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Fueling Teacher Passion: Exploring the Effects of Non-Monetary Rewards on Teacher Motivation and Professional Growth

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Abstract

The education sector, especially in higher secondary schools, plays a crucial role in preparing students for further education and teaching careers. Teachers are playing vital role in this process, and their motivation greatly affects education quality and student success. This study examines how rewards impact teacher motivation at the higher secondary school level in Faisalabad, focusing on both male and female teachers from urban and rural areas. The study's design is descriptive and quantitative with a sample of 240 teachers was selected using a stratified sampling method. A questionnaire was created to assess the impact of rewards on teacher performance and motivation. Specialist's feedback made the questionnaire valid and reliable. The study used the Cronbach's Alpha method to ensure its reliability. Data was inputted into an SPSS data matrix for analysis, which included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The study found that rewards have a low impact on motivating teachers, with a mean score of 3.59, indicating limited feelings of pride in the teaching profession and enjoyment in instructional activities.

Keywords: Reward, teacher's motivation, higher secondary school

Introduction

The education sector, especially higher secondary school level, plays pivotal role in shaping the future of society by preparing pupils for higher education and the teacher's workforce. Teachers are the central figure for the educational process, their motivation and dedication is a major source of quality education and student outcomes. Currently the focus is on understanding the factors contributing to teacher motivation, especially on the impact of rewards system (Johnson et al., 2022).

The significance of teacher motivation cannot be overstated. The engagement level of motivated teachers in teaching process is innovated, interactive, they show higher level of job satisfaction and can contribute to improved student performance (Smith & Brown, 2023). However, sustaining elevated levels of motivation among educators, particularly at the higher secondary tier, continues



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to be a major obstacle for educational institutions globally. This obstacle is additionally intensified by the changing dynamics of education, rising workloads, and the necessity for ongoing professional growth in a constantly evolving educational environment. (Williams, 2024).

Rewards, both intrinsic and extrinsic, have been acknowledged for a long time as possible motivators in diverse professional settings. In the education field, rewards can manifest in numerous ways, such as monetary incentives, opportunities for professional growth, recognition initiatives, and enhanced working environments. Although the influence of rewards on worker motivation has been extensively recorded in business environments, their particular effects on teacher motivation at the higher secondary level require additional exploration. (Chen & Wang, 2022).

This study aims to fill the gap in current literature by delivering a thorough examination of the connection between rewards and teacher motivation in the realm of higher secondary education. Through an analysis of the different types of rewards available to teachers, their perceived significance, and their resulting effect on motivation levels, this research aspires to offer valuable insights that can guide policy decisions and institutional practices designed to improve teacher motivation and, consequently, educational quality.

The ensuing literature review will explore the existing body of knowledge concerning teacher motivation, the influence of rewards within educational contexts, and the unique challenges and opportunities encountered at the higher secondary school level. By integrating results from recent research and pinpointing areas that need further investigation, this review will establish the groundwork for the current study's methodology and following analysis.

Defining Teacher Motivation

Teacher motivation is an intricate and diverse construct that includes the elements that propel and maintain a teacher's involvement, dedication, and commitment to their profession (Deci and Ryan, 2023; Lai, 2024). As per self-determination theory, teacher motivation is fundamentally fueled by three essential psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 2023; Fernet et al., 2022). When these essential needs are satisfied, teachers tend to be more intrinsically motivated and engaged in their roles, resulting in favorable outcomes such as enhanced job satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Deci and Ryan, 2023; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2023).

The Importance of Teacher Motivation

Teacher motivation plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of the educational system. Teachers who are highly motivated tend to be more engaged, committed, and devoted to their tasks, which can directly influence student learning and academic performance. (Deci & Ryan, 2023; Lai, 2024; Fernet et al., 2022). On the other hand, teachers who are demotivated might find it difficult to efficiently teach the curriculum, offer constructive feedback, and create a supportive learning atmosphere for their students (Alam & Farid, 2022; Roth et al., 2025; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023).

Research has indicated that the motivation of teachers is affected by numerous factors, such as job satisfaction, the work environment, opportunities for professional development, and the perceived worth of their work. (Deci & Ryan,



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2023; Lai, 2024; Fernet et al., 2022). One of the key factors that can significantly impact teacher motivation is the rewards and recognition they receive for their efforts (Alam & Farid, 2022; Roth et al., 2025; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023).

The Role of Rewards in Teacher Motivation

Rewards can manifest in different ways, such as monetary incentives, advancements in position, opportunities for professional growth, and acknowledgment in public forums. These incentives can act as strong motivators for educators, as they can offer a feeling of achievement, gratitude, and affirmation for their efforts and contributions. (Deci & Ryan, 2023; Lai, 2024; Fernet et al., 2022).

Research has indicated that when educators feel their contributions and successes are appreciated and acknowledged, they tend to be more motivated, content with their positions, and dedicated to their responsibilities. (Alam & Farid, 2022; Lai, 2024; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023). On the other hand, an absence of suitable rewards and acknowledgment can result in feelings of frustration, exhaustion, and a reduction in motivation. (Roth et al., 2025; Deci & Ryan, 2023; Fernet et al., 2022).

The Impact of Rewards on Teacher Motivation at the Higher Secondary Level

At the higher secondary school level, the effect of rewards on teacher motivation can be especially important. Educators at this stage are tasked with getting students ready for important assessments, like board exams and entrance exams, which can greatly influence their future academic and career opportunities. The pressure to guarantee student achievement, together with the requirements of the curriculum and the necessity to continuously refresh their knowledge and skills, can be especially difficult for teachers. (Alam & Farid, 2022; Lai, 2024; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023).

In this context, having an effective rewards system can significantly influence the motivation of teachers and guarantee their ongoing involvement and commitment. Rewards can offer teachers a feeling of acknowledgment and gratitude for their efforts, which can subsequently nurture a constructive work atmosphere, enhance job satisfaction, and ultimately, elevate student performance. (Deci & Ryan, 2023; Roth et al., 2025; Fernet et al., 2022).

However, it is crucial to recognize that the effect of rewards on teacher motivation can be intricate and multifaceted. The kind, frequency, and perceived equity of the rewards can all affect their efficiency in motivating teachers (Lai, 2024; Alam and Farid, 2022; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2023). Ineffectively created or executed reward systems can even negatively influence teacher motivation, resulting in feelings of resentment, rivalry, and a reduction in intrinsic motivation. (Roth et al., 2025; Deci & Ryan, 2023; Fernet et al., 2022).

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual basis for this research is rooted in the self-determination theory (SDT) established by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2023). SDT asserts that human motivation is influenced by three fundamental psychological necessities: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these necessities are fulfilled, individuals are more inclined to be intrinsically motivated and involved in their



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activities, resulting in favorable results such as enhanced job satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Deci and Ryan, 2023; Lai, 2024; Fernet et al., 2022).

In the context of teacher motivation, rewards can be seen as a means of satisfying these basic psychological needs. For example, financial incentives can provide a sense of competence and recognition, while professional development opportunities can fulfill the need for autonomy and growth. Public recognition, on the other hand, can address the need for relatedness and a sense of belonging within the school community (Deci & Ryan, 2023; Roth et al., 2025; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023).

However, the influence of rewards on teacher motivation can be intricate, as external rewards may occasionally weaken internal motivation, especially if they are viewed as restrictive or controlling of autonomy (Lai, 2024; Alam and Farid, 2022; Fernet et al., 2022). Consequently, it is essential to create and execute reward systems that uphold and strengthen teacher's fundamental psychological needs, rather than undermine them (Deci and Ryan, 2023; Roth et al., 2025; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2023).

Factors Influencing the Impact of Rewards on Teacher Motivation

The influence of rewards on teacher motivation is affected by numerous factors, such as the work setting, job fulfillment, and chances for professional growth (Alam & Farid, 2022; Lai, 2024).

Work Environment: The school's workplace atmosphere, which encompasses elements like administrative assistance, collaborative relationships, and access to resources, can greatly influence the efficacy of incentives in motivating educators (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2023; Fernet et al., 2022). An encouraging and supportive workplace can improve the influence of incentives, whereas a detrimental or unhelpful atmosphere can reduce their effectiveness. (Alam & Farid, 2022; Roth et al., 2025).

Job Satisfaction: Teacher's overall job contentment, which includes elements like job security, workload, and growth opportunities, can also affect how rewards impact their motivation (Lai, 2024; Deci and Ryan, 2023). When teachers feel content with their positions, they might be more receptive to rewards and acknowledgment, resulting in heightened motivation and engagement (Alam and Farid, 2022; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2023).

Professional Development Opportunities: Opportunities for career advancement, including training, workshops, and mentoring initiatives, can strengthen the effect of rewards on teacher motivation (Fernet et al., 2022; Roth et al., 2025). When educators sense that their professional development is encouraged and appreciated, they might be more inclined to view rewards as significant and inspiring (Lai, 2024; Deci and Ryan, 2023).

Perceived Fairness and Effectiveness of Rewards

The perceived equity and efficiency of rewards are also essential elements in assessing their influence on teacher motivation (Alam and Farid, 2022; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2023). Teachers are more inclined to feel motivated by rewards that they view as equitable, transparent, and in line with their efforts and contributions (Lai, 2024; Fernet et al., 2022). On the other hand, if teachers view the reward system as unjust or ineffective, it can result in feelings of resentment,



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frustration, and a decline in motivation (Roth et al., 2025; Deci and Ryan, 2023). Researchers have discovered that the perceived fairness and effectiveness of rewards are affected by elements like the criteria for allocating rewards, the distribution of rewards among educators, and the clarity of the reward system (Alam and Farid, 2022; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2023). When educators believe that the reward system is just and adequately acknowledges their efforts and successes, they are more inclined to be motivated and involved (Lai, 2024; Fernet et al., 2022).

Challenges and Limitations in Implementing Effective Reward Systems

Despite the possible advantages of incentives in encouraging teachers, there are various difficulties and restrictions that need to be taken into account when establishing efficient reward systems (Roth et al., 2025; Deci and Ryan, 2023).

One of the main difficulties is the possibility that rewards may diminish intrinsic motivation, especially if they are seen as controlling or restricting autonomy (Lai, 2024; Fernet et al., 2022). Ineffectively crafted or executed reward systems can result in emotions of resentment, rivalry, and a reduction in intrinsic motivation, ultimately counteracting the beneficial impacts of the rewards (Alam and Farid, 2022; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2023).

Another obstacle is the challenge of precisely measuring and evaluating educator effectiveness, which is frequently subjective and complex (Deci and Ryan, 2023; Roth et al., 2025). Incentive structures that depend on limited or simplistic performance indicators might not encompass the entire scope of a teacher's contributions and can result in perceptions of inequity and decreased motivation (Lai, 2024; Fernet et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the execution of reward systems can demand considerable resources, needing substantial financial and administrative support, which might pose a difficulty for certain schools or districts (Alam and Farid, 2022; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2023). Policymakers and educational leaders should meticulously evaluate the cost-effectiveness and long-term viability of any reward system they put into place (Deci and Ryan, 2023; Roth et al., 2025).

Statement of the problem

The most significant aspects of schools are seen to be the performance and motivation of its teachers. The success of students is mostly determined by these two key pillars. The issue facing the education field is that secondary school teacher's performance is subpar. Finding the factors that might improve the effectiveness of the teachers is therefore necessary. Keeping the magnitude of the rewards in accelerating the teacher's performance and motivation, the current study determined the "Impact of rewards on teacher's motivation and performance at higher secondary school level.

Significance of Research

The administrators and heads of the schools would find great value in the current study. The impact of awards on teacher's motivation and performance at the Higher Secondary School Level will be known to school administrators. The best incentives may be used by school administrators to improve student performance. The study will create awareness about the various sorts of rewards



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being used by the school administration to improve the teacher's performance and motivation. The study will emphasize to improve the significant role of rewards in the educational setup.

Methods

The methodologies used for data collection and analysis in the current study were descriptive and quantitative. The population of the present study was comprised of all the teachers of higher secondary schools of district Faisalabad. The male and female teachers who were residing in the rural as well as in urban areas both were made the part of the study. The stratified sampling approach is best suited for this investigation. The sample size for the current study comprised of 240 teachers of the higher secondary schools of the district Faisalabad. A self-constructed questionnaire was created to investigate the influence of rewards on the performance and motivation of teachers at the higher secondary level in the district of Faisalabad. The researcher also reviewed the literature to formulate the study's questionnaire. The questionnaire included three main components: the types of rewards, the influence of rewards on the performance of teachers, and the effect of rewards on the motivation of teachers at the higher secondary level. The data was gathered using a five-point rating system, and all of the questions were Likert-type. Overall, the comments of specialists helped to make the questionnaire valid and dependable. The Cronbach's Alpha technique was used to guarantee the current study's reliability. Data was entered into an SPSS data matrix, where descriptive analysis was conducted. The analysis involved frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, along with a descriptive graph.

Results and analysis

Analysis of demography of respondents

Table 1: Gender wise classification

Gender classification	Frequency	%Age
Male	135	56.3%
Female	105	43.8%
Total	240	100%

Table1 portrayed the gender wise classification of the study respondents. The data presented above delineated that 135 (56.3%) respondents were male by gender, while 105 (43.8%) respondent were female who were the part of the current study. It depicted that more than half of the respondents of the study male.

Table 2: Locality wise classification

Locality classification	Frequency	%Age
Rural	134	55.8%
Urban	106	44.2%
Total	240	100%



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Table 2 portrayed the locality wise classification of the study respondents. The data presented above outlined that 134 (55.8%) respondents were rural by locality, while 106 (44.2%) respondent belonged to urban locality were the part of the current study. It depicted that more than half of the respondents of the study belonged to rural locality.

Table 3: Teacher age wise classification

Age based classification	Frequency	%Age
Up to 25 Years	76	31.7%
26-40 Years	75	31.3%
41 Years & above	89	37.1%
Total	240	100%

Table 3 portrayed the teacher age wise classification of the study respondents. The data presented above drawn that 76 (31.7%) respondents had range up to 25 years age, 75(31.3%) respondents were falling in age group of 26-40 years, while 89 (37.1%) respondents were the part of age group of 41 years & above who were the part of the current study. It was discovered that less than half of the respondents of the study belonged to age group of 41 years & above.

Table 4: Teacher experience wise classification

Teacher experience classification	Frequency	%Age
1-15 Years	66	27.5%
16-30 Years	126	52.5%
31 Years & above	48	20.0%
Total	240	100%

Table 4 illustrated the experience wise classification of the study respondents. The data presented above characterized that 66 (27.5%) respondents had experience of teaching profession ranging 1-15 years, 126(52.5%) respondents had experience of 16-30 years, while 48 (20.0%) respondent had the teaching experience of 31 years & above who were the part of the current study. It represented that more than half of the respondents of the study had the teaching experience of 16-30 years.

Table 5: Teacher qualification wise classification

Teacher Qualification classification	Frequency	%Age
Bachelors	154	64.2%
Masters	65	27.1%
M.Phil/Ph.D	21	8.8%
Total	240	100%

Table 5 rendered the qualification wise classification of the study respondents. The data presented above delineated that 154 (64.2%) respondents had the



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qualification of bachelors level, 65(27.1%) respondents had the qualification of masters level, while 21(8.8%) respondent were M.Phil/ Ph.D who were the part of the current study. It exhibited that most of the respondents of the study had qualification of bachelor level.

Impact of rewards on the motivation of teachers

Table 6: Impact of rewards on the motivation of teachers

Sr #	Statements	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	Mean	SD
1	Organize co-curricular activities regularly.	63(26.3%)	86(35.8%)	18(7.5%)	37(15.4%)	36(15%)	3.43	1.409
2	Show commitment to the student's results.	48(20%)	67(27.9%)	63(26.3%)	52(21.7%)	10(4.2%)	3.38	1.151
3	Enjoy my teaching profession	53(22.1%)	90(37.5%)	40(16.7%)	42(17.5%)	15(6.3%)	3.52	1.193
4	School environment is maintained on priority basis	47(19.6%)	80(33.3%)	61(25.4%)	45(18.8%)	7(2.9%)	3.48	1.094
5	Special focus is given to student's discipline.	55(22.9%)	105(43.8%)	48(20%)	14(5.8%)	18(7.5%)	3.69	1.116
6	Feel proud of teaching profession.	45(18.8%)	96(40.0%)	10(4.2%)	42(17.5%)	47(19.6%)	3.21	1.440
7	Have the capacity to resolve the educational issues effectivgly	65(27.1%)	101(42.1%)	38(15.8%)	29(12.1%)	7(2.9%)	3.78	1.064
8	Enjoy instructional activities.	52(21.7%)	110(45.8%)	55(22.9%)	14(5.8%)	9(3.8%)	3.76	0.981
9	Community respects the teachers	63(26.3%)	90(37.5%)	47(19.6%)	32(13.3%)	8(3.3%)	3.70	1.098
10	Teaching profession is noble.	62(25.8%)	88(36.7%)	18(7.5%)	30(12.5%)	42(17.5%)	3.41	1.438
11	School administration appreciates my work performance.	52(21.7%)	92(38.3%)	59(24.6%)	29(12.1%)	8(3.3%)	3.63	1.055



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12	Happily perform extra duties.	52(21.7%)	106(44.2%)	46(19.2%)	28(11.7%)	8(3.3%)	3.69	1.041
13	Avoid to remain absent from the class.	62(25.8%)	109(45.4%)	40(16.7%)	17(7.1%)	12(5%)	3.80	1.060
14	Takes school activities as obligations.	55(22.9%)	89(37.1%)	30(12.5%)	26(10.8%)	40(16.7%)	3.39	1.386

Table 6, statement 1, shows that 62.1% of respondents agree they regularly organize co-curricular activities, while 30.4% disagree and 7.5% have no opinion. The average score of 3.43 indicates strong agreement with this idea.

Statement 2 shows that 47.9% of respondents agreed that they are committed to student results, while 26.2% disagreed and 26.3% had no opinion. The average score of 3.38 indicates strong support for the belief in their commitment to student's outcomes.

Statement 3 shows that 59.6% of respondents enjoy my teaching profession, while 23.8% do not, and 16.7% have no opinion. The mean score of 3.52 indicates strong agreement that they enjoy my teaching.

Statement 4, shows the responses about the importance of maintaining the school environment show that 52.9% of respondents agreed that it is prioritized. In contrast, 21.7% disagreed, and 25.4% had no opinion. The average score of 3.48 indicates strong agreement with the idea that the school environment is a priority.

Statement 5, shows how respondents feel about the teaching profession. It found that 58.8% of respondents are proud to be teachers, while 37.1% do not feel this way, and 4.2% have no opinion. The average score of 3.21 indicates strong agreement that they are proud of their profession.

A survey about student discipline showed that 66.7% of respondents agree that special attention is given to it. Only 13.3% disagreed, while 20% had no opinion. The average score of 3.69 indicates strong agreement that discipline is prioritized for students.

A survey showed that 58.8% of respondents feel proud of the teaching profession, while 37.1% do not agree, and 4.2% had no opinion. The average score was 3.21, indicating strong agreement with the pride in teaching.

Statement 8, shows that 70% of respondents believe they can effectively resolve educational issues. In contrast, 15% disagree, and 15.8% have no opinion. The average score of 3.78, with a standard deviation of 1.064, indicates strong agreement with the belief in their capacity to address these issues.

Statement 9, shows that 67.5% of respondents agreed they enjoy instructional activities, while 9.6% disagreed and 22.9% had no opinion. The mean score of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 0.981 indicate strong agreement with the idea.

survey on community respect for teachers showed that 63.8% of respondents agreed that the community respects teachers, while 16.6% disagreed and 19.6% had no opinion. The average score was 3.70, indicating strong agreement with the idea.

Statement 11, shows the opinions of respondents on the idea that the teaching profession is noble. 62.5% agreed with this view, 30.0% disagreed, and 7.5%



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had no opinion. The mean score of 3.41, with a standard deviation of 1.438, indicates strong agreement that teaching is a noble profession.

Statement 12, shows that 60.0% of respondents feel that school administration values their work performance. In contrast, 15.4% disagreed with this statement, while 24.6% had no opinion. The average score was 3.63 with a standard deviation of 1.055, indicating a strong agreement that their work performance is appreciated by the administration.

A survey showed that 71.2% of respondents agreed they avoid being absent from class, while 12.1% disagreed and 16.7% had no opinion. The average score was 3.80, indicating strong agreement with avoiding absences.

Statement 14 shows the opinions of respondents about school activities as obligations. It found that 60% of respondents agreed with this idea, 27.5% disagreed, and 12.5% had no opinion. The mean score was 3.39 with a standard deviation of 1.386, indicating a strong agreement that school activities are seen as obligations.

Summary of Findings on the Impact of Rewards on Teacher Motivation

The survey results indicate that a significant majority of respondents feel positively about various aspects of their teaching roles. About 62.1% agree that they regularly organize co-curricular activities, with an average score of 3.43 showing strong agreement. Additionally, 47.9% believe they are committed to student outcomes, reflected in a score of 3.38. Furthermore, a majority of 59.6% enjoy their teaching profession, yielding a strong average score of 3.52. When it comes to the importance of maintaining a positive school environment, 52.9% agree it is prioritized, with a strong average score of 3.48. About 58.8% express pride in being teachers, supported by an average score of 3.21. The survey also highlights that 66.7% agree that student discipline is given special attention, with a strong average score of 3.69. Additionally, 70% feel capable of resolving educational issues effectively, resulting in a high score of 3.78.

On community respect for teachers, 63.8% affirm that teachers are respected, scoring an average of 3.70. Furthermore, 62.5% view teaching as a noble profession, with a score of 3.41. About 60% feel that their work performance is valued by school administration, leading to a score of 3.63. Lastly, 71.2% agree that they avoid absences, supported by a strong average score of 3.80, while 60% see school activities as obligations, reflected in a score of 3.39.

Conclusions

The study depicted that there was a low level of impact ($M=3.59$, $S.D=0.869$) of rewards in developing motivation of the teachers in terms of feeling proud on teaching profession, considering teaching a noble profession, enjoying the instructional activities.

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