Original Research Article

The Effects of Rewards and Ice-Breaking on Students' Learning Motivation at a Rural Public Elementary School in Lampung, Indonesia

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Abstract

The main concern in this study is the low learning motivation of primary school children in Rejomulyo Village, which is brought on by the repetitive nature of the curriculum and the dearth of educators with a range of teaching styles. Offering incentives and icebreakers during lessons is one technique to enhance students' motivation to study. The goal of this study was to investigate whether rewarding and ice-breaking had any impact on their motivation to learn in Rejomulyo Village's public elementary school students, Lampung, Indonesia. This study was conducted in a quasi-experimental manner. A questionnaire and documentation methods were used in the data collection process. A t- test analysis was the method of data analysis employed in this study (independent sample t-test). The test's calculations reveal a strong impact of rewards and ice-breaking on the motivation to learn of Rejomulyo Village's elementary school students.
Keywords: elementary school, ice-breaking, learning motivation, reward.

INTRODUCTION

A nation's progress is significantly influenced by its human capital (Aryo, 2020). Thus, it is necessary to improve the quality of human resources. Education, which involves a learning process, can help in efforts to raise the standard of human resources. As a result, via this learning, people may realize their innate potential. The educational process is one that has been specifically created with students in mind. In order for them to feel happy and gain a passion for learning, educators must create a supportive learning environment by utilizing the classroom to its fullest capacity. As a result, the process of teaching and learning is an activity including educator-student interaction that really takes place in educational contexts to achieve certain goals. If learning results in a favorable impression and attitude, it is considered helpful. Learning that can benefit students can come from a variety of sources, one of which is the desire to learn that students have for it. The learning process is significantly impacted by motivation. If a student lacks motivation to learn even though the teacher is considered knowledgeable, effective, and efficient in presenting the lesson's material, she or he may not fully understand what the teacher has just communicated.

Students must be motivated if they are to excel in their academic endeavors. Teachers are expected to be able to stimulate students' interest in learning by giving them a stimulus. To create the ideal settings for learning and teaching, educators must take into account a variety of variables. To achieve this state, educators must foster a stimulating, imaginative, and fun learning environment (Laili *et al.*, 2022). According to (Khoerunisa *et al.*, 2020), the existence of a good learning environment is crucial to the learning process. A welcoming learning environment will put students at ease and make it simpler for them to absorb the information taught by teachers without feeling pushed or under pressure. If the atmosphere is enjoyable, interesting, safe, free of pressure, supports learning motivation, promotes active involvement, and has many other qualities, learning is regarded to be enjoyable. Therefore, educators must plan or prepare how to establish an active, creative, instructional, inventive and entertaining learning process before they begin the teaching and learning process. (Wurjani *et al.*, 2019). If teachers do not control it, most students will be less motivated to study, leading to feelings of boredom, drowsiness, disinterest in the teacher's explanations, conversing with peers while learning, and a variety of other unpleasant traits.

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In light of the aforementioned concerns, motivation is crucial to the learning process. Given that the primary goal of the instructor is to inspire students to be involved in the lessons being taught as well as to provide them with material, teachers are required to be more innovative when developing learning settings and situations that enhance students' learning motivation (Fanani, 2010). The definition of learning motivation is an internal and external force that encourages a person or individual to behave in order to achieve particular goals, which leads to a transformation in student behavior. Moreover, educators must promote a favorable learning atmosphere and refrain from exerting pressure on students—in particular by giving rewards and ice-breaking activities during learning sessions.

Rewarding students is crucial and influential in encouraging their enthusiasm and motivation to learn (Aljena *et al.*, 2020). Students can be rewarded with money, recognition, applause, additional score, and goods such as stationery that they will find useful. Giving these rewards has a typically beneficial impact on learning. In addition, rewards are provided in the section on positive reinforcement and stimuli to motivate pupils to be more active, enthusiastic, and passionate towards learning. Additionally, ice-breaking is useful content for learning. The purpose of ice-breaking games is to thaw the tedious atmosphere within the class. This technique of ice-breaking will create a learning environment that is enjoyable and serious, as well as refreshing. Multiple kinds of clapping, funny stories, performing slogans together, and educational games are all examples of activities that

can be employed to break the ice when a classroom feels monotonous and uninviting (Khoirullah, 2020).

In the absence of ice-breaking and rewards, students will experience boredom and a lack of motivation to learn. If students witness boredom, their engagement in the learning process will diminish. There will be a decline in students' motivation to learn as a result of their greater focus on other activities that are more engaging. Primarily for elementary school teachers who must instruct students who are in the active phase of playing and seeking enjoyment. Therefore, elementary school teachers should be more creative and innovative than educators at higher levels of education in order to create a meaningful learning process (Sundari *et al.*, 2022).

SD Negeri 1 and 2 Rejomulyo are primary schools in Lampung, located in Rejomulyo Village, Palas District, and South Lampung Regency. These two elementary schools are neither overwhelmingly large nor populated. Additionally, these elementary schools lack learning aid tools such as LCDs, projectors, and many more. In the learning process, teachers have not yet introduced and provided rewards and ice-breaking, thus students tend to become quickly distracted and find it difficult to concentrate on the teacher-provided content. Based on these issues, educators might attempt to provide rewards and ice-breaking to encourage and motivate students to be more motivated about studying in order to foster a conducive, lively, and enjoyable learning atmosphere. The following Table 1 displays the findings of direct observations made throughout the learning process on 22 November 2021 in class IV at SD Negeri 2 Rejomulyo.

Table 1: Learning Motivation of grade IV students of SD Negeri 2 Rejomulyo

Variable	Aspect	Indicator	Total Students (%)	
			Motivated	**Demotivated**
Learning Motivation	Feeling of ease	Students are enthusiastic when attending class.	16 students (61.5%)	10 students (38.5%)
		Students do not become drowsy or bored easily when learning.	17 students (65.4%)	9 students (34.6%)
	Student interest	Students do not converse among themselves when the teacher explains the subject.	17 students (65.4%)	9 students (34.6%)
	Student attention	Students are attentive throughout instruction.	14 students (53.8%)	12 students (46.2%)
	Student engagement	Students actively ask and answer questions posed by the teacher.	4 students (15.5%)	22 students (84.5%)

On the basis of the Table 1 above regarding learning motivation, it can be stated that there are still a substantial number of students who are not highly motivated during the learning process, specifically with regard to the indicator of student engagement, in which only a small percentage of students demonstrate motivation. Therefore, we were interested in conducting research entitled "The effects of rewards and ice-breaking on students' learning motivation at a rural public elementary school in Lampung, Indonesia".

Considering that the teaching and learning process still appears monotonous, we believe that it was necessary to undertake this study.

METHOD
This research adopted an experimental research design, consisting of methods for validating or testing the effect of one or more variables on other variables. Variables that have an influence are classified

as independent variables, whereas variables that are influenced are classified as dependent variables. According to (Gay *et al.*, 2012), experimental research involves undertaking objective, systematic, and controlled research in order to forecast or understand a phenomenon. By exposing one or more experimental groups and/or experimental settings, experimental research aims to find causality. This study employed a quasi-experimental approach. In a quasi-experiment, there are experimental and control groups with identical characteristics. The experimental group was given the treatment (the variable whose effect was to be investigated), while the control group was not given the treatment.

Population refers to all of the analyzed samples or elements. According to (Tanzeh, 2011), population is a generalization area comprising of objects and subjects with specific quantities and qualities that are set by the authors to be investigated and evaluated. Accordingly, the population is comprised of not only the quantity, but also all the attributes of the subject or object being studied. Students at the public elementary schools in Rejomulyo Village represented the entire population in this study. Table 2 below provides more specific information.

Table 2: Number of Students at Public Elementary Schools in Rejomulyo

Grade IV	Total
SD Negeri 1 Rejomulyo	160
SD Negeri 2 Rejomulyo	111
Total	**271**

In this study, 56 fourth-grade students from SD Negeri 1 and 2 Rejomulyo represented the sample. This study involves two classes: the experimental class and the control class. As the experimental class, SD Negeri 2 Rejomulyo was treated with rewards and ice-breaking during the learning process, whereas SD Negeri 1 Rejomulyo as the control class did not receive rewards and ice-breaking treatment.

Moreover, we employed two sampling techniques, namely purposive and random sampling. Initially, using the technique of purposive sampling, we chose samples from the upper tier, namely Classes IV, V, and VI. The purpose of selecting the upper tier is because the research instrument required feedback from the students. We believed that upper-tier students could provide a more informed judgment than those in the lower-tier. Furthermore, we utilized a random sampling technique to narrow the sample since the sample was still excessively large. From the random sampling technique, Class IV was chosen as a sample that represented the entire population.

In addition, data collecting techniques are ways that researchers might employ to gather data. According to (Kabir, 2016), data collection techniques are the most crucial step in research, as the primary objective of a research is to collect data. In this study, we utilized a questionnaire and documentation to collect the required data. The approach for collecting data with a questionnaire consisted of providing a number of written questions for respondents to answer in written form. A questionnaire can also be defined as an organized, structured, and prepared series of questions that are used to collect quantitative data from respondents. In this study, a questionnaire was employed to collect information regarding the learning motivation of students. In addition, the documentation referred to in this study was the collection of documents in the form of data about the school and the condition of the students as well as the teachers in order to identify the learning motivation of students prior to performing comparative research.

Besides, this study employed quantitative data analysis techniques for its data analysis. Quantitative techniques for data analysis involve statistics; hence this might be referred to as statistical analysis. This study utilized prerequisite testing and hypothesis testing for its assessments. Normality and homogeneity tests are part of the prerequisite testing. After conducting the prerequisite test and determining that the data were normally distributed and homogeneous, the t-test was conducted to test the hypothesis. The type of t-test instrument used in the study was the independent sample t-test. The independent sample t-test compares the mean of two samples, namely the experimental class and the control class to find out whether there was a significant difference in motivation or not. If there was a significant difference in motivation between the experimental class that was treated with rewards and ice-breaking activities and the control class that was not treated, it can be concluded that implementing rewards and ice-breaking had an effect on students' motivation to learn.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Prerequisite Testing
Normality Test
The results of the calculation of the normality test for the data on learning motivation revealed that D (0.172) < K (0.181); therefore, the Ho was accepted and Ha was rejected. It means that the data from the population were normally distributed.

Homogeneity Test
The calculation of the homogeneity test of learning motivation data variance in the experimental and control classes yielded f_{count} (0.191) < f_{table} (0.528); therefore, the Ho was accepted and Ha was rejected. It means that the variance of the data was homogeneous.

Hypothesis Testing
Based on the results of the calculations, the mean of the experimental class was 97.96, whereas the mean of the control class was 90.36. Therefore, it can

be concluded that the experimental class had a higher mean score than the control class. Moreover, it was found that t_{count} (4.32) > t_{table} (2.00). Thus, the Ho was rejected and Ha was accepted. It means that there was a significant difference in students' learning motivation between the class that was treated by implementing rewards and ice-breaking and the class that was not given the treatment.

The Implementation of Rewards and Ice-Breaking on Student Learning Motivation

According to the findings of the study, there was a significant difference between the average learning motivation of the experimental class, which was treated with rewards and ice-breaking, and the control class, which was not treated with rewards and ice-breaking. Students in the experimental class were significantly more motivated than those in the control group. Therefore, it can be inferred that rewards and ice-breaking had an effect on the learning motivation of learners at a public elementary school in Rejomulyo Village.

The findings of this study are in line with (Husna, 2018) who found that the learning process that involves rewards and ice-breaking is preferable to the learning process that does not include rewards and ice-breaking. In the experimental class, during the learning process, we began the session with ice-breaking, inviting students to sing the national anthem and applauding "the spirit" and "character education" to raise students' learning enthusiasm. We then proceeded with topic presentation and group distribution. When it was observed that students were becoming drowsy and talking with their peers, we encouraged them to engage in ice-breaking activities by doing claps "morning, afternoon, evening, night" in order to combat drowsiness and refocus students. Furthermore, when there were students who were not paying attention and clapped inaccurately, they were asked to come to the front of the class, where we would begin asking questions and those who could answer correctly would be rewarded with applause from their peers; we gave them a thumbs-up; after which they were allowed to return to their seat. When students regained their concentration, then learning was resumed. After delivering all of the material and before the end of class, we also conducted a question-and-answer session to determine whether the material was fully comprehended or not. Students who were able to provide accurate responses were rewarded with pens. It demonstrated that students were extremely engaged and eager to answer the questions posed by us. Compared to the control class, where the learning process was conducted without rewards and ice-breaking, the students tended to be passive, easily bored and drowsy, and even interacted frequently with their peers, resulting in unfavorable classroom conditions and the inability to meet learning objectives.

On the basis of the data analysis, the current findings support previous findings found by (Melinda *et al.*, 2018; Rahmi, 2018; Randi, 2021) that the implementation of reward positively and significantly influence students' motivation in learning. Therefore, students become more keen in the learning process to attain the learning objectives (Oktapiani *et al.*, 2019). It is congruent with the motivation theory described by (Harianja *et al.*, 2022), student learning achievement is mostly influenced by motivation. Without motivation and encouragement, it will be extremely challenging to learn and succeed. If one does not have the motivation or encouragement, she or he will not be able to do learning activities. Thus, reward and ice-breaking are attempts that can be utilized to improve students' learning motivation and ensure that learning objectives are optimally attained.

Based on the discussion above, it is essential to incorporate rewards and ice-breaking into the learning process since it further increases students' motivation to learn and study. In addition, implementing rewards and ice- breaking throughout the learning process helps students become more eager and driven to compete in terms of learning in order to be better than their peers, hence enabling them to attain greater academic achievements.

CONCLUSION

According to the study's findings, the implementation of rewards and ice-breaking activities has an impact on the learning motivation of elementary school students in Rejomulyo, Lampung, Indonesia. Therefore, when teachers provide material to students, they are more interested, daring to share their ideas and active rather than falling asleep. They are more excited and driven to compete in terms of learning to become better when rewards and ice-breaking activities are adopted during the learning process, which enables them to achieve bigger successes.

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