Teachers' Motivational Techniques and Student Performance: A Comparative Study of Public and Private Primary Schools in Lahore

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Abstract

The techniques that promote individuals' goal related behavior are motivational techniques. As a teacher, knowing how to apply motivational techniques at a primary level is the most powerful tool for teaching. The aim of this study is to find out if there is any difference of the usage of motivational techniques among the government and private school teachers. Primary school teachers, teaching both private and public schools in Lahore were selected as a population of this research. A simple random sampling method was selected. A total of 300 primary school teachers were selected for gathering data. It was observed that motivational techniques were used in both public and private sectors. It was also observed that motivational techniques are very helpful in the enhancement of learning. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Chi-square test, which revealed statistically significant differences in motivational techniques and student performance between school types.

Keywords: Teachers', Motivational Techniques, Students' Performance, Lahore.

Introduction

Effective teaching strategies that motivate students are crucial for improving learning outcomes. Researchers have explored various instructional approaches to enhance student motivation and engagement in the classroom (Adhikari, Budhathoki & Adhikari, 2025; Machingambi, 2013; Tadjibaeva, 2025). One legendary study (Marshall, 1987) examined the motivational orientations of three fifth-grade teachers, observing that teachers who fostered a learning-oriented environment tended to use more motivational statements in their lessons. These statements often focused on intrinsic factors, such as stimulating student interest, rather than extrinsic rewards or punishments. Similarly, a paper on higher education teaching strategies suggests that making course content relevant to students' lives, drawing on their background knowledge, and developing self-regulated learning skills can contribute to enhanced motivation and learning (Russell, Baik, Ryan & Molloy, 2022). The benefits of

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implementing motivational techniques in tertiary education have also been documented. These include decreased absenteeism, improved assessment performance, increased student well-being, and the propagation of a positive learning environment. Given the importance of student motivation in facilitating effective learning, it is imperative for educators to thoughtfully consider and employ a range of motivational strategies in their classrooms.

One study on English language instruction in Thailand suggests, a balance between autonomy-supportive and controlling strategies may be most effective, as they can nurture students' intrinsic interests while also providing necessary structure and guidance (Kistnasamy, 2014). Motivating students is a critical aspect of the teaching and learning process, as it can significantly impact student engagement, academic performance, and overall learning outcomes. Effective teachers understand the importance of employing various motivational techniques to create a positive and enriching learning environment.

Literature Review

One key strategy for motivating students is for teachers to serve as role models. When teachers embody the characteristics and behaviors they hope to instill in their students, such as enthusiasm, curiosity, and a love of learning, they can inspire and encourage their students to strive for excellence. Brophy's assertion that "you-your own personality and everyday behavior in the classroom-can become your most powerful motivational tool" underscores the profound influence teachers can have on their students' motivation and engagement (Brophy, 2004). Beyond modeling desired behaviors, teachers can also use extrinsic and intrinsic motivational techniques to foster student motivation. Extrinsic motivation, such as the use of rewards and recognition, can be particularly effective in tertiary education settings, where it has been shown to decrease absenteeism, increase student achievement, and enhance overall well-being and personal empowerment (Wentzel, 2020).

At the same time, teachers should also nurture intrinsic motivation by creating learning environments that foster personal goal setting, a genuine interest in the subject matter, and a sense of accomplishment. When students experience a "continuous motivating cycle of reflection, connection, confidence and positive self-esteem," they are more likely to be engaged, committed, and successful in their academic pursuits. The existing research in the field of education highlights the significant role that teachers play in shaping student motivation (T Soto et al., 2025). By employing a combination of role modeling, extrinsic rewards, and intrinsic motivation strategies, teachers can create a dynamic and engaging learning environment that empowers students to reach their full potential. Motivation is a crucial factor in shaping the effectiveness of teachers and, by extension, the success of educational institutions (Khun-Inkeeree et al., 2022). Existing research has examined the connection between teachers' motivational techniques and various

school characteristics, including the distinction between public and private institutions (Jiang, et al., 2025).

One study found that external motivation, such as rewards and incentives, did not have a significant impact on school effectiveness. Instead, the authors emphasized the importance of intrinsic motivation, which can be fostered through factors like teacher participation in decision-making, authority sharing, and positive communication with administrators (Khun-Inkeeree et al., 2022). Similarly, another study revealed that intrinsic factors in the motivation to choose a teaching career were associated with teachers' adoption of comprehensive learning and disciplinary practices, while extrinsic factors were linked to ability-avoidance goals and work avoidance (Alasad, 2017). These findings suggest that the relationship between teachers' motivational techniques and school type is complex and multifaceted. While extrinsic rewards may not be the most effective approach, fostering intrinsic motivation through collaborative decision-making and a supportive school culture can have a positive impact on teacher performance and, ultimately, student outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Williams & Stockdale, 2004).

The distinction between public and private schools also appears to play a role in the interplay of teacher motivation and school effectiveness. In the case of Bedouin secondary schools in Israel, the study found that the leadership style of the principal was a key factor in shaping teacher motivation and, consequently, student achievement (Taun, 2023). These findings underscore the importance of considering the unique contextual factors that may influence the relationship between teachers' motivational techniques and school type. In conclusion, the existing literature suggests that the relationship between teachers' motivational techniques and school type is a nuanced and multifaceted topic that warrants further investigation. By understanding the complex interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors, as well as the influence of school characteristics, educators and policymakers can develop more effective strategies to support and empower teachers, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes.

The Impact of Teachers' Motivational Techniques on Students' Goal-Directed Behavior

Researchers have explored various theoretical frameworks, including achievement goal theory, self-determination theory, and social-cognitive theory, to understand how classroom environments and teacher-student interactions can shape student motivation (Butler & Shibaz, 2008). One of the key findings from the literature is that teachers can play a crucial role in fostering students' goal-directed behavior through their instructional practices and the climate they create in the classroom. Brophy's work emphasizes that teachers can serve as powerful motivational tools by modeling the behaviors and attitudes they want to see in their students. Furthermore, studies have shown that teachers' achievement goals for teaching can influence students' perceptions of instructional practices and their own goal orientations (Daumiller, et al., 2025; Yu, Zhou & Jiang, 2025).

The role of social relationships in the classroom is also an important factor in shaping student motivation. Teachers who are able to build strong, supportive relationships with their students are more likely to foster intrinsic motivation and a sense of autonomy, which are key drivers of goal-directed behavior. Additionally, the nature of peer relationships and the overall social climate of the classroom can also impact students' motivation and engagement. In summary, the research suggests that teachers' use of effective motivational techniques, such as serving as role models, aligning their own achievement goals with those of their students, and cultivating a positive social environment, can have a significant impact on students' goal-directed behavior and academic success (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006; Wati, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Motivational techniques play a vital role in enhancing student learning and improving teacher performance in schools. Recently, many schools have adopted the slogan "Maar Nahi, Pyaar" (No Beating, Only Love), emphasizing the importance of using motivation over punishment. In line with this, it is essential that motivational strategies become a regular part of daily school practices. Unfortunately, in many primary schools, this area is often overlooked—either due to a lack of awareness or understanding among teachers about how to implement these techniques. As a result, student performance suffers, both during the academic year and in final assessments.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were framed for the study:
1. To explore the motivational techniques implemented by teachers to enhance student performance at the primary level in public and private schools.
2. To examine the motivational strategies used by teachers to boost students' performance at the primary level in public and private schools.
3. Comparing the motivational methods adopted in public and private primary schools.

Significance of the study

This study is beneficial for school leaders and teachers by promoting the use of positive motivation over authoritarian approaches. The significance of this research can be summarized as follows:
1. It may assist school heads in managing teachers more effectively and support teachers in improving both their teaching performance and student learning outcomes.
2. It may offer insight into the motivational strategies currently being used in schools.
3. The findings may draw the attention of teacher training institutions, encouraging them to include motivational strategies in both initial teacher training and ongoing professional development programs.

Research Questions
1. Are there any motivational strategies implemented by teachers in their classrooms?
2. What are the most frequently used motivational strategies in public and private schools?
3. What are the differences between the motivational strategies used by teachers in public and private schools?

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive, quantitative research design, utilizing the survey method as part of descriptive research. In Lahore, there were 290 public and 600 private primary schools. A list of these schools was obtained from the District Education Officer (DEO) office, Lahore. For the purpose of this study, a total of 60 public and 60 private primary schools were selected. From each selected school, three teachers were randomly chosen, resulting in a total sample size of 300 teachers—150 from public schools and 150 from private schools. Data collection was carried out using a random sampling technique, and a structured, closed-ended questionnaire developed by the researcher served as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never).

The data was collected through personal visits. In cases where personal visits were not feasible, the survey was delivered to the respective schools. To ensure maximum response rates, additional communication methods, such as telephone and internet, were also employed. To ensure the validity of the instrument, expert opinions were sought. Feedback was obtained from three departmental research experts, and the questionnaire was revised and finalized based on their recommendations.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. A Chi-square test was applied at the 0.05 level of significance, and a weighted average was calculated.

Table 1: *Data Analysis Results*

	Statements		Difference
1	Grades are utilized to encourage and enhance student motivation in the classroom.	.193	no
2	Tokens are employed to encourage and motivate students in the classroom.	.002	yes
3	Awarding stars is your preferred technique to motivate students.	.004	yes
4	Punishment is preferred over reinforcement as a technique in your class.	.001	yes
5	Prizes help you achieve the learning objectives in the classroom.	.146	no

6	Competition among students fosters a positive learning environment in the classroom.	.001	yes
7	Granting autonomy to students helps build their self-confidence through the freedom you provide.	.253	no
8	Praising students for good performance has a lasting impact on their learning in your class.	.107	no
9	You motivate your students by providing proper help and assistance with their learning challenges.	.039	yes
10	Incorporating short and reinforcing activities in your class enhances students' learning.	.902	no
11	The use of stars motivates and encourages students in your class.	.075	no
12	The use of stickers motivates students to engage more in learning and participate actively in the class.	.916	no
13	The use of incentives encourages greater learning and participation from your students in class.	.633	no
14	Giving stickers is the most frequently used technique in your class.	.853	no
15	Prizes are the most frequently used technique in your class.	.132	no
16	Giving stars is the most frequently used technique in your class.	.015	yes
17	The use of toffees is the most frequently used technique in your class.	.713	no
18	Incentives are the most frequently used technique in your class.	.092	no
19	Rewards are more effective than punishment in your class.	.065	no
20	Granting power/freedom is helpful in enhancing learning in your class.	.085	no
21	The use of the token technique in teaching is satisfactory in your class.	.056	no
22	The current use of motivational techniques in your class is satisfactory to you.	.003	yes
23	Educational games are used to motivate students in your class.	.319	no
24	A competitive atmosphere is created in your class to promote and enhance student learning.	.056	no
25	Motivational comments are used to encourage students in your class.	.015	yes

Findings

1. Grades emerged as the most commonly used motivational technique in both public and private schools. Stickers were also widely used, as indicated by a P-value of 0.916 (greater than 0.05), suggesting no significant difference in usage between the two sectors. However, the analysis also revealed significant differences in the use of certain other techniques between public and private schools.
2. The significance value for grades was 1.93 ($p > 0.05$), indicating no statistical difference between public and private schools. This suggests that both sectors consistently use grades as a motivational tool at the primary level.
3. The significance value for the use of tokens was 0.002 ($p < 0.05$), showing a statistically significant difference. Public schools were found to use token systems more frequently than private schools.
4. The use of stars in classrooms showed a significance value of 0.004 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a notable difference. Public schools use stars more often than private schools, where their use is occasional.
5. The significance value for the use of punishment was 0.001 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a difference between the sectors. Punishment is used occasionally in public schools but is reportedly never used in private schools.
6. With a significance value of 0.146 ($p > 0.05$), there is no notable difference in the use of prizes as a motivational strategy. Both public and private schools use this technique equally.
7. A significance value of <0.001 ($p < 0.05$) for competition reveals a significant difference. Public schools tend to use competition more frequently than private schools to enhance classroom learning.
8. The significance value of 0.253 ($p > 0.05$) for the use of freedom indicates no difference between public and private schools. Both sectors use this technique equally to build student confidence.
9. The significance value of 0.107 ($p > 0.05$) shows no significant difference between sectors in the use of praise to enhance student learning.
10. The significance value of 0.039 ($p < 0.05$) indicates a significant difference in the use of encouragement through help and support. Private schools use this strategy more than public schools.
11. The significance value of 0.902 ($p > 0.05$) shows no difference in the use of short and reinforcing activities; both sectors apply them equally.
12. The significance value of 0.916 ($p > 0.05$) again confirms no difference between public and private schools in the use of stickers to encourage students.
13. The significance value of 0.633 ($p > 0.05$) indicates no difference in the use of incentives between public and private schools.
14. The significance value of 0.853 ($p > 0.05$) also shows no difference in how frequently stickers are used in both school types.

15. The significance value of 0.132 (p > 0.05) reveals that both sectors use prizes with similar frequency.
16. The significance value of 0.056 (p > 0.05) suggests no significant difference between public and private schools in using power/freedom as a motivational tool.
17. The significance value of 0.824 (p > 0.05) shows no difference in how often incentives are used in either sector.
18. The significance value of 0.529 (p > 0.05) reveals that rewards are used equally in both public and private schools.
19. The significance value of 0.056 (p > 0.05) (duplicate of #16) again indicates no difference between sectors in using power/freedom to increase learning.
20. The significance value of 0.570 (p > 0.05) shows that tokens are used similarly across both public and private schools for student motivation.
21. A significance value of 0.767 (p > 0.05) indicates no difference in the overall state of motivational practices between the two school types.
22. The significance value of 0.412 (p > 0.05) reveals no difference in the use of educational games for motivation in public and private schools.
23. The significance value of 0.199 (p > 0.05) shows no significant difference in how competition is used to enhance learning in either school type.
24. The p-value (.015) indicates a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level.

Discussion

The use of tokens, stars, and other tangible rewards in the classroom has long been a subject of debate among educators, with some arguing that they can be effective motivational tools, while others believe that they can undermine intrinsic motivation and hinder student learning (Lohrmann & Talerico, 2004). The purpose of this research paper is to examine the existing literature on the role of these extrinsic rewards in the learning process and to propose a balanced approach that uses their potential benefits while mitigating their drawbacks. Extrinsic rewards, such as tokens, stars, and prizes, are often used in the classroom to encourage students to engage in specific behaviors or to complete academic tasks (Workman & Williams, 1980; Witzel & Mercer, 2003). Proponents of this approach argue that these rewards can help to establish positive reinforcement, improve task completion, and foster a sense of accomplishment in students (Williams & Stockdale, 2004). Additionally, they suggest that the use of extrinsic rewards can be particularly beneficial for students with special needs or learning disabilities, as they can provide a structured and predictable system of feedback and reinforcement.

However, critics of the use of extrinsic rewards contend that they can undermine intrinsic motivation, leading students to focus more on the reward itself rather than the inherent value or enjoyment of the task. This can result in a decreased sense of autonomy and a diminished sense of personal agency, which can ultimately

hinder the learning process. One study found that the use of extrinsic rewards can indeed increase student engagement and task completion in the short term, but that this effect diminishes over time, and that students may become less intrinsically motivated to engage in the task (Sergeeva, et al., 2025). Another study, however, suggests that the use of extrinsic rewards can be effective in building intrinsic motivation, particularly for students with special needs, as it can provide a framework for them to experience success and develop a sense of competence (Sainz et al., 2025).

Motivation is a crucial element in the teaching and learning process, as it plays a pivotal role in shaping the attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes of both teachers and students. Without motivation, the learning process can become arduous and challenging, as students may lack the drive and enthusiasm necessary to engage fully with the material. Motivation is the overall driving force that raises, sustains, and directs learning activities, enabling students to achieve their learning objectives. Teachers are responsible for fostering and maintaining student motivation, as they must make efforts to create engaging and stimulating learning environments. When students are motivated, they are more likely to concentrate, retain information, and persist in achieving their learning goals. (Anwar & Ijie, 2023)

Conversely, a lack of motivation can lead to students becoming disinterested, lazy, and struggling to focus on the learning process. To address this, teachers must take an active role in cultivating a positive and supportive classroom environment where students feel safe to express their opinions, ask questions, and participate actively in learning. The research suggests that there are several key factors that influence motivation to learn, including students' own beliefs and values, intrinsic motivation, learning goals, and social and cultural factors. (Limson, 2023) By understanding these factors, teachers can develop strategies to effectively motivate their students and foster a love of learning.

Girmus (2011) emphasized the critical role of motivation in student engagement, aligning with the present study's findings on the importance of tailored motivational strategies. Girmus's research findings reveal an important understanding of the motivational processes at play in Mexico, underscoring the critical role of social factors in shaping intrinsic motivation. (Vallerand, 2012). Furthermore, the research acknowledges the limitations of simplistic dichotomies between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as well as individualistic and collectivist orientations, when examining any unique sociocultural landscape (Engin & McKeown, 2016). Ultimately, Girmus's study on motivation in Mexico stands as a testament to the richness and complexity of human motivation, challenging researchers to embrace a more important and contextually grounded approach to understanding the intricate drivers of human behavior.

Research has consistently shown that teachers play a crucial role in shaping student outcomes, including their academic performance, motivation, and career aspirations (Serdarević, 2023). When teachers are motivated and engaged in their work, they can positively influence their students' drive and ambition (Serdarević,

2023; Wati, 2017). One key factor in this dynamic is the concept of teacher motivation. Highly motivated teachers tend to have a positive effect on student achievement, as their own enthusiasm and dedication can be contagious. Intrinsic motivation, which arises from the inherent satisfaction and enjoyment of the work itself, is particularly important for teachers. Teachers with strong intrinsic motivation, stemming from a genuine interest in their subject matter and a desire to help students learn, are more likely to create engaging and meaningful learning experiences.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that motivational techniques are utilized equally in both public and private primary schools. Specifically, grades were commonly used across both sectors to enhance student learning. However, techniques such as tokens, stars, and competition were found to be used more frequently in public schools. The use of punishment was reported occasionally in public schools, while it was never adopted in private schools as a learning strategy at the primary level. Among all techniques, stars and stickers emerged as the most frequently used methods for recognizing and encouraging student performance in both public and private schools. The analysis also concluded that motivational comments are used more often in public schools compared to private ones.

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