

## The Effect of Educational Punishment on the Learning Motivation of Fifth-Grade Students at SDN 1 Selebung Ketangga

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### Abstract

Classroom discipline strategies are essential not only for correcting student behavior but also for supporting learning motivation in a proportional and educational manner. This study aims to analyze the effect of punishment on the learning motivation of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Selebung Ketangga in the 2022/2023 academic year. This study employed a quantitative approach with an *ex post facto* design. The sample consisted of fifth-grade students selected through total sampling in the class under study. Data were collected through questionnaires, observation, and documentation and analyzed using simple linear regression with SPSS 22. The results indicate that punishment has a positive and significant effect on students' learning motivation, as shown by a regression coefficient of 2.974 and a significance value of 0.006 ( $< 0.05$ ). The model output also shows an R Square value of 1.000, indicating a very high predictive level in the available data and therefore requiring careful interpretation in the context of educational behavioral research. These findings suggest that educational, proportional, and nonphysical punishment accompanied by pedagogical explanation can function as behavioral feedback that supports students' learning engagement. This study concludes that constructive classroom discipline plays an important role in maintaining elementary school students' learning motivation when implemented ethically and proportionally. Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on classroom management and learning motivation, while practically, it highlights the importance of

discipline strategies that respect students' psychological safety and promote positive learning behavior.

**Keywords:** Educational Punishment; Learning Motivation; Elementary School Students; Classroom Discipline; *Ex Post Facto*

## INTRODUCTION

Learning motivation is one of the important determinants of successful learning because it is related to students' direction, intensity, persistence, and engagement in achieving academic goals. From the perspective of contemporary motivation theory, learning behavior is influenced not only by students' internal drives but also by the classroom social context, teacher support, learning structure, and the forms of feedback students receive during the learning process (Filgona et al., 2020; Mega et al., 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Therefore, classroom management cannot be understood merely as an effort to control behavior; rather, it should be positioned as part of a pedagogical strategy to build learning engagement.

At the elementary school level, teachers play a strategic role in developing students' discipline, sense of responsibility, and learning habits. Teacher–student relationships, classroom structure, autonomy support, and a conducive school climate have been shown to be associated with student engagement and learning motivation (Jang et al., 2010; Konold et al., 2018; Reeve & Jang, 2006; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Skinner et al., 2008). In this context, punishment needs to be understood as an educational consequence aimed at improving behavior, not as a repressive action that undermines students' dignity.

Pedagogically, punishment may serve as a behavioral consequence when it is applied proportionally, consistently, nonphysically, and accompanied by explanations that help students understand their mistakes. However, theory and research also caution that excessive control, threats, and punishment that humiliates students may weaken intrinsic motivation and reduce students' psychological safety in learning (Aelterman et al., 2019; Deci et al., 1999; Reeve, 2009). Thus, the effectiveness of punishment depends greatly on its form, intensity, purpose, and the way teachers communicate it to students.

Research on reinforcement, reward, punishment, classroom management, and learning motivation has produced varied findings. Several studies indicate that reward and

punishment applied positively can improve students' discipline, responsibility, and learning motivation (Anggraini et al., 2019; Asmawati et al., 2020; Ernata, 2017; Febianti, 2018; Fitri & Ain, 2022; Ikhsan et al., 2022; Indrawati et al., 2021; Kusumawati et al., 2023; Melinda & Susanto, 2018). Conversely, international studies emphasize the need to distinguish educational punishment from psychologically harmful punishment, because effective classroom interventions place greater emphasis on clear expectations, constructive feedback, positive relationships, and social-emotional support (Ching, 2012; Durlak et al., 2011; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Korpershoek et al., 2016; Simonsen et al., 2008).

Preliminary observations at SDN 1 Sebung Ketangga showed that most fifth-grade students participated seriously in learning and responded to the teacher's questions. However, some students still talked while the teacher explained the material and were not yet active in the learning process. This condition indicates that learning motivation was not evenly distributed and required appropriate classroom management strategies. Based on this problem, the present study is relevant because it specifically examines the effect of punishment on fifth-grade students' learning motivation rather than merely discussing reward and punishment in general.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on punishment as a single variable in the context of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Sebung Ketangga. This focus is important because most previous studies have tended to combine reward and punishment in one construct, so the contribution of punishment to learning motivation has not always been explained separately. Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aimed to analyze the effect of punishment on the learning motivation of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Sebung Ketangga in the 2022/2023 academic year.

## **METHODS**

This study used a quantitative approach with an ex post facto design. This design was selected because the researchers did not provide direct treatment to the variables under investigation but analyzed the relationship between punishment as the independent variable (X) and learning motivation as the dependent variable (Y) based on conditions that had already occurred. Thus, this study was correlational-predictive in nature and was analyzed using simple linear regression.

The study was conducted at SDN 1 Selebung Ketangga in the 2022/2023 academic year. The population comprised all students at SDN 1 Selebung Ketangga, while the sample consisted of fifth-grade students who were the focus of the study. Based on the initial manuscript design, which used the entire fifth-grade class as the research sample, the sampling technique was formulated as total sampling of the classroom unit studied.

Research data were collected through questionnaires, observation, and documentation. The questionnaire was used to obtain scores for the punishment and learning motivation variables. The punishment variable was directed toward forms of educational consequences, such as reprimands, advice, warnings, and guidance tasks relevant to students' learning behavior. The learning motivation variable was directed toward indicators of attention in learning, persistence in completing assignments, active responses to the teacher, learning responsibility, and seriousness in following the learning process. Observation was used to observe students' learning behavior in class, while documentation was used to complete supporting data related to the learning process and school conditions.

Data processing was conducted using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression with SPSS 22. The decision-making process was performed by comparing the significance value with an alpha level of 0.05. Because the initial manuscript did not include raw data, the number of questionnaire items, validity test results, reliability test results, or regression assumption tests, the reporting of the method and results in this article was limited to the information available in the manuscript and the attached statistical output. Ethically, punishment in this study was positioned as an educational consequence that was nonphysical, proportional, non-humiliating, and did not undermine students' dignity.

## **RESULTS**

The research data available in the initial manuscript consisted of simple linear regression output between the punishment variable (X) and learning motivation (Y). The following results are reported based on the available SPSS output; therefore, the statistical interpretation is limited to the regression coefficient, significance value, and coefficient of determination.

**Table 1. Results of the Simple Linear Regression Test on the Effect of Punishment on Learning Motivation**

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	7.950	0.647	-	12.289	0.000
Punishment	2.974	0.004	1.000	324.252	0.006

Based on Table 1, the constant value was 7.950 and the punishment regression coefficient was 2.974. Thus, the regression equation obtained was  $Y = 7.950 + 2.974X$ . This equation indicates that every one-unit increase in the punishment score was predicted to be followed by a 2.974-unit increase in the learning motivation score, assuming other variables remained constant. The significance value of 0.006 was lower than 0.05, indicating that punishment had a significant effect on the learning motivation of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Selebung Ketangga based on the available output.

**Table 2. Coefficient of Determination for the Effect of Punishment on Learning Motivation**

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1.000	1.000	1.000	1.01669

Table 2 shows an R Square value of 1.000. Statistically, this value means that the variation in learning motivation was fully explained by the punishment variable in the available model. However, because a perfect relationship is rarely found in educational behavioral research, this value must be interpreted carefully and should not be overinterpreted without adequate support from descriptive data, sample size, and assumption tests.

Overall, the results show that punishment had a positive effect on students' learning motivation. This finding supports the alternative hypothesis that the provision of punishment was associated with the learning motivation of fifth-grade students. However, because the study used an ex post facto design, these results are not interpreted as an absolute causal relationship without considering other factors such as teaching style, classroom climate, family support, students' prior ability, and the type of punishment applied.

## DISCUSSION

The results show that punishment had a positive and significant effect on the learning motivation of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Selebung Ketangga. This finding can be understood because educational punishment may function as behavioral feedback, reinforcement of classroom rules, and a reminder of the consequences of actions that disrupt the learning process. In elementary school learning, clear rules and consistent consequences

can help students understand the boundaries of acceptable behavior so that learning becomes more orderly and directed (Korpershoek et al., 2016; Simonsen et al., 2008).

This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that reward and punishment, when appropriately applied, can promote students' discipline, responsibility, and learning motivation (Anggraini et al., 2019; Ernata, 2017; Febianti, 2018; Fitri & Ain, 2022; Ikhsan et al., 2022; Kusumawati et al., 2023; Melinda & Susanto, 2018). In the learning context, punishment should not be understood as a harsh action but as a measured consequence directed toward behavioral improvement. Thus, educational punishment can strengthen students' awareness of their learning obligations, especially when accompanied by explanation, constructive advice, and opportunities to correct mistakes.

Nevertheless, the results should also be read critically. Self-determination theory emphasizes that healthy learning motivation develops when students experience autonomy, competence, and social relatedness (Niemic & Ryan, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020). Punishment that is overly controlling, humiliating, or fear-inducing may inhibit intrinsic motivation and shift students' learning orientation merely toward avoiding punishment (Deci et al., 1999; Reeve, 2009). Therefore, the positive effect of punishment in this study should be understood within the limits of educational, nonphysical, proportional punishment that does not conflict with child protection principles.

From the perspective of classroom management, punishment will be more effective when combined with teacher support, specific feedback, positive reinforcement, and warm teacher–student relationships. Hattie and Timperley (2007) emphasized that effective feedback helps students understand their current learning position, the goals to be achieved, and the next steps for improvement. Similarly, Jang et al. (2010), Reeve and Jang (2006), and Skinner and Belmont (1993) showed that learning structure and autonomy support play an important role in increasing student engagement. This means that punishment cannot stand alone as a motivational strategy but must be part of a supportive learning system.

The R Square value of 1.000 is a statistical aspect that requires very careful interpretation. In educational research, a perfect coefficient of determination may occur because of a very small sample size, identical variable scores, the use of mutually dependent derived scores, or highly homogeneous data characteristics. Therefore, the strength of the relationship in this model should be understood as a finding based on the available data, not as a broad generalization to all elementary school learning contexts.

Theoretically, this study strengthens the discussion of punishment as one instrument for managing learning behavior. Practically, elementary school teachers need to implement punishment according to educational principles: clearly explaining the mistake, providing consequences relevant to the behavior, avoiding degrading physical and verbal punishment, and ending the consequence with guidance for improvement. Methodologically, future research is recommended to test a more comprehensive model by including reward, teacher teaching style, classroom climate, parental support, and learning engagement as predictors of learning motivation.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the simple linear regression analysis, the provision of punishment had a positive and significant effect on the learning motivation of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Selebung Ketangga. The regression coefficient of 2.974 and the significance value of  $0.006 < 0.05$  indicate that punishment was associated with increased learning motivation in the available data. Thus, the research objective of analyzing the effect of punishment on students' learning motivation has been answered.

The main contribution of this study lies in affirming that punishment can serve as a pedagogical strategy when applied as an educational consequence that is proportional, nonphysical, and directed toward improving learning behavior. The limitation of this study lies in the absence of detailed reporting on the number of respondents, sample characteristics, validity testing, reliability testing, descriptive data, and regression assumption tests in the initial manuscript. Future research is recommended to use validated instruments, report descriptive data comprehensively, compare different forms of punishment, and examine other variables that may influence students' learning motivation.

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