THE IMPACT OF MOTIVATION BY SCHOOL’S ADMINISTRATION ON THE
STUDENT’S ACHIEVEMENT

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Dedication

I dedicate my Master’s thesis to my husband, Adel; and to my mother and father, living in Saudi Arabia. Their words of encouragement and push for tenacity were my motivation to complete this project successfully.

I also dedicate this project to my son, Sulaiman. As I worked on this thesis, I thought about him many times. I wish that one day when he is older, he will read and understand this research and be proud of his mother. Also, this research has made me realize the importance of motivation in education, and I will always make sure that Sulaiman has a motivational environment in school that will help him succeed in school, and in life.
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Abstract

This research set out to examine the effectiveness of motivation (incentive-based
programs) by school’s administration on student’s academic and non-academic
achievement. Ex post facto design is used. Thirteen students from two schools in Saudi
Arabia were chosen for this study. Saudi Arabia General Aptitude Test of achievement
is used to measure the motivated students’ achievement. Open-ended interviews with the
school’s administrator assisted in providing more information about the impact of
incentive-based programs on students' achievement.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Motivation can positively affect students to like and enjoy their school. Also, motivation plays a role in the student discovering his/her talents, self-management, and ambition to achieve. Also, motivation has an important role in the formation of good character. Motivation can help to ensure that academic achievement is the result of internal persistence, rather than external pressure. However, some administrators have a lack of awareness about effective methods to motivate students toward accomplishment. Unfortunately, administrators occasionally resort to punitive motivational measures, which can negatively affect students’ academic achievement and sense of motivation. For example, many schools use detention as a means of punishment for bad behavior. Detention typically is the protocol of requiring a student stay after school for an extended period of time as their punishment. However, this method has not necessarily been found to be an effective method of improving academic performance, nor student behavior. (Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd, 2014)

School administrators are responsible for arranging incentive-based programs for students. Incentive-based education programs are those that use tangible incentives to motivate students to perform well academically. Research has provided many incentive-
based programs offered by administrators that range from food, entertainment, and extra
privileges, to pep rallies in attempts to motivate students to do their best academically in
school (Hollingworth, Dude and Shepherd, 2010). These programs, when effective
should be offered fairly to each student and should cover both academic and behavioral
expectations. Academic achievement includes performance based on grades given in
coursework. Behavioral expectations includes performance beyond the classroom in
activations and school organizations.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine academic and non-academic performance
in students at the middle school level, who have completed elementary school with an
incentive-based education program.

Limitations

There were several limitations in this research. One limitation is that all the
respondents were male. Having some female respondents, may or may not have affected
the final results. Another limitation is that all the respondents were from the same grade,
and were the same age. The results may be different is children from various ages had
participated. A third limitation is that the respondents were all from the same city in
Saudi Arabia. It is possible that respondents from different cities may have produced
different results, due to the school systems being different in each city.
Literature Review

Research has produced many incentive-based programs. For example, in the state of Iowa, extrinsic incentive-based programs have been shown to improve scores on high school achievement tests (Hollingworth, 2010). In this particular Iowa study, each school district was categorized into groups based on their student enrollment during the 2007-2008, which included both urban and rural schools. Incentives including pep rallies and pizza parties were used in an effort to motivate and raise scores on students’ achievement tests.

Fifty-four principals were interviewed through the phone to get their opinions about if the incentives were effective. In regards to results, the survey stated, “From our surveys, we found principals are indeed instituting behavior-based motivation activities like pep rallies, assemblies, and pizza parties as rewards to students for improved test scores. In addition, school administrators are preparing students physically for the tests by providing breakfast and snacks on test day and mentally by using practice tests in the weeks before the official state testing dates. Several principals said they have offered students a day off from school as a reward for raising test scores.

Furthermore, (Martin & Dowson, 2009) discusses how motivation can and should be used in schools to increase performance and retain student interest in school. The authors Martin & Dowson addresses strategies that teachers and administrators can use to increase motivation among students. These strategies include greater interpersonal relationships and implementing policy that can a motivated environment in the school.
On the other hand, (Rikki, Richard, Cade, Richard, Smith & Matthew, 2009) looked at an intervention used to motivate students to conduct proper behavior while in school. Participants included 200 first through fifth grade students in a rural Utah elementary school. The students were the majority white, and from households that were middle to lower-middle class. One of the methods they used was the "Praise Note" system. Students were taught the proper way to behave. Staff were trained to reward students who conducted proper behavior, such as cleaning the lunchroom and sitting properly in their seats. The results showed the Praise Note was effective. The amount of littering in the lunchroom decreased by 96%. The average number of times, students misbehaved in the lunchroom decreased by 75%.

Indeed, Joshua and Dean (2012) in studying Lincoln High School, a large urban high school in California, implemented a “Think Gold” program. Part of the “Think Gold” program was the addition of an extrinsic motivation program. Employees and students were interviewed to look at achievement test scores. The results showed that student achievement of state assessments improved during the spring of 2010 and 2011.

Also, a study conducted by Acat and Dereli (2012) was to determine problems, sources of motivation, and decision-making strategies among 360 teaching students from Selcuk University. The students were surveyed using the Motivation Source and Problems candidate Teacher Occupation Questionnaire, and The Questionnaire of Decision Strategies. The findings showed that the students preferred more strategies of reasonable decision-making.

A study (Margaret & Herbert, 1979) from the University of Illinois analyzed 22 different studies to determine the correlation between five motivational factors and
achievement outcome. The five motivational factors were restricted to general, academic, or mathematics self-concept, locus of control, and achievement motivation. The results showed that motivation on average accounted for 11.4% of the variance in achievement. Boys showed a slightly lower correlation between motivation and success in comparison to their female counterparts. It states that if motivation is very low for a particular student or group it can be a very strong deterrent to learning. The study measured achievement, grades and ability tests. The results indicated that there was a positive correlation between grades and motivation. It suggested that when the teacher encouraged motivation the students’ grades were at their highest. There are multiple factors that can effect classroom learning and motivation is a key factor.

Moreover, effective leadership or administration and school communities can play a large role in interpersonal relationships in students’ academic motivation, and achievement. (Martin & Dowson, 2009). At the teacher and classroom level, students can be motivated by effective reward contingencies, expectations, set tasks, assessment and grouping strategies, supportive communication and modeling of efficacy and control. These style of motivation can also be applicable at the administrative level. Research shows that when leadership is effective this can influence the effectiveness of the school. There are many features that can influence motivation and achievement at the administrative level. These can include visibility and energy that serve as modeling behavior, high expectations for staff and students and openness to feedback. They emphasize the importance of emotional and professional support of staff, mutual respect between staff and executives and connectedness to the student body. The more the administration is involved and with parents and the community the better is it for the
students and the school as a whole. This can all impact the students’ motivation in a positive way.

Cameron, Pierce, Banko & Gear, 2005 evaluated how rewards affected intrinsic motivation when students were rewarded for achievement while learning an activity, for performing at a particular level on a test, or for both. Undergraduate university students engaged in a problem-solving activity. The design was a 2 factorial with 2 levels of reward in a learning phase (reward for achievement, no reward) and 2 levels of reward in a test phase (reward for achievement, no reward). Intrinsic motivation was measured as time spent on the experimental task and ratings of task interest during a free-choice period. A major finding was that achievement-based rewards during learning or testing increased participants’ intrinsic motivation. A path analysis indicated that 2 processes (perceived competence and interest–internal attribution) mediated the positive effects of achievement-based rewards in learning and testing on intrinsic motivation. Findings are discussed in terms of the cognitive evaluation, attribution, and social–cognitive theories. On task-interest measures, the results shows that participants who received rewards for achievement during learning rated FTD puzzles as more interesting, exciting, enjoyable, and entertaining than did no rewarded participants. Results also showed that rewards for test performance also increased participants’ ratings on each of the task-interest items.

In addition, the aim of the present study was to examine the effects of 3 school-related constructs—motivation, attitude, and academic engagement on 8th-grade students’ achievement in mathematics and science. Results supported the positive effects of the 2 motivation factors, attitude and academic time on mathematics and science achievement. The strongest effects were those of academic time spent on homework.
There was strong support for the hypothesized relationships and mediated impacts of motivation and attitude on academic time and achievement in mathematics and science. (Singh, Granville, & Dika, 2002).

However, the purpose of this study was to explore relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on academic performance. Based on literature review, the following hypotheses were formulated 1) there would be a positive correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on academic performance, and; 2) there would be a gender difference on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on academic performance. (Nadia, 2010). A sample of 200 students (100 males and 100 females) were selected from different colleges of Karachi, Pakistan. The age of the participants ranged from 18-21 years (with mean age of 18 years). (Their educational level and socioeconomic status was middle and high class. The Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand, 1992) was administered to assess academic intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and academic performance was measured through last GPA. Results suggest that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and academic performance were positively correlated. Furthermore, gender difference was found on motivation and academic performance. To conclude, findings of the results illustrates that motivation improves academic performance of the students. In addition, there is gender difference in motivation type and academic performance.

Sansgiry, Chanda, Lemke, & Szilagyi, 2006 conducted a retrospective longitudinal study over a period of 6 years, from 2000 to 2005. Passing rates on the cumulative examinations administered during the first 3 years of the doctor of pharmacy curriculum were obtained. These cumulative examinations, known as the Mile marker
assessments, involve 3 examinations: *Mile marker I, II and III*, each offered after completion of each progressive year. *Mile marker I* and *II* examinations were phased in throughout the years with various incentives to increase students’ performance. Incentives for these examinations included books, achievement letters, bonus points, and remediation exercises. Incentives with respect to *Mile marker III* examination was determination of students' progression into the experiential year of the curriculum and did not change over the study period. Passing rates were compared for these examinations before and after the implementation of these incentives. Passing rates for *Mile marker I* increased significantly by 185% from 2003 to 2004 when incentives were changed from awards such as books and achievement letters from the Dean's office to bonus points towards future examinations and a remediation process. Similar results were seen for *Mile marker II*, where the passing rates increased by 590% during the same period for similar incentives. Suitable incentives may be effective in changing student performance on comprehensive cumulative examinations. (Sansgiry, Chanda, Lemke, & Szilagyi, 2006)

However in 2007, Coshocton City Schools, a 2,000-pupil district, in Ohio, was in the last year of a three-year experiment to test the effect of financial incentives on students’ academic achievement. In this study, students in grades three through six received $15 for every score of “proficient” (above the 75th percentile) and $20 for a score of “accelerated” or “advanced” (above the 85th percentile) on the state proficiency exams. Students could collect a total of $100 if they have high scores in all five subjects (math, reading, writing, science, and social studies). Children were paid in “Coshocton Children’s Bucks,” a gift certificate redeemable at local establishments to be used only on
items for the child. Data results demonstrated positive effects in math scores. In fact, those eligible to receive the incentives scored about 0.15 standard deviations higher than those who did not. There also appeared to be positive effects in social science and to a lesser extent, in science. (Bettinger, 2007).

**Rationale**

Motivation is the secret to great success, (Cawley, 2010). Motivation students and make incentive-based program in schools are needed in order to achieve their goals. However, school administrators are in charge of arranging incentive-based program for students. This program should be offered fairly to each student and cover all academic and non-academic achievement. That is to examine their performance after complete the elementary school.
CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Design

This research uses the ex-post facto design in view of the fact that the researcher does not have direct control over independent variable for the reason that their materializations have already happened or for the reason that they intrinsically cannot be manipulated. The investigator therefore studied the implication of incentive-based programs (independent variable) on achievement (dependent variable) by looking at secondary school student success in an incentive-based program and in a non-incentive-based program.

Ex-post facto design is decided since it is a non-experimental research approach wherein pre-existing groups are evaluated on some dependent variable, this type of study can masquerade as an authentic experiment. In this research, the pre-existing groups were the groups of students in the incentive and non-incentive programs. These two groups were evaluated on their achievement, as measured by an achievement test that was given to them. This experiment seems to be a factual experiment owing to the method the groups are divided and the method the analysis is executed, although it is still subject to similar limitations as non-experimental research. The task of the research participants to
measure levels of achievement is based on the events that took place in the past, i.e. if 
they participated in incentive program or not. This can be compared to experiment for the 
reason that it evaluates two or more groups of individuals with comparable backgrounds 
who were uncovered to dissimilar conditions on account of their natural histories.

Sample

The study’s participants are from two secondary schools, all students are male 
students. One of these schools has an incentive-based program and the other school does 
not. It will be composed of 30 students which will be represented by 15 students per 
school. This sample of students was randomly chosen from the elected schools. The study 
is only for male students.

A proportional stratified random sampling method will be utilized in the 
collection of the sample to guarantee that the factors that have impact on the motivation 
among students will be fully signified. 15 students were chosen from the 7th grade of 
each secondary school in a random fashion. Each 7th grade student was given a number, 
and fifteen numbers were chosen randomly to be in the sample. Using a number method 
avoids any potential bias in sample selection. In performing the study, the only 
information about the student that will be obtained by the investigator are their 
achievement scores/grades. No other information about the student was provided to the 
investigator. Student’s identities will be kept from the investigator so to avoid bias and 
comply with privacy standards. To discover the academic success of the students, their 
academic performances at the end of their previous school years was likewise gathered. 
The research questions given were answered employing mean and standard deviation
whereas the hypotheses prepared were tested by means of analysis of variance and t-test statistic.

**Instrumentation**

A student achievement test was given to the participants to compare their scores in order to find out the impact of incentive-based program on their achievement. Saudi Arabia General Aptitude Test of achievement, this test measures achievement and abilities relevant to: reading comprehension, recognizing logical relations, solving problems based on basic mathematical concepts, inference skills and, measuring capacity. However, the test is divided into three sections, the verbal, the quantitative and the writing passage. The verbal section includes the following: reading comprehension, sentence completion, verbal analogy, synonymy and, this section includes 6 questions. The quantitative section includes suitable mathematical problems that match General Secondary Schools Science and humanities majors. It focuses on measurements, inference and problem solving skills and requires only basic knowledge. This section includes 6 questions. The writing passage section includes 36 words.

**Procedure**

Data on academic performance was collected by means of the achievement test which is commonly used in Saudi Arabia. The 30 students were all asked to take the Saudi Arabia General Aptitude Test of achievement. There were also teachers who participated throughout the administration of the instruments. There was information gathered regarding incentives given by the school administrators to find out which among
those activities motivated the students the most. This information was gathered through open-ended interviews with the school’s administrator. Also, this aims to find out whether the school administration in general participates in motivating the students. There were instruction given by the researcher regarding completing the questionnaire. This was to ensure that the participants were able to fill out the questionnaire properly. The data was gathered individually. In cases where the researcher was not allowed inside the classroom, the teacher was the one who read the instructions to the respondents. Furthermore, the respondents were informed regarding the objective of the study. Likewise, the researcher informed the respondents that all information given will be taken as confidential. The tests were administered at a time and day that were of convenience to the students and the teachers. After all the data were gathered, the evaluation, analysis and computation were immediately executed. The data with reference to the sampled students were collected from their departments throughout the students’ files by the examiner.
CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

The Al-Kirwan School was the school having students in the incentive-based program. Fifteen students were administered the examination. All fifteen students were male, and were all in the seventh grade which is age 12. All fifteen students submitted test scores, so the sample size for this school was N=15. The test had 12 questions and one writing passage. Grading for the questions was based on a multiple choice answer. Grading for the writing passage was based on the number of misspelled words written by the student. The following table for the questions section:
Table: 1

The average of the scores from the questions section was 6.67. The maximum score was 10, the minimum score was 5. The mode of this sample was 7.

The following table for the writing passage. The score is the number of misspelled words out of a total of 36 words:
The average number of misspelled words was 2.6. The maximum number of misspelled words was 5, the minimum was zero. The mode of this sample size was 4.

The Al-Kuzama School was the school having students who were not part of an incentive-based program. Fifteen students were administered the examination. All fifteen students were male, and were all in the seventh grade which is age 12. All fifteen students submitted test scores, so the sample size for this school was N=15. The test had 12 questions and one writing passage. Grading for the questions was based on a multiple choice answer. Grading for the writing passage was based on the number of misspelled words written by the student. The following table for the questions section:
The average score of the questions section for this sample was 5.40. The maximum score was 8, the minimum as 3. The mode of this sample is 6.

The following table for the writing passage. The score is the number of misspelled words out of a total of 36 words:
The average number of misspelled words was 5.20. The maximum number of misspelled words was 15, the minimum was zero. The mode of this sample was 1 and 3.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results show some interesting findings. The Al-Kirwan school (incentive) had an average questions score that was higher that Al-Kuzama (non-incentive). They also had a lower average number of words that were misspelled in the reading passage. Al-Kirwan overall had higher scores on the questions section; and overall had a lower number of misspelled words on the passage. For the scores regarding misspelled words, both schools did have a minimum score of zero. However, it should be noted that Al-Kirwan did have more students with zero misspelled words (3 students) compared to Al-Kuzama that only had one student with zero misspelled words. The test results do show that there is a positive link between incentive-based programs and high academic achievement.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The research provides a basis for some recommendations that can be made to the school administration. Since it is clear that motivated students perform better academically, administration and staff in all schools should be taught and guided on how to better motivate their students. Motivation should be integrated into all curriculums. This should be a top priority in the schools so that overall school outcomes are high. There are several next steps regarding this research. One next step would be to apply the research to an all-female sample, and compare those results to the results from this research with all boys. A second next step would be to examine this research when applied to multiple schools located in different cities. Another future step would be to also apply this research project to private schools, and compare to the results from this research, since these schools were public schools.
In conclusion, the research found that children who are motivated are more likely to have higher academic performance, compared to those children who are not motivated. This is important research for teachers and administrators to learn from. It is hopeful that teachers and administrators, especially in Saudi Arabia, will use these findings to implement more motivation and incentives in their schools and curriculums.
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