



# The Influence of Giving Rewards in Increasing Students' Motivation and Learning Outcomes at SDN 256 Benteng Jati

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## Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis: (1) pengaruh penerapan metode reward berupa bintang prestasi terhadap motivasi belajar Bahasa Inggris siswa kelas V di SDN 256 Benteng Jati; (2) pengaruh penerapan metode reward berupa bintang prestasi terhadap hasil belajar Bahasa Inggris siswa kelas V; dan (3) sejauh mana penerapan metode reward memberikan pengaruh terhadap motivasi dan hasil belajar siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuasi-eksperimen dengan desain *Pretest-Posttest Non-Equivalent Control Group*. Populasi penelitian adalah seluruh siswa SDN 256 Benteng Jati dengan jumlah 110 orang, sedangkan sampel penelitian adalah siswa kelas V yang terdiri dari dua kelas, yaitu Va (11 siswa) dan Vb (11 siswa). Teknik analisis data menggunakan analisis deskriptif dan inferensial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan metode reward berpengaruh signifikan terhadap motivasi belajar Bahasa Inggris siswa kelas V, serta memberikan peningkatan yang nyata pada hasil belajar mereka. Dengan demikian, pemberian reward berupa bintang prestasi terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan motivasi sekaligus hasil belajar siswa.

**Kata Kunci:** Reward, Motivasi Belajar, Hasil Belajar, Bahasa Inggris

## Abstract

This study aims to analyze: (1) the effect of applying the reward method in the form of achievement stars on the English learning motivation of fifth-grade students at SDN 256 Benteng Jati; (2) the effect of applying the reward method in the form of achievement stars on their English learning outcomes; and (3) the overall influence of the reward method on students' motivation and learning outcomes. The research employed a quasi-experimental design using the *Pretest-Posttest Non-Equivalent Control Group Design*. The population consisted of 110 students of SDN 256 Benteng Jati, while the sample was the fifth-grade students divided into two classes: Class Va (11 students) as the experimental group and Class Vb (11 students) as the control group. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

The findings reveal that the implementation of the reward method significantly affected the students' motivation in learning English and also improved their learning outcomes. Thus, providing rewards in the form of achievement stars proved to be an effective strategy to enhance both learning motivation and achievement among fifth-grade students.

**Keywords:** Reward, Learning Motivation, Learning Outcomes, English

## Introduction

Education is a fundamental process that enables individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, and values essential for

personal growth and social development. In Indonesia, the 1945 Constitution Article 31 guarantees every citizen the right to education, highlighting its importance as a national priority. Furthermore, Law No. 20 of

2003 on the National Education System defines education as a conscious and planned effort to create learning environments and processes that empower students to develop their potential. This includes intellectual capacity, noble character, and skills necessary for contributing to society, the nation, and the state.

The function of national education is to shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation, while its goal is to foster students to become individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, capable, and responsible. Within this framework, teachers play a central role in guiding students to achieve educational objectives. They are not only responsible for transferring knowledge but also for motivating, mentoring, and shaping students' attitudes and values. Therefore, teachers must continuously adapt to changing educational needs and adopt effective teaching strategies that enhance both motivation and learning outcomes.

However, in practice, many teachers face challenges in motivating students during the teaching and learning process. It is common for students to appear uninterested, bored, or distracted during lessons, especially when dealing with subjects they find difficult, such as English. This lack of motivation negatively impacts student participation and results in low academic achievement. Consequently, teachers are encouraged to find innovative and engaging methods that stimulate enthusiasm for learning and foster better academic performance.

One of the methods commonly used to increase students' interest and engagement is the provision of rewards. Rewards, in the form of praise, recognition, or symbolic items such as achievement stars, serve as positive reinforcement that acknowledges students' efforts and achievements. When appropriately given, rewards can create a positive learning atmosphere, strengthen self-confidence, and inspire students to be more active in the learning process. Such reinforcement is particularly important in elementary school contexts, where students are highly responsive to appreciation and encouragement from teachers.

According to motivation theories, reinforcement plays a vital role in shaping students' learning behavior. Properly administered rewards can influence students'

willingness to focus on learning activities, improve their classroom participation, and enhance their academic outcomes. Research has shown that students who are motivated through recognition or incentives tend to demonstrate higher levels of engagement and better learning achievements compared to those who receive no reinforcement.

In the context of English language learning, rewards can play a significant role in overcoming challenges faced by elementary students. Many students view English as a difficult subject, and without motivation, they may struggle to actively participate in classroom activities. The reward method, by providing tangible or symbolic recognition, can foster a sense of accomplishment, encouraging students to put more effort into mastering the subject matter.

Several previous studies have confirmed the effectiveness of rewards in improving both learning motivation and academic outcomes. For instance, research conducted by Dyah Puspita Sri Wulandari (2018) demonstrated that rewards had a positive effect on motivation and learning achievement among elementary school students. Similarly, studies by Takdir Haping (2017) and Navil Alfarisi Abbas (2017) also highlighted the significant impact of rewards on improving students' academic performance. These findings indicate that rewards can be an effective tool for teachers to enhance the quality of the learning process.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to investigate the influence of giving rewards, specifically in the form of achievement stars, on the motivation and learning outcomes of fifth-grade students at SDN 256 Benteng Jati, Soppeng Regency. It is expected that the implementation of this method will provide valuable insights into effective teaching strategies that can improve students' motivation and learning outcomes, particularly in English language learning.

## Method

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a *Pretest-Posttest Non-Equivalent Control Group Design*. This design was selected because it allows the researcher to compare the outcomes of two groups: one receiving treatment in the form of rewards and the other receiving

conventional instruction. By comparing pre-test and post-test scores of both groups, the study was able to measure the effect of reward implementation on students' motivation and learning outcomes.

The research was conducted at SDN 256 Benteng Jati, located in Liliriaja Subdistrict, Soppeng Regency. This school was chosen based on the observation that students showed relatively low motivation and unsatisfactory learning outcomes in English, and no prior study had examined the use of reward methods in this particular context. The study was carried out during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year.

The population of this research consisted of all 110 students of SDN 256 Benteng Jati. Using purposive sampling, fifth-grade students were selected as the sample because they were considered to have relatively homogeneous abilities and were at an appropriate cognitive developmental stage to respond effectively to reward-based learning. The sample comprised two classes: Class Va (11 students) as the experimental group and Class Vb (11 students) as the control group.

Two variables were identified in this study: the independent variable was the reward method (achievement stars), while the dependent variables were students' motivation and English learning outcomes. The reward was given in the form of stars awarded to students who actively participated in class and demonstrated good performance. Students with the highest number of stars were recognized as "Star of the Class." This intervention aimed to encourage enthusiasm, active engagement, and responsibility during learning.

The instruments used for data collection were questionnaires and tests. A questionnaire was employed to measure students' learning motivation, adapted from Keller's ARCS model (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction). It was administered before and after the intervention. Meanwhile, learning outcomes were measured through a test consisting of multiple-choice questions based on the English curriculum for grade V. Both instruments underwent validity and reliability testing prior to their use in the study.

The procedures of data collection were conducted in three sessions. The first session involved administering the pre-test and pre-questionnaire to both groups to measure their initial motivation and learning outcomes. In the second session, the experimental group was taught using the reward method, while the control group received instruction through conventional methods. In the third session, a post-test and post-questionnaire were administered to evaluate changes in students' motivation and learning outcomes.

Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and frequency distribution, were used to describe the students' motivation and learning outcomes before and after treatment. Inferential statistics, particularly the Independent Samples t-test, were applied to determine whether there were significant differences between the experimental and control groups. Prior to hypothesis testing, normality and homogeneity tests were conducted to ensure that the data met the necessary assumptions.

Through this methodological approach, the study sought to provide reliable evidence regarding the effectiveness of the reward method in enhancing students' motivation and English learning outcomes. By combining descriptive and inferential analysis, the findings were expected to yield both a detailed description of students' performance and statistical confirmation of the reward method's impact.

## Result and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of giving rewards in the form of achievement stars on the motivation and English learning outcomes of fifth-grade students at SDN 256 Benteng Jati. Data were collected through pre-tests, post-tests, and questionnaires administered to both the experimental and control groups. The analysis employed descriptive and inferential statistics.

In terms of learning motivation, the results showed a clear improvement in the experimental group after the implementation of the reward method. The mean pre-test score for learning motivation was 116.27, which increased to 153.73 in the post-test. This significant rise suggests that rewards encouraged students to become more enthusiastic and actively engaged in English learning.

The control group, which did not receive the reward intervention, also showed an increase in motivation, though the improvement was less substantial. The mean motivation score rose from 115.64 to 130.00. While there was some progress, the overall gain was lower than that of the experimental group, highlighting the impact of rewards.

The descriptive statistics for students' motivation in both groups are presented in Table 1 below:

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Motivation Scores**

Group	Test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Experimental Group	Pre-test	11	116.27	9.25	100	134
	Post-test	11	153.73	7.08	143	167
Control Group	Pre-test	11	115.64	3.67	110	124
	Post-test	11	130.00	6.29	121	139

With regard to learning outcomes, the experimental group showed a notable improvement. The mean score increased from 49.64 in the pre-test to 78.00 in the post-test, moving most students from the low and moderate categories into the high and very high achievement categories.

In contrast, the control group also experienced improvement, but the results were not as significant. Their mean score rose from 45.82 to 56.27. This indicated some progress due to regular instruction, yet the gains were far less compared to those who received rewards.

The descriptive statistics for students' learning outcomes are shown in Table 2 below:

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Learning Outcomes**

Group	Test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Experimental Group	Pre-test	11	49.64	5.50	40	59
	Post-test	11	78.00	9.01	68	100
Control Group	Pre-test	11	45.82	5.79	36	54
	Post-test	11	56.27	12.97	40	86

Inferential statistical tests confirmed the significance of these results. The Independent Samples t-test showed that both learning motivation and learning outcomes in the experimental group improved significantly compared to the control group ( $p < 0.05$ ). This finding supports the hypothesis that rewards positively influence both motivation and achievement in English learning.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that the implementation of rewards has a significant impact on students' motivation. The experimental group showed much higher gains in motivation compared to the control group, demonstrating that the recognition of effort through achievement stars can

inspire students to engage more actively in the learning process.

The improvement in students' motivation aligns with the theory of positive reinforcement proposed by Skinner, which emphasizes that behavior followed by rewarding stimuli is more likely to be repeated. Achievement stars acted as a reinforcing tool that motivated students to maintain active participation in English lessons.

Furthermore, rewards created a positive classroom atmosphere. Students became more confident and enthusiastic, as they felt their efforts were recognized. This finding is consistent with Sardiman (2008), who noted that appropriate praise and recognition foster enthusiasm and self-esteem, which in turn enhance learning motivation.

In terms of learning outcomes, the study demonstrated that students in the experimental group significantly improved their test scores after the treatment. The transition of students from low achievement categories to higher categories indicates that motivation plays a key role in academic performance.

The results support Keller's ARCS model of motivation, particularly the elements of confidence and satisfaction. By receiving achievement stars, students developed greater confidence in their abilities and felt satisfied with their progress, which ultimately translated into better learning outcomes.

Although the control group also showed improvement, the gains were relatively modest. This suggests that while conventional teaching methods may contribute to learning progress, they may not provide sufficient motivational reinforcement to maximize student achievement.

The findings also resonate with previous studies, such as Wulandari (2018) and Haping (2017), which reported that reward methods significantly improved student motivation and learning achievement. This consistency reinforces the idea that rewards are a reliable and effective strategy in elementary education.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of integrating reward systems into classroom practices. Rewards not only encourage students to be more active and responsible in their learning but also serve as a powerful motivational tool that leads to better academic outcomes. Thus, teachers should consider implementing reward-based strategies to enhance both student motivation and performance, particularly in challenging subjects such as English.

## Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate that the use of rewards in the form of achievement stars has a significant effect on both students' motivation and their English learning outcomes. Students in the experimental group showed a substantial improvement in their motivation scores, moving from moderate to high and very high categories, while their learning outcomes also increased significantly compared to the control group. These findings indicate that rewards serve as an effective motivational tool in fostering enthusiasm and improving academic performance.

The study further confirms that motivation plays a crucial role in determining students' learning success. When students feel recognized and appreciated, they are more likely to engage actively in the learning process, gain confidence, and achieve better results. This aligns with motivational theories that emphasize reinforcement,

confidence, and satisfaction as key drivers of learning effectiveness.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that teachers incorporate reward systems into their teaching practices as part of classroom management strategies. By providing simple yet meaningful rewards, educators can create a positive learning environment that encourages students to participate actively, strengthens their motivation, and ultimately improves their academic achievements, particularly in challenging subjects such as English.

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