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Examining The Influence of Rewards on Student's Motivation Among University Students

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ABSTRACT

A reward system is a framework for identifying and appreciating the efforts and academic achievements of the students. This may include grades, certificates, scholarships, praise, or opportunities for personal and professional development. The main purpose of the study to find out the influence of rewards structures on student's motivation among university students. The primary objectives of this study, to determine the influence of different rewards on students' motivation at university level. The research used quantitative approach. The tool of the study was self-made five point Likert scale questionnaire designed by the researcher and distributed to a sample size of 308 undergraduate students according to the L.R Gay table selected from a total population 1580 from six public universities of Islamabad. Simple Random Sampling technique used for selection of respondents, the data analyzed by using SPSS software to ensure accurate results. The study aimed to provide understandings into which reward systems are most likely to foster a positive learning environment and enhance academic success. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. For future, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies that track the long-term effects of different types of rewards on motivation, for future researchers, it is recommended to conduct studies using mixed methods combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture a deeper understanding of how rewards influence motivation over time.

Keywords: Academic success, Student motivation. Reward structure

INTRODUCTION

Rewards recognized as a powerful tool for motivating the students. Rewards are given as appreciation for good behavior or work. Rewards are a way to show students that their good behavior or hard work is noticed and appreciated. They can help make learning more fun and encourage students to keep trying their best. Rewards can make students feel happy and more interested in learning. Teachers often use them to encourage students who complete their tasks well. According to Harmer, rewards act as an incentive, motivating students to perform correctly. The use of rewards and incentives in educational settings as a way to improve student performance and motivation is an issue that has generated controversy. On one side of the debate are those who argue that rewards are detrimental. From this perspective, rewards are seen as effective in getting people to perform an activity, but once the rewards are no longer available, people's intrinsic motivation to engage in activities is undermined. On the other side of the debate are researchers who claim that negative effects of reward are limited and that rewards can be used to increase motivation and performance.

Reward is an educational tool that is easy to implement and very enjoyable for (J. Guo dkk., 2022). For this (Felip dkk., 2021) rewards in an educational process are needed in order to increase learning. The purpose of educators giving rewards to students is so that students become even more active in their efforts to improve or increase the achievements they will, in other (Boer dkk., 2020), students become more determined to learn. So it can be concluded that reward is one of the ways that teachers use to give awards or prizes to students for doing a job. For example: a teacher gives praise "you are great" or "very right" to one of the students who can answer questions from the ,This includes positive reinforcement by giving praise so that students feel happy with their achievements and are motivated to study (Boer dkk., 2020). The role of rewards in the teaching process is quite important, especially as an external factor in influencing and directing student behavior.

It is commonly observed of all these students that "if they worked harder, they will do higher on examinations, take more chances, and achieve greater results." Prizes are usually awarded in the hopes of increasing that important student motivation because poor performance of students is sometimes related to a lack of desire. Learning difficulties are usually present in unmotivated students because they perceive education as a series of failures (Tayo, 2007). People who received regular rewards for completing simple tasks showed more passion and interest in their work than those who only received late awards at the conclusion of a lengthy assignment (Woolley, 2018). Teachers often use rewards to encourage students to do well in their studies and behave properly in class. Rewards are particularly effective in boosting motivation and performance for tasks that initially don't interest students. The use of different rewards at the university levels such as praise scholarships, academic recognitions rewards enhancing student's motivation in learning process. All Rewards can be a useful tool to help students learn better and act appropriately in class. Praise plays a significant role in students' academic motivation and performance. Scholarship students work hard to improve their academic achievement. Students consider the scholarship as motivation and achievement.. Additionally, academic recognition can lead to increased satisfaction among students. Therefore, academic recognition serves as a powerful tool in enhancing student motivation, satisfaction, and their academic performance.

Rewards include systems, programs and practices that influence the actions of people. The purpose of reward systems is to provide a systematic way to deliver positive consequences. Fundamental purpose is to provide positive consequences for contributions to desired performance (Wilson, 2003).

Rewards play a significant role in enhancing student motivation in the learning process. Rewards, such as object rewards, praise, symbolic rewards like star stamps, and touch rewards, can effectively increase students' motivation to learn. Students' academic success is influenced by some factors, including the extent to which they participate in class, whether or not they do their homework, whether or not they take quizzes or tests, and whether or not they compete in other events (Kapur, 2018).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY;

1. To determine the influence of different reward on students' motivation at university level.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does the different rewards influence the students' motivation at university level?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Rewards as motivational tool in education system the university students also need rewards that enhance their academic performance so this study aimed to investigate how various reward structures influence university students' motivation. The target of the study examined that rewards are play a vital role to develop the student's interest in their studies in university settings. The researcher examined that rewards are play a vital role to develop the interest in their studies. Many institutions had implemented reward systems ranging from scholarships and grants to dean's lists to incentivize academic excellence.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study's findings provided critical perceptions to help universities reform their reward system. By understanding how different incentives influence student motivation and performance, Universities invest extensively reward systems like merit-based aid. This study provided data on the returns of these investments in terms of student success, helping institutions allocate resources more effectively between extrinsic rewards and other motivational tools like internship programs, research opportunities, foreign Study tour, and multinational Job opportunity and collectively for career development. Findings had enhance teaching strategies, student support services, and even mental health initiatives by revealing how different rewards. In principle, this research promises to redefine reward structures in higher education, ensuring they genuinely increase both to learn and the achievement that follows.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

In the university environment students are near to their career therefore the major goal of the study to identify rewards can develop the student's skills towards the higher level of education. The purpose of the study to examine that rewards motivate the students in university settings. The previous studies based upon the influence of rewards at primary or at secondary school level, Second, rewards are usually given by test performance and not during the performance in a learning activity (e.g., drafting a mission)

Some studies have proposed mediator variables to understand the process by which rewards influence motivation, most studies do not provide evidence related to the differential quality of individuals' engagement during specific learning activities (e.g., quality of drafted missions). While universities widely engagement reward structures such as merit-based scholarships, academic honors, their influence on university students' motivation and academic success remain largely unexplored. Specifically, there is limited knowledge about the long-term influence of rewards at the university students, the differences is how rewards system influence on students motivation and academic achievement. Additionally, the role of non-financial rewards, such as praise and recognition, is underexplored in university settings.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Rewards

The measurable influence that different types of rewards (both tangible and intangible) have on students' behaviors, attitudes, and academic outcomes. Rewards as encouragements that act as motivators for achieving goals. They note that rewards can be both financial and non-financial, and their usefulness is often strong, definite, and exciting aims. (Locke & Latham, 2020).

Student's Motivation

Student motivation is the process by which students' attention and effort are channeled toward realizing their academic potential and accomplishing their learning objectives. Motivation in students is defined as the procedures that encourage and sustain goal-directed performance. It consist of beliefs about one's capability, the aims for engaging in a mission, and the influence of external factors like feedback and support, Pintrich, & Meece (2018).

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE CONCEPT OF REWARDS

The definition of reward Wilujeng in Djamarah (2015) state Reward is giving something to others as an appreciation or souvenir. The reward given to others in any form, depending on the wishes. Other forms of reward are also adjusted for performance which is achieved by a person. Everyone is entitled to receive a gift from someone with certain motives. Slameto (2010) state reward is an appreciation who gives by the teacher to the students as a gift, because a student have behaves well and finished the task of the teacher. Based on the definition above the researcher conclude that the definition of reward is giving something to the student as an appreciation of what the student achieve.

PURPOSE OF REWARDS

The goal that must be achieved in giving rewards is to further develop motivation that is intrinsic from extrinsic motivation, in the sense that students do an action, then the action arises from the student's own awareness. And with the reward, it is also expected to build a positive relationship between teachers and students, because the reward is part of the manifestation of a teacher's love and affection for students. In giving a response increases because it is followed by a supportive stimulus (rewarding). As in the example where the teacher's positive comments improved the students' writing behavior. Reinforcement is a consequence that increases the probability of a behavior occurring. (John W. Santrok, 2008: 273) Rewards can be given to all students, to some students, or to individual students. However, it is important to remember when teachers should give rewards to all students, to some students or to individual students.

So, the purpose of the reward is so that students can do the tasks given by the teacher based on the students' willingness and awareness. As explained above, rewards, in addition to being an educational tool and stimulus in learning, can also be a driver or motivation for students to learn more actively. Giving numbers generally, every student wants to know the results of his work, namely in the form of numbers given by the teacher. Students who get good numbers, will encourage their learning motivation to be greater, on the other hand students who get less numbers may cause frustration or can also be an incentive to learn better.

Responsibility for consequences and attitude changes

When participants attribute their behavior to internal factors, they will think that they are responsible for the consequences related to that behavior. Therefore, attitude changes will occur, the relationship between rewards (i.e., incentives) and changes in attitude is an important, regarding a student's participation, sufficient motivation can change a previous attitude. More incentives result in behavior reverse to that which is usual sufficient. High incentives can change a student's attitude. As universities want students to participate in certificate examinations, they offer various incentives. Students will experience dissonance if they participate in examinations with few incentives

TYPE'S OF REWARDS MOTIVATION

There are four key factors that serve as indicators for the external motivators that threaten internal motivation (Deci, 1972; Deci et al., 1991); namely, expectancy, relevance, tangibility, and non-contingency. When the rewards of students participating in certificate examinations are uncertain, the external motivators will not lessen the internal motivations that maintain these reinforcement effects. Therefore, students take certificate examinations because the external motivators of internal motivations are more unexpected, less relevant, intangible, and highly contingent, and the internal motivations for participation are stronger and more attractive.



Fig2.1, rewards and students motivation

Fig2.1, rewards and students motivation

- a. Students' level of attention to learning
- b. The level of relevance of learning to students' needs
- c. The level of students' confidence in their ability to do learning tasks
- d. The level of student satisfaction with the learning process that has been carried out
- e. competence (the need to feel capable and effective)

In educational environments, when students are learning new material, teachers usually present rewards over a period of time and allocate the reward on the basis of students' proficiency. In order to address these issues and in an attempt to more closely mirror what goes on in the classroom, the present study tests the effects of rewards on intrinsic motivation when the rewards are given over a series of trials in a learning phase, for achievement on a test, or both. (Cameron et al, 2005) This method of rewarding, especially with tangible rewards, is very effective. Rewards are a form of recognition given by teachers to students who have completed their tasks correctly and well. Harmer (2007) defines rewards as a stimulus that encourages

students to perform correctly. Brophy (2004) explains that rewards are used by teachers to enhance students' enjoyment and interest in learning activities. Brophy (2004) also categorizes rewards into two types (Tangible rewards and Intangible rewards).

TANGIBLE REWARDS

According to Dörnyei (2001), tangible rewards are things that students can see and touch, such as physical items, opportunities, awards, and other forms of recognition. These include things like prizes and extra credit. Brophy (2004) points out that tangible rewards are the simplest, most straightforward, and most adaptable ways to address the motivational aspect of learning. Some examples of tangible rewards include things like small prizes or giving students extra points on their grades. Tangible rewards are the simplest and most direct form of reward because students can physically see and feel them. Tangible rewards can be connected to aspects of psychology, sociology, and education, and has been found to have a wide range of effects. Student's positivity and teaching efficiency can be enhanced by the tangible reward system.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Provide incentives or rewards to the students then it will have very positive effects on their behavior (ralay.2000). The significance of education in economic development cannot be denied. The importance of education as a major factor in economic development was shown by economic research over the past four decades. Education is the process of improving a person's or a workforce's human skills and knowledge. Economic progress needs both a qualitative improvement in the type of education provided and a quantitative increase in the number of educational possibilities (Komenan, 2009).

Among other socio-economic and cultural constraints, poverty is one of the biggest hurdles to the development of higher education in Pakistan (Razi, 2016). Getting higher education is even much harder for females than males because, inter alia, money or financial constraint is the core hindrance to females' higher education (Abid & Khan 2017; Amin et al., 2018; Hashmi et al., 2016; Khan et al., 2020). The lack of financial resources is the key barrier that every marginalized community in Pakistan faces to getting a higher education (e.g., slum dwellers) (Awab-us-Sibtain et al., 2020). Studies highlight that scholarship programmes in general increase the chances of accessibility to educational institutions, increase students' enrolment, and improve survival, retention, and academic performance (Barrow et al., 2014; Bettinger, et al. 2017; Schudde & Scott-Clayton, 2016; Timilsana, 2017).

In a global context, the significance of scholarships is profoundly acknowledged across all levels of education. Specifically, in the year 2015, it gained more importance when the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasized the inclusion of scholarship programs as a tool for achieving its goals. Scholarships as a significant instrument for the nation's development and growth. Campbell & Neff (2020) reviewed 105 research articles on international higher education scholarships. They found that the six primary outcomes of these scholarships were;

Primary Outcomes of These Scholarships

Building human capital,
Bringing social change,
Promoting sustainable development,
Internationalizing institutes,

Improving diplomatic ties,
Enhancing access to education.

In addition, several studies reported empirical evidence of the link between scholarships or financial aid and students' academic success, motivation, satisfaction, retention, and engagement (Alon, 2011; Angrist, et al. 2015; Glocker, 2011; Millea, et al. 2018; Mulyaningsih, et al. 2022; Waskito & Azizah, 2013). In their seminal work, Ganem & Manasse (2011) found that scholarships had a manifold influence on students' academic achievement, motivation, and success.

PHYSICAL INCENTIVES

When students apply for jobs after graduating from a university, they are usually required to have some relevant certificates. Moreover, as students who have professional certificates constitute the group with the most important indicators for university evaluations by the Ministry of Education, students are being encouraged to obtain professional certificates. From an educational viewpoint, improving student learning attitudes and professional knowledge through examination preparation and understanding the motivations and attitudes of students taking certificate examinations are therefore important. When the rewards of students participating in certificate examinations are uncertain, the external motivators will not lessen the internal motivations that maintain these reinforcement effects. Therefore, students take certificate examinations because the external motivators of internal motivations are more unexpected, less relevant, intangible, and highly contingent, and the internal motivations for participation are stronger and more attractive. (Cheng, et al. (2011). High incentives can change a student's attitude. As universities want students to participate in certificate examinations, they offer various incentives. Students will experience dissonance if they participate in examinations with few incentives and insufficient justification. Alike, which gives rise to frequent reforms of educational institutions.

Likewise, Levitt et al. (2016) find that non-monetary trophies, which they compare to certificates, improve performance. The effects of the certificate and deadline suggest that these can create incentives for students, Levitt et al. (2016) find that trophies increase performance among young students, Although non-monetary incentives are both arguably powerful and common in education, much research has focused on monetary incentives (e.g., Angrist & Lavy 2009; Kremer et al. 2009).

These incentives, all monetary (e.g., scholarships or exemptions from or refunds of tuition fees), are supposed to make students account for the long-term benefits of education, which these presumably discount too heavily (Oreopoulos, 2007). Evidence on the effects of monetary incentives is mixed, though. Gneezy et al. (2011) summarize the literature to show that monetary incentives increase attendance and enrollment, Certificates resemble trophies in many regards. They recognize achievements as they are awarded only to students who have reached some milestone in their education. They are therefore different from transcripts of records, which can be retrieved anytime by the student, although they provide eventually the same information. As a matter of fact, the early certificate may have been more valuable than the degree certificate for students, who use internships to establish ties with firms where they want to start their careers.

In addition to providing exceptional mentoring and support services, assisting students in identifying and earning certificates appears to increase student confidence and persistence rates in matriculating to more traditional online degree programs (Walch, T. A, 2022). The immediate benefit of having a professional certificate in hand was important and something most nontraditional students valued; but they also were mindful of the fact that their certification would count towards their degree. It is generally acknowledged that alternative credentials have the potential to alleviate a perceived educational void by providing a bridge for nontraditional students to obtain additional education and better employment. Others may include the name of the student or their pictures on a bulletin board or poster. Symbolic awards work similarly to praise the outstanding one in front of public displays of favor. The golden star or photograph on the bulletin board declares that the student has done something great. Unlike praise, symbolic awards have the potential to last longer than a single spoken word and can act as a reminder for students to uphold their good standing since it will be displayed in certain period of time and can be seen by many other students.

INTANGIBLE REWARDS

On the other hand, intangible rewards are a form of recognition given verbally by the teacher. According to Brophy (2004), intangible rewards include words of praise such as "congratulations," "good job," "great," "awesome," "thank you," and other similar expressions. Although rewards and recognition are commonly used, they can be quite complex and challenging to implement effectively due to the diverse and complicated nature of modern work environments (Eshun & Duah, 2011). This complexity arises because workplaces often consist of people with different backgrounds, skills, and motivations.

Praise

The teacher must be a helper to the students, the teacher's praise of students' success would increase the involvement between the teacher and the students and leads to more responsible students' behavior. The teachers need to be more aware of the students' results and the process and behaviors. Some students' problems such as lack of discipline and low motivation in learning can hinder the success of teaching learning process. For this reason, some students do not perform well during the lessons. They sometimes do not show maximum efforts to do class projects, assignments, classwork and various tasks. Therefore, it is very essential for teachers to find ways on how to motivate their students in the classroom. In teaching learning process, motivating students to learn is indeed a part of the challenge faced by teachers. One of the most important aspects is a good classroom condition which is related to the management of classroom during teaching and learning process. The most popular form of reward is a verbal praise offered to students by the teachers; it means applauding the students when they act in a positive way. It shows that the teacher is satisfied with the achievement of the students. The display of a behavior pattern, such as perseverance, compassion, courage, or general intelligence, could be that behavior. Praise may also be used to compliment academic achievement, sporting or group accomplishments.

Create a Positive Learning Environment;

The aim of this strategy is to establish a positive, inclusive, and respectful learning environment where students feel safe and valued. Praise students individually for their efforts and improvements. Encourage open communication between students and teachers, promoting a supportive relationship. Organize team-building activities and ice-breaker sessions to create a sense of camaraderie among students. A positive learning environment fosters trust, promotes active participation, and allows students to feel comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions. Kunicina, et al. (2023) Encouragement for students to set and pursue ambitious goals.

Grades

Grades can also enhance autonomous motivation if students view grades as competence-enhancing informational feedback (Cameron et al., 2001). Given the higher level of autonomy given to undergraduate students (Ratelle et al., 2007), in terms of selecting majors, time tables or decisions to attend university, grades in university may support autonomous motivation by providing competence-enhancing information that helps students make personally meaningful decisions (e.g. how to study or what subjects to take) towards self-endorsed goals or careers (Harackiewicz et al., 2000; Midgley et al., 2001).

Furthermore, because most universities require a minimum GPA or entry qualifications, students may be more likely to be higher performing individuals who may be more resilient to the negative effects of grades on autonomous academic motivation (Black & Deci, 2000). Given the many factors that influence academic motivation, pedagogical environments such as grading systems as well as the impact of receiving grades may also influence academic motivation. Grades influenced feelings of autonomy, competence and relatedness in several ways. In terms of competence and autonomy, some students felt that grades provided information on their skills or abilities that helped them avoid classes, teachers or assignments that would lower GPAs or pursue careers in which they may be more likely to fail.

Career development opportunities

Effective implementation and development of the career development programs determine the economic growth of countries. High-quality preparation of students and pursuing a career path that interests them is one of the ways for countries to ensure stable economic growth (Boat et al., 2021). The fast development of civilization becomes an obstacle for many students to fulfill their career opportunities and build a successful career (Van der Horst et al., 2021). From year to year, employment requirements for employees are increasing, and some professions are becoming obsolete and even unnecessary. Medium and small businesses are developing, and new requirements for job seekers are changing dramatically (Emanuel et al., 2021).

In addition to professional knowledge, skills and abilities, a graduate must have self-esteem, a desire to continue learning and take advanced training even if they complete formal education and enter the workforce. Moreover, graduates should have the good critical thinking, developed communication skills, high emotional intelligence, the ability to solve various kinds of problems and use modern technologies in the learning process (Gordieiev et al., 2014). The concept of Career Opportunities is at the initial stage of its development, so the scholars combine two concepts as Career and Personal opportunities into one.

The concept of career opportunities includes two important notions: personality and intellect (Leutner & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2018). Career opportunities mean a set of internal resources of the individual and management of these resources. Moreover, career opportunities depend greatly upon the overall success of career building, intelligence viewed as a fundamental component, and the academic performance of each student that is not assessed by employers (Ganiyeva & Pfeifer, 2020). Career success largely depends on the personal opportunities, skills, professional orientations, motivations, needs and values of young employees. The current research reflects the development of certain aspects of career opportunities, including career orientations as the important incentives for work productivity and output (Schein, 1996); emotional intelligence, perceived as the ability to identify and manage emotions (Urquijo et al., 2019); motivation as a factor of progressive career development (Day & Allen, 2004); self-esteem, as a person's ideas about himself and his qualities (Yang & Wong, 2020) and communication skills, as the ability to communicate effectively (Pico-Saltos et al., 2021). Career motivation differs among individuals. It is important to identify motivation in the final university years. A student, a future employee motivated for success, should be aware of career needs considered the most critical factors influencing organizational performance (Copuš et al., 2019). Increased student engagement and participation in class discussions and activities. Greater collaboration and teamwork among students, leading to a more positive classroom atmosphere. Career guidance and counseling sessions provide students with insights into various career options and how their chosen study programs align with their interests and aspirations.

Function of Rewards

The use of rewards in the classroom situation helps teachers improve student motivation in learning. Reward provides information about one's abilities when related to real success or development, such as when an instructor commends students for learning new skills or gaining new knowledge C. Kyriacou et al., "Motivation in Education: Theory, Research and Applications," Teach. Dev., 2008. J. W. Santrock, "Educational Psychology 5th Edition," Educ. Psychol., 2011. Points out that classroom rewards can be beneficial. Referring to the above argument, when a teacher offers a reward, students can be correlated with behaving and acting in a feeling of pleasure. Typically, students are going to do something that constantly activates reward. Besides, reward is intended to make students do all they can to raise motivate the students to become involved in learning he score more faithfully. Rewards can be a successful way to inspire students to do. It is a positive behavior or accomplishment award for the students with desirable achievement. While intangible prizes are activity rewards that give more satisfaction on the students, such as becoming a line leader or the teacher's assistant, being a team leader during activities or having certain privilege that singles out the student from others. Am. J. Psychol., 1939 States that there are various advantages of rewarding students in teaching, including:

- Firstly, students will become happy to learn and indirectly try to be the best.
- Secondly, the teachers and students will have a good relationship to make students feel comfortable learning.
- Third, it trains students to be more enthusiastic and to study.

- Fourth, it enhances students' learning abilities and skills. It is generally understood that the rewards system would come with a sense of pride among students. This positive atmosphere would lead to achievement among students.

In other words, the reward system has motivated them to be more successful. The most effective rewards are those that are motivated the learner intrinsically. This is because human's action and or behavior normally derive from the desires or needs from within oneself. In other words, the actions and behavior themselves are self-rewarding. For this reason, people actually do really need externally driven reward for their achievement. In other words, rewards increase the likelihood of certain behaviors by associating them with positive outcomes

MOTIVATION

Motivation comes from the Greek word "Mover," which means "to move" or "to drive forward." Motivation can be defined as "a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual's being to initiate work-related behavior, and determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration". Rewards can be used to influence motivation. By no means are financial rewards the only way to motivate. The word motivates which mean to move or persuade to act and satisfy specific achievement is a motivation (Butkus & Green, 1999). Motivation is the internal feeling that arises from the desires and needs of an individual (Locke & Schattke, 2019) It is the continuous process of needs and satisfaction that stimulate individual to perform. It is important to have a motivation in order to achieve individual and organizational goal.

TYPES OF MOTIVATION

Motivation can generally be categorized into two types: intrinsic and extrinsic.

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation is when people engage in an activity because they find it inherently satisfying, rather than for some external reward or outcome. In other words, the activity itself is rewarding. To measure intrinsic motivation, we look at factors like how much learners choose to engage in activities on their own, how interested and enjoyable they find the learning process, and how their sense of competence and autonomy in learning affects their motivation. Intrinsic motivation is often strengthened when learners feel they are competent and have control over their own learning experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Extrinsic motivation involves doing something to achieve a separate goal or reward, rather than for the enjoyment of the activity itself. Extrinsic motivation describes acting for purposes other than one's own, such as achieving specific goals (like prizes) or averting unfavorable consequences. Extrinsic motivation is the process of working toward goals unrelated to the work itself, including recognition or money incentives (Guay et al., 2010). The term "extrinsic motivation" refers to actions taken in order to obtain something that does not come directly from the activity itself, such as praise or recognition (Guay et al., 2010).

Extrinsically driven people, for instance, will complete a math problem even though they have little interest in doing so since the satisfaction, they will obtain from a reward will outweigh their lack of interest in the topic. Behavior that is prompted by an extrinsic reward is referred to as having extrinsic motivation. These benefits might be material things like money and grades, or they can be intangible things like acclaim and renown. Tribes who are motivated by things

outside of themselves will continue to complete activities, even if the tasks themselves are not very difficult (Huang, 2019). The process of operant conditioning involves the use of the extrinsic incentive. Someone is trained to behave in a particular manner to receive a particular reward or consequence, individual's urge to investigate, and control the surroundings is represented by the concept of the need for growth. It is possible to utilize rewards as instructional tactics to inspire pupils while they are engaged in the learning process. The word "compensation" comes from a Latin phrase that means "to arouse, gratify, or satisfy the request of another" (Holbrook & Chappell, 2019).

INFLUENCE OF REWARDS ON MOTIVATION

It is possible to utilize rewards as instructional tactics to inspire pupils while they are engaged in the learning process. The word "compensation" comes from a Latin phrase that means "to arouse, gratify, or satisfy the request of another" (Holbrook & Chappell, 2019). According to Skinner, rewards also known as positive reinforcement, after certain acts have been carried out, promote other behaviors or repeated responses that the subject desires. If the outcome of a plaque or the conduct grew, the label began the reward. If one deviates and the badge was the honor, the criticism was transformed into a reward. The application might get various benefits from the successful implementation of the strategy. Praise in the form of words, high marks, or simple contentment is a valid form of reward (Sidin, 2021; Anderson, 2021) this can come in the shape of things like happiness, the completion of a goal, self-satisfaction, meaningful humor, or the expression of oneself.

METHODOLOGY

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This chapter presents and explains the materials and methods adopted in this research. It outlines every component involved in conducting this study, including the research design, respondents of the study, sampling procedure, research instrument, and the data gathering and analysis procedures. A detailed discussion of the research process is provided to ensure that the aim of the study is achieved effectively.

RESEARCH DESIGN OF THIS STUDY

The current study employed a descriptive research method using a survey technique to investigate the influence of rewards on students' motivation and academic success at the university level. This design was appropriate for examining how different types of rewards such as monetary incentives, physical items (non-monetary), and verbal appreciation level of motivation and their academic outcomes. It allowed the researcher to collect quantifiable information from a large number of students and analyze it statistically to explore possible associations between the independent variable (rewards) and the dependent variables (motivation).

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

A population refers to a complete group of individuals or objects. It is from this population that researchers often select samples for more manageable analysis. Populations can be large or small, depending on the scope of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). There are 14 public universities in Islamabad by using simple random sampling the researcher selected 6 public

universities have the common departments. The population of the study universities students of undergraduates, the total population from six universities be comprised 1580 students.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The delimitations of the study to;

- After delimiting the researcher selected 6 public universities of Islamabad (public universities of Islamabad, because not easy to access of collecting data from all the public sector universities).
- The study delimited to the common departments of education and psychology.
- Students from undergraduate's 4th to 8th semesters.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES OF THE STUDY

The sample respondents chosen through a simple random sample technique. A sample size of 308 from 1580 population, according to the L.R Gay table, university students selected randomly. Furthermore the common department of the universities randomly selected that were include in the study.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The study is descriptive in nature and standardized questionnaire directed to participating students. The questionnaire included Likert-scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) items and individually developed by the researcher who focused on the objective of the study. In this study questionnaire developed for students.

PILOT TESTING

The questionnaire was pretested on a small sample of the population to assess the reliability of the instrument before the actual data collection. To ensure the validity of the instrument, experts were consulted to evaluate the content and relevance of each item selected for the pilot study, which was specifically aimed at checking the tool's reliability. To strengthen both validity and reliability, multiple experts participated in the pilot testing process. Initially, the instrument was revised based on expert feedback, which helped refine item clarity and alignment with the research objective. Following this, the questionnaire was administered to 40 students who were not part of the main study sample.

RESEARCH VALIDITY

A validity of research instruments checked out by the experts of the different universities panel from the faculty of social sciences. In order to validation of data requested to the panel of expert to refine the items of question statements to make items simple and understandable. Content validity was achieved through a thorough review process by academic experts in the field of education. These experts evaluated each item of the instrument for its relevance, clarity, and alignment with the study's objective, particularly in relation to measuring students' motivation and academic success in response to rewards. Thus, the instrument used in this research is considered both valid and appropriate for collecting meaningful and accurate.

RESEARCH RELIABILITY

The reliability of the research instrument was evaluated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Reliability refers to the degree to which an instrument consistently measures what it is intended to measure. To determine the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was applied. A pilot test was conducted with a sample of 40

university students, and the Cronbach's alpha value was calculated as .832. This result indicates a high level of internal consistency, demonstrating that the instrument is statistically reliable. These procedures confirm that the instrument used in this study is both reliable and suitable for measuring the influence of rewards on students' motivation and academic success.

Table; Research Reliability

| Reliability Statics | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Cronbach Alpha | No. of Items |
| .832 | 40 |

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize and describe the participants' responses and demographic information. These statistics provided a clear overview of the distribution and central tendencies within the dataset. The results were presented through tables and graphical illustrations, to enhance the clarity and visual representation of findings. These visuals supported the interpretation of the data and made the results easier to understand.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter of the study provides the necessary discussion, analysis, and interpretation of the results gathered by the researchers, which aim to explain the statistical analysis of the data, elaborate the findings collected from participants' evaluation, and offer a comprehensive analysis of the study's overall results. Tables are utilized throughout the chapter to interpret the gathered results accurately.

Table 4.1; student's perceptions about the influence of appreciation as reward on student's motivation

| Appreciation as reward and students motivation | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | |
|--|---|-----|----|-----|----|------|-----|------|-----|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Recognition of my progress motivates me to keep improving. | 1 | 0.3 | 5 | 1.6 | 38 | 12.3 | 123 | 39.9 | 141 | 45.8 |
| Encouragement from teachers enhances my satisfaction with my work. | 1 | 0.3 | 5 | 1.6 | 39 | 12.7 | 121 | 39.3 | 142 | 46.1 |
| Positive feedback from teachers strengthens my confidence. | 1 | 0.3 | 13 | 4.2 | 44 | 14.3 | 114 | 37.0 | 136 | 44.2 |

Acknowledgement of my academic performance enhances my competence.

5 1.6 11 3.6 43 14.0 120 39.0 129 41.9

Table 4.1 presented data on students perceptions of appreciation as a motivational reward in academic settings, the data in Table 4.1 showed students views on appreciation as rewards, nearly half (46.1-41.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that encouragement from teachers enhances their satisfaction with their work and motivates them to keep improving. One fourth of the students (39.9% 39.0%) agreed that positive feedback from teachers strengthens confidence and acknowledgements of academic performance enhance competence. These results indicate that different forms of appreciation such as recognition, encouragement, and feedback play a significant role in enhancing students' confidence and academic drive. Only (0.3% to 4.2%) disagreed with the statements, showing that the vast majority of students view appreciation as an effective and positive motivational tool in their academic experience.

Table 4.2; student's perceptions about grades as rewards and students motivation.

| GRADES/CGPA | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | |
|--|---|-----|----|-----|----|------|----|------|-----|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Academic results drive me to remain committed to learning. | 4 | 1.3 | 17 | 5.5 | 47 | 15.3 | 96 | 31.2 | 144 | 46.8 |
| Achieving a good CGPA strengthens my interest in exploring new concepts. | 6 | 1.9 | 23 | 7.5 | 49 | 15.9 | 80 | 26.0 | 150 | 48.7 |
| Achieving high marks boosts my confidence in my intellectual abilities. | 9 | 2.9 | 12 | 3.9 | 47 | 15.3 | 94 | 30.5 | 146 | 47.4 |
| High grades motivate me to engage more in challenging courses. | 9 | 2.9 | 18 | 5.8 | 47 | 15.3 | 99 | 32.1 | 135 | 43.8 |

In Table 4.2 show that about more than half of the respondents (48.7.3) showed their strong agreement about the Grades/CGPA strengthens my interest in exploring new concepts, half of the respondents (20.01-25.4%) expressed agreement to identify grades more motivates in challenging course, one fifth of the respondents (26.0-32.1%) showed that grades as a rewards for university students to develop intellectual abilities. Less than one tenth (1.3-5.8%) of the respondent showed disagreement about that Grades as rewards strengthens my interest in exploring new concepts.

Table 4.3; student's perceptions about financial incentives and motivation.

| Financial incentives | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | |
|--|----|-----|----|------|----|------|----|------|-----|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Financial rewards stimulate my commitment to academic progress | 8 | 2.6 | 24 | 7.8 | 48 | 15.6 | 71 | 23.1 | 157 | 51.0 |
| Receiving a scholarship makes me more assertive in my abilities to succeed. | 8 | 2.6 | 27 | 8.8 | 62 | 20.1 | 59 | 19.2 | 152 | 49.4 |
| The opportunity to receive scholarship motivates me to work more hard. | 8 | 2.6 | 31 | 10.1 | 49 | 15.9 | 79 | 25.6 | 141 | 45.8 |
| Monetary rewards support to work enthusiastically toward my educational goals. | 10 | 3.2 | 31 | 10.1 | 50 | 16.2 | 63 | 20.5 | 154 | 50.0 |

The data in table 4.3 showed that about more than half of the respondents (51.0) showed their string agreement about the financial incentives as rewards stimulate commitment to academic progress, one fourth of the respondents (19.02-25.6%) express agreement to identify that scholarships makes more active to succeed, scholarships motivates to work more hard, less than one tenth of the respondents (7.8-10.1%) showed disagreement about the Monetary rewards support to work enthusiastically.

Table 4.4; student's perceptions about physical items and students motivation.

| Physical items | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | |
|---|----|-----|----|------|----|------|----|------|-----|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| The opportunity to earn a medal fuels my determination to do best in every academic task. | 10 | 3.2 | 26 | 8.4 | 55 | 17.9 | 73 | 23.7 | 144 | 46.8 |
| The chance to win a trophy boosts my dedication in educational activities. | 9 | 2.9 | 28 | 9.1 | 63 | 20.5 | 67 | 21.8 | 141 | 45.8 |
| Functional rewards (laptop) lead me to excel in digital learning. | 8 | 2.6 | 30 | 9.7 | 63 | 20.5 | 69 | 22.4 | 138 | 44.8 |
| Receiving a certificate makes me more confident to participate in educational activities. | 12 | 3.9 | 35 | 11.4 | 58 | 18.8 | 58 | 18.8 | 145 | 47.1 |

The data in table 4.4 showed that about more than half of the respondent (47.01) showed their strong agreement about that physical item as rewards certificates makes more confident to participate in educational activities, one fourth of the respondents (18.08-23.7%) showed strong agreement that functional rewards (laptop) lead to excel in digital learning, to earn a medal fuels determination to do best. However a lesser number of the respondents (2.6-3.9%) disagreed with the benefits of financial incentives.

Table4.5; students perceptions about career development opportunities and students motivation.

| Career development opportunities | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | |
|--|----|-----|----|------|----|------|----|------|-----|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Access to career-related certifications enhances my skills for future job opportunities | 19 | 6.2 | 35 | 11.4 | 77 | 25.0 | 49 | 15.9 | 128 | 41.6 |
| Collaboration with professors on projects enhances practical knowledge for my career. | 19 | 6.2 | 44 | 14.3 | 62 | 20.1 | 54 | 17.5 | 129 | 41.9 |
| Engaging in student leadership roles builds my management skills for future career challenges. | 20 | 6.5 | 37 | 12.0 | 61 | 19.8 | 60 | 19.5 | 130 | 42.2 |
| The opportunity to participate in professional conferences strengthens my teamwork skills. | 18 | 5.8 | 31 | 10.1 | 69 | 22.4 | 68 | 22.1 | 122 | 39.6 |

The data in Table 4.5 showed that the students opinions on career development opportunities as rewards. About the one fourth of the respondents (39.6%–42.2%) strongly agreed that participate in professional conferences, build leadership roles and management skills. Around one fifth (19.8%–25.0%) supported its role in minimizing academic procrastination and prioritizing responsibilities. However a lesser number of students (14.3%) neutral that career development opportunities professional conferences strengthens my teamwork skills. Overall, the data reflects that most students recognize career development opportunities as a valuable tool for improving academic motivation.

DISCUSSIONS

This study set out to examine the influence of various reward types on students' motivation at the university level. While many educational theorists and practitioners have long assumed that external rewards can act as effective motivators for academic engagement, the findings of this

research present a more nuanced and cautious perspective. Through descriptive analyses, the study investigated student perceptions and the statistical significance of the reward types including appreciation, grades, financial incentives, physical rewards, and career development opportunities and key academic outcomes. The findings demonstrate that while students generally express positive attitudes toward rewards and perceive them as helpful in enhancing motivation and academic engagement. This calls into question the assumption that extrinsic motivators directly drive academic excellence and suggests the need for a deeper understanding of internal and contextual factors that influence student achievement.

Educational institutions should therefore approach the use of rewards with caution. While they may be effective in promoting engagement or compliance in the short term, their impact on academic outcomes may be limited without a supportive learning environment, strong teaching practices, and individual student commitment. Non-material rewards such as praise and career-related opportunities may still play a supportive role in building students' confidence and engagement, even if not directly improving grades.

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of using multiple strategies to foster student success. Rather than relying solely on external rewards, universities should cultivate environments that support intrinsic motivation, self-directed learning, and meaningful academic experiences. Encouraging student autonomy, offering relevant and engaging curricula, and recognizing individual progress may collectively contribute more substantially to long-term academic achievement. In conclusion, while rewards are appreciated by students and can play a role in shaping their academic attitudes, they should be used as complementary tools rather than primary drivers of academic success.

FINDINGS

- The descriptive analysis of Tables 4.1 to 4.5 reveals strong student perceptions regarding the influence of various rewards appreciation, grades, financial incentives, physical items, and career development opportunities on their academic motivation.
- Most notably, students demonstrated strong agreement that appreciation from teachers, including recognition, verbal praise, and encouragement, plays a vital role in sustaining motivation. Across multiple indicators, approximately 43%–46% of respondents strongly agreed that such appreciation helps them remain confident, engaged, and academically driven. Only a small percentage (0.3%–4.2%) expressed disagreement, reinforcing appreciation as a widely accepted motivational tool.
- Similarly, grades and CGPA were identified as significant external motivators. More than 48% of respondents strongly agreed that high academic results inspire deeper learning, improve problem-solving, and enhance their intellectual confidence. Roughly 31%–34% of students also agreed, indicating a shared belief in grades as a reinforcement mechanism for motivation.
- The role of financial incentives was positively affirmed, with over 45%–51% of students strongly agreeing that scholarships, monetary rewards, and financial support boost their academic drive and skill development. The combined responses of "agree" and "strongly agree" consistently represented about three-fourths of the sample population, underlining the perceived value of financial rewards in sustaining motivation.

- Physical rewards, such as certificates, medals, and functional items like laptops, were also seen as meaningful. Nearly 47% of students strongly agreed that such recognition highlights their achievements and encourages creative academic engagement. Around 23%–25% agreed with these statements, and less than 10% disagreed, showing a generally favorable attitude toward tangible rewards.
- Lastly, career development opportunities were widely accepted as effective motivators. Approximately 41%–42% strongly agreed that access to professional certifications, leadership roles, and collaborative projects with professors enhances their motivation by aligning academic goals with career readiness. The data consistently reflect that these opportunities are valued for their long-term benefits. In conclusion, the overall findings show that a vast majority of students perceive all five forms of rewards as significantly contributing to their academic motivation. These rewards not only reinforce effort but also serve as recognition

CONCLUSION

- The primary objective of this research was to explore how various types of rewards such as appreciation, grades, financial incentives, physical items, and career development opportunities influence university students' motivation and their academic achievements.

The results provided valuable insights into students' perceptions of rewards, showing that many students consider them beneficial in maintaining engagement, boosting confidence, and promoting effort in their studies. The findings call for educators and policymakers to consider more holistic and personalized approaches when designing interventions to enhance student motivation and performance.

- Additionally, the motivational value of rewards might be limited if not reinforced by internal goals or a meaningful connection to students' academic identities.
- In conclusion, while rewards may support a more encouraging and engaging academic atmosphere, they do not, in isolation, guarantee higher levels of academic achievement. For rewards to be truly effective, they must be part of a broader educational approach that nurtures both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Future studies could investigate how reward systems can be better aligned with students' personal learning goals and explore their long-term effects on academic behavior and success. In light of the findings from this study, it is recommended that higher education institutions adopt a more balanced and structured approach to using rewards for enhancing student motivation.
- Teachers should be encouraged to use non-material rewards such as verbal praise, recognition, and constructive feedback, as students in this study showed strong appreciation for these forms of encouragement. These cost-effective strategies can create a supportive learning environment that reinforces students' sense of competence and belonging.
- At the same time, while grades are an established reward system, their overemphasis may shift focus from learning to performance. Therefore, universities should diversify their reward practices by integrating career-oriented opportunities, such as internships, leadership roles, or certifications, which students found particularly motivating and relevant to their future goals. Reward systems should be flexible and inclusive, recognizing both academic achievement and effort, so that a wider range of student contributions can be

acknowledged. Training and awareness sessions for faculty should also be introduced to help them implement reward strategies that align with student needs and psychological development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that university instructors and administrators adopt a more strategic and thoughtful use of rewards in academic settings. Non-material rewards such as appreciation, encouragement, and verbal praise should be actively incorporated into daily classroom interactions, as they were highly appreciated by students and help foster a positive learning environment. While grades remain a central form of academic recognition, they should not be the sole method of motivation. Educational institutions are encouraged to explore and diversify reward mechanisms by including career-oriented incentives like internships, certificates, and opportunities for leadership roles, which students found particularly motivating. Flexibility in reward systems is also crucial, as students respond differently to various types of rewards depending on their personal preferences and academic goals. Faculty development programs should include training on how to use motivational strategies effectively, ensuring that rewards are used to reinforce effort and improvement rather than just academic outcomes.
- For future, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies that track the long-term effects of different types of rewards on motivation and performance, as short-term data may not fully capture delayed or cumulative impact, for future researchers, it is recommended to conduct studies using mixed methods combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture a deeper understanding of how rewards influence motivation over time. Longitudinal studies would be particularly helpful in assessing whether sustained use of reward systems contributes to lasting improvements in academic performance. Researchers should also explore the role of internal factors such as self-discipline, personal goals, and learning attitudes in mediating the relationship between rewards and academic success.
- Organize career fairs and workshops where students can interact with professionals from different fields. Conduct one-on-one counseling sessions to understand students' interests and guide them towards suitable study programs. Collaborate with industry experts and alumni to provide mentorship opportunities for students. Increased student motivation to excel in their studies as they see the relevance of their education to their future goals. Higher satisfaction and better retention rates as students choose study programs that align with their passions and career aspirations.

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