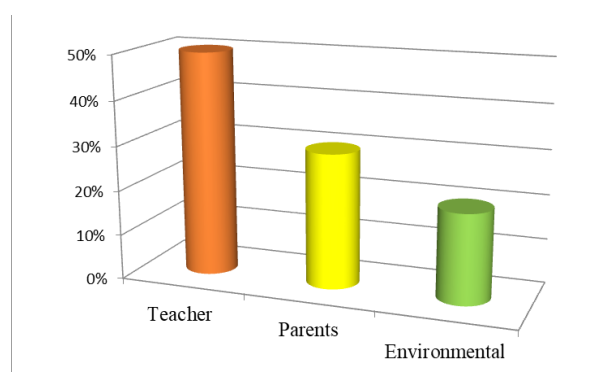
*N* = Total respondents

The formula above was used to analyze the impact of rewards on student motivation by converting frequency data into percentages. This formula helps quantify the proportion of students who responded in a particular way to the questionnaire items, making it easier to interpret and compare the results. In addition to the quantitative data collected, thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview data. Thematic analysis is a method used to identify and interpret patterns and themes within qualitative data, such as stories and interviews (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). The process involved several key steps. First, the researcher transcribed the recorded interviews into written text, creating interview transcripts. These transcripts were then carefully read multiple times to familiarize the researcher with the data. Next, the researcher coded the transcripts by identifying and labeling significant segments of text according to emerging themes. These codes were then grouped into categories to reveal overarching themes related to students' perspectives on the effect of rewards on their motivation to learn English. Finally, the researcher organized and presented the findings in alignment with the study's research objectives, highlighting how the themes support the understanding of the rewards' impact on student motivation.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Results of Questionnaire Analysis**

The researcher obtained from the distribution of the questionnaire to the students. The questionnaire consists of 20 statement items and it was created to know the students' perspectives regarding the effect of giving rewards on their motivation in learning English. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to 20 students of XI IPS 1 at MAS Al Mustaqim in Kubu Raya. To find out the percentages from all items in the questionnaire, the researcher used Microsoft Excel. There were three indicators in the questionnaire, consisting of teacher (Item no 1-10), parents (Item no 11-16), and environment (Item no 17-20). The following chart is created to show the percentage of each indicator:



**Figure 2. Students' Motivation in Learning English**

The above chart shows the percentage of each indicator in the questionnaire. The researcher calculated the percentage using the AVERAGE formula. It can be seen that the indicator Teacher received the highest percentage of 50% with a total score of 200. The second indicator of Parents received a percentage of 30% with a total score of 120.

The third indicator Environmental received a percentage of 20% with a total score of 80.

Based on the result of the questionnaire analysis, the statement item that received the highest percentage in the strongly agree (SA) scale was item no 7 with a percentage of 75%. Meanwhile, the statements items that received the highest percentage in the agree (A) scales were item no 1 with a percentage of 75% and item no 11 with a percentage of 70%. It can be seen that items 7, 1, and 11 were categorized as high. On the other hand, the statements items that received the lowest percentage on the strongly agree scale were item number 18 with a percentage of 5%, and item number 10 with a percentage of 10%. Whereas, the statement item that received the lowest percentage in the agree (A) scale is item number 12 with a percentage of 5%.

## 2. Results of Interview Analysis

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with 5 students to know their perception of the effect of giving rewards on their motivation to learn English. The data from the interview were coded and categorized into themes. The results were presented based on the themes as follows:

### 2.1. The Influence of Giving Rewards to the Students

The researcher asked the students about how the reward given by the teacher in the English language learning program can affect their motivation to learn English. Students believe that rewards can have a positive impact on increasing their motivation. Some students' responses are shown below:

S1 said that:

*“Rewards given by teachers can form a positive knowledge that gives effort and appreciation; this can increase self-confidence and motivation to continue learning English”* (Excerpt 1, S1).

Meanwhile, S2 stated that:

*“Very motivating, with the rewards given by the teacher, my enthusiasm for learning increases”* (Excerpt 2, S2).

Similarly, S4 and S5 said that:

*“It is very motivating to study because it makes me happy”* (Excerpt 3, S4).

*“I am very happy, and it makes me more enthusiastic about learning English”* (Excerpt 4, S5).

Whereas, S3 argues that:

*“I am very motivated when given a reward because it excites me to learn, especially when the reward is money”* (Excerpt 5, S3).

Based on the students' responses above, the rewards given by teachers can influence students' motivation to study and make them feel happy and more enthusiastic about learning English. Some students also argue that the reward given by the teacher as the main factor can motivate them to learn English more diligently.

S1 said that:

*“Yes, rewards can be a motivating factor for me to study English more diligently”*) (Excerpt 6, S1).

S2 and S3 also said that:

*“Yes, because the rewards given are quite motivating and provide encouragement as well as enthusiasm for learning English.”* (Excerpt 7, S2).

*“Iya, saya ketika dikasih hadiah serta akan selalu lebih giat untuk belajar bahasa Inggris”*  
(Excerpt 8, S3).

Based on the students' responses, they argue that rewards as the primary factor and can enhance their motivation. It can be seen that providing rewards to the student can make them more diligent in learning English. The researcher also asked about their opinion on the impact of providing rewards to increase their motivation to learn English. They believe that rewards can have a positive effect on learning. They said:

*“Positive. Rewards can provide additional encouragement and push me to achieve learning objectives.”* (Excerpt 9, S1).

*“Positive. The reward given is very influential because it can encourage me.”* (Excerpt 10, S2).

*“Positive, because I feel that when there are rewards, I am more diligent in studying English.”* (Excerpt 11, S3).

*“Positive, because rewards have a significant influence, making me more diligent in studying”* (Excerpt 12, S4).

*“Positive. The reward given is very influential because it can encourage me”* (Excerpt 13, S5)

Based on students' responses above, they argue that rewards can positively influence them in learning English. This indicates that providing rewards can enhance their motivation to learn English.

## 2.2. Types of Reward

The researcher asked about the effective or interesting types of rewards given by the teacher that encourage them to be more active in learning English. Some students' responses are shown below:

S1 argues that:

*“Feedback and praise, especially positive feedback and praise from teachers, can have a strong impact on motivating me.”*  
(Excerpt 14, S1).

S1 mentioned that rewards such as positive feedback and praise from the teacher can have a strong impact on motivating students to learn English. Meanwhile, S2 said that:

*“Stationery items and positive words of praise from teachers can have a strong impact in motivating me.”* (Excerpt 15, S2).

S3 stated that:

*“Rewards in the form of money and stationery can have a strong impact on motivating me to learn English.”* (Excerpt 16, S3).

S4 and S5 also argue that:

*“Stationery as the reward can have a strong impact on motivating me to learn English.”* (Excerpt 17, S4).

*“Rewards such as stationery and money from teachers can have a strong impact on motivating me to learn English.”*(Excerpt 18, S5).

Based on the students' responses above, some of them want rewards in the form of stationery and money. They argue that these rewards can enhance their motivation to learn English.

### **2.3 Parents Involvement in Motivating Students**

The researcher asked about how the students' parents can provide encouragement and motivation for learning. Some responses can be seen in the following:

S1 said that:

*“Yes, despite my parents' busy work schedules, they always provide encouragement and motivation for me to study harder.”*  
(Excerpt 19, S1).

Similarly, S2, S4 and S5 said that:

*“Yes, my parents always give me encouragement and support to study hard.”* (Excerpt 20, S2).

*“Yes, my parents always motivate and encourage me to study when I am at home”* (Excerpt 21, S4).

*“Yes, my parents always encourage and support me every day”*  
(Excerpt 22, S5).

Based on the students' responses above, their parents always provide motivation and encourage them to study English. Meanwhile, the parents of S3 do not always provide motivation and support because they are busy working. S3 specifically said that:

*“No, because my parents are busy with their work so I study by myself”*  
(Excerpt 23, S3).

During the interview, the researcher also asked whether their parents always want to know about the teaching and learning activities they participate in at school every day. They replied:

S1 said that:

*“Yes, my parents always ask about learning activities at school, and my parents always ask about whether the teacher gives assignments from school, if there are they tell me to do it first”* (Excerpt 24, S1).

Meanwhile, S2, S3 and S4 stated that:



*“Sometimes they ask but more often than not, my parents don't ask about teaching and learning activities at school”* (Excerpt 25, S2, S3, S4).

On the other hand, S5 said that:

*“No, because my parents don't have time to ask about that.”* (Excerpt 26, S5).

Based on the response above, it can be seen that the parents' involvement can significantly impact students' motivation to learn English. Parents' involvement plays a crucial role in fostering students' motivation to learn English by providing emotional support and encouragement to their children.

#### **2.4. The Influence of the Environment on Motivating Students**

The researcher asked about how the school environment can influence the use of rewards in learning English. Some students' responses are shown below:

S1 and S3 argue that the environment has a positive impact on their learning. They said:

*“The environment has a positive impact on my learning”*  
(Excerpt 27, S1)

*“The influence of the environment has a positive impact on my learning”*

(Appendix 28, S3)

Meanwhile, S2 argues that:

*“It is very influential for my enthusiasm for learning”* (Excerpt 29, S2).

On the other hand, S4 and S5 said that:

*“The influence of the environment is very significant in making me more diligent in studying”* (Excerpt 30, S4).

*“It's very influential for me to be more diligent in studying”*  
(Excerpt 31, S5).

Based on the responses above, the influence of the environment has a positive impact on student's motivation. Furthermore, the researcher also asked the condition of the school building whether can make them feel comfortable during the teaching and learning process. They replied:

S1 said that:

*“Yes, because the condition of my school building is quite good, and there is rarely any litter around it, which makes me more comfortable while studying”*

(Excerpt 32, S1).

Meanwhile, S2, S3, S4, and S5 mentioned that the environment and the facilities in their school are inadequate. They said:

*“No, the school environment and facilities are inadequate.”*

(Excerpt 33, S2, S3, S4, S5).

Based on the responses above, some students said that the facilities in their school were insufficient. When school facilities are insufficient, it can impact the learning environment. The environment at a school is essential to motivate students to learn English. When students feel comfortable and encouraged, they are more likely to engage actively in language learning activities.

This study aimed to know the effect of extrinsic motivation faced by the students in learning English at Mas al Mustaqim Kubu Raya. The questionnaire was used as the research instrument for collecting the data. The statement items consist of 20, which were divided into three indicators: 10-item indicator of teacher, 6-item indicator of parents, and 4-item indicator of environment.

In the indicator of the teacher, it was found that students feel more motivated when the teacher gives rewards to them for answering questions in class. This is evidenced by the result of item number 7 which received the highest percentage of 75%, students chose to strongly agree with the statements. Furthermore, they also wanted the teacher can give stationery when the student answered the questions correctly. This is evidenced by the result of item number 1 which received the highest percentage of 70%, students chose to agree with the statements. Moreover, beyond merely functioning as educational tools and stimuli for learning, rewards can also serve as drivers, motivating students to engage in more active learning (Maulana & Budiyo, 2022).

Furthermore, the parents' involvement significantly impacts students' motivation to learn English. It was evidenced by statement item number 11 with the percentage of 70%, of students who chose agree with the statement. The motivation that parents provide to their children can significantly impact their school achievements (Moneva, 2020). Moreover, in the indicator of environment, the statements items received the lowest percentage. It can be seen that the school environment did not have as much influence on the use of rewards in learning English.

Meanwhile, according to the result from the interview, it was found that students believe that rewards can have a positive impact on increasing their motivation. They also mentioned the types of rewards, such as positive feedback, praise, gifts or presents can enhance their motivation to learn English. In line with that, Chen (2023) and Sardi et al., (2023) revealed that feedback that provides support for further improvement is beneficial to learning. They also found the significance of both rewards and feedback in enhancing the learning process. According to Maulana and Budiyo (2022), the rewards given by the teacher will improve the psychological condition of students in learning English. Furthermore, reward is an educational method that aims to make a person feel happy, motivated, and enthusiastic about learning (Irawan & Usman, 2021). Most students feel happier and more comfortable when learning is conducted using the reward method because they can compete to be the best in their ongoing learning.

In addition to the teacher giving rewards to students, they also mentioned that the influence of parents and the environment can significantly impact to increase their motivation. In line with this, Irawan and Usman (2021) argue that high student motivation to learn can be influenced by factors of the family environment, classroom

environment, and community environment. It can be justified that the parents and the environment at a school can also motivate students to learn English.

Based on the results from the questionnaire and the interview, it can be concluded that the effect of giving rewards has a positive effect on increasing students' motivation to study English. Learning with rewards can make students more active and responsive in participating in English learning (Maulana & Budiyanto, 2022). The effect of giving rewards in English class makes students want to learn more. When teachers give rewards, students feel happy and excited about studying English. This helps them pay attention and participate more in class activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The primary goal of this research was to find out the effect of giving rewards on students' motivation to learn English at MAS AL Mustaqim in Kubu Raya. The researcher used two research instruments, such as questionnaire and conducting interview. Based on the results from the questionnaire analysis, most students agree that they feel more motivated when the teacher rewards them for answering questions in the classroom; they also want the teacher to give stationery when they can answer the questions correctly. From the results of conducting interview, the researcher found that the effects of giving rewards to the student can increase their enthusiasm and motivation in learning English. Students feel motivated when the teacher gives rewards, such as positive feedback, praise, gifts, or presents. Furthermore, the influences from their parents and environment also have a significant impact on their motivation to learn English. However, the research is limited by its focus on a single school and reliance on self-reported data, which may affect the generalizability and accuracy of the findings. The results suggest that educators should balance the use of extrinsic rewards with strategies that foster intrinsic motivation and involve parents in the learning process. Future research should explore the long-term effects of rewards, investigate their impact across different contexts, and examine the interplay between extrinsic and intrinsic motivators to better understand how to optimize student learning outcomes.

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