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Role of Teachers In Motivating Students to Learn Motivation In Class IV of SDN 003 Tambun Pelalawan

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of teachers in motivating learning among Class IV students at SDN 003 Tambun, Pelalawan. Learning motivation is a key factor influencing students' engagement and academic participation, particularly at the elementary school level. Preliminary observations indicated that students' motivation varied, with several learners showing low motivation, as reflected in passive behavior, limited participation, and low interest during classroom activities. Therefore, this study explores how teachers enact their roles as motivators in addressing these challenges. The present study employed a descriptive qualitative design conducted during the 2024/2025 academic year. The participants consisted of one fourth-grade classroom teacher as the primary informant and 18 Class IV students as supporting informants. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation of instructional activities. Data were analyzed using an interactive analysis model that involved data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions, while trustworthiness was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings revealed three main motivational strategies implemented by the teacher: providing encouragement and clear learning objectives, applying praise and positive reinforcement, and using varied teaching methods supported by learning media and individualized approaches. These strategies contributed to a more supportive and engaging learning environment. However, students' learning motivation remained uneven, with some demonstrating low self-confidence and fear of making mistakes, which limited their active participation. In conclusion, teachers play a crucial role in motivating students' engagement in learning. The findings provide practical implications for teachers in designing structured, emotionally supportive, and interactive learning environments to strengthen students' confidence and sustain learning motivation in elementary classrooms.

Keywords*: *teacher role, learning motivation, elementary school students

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a deliberate and systematic effort to design learning processes that enable students to develop their full potential, including spiritual strength, self-control, intelligence, character, and social competencies. Beyond the transmission of knowledge, education functions as a holistic process that shapes learners' personalities in accordance with social and cultural values. Globally, improving the quality of education has become a major concern, as student engagement and participation in learning increasingly determine educational success. Education is therefore viewed as a continuous process of self-development, in which the quality of educational practices significantly influences national development. (Rahmadhani et al., 2024)

The learning process, characterized by interaction between teachers and students to achieve instructional goals, represents a central component of education. Learning occurs through meaningful communication and structured classroom interaction that supports academic achievement (Widyastuti & Putra, 2021). In this process, teachers play a fundamental role not only as providers of knowledge but also as facilitators who guide, direct, and support students' holistic development. Without teachers' active involvement at both the institutional and instructional levels, achieving educational objectives would be

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difficult (Surya, 2021), as teachers are the primary implementers of educational procedures at both levels; without them, education would become a hollow promise.

Teachers hold a strategic position in shaping students' academic, moral, emotional, and spiritual growth. Previous studies consistently emphasize that teachers contribute significantly to students' academic quality and character formation while simultaneously functioning as educators, mentors, and evaluators (Saumi et al., 2021; Sandi & Sitika, 2021). In addition, teachers serve as role models whose attitudes and behaviors influence students' learning attitudes and classroom engagement (Sari et al., 2022). Consequently, teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge but also motivators who play an essential role in fostering students' motivation to learn.

Learning motivation is a crucial internal factor influencing students' achievement and participation in learning. Students with strong motivation tend to demonstrate persistence, active engagement, and goal-oriented learning behavior, whereas students with low motivation often display passivity, limited attention, and minimal participation during classroom activities. Learning motivation acts as a driving force that encourages students to actively engage in academic tasks and sustain learning efforts (Dewi & Rachmatillah, 2023). Therefore, fostering students' motivation is essential to creating effective and meaningful learning experiences.

Preliminary observations and interviews conducted in May 2024 with a fourth-grade teacher at SDN 003 Tambun Pelalawan revealed that students' learning motivation varied, with several learners' motivation generally low. Numerous students, who indicated limited interest in the learning materials, were easily distracted and participated less actively during classroom activities. The teacher indicated that low intrinsic interest and limited use of engaging instructional media contributed to this condition. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies, indicating that low learning motivation leads to reduced responsibility, attentiveness, and participation among students (Habbah & Sari, 2023). Research also highlights that teachers' support, interactive communication, and innovative teaching strategies play a significant role in enhancing students' motivation and engagement (Hapsari et al., 2021; Putri et al., 2021).

However, although previous studies have emphasized the essentials of teachers in improving students' learning motivation, considerable research focuses on general motivational strategies or learning outcomes rather than examining how teachers enact motivational roles through daily classroom interactions in authentic elementary school contexts. Limited qualitative studies explore how motivational practices are implemented and experienced directly by students, particularly in local primary school settings. This gap highlights the need for an in-depth investigation to better understand how teachers function as motivators within real classroom environments.

Understanding teachers' motivational roles is crucial, as motivation developed at the elementary level forms the foundation for students' long-term academic engagement, confidence, and persistence in learning. Investigating classroom-based motivational practices can therefore provide practical insights to improve teaching strategies and enhance learning quality in primary education.

Therefore, this study aims to examine how teachers perform their roles as motivators in fostering learning motivation among Class IV students at SDN 003 Tambun Pelalawan. The findings are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of motivational practices in elementary classrooms and to support improvements in teaching effectiveness and student engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Role of Teachers

Teachers play a central and strategic role in the educational process, particularly in shaping students' academic development, character formation, and motivation to learn. Previous studies consistently underscore teachers as key facilitators who support students in developing their potential and achieving educational goals (Sabila et al., 2023; Widyastuti & Putra, 2021). In classroom settings, teachers function not only as transmitters

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of knowledge but also as planners, implementers, and managers of learning activities that guide students' overall development.

Beyond instructional responsibilities, teachers are recognized as respected figures and role models whose attitudes and behaviors influence students' attitudes toward learning and social development. Teaching, therefore, represents a professional responsibility that requires pedagogical competence, interpersonal skills, and strong moral commitment (Dewi & Rachmatillah, 2023). As teachers interact directly with students on a daily basis, their actions significantly shape classroom experiences and engagement in learning.

Regarding a functional perspective, teachers perform multiple interconnected roles. These roles include professional, humanitarian, and civic functions, which collectively support students' academic growth, character development, and social awareness (Jaimiyah et al., 2023). The professional function emphasizes mastery of subject content and instructional strategies, while the humanitarian function focuses on empathy, guidance, and moral development. The civic function further highlights teachers' responsibility in fostering discipline, social responsibility, and national values among students.

Similarly, teachers' roles can be understood through four integrated functions, consisting of teaching, training, and guiding (Sandi & Sitika, 2021). Educating involves instilling ethical values; teaching promotes knowledge acquisition and critical thinking; training develops practical competencies; and guiding supports students' academic and emotional growth. In addition, teachers act as models, leaders, and mentors who manage learning environments and facilitate meaningful learning experiences aligned with students' characteristics and needs (Eliyantika et al., 2022).

Above all, teachers can be conceptualized as educators, facilitators, guides, and motivators whose professional practices directly influence students' engagement, attitudes toward learning, and motivational development. The effectiveness of learning processes, therefore, depends largely on teachers' ability to integrate pedagogical strategies with supportive interpersonal interactions in the classroom.

Learning Motivation

Learning motivation is an essential psychological factor that encourages students to engage actively in learning and achieve academic objectives. Motivation functions as an internal and external driving force that initiates, directs, and sustains learning behavior. In educational contexts, motivated students demonstrate higher engagement, persistence, and willingness to complete learning tasks (Amalia & Maknun, 2021).

Scholars commonly classify learning motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic forms. Intrinsic motivation originates from internal factors such as curiosity, personal goals, and the desire for achievement, whereas extrinsic motivation comes from external influences, including rewards, recognition, and supportive learning environments (Iskandar et al., 2023). Both forms of motivation play complementary roles in learning processes, and teachers contribute significantly to fostering them through purposeful instructional strategies and meaningful classroom interactions (Sandi & Sitika, 2021).

Previous studies consistently emphasize motivation as a key determinant of learning success. Students with significant motivation tend to participate more actively, imply enthusiasm during lessons, and demonstrate greater academic persistence (Miranda & 'Ain, 2022; Rosela & Gunansyah, 2024). Consequently, teachers are encouraged to stimulate motivation by clearly communicating learning objectives, providing positive reinforcement, applying varied teaching methods, and creating supportive classroom environments that promote student engagement.

Motivation also performs several crucial functions in learning. It acts as a driver of behavior, directs students toward specific learning goals, and helps pupils select appropriate strategies to achieve those goals (Eliyantika et al., 2022; Sardiman in Triandi, 2021). Motivated students are generally more focused, resilient when facing difficulties, and persistent in completing academic tasks. Motivation, therefore, not only initiates learning behavior but also sustains continuous learning efforts and supports goal achievement (Habbah & Sari, 2023).

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Learning motivation can be identified through observable behavioral indicators. These include the desire to succeed, learning needs, future aspirations, appreciation of achievement, interest in learning activities, and responsiveness to supportive learning environments (Uno in Nova, 2020). Additional indicators such as perseverance, independence, curiosity, and problem-solving ability further reflect students' active engagement in learning processes (Dewi & Rachmatillah, 2023).

Synthesizing these perspectives, learning motivation emerges as a dynamic interaction between students' internal characteristics and external instructional influences. Teachers play a crucial role in shaping this process through pedagogical practices, emotional support, and classroom management strategies that encourage active participation. Understanding how teachers implement motivational practices in real classroom contexts is therefore essential for improving students' engagement and learning outcomes. This theoretical foundation supports the present study, which examines how teachers enact their roles as motivators in fostering learning motivation among Class IV students at SDN 003 Tambun Pelalawan.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive design using a qualitative research approach to explore teachers' roles in motivating students' learning within natural classroom settings. Qualitative research was selected because it enables researchers to understand social phenomena based on participants' perspectives and real-life interactions. Related to the presents study, the researcher served as the primary research instrument, while data were collected using triangulated techniques, including observation, interviews, and documentation. Qualitative research emphasizes inductive analysis and focuses on meaning rather than generalization (Sugiyono, 2021). This approach was considered appropriate, as the study aimed to explore in depth how teachers motivate students and how these interactions are experienced during the learning process (Miranda & 'Ain, (2022).

The research was conducted at SDN 003 Tambun in Pelalawan, during the 2024/2025 academic year. The research site was selected based on preliminary observations indicating variations in students' learning motivation in Class IV classrooms. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the school and relevant authorities, and all research procedures were conducted in accordance with ethical research principles. The participants consisted of one fourth-grade classroom teacher and 18 Class IV students. Purposive sampling was used to select informants who were directly involved in classroom learning activities. All 18 students constituted the study population, while 5 students were selected as interview participants to represent varied levels of learning participation and motivation. The classroom teacher served as the primary informant due to direct responsibility in planning, implementing, and evaluating instructional activities, while students functioned as supporting informants who provided insights into their learning experiences.

Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through classroom observations and interviews with the teacher and selected students, while secondary data included lesson plans (RPPs), instructional materials, and relevant school documents that supported the research focus. Data collection techniques included observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Classroom observations were conducted across three learning sessions to examine teacher–student interactions, instructional strategies, and students' engagement in learning. Interviews were conducted in several sessions adjusted to participants' availability and conducted ethically to ensure participants' comfort and voluntary participation. Semi-structured interviews provided flexibility to explore teachers' motivational strategies and students' perceptions of classroom learning experiences. Documentation, including written records and learning materials, was used to strengthen and corroborate observational and interview data.

In qualitative research, the researcher served as the main instrument. Supporting instruments included observation guidelines, interview protocols, and documentation checklists developed based on indicators of teachers' roles and learning motivation derived from relevant theoretical frameworks. These instruments ensured systematic and focused data collection aligned with the research objectives.

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Data were analyzed using an interactive analysis model that included data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. During data reduction, relevant information was selected, categorized, and simplified. Data were subsequently organized into thematic narratives to facilitate interpretation. Thematic coding was used to identify recurring patterns in teachers' motivational practices and students' learning responses. Conclusions were drawn by identifying relationships and patterns emerging from the analyzed data.

To ensure trustworthiness, triangulation techniques were applied by comparing multiple data sources and data collection methods. Source triangulation enhanced credibility by comparing information obtained from teachers and students, while method triangulation ensured consistency across observation, interview, and documentation data. These procedures strengthened the validity and reliability of the study findings while maintaining adherence to ethical research standards.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings were obtained from classroom observations conducted during three learning sessions, interviews with the fourth-grade teacher and five selected students, and supporting information from the school principal. Data analysis revealed several interconnected themes describing the teacher's role in motivating students' learning and students' motivational responses during classroom activities.

Teacher Motivation through Structured Learning Activities

Observation results implied that the teacher consistently implemented structured learning procedures that supported students' readiness to learn. The teacher opened lessons with greetings and prayers, conducted apperception activities, explained learning objectives, and provided motivational encouragement at the beginning of instruction. Moreover, the teacher used language that students could easily understand and concluded lessons with summaries of what they had learned.

All observed instructional indicators related to motivational practices were implemented during classroom activities, including providing encouragement, guiding students directly, and giving students opportunities to ask questions. These structured practices created an organized learning atmosphere that helped students focus on learning tasks.

Field notes indicated that students appeared orderly at the beginning of lessons, though several remained distracted by peers. After motivational reinforcement and classroom guidance were provided, the classroom atmosphere became more conducive to learning.

Table 1. Observation Results of Teacher Motivational Practices

No.	Observed Teacher Activities	Implementation Status	Descriptions of Observation
1	Opening the lesson with greetings and prayer	Implemented	Teacher consistently begins learning activities with greetings and a prayer to prepare students psychologically.
2	Conducting apperception activities	Implemented	Teacher connects prior knowledge with the new learning material.
3	Explaining learning objectives	Implemented	Learning goals are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of the lesson.
4	Providing motivation at the beginning of learning	Implemented	Teacher encourages students to participate actively before starting instruction.
5	Using understandable language	Implemented	Teacher delivers explanations using simple, clear language suitable for the students' level.
6	Giving praise to active students	Implemented	Verbal praise is given to students who answer questions or complete tasks.
7	Encouraging passive students	Implemented	Teacher approaches and motivates the less

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No.	Observed Teacher Activities	Implementation Status	Descriptions of Observation
			active students individually.
8	Providing opportunities for students to ask questions	Implemented	Students are encouraged to ask questions during learning activities.
9	Using varied teaching methods	Implemented	Learning includes discussion, questioning, and group activities.
10	Using learning media	Implemented	Teacher uses books and visual images to support explanations.
11	Providing direct guidance	Implemented	Teacher assists students individually during tasks.
12	Giving attention to less active students	Implemented	Teacher monitors and supports students showing low participation.
13	Managing the classroom effectively	Implemented	Classroom atmosphere remains conducive and organized.
14	Reprimanding unfocused students	Implemented	Teacher reminds distracted students in a constructive manner.
15	Providing positive reinforcement	Implemented	Teacher strengthens students' confidence through encouragement and feedback.
16	Closing the lesson with a summary	Implemented	Teacher concludes learning by summarizing key material.

Source: Processed researcher data (2025)

Positive Reinforcement and Praise as Motivational Strategies

Observation results indicated that the teacher consistently used positive reinforcement to enhance students' motivation to learn. During classroom activities, the teacher praised students who actively answered questions, completed tasks, or demonstrated effort in their learning. Encouragement was also delivered verbally to maintain students' attention and engagement throughout the lesson.

Interview data with the teacher revealed that praise was intentionally used to build students' confidence and reduce fear of making mistakes. The teacher explained that students tend to participate more actively when they feel appreciated rather than pressured. This strategy was particularly essential for students who were initially reluctant to speak during classroom interactions.

Student interviews supported these findings. Most students reported feeling happy and more motivated when receiving praise from the teacher. Several students stated that encouragement made them more willing to try answering questions even when they were unsure of the correct answer. In addition, verbal motivation from the teacher increased their enthusiasm for completing learning tasks and participating in discussions. These responses demonstrate that praise served as an effective external motivational stimulus, strengthening students' emotional comfort and classroom engagement.

Individualized Teacher Approaches to Passive Students

Observation findings elucidated that students' participation levels varied during classroom learning. Although numerous students followed instructions and completed assignments, several students remained passive and hesitant to engage actively. They avoided responding when asked questions and appeared less confident during learning activities.

Field notes indicated that the teacher responded to this situation by approaching passive students individually. The teacher provided guidance through calm communication, asked questions gradually, and avoided forcing students to respond publicly. This individualized approach aimed to create a safe learning atmosphere that reduced students' anxiety.

Interview results clarified the reasons behind students' passivity. Students admitted that they were often afraid of making mistakes and felt embarrassed when answering incorrectly in front of classmates. Fear

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of peer judgment and lack of confidence were repeatedly mentioned as factors influencing their reluctance to participate. The teacher confirmed that differences among students' character, confidence, and readiness to learn became a major challenge in maintaining consistent motivation.

Through personal interaction and supportive guidance, several students gradually showed increased willingness to participate after receiving encouragement. These findings indicate that individualized teacher support played a pivotal role in addressing emotional barriers and fostering students' confidence in classroom learning.

Use of Varied Teaching Methods and Learning Media

Observation results revealed that the teacher implemented a variety of instructional methods during classroom instruction, including question-and-answer activities, discussions, and group work. These approaches encouraged student interaction and reduced passive learning. Furthermore, the teacher utilized learning media such as textbooks and visual images to support lesson delivery.

Classroom observations indicated that students became more attentive when visual media were used. Students appeared more focused and less distracted compared to sessions dominated by verbal explanation. Interactive activities, particularly group learning, increased student participation as learners exchanged ideas and assisted one another in understanding the material.

Interview findings supported these observations. Students reported that group discussions helped them better understand lessons by allowing them to ask peers for clarification. In addition, the use of pictures or teaching aids made learning more enjoyable and reduced boredom during lessons. Conversely, prolonged explanations without variation tend to reduce attention and enthusiasm for learning.

The implementation of varied instructional strategies and learning media observed during classroom sessions is summarized in Table 2, which presents the key instructional practices the teacher applied to support students' motivation and engagement.

Table 2. Variations in Teaching Methods and Learning Media used by the Teacher

No.	Instructional Strategies	Types of Activity	Learning Media	Observed Student Responses
1	Question-and-answer method	Teacher asks guiding questions during lessons	Textbook and oral explanation	Several students respond actively, though participation was dominated by a few.
2	Classroom discussion	Interactive discussion between teacher and students	Textbook support	Students show increased attention and engagement during interaction.
3	Group learning activities	Students work collaboratively in small groups	Worksheets and peer interaction	Students appear more confident and willing to communicate with peers.
4	Direct teacher guidance	Teacher approaches students individually during tasks	Learning materials and task sheets	Passive students become more involved after receiving guidance.
5	Use of visual media	Teacher uses pictures to explain the learning material	Visual images and printed materials	Students become more focused and indicate reduced distraction.
6	Motivational verbal interaction	Teacher provides encouragement during learning	Verbal reinforcement	Students demonstrate improved enthusiasm and willingness to complete tasks.

Source: Processed researcher data (2025)

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These findings indicate that instructional variation functions as an essential strategy for maintaining students' attention and supporting active classroom participation.

Uneven Distribution of Students' Learning Motivation

Despite the implementation of various motivational strategies, observation results underscored that students' learning motivation was not evenly distributed. Most students paid attention and completed assigned tasks; however, only a small number actively volunteered to answer or ask questions. Several students demonstrated fluctuating enthusiasm and were occasionally distracted during learning activities.

Field observations identified approximately three to five students who remained passive during classroom sessions. These students showed hesitation, limited participation, and low confidence during instructional interaction. Although task completion rates were generally high, active engagement remained concentrated among certain students.

Student interview data confirmed that motivation levels varied across individuals. Numerous students reported feeling motivated at certain times but experiencing boredom when learning activities became repetitive or prolonged. Fear of making mistakes and embarrassment in front of classmates were frequently mentioned as reasons for avoiding participation.

A summary of observed motivational indicators, including attention, participation, confidence, and task completion, is presented in Table 3 to illustrate differences in students' motivational responses during classroom learning.

Table 3. Indicators of Students' Learning Motivation based on Observation Results

No.	Learning Motivation Indicators	Observation Results	Interpretations of Student Behavior
1	Paying attention to teacher explanations	Majority of students	Most students follow instructions and demonstrate readiness to learn during lessons.
2	Actively answering questions	Several students	Participation is limited to certain students, indicating unequal engagement.
3	Asking questions voluntarily	Few students	Students demonstrate hesitation and low confidence in initiating interaction.
4	Showing interest in learning activities	Numerous students	Interest appears situational and depends on the instructional methods used.
5	Completing assigned tasks	Almost all students	Students demonstrate responsibility toward academic tasks.
6	Completing tasks on time	Majority of students	Students generally follow classroom expectations and deadlines.
7	Demonstrating enthusiasm during learning	Several students	Enthusiasm increases during interactive or varied activities.
8	Easily distracted during lessons	Several students	Attention fluctuates, particularly during long explanations.
9	Showing a lack of self-confidence	Still observed among some students	Fear of making mistakes influences participation levels.
10	Passive participation during learning	3–5 students	A small group consistently avoids active classroom interaction.

Source: Processed researcher data (2025)

These findings demonstrate that students' learning motivation is dynamic and influenced by individual confidence levels and classroom learning conditions.

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Supporting School Environment in Enhancing Student Motivation

Interview findings implied that students' learning motivation was influenced not only by classroom instructional practices but also by the broader school environment. The school implemented several programs to strengthen students' discipline, learning habits, and motivation for academic success.

Information obtained from school-level interviews revealed that motivational support was provided through routine school activities, including morning habituation programs, character-building activities, student achievement recognition, and extracurricular programs designed to develop students' interests and talents. These activities were intended to encourage positive learning attitudes and foster students' confidence both inside and outside the classroom.

In addition, the school supported teachers' professional practices through regular coordination meetings and evaluations to improve instructional quality. The availability of learning facilities and instructional resources also contributed to creating a learning environment that supported classroom engagement. These institutional efforts complemented the motivational strategies implemented by the classroom teacher.

Students' responses during interviews reflected that a supportive school atmosphere contributed to their comfort in learning. Students described the school environment as structured yet supportive, where teachers were perceived as firm but not intimidating. Such conditions helped students feel secure during learning activities, although numerous students still experienced boredom or fluctuating motivation during longer lessons.

A summary of school-level motivational support and its contribution to students' learning engagement is presented in Table 4, which outlines institutional programs and their observed influence on students' motivation to learn.

Table 4. Students' Motivation To Learn

No.	School Support Programs	Forms of Implementation	Purposes of the Program	Observed Contributions to Student Motivation
1	Morning habituation activities	Routine morning activities before lessons	Building discipline and positive learning habits	Students demonstrate improved readiness and orderliness before learning activities begin.
2	Character-building activities	School-based character education practices	Developing responsibility and positive attitudes	Students demonstrate respectful behavior and improve classroom conduct.
3	Student achievement recognition	Appreciation and acknowledgment of student achievements	Increasing confidence and encouraging academic effort	Recognition motivates students to participate and strive for better performance.
4	Extracurricular programs	Participation in talent and interest-based activities	Supporting students' interests and self-development	Students demonstrate increased enthusiasm and confidence beyond classroom learning.
5	Provision of learning facilities	Availability of learning resources and instructional materials	Supporting effective teaching and learning processes	Adequate facilities help create a conducive learning environment.
6	Teacher coordination and evaluation meetings	Regular professional discussions and evaluations	Improving instructional quality and teaching strategies	Enhanced teacher preparedness contributes indirectly to students' motivation to learn.

Source: Processed researcher data (2025)

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Overall, these findings indicate that student motivation is shaped not only by teacher–student interaction in the classroom but also by institutional support that reinforces positive learning behaviors and engagement.

Discussion

Teacher Motivational Practices and Learning Structure

The findings underscore that structured learning practices played an essential role in supporting students' motivation. The consistent implementation of lesson openings, clarification of learning objectives, and guided instructional flow created predictability and psychological readiness among students. Based on a motivational perspective, structured learning environments help students understand expectations and reduce uncertainty during learning activities, thereby strengthening engagement.

This finding supports the argument that teachers function not only as knowledge transmitters but also as learning managers who organize instructional environments to facilitate student participation (Nor Saumi et al., 2021). Similarly, Melinda & Susanto, (2023) explain that teacher involvement in organizing learning activities contributes directly to students' willingness to engage, as structured instruction provides emotional and cognitive direction. The present study extends these findings by showing that structured classroom routines also function as an implicit motivational strategy, particularly for elementary students who require clear guidance and stability during learning.

Role of Praise as External Motivation

The effectiveness of praise observed in this study can be interpreted through motivational reinforcement theory, where positive feedback strengthens students' sense of competence and encourages repeated participation. Instead of merely increasing participation, praise appeared to reduce students' hesitation and support emotional comfort during learning.

Previous studies demonstrate that reward-based strategies significantly influence learning motivation by reinforcing positive learning behavior (Melinda & Susanto, 2023). Similarly, Anggraenita, (2026) found that appreciative teaching approaches increased student enthusiasm and classroom engagement through positive reinforcement. The present findings align with these studies but further suggest that praise functions not only as an external motivator but also as a psychological safety mechanism that helps students overcome fear of failure. This interpretation indicates that motivational reinforcement is effective when delivered in a supportive, humanistic manner rather than as performance pressure.

Individualized Support and Student Confidence

One essential contribution of this study is to identify the psychological dimension of students' passive participation. Students' reluctance to engage was strongly associated with fear of making mistakes and feelings of embarrassment in front of peers. These findings highlight that low participation is not always due to a lack of interest but may stem from emotional insecurity.

This result is consistent with findings by Sabila et al., (2023), who emphasize that teacher encouragement and personal guidance help students develop confidence and a willingness to participate. In addition, a research by Syafruddin & Komalasari, (2022) also underscores that teacher-student relationships significantly influence motivation, particularly when teachers adopt supportive interpersonal approaches.

From a psychological perspective, individualized interaction contributes to emotional safety in the classroom climate. When students perceive the classroom as a non-threatening environment, intrinsic motivation is more likely to develop. Therefore, teacher roles as mentors and emotional supporters become essential components of motivational practice instead of supplementary actions.

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Instructional Variation and Student Engagement

The use of varied teaching methods and learning media increases student engagement by reducing monotony and sustaining attention. Interactive learning activities enabled students to engage socially, strengthening their involvement in the learning process.

These findings support previous research showing that interactive instructional approaches increase motivation because students become active participants rather than passive recipients of information (Jusman et al., 2022). Likewise, Sabila et al., (2023) emphasize that selecting appropriate teaching methods and media helps create enjoyable learning environments that stimulate students' interest.

The present study appends nuance by demonstrating that instructional variation does not automatically translate into motivation; instead, engagement increased when variation enabled peer interaction and collaborative learning. This suggests that social learning dynamics play a pivotal role in sustaining motivation at the elementary level.

Uneven Motivation and Psychological Factors

Although motivational strategies were implemented consistently, students' motivation remained uneven. This finding indicates that learning motivation is a dynamic construct influenced by both internal and external factors. Students' fear of making mistakes, fluctuating confidence, and varying levels of interest revealed the essentials of psychological readiness in learning participation.

Research on learning motivation highlights that motivation arises from the interaction between intrinsic factors, like self-confidence, and extrinsic factors, like classroom environment (Arifin et al., 2024; Pramudita & Bintaro, 2022). The present study confirms this interaction by showing that even effective teaching strategies cannot fully equalize motivation when students experience emotional barriers.

This finding contributes theoretically by emphasizing that motivational challenges in elementary classrooms are not solely instructional problems but also developmental and emotional issues. Therefore, motivational interventions must address students' psychological needs alongside pedagogical strategies.

School Environment as Contextual Support

The study also demonstrates that student motivation is shaped by broader institutional support, not just classroom interaction. School programs, structured routines, and supportive facilities contributed indirectly to students' engagement by reinforcing positive learning habits.

Previous studies highlight that supportive environments, including institutional programs and family involvement, strengthen students' motivation through consistent reinforcement across contexts (Pramudita & Bintaro, 2022; Syafruddin & Komalasari, 2022). These findings suggest that motivation develops through ecological interaction between classroom practices and school culture.

The present study extends earlier research by showing that teacher motivational efforts become more effective when supported by institutional structures that promote discipline, recognition, and positive learning experiences.

Synthesis and Research Contribution

Overall, the findings indicate that teachers' motivational roles operate through three interconnected dimensions: instructional structure, emotional support, and environmental reinforcement. Motivation was strengthened not merely through teaching techniques but through the interaction between pedagogical strategies and students' psychological experiences.

This study contributes to the existing literature by demonstrating that motivational practices in elementary classrooms are most effective when instructional strategies are combined with emotional safety and a supportive school environment. While previous studies primarily emphasize teaching strategies or reward systems, the present findings highlight the essentials of addressing students' emotional barriers, particularly fear of failure and low self-confidence, as central determinants of learning motivation.

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These results imply that improving student motivation requires a holistic approach integrating pedagogical competence, interpersonal sensitivity, and institutional support systems. Such integration enables teachers to function not only as instructors but also as facilitators of psychological readiness and engagement in learning.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This study demonstrates that teachers' roles as motivators extend beyond the implementation of instructional strategies and involve the integration of pedagogical structure, emotional support, and environmental reinforcement within the learning process. The findings elucidate that students' learning motivation develops through the interaction between structured classroom practices, positive reinforcement, individualized teacher support, and supportive school environments. Motivation was not solely influenced by teaching techniques but was closely associated with students' psychological experiences, particularly their sense of confidence, emotional safety, and willingness to participate without fear of making mistakes. These results highlight that effective motivational practices in elementary classrooms require teachers to balance instructional competence with interpersonal sensitivity and supportive classroom relationships.

This study contributes to the existing literature by emphasizing that students' learning motivation cannot be understood only as an outcome of teaching methods or reward systems, but as a multidimensional process shaped by emotional and contextual factors. The findings suggest that teachers play a critical role in creating psychologically safe learning environments that encourage participation and sustain engagement. Practically, teachers are encouraged to combine structured lesson organization, positive reinforcement, varied instructional strategies, and individualized guidance to address diverse student characteristics and motivational needs. Schools are also expected to strengthen institutional support through conducive learning programs and collaborative professional practices that reinforce classroom motivation.

However, this study is limited to a single classroom context with a relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational settings. Future research is recommended to explore motivational practices across diverse school environments, examine longitudinal changes in student motivation, and investigate the interactions among emotional, instructional, and environmental factors using mixed-methods or comparative research approaches. Such investigations may provide deeper insights into sustainable strategies for fostering student motivation in elementary education.

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