

The Role of Parental Support in Elementary Students' Learning Motivation

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Abstract: The success of elementary education is determined not only by the learning process at school but is also strongly influenced by parental involvement in the home environment. This study aimed to explore the role of parental support in enhancing the learning motivation of fifth-grade students at SD Swasta Kristen BNKP Lahewa. A descriptive qualitative approach with purposive sampling was employed, involving 32 students and 32 parents. Data were collected through structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation and were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, which encompasses data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings showed that parental support was manifested in four principal forms: emotional, esteem, instrumental, and informational support. Emotional support in the form of attention and encouragement increased students' self-confidence. Esteem support through praise or rewards fostered extrinsic motivation, whereas instrumental support through the provision of learning resources and assistance promoted regular study habits. Informational support also helped children master subject matter and manage their study time. Overall, parental involvement played a significant role in strengthening students' learning motivation, although support practices differed across families. These findings emphasize that partnerships between schools and families are essential for sustaining learning motivation. The distinctiveness of this study lies in its island-region context, which demonstrates how parental support can compensate for limitations in formal educational facilities. The findings are expected to inform teachers, schools, and parents seeking to strengthen collaboration in support of students' academic achievement.

Keywords: *Parental support, learning motivation, elementary school, family education*

INTRODUCTION

Elementary education provides an essential foundation for the development of children's character, knowledge, and skills. At the elementary school level, students' learning motivation is a major determinant of both academic success and socioemotional development (Schunk et al., 2014). However, various studies have indicated that elementary school students' learning motivation tends to fluctuate and is particularly influenced by the family environment, teacher support, and sociocultural conditions (Wentzel & Miele, 2016).

Parental support is one of the primary determinants of children's learning motivation. Such support may take the form of involvement in academic activities, the provision of learning facilities, verbal encouragement, and positive attitudes toward education (Fan & Chen, 2021). UNICEF (2022) reported that elementary school children who receive intensive parental support are 30% more likely to demonstrate sustained learning motivation than children who receive limited support. In Indonesia, the National Socioeconomic Survey (Badan Pusat Statistik [BPS], 2023) recorded that only 54% of parents consistently assist their children's learning at home, particularly in disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost (3T) regions.

These conditions highlight the urgency of investigating the extent to which parental support can promote the learning motivation of elementary school students, particularly in island communities and areas with limited access to education. As a private elementary school in North Nias Regency, SD Swasta Kristen BNKP Lahewa faces distinctive challenges, including limited learning facilities, diverse family socioeconomic backgrounds, and varying levels of parental involvement in children's education. Preliminary observations conducted in 2024 indicated that, among 32 fifth-grade students, approximately 40% demonstrated low learning motivation, as reflected in limited participation in discussions, insufficient independence in completing assignments, and declining consistency in studying at home.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between parental support and children's learning motivation. For example, Hornby and Lafaele (2011) emphasized that active parental involvement directly improves academic achievement. In Indonesia, Sari and Rahman (2021) likewise found that parents' emotional and academic support had a significant effect on the learning motivation of elementary school students in urban areas. Nevertheless, most studies have focused on urban settings or public schools with adequate facilities, whereas research in island regions and small private schools remains limited.

Accordingly, this study offers novelty in several respects. First, it was conducted in a distinctive local context, namely a private elementary school in the island region of North Nias, which has rarely served as a locus for research on learning motivation. Second, the study not only examined students' level of learning motivation but also related it to variations in forms of parental support, including emotional, instrumental, and academic support. Third, the findings are expected to make an empirical contribution to the development of school-parent collaboration strategies for improving students' learning motivation, particularly in areas with limited access to education. Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the role of parental support in the learning motivation of fifth-grade students at SD Swasta Kristen BNKP Lahewa. The findings are expected to enrich the literature on the relationship between family support and learning motivation while also providing practical recommendations for strengthening parental involvement in elementary education.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was selected because it was considered the most appropriate for exploring and understanding social phenomena in depth through natural descriptions grounded in actual field conditions. As proposed by Sulastris and Masriqon (2021) and Yuliani (2018), qualitative research seeks to identify the meanings underlying behaviors, actions, and social interactions and presents those meanings in descriptive narratives based on directly obtained data. The study therefore explored how parental support contributed to the development of learning motivation among fifth-grade students at SD Swasta Kristen BNKP Lahewa.

Research Site and Participants

The research participants comprised all fifth-grade students and their parents, totaling 32 students and 32 parents. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, namely deliberate selection based on specified considerations (Sugiyono, 2019). The inclusion criteria were: (1) students actively enrolled in the 2023/2024 academic year; (2) parents who were directly involved in assisting their children's learning at home; and (3) willingness to participate in the study.

Data Collection

Data were collected using three methods. First, structured interviews were conducted with both students and parents. Parent interviews explored the forms of support they provided, including emotional, instrumental, and academic support, whereas student interviews focused on their perceptions of their parents' role in stimulating learning motivation. Second, observations were conducted at school and in students' homes to examine parental involvement in supporting children's learning activities and students' participation in classroom learning. Third, documentation was used to collect secondary data, including learning-achievement scores, attendance records, and school records concerning parental participation in academic activities.

Research Instruments

The instruments consisted of interview guides and observation sheets developed on the basis of indicators of parental support—emotional, instrumental, and academic—and indicators of students' learning motivation, namely intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and learning consistency, as presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Data were analyzed interactively using the model of Miles et al. (2014). The analysis involved three principal stages: data reduction, in which data were filtered and focused to ensure relevance to the research objectives; data display, in which data were organized into narrative descriptions, tables, or matrices to facilitate interpretation; and conclusion drawing, in which patterns, relationships, and meanings emerging from the data were identified and formulated as findings. To ensure the credibility of the findings, source and method triangulation was conducted by comparing interview, observation,

and documentation data. Member checking was also undertaken with participants to ensure that the researchers' interpretations corresponded with the respondents' lived realities

Table 1. Blueprint for the parent interview instrument.

Aspect of Parental Support	Indicator	Sample Question
Emotional Support	Providing motivation, encouragement, and appreciation	"What do you usually do to motivate your child when the child is reluctant to study?"
Instrumental Support	Providing learning resources	"Do you provide books or other facilities to support your child's learning?"
Academic Support	Involvement in the learning process	"How often do you accompany your child while studying at home?"

Table 2. Blueprint for the student interview instrument

Aspect of Learning Motivation	Indicator	Sample Question
Intrinsic Motivation	Interest in and enjoyment of learning	"Do you enjoy studying at home when your parents accompany you?"
Extrinsic Motivation	External encouragement (rewards and praise)	"Do your parents give you rewards or praise when you study well?"
Learning Consistency	Independence and study habits	"How often do you study independently without being asked?"

RESULTS

This study revealed that parental support at SD Swasta Kristen BNKP Lahewa played a significant role in shaping the learning motivation of fifth-grade students. Based on the interviews, observations, and documentation, such support was classified into four principal dimensions: emotional, esteem, instrumental, and informational support. Most parents demonstrated a high level of emotional involvement. They consistently provided attention, encouragement, and advice to promote persistence in learning. Eight of the nine participants reported that they always asked about their children's progress after school and offered positive encouragement, for example through simple motivational expressions. However, one parent was less consistent in providing assistance because of work-related demands. Esteem support was provided in both material and verbal forms. Several parents gave gifts such as new school bags, toys, or bicycles when their children attained academic achievements. In addition, almost all parents offered praise, congratulations, or simple expressions of appreciation when their children demonstrated strong learning efforts.

Parents also played an active role in directly supporting their children by providing learning facilities, accompanying them while they completed assignments, and giving an average daily allowance of IDR 5,000. Although some parents were unable to provide direct assistance consistently because of

their work commitments, they ensured that their children received guidance from other adult family members. Parents further provided support in the form of knowledge and guidance. This support included helping children understand difficult material, advising them on effective study practices, and managing rest periods to prevent boredom. Some parents used books or digital devices to obtain additional information. Challenges were reported by three parents who stated that their children remained insufficiently motivated despite receiving guidance.

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that parental support is an important factor in the development of learning motivation among elementary school-aged children. This finding is consistent with the view that the family, particularly parents, functions not only as a provider of physical needs but also as a source of psychological and motivational reinforcement in children's education. The results demonstrate that parental attention and verbal encouragement can create a sense of security and self-confidence in children. This observation is consistent with the theory of Sarafino and Smith (2011), which emphasizes that emotional support strengthens psychological attachment and provides comfort, thereby preparing children to confront learning challenges. An attentive family environment also encourages children to persevere and reduces their tendency to give up easily. Esteem support was shown to provide a positive stimulus for children. Praise and rewards promote extrinsic motivation, which can serve as an initial trigger for increased enthusiasm for learning. Mulyadi et al. (2021) similarly reported that even simple forms of appreciation can enhance children's self-confidence. Thus, appreciation serves a dual function as both reinforcement of positive behavior and a driver of learning motivation. The provision of learning facilities, supervision, and material assistance constitutes a tangible form of parental involvement. The findings support Widodo's (2016) view that adequate learning facilities improve children's concentration during study. Moreover, parental presence while children study provides a sense of security and increases consistency in completing academic tasks. Informational support is also important in helping children understand lessons. Guidance, advice, and additional explanations from parents strengthen children's learning processes, as emphasized by Hero and Sni (2018). Nevertheless, the finding that several children remained difficult to motivate despite receiving guidance indicates that informational support should be complemented by creative approaches and school collaboration to improve its effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that parental support has an important and strategic role in fostering elementary school students' learning motivation. Through emotional, esteem, instrumental, and informational support, parents serve not only as facilitators of learning but also as sources of psychological energy that encourage children to continue striving for achievement. The findings from SD Swasta Kristen BNKP Lahewa indicate that students who receive consistent parental support tend to demonstrate higher learning motivation than students who receive less attention. This finding shows that parental involvement is not merely an additional component but a fundamental foundation for children's educational success, particularly at the elementary school level. The study therefore contributes to elementary education, especially in island regions, by affirming that effective education is developed not

only at school but is also strengthened through the family's active role at home. Through synergy among schools, parents, and students, a generation with strong motivation, resilience, and readiness to confront future challenges can be developed.

Data Availability The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Ethical approval All procedures performed in the study followed the ethical standards.

Consent for publication All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Consent to participate Consent to participate was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Informed consent Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. Data were reported anonymously in the study.

Conflict of interest The authors declare no competing interests.

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