Pedagogy and Psychology of Sport. 2026;29:68565. elSSN 2450-6605. https://doi.org/10.12775/PPS.2026.29.68565

Pedagogy and Psychology of Sport. elSSN 2450-6605
Journal Home Page
https://apcz.umk.pl/PPS/index

JABEEN, Nahida, RAHMAN, Atia and SAMAD, Assad us. Teachers and Students' Perceptions of the Rewards System and Motivation In Relation To Academic Achievement. Pedagogy and Psychology of Sport. 2026;29:68565. eISSN 2450-6605.
https://doi.org/10.12775/PPS.2026.29.68565

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.
Received: 25.01.2026. Revised: 05.02.2026. Accepted: 05.02.2026. Published: 15.02.2026.

Teachers and Students' Perceptions of the Rewards System and Motivation In Relation To Academic Achievement

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Abstract

The study aims to explore the perceptions of teachers and students of the reward system and motivation in relation to academic achievement within the district of Lower Chitral. By using a quantitative design, data were collected from 96 participants, comprising 80 students and 16 teachers from 8 schools were randomly selected to give an equal chance of occurrence. A well-organized closed-ended questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used, and the data were evaluated through the statistical package for the social sciences SPSS. The findings demonstrated that 93.8% of participants agreed that a reward system increases academic performance. However, 100% assumed that rewards are a more effective tool in forming behavior than punishment. In addition, 96.3% agreed that teachers' appreciation enhances confidence level; while extensive use of rewards minimizes inner motivation.Statistical consequences highlighted both significant and non-significant correlations between variables. Furthermore, it was summarized that reward systems, when applied properly, have a positive effect onstudents'learning, motivation, and behavior. The study determined that a balanced use of rewards could enhance learning results without reducing learners' inner motivations. In addition, it suggests that future research should comprise both genders' respondents and include expert perspectives to offer a more detailed insight into the lasting effect of reward and motivation on students’ achievement.

Keywords

Teachers, Students, Perceptions, Rewards System, Motivation In Relation

Education is the structured and conscious process of advancing individuals' knowledge, values, and behavior. It is known that teachers utilize rewards as an instructional technique in educational settings (Mercan, 2025). Students attend school to acquire valuable knowledge and skills that will help them achieve their future goals. Schools provide a roadmap for achieving their objectives. Academic success does not depend solely on cognitive ability, but motivation

and the reward system also play an equal role. Four factors shape the motivation context: temperament, goal, and instruments (Sharma & Sharma). All human beings are born with the natural intrinsic motivation to learn. Student motivation affects every aspect of school life, from attendances academic achievement and extracurricular activities.

Motivation is the internal drive or external influence that guides and maintains goal-oriented behavior. We have two types of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic). Intrinsic motivation is the act of completing tasks or activities for inner satisfaction. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is the act of completing an activity to obtain a reward. Both have positive and negative effects on learning(Baranek,1996). Intrinsic motivation fosters in-depth learning, innovation, and self-regulation, but can be challenging to maintain for routine tasks. Extrinsic motivation enhances struggle and goal accomplishment, but may lead to reliance on rewards and a decrease in interest. There is a significant association between motivation and academic achievement among undergraduate students at the University of Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia. Higher motivation will result in higher GPA scores (Bakar et al., 2022). Higher motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, facilitates learners to dedicate more time and effort to the learning process. It also reinforces the need to actively participate in academic activities i.e., regular class attendance and timely submission of assignments, all of which are crucial to achieving higher GPA scores.

Student autonomy in education can increase student motivation. Self –determination theory states that learners who are in control of their self-directed learning, competent in what they do, and welcomed by their peers tend to be intrinsically motivated. Facilitators can enhance motivation by providing useful feedback, fostering strong relationships, and making learning an enjoyable experience. A fitness routine is also beneficial for the brain to stay fresh, helping students remain motivated and focused in their studies (Sharma & Sharma, 2018).

In the context of education, the teacher has the basic duty to build, enhance, and preserve motivation in the student. In contrast, parents are the most significant and powerful adults in pupils' lives. Parental control plays a vital role in shaping children's attitudes toward their schooling (Nancy, 1992).

Motivation is the spinal cord of the teaching–learning process. Success is the product of motivation; the more motivated one is, the closer they can reach their comfort zone. To run the student learning program, teachers use rewards as a motivational drive for students. It also influences student behavior. Rewards provide a roadmap to act, focused on learning objectives, boost positive behavior, and minimize behavioral disparities (Hamid & Akande).In today's classroom, learning disparities are common, often resulting in a loss of student motivation. To

overcome this issue, facilitators frequently use rewards as a motivational tool. The rewards system is a powerful instrument used by the teacher to enhance students' good manners in the classroom. It is the naturalistic process that all human beings like gifts, just as being a student, like praise as a gift. Students who receive rewards are highly motivated, and this motivation helps them perform better in tests, examinations, and all classroom activities (Emenike & Chima, 2023). Reward is defined as a positive consequence given to a pupil's reaction to acceptable behavior or academic achievement, striving to motivate and reinforce that positive action. Tangible and intangible prizes are types of rewards. Tangible rewards, also called external incentives, include stickers, hand stamps, small toys, etc. Intangible reward, also called internal recognition, includes teachers' appreciation of students' positive relationship with the tutor. Rewards have both positive and negative effects. On the positive side, they build healthy habits, create an inclusive learning environment, enhance academic performance, build self-confidence, and reduce absenteeism. The rewards should match the students' abilities; if they are not in line with the standard, it may harm students' inner motivation and reduce their performance. Additionally, in the educational field, monetary rewards are unfavorable; this reduces students' intrinsic motivation for learning (Leuven et al, 2010).Researchers evaluate the effect of the reward system on motivation and academic performance in digital game–based learning. They divide learners into a control group that received classic guidance and an experimental group that was involved in DGBL with rewards. The study indicated that pupils in the experimental learning environment were more motivated and showed better performance than those in the control group. The study found that rewards can boost both motivation and academic performance. Despite all these factors for lasting and high-quality outcomes, facilitators should balance extrinsic rewards with intrinsic motivation (Duisenova & Zhorabekova, 2024).Due to diversity; pupils have various educational backgrounds, have different levels of learning ability, and will be affected by the reward system to various extents. The example, reward systems help elementary school learners to build good behaviors and habits, but they also help middle school learners to enhance academic achievement. Extensive use of rewards in the educational field can have a negative influence on pupils' inner motivation and impact student learning achievement. Negative effects include reward addiction, fear of punishment, and low confidence. Over time, students may become dependent on rewards. This study focuses on understanding how students and teachers view these factors. It aims to find out what students think about the reward system and motivation, and how these affect their academic achievement. It also looks at teachers’ views on using rewards and motivation, and how they believe these relate to students’ academic performance.

Research Objectives

To investigate the opinion of the students about the reward system and motivation, and their impact on students' academic achievement.

. To explore teachers' perceptions of the use of the reward system and motivation, and their relation to academic achievement.

Research Hypothesis

H1.Students' perceptions of the reward system and motivation have no significant effect on their academic achievement.

H2.Teachers' perceptions of the reward system and motivation significantly influence students' academic achievement

Materials and Method

This study is quantitative, aiming to examine teachers' and students' perceptions of rewards and motivation and their relationship to academic achievement. A survey method was used to collect structured numerical data from participants efficiently. This approach enables the study to assess both students' views on how rewards and motivation affect learning and performance, and teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness and challenges of using reward systems in the classroom.The population of this research consists of 12 girls' secondary schools in the district Lower Chitral, Pakistan. Eight 8 schools were randomly selected as the sample from the entire population of girls' secondary schools in the district of Lower Chitral Pakistan. Slovin's formula was applied to calculate the sample size from the population, as it is applicable for small and known populations. Both female teachers and students were randomly selected out of eight schools, the total number of participants is 96, comprising 80 students and 16 teachers. From each school 10 students and 2 teachers were selected. Data were collected through questionnaire that contained a closed-ended 5-pointLikert scale. Data were analyzed with the help of SPSS.

Table 1: Teachers perceptions about reward, motivation, and academic performance

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree	P-value
A reward system enhances academic performance	62.5%	31.3%	0%	6.3%	0%	.096
Intrinsic motivation helps with active participation in class activities	31.3%	62.5%	0%	6.3%	0%	.119
Reward is considered a more powerful tool in shaping students' behavior than punishment	31.3%	68.8%	0%	0%	0%	.344
It is difficult for teachers to provide material rewards every time	12.5%	56.3%	31.3%	0%	0%	.758

Table 1. Statement no 1 denotes that 93.8% contributors accepted the statement that the reward system enhances academic performance. At the same time, there is no one in favor of neutrality; additionally, only 6.3% disagree with the idea, and the p-value is 0.096, which is greater than 0.05, meaning there is no correlation between the reward system and academic performance. Statement no 2 highlighted that 93.8% members believed that intrinsic motivation helps active participation in class activities; on the other hand, there is no result found that represents not sure. Moreover, very few participants, 6.3% remained in disagreement with the theme. In addition, the P-value .119 indicates there is no significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and participation in class tasks. Statement no3 shows that 100% respondents agreed with the survey the item that reward is considered more powerful strategy in shaping behavior than punishments, although none of the research participants agreed that the research study was uncertain and disagree; however, the P value is .399, whichillustrates there is no bond between the reward system and pupils' behavior. Statement no 4 says that 68.8% participants in the study consider it difficult for teachers to provide tangible rewards every time, whereas 31.3% stay undecided. Furthermore, no one rejects the study question, since the p-value, .758, is higher than the expected value, which stresses that there is no linkage between the item and the observed variables.

Graph 1.

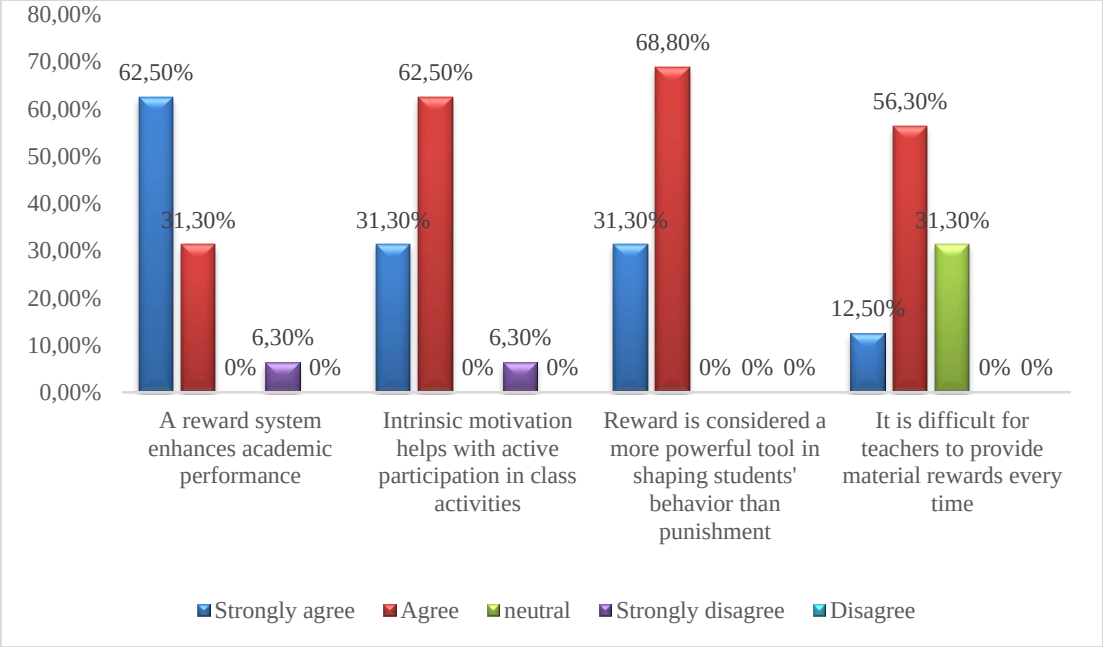


Table 2. Teachers' perceptions of challenges and impact of Reward systems

	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree	P-value
	A reward system promotes conflict, competition, and jealousy	6.3%	50%	18.8%	6.3%	18.8%	.894
	Favoritism is boosted by the reward system among students	0%	12.5%	31.3%	6.3%	50%	.855
	The reward should be aligned with learning objectives	37.5%	31.3%	25%	6.3%	0%	.965
	A reward system is helpful for curricular and non-curricular activities	42.8%	50%	0%	6.3%	0%	.981

Table 2. Statement no 1 shows the result that the p-value is .894, there is no significant relationship between the reward system promoting conflict, completion, and jealousy; however, 56.3% teachers accepted, while 18.8% not sure, furthermore 25.1% disagreed. Statement no 2 demonstratesthat only 12.5% suppose that the reward system boosts favoritism, while 31.3% stay neutral, and 56.3% deny. Additionally, p-value .855 is greater than the constant value of p; here, we found no correlation betweenthe reward system and favoritism within students.Statement no 3 interprets that 68.8% respondents agreedthe reward system should be aligned to learning objectives, simultaneously 25% participants remain unsure, while only 6.3% not believe the survey item. The P-value .965 exceeds the normal value, indicating that there is no significant connection between the item and the variable. Statement no 4 marked 92.8% fully agreed with the concept that the reward system aids both curricular and non-curricular activities. In addition, no respondent remains unsure, as 6.3% disagreed with the item, while the p-value is .981, meaning there is no significant bonding within the reward system and its helpfulness in both curricular and non-curricular activities.

Graph 2.

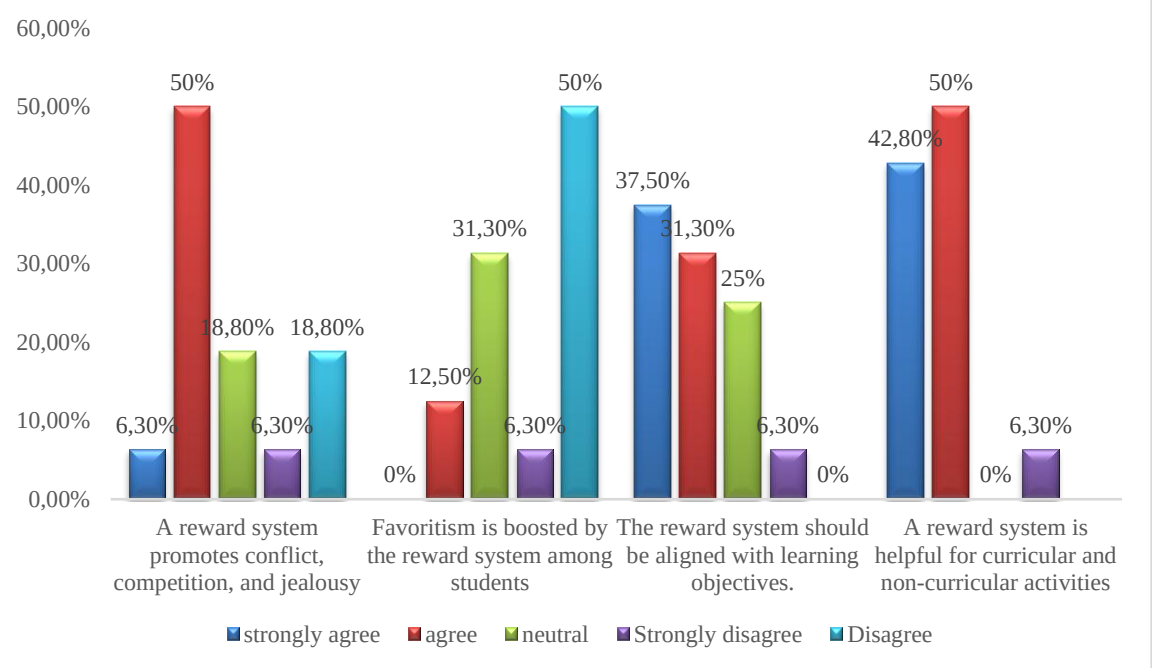
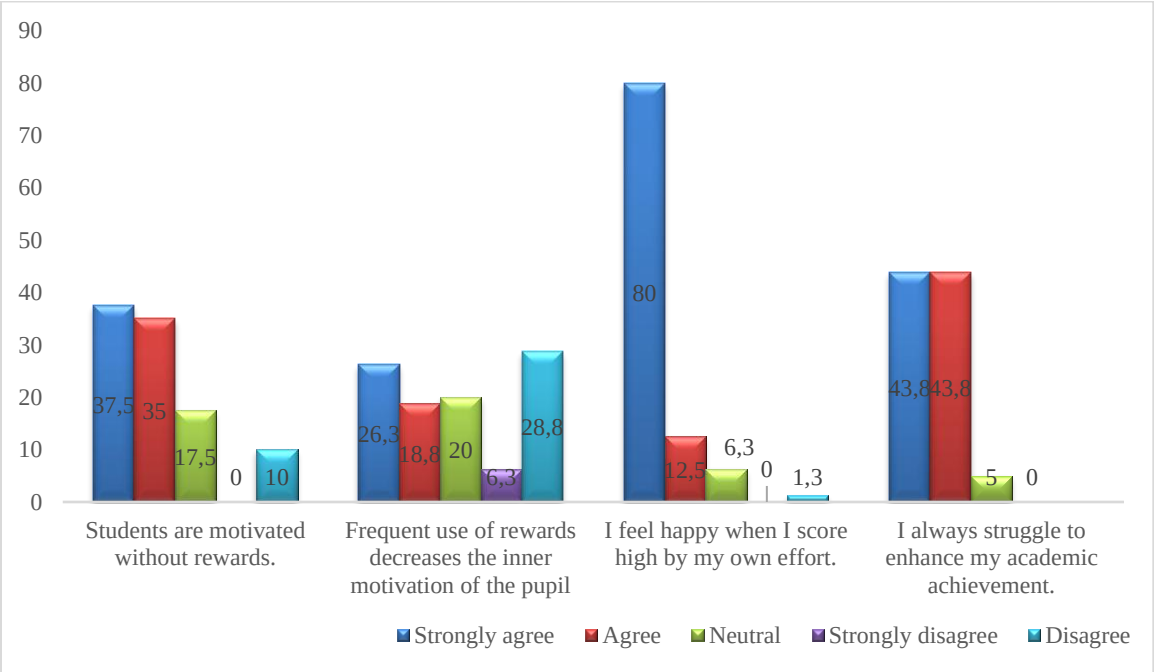


Table 3. Students'perceptions of the rewards system and motivation

statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	P-value
The rewards system motivates students to get a position	65%	28.8%	2.5%	0%	3.8%	.502
Teacher appreciation enhances the confidence level of students.	70%	26.3%	1.3%	0%	2.5%	.381
When a reward is given, I stay focused on my studies.	43.8%	43.8%	7.5%	5.0%	0%	.393
Reward is considered the best tool to achieve better academic achievement.	38.8%	37.5%	11.3%	10.0%	2.5%	.198

Table 3. statement no 1 show that 93.8% students agreed that rewards system assist them to achieve higher position, while the small percentage of 3.8% respondent disagreed that rewards system doesn't, matter for them to get better academic position, moreover 2.5% remain undecided to the concept, additionally p –value is .502 is greater than 0.05 indicate that there is no association among variables. Statement no 2 states that 96.3% believed that teacher appreciation boosts pupils' confidence level. Only 1.3% stayed neutral to the influence, and 2.5% completely disagreed with the statement. The p-value is .381, which is also higher than the p-value, strongly opposing the idea that there is no relation between teacher appreciation and students' confidence level. Statement no 3indicates that 86.75 respondents agreed with the idea that reward help them to stay focused on their studies but 5% disagreed that reward is not helpful to pay attention on study, and 7.5% learners remain undecided mean that reward neither help nor hinder their concentration, however, the p value .393 is also high than 0.05%, which shows that there is no link between factor so we cannot strongly assume that reward aids to focus better. Statement no 4 suggests that 76.3% respondents agreed that reward is the best tool to obtain higher academic achievement, 11.3% remained uninvolved, and 12.5% replied against the comment, as the p-value also exceeds the expected value of p, so we can express that reward is not the best tool to increase academic achievement.

Graph 3.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed that 93.8% of respondents agreed that a reward system enhances students' academic performance, while 6.3% disagreed with the idea that rewards are necessary to support academic progress. Similarly, 93.8% of students reported that the use of rewards helps them achieve higher academic positions, indicating that rewards act as strong motivators for improving academic outcomes**.** Findings showed that 93.8% of participants agreed that intrinsic motivation encourages students to actively participate in class activities, while 6.3% disagreed. This reflects that most learners believe internal motivation plays a vital role in enhancing engagement and learning within the classroom. The results demonstrated that 100% of respondents believed that rewards are more effective than punishment in shaping pupils' behavior. Additionally, 71.3% agreed that rewards help teachers manage behavioral issues in the classroom, while 13.8% disagreed, indicating a generally positive perception of reward systems for behavior management.

A significant 68.8% of the participants agreed that offering tangible rewards consistently is difficult for teachers, whereas 31.3% remained neutral. This highlights practical challenges teachers may face, such as financial limitations or a lack of resources, when implementing reward systems regularly.

The findings indicate that 56.3% of respondents believe that reward systems may increase conflict, competition, and jealousy among students, while 25.1% disagreed. In addition, 56.3% disagreed with the statement that reward systems promote favoritism, whereas only 12% agreed, showing mixed perceptions regarding the fairness and social impact of rewards.

A majority of 68.8% of respondents agreed that rewards should be linked to learning objectives, ensuring that reward-based strategies support meaningful educational goals. Only 6.3% disagreed, showing a strong preference for purposeful and structured reward systems. A large proportion (86.75%) agreed that rewards help students stay focused on their studies, whereas 5% disagreed. Moreover, 76.3% of respondents agreed that rewards are the best tool for achieving higher academic performance, while 12.5% disagreed, showing strong support for reward systems in enhancing study habits and achievement. **Hypothesis 1,** which stated that students' perceptions of the reward system and motivation have no significant effect on their academic achievement, the regression results showed a **significant relationship ($p < 0.05$).** This means that students who have positive perceptions of rewards and feel motivated tend to perform better academically. Therefore, the **null hypothesis H1 is rejected,** showing that students' perceptions do have a meaningful impact on their academic achievement.

Hypothesis 2, which stated that teachers' perceptions of the reward system and motivation significantly influence students' academic achievement, the regression analysis also showed a **positive and significant effect ($p < 0.05$).** Teachers who believe rewards help improve motivation are more likely to use supportive strategies in the classroom, leading to better student performance. Thus, **Hypothesis 2 is accepted**, confirming that teachers' perceptions play an important role in students' academic outcomes. Conclusions were drawn based on research findings. The study determined that reward systems have an effective influence on students' learning, motivation, and behavior. A huge number of participants agreed that the reward boosts their confidence, class participation, and stay focused on tasks. The analysis demonstrates that reward plays a vital role in shaping learners' behavior and enhancing their academic success. While the extreme use of reward may minimize pupils' self-motivation. The majority of students believed that success gained through their own struggle brings greater pleasure and a more lifelong success. Finally, the result highlighted that when rewards are utilized properly, they can assist learners' stay self-motivated not just temporarily. The study found that teachers should keep a counter between offering rewards and encouraging learners' own motivations to achieve better learning. Being a teacher, they make their students into independent learners, not dependent. Teachers should avoid frequently using external rewards because they minimize learners' inner drive. Teachers should concentrate on promoting inner

motivation and fostering lasting learning, as external rewards boost short-term motivation. This study is only focused on female students. Future research should be applied to both male and female students to comprehensively understand the effect of the rewards system and motivation on students' academic achievement. Future studies should be based on expert opinion.

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