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The Significance and Appreciation of the "Reward of the Week" Program for Students at MI Islamiyah Pringlangu 01

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Abstract

The Reward of the Week program is an educational appreciation initiative implemented at MII Pringlangu 01 to recognize students' achievements, efforts, and positive behaviors. The program incorporates appreciation and rewards as forms of positive reinforcement to encourage desirable behaviors and character development. This study aims to describe the program's implementation, recognition criteria, and perceived contributions to students' motivation, confidence, behavior, and character development. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through interviews with the teacher responsible for the program and observations of students' behavior and development. Data were analyzed descriptively by organizing findings according to the research objectives and comparing interview and observation results. The findings reveal that recognition extends beyond academic achievement to include discipline, diligence, responsibility, active participation, politeness, cleanliness, concern for peers, and behavioral improvement. Appreciation is expressed through symbolic rewards, particularly pins, accompanied by congratulatory expressions and applause. These practices are perceived to enhance students' enthusiasm, confidence, discipline, responsibility, and classroom participation. Additionally, consistent recognition of positive behaviors encourages students to develop constructive habits and strengthens the school's appreciation culture. The program also demonstrates that acknowledging students' efforts and behavioral progress can provide meaningful encouragement beyond conventional academic assessment. Overall, the Reward of the Week program represents an educational appreciation practice that integrates symbolic recognition and positive reinforcement to support students' motivation, positive behavior, and character development. Its implementation highlights the potential of school-based recognition programs to foster a supportive learning environment that values both achievement and personal growth.

Keywords: *Appreciation, Motivation, Positive Reinforcement, Recognition, Reward of the Week*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Elementary school education is not only focused on academic achievement, but also on fostering students' motivation, engagement, discipline, and positive behavior. Motivation to learn is the driving force that makes students willing to participate in learning and persist in their efforts to achieve their learning goals (Liem, 2021; Tinto, 2025; Utami et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024). In the educational process, motivation can stem from within the student (intrinsic motivation)—such as curiosity, interest, and the satisfaction of successfully understanding something—or from external factors (extrinsic motivation), such as praise, grades, rewards, and other forms of recognition. Both sources of motivation can play a role in learning activities, but their use must be carefully considered so that external rewards do not become the sole reason students learn or behave positively (Bøe et al., 2025; Halamish et al., 2019; Lin-Siegler et al., 2016; Nur, 2025; Zhou & Zhang, 2024).

One form of external support commonly used in schools is appreciation or rewards. Appreciation can take the form of praise, words of recognition, encouragement, or specific awards given in recognition of students' efforts and behavior. Research (Wedanthi et al., 2025) shows that reinforcement through praise and recognition can boost student motivation and engagement. Similarly, (Al Rasyid et

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al., 2025) discusses the role of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards in relation to elementary school students' motivation to learn. However, extrinsic rewards cannot always be considered to have a positive impact in every situation. If rewards are too prominent or are given continuously as compensation for certain behaviors, there is a possibility that students will focus more on the reward than on understanding the value or purpose of the expected behavior. Therefore, appreciation should be viewed as a form of recognition and support, not as the sole driver of student behavior.

A number of studies have shown a link between the use of rewards and students' motivation and positive behavior. (Mulyawati, 2022) found a correlation The Relationship Between Rewards and Learning Motivation Among Elementary School Students, while (Gamilina & Noor, 2025) demonstrated that Students' perceptions of rewards are positively correlated with their motivation to learn, although rewards are not the only factor that determines motivation. (Damayanti & Yuliati, 2024) It also links rewards to motivation, active participation, and student behavior. In the context of character education, (Azis et al., 2026) explains that rewards can be implemented through learning, habit formation, extracurricular activities, and students' daily routines. However, these findings do not imply that every form of reward is always effective for all students or under all circumstances. The impact of rewards must be understood by considering the type of reward, the method of delivery, students' needs, and the educational goals to be achieved.

In addition to the issue of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, the awarding of rewards is also related to the principle of fairness. Unclear criteria for award recipients or inconsistent application can lead to perceptions of favoritism, unhealthy competition, or disappointment among students who have not received awards. (Alfaleh, 2026; Kadir & Rukaiyah, 2026; Schoneveld & Brummelman, 2023) emphasizes the importance of fairness, transparency, and relevance in the process of giving recognition. Therefore, schools need to ensure that the criteria for recognition are understandable, applied consistently, and take into account students' efforts and progress—not just their final results. Teachers also need to anticipate the possibility of reward dependency, which occurs when students engage in positive behaviors primarily to receive rewards. Any reinforcement provided should be accompanied by an explanation of the value of the behavior so that students will gradually be able to engage in it out of their own awareness and volition.

These various considerations are relevant to an assessment of the implementation of the "Reward of the Week" program at MII Pringlangu 01. Based on preliminary information from the teacher in charge of the program, awards are given weekly to students who demonstrate effort and positive behavior. Recipients are selected not only based on academic achievement but also by considering discipline, diligence, responsibility, active participation, politeness, cleanliness, concern for peers, and the development of positive attitudes in students. The award takes the form of a pin. These characteristics indicate that the program seeks to recognize various aspects of student development. However, the implementation of the program still needs to be examined openly, including how students interpret the award, how fairly the criteria are applied, and whether the recognition fosters positive behavior stemming from self-awareness or, conversely, risks making students reward-oriented.

This program is worth studying because previous research on rewards in elementary education has primarily focused on their relationship to motivation, participation, behavior, and character education. Meanwhile, the "Reward of the Week" program at MII Pringlangu 01 has a unique feature: it involves the routine provision of recognition based on observations of students' progress over the course of a week and encompasses a variety of positive behaviors. An examination of this program is important not to assume that the use of rewards is always beneficial, but rather to understand the meaning of appreciation from the perspective of program implementation and to explore the potential benefits and challenges associated with it, such as its impact on intrinsic motivation, perceptions of fairness, and students' attitudes toward rewards.

Based on the above description, this study focuses on the meaning and value of the "Reward of the Week" program for students at MII Pringlangu 01. The study aims to describe the implementation

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of the program, the forms and criteria of the rewards, as well as the significance of recognition for students' motivation, self-confidence, positive behavior, and character development. The research findings are expected to enrich the study of appreciation practices in elementary education and serve as a basis for teachers and schools to develop targeted, fair, and student-centered reward programs.

2. METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the implementation, forms of appreciation, and perceived significance of the Reward of the Week program for students at MII Pringlangu 01. This approach was considered appropriate for exploring how recognition and appreciation were incorporated into school practices and how students visibly responded to the program. Rather than measuring the program's effectiveness quantitatively, the study focused on describing its implementation and understanding its perceived contribution to students' motivation, positive behavior, and character development within the school context.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and direct observations. The primary informant was Ustadzah Kharisatun Nafilah, S.Pd., a teacher at MII Pringlangu 01 who was directly involved in and knowledgeable about the implementation of the program. The interview explored the program's background, objectives, selection criteria, implementation procedures, forms of recognition, and perceived benefits for students. Observations were conducted by university students participating in the School Field Experience (Pengenalan Lapangan Persekolahan, PLP) program during the Reward of the Week activities held on Tuesdays. These observations focused on the implementation process, recognition practices, student participation, and observable behavioral responses during the activities. The combination of interviews and observations enabled the researchers to examine both the teacher's explanations and the actual practices observed in the school environment.

Data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis through four stages: data organization, categorization, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. First, information obtained from interviews and observations was organized according to the research objectives. Second, the data were categorized into several themes, including program implementation, forms and criteria of appreciation, student responses, and the perceived significance of recognition for motivation and positive behavior. Third, the categorized findings were presented in narrative descriptions to identify patterns and relationships across the data. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the findings in relation to the research focus. To strengthen the credibility of the findings, methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing the teacher's interview responses with observational evidence. This process helped identify consistencies and differences between the reported implementation of the program and the practices observed during its activities.

The study has several methodological limitations. The interview involved only one teacher, while students, other teachers, and school administrators were not directly interviewed. Furthermore, observations primarily captured students' immediate responses during program activities rather than longitudinal changes in their behavior or character. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as a contextual description of the program's implementation and perceived significance rather than evidence of its causal effects on students' motivation, behavior, or character development.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on interviews with the teacher in charge of the "Reward of the Week" program at MII Pringlangu 01, it was found that the program serves as a form of school appreciation for students' efforts, attitudes, and positive behaviors demonstrated over the course of a week. Awards are granted not only for academic achievements but also by taking into account students' attitudes and habits during daily school activities. The program is implemented as an effort to encourage students to be more enthusiastic about learning, disciplined, and responsible, and to exhibit good behavior.

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The primary form of recognition in the "Reward of the Week" program is a pin that students can wear while on school premises. Additionally, teachers offer non-material appreciation in the form of praise, congratulations, and applause. According to the teachers, receiving the pin instills a sense of pride in students as their achievements are acknowledged, while praise and congratulations serve to demonstrate that the teachers notice the students' efforts and positive behavior.

In determining award recipients, teachers consider several criteria: discipline, diligence, responsibility, active participation in learning, politeness, cleanliness, concern for peers, and the positive progress demonstrated by the students. Both class teachers and subject teachers observe student behavior and activities during lessons and within the school environment. These observations serve as the basis for identifying students who meet the criteria for the award.

Based on information gathered from interviews, the mechanism for selecting award recipients has not been explained in detail. There is no information confirming whether the school employs written assessment indicators, specific evaluation forms, a nomination process, or teacher deliberations to determine the recipients. Furthermore, information regarding the possibility of a student receiving a pin again in a subsequent week is not yet available. Additionally, no detailed explanation has been obtained regarding how teachers align their assessments and ensure consistency in applying the award criteria.

According to the supervising teacher, the "Reward of the Week" program has had a notably positive impact on student morale and behavior. Students appear more enthusiastic about participating in lessons and strive to demonstrate good conduct. Teachers also noted behavioral improvements—such as increased discipline, greater responsibility in completing assignments, more active participation in class, and heightened self-confidence—following the receipt of awards. However, information regarding the program's impact is currently based on teacher observations and lacks data reflecting the experiences of the entire student body.

Publicly presenting awards in the form of pins is a distinctive feature of this program. Teachers report that students who receive pins often feel proud, as the awards can be worn and seen by their peers. However, the interviews conducted have not specifically explored the reactions of students who have not received an award—including potential feelings of disappointment, jealousy, or peer comparison. Consequently, it remains unclear how this practice of public recognition affects the social dynamics and emotional well-being of the class as a whole.

In addition to boosting motivation, the "Reward of the Week" program aims to instill values such as discipline, responsibility, hard work, honesty, self-confidence, independence, and mutual respect. Teachers emphasize that students should not perform good deeds solely to earn a pin; rather, they are expected to maintain good behavior because they understand the importance of such attitudes in daily life. Teachers encourage students who have not yet received an award not to be discouraged, urging them to continue striving for positive progress.

Teachers hope that the "Reward of the Week" program will continue to be implemented and developed at MII Pringlangu 01. The program is intended to serve as a means of acknowledging students' efforts and behavior, while also fostering improvements in discipline, responsibility, learning motivation, and academic achievement. Interview results indicate that the program has established award criteria and involves teachers in the process of observing students. However, further data collection is required to clarify details regarding recipient selection procedures, assessment consistency, the possibility of repeat awards, and students' experiences with the public presentation of pins. The following is a summary of the interview findings:

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Table 1. *Aspects and Findings*

Aspects	Findings
Objective	To enhance motivation, enthusiasm for learning, discipline, and positive behavior.
Criteria	Diligent, disciplined, responsible, polite, clean, proactive, caring, and showing positive progress.
Program expectations	The program continues to be implemented and developed as a positive aspect of student culture.
Forms of reward	Pins, congratulations and 4. applause
Assessors	Class teachers and subject teachers

The findings indicate that the Reward of the Week program at MII Pringlangu 01 represents a school-based appreciation practice designed to recognize students' efforts, achievements, and positive behaviors demonstrated throughout the week. Unlike recognition practices that primarily emphasize academic performance, this program incorporates various behavioral and personal development criteria, including discipline, diligence, responsibility, active classroom participation, politeness, cleanliness, concern for peers, and observable behavioral improvement. These criteria suggest that the school conceptualizes student achievement more broadly than academic attainment, recognizing positive behavior and personal development as meaningful components of the educational process. Such an approach is relevant to elementary education, where learning involves not only the acquisition of knowledge and skills but also the gradual development of attitudes, habits, and social responsibility. In this context, appreciation functions as a means of communicating which behaviors are valued within the school environment.

The emphasis on recognizing different forms of achievement provides an opportunity to reconsider conventional understandings of student success. Students who may not consistently demonstrate outstanding academic performance can still receive recognition for their efforts, improvement, and contributions to classroom life. This broader conception of achievement is educationally significant because students possess different abilities, developmental characteristics, and opportunities to demonstrate competence. Appreciation directed toward effort and behavioral progress may help students understand that educational success is not determined exclusively by examination results or academic rankings. (Wahiddah & Julia, 2022; Yoshida, 2022) similarly discussed the importance of appreciation and recognition in encouraging students' positive responses to educational activities. However, appreciation should not be interpreted merely as the distribution of rewards. Its educational significance lies in the message communicated to students regarding the value of their efforts, behaviors, and contributions to the learning community. Consequently, the Reward of the Week program can be interpreted as an institutional practice through which the school communicates expectations while acknowledging students' individual development.

An important aspect of the program concerns the criteria and procedures used to determine award recipients. The findings identify several characteristics considered worthy of appreciation, yet these characteristics encompass relatively broad behavioral dimensions. For example, discipline may be demonstrated through punctuality, adherence to classroom agreements, or consistent completion of assigned responsibilities, while concern for peers may be reflected in helping classmates, sharing learning materials, or responding appropriately to others' difficulties. Although these examples illustrate how the criteria could be operationalized, the available findings do not establish that the school formally employs these specific indicators. This distinction is important because the existence of recognition criteria does not necessarily demonstrate that selection procedures are consistently implemented. The educational credibility of an appreciation program depends partly on whether students understand the expectations associated with recognition and whether teachers apply the criteria fairly.

From an educational perspective, transparent and consistent selection procedures are essential for preventing recognition from being perceived as arbitrary or dependent on teachers' personal

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preferences. If the criteria remain unclear, students may have difficulty identifying which behaviors deserve recognition or how they can demonstrate progress. Furthermore, students who consistently receive awards may be perceived as favored, even when teachers intend to acknowledge genuine achievement. The program would therefore benefit from clearly communicated indicators, systematic observation of students' progress, and opportunities for recognition across different behavioral dimensions. Such procedures could help maintain the program's educational orientation while minimizing subjective judgments. Nevertheless, the present study did not comprehensively document the mechanisms used to select recipients, including whether nominations, scoring systems, teacher deliberations, or specific behavioral records were employed. Therefore, the discussion of transparency and fairness represents an implication derived from the identified recognition criteria rather than a confirmed assessment of the school's selection practices.

Another important finding concerns the symbolic significance of the pin awarded to selected students. According to the teacher's explanation, students who receive the award appear happy and confident because the pin represents acknowledgment of their positive efforts and can be displayed within the school environment. Unlike material rewards with primarily economic value, the pin functions as a visible symbol of recognition and achievement. Its significance may therefore arise less from its physical characteristics than from the social meaning attached to receiving it. The combination of pins, congratulatory expressions, and applause also creates a public moment of appreciation in which students' efforts are acknowledged by teachers and peers. These practices suggest that recognition within the program involves both symbolic rewards and interpersonal affirmation, allowing appreciation to become part of the school's everyday social interactions.

The symbolic function of the pin can be interpreted through the concept of positive reinforcement, which explains how favorable consequences following behaviors may increase the likelihood of those behaviors being repeated. In the context of the Reward of the Week program, recognition is intended to encourage students to maintain discipline, demonstrate responsibility, participate actively, and engage in positive social interactions. (Lewis et al., 2016; O'Rourke et al., 2014; Setyaningsih & Djukri, 2020), who examined a point-and-pin reward method in relation to students' learning interest and outcomes, provide a relevant comparison concerning the educational use of symbolic rewards. However, an important distinction must be maintained between the intention to reinforce behavior and empirical evidence that reinforcement has occurred. The present study documents recognition practices and reported student responses but does not systematically measure whether behaviors increased after students received the award. Therefore, positive reinforcement is used as a conceptual framework for interpreting the program's intended mechanism rather than as evidence of a demonstrated behavioral effect.

The relationship between appreciation and learning motivation also requires consideration beyond the immediate pleasure associated with receiving an award. The findings suggest that teachers perceive recognition as a means of encouraging students to become more enthusiastic about learning, complete assignments, participate in classroom activities, and demonstrate positive behavior. (Arianty & Watini, 2022) similarly discussed the potential contribution of rewards to students' learning motivation. Recognition may provide an immediate motivational stimulus because students associate desirable behaviors with positive acknowledgment from teachers and peers. However, the presence of external incentives does not necessarily indicate that students have developed a sustained interest in learning or an internal commitment to positive behavior. Students may respond enthusiastically to an award while continuing to depend on external recognition to maintain the behaviors being encouraged. For this reason, the educational significance of the program should be evaluated not only through students' visible enthusiasm during award activities but also through the extent to which positive behaviors are maintained independently of recognition.

This distinction can be further understood through self-determination theory, which emphasizes the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness in supporting motivation and

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personal development (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Recognition may support students' sense of competence when it communicates that their efforts and improvements are meaningful. Similarly, appreciation expressed through encouragement and positive teacher–student interactions may contribute to students' feelings of acceptance and belonging within the school community. Nevertheless, rewards may have different motivational implications depending on how students interpret them. When recognition is experienced as informative feedback about progress, it may strengthen students' perceived competence. Conversely, when students perceive rewards primarily as instruments of control or conditions for receiving approval, external recognition may weaken their sense of autonomy. Thus, the educational value of the Reward of the Week program cannot be determined solely by the frequency or visibility of awards. It also depends on whether recognition encourages students to understand the value of positive behavior beyond the possibility of receiving a pin.

The manner in which appreciation is communicated is equally important. Henderlong and Lepper (2002) explained that praise may support, undermine, or have little influence on intrinsic motivation depending on its content, sincerity, and social context. Praise is particularly meaningful when it acknowledges controllable aspects of students' performance, supports their perceived competence, and avoids excessive dependence on social comparison. Applied to the present findings, this perspective suggests that recognition should emphasize specific efforts and observable improvements rather than fixed personal qualities or generalized judgments. For instance, acknowledging a student's consistent effort in completing responsibilities provides more informative feedback than simply describing the student as superior to classmates. Such recognition may help students identify the behaviors they can continue developing. Although the present study did not analyze the precise wording used by teachers during award presentations, the theoretical perspective highlights the importance of ensuring that appreciation communicates constructive feedback rather than merely distinguishing award recipients from other students.

Public recognition also introduces a social dimension that deserves critical attention. The visibility of pins and the practice of announcing recipients may contribute to positive emotional experiences by allowing students to share their achievements with classmates. At the same time, public acknowledgment may create opportunities for social comparison when students interpret recognition as evidence of their relative standing within the group. This possibility becomes particularly relevant when awards are distributed repeatedly and some students receive recognition more frequently than others. Students who are not selected may respond in different ways: some may feel motivated to improve, while others may experience disappointment or perceive the process as unfair. However, these responses cannot be assumed to occur in the present setting because the study did not directly investigate the perspectives of students who had not received awards. The findings therefore support an examination of potential social implications rather than a conclusion that the program produces competition, exclusion, or negative peer relationships.

To maintain its inclusive educational purpose, the program could place greater emphasis on individual progress and diverse opportunities for recognition. Recognizing improvement relative to students' previous behavior, rather than relying exclusively on comparisons between students, may provide a more developmentally appropriate basis for appreciation. This approach is especially relevant because elementary school students differ in their readiness, confidence, social experiences, and learning circumstances. Teachers could also communicate that receiving an award does not represent a permanent classification of students as successful or unsuccessful. Instead, recognition can be presented as acknowledgment of particular efforts and positive actions demonstrated during a specific period. Such an approach may help students understand that positive development remains possible for everyone and that appreciation is intended to encourage growth rather than establish social hierarchies. These considerations are recommendations for strengthening implementation and should not be interpreted as evidence that the existing program lacks inclusiveness.

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Beyond motivation and confidence, the Reward of the Week program is also relevant to the school's character education practices. The inclusion of discipline, responsibility, diligence, politeness, cleanliness, and concern for peers demonstrates that the school seeks to recognize behaviors associated with personal and social development. Character education in this context is not limited to conveying moral values through verbal instruction but also involves encouraging students to demonstrate those values through everyday actions. Recognition may help make behavioral expectations more visible by connecting abstract values with concrete experiences within the school environment. (Kurniawati, 2021), who examined reward-and-punishment practices in relation to elementary students' discipline, provides a relevant point of comparison regarding the use of behavioral recognition in school settings. Nevertheless, the present program differs conceptually from approaches that combine rewards and punishment because its reported practices emphasize positive acknowledgment rather than punitive consequences.

The relationship between recognition and character development is particularly important because character formation requires more than short-term behavioral compliance. Students may demonstrate desirable behaviors to obtain an award without necessarily understanding or accepting the values underlying those behaviors. For example, maintaining classroom cleanliness because of the possibility of receiving recognition is not necessarily equivalent to developing personal responsibility for a shared environment. Similarly, helping classmates to receive appreciation differs conceptually from demonstrating concern based on empathy and social awareness. These distinctions do not diminish the potential value of recognition but indicate that rewards should be integrated with educational experiences that encourage reflection and understanding. Teachers may strengthen the program by discussing why particular behaviors matter, providing opportunities for students to reflect on their actions, and demonstrating the same values through everyday interactions. In this way, external appreciation can complement, rather than replace, the development of internalized values.

The findings also suggest that the program may contribute to establishing a school culture in which positive behaviors receive explicit acknowledgment. School culture is developed through repeated interactions, shared expectations, and everyday practices that communicate what members of the school community consider valuable. By recognizing student effort and positive conduct regularly, the Reward of the Week program provides a structured opportunity for teachers to communicate educational expectations. The weekly nature of the activity may help make appreciation a recurring school practice rather than an occasional response to exceptional achievement. Nevertheless, the existence of regular recognition activities does not automatically establish a supportive school culture. Such a culture also depends on how teachers respond to students who struggle, whether appreciation is distributed fairly, and whether students experience respect and encouragement outside formal award activities. Therefore, the program is better understood as a potential contributor to an appreciative school environment rather than definitive evidence that such a culture has been fully established.

From a broader educational perspective, the program illustrates how relatively simple recognition practices may be incorporated into school activities without requiring elaborate material incentives. The use of pins, verbal congratulations, and applause demonstrates an approach in which symbolic acknowledgment is central to the appreciation process. This is significant because educational recognition does not necessarily depend on the monetary value of rewards. Instead, its meaning emerges through the relationship between recognition, teacher feedback, student experiences, and the values communicated by the school. However, symbolic rewards should not be considered universally beneficial. Their educational implications depend on the developmental characteristics of students, the clarity of recognition criteria, the consistency of implementation, and the interpersonal environment in which awards are presented. The program should therefore be interpreted as a context-specific educational practice whose potential benefits require continued reflection and evaluation.

The present findings also highlight several methodological considerations. Information regarding the objectives, criteria, and perceived significance of the program was obtained primarily from one

teacher involved in its implementation, while observations provided descriptive evidence of activities and visible student responses. This combination offers insight into how the program is organized and understood within the school context. However, the absence of direct interviews with students limits the study's ability to explain how recipients and non-recipients personally interpret recognition. Furthermore, observations of program activities cannot establish whether changes in motivation, discipline, confidence, or character persist over time. The reported contributions should therefore be understood as teacher-perceived benefits and theoretically plausible educational implications, rather than verified causal outcomes. Future studies could incorporate student interviews, perspectives from additional teachers and parents, repeated behavioral observations, and documentation of award distribution to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the program's implementation and outcomes.

Overall, the Reward of the Week program at MII Pringlangu 01 can be interpreted as an educational appreciation practice that integrates symbolic recognition, positive reinforcement, and character-related expectations into regular school activities. Its distinctive contribution lies in broadening the meaning of student achievement beyond academic performance by acknowledging effort, behavioral improvement, social responsibility, and positive participation. The findings illustrate how relatively simple appreciation practices can communicate educational values and provide students with opportunities to experience recognition for their contributions to school life. Nevertheless, the relationship between appreciation and student development is not automatic; it depends on how recognition is selected, communicated, experienced, and connected to meaningful learning experiences. The program's educational significance is therefore best understood not in terms of the pin itself, but through its potential to encourage reflection, reinforce constructive behavior, and cultivate a learning environment that values individual progress and mutual respect. By prioritizing transparent criteria, inclusive recognition, and the gradual internalization of positive values, the program may contribute to educational practices that support students' development beyond immediate rewards.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that the *Reward of the Week* program at MII Pringlangu 01 serves as an educational appreciation practice that recognizes students' academic efforts, positive behaviors, and character development through symbolic rewards and verbal recognition. Based on the teacher's perceptions and observed program activities, the initiative is considered to encourage students' learning motivation, discipline, responsibility, active participation, and self-confidence while promoting positive values such as politeness, cleanliness, and concern for others. However, the findings do not establish the program's long-term effectiveness, as the study relied primarily on one teacher's perspective and observations of students' immediate responses. Furthermore, the transparency of recipient selection, consistency of assessment, and potential implications of public recognition for students who do not receive awards require further examination. Therefore, continuous evaluation involving teachers and students is necessary to strengthen the program's fairness, inclusiveness, and educational relevance. Overall, the significance of the *Reward of the Week* program lies not merely in the distribution of rewards but in its potential to cultivate a supportive school environment that values individual progress, encourages positive behavior, and contributes to students' holistic development.

AI USAGE STATEMENT

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT as an AI-assisted tool for language editing, improving sentence structure, organizing ideas, and proofreading. The author reviewed and edited the content generated by ChatGPT as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of this publication.

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