



ANALYZING STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARD REWARD SYSTEM IN ENGLISH CLASSROOM

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Abstract:

Student motivation in learning English is still low. One of the ways to increase students' motivation for learning in English is the rewards system. The reward system is a form of appreciation for educating students who are given individually or in groups so that they are happy and feel appreciated. However, to have a better understanding of student perception, it is necessary to analyze other aspects. Therefore, this research aimed to explore student perception towards reward systems in the English classroom to know what type of rewards English teachers usually use, the impact on student's motivation in learning English, and also student preferences about particular rewards. This study utilizes a qualitative descriptive research method with a case study approach, using interviews and voice recording to collect data. Using purposive sampling, 10 students from class 8C at SMPN 2 Mojokerto were interviewed. Data is analyzed using Miles and Hubberman's data reduction, display, and conclusion. To validate the data, triangulation is used by double-checking the results. The results obtained were that their English teacher often used material and non-material reward types. Students show a positive impact by increasing their motivation to learn English. As well as showing unique and fun reward preferences. From the analysis of student perception, the English teachers are recommended to use the reward system to gain student motivation in learning English.

Keywords: *English learning, Reward system, Student perception*

1. INTRODUCTION

English is an important language to learn. This is because English is a multinational language, and people from various parts of the world speak this language (Kushner, 2003). Therefore, activities such as economics, education, business trade, and so on in the world often use English. Indonesia, a country with a fairly large economy, has started English language education at the junior high school level as a compulsory subject (Yulizar, 2022). This is, of course, to develop Indonesia's young generation to speak English fluently and correctly in the future so that it can compete with other countries. However, this still seems far from being realized because students' motivation to study English in Indonesia has decreased quite a bit. As said in Purmama et al. (2019), motivation from students in Indonesia is still at a low level. Therefore, students' motivation to learn English needs to be increased.

Motivation in learning English is very important because it can improve the quality of English learning (Margolang et al., 2019). This is because motivation can increase students' active participation, where students are involved in the learning process so that they can absorb and use English learning materials in real life. Apart from that, motivation can make students more interested and ambitious in learning it independently and can make English become their favorite subject, which will be useful in the future. Therefore, teacher strategies to increase student motivation are very necessary in learning English.

One strategy that teachers can use to enlarge students' personal determination to learn English is providing rewards or reward systems. This is consistent with Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's self-determination theory, which states that "reward systems



can increase student extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation." There are two different ways to look at why people do specific things: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic incentive. Intrinsic motivation is caused by the interest, pleasure, and extraordinary sense of achievement that students feel when they obtain something. Because of this feeling, they no longer need external stimulation (external rewards) to achieve satisfaction with their achievements, so there is only motivation within themselves in this matter. A writer might, for instance, work on a novel because they find the creative process to be rewarding. Intrinsic motivation is in line with the psychological needs of human well-being, active participation from students, persistence in learning, and high creativity (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In contrast, extrinsic motivation requires encouragement from external parties, such as giving rewards or avoiding consequences for bad things. This might include working for a salary, studying to get good grades, or performing a task to receive praise. While extrinsic motivation can effectively encourage behavior in the short term, it might not sustain long-term commitment. Studies by Vallerand & Reid (1984) suggest that over time, excessive reliance on extrinsic rewards may diminish intrinsic motivation as individuals begin to see their actions as controlled by external forces rather than personal choice.

In certain situations, both forms of motivation are significant. Offering extrinsic incentives, like grades, might increase student involvement in the classroom at first, but encouraging intrinsic motivation through freedom and choice can result in deeper learning and longer-lasting interest (Reeve, 2006). Individuals and organizations can establish settings that foster success and personal fulfillment by striking a balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.

Furthermore, based on Fuad in (Afriyeni, 2023), teachers can improve students' motivation by using rewards. Maulana (2022) also alleged that the reward system expands students' personal motivation to learn English. Rewards are a form of praise or appreciation from someone for someone else who has succeeded in achieving an achievement in their life (Costică, 2014). Apart from that, rewards can be said to be useful in teaching students effectively so that students will be happy thanks to work that is respected by their teacher (Purwandari & Andriyani, 2022). It can be defined that rewards are a form of appreciation for educating students who are given individually or in groups so that they are happy and feel appreciated.

According to Chen (2023), the benefits of rewards are to increase student learning motivation, increase student competition, make students enthusiastic, enjoy learning, and encourage them to do their best in learning English, creating a relaxed and enjoyable class atmosphere. Meanwhile, according to Wilson & Corpus (2001) there are a lot of benefits of using the reward system: 1) students seriously pay attention to the material explained by the teacher, 2) grow, maintain and increase students' learning motivation, 3) students' thinking becomes more critical towards a problem 4) control bad student behavior to become good so that deviant behavior can be avoided and productive attitudes can develop in students. Giving rewards also works to provide reinforcement to students. From this, it can be concluded that most of the benefits of



rewards are to increase students' motivation to learn English and develop thinking accompanied by an enjoyable and relaxed class atmosphere.

The factors for giving rewards based on Kang (2012) are that students get good grades in quizzes and lessons, students can answer questions, students behave well and positively, and students participate in studying well. The types of rewards that educators usually grant to pupils can be material and non-material. This is in line with Hidayat (2023) state that there are two types of rewards: material and non-material. Materials rewards can include snacks, pens, money, etc. Non-material rewards can include praise, sign features, and so on. However, teachers also have to consider student preferences when considering new innovations in giving rewards.

Student preferences are descriptions of the best things that students consider when making a choice. Based on Fefer et al. (2016), student preferences in determining the type of reward they like are influenced by several factors, which are student interest, use or value of the reward, and student needs. Students often consider these things when determining their preferences. Student preferences are very important in improving English language learning. If students get rewards according to their preferences, they will certainly make more effort to participate, be enthusiastic about learning, and do everything possible to get the rewards they want. Therefore, this research focuses on evaluating students' perceptions of the reward system in English classes in order to find out the types of rewards used by teachers, their influence on learning motivation, and their preferences for certain types of rewards. By knowing students' preferences, teachers can find new innovations in giving rewards to students and increase student motivation in learning English.

In a phenomenon that occurred at SMPN 2 Mojokerto where, the English teacher in class 8C implemented a reward system to motivate her students to learn English and create a relaxed and fun class atmosphere. The English teacher gave various types of rewards to show appreciation to her students, and the students seemed enthusiastic even though the rewards given did not match their preferences. In this case, the researcher wants to analyze students' perceptions about giving rewards, which are related to the kind of reward given, its effect on their motivation to learn English, and their preferences for certain types of rewards.

There are several studies that examine students' perceptions of rewards, such as research conducted by Setiadi (2021), which took place in senior high schools and included students' perceptions of punishment. The results obtained have a positive effect on giving rewards to students. Phungphai & Boonmoh (2021), conduct research with the setting of a football school in Bangkok and its influence on learning behavior and self-development. The results obtained are positive effects on learning behavior and self-development due to using a reward system. Furthermore, research conducted by Sesmita (2021) took place in a junior high school regarding students' perceptions of rewards and punishment but did not explain the effect on student motivation. The results obtained were that students' responses to giving rewards and punishments were categorized as good.



Therefore, in this study, the researcher only examined students' perceptions of the reward system in English classes and paid attention to the types of rewards used by teachers, their influence on students' English learning motivation, and students' preferences for certain types of rewards. Data analysis, in this case, is based on analysis from Akmal & Susanti (2019) in analyzing student perception. Analysis of student perception is important to know what the students need and want about the reward system in the English classroom. By analyzing student perception of the reward system, teachers can find out what types of rewards attract students' attention and create new innovations related to their preferences and can increase student motivation in a unique way so that students can learn English seriously but relax in class.

2. METHOD

This study was conducted using descriptive-qualitative methods. As stated in Patel & Patel (2019), descriptive research is used to explain in detail and descriptively the phenomena that occur, both natural and man-made, in the results of the subjects studied. This is related to the purpose of this research, which is to analyze student perception of reward systems in English classrooms. According to Creswell (2014), the qualitative method can be applied in certain situations that involve a deep and observant relationship to a phenomenon/event in everyday life. In further, this study is classified as descriptive research. This is in line with the pursuit of this groundwork, which is to examine students' perceptions of reward systems in order to find out the types of rewards used by their teachers, their feeling or opinions of giving rewards on their learning motivation, and their preferences for certain types of rewards.

This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Mojokerto. An English teacher implemented a reward system in the English classroom with several types of rewards to motivate students to learn English better; hence, the school was chosen as the research location. The participants were 10 students of 8th C-grade students at SMPN 2 Mojokerto as chosen by using a purposive sampling technique. According to Adolph Jenson in (Rai & Thapa, 2016) purposive sampling is a technique that determines samples or research subjects with predetermined conditions. Therefore, the ten 8C students were selected because they met the criteria, including having received various types of rewards from their English teachers, and their motivation to learn English increased based on the preliminary study.

This research used interview questions and a voice recorder to collect data. Like Berger said in (Brenner, 2006), interviews are conversations conducted by researchers or people who hope to get information, and informants are people who are considered to have important information about an object. This is in line with the aim of this research, where interviews were conducted to obtain more in-depth information and opinions regarding the reward system in English classes by interviewing students. The interviews were carried out by interviewing ten children from class 8C who had met the criteria, and during the interview process, they were recorded using a voice recorder as proof that the interviews had been carried out and to help with the data processing



carried out. The interview is semi-structured, and new interview questions are asked during the interview session.

In analyzing the data, the researcher uses reference analysis, according to Miles & Huberman (1994), which are: Data Reduction, Data Display (Data Presentation, and Conclusion Drawing. In data reduction, the researcher carried out data reduction by sorting through the information obtained from participants through voice recording transcripts according to the research objectives and theories of blah blab la and double-checking with participants to ensure the correctness of the information. In data display, the researcher displays the results of the analysis regarding student opinions in the finding and discussion section. Then in conclusion drawing, the results of the analysis regarding students' opinions regarding the reward system are drawn in the conclusion section.

Analyzing student perceptions is also based on the analysis carried out by Akmal & Susanti (2019), which directly analyzes the aspects analyzed and strengthens the results of the analysis with the results of direct interview transcripts.

For the validity of the findings obtained, researchers used source triangulation and member-checking data. According to Denzin and Lincoln in (*Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 1994), source triangulation is a method for checking the credibility of a data source with the party concerned, such as double-checking the truth of the transcribed interview results with the interviewee. This aims to ensure the validity of the data obtained. The researcher also member-checked the data by showing the results of the analysis of student perception to the interviewee and confirming the results of the researcher's elucidation contained in the results of the analysis of student perception in line with the intent of their interview answers. This is done to strengthen confidence in the data results obtained.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

As shown in the findings, interviews were conducted with 10 students from class 8C, and data analysis was based on Miles & Huberman (1994) and adjusted to the theory from Akmal & Susanti (2019). The results of the analysis are as follows:

3.1 Type of reward used by the teacher

Teachers often give 2 forms of rewards, namely in the form of material and non-material. Of the 10 people interviewed, they received the most rewards in the form of non-material rather than material. Non-material forms that teachers often use include giving good grades, being praised in front of the class, certain symbols such as thumbs up, showing 10 fingers to give a score of ten; words such as good job, excellent, smart, continue to increase enthusiasm for learning by appreciating students for doing what they were previously instructed to do and doing their job well. This is reinforced by one student's opinion, which stated:

"I was given verbal rewards such as good job, excellent, and smart when I successfully answered questions on the blackboard and successfully answered certain questions from the teacher. I was also rewarded in the



form of applause when I successfully answered certain questions too. This allows me to feel valued and appreciated."

Meanwhile, rewards are in the form of snacks, pens, bags, and sticky notes. Providing rewards in the form of materials allows students to study hard and is a form of encouragement to make students more enthusiastic about learning English. This is reinforced by one student's opinion, which states:

"I was given a prize in the form of a snack and a pen when I got the highest score on a certain quiz. I was also given a bag because I won the English Olympic competition, so I felt happy."

From the two things above, the teacher gives a type of non-material reward when students can answer questions related to the material that has been explained or when the student has understood the material that has been taught, while the reward is in the form of material when the student has achieved the highest achievement in his class or at his school related to English as well as a form of support for students in learning English. This is in line with Hidayat (2023), who state that teachers usually give two types of rewards: material and non-material.

3.2 Students' perception regarding the reward system in English class on motivation to learn English

All of the students increased their motivation to learn English because they were encouraged to get the rewards given by the teacher. Not only that, students also feel happy and enthusiastic about learning English. This is in line with the theory of Chen (2023) that they feel valued and appreciated by the English teacher. There was even one student who felt compelled to get the highest achievement in an English language competition to get a reward from the teacher. This is reinforced by one student's opinion, which stated:

"Yes, you could say that the teacher's reward helped me to increase my motivation to learn English. I also actively participated in class and was enthusiastic about learning English. "Once, the teacher gave my friend a bag because he won the Olympics; from there, I was motivated to win a competition in the field of English."

There is also the impact of giving rewards to make them feel proud because they can get rewards for their own efforts. They feel satisfied with the results of the efforts they have made. This indicates that rewards can also increase students' English learning efforts by trying to achieve certain English learning goals. Of course, this is in line with the theory of Chen (2023), where creating a positive English learning atmosphere requires student effort to achieve predetermined learning goals. This is reinforced by one student's opinion, which states:



"It's true; giving a reward from the teacher makes me feel proud because it is the result of my own efforts to get the reward."

From these things, it can be concluded that giving rewards to students in English classes can increase student motivation and make students feel happy, relaxed, and proud because they get rewards.

3.3 Student preferences for certain rewards

From the interview results, information can be obtained that students want unique types of rewards or reward innovations, such as drones, money, games, fun activities, books, etc. This is influenced by student interests, the value of rewards, and student needs. This is in line with Fefer et al. (2016). In this case, the unique thing that was found was that students wanted drones and fun activities, which rarely happens when teachers give rewards for learning English. This is reinforced by one of the following student opinions;

"Yes, I want to get a drone as a reward for my achievement in English class. I want that because I want to make good videos."

There are also those who want fun activities as a reward for answering the teacher's questions correctly and well. This is reinforced by one of the following student opinions;

"I want fun activities together in between learning activities when I have answered questions from the teacher. I can use this activity as a form of reward for me to rest for a while after doing existing learning activities."

In fact, the reward preferences mentioned above are in line with Fefer et al. (2016), where these preferences are a modern form of reward. These forms of reward can be given by the teacher if students really get the highest achievements, especially drones. For fun activities, teachers can innovate by involving unique things in English learning activities.

From all of the above, it can be concluded that the types of rewards given by teachers are material and non-material. Students have a positive impact on their motivation to learn English by providing rewards. Students also respond positively to the rewards given by the teacher, and student reward preferences depend on student interests, student needs, and the use value of the rewards given. In this case, the newest and most unique reward is that students want drones and exciting activities.



4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion is that material and non-material rewards given by teachers can increase students' motivation to learn English in English classes. In addition, rewards increase the sense of competence among students and foster increased student achievement to gain recognition for their efforts so far. This is reinforced by the positive response given by students to the rewards given so that they gain satisfaction because the teacher validates their abilities and obtains external recognition. As a result, the motivation to study harder creates a desire in their hearts. In other words, the results of this research are in line with "Self-determination theory," where their motivation is influenced by basic psychological needs, competence, and connectedness.

Apart from that, an important point in SDT, namely the role of student autonomy, is illustrated in the results of this research. where students have a strong desire to obtain rewards that are quite modern and unique, such as drones and interesting activities, thereby increasing students' sense of autonomy because teachers take their interests and preferences into account. As a result, they want something bigger during the learning process and are serious about participating. In conclusion, the more motivated the role of autonomy is in the learning process, the stronger and greater their intrinsic motivation is in the learning process. However, teachers must also be able to provide more useful and helpful things in the learning process when students' requests are too frivolous.

Therefore, it is recommended for English teachers to find out students' interests and preferences in giving rewards so that teachers can assess whether the rewards are useful or not for student development. Not only that, it can also increase student involvement in the learning process, increase student motivation, and support the growth of their autonomy and abilities. Teachers can also apply this reward system in learning by inserting it into learning strategies during the learning process. With this, teachers are allowed to innovate in their learning strategies by providing a reward system that is different and unique from others. This can certainly fulfill students' psychological satisfaction, which will have an impact on high learning interest in learning English.

Apart from that, from an SDT perspective, teachers must be able to balance an environment where external rewards can foster intrinsic motivation and much better opportunities for students in the learning process. This tactic must be carried out with incentives and in stages so that it can produce long-term success in learning, where external rewards become intrinsic motivation for students. The SDT theory in this research can be developed further. It is recommended that other researchers who want to discuss SDT not only consider students' opinions but also consider teachers' opinions about the influence of rewards on learning in English classes regarding students' learning motivation. In this way, the principles of SDT can be integrated into learning, which can foster a sense of competition among students, an ambitious attitude toward achievement, and independence in learning English.



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