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The Relationship Between Learning Motivation and Learning Outcomes at Teratai Kindergarten in Kendari City

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ABSTRACT: Learning motivation is a key factor that affects children's learning outcomes, including in early childhood education. This study aims to analyze the relationship between learning motivation and children's learning outcomes in Teratai Kindergarten, Kendari City. The research method uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The sample consisted of 30 class B children selected through purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using validated learning motivation questionnaires, as well as documentation of learning outcomes from student development reports. Data analysis was carried out by descriptive statistics, normality test, linearity test, and Pearson correlation test. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between learning motivation and children's learning outcomes ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.01$). These findings indicate that children with higher levels of learning motivation tend to have better learning outcomes. Furthermore, it reinforces the view that learning strategies that promote intrinsic motivation, provide challenges appropriate to the child's development, and offer rewards for effort contribute to improved academic achievement. This study recommends the active role of teachers and parents in building a learning environment that supports children's motivation from an early age.

Keywords: Learning Motivation, Learning Outcomes, Early Childhood, Correlation.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation to learn is an important foundation in early childhood education, as this period is a time of very rapid brain growth and is crucial for cognitive and emotional development. Quality early childhood education that includes a responsive environment, an appropriate curriculum, and warm relationships with educators has been shown to accelerate the development of basic abilities such as reading, math, as well as social-emotional skills. At Teratai Kindergarten in Kendari City, various observations showed that there was a striking variation in the learning outcomes of students, especially in the aspects of language and numeracy skills. Some children seem excited and achieving

developmental goals, while others need more encouragement to be actively involved. This phenomenon raises questions about the factors that affect learning outcomes, especially the role of learning motivation. (Alderman & Headey, 2017; Urhahne & Wijnia, 2023; Wigfield et al., 2025)

Theoretically, academic motivation both intrinsic and extrinsic is a fundamental factor that determines the quality of a child's learning process and outcomes. Intrinsic motivation, which is born from curiosity, interest, and enjoyment in exploring knowledge, encourages children to engage deeply without dependence on external incentives. In contrast, extrinsic motivations such as praise, appreciation, or parental expectations serve as important early triggers, especially when intrinsic motivation has not been optimally formed. Two main theoretical frameworks explain this dynamic. First, *Self-Determination Theory* (SDT) emphasizes the fulfillment of basic psychological needs autonomy, competence, and connectedness as a prerequisite for the emergence of more autonomous intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Second, *Expectancy-Value Theory* (EVT/SEVT) highlights that children's perceptions of self-ability and task values (interests, utility, achievements, and costs) predict learning choices and perseverance (J. S. Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). In the context of early childhood education, motivational indicators are seen in interest in activities, perseverance in completing tasks, play-and-learning initiatives, and positive involvement in the classroom. Recent empirical findings show that meeting psychological needs improves the quality of children's motivation and involvement from an early age (Wang et al., 2024; Zimmerman et al., 2017). In fact, in digital learning and *blended learning*, intrinsic motivation has been shown to contribute directly to academic performance (Y. Liu et al., 2024; Urhahne & Wijnia, 2023). Thus, motivation can be seen as a key mechanism that connects the learning environment with the child's academic development in a sustainable manner.

Learning outcomes in kindergarten are commonly classified into three domains: cognitive, affective/social-emotional, and psychomotor. (Erin Stapleton-Corcoran, 2023)Bloom's taxonomy and its subsequent revisions have provided a systematic framework for defining goals and achievement indicators within these domains, ensuring structured progression in children's learning. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) through its *Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) (2020)* underscores that early childhood learning must embrace a holistic perspective, integrating language, social-emotional, physical, and cognitive growth while employing diverse and authentic assessments (NAEYC, 2020). At a systemic level, OECD findings highlight that participation in high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) is consistently associated with both immediate and long-term benefits, particularly in fostering cognitive competence and social-emotional resilience (OECD, 2023); (Petrowski et al., 2023). Complementing this, UNICEF's *Early Childhood Development Index 2030* (ECDI 2030) provides an international population-level measure to monitor developmental progress in health, learning, and psychosocial well-being for children aged 24–59 months. Together, these frameworks emphasize the need for integrated, evidence-based approaches that align pedagogy, policy, and measurement tools to ensure equitable and holistic kindergarten learning outcomes globally.

Empirical evidence consistently highlights the strong link between motivation and early learning outcomes. The quality of teacher–child relationships in kindergarten significantly predicts children's reading interest, persistence in completing tasks, and foundational literacy skills in early grades. Cross-level meta-analyses confirm that psychological needs support fosters higher motivational quality, which in turn enhances engagement and academic performance (Bureau et al., 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Within early childhood education, game-based learning has been widely recognized for promoting intrinsic motivation, active participation, and emotional engagement, though its impact varies across developmental domains (Hiltunen et al., 2024a). Furthermore, parental involvement plays a critical role in nurturing children's autonomous motivation, positively influencing well-being and early academic achievement, which subsequently contributes to long-term educational success (Alotaibi, 2024; X. Liu et al., 2024).

Theoretically, this research advances the study of learning motivation by extending its focus to early childhood education (PAUD), a field often overshadowed by research in primary, secondary, and higher education. By analyzing the relationship between motivation and learning outcomes among children aged 5–6, it deepens the application of motivation theories such as self-determination theory and expectancy-value theory within the unique context of early development. These insights contribute to shaping a more holistic conceptual framework of childhood learning. Practically, the study provides valuable implications for teachers, principals, and parents in designing strategies that cultivate intrinsic motivation while appropriately leveraging extrinsic factors. Such practices include integrating play-based learning aligned with children's interests, offering meaningful challenges, and delivering positive, individualized reinforcement tailored to each child's developmental needs and character.

Based on this background, the main research question that arises is: *Is there a relationship between learning motivation and children's learning outcomes in Teratai Kindergarten in Kendari City?* This question is relevant given the importance of understanding the psychological factors that affect academic achievement from an early age. The main purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the relationship between the level of learning motivation and the learning outcomes of children aged 5–6 years in Teratai Kindergarten in Kendari City. This research is focused on three key questions: (1) What is the level of children's motivation to learn in Teratai Kindergarten, both from intrinsic and extrinsic aspects? (2) What is the description of children's learning outcomes at Teratai Kindergarten based on developmental assessment documents and semester report cards? (3) Is there a statistically significant relationship between learning motivation and children's learning outcomes? The answer to this question is expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution to the development of learning strategies in PAUD (Annie D. Schoch et al., 2023).

This research specifically focuses on students aged 5–6 years in Class B of Teratai Kindergarten, Kendari City, with data collected during the even semester to ensure developmental consistency and curricular uniformity. While international studies have provided substantial evidence on the role of motivation in shaping children's learning outcomes, empirical research that rigorously examines the

relationship between learning motivation and standardized learning outcomes in Indonesian kindergarten contexts remains scarce. Most existing studies emphasize primary or higher levels of education, leaving a gap in understanding how motivation theories such as self-determination and expectancy-value operate in early childhood settings. Furthermore, although international frameworks provide valuable benchmarks, the translation of global indicators into local practices such as curriculum design, developmental report cards, and culturally grounded assessments requires contextualized investigation. The novelty of this study lies in its effort to adapt validated motivational instruments to the Indonesian kindergarten context, while applying rigorous correlational analytical procedures and robust assumption testing. By aligning achievement indicators with national early childhood development standards, this study not only addresses the lack of localized evidence but also contributes to bridging theoretical models with practical realities. Ultimately, findings from Teratai Kindergarten are expected to enrich both global and local discourse on the interplay between learning motivation and early learning outcomes.

METHOD

This study uses a correlational quantitative approach to identify the relationships between variables in the population. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A correlational approach was selected because it allows for testing the strength and direction of associations between variables without manipulation, making it appropriate for early childhood education (PAUD) research where experimental methods often raise ethical concerns and are less aligned with children's developmental stages (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2019). The primary aim is to provide empirical evidence on how motivation contributes to children's academic and developmental achievements, offering a quantitative lens to complement theoretical models of early learning..

The population of this research includes all 60 students at Teratai Kindergarten, Kendari, in the 2024/2025 academic year, divided into Class A (4–5 years) and Class B (5–6 years). Using purposive sampling, 30 children in Class B were selected based on their age and minimum participation of one semester in learning activities, ensuring developmental comparability and meeting recommended sample thresholds for correlation studies (Cohen et al., 2018; Etikan et al., 2016).

Two core variables were investigated: (1) Learning motivation (X), defined as intrinsic and extrinsic impulses reflected in perseverance, curiosity, enthusiasm, and learning independence (Wigfield & Eccles, 2020); and (2) Learning outcomes (Y), referring to cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development assessed through teacher evaluations and standardized child development reports (NAEYC, 2022).

Data were collected using the *Early Childhood Learning Motivation Scale*, adapted from the Children's Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (CAIMI), contextualized into the local language, validated by experts, and piloted on a separate group of children. Teachers completed the instrument via

structured classroom observations using a three-point Likert scale ("often," "sometimes," "never"), ensuring ecological validity in capturing children's authentic learning behaviors.

Table 1. Children's learning motivation instruments

No	Statement
1	Children show enthusiasm when starting learning activities.
2	Children ask questions when they do not understand the task or instructions.
3	Children stay focused during learning activities.
4	The child completes the task without needing to be reminded many times.
5	The child shows a sense of pride after completing the task.
6	Children are interested in new learning activities.
7	The child repeats the learning activity even though it is not asked.
8	Children are willing to try new things in learning.
9	Children can work independently without always relying on teachers.
10	Children actively discuss with friends while studying.
11	Children show curiosity about learning materials.
12	Children do not give up easily when they experience difficulties.
13	Children welcome learning activities with joy.
14	Children have goals or expectations in learning (for example, wanting to be able to write).
15	Children show consistency in following the rules in the learning process.

Adaptation sources: (J. S. , Eccles & Wigfield, 2020), Deci & Ryan (2000), as well as modifications according to the local PAUD context.

2) Learning Outcome Document Learning outcome data is obtained from student development reports (semester report cards) which contain indicators of child development achievement in the cognitive, language, social-emotional, and motor fields. The assessment is sourced from authentic assessments conducted by teachers in accordance with national PAUD standards (Permendikbud No. 137 of 2014) and international assessment practices (NAEYC, 2022). (Based on documentation and developmental records from teachers in 4 domains: cognitive, language, social-emotional, motor)

Table 2. Children's learning outcomes instruments

Yes	Question
	Cognitive
1	Children are able to recognize and pronounce the numbers 1–10.
2	The child is able to recognize basic shapes (circles, triangles, squares).
3	Children can group objects by color or size.
4	Children are able to understand the concepts of many and little.
5	Children can solve simple puzzles.

	Language
6	Children can mention their names and family members.
7	Children are able to retell the stories they have heard.
8	The child correctly names the objects around him.
9	Children use simple sentences in communicating.
10	The child can follow the two-step instructions in sequence.
	Socio-emotional
11	Children can share toys with friends.
12	Children show empathy when they see friends who are sad.
13	Children can wait for their turn while playing or studying.
	Motor
14	Children are able to hold stationery correctly.
15	Children can follow simple movements (jumping, running, dancing).

Source: Permendikbud No. 137 of 2014 concerning Early Childhood Development Standards, NAEYC (2022), and early childhood development assessment based on the 2013 Early Childhood Education curriculum.

Data collection techniques include 1) Observation: Used to observe children's learning behavior during learning activities, especially indicators of learning motivation.2) Documentation: Used to access report cards and student development records that are used as learning outcome data. 3) Questionnaire: Provided to classroom teachers to fill in the learning motivation scale based on their observations of student behavior during learning. All data collection procedures are carried out with the written consent of the school and the parents of the students, as well as by paying attention to the ethical principles of research in early childhood.

Data were analyzed using the following statistical methods: 1) Descriptive StatisticsTo describe the data profile of learning motivation and learning outcomes, descriptive statistics were used in the form of average scores, standard deviations, minimum values, and maximums. 2) Test of Assumption of Normality and Linearity. The normality test was performed with the Shapiro-Wilk Test because the sample count was less than 50, while the linearity test was performed through ANOVA on simple regression. Both are important to ensure that the data are eligible for parametric correlation analysis (Field, 2018). 3) Pearson Correlation Test (r). It is used to find out if there is a significant relationship between learning motivation and children's learning outcomes. The correlation coefficient (r) will indicate the strength and direction of the relationship, as well as the level of significance ($p < 0.05$) used to test the hypothesis The use of this analysis is in accordance with the standards of correlational research, applied to measure the strength and direction of the relationships between relevant variables in the context of education and child psychology in a systematic, objective, and data-driven manner. (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

The following is a table of respondent characteristics for the study "The relationship between learning motivation and learning outcomes at Teratai Kindergarten in Kendari City":

Table 3. Characteristics of Research respondents

No	Respondent Characteristics	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Man	14	46,7
		Woman	16	53,3
2	Age	5 years	12	40,0
		6 years	18	60,0
3	Parents' Background	Elementary Education	6	20,0
		Junior High School Education	7	23,3
		High School Education	11	36,7
		Undergraduate Education	6	20,0
4	Parenting Work	PNS	8	26,7
		Self employed	10	33,3
		Farmer/Fisherman	5	16,7
		Other	7	23,3

The study was conducted on 30 class B children at Teratai Kindergarten in Kendari City. Learning motivation variables were measured using 15 instrument items, while learning outcomes were measured using documentation of developmental achievements on 15 indicators.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variabel	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Learning Motivation	30	38.6	4.21	30	45
Learning Outcomes	30	39.8	3.87	32	46

Descriptive results showed that the average child's learning motivation was in the high category (Mean = 38.6 from a maximum score of 45), while learning outcomes were also in the high category (Mean = 39.8 from a maximum score of 45). This indicates that most children have active involvement and good developmental achievements.

Assumption Test

Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk)

Table 5. Normality Test Results

Variabel	In	Itself.
Learning Motivation	0.961	0.324
Learning Outcomes	0.954	0.287

Both variables have a significance value of $p > 0.05$, so the data is normally distributed.

Linearity Test

The results of the ANOVA test on the simple regression model showed a value of Sig. = 0.001 (< 0.05), which means that the relationship between learning motivation and learning outcomes is linear.

Pearson Correlation Test

Table 6. Pearson Correlation Test Results

Variabel 1	Variabel 2	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
Learning Motivation	Learning Outcomes	0.726	0.000

The test results showed a value of $r = 0.726$ with $p < 0.001$, which means that there is a strong and significant positive relationship between learning motivation and learning outcomes of children at Teratai Kindergarten in Kendari City.

These findings indicate that the higher the child's motivation to learn, the higher the achievement of learning outcomes. These results are in line with the findings of Wigfield et al. (2025) who stated that children's intrinsic motivation contributes greatly to their cognitive, affective, and social-emotional development. In addition, research by Schunk et al. (2014) also confirms that motivation plays a key role as a major driver of academic success. The results of this study have practical implications for early childhood teachers, especially in developing learning strategies that can increase children's motivation to learn, such as the use of interactive play methods, giving praise, and simple project-based learning.

The findings of the study showed a positive and significant relationship between learning motivation and children's learning outcomes in Teratai Kindergarten, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.726$ ($p < 0.001$). (Kosec et al., 2022) This means that the higher the motivation to learn, the better the achievement of children's learning outcomes. These results are consistent with theoretical

principles such as Self-Determination Theory, which states that curiosity and intrinsic motivation increase engagement as well as academic outcomes Previous research has also emphasized that structured play environments, which stimulate word interaction, exploration, and curiosity, can increase early childhood learning motivation. This matter showed that an interactive play environment environment fosters children's motivation to become more active, vibrant, and curious. (Alotaibi, 2024; Hiltunen et al., 2024a; X. Liu et al., 2024; Petrowski et al., 2023)

The positive relationship between teachers and children has proven to be one of the crucial factors in shaping learning motivation and early childhood learning outcomes. A longitudinal study examining the transition from kindergarten to the classroom reveals that conflicts in children's teacher relationships can negatively impact children's reading interest, perseverance in completing assignments, as well as reading skills These findings underscore that the quality of social-emotional relationships between educators and learners has direct implications for academic development. In line with that, systematic reviews show that positive interactions between teachers and students play a role in supporting internal motivational regulation and active involvement in the learning process, thus creating a conducive and motivating learning environment. (Hiltunen et al., 2024a; X. Liu et al., 2024)

Parental involvement plays a vital role in shaping children's motivation and learning outcomes, especially at an early age. Based on ecological models, a positive home environment and sensitive and stimulating parenting have been proven to be able to foster children's curiosity and learning encouragement, even in families with low socioeconomic conditions. In addition, parental involvement through academic practices at home such as reading books, helping with simple tasks, and providing emotional support can increase children's academic motivation and involvement in school. Research shows that attention, open communication, and active involvement of parents in the educational process contribute significantly to the development of children's motivation and achievement. (Roberts et al., 2025; Ruig et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024; Zimmerman et al., 2017)

Informal contexts such as houses and museums also strengthen children's motivation. Science interaction with parents in everyday activities such as cooking, reading stories, or playing board games predicts improved scientific ability and motivation. Museum-like environments can also spark exploration and scientific conversations because of their interactive design. Self-regulated learning (SRL) and teacher-child interaction contribute significantly to motivation. In the classroom setting, instructional support, classroom management, and emotional support have been shown to influence student engagement, although results vary. However, at the dyad (teacher-student) level, a positive relationship was found between teacher-child closeness and motivation regulation. (Candia et al., 2022; Haryanti & Aryani, 2024; Hiltunen et al., 2024b; Moore et al., 2014)

In addition, emergent curriculum planning, which is designed flexibly and responsive to children's interests and needs, is able to encourage active participation, collaboration, and meaningful learning. This approach allows children to become co-creators in the learning process, so that their intrinsic motivation is further awakened. Social-emotional support (in the classroom) also has a significant role

in fostering motivation to learn. The SEL program implemented from kindergarten has been proven to be able to increase average academic achievement by up to 11 percentile and reduce the risk of children engaging in problematic behavior or criminal acts in the future. The integration of the emergent curriculum with SEL creates a learning environment that is safe, supportive, and relevant to children's lives, thereby encouraging their active engagement and holistic development. (Broaddus et al., 2019; Ruig et al., 2023; Stumm et al., 2011)

Thus, the correlation between learning motivation and learning outcomes shows a definitive causal relationship. Various external factors can play a role as mediators or moderators in this relationship, such as family support, the child's health condition, and the quality of teacher-child interaction. For example, the family's socio-economic background influences access to learning resources, while a home environment rich in intellectual stimulation can strengthen children's interest in learning Therefore, an analysis that considers these supporting variables is important to gain a more accurate understanding of the dynamics of children's motivation and learning achievement. (Candia et al., 2022; Mofatteh, 2021)

CONCLUSION

This study aims to identify the relationship between learning motivation and early childhood learning outcomes in Teratai Kindergarten, Kendari City. Based on data analysis using the Pearson correlation test, it was found that there was a significant positive relationship between learning motivation and learning outcomes. This means that the higher the child's motivation to learn, the better their learning outcomes will be in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. These results show that interventions to increase learning motivation need to be a priority in learning strategies in kindergarten. Teachers can integrate learning approaches that spark curiosity, provide challenges that are appropriate to the child's developmental level, and provide consistent positive reinforcement. In addition, the role of the family is crucial in building a supportive environment, both at school and at home.

However, it is important to note that the relationships found in this study are correlational, so they cannot be concluded to be cause-and-effect relationships. External factors such as family support, children's health conditions, the quality of teacher-child interaction, and the availability of learning facilities also have the potential to influence learning outcomes. Therefore, further research incorporating longitudinal or experimental designs is needed to more precisely identify causal relationships. Overall, this research contributes to the understanding of the importance of learning motivation in early childhood education, and is the basis for designing more effective learning policies and practices in Teratai Kindergarten in Kendari City and similar institutions.

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