

**The Use of Rewards to Motivate Learners**  
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استخدام المكافآت لتحفيز المتعلمين

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**المخلص**

تسعى هذه الورقة لاستكشاف استخدام المكافآت لتحفيز المتعلمين. نحن نفترض أن المكافآت كبيرة؛ ومع ذلك، يجب عدم استخدامها كعامل محفز وحيد لتشجيع الطلاب على التعلم. يجب أن يقوم المعلمون ببناء التعلم بطريقة تجعل الطلاب أكثر تفاعلاً وراغبة في المشاركة. لتحقيق هدف هذه الورقة، سوف نستكشف الدراسات البحثية المختلفة التي أجريت في الماضي، والتي تتعلق باستخدام المكافآت داخل الفصل الدراسي. وبلاستفادة من هذا البحث، سنستنتج ما إذا كان ينبغي استخدام المكافآت كعامل محفز واستكشاف خيارات أخرى لمساعدة الطلاب على أن يصبحوا أكثر تفاعلاً وراغبة في التعلم. يمكن أن يكون استخدام المكافآت لتحفيز المتعلمين أداة فعالة. ومع ذلك، لا ينبغي أن يكون هناك بديل أفضل لتحفيز المتعلمين للدراسة من السماح لهم بفهم أهمية التعلم وهيكله الفصول بطريقة تجعلها مواتية لنقل الأفكار والمعرفة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** استخدام المكافآت، الدافع الطلابي، أثر المكافآت على تعلم الطلاب، صفات الحافز الجوهري.

**Abstract**

This paper seeks to explore the use of rewards to motivate learners. We hypothesize that rewards are great; however, they must not be used as a sole motivating factor to encourage students to learn. Teachers have to structure learning in such a way that the students become more engaged and willing to participate. To achieve the aim of this paper, we will explore the different research studies conducted in the past, which are relevant to the use of rewards inside the classroom. Drawing from the research, we will conclude whether rewards should be used as a motivating factor and explore other options to help students become more engaged and willing to learn. The use of rewards to motivate learners can be an effective tool. However, there should be no better substitute to motivate learners to study than letting them understand the importance of learning and structuring the classroom in such a way that it becomes conducive for transference of ideas and knowledge.

**Keywords:** The use of rewards, Student motivation, The Impact of Rewards on Student Learning, Qualities of Intrinsic Motivation.

**The Use of Rewards to Motivate Learners**

The use of external rewards to inspire students to get good grades has been used since time immemorial (Davis & Middleton, 2006). In every classroom, students learn differently. There are children that are intrinsically motivated while others are extrinsically motivated. For example, Abramovich, Schunn, and Higashi (2013) considered educational badges as an alternative assessment to increase motivation among learners. Students who are motivated inherently display an interest to learn. Normally, they seek after a subject for the joy of learning or for achievement purposes (Ledford Jr, Gerhart, & Fang, 2013). Naturally spurred learners have a tendency to incline toward testing errands and comprehending data inside and out. They will probably pick projects that request more prominent exertion than outwardly propelled students who typically work to get some reward or to keep away from a punishment (Filsecker & Hickey, 2014). Despite the fact that children who enter school are regularly disposed to be either characteristically or extrinsically motivated, an advantageous objective for educators is to encourage intrinsic motivation in children.

Student motivation, engagement, and achievements undeniably affect every aspect of a student's school life, including their participation, academic performance, and involvement in extracurricular activities. Likewise, advancing the best possible ways to enhance the motivation of grades K-12 is crucial for all instructions, especially in the current academic environment whereby excessive attention is given to test scores, duty, and student responsibility. Researchers have also noted some challenges faced by educators who promote learner motivation. For example, there were instances when a number of parents or guardians and educators alike fail to encourage the students to do their best in school. As a result, some learners become apathetic and careless towards their academic responsibilities. Thus, educators and advocates of motivating students recommend feasible ways to urge the students to study and increase their motivation and concentration whether in or out of the school, wherever learning is involved, such as giving incentives or rewards for a job well done.

In effect, numerous educators have found that learner motivation can be instilled by giving unmistakable rewards, for example, prizes, stickers, or treats because they believe these strengthen teaching practices to have positive outcomes (Carlton, 2003; Chaltain, 2010). They also said that by using rewards, students figure out how to tune in, to finish work, and to carry on properly. Teachers offer prizes or rewards for doing better in class, such as stickers for good behavior, treats for completing homework and, of course, good grades. However, it has been prove in the past that these kinds of rewards prohibit the young learners to see learning as a responsibility (Amabile & Gitomer, 1984; DeCharms, 1972; Ryan & Grolnick, 1986). Others contended that prizes downgrade learning and check the improvement of self-restraint and characteristic motivation (Cameron & Pierce, 1996).

This paper seeks to explore the use of rewards to motivate learners. We hypothesize that rewards are great; however, they must not be used as a sole motivating factor to encourage students to learn. Teachers have to structure learning in such a way that the students become more engaged and willing to participate. To achieve the aim of this paper, we will explore the different research studies conducted in the past, which are relevant to the use of rewards inside the classroom. Drawing from the research, we will conclude whether rewards should be used as a motivating factor and explore other options to help students become more engaged and willing to learn.

### **Literature Review**

Educators who wish to reform the current standards of education perceive elective assessments as a feasible way to improve the advantages of student evaluation while lessening any negative effects (Abramovich et al., 2013). Moving far from the way of life of state-administered testing permits, more choices have been made available for instructional planners in the development of evaluations that allow a more extensive assortment of criticism and information to learners and educators. An alternative evaluation that has become increasingly popular among educators is instructive identifications (Alberts, 2010). Identifications, much like their partners in exploring and videogames, are viewed as an approach to evaluate learning outside of formal tutoring. The backers of instructive identifications—a teacher or instructive association—can give a representative honor for an ability, learning, or accomplishment like how they right now give degrees or declarations. The image, as identification, would then be able to be shown by the student to tell others of their dominance or information. In this way, instructional planners can utilize instructive identifications to impact engagement and learning. For instance, identifications can give centered objectives, testing undertakings, clear measures, and insistence of execution, oddity, decision, and genuineness.

Advocates guarantee that identifications can be offered as an option evaluation that will build student motivation while keeping up fantastic input. Instructive identifications share a large number of similar highlights of the legitimacy identification and computer game models. Like legitimacy identifications, instructive identifications are generally offered for discovering that happens outside of conventional instructive establishments. Instructive identifications are usually distinguishable on a student's online profile similar to how videogame identifications are seen by other players or how boy scouts reveal their identification on their badges and scarves. Like videogame accomplishments,

identifications can be granted for coincidental action notwithstanding authority of abilities or show of information.

Frameworks of reward systems in schools are usually focused and used on students with learning disabilities, particularly in specialized classroom curriculum (Schultz & Switzky, 1990). In most cases, the use of these rewards has not resulted to the successful implementation of rewards. The best assessment showing a change in the grades of young students with learning disabilities have seldom provided the students with thought-provoking critical thinking opportunities that are a must in real-life situations. Albeit some outward rewards might be important to initiate learners in an instruction program, the heft of substance ought to be fixated on aptitudes that advance inherent motivation and prompt the dominance of summed up abilities (Schultz & Switzky, 1990). At this point, all classroom undertakings should use methods to enhance the advancement of the students' inherent motivation. Likewise, educators should remember that the end goal should be to foster an independent classroom environment where the students are given the chance to excel independently. In order to accomplish this, the students must be given alternatives –a chance to make their own decisions – and made to feel they have autonomy over nature and their learning experiences (Amabile & Gitomer, 1984). Additionally, students need to feel confident in learning the subject matters (DeCharms, 1972). As a result, instructors can have lesser difficulty in terms of managing their time accordingly and preventing untoward or bad behavior because the students are inherently motivated to do their best rather than cause any trouble (Adelman & Taylor, 1990). Fortunately, there is a wide array of actions or activities that teachers can implement to improve the motivation of different types of students.

The term characteristic motivation is by and large comprehended rather than extraneous motivation. Naturally propelled practices are those in which there is no obvious reward aside from with the movement itself. Extraneous motivation, then again, is said to happen when an action is remunerated by motivating forces not inherent in the assignment. Despite the fact that these terms have been censured (Dickinson, 1989), they are acknowledged by numerous scientists. According to scholars and theorists, the connection between the improvement of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation originate from two assumptions. First, it is believed that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation work hand-in-hand to initiate motivation in general. For example, in work environments, leading psychologists contend that the workers are most motivated when they feel passionate and interested towards their job, and that they are well-compensated for their work. Meanwhile, various researchers have evaluated the implications of providing incentives at work, and their findings suggest that extraneous rewards may actually hinder motivation instead (DeCharms, 1976). In fact, during the studies developed in the mid-1970s, external rewards were found to disturb motivation (Deci, 1971). Based on core evaluations, researchers attempted to test the theory whereby external rewards would challenge intrinsic motivation either by threatening feelings of ability and self-assurance or by diverting the participants' motivation from internal to external causes. Deci's (1971) study found that when money was used as a form of external reward, there was a notable decrease in intrinsic motivation. Meanwhile, when positive feedback and verbal reinforcement were utilized, intrinsic motivation increased. Such investigative finding implies that early studies provide an underlying assumption that people's performance, time, and motivation diminished when the prospect of external reward was challenged.

### **Qualities of Intrinsic Motivation**

Educators normally depict great learners as persevering, intrigued, and persuaded (Spaulding, 1992). Motivation is a term that is repeatedly emphasized when dealing with academic endeavors among children. Researchers are constantly in pursuit of solutions to help improve student motivation. Traditionally, there are two forms of motivation that has been derived from past studies: the intrinsic motivation and the extrinsic motivation. Accordingly, a motivated individual is a person who participates or engages in an action whereby the action is to be rewarded. A child, for example, who

cleans his room with the goal of finding his baseball card collection, is innately motivated to clean. Thus, extrinsic motivation occurs when an individual completes an action when prompted he or she will receive an extrinsic reward. A child who is promised an out-of-town trip if he finds his baseball card collection is said to be outwardly motivated. While the dominant aspect of rewards offered in school is also extrinsically motivated, children benefit the most when they are inspired by innate or intrinsic motivation. One major reason behind this is that children who are innately motivated reveal different practices that allow them to perform positively with their academic abilities (Spaulding, 1992). For example, young students who are intrinsically motivated turn out to be profoundly participative with the task that needs to be accomplished. When they do, they achieve a sense satisfaction upon completion of a task (Amabile & Gitomer, 1984), and they are inspired to overcome the challenge with the expectation of resolving them, which to them is satisfying nonetheless (Adelman & Taylor, 1990).

According to DeCharms (1972), a naturally motivated person normally feels he or she can try to adjust in any given situation and feels certain that positive change will occur. Children who are seen showing these qualities inside the classroom are described as driven, talented students. Additionally, children with learning disabilities have been found to immensely benefit from intrinsic motivation. In fact, these learners tend to work longer and harder in their tasks in comparison with extrinsically motivated children with learning disabilities. This is because it is believed that children, who are intrinsically motivated, despite the presence of learning disability, are able to develop a fundamental inner structure consisting of self-reward and self-control (Adelman & Taylor, 1990).

### **The Impact of Rewards on Student Learning**

Intrinsic motivation is crucial to the advancement of promising students. On the other hand, this type of motivation is quite difficult to witness inside the classroom. Various educators in general and special education have leaned towards the provision of prizes or rewards and motivation programs, expecting the goal of supervising behavior and the students' learning at the same time. For example, a teacher gives a student a treat for being well-behaved inside the classroom with the expectation that the prize will widen the chances of the young student to go to the classroom quietly every time. Likewise, the teacher might feel that she is enhancing a positive classroom situation but, in reality, the child only acknowledges what particular actions would help him or her receive a prize. Thus, in such scenario, it becomes evident to the child that he or she will only get rewarded if he or she does what he or she is told – not necessarily learn the importance of going inside the room quietly or the need to behave well inside the classroom. In short, the teacher fails at teaching the student on what qualities and behaviors are required in a rewarding classroom setting.

In relation, the field of behaviorism offered a popular assumption during the 1950s wherein the implementation of a reward system in schools was popular. In operant conditioning, for example, positive reinforcement is given in addition to a reinforcing stimulus (such as a reward) after a behavior that is believed to increase the chances for that behavior will reoccur in the future. Over time, teachers have used the fundamentals of operant conditioning whenever they give prizes, stickers, and approval to their students. Numerous support procedures are focused for use in populaces with slight disabilities, and that care ought to be utilized while picking fortification with a specific gathering. Indeed, even with the alerts, the standards of operant molding have seen an across the board execution in instruction.

The planning of a reward likewise influences motivation. In a study conducted at a nursery school, Lepper, Greene, and Nisbett (1973) rewarded 51 children with high levels of enthusiasm for accomplishing one out of the three tests given. In one group of learners, they consented to finish an illustration movement for a reward of a testament and star. One group finished the illustration action, after that they got an unexpected reward, and the third gathering finished the action yet got no reward. The researchers eventually discovered that the children who got no reward or commendation invested more energy at drawing in contrast to the children with rewards and praises when done with the

activity. Thus, the rewards agreed prior to an action begins appearing to have less enthusiasm to do the same action in the future since the students in the control group still invested great amounts of energy at drawing even when given extra time (Lepper et al., 1973).

Finally, one study discovered that rewards seem to interfere with the nature of learning. According to Masters and Mokros' (1973) investigation, it was shown that the provision of rewards diverted the attention of the students, attributing to fewer actual lessons learned. The nursery students that participated in the said study were provided with treats for working on the tasks during the classroom assignments, while a control group were not given anything to reward their answers. The findings of the study revealed that the group that accepted treats as reward for doing their classroom tasks were slower in acquiring new skills and had more mistakes in comparison with the control group. The findings emphasize the potentials of learning from tasks becomes approached with the intent of getting a reward rather than learning from the experience. Thus, in such situations, it is proven that rewards should be discouraged inside the classroom because they make students commit more mistakes and only become preoccupied with the notions of receiving treats or rewards for each of their tasks.

### **Discussion**

Motivation hints at the causes that inspire behavior that is shown by willingness and decision. Intrinsic motivation is the kind of motivation that is driven by a person's curiosity, eagerness, or happiness. According to experts, they commonly balance intrinsic with extrinsic motivation, which is motivation given by supporting one's potentials. Traditionally, educators perceive intrinsic motivation as more appealing because they claim it results to improved learning outcomes in contrast to extrinsic motivation. In addition, motivation is inclusive of a clustered group strongly associated with beliefs, confidence, recognition, values, interests, and related activities. For example, self-confidence is an individual's noticeable abilities in a particular expertise, and people naturally become more stimulated to participate in activities where their abilities exceed expectations. A person's perception of control over their own accomplishments and failures are known as proper attributions, with certain different kinds of attributions are more pronounced to strengthen motivation than others. In particular, citing one's failure to lack of effort appears to be more acceptable than ascribing failure to one's lack of knowledge and abilities. Meanwhile, qualities are motivating factors or reasons to participate in certain activities, with inherent value more inclined to develop persistence and effort than achievement values or qualities that focus on costs.

Additionally, interests involve collaborations between a person and his or her abilities. Interests are content-particular and come in two structures: personal interests and situational interests. Personal interest is a moderately steady characteristic created as for a specific point or subject. Situational interest, on the other hand, is prompt, full of feeling, and fleeting, and mirrors certain natural elements, for example, undertaking attributes. Singular intrigue is accepted to encourage more prominent long haul determination than situational intrigue.

In relation, a fundamental topic in the investigation of intrinsic motivation is the improvement of an independent classroom setting. During a time when young students feel responsible for their conditions, they are innately driven to work and experience positive feelings and attitudes towards their self-esteem (Ryan & Grolnick, 1986). Additionally, it is imperative to mention that young students may view independent learning differently from their teachers. It is believed that a child's identification and acknowledgement of the world and its different facets is largely affected by the way he or she was trained at a young age (Adelman & Taylor, 1990). Therefore, it is critical for educators to create a setting wherein children can consider themselves to be autonomous and independent while providing with some alternatives or options they could choose from. In doing so, children are permitted to make their own decisions based on their knowledge and capabilities, which could be positively attributed to developing their intrinsic motivation.

Meanwhile, behavioral management is another important aspect of the classroom. As much as extrinsic motivation influences how a student acts, it is also important to identify incidents of

misbehavior inside the classroom before deciding on what type of motivation to implement on the students. According to Adelman and Taylor (1990), misbehavior can either be proactive or receptive. Proactive behavior usually happens in an activity that a student participates in and where it makes him feel responsibility for the outcome. Meanwhile, receptive behavior occurs when a student feels he is at a disadvantage and then acts or behaves in a disruptive way to avoid feeling negative emotions. Educators must be well-aware of this so that they may distinguish between troublemakers and students who are merely reacting to avoid unfavorable emotions. To avoid this, it is recommended to plan the classroom activities to match the abilities of the students, and to explain to the students the goal and objectives of the activity so that they will understand the importance of accomplishing specific classroom activities without causing trouble.

Motivation can influence how students approach school all in all, how they identify with instructors, how much time and exertion they give to their examinations, how much help they look for when they're battling, how they perform on tests, what's more, numerous different parts of instruction. On the off chance that students aren't persuaded, it is troublesome, if certainly feasible, to enhance their scholastic accomplishment, regardless of how great the educator, educational modules or school is. In addition, unmotivated students can withdraw different students from scholastics, which can influence the earth of a whole classroom or then again school.

Higher motivation to learn has been connected not exclusively to better scholarly execution, yet to more noteworthy calculated comprehension, fulfillment with school, confidence, social modification, furthermore, school fruition rates. Motivation regularly decays as students advance from rudimentary through secondary school. Upwards of 40% of high school students are withdrawn from learning, are preoccupied, apply little exertion on school work, and report being exhausted in school, as indicated by a 2004 investigation by the National Research Council. The absence of motivation has genuine outcomes. For instance, in a 2006 review investigating why students dropped out of school, 70% of secondary school dropouts said they were unmotivated (Bridgeland, DiIulio& Morison, 2006).

Supporters of using rewards to inspire students argue that these projects can cause convey adjust to an instructive framework that anticipates students to apply exertion in advance for the guarantee of prizes that are deferred or hard to get a handle on. Besides, a few defenders note, rewards have for some time been a piece of training (think gold stars) and can help make everything fair for low-pay students whose guardians do not have the way to offer them impetuses for scholarly achievement. A few advocates contend that seeking after a reward can change students' practices in positive routes for the span of the reward program and maybe after the reward closes. Others bring up that prizes might be the best way to propel students to put forth a concentrated effort to errands that have no incentive to them, for example, taking government sanctioned tests that have no outcomes for students however are vital for their school.

Numerous opposing scholars, as far as it matters for them, fight that compensating students for attractive conduct runs counter to the genuine objective of training, which ought to be to build up students' interest and characteristic love of learning. A few contend that when the reward program closes, students not any more have motivation to proceed with their conduct. Remunerating execution is unreasonable, a few rivals say, since students who are normally gifted will effectively gain rewards, while less gifted students may make a decent attempt yet at the same time not qualify for a reward. A few adversaries likewise point to prove recommending that extraneous prizes can energize a consistence attitude and diminish inborn motivation.

Be that as it may, do reward programs work? Noting this inquiry is confused by the way that numerous such projects have been done in only one locale, school, or classroom, and even comparable projects can be executed contrastingly in various settings. Likewise, it's vital to break down not just the end result for student motivation while the program is set up, yet additionally what occurs after the rewards are removed.

Self-awareness about a person's thought processes and motivation can strengthen fundamental understanding of one's abilities according to evidence-based studies. Also, motivation inspires the improvement and expression of the students' metacognition. Students with better control and direction of their feelings and motivations have a better, more positive social relationships in school, which eventually encourages them participate more and be academically motivated as well.

## Conclusion

The use of rewards to motivate learners can be an effective tool. However, there should be no better substitute to motivate learners to study than letting them understand the importance of learning and structuring the classroom in such a way that it becomes conducive for transference of ideas and knowledge.

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