A Case Study Investigation into Teacher View’s on Extrinsic Rewards and Intrinsic Motivation in the Educate Together Primary School Classroom

Professional Masters of Education (PME)

2020

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Date of submission: 11/05/2020

Word count: 10,752
Declaration

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Abstract

The purpose of this master’s dissertation is to develop a greater understanding of teacher’s views on the use of extrinsic rewards and on the promotion of intrinsic motivation in the primary school classroom. The researcher is interested in the ongoing debate in the educational psychology field on the effectiveness of the two types of motivation in the classroom context. The researcher was eager to hear the views of teachers who, on a practical level, utilise classroom management and motivational strategies to best support pupil learning. Dealing with an interviewee group of Educate Together teachers from the same school, this project is a case study investigation, which used qualitative methods in data collection. The data revealed overwhelming support for the promotion of intrinsic motivation in the classroom. Despite views on the use of extrinsic rewards being mixed, most of the teachers valued praise as an effective extrinsic motivator.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Richard Coady for all his help and guidance throughout this process. I would like to give my gratitude to each of the Marino lecturers who have taught me over the past two years. I would also like to thank each of my peers in Marino, many of whom have become good friends. It has been a fantastic experience. Lastly, I would like to thank Linda, Ger and Matthew for their unwavering support of me and their accommodation of my writing of this thesis during a global pandemic.
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Introduction

Project purpose

This project is a case study investigation into teacher views on the use of extrinsic rewards and the promotion of intrinsic motivation in an Educate Together (ET) primary school. This study analyses teacher practices by gathering data on their opinions on reward systems and classroom management strategies. ET, who adopt a brand of multi-denominational, progressive schooling, are a growing component in Irish education (Mulcahy, 2006). One ET school in the North of Dublin, in which a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, will provide the context for this study. This research will assess classroom management strategies and practice, as informed by the teacher’s own educational experiences and beliefs.

The ET ethos revolves around a child-centred approach which lends itself to the belief that children should have a certain amount of autonomy and voice in the classroom (Educate Together, 2005). Educational motivation research, as discussed in the literature review, suggests these factors can foster an enjoyment of learning and enhance a pupil’s intrinsic motivation. However, as developed from a behaviourist theory perspective, it can be argued that many students benefit from a more structured, extrinsically based reward system in their classroom (Cameron & Pierce, 1994; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). The aim of this research project has been to try and establish what works best for teachers, in practical classroom scenarios in this ET school, while uncovering the variables that result in teacher’s choice of classroom management strategies and reward systems.

Relevance and context for the study
National and international research has been conducted on what affects pupil motivation in education. However, there is a gap in the research regarding primary school teacher’s views on such methods of pupil motivation. Hoffmann et al. (2009) stress that “there is a critical need for more studies to explore teacher perceptions of reward use in schools and the potential effects of rewards on intrinsic motivation to learn” (p.847).

Furthermore, as ET is a new school type it can be assumed that there has been fewer research studies done on the views of teachers working in an ET school setting (Mulcahy, 2006). Two relevant studies of note are Mulcahy’s (2006) study on ET community and voice, and Lalor’s (2013) case study on the role of ET within a pluralist Ireland. The researcher wants to develop a greater understanding as to the classroom management choices teachers make, to fill this gap in the research. Progressing as a newly qualified primary school teacher, the researcher aims to develop their classroom management skills and believes that they will learn from the data gathered in this study. Finally, the researcher wants to assess whether the child-centred approach of the ET ethos is applied in each class of the school.

Regarding the effects of rewards on pupil motivation, there has been a continued disagreement in the fields of educational and motivational literature. Relevant literature, theory, and research regarding this debate will be discussed in the literature review. The researcher argues the potential benefit of this debate being analysed from the practical perspectives of teachers.

The question of how or even if rewards should be used in educational settings has been a topic of debate in motivation and education research for many years, yet it is ironic that this dialogue has rarely included the voices of classroom teachers. (Hoffmann et al., 2009, p.843)
In this instance, the voice of classroom teachers will come from the ET school in question. Data on their practices, experiences and beliefs will be presented and discussed. The data will then be analysed using the motivational theories and relevant literature as will be discussed in the literature review.

**Definitions**

Driving engagement and achievement, Kovach (2018) describes motivation as an essential construct not only in education but in life. Ormrod (2016) defines this construct simply as a state in which action and focus is stimulated to achieve an objective. Rewards can also stimulate action, as Witzel & Mercer (2003) describe a reward in an educational context as a reinforcement tool that teachers use to motivate and illicit behaviours from their pupils. Typically, classroom rewards and motivation fall into one of two categories: extrinsic and intrinsic (O’Donnell et al, 2012). Bilouk (2015) describes extrinsic rewards as tangible rewards that are given to encourage or commend behaviour or performance. In contrast, intrinsic motivation comes from the pupil’s own internal desire to engage in tasks and conduct themselves appropriately, without the presence of an external reinforcer. Finally, encompassing values and aims, ethos is a term used in education to describe the philosophy and over-arching beliefs of a school or organization (Donnelly, 2000). This suggests that the ethos of a school will influence how the school is run, the values that are upheld throughout, and potentially the classroom processes.

**Research questions**

This research involves the interviewing of seven ET teachers with a goal of developing a greater understanding of their views on the use of rewards and management strategies in the primary school classroom. The fundamental questions of the research are:

- Does the ET ethos effect the way the teachers run their classrooms?
• Are extrinsic rewards beneficial, or do they damage a pupil’s natural inclination toward learning?
• Do teachers believe they can effectively manage a classroom relying only on intrinsic pupil motivation?

Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the case study, providing the rationale for the study and highlighting the aims of the researcher. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature on the topic of study. It also establishes the position of the study within the current Irish educational context. It reviews motivational theories and relevant educational studies. The methodology used to gather the data is discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents, discusses, and analyses the data, suggesting indications of the findings. In this chapter, the qualitative data is presented thematically. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings of this case study, then suggests recommendations and suggestions for future research before concluding the dissertation.
Review of the pertinent literature

This chapter explores the literature in the area of the study. It discusses several theories and contentious arguments, while assessing relevant studies. This literature review will provide the foundation to review teacher’s views and practical approaches. It begins by providing a brief historical and Irish context for the study. As the project is a case study on an ET school, a review of the ET ethos and relevant literature regarding the school type will follow. The chapter then reviews literature on the psychology of rewards and motivation, under which two subheadings of extrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivation will be discussed. Literature regarding classroom management strategies will then follow, before assessing variables affecting strategies and rewards in the classroom. The chapter is then summarised and concluded in the final section.

History & broader Irish context

This sub-chapter outlines the historical and Irish context of this study. Prior to the 20th century, child education in Ireland was undergoing development. The focus of children’s role in society had shifted from an economic one, to one in which their education had become more valued (Hyland, 2014). Hyland (2014) describes how society’s changed view of childhood and its purpose coincided with developments in the aims of teaching and education. The education of children in Ireland was now concentrated on the development of religious and moral character, in which discipline was deemed to be a key component (Wallace, Franklin, & Keegan, 2010). This change was articulated by Locke (1693) who recognized that a child was neither naturally a good child nor a bad child but was one who, as a developing individual, could have their character and behaviour shaped and manipulated by an educator. Locke (1693) described how the optimal way of manipulating behaviour was the
building of esteem through praise and reward for the demonstration of positive behaviours, and punishment in the form of disgrace for negative ones. Irish schools typically used the latter technique, with teachers giving severe punishments to pupils who erred from the desired behaviours (Hyland, 2014).

However, Ireland went on to develop a national curriculum based on child-centred ideals in 1971. The curriculum was designed to foster positive pupil-teacher relationships with the creation of child-appealing, positive classroom environments (Walshe, 2004). These developments lead to the 1982 abolishment of corporal punishment in the Irish Education system. However, Irish attitudes were not necessarily welcoming of this development at the time, only receiving a reported 58% of public support prior to implementation, according to a study by Kellaghan et al. (1981). The sample number of the study was 994, with 27% describing it as a ‘change for the worst.’ The study sought response from the Irish public on new practices which had been introduced in the 1960s and 1970s, which included the changing of the school leaving age and mixing of genders in classrooms (Kellaghan et al., 1981).

These developments in the education systems were to see a shift in the role of the teacher. It saw a deviation from the authoritative, disciplinarian figure, to one which aimed to best support the development of behavioural and moral character through positive educational experiences (Hyland, 2014). New expectations were placed on the teacher, recognizing their influence on the child’s broad, holistic development (O’Connor, 2008). The Teaching Council of Ireland (2012) emphasize this point, stating that teachers’ practice is “motivated by the best interests of the pupils entrusted to their care,” which is to be demonstrated “through positive influence, professional judgement and empathy” (p.5). Hyland concludes that the role of teacher, the societal view of childhood and its purpose, and
the way in which child behaviours are viewed and managed, have greatly changed over the past hundreds of years, and will continue to grow and develop in the years to come.

Educate Together schools

Established in 1831, the Irish national school system originally supported the multidenominational approach (Mulcahy, 2006). However, interjection from the Church resulted in the school system we have in Ireland today, with the vast majority of schools operating under the patronage of the Catholic church. Irwin (2018) describes how “one of the distinctive features of the Irish educational system at primary level, is the preponderance of denominational and faith-based schooling” (p.16). As of 2019, just over 96% of primary schools are denominational (Central Statistics Office, 2019).

Ireland’s first ET school, Dalkey School Project, was founded by a group of parents in 1978. The initial aim of the organization was to provide equality of access to children and families of any religion or none, in what was and remains a culturally developing Ireland (Educate Together, 2018). Ireland has been quickly developing into a diverse society since the 1990s, and the rise of this brand of culturally inclusive, non-denominational education has continued to grow (Fischer, 2016). As of 2020, ET have 92 primary schools in Ireland with three new ones due to open by the start of the new school year (Educate Together, 2020). These figures demonstrate an expansion of ET, as a component of progressivism in the Irish education system which has been developing over the past century (Irwin, 2018). ET have developed their ethos to revolve around ‘four pillars’ which have remained relatively unchanged since the school’s inception. As well as being multidenominational, they have structured their ethos to be “child-centred, democratic and co-educational” (LETNS, 2005). Educate Together (2005) explain that “its policies and procedures and should be reflected in all interactions within the school community,” implying that teachers in ET schools will
consider the pillars when designing and implementing classroom management strategies. The four pillars are detailed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four pillars</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equality-based/Multi-denominational</td>
<td>Children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural, and religious backgrounds being equally respected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-centred</td>
<td>In their approach to education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratically run</td>
<td>With active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, with due regard however for the professional role of teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-educational</td>
<td>Committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Mulcahy (2007, p.57)

**Child-centred education**

Having considered the four ET pillars, the one which stands out the most in its relevance to this study is ‘child-centred’ practice. Schools have progressed from using corporal punishment as a means regulating behaviour in teacher-led classrooms to adopting the more child-centred approach as detailed by ET and the NCCA, respectfully. Upon research of the more child-centred 1999 NCCA Curriculum, Irwin (2018) explains how the domination of this style in education today was birthed from a response to educational issues linked with the more authoritarian, traditional style of teacher-centred education that had come before. Such issues had been highlighted by educational philosopher John Dewey.
Dewey (1897) who listed several weaknesses of the more-traditional, teacher-centred style of education. This included pupil detachment from educational tasks, disregarding of pupil interest, and control of the classroom through authoritarian discipline instead of through pupil engagement. Despite Dewey being a central figure of the child-centred, progressivist educational movement, Irwin (2018) describes how Dewey maintained a sense of scepticism regarding the implementation of child-centred education in the place of teacher-centred education. Educational philosopher Freire (1996) argued that a lot of child-centred education impairs the student-teacher relationship. In line with the viewpoints of Freire (1996), Dewey described how an exaggerated focus on the child at the centre of the learning process undermines the role of the teacher. He argued that child-centred education should only be applied as an enhancement of the traditionalist style of education. Educational philosophies, such as those detailed by Freire and Dewey, pertain to the research question in that they underpin the choices teachers make in their classrooms when choosing between child and teacher-centred classroom management setups.

**Psychology of motivation and rewards in the classroom**

Let us now consider the psychological processes involved in motivation, which determine pupil actions and behaviour in the classroom. A considerable amount of literature has been published on theories of motivation in educational contexts, including the gathering of much empirical research (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006; Kovach, 2018; Hoffmann et. al, 2009). While there are many theories of motivation and behaviour, the researcher has selected several of focus as they pertain to this study which will be analysed below.

Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs assess the broad range of needs of an individual, which posit that motivation increases as the needs are sequentially met. The Department of Education and Skills (2007) have since used Maslow’s hierarchy in designing a checklist for essential pupil needs in the teacher guidelines *Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of*
Support. They describe how these levels detail the route towards self-actualisation and the fulfilment of potential. One question that needs to be asked, however, is whether the final level of self-actualisation can be achieved without sequential completion of the previous stages. Several researchers have since critiqued Maslow’s hierarchy, arguing this achievement to be possible (Routledge, 2013; Harrigan & Commons, 2015). Perhaps, Maslow’s theory serves as a basic framework for which an individual’s circumstance can be understood.

Like Maslow’s hierarchy, Deci & Ryan’s (1985) self-determination theory (SDT) states that pupils have three essential needs. SDT’s needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness can be positively or negatively influenced by classroom environments (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006). Deci & Ryan (1985) suggest classrooms environments and processes should be designed with an awareness of these needs to provide opportunities for optimal learning experiences. In the way that Maslow argued that the needs of the hierarchy are sequential, the needs of SDT are interdependent. In the classroom context, Urdan & Schoenfelder (2006) describe how “relatedness provides security required for students to take autonomous initiative; feeling autonomous in completing tasks promotes competence; competence provides the confidence to feel accepted and related to those around them” (p.336). SDT revolves around valuing the development of a sense of control in the pupil within the circumstances around them.

The benefit of developing this sense of control is mirrored in Rotter’s (1966) locus of control theory. From an educational perspective, the theory suggests that pupils with an ‘internal locus of control’ will view their own actions and efforts as primary influencers of the circumstances they are in. This suggests that they will view effort and self-application as the pathway to success and they will take responsibility for their actions in the classroom while understanding their role in the classroom environment (Kovach, 2018).
The original psychology of rewards must also be considered as it pertains to study. In the 1960s, the concept of operant conditioning was developed by psychologist BF Skinner. Within an educational context, operant conditioning is present when teachers introduce consequences for pupil actions, in the form of reward and/or punishment (Bartlett & Burton, 2016). Original critics of this approach include Masden et al. (1968), who assessed operant conditioning in operation in a primary school. They argued that such behaviourist approaches must only be executed with competence if they are to be beneficial. When adapting the operant conditioning approach, Bartlett & Burton (2016) describe how “the challenge in education is to harness the external reinforcer to an intrinsic desire to learn” (p.198).

From the 1970s, the practice of using extrinsic reinforcement to influence pupil behaviour was further critiqued by cognitive psychologists who believed that extrinsic reinforcements in the classroom damage intrinsically motivated behaviour once the reward was taken away (Hoffmann et al., 2009). There has since been debate in the field of education and psychology with theorists, educators and researchers differing on their opinions on the use of rewards in the classroom. On one hand, researchers like Kohn (1999) argue against the use of rewards in an educational context, perceiving the use of rewards by teachers as tools of manipulation to obtain pupil compliance (Hoffmann et al., 2009). On the other hand, however, educational psychologist Cameron (2001) argues the case that the use of extrinsic rewards did not show negative effects in the pupils of her study. Hoffmann et al (2009) emphasise how “this question of whether external reinforcement undermines internal motivation for classroom behaviour and academic performance is a complex and multi-faceted issue that has incurred conflicting outcomes throughout its research history” (p.844). This debate will be further discussed in the following sub-chapters discussing extrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivation.
**Extrinsic rewards.** In the classroom context, extrinsic rewards (extrinsic indicating an external response or consequence is present) are offered in response to a desired behaviour (Noels et al., 2001). Effective extrinsic rewards are likely to appeal to students as they are gratifying and are evidently achievable. In this sense, the extrinsic reward acts as a reinforcer which will encourage the repetition of the desired behaviour that is being modelled by the teacher. Several psychologists and educators differ on their opinions of the benefits of extrinsic rewards, with some being critical of the idea of extrinsic rewards acting as positive reinforcers (O’Donnell et al. 2012; Kohn, 1999; Lungu, 2019).

Extrinsic reward-critic Kohn (1999) argues that rewards and punishments are merely “ways of manipulating behaviour that destroy the potential for real learning” (p.1). This critique is shared by Lungu (2019) who stresses that excessive reliance on extrinsic motivators damage a pupil’s natural inclination toward learning. This presents a problematic viewpoint, suggesting that students who have been immersed in a solely extrinsic reward system, will struggle to motivate themselves or be motivated to participate without a tangible reason to do so. This point is echoed by Bilouk (2015), who states that extrinsic reinforcers “diminish risk-taking, creativity, and intrinsic interest in the activity” describing how the pupil’s focus from engaging with a task is shifted to merely chasing a reward.

In terms of empirical research on classroom rewards, Deci et al. (1999) have conducted studies on student motivation as influenced by extrinsic rewards. Echoing the criticisms of Masden et al. (1968), they concluded that teachers should only give these styles of rewards in a careful, considered manner. The Deci et al. (1999) study argued that praise and verbal feedback were a superior form of extrinsic reward, having less of a detrimental effect on pupil behaviour and autonomy than that of other, more tangible extrinsic rewards.
In contrast, however, several researchers have argued the benefits for using extrinsic rewards in the classroom (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Cameron & Pierce, 1994). Hidi & Harackiewicz (2000) present the argument that the appropriate style of motivational reinforcer will depend on the task at hand. They suggest that a challenging task that will take longer to complete, requires a mixture of extrinsic reward and intrinsic motivation. Hidi & Harackiewicz also argue the case for extrinsic rewards being suited to certain pupils, particularly those who struggle academically or who are not as naturally intrinsically motivated as their peers. O’Donnell et al. (2012) describe how the use of rewards can result in positive outcomes for certain pupils who may otherwise struggle to be motivated in certain tasks. Furthermore, they argue that even the naturally intrinsically motivated pupils will often need the boost of an extrinsic reinforcer from time to time. Cameron (2001) contests the findings of Deci et al (1999) by suggesting that there is little to no reason for teachers to refrain from utilising extrinsic reward systems to support learning and appropriate behaviour in the classroom. Cameron & Pierce (1994) and Cameron (2001) argue that extrinsic reward systems promote learning in children, contesting the viewpoint that such systems are damaging to the pupil’s natural motivation and inclination to learn. In summary, it has been shown from this section of the review that there is an absence of consensus on the topic of extrinsic rewards in the classroom.

**Intrinsic motivation.** In 1990, Gottfried determined that intrinsic motivation in primary school pupils was a relatively unstudied area. Yet Lai (2011) explains how successive research unveiled several insights regarding intrinsic motivation. Essentially, there is a consensus among researchers that children have naturally high levels of intrinsic motivation (Broussard & Garrison, 2004; Stipek, 1996). Yet, research has demonstrated that this natural motivation decreases as children grow, and this difference can be evident once children are old enough to leave primary school (Broussard & Garrison, 2004; Guthrie,
A study by Miller & Meece (1997) observed this decline in motivation, with regards to interest levels in reading and writing for enjoyment. The question must be asked whether this decline in intrinsic motivation is noticeable between the youngest and oldest classes of the primary school. If so, it lends itself to the belief that structured, extrinsic systems are more likely to suit the older classes of the primary school.

With an aim of promoting intrinsic motivation in a group of primary school age pupils, Guthrie et al. (2000) designed a research study around the three needs of SDT (autonomy, competence, relatedness). Autonomy was considered by the inclusion of self-directed learning. Competence was considered through strategy instruction. Relatedness was considered through the inclusion of peer-supported learning, the setting of goals and use of engaging, interactive activities (Lai, 2011). While teachers did not place value on performance or pupil results, the results of the study concluded that “students exposed to this instruction scored significantly higher with respect to curiosity and strategy use than students receiving traditional instruction” (Lai, 2011, p.20).

**Classroom management strategies**

Lai (2011) describes how there is plenty of empirical research revealing how motivation can be manipulated. Whether to a positive or negative extent, Lai explains how this manipulability arises from teaching strategy and classroom management implementation. As implemented by the teacher, classroom management strategies aim to ensure that classroom processes and policies run smoothly and are concerned primarily with the maintenance of control (O’Connor, 2008). A successful classroom management system is made up of several intertwined factors, working to consistently encourage desired behaviours and to reduce undesirable behaviours (Emmer & Stough, 2001). There are a wide variety of behaviour and classroom management approaches. When appropriately applied, they have the capacity manipulate the atmosphere of the classroom and the behaviour and actions of the
child (Hyland, 2014). O’Donnell et al. (2012) describe how teachers aim to create engaging environments and worthy experiences in their classrooms that are optimal for learning and development. They go on to describe learning as “a process through which relatively permanent changes in behaviour or knowledge occur as a result of experience” (p.195).

Most classroom management strategies will include positive reinforcers and negative reinforcers, to varying extents. O’Donnell et al. (2012) suggest that the inclusion of the pupils in deciding what to use as reinforcers, allows them to discuss what they value and provides them with a voice in the classroom. They argue that this makes the reward system more effective in that the pupils are more inclined to work for something they value. Teachers offer extrinsic rewards when they offer prizes in return for participation or enactment of desired behaviours. Similarly, a smiling, positive response can be used by the teacher as an extrinsic reward if it used consistently in response to the action, to the point where the pupil is aware, they will receive it upon completion of a certain action or task (O’Donnell et al, 2012).

Where there are rules in the classroom, the consequences of breaking these rules and subsequent discipline approaches will make up another component of a classroom management system. O’Donnell et al. (2012) emphasize the importance of consequences which increase the probability of the desired behaviour being repeated. However, they are wary of the use of punishments which try to achieve this same goal. They argue that the administration of punishment has several side effects in that it “teaches aggression, produces negative emotions, undermines the quality of the interpersonal relationship, and often exacerbates behaviour” (p.204). Hyland (2014) echoes this point, describing how the building and maintenance of a good quality interpersonal relationship between pupil and teacher is essential for a strong, positive classroom management system, while Brophy & Good (1974) describe it as a foundational aspect of a positive school experience.
Literature on the variables affecting motivation and classroom management strategies

Firstly, Hyland (2014) argues that teacher’s confidence in their abilities will impact the effectiveness of whatever classroom management system they are trying to impose. Teacher’s self-efficacy revolves around the extent to which teachers believe they can impact the motivation and achievement of their pupils. Hyland (2014) describes how “positive beliefs about current classroom management lead to confidence in future management,” while “negative beliefs in this regard can result in lower management expectations in the future” (p.61). Secondly, some research suggests that there are differences in motivation with regards to gender (Lai, 2011). However, the results are inconclusive. In a study by Lange & Adler (1997), they describe how teachers proposed girls to have considerably higher levels of intrinsic motivation and mastery-oriented behaviours, despite achievement in the form of test results being practically the same between the genders. Arguments have been made for a gender difference in intrinsic motivation levels across different subjects. A study by Guay et al. (2010) demonstrated a gender difference in intrinsic motivation with the girls of the study having higher intrinsic motivation in writing and reading activities in comparison to the boys. In contrast, the boys of the study had higher intrinsic motivation for the maths activities in comparison to the girls. Lastly, McCoy et al. (2012) discuss how research suggests that pupils from certain socio-economic backgrounds are better suited to teacher-centred classrooms, typically involving a greater emphasis on extrinsic reward systems. However, there is a considerable lack of research in this area.

Conclusion

This chapter addressed the key literature on the topic of study. It reviewed the relevant details of the ET ethos and provided a brief Irish educational history, presenting the context from which this study has arisen. It then reviewed literature on the psychology of
rewards and motivation. The chapter discussed extrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivation, highlighting the ongoing debate on the effect of extrinsic rewards and whether intrinsic motivation is more beneficial for pupils. Finally, the chapter gave an overview of the relevant literature on the variables that affect motivation and the implementation of classroom management strategies. The methodology of this study will be discussed in the next chapter.
Methodology

This chapter outlines the objectives of this study and provides a rationale for the research methodology chosen for data collection. At the beginning of the chapter, the aims of the study, and positionality of the researcher will be discussed. The chapter will then describe the research instruments, providing a rationale for the choice. The study sample will be discussed, proceeded by a section on data analysis. The ethical considerations will be made before a conclusion of the chapter.

Aim of the study

The research project aims to explore teacher views on the use of extrinsic rewards and promotion of intrinsic rewards in an ET primary school context. This study aims to gather data on teacher’s opinions on reward systems, and classroom management strategies. The researcher will look to understand their practices as informed by the teacher’s own experiences and beliefs. As this study deals with a group of teachers from one school, this project is a case study. Nisbet & Watt (1984) as cited in Cohen et al. (2007) state that “a case study is a specific instance that is designed to illustrate a more general principle” (p.253). In the context of this study, the ET school is the instance and the general principle is the research question. The researcher deemed this framework to be most suitable for the project when considering the time frame and access limitations. Drawing upon the work of Nisbet & Watt (1984), the researcher believes that the framework will enable the researcher to gather richer data from this specific location in one moment in time.

To gather and analyse unique viewpoints, qualitative methods were chosen for this research design. The researcher wanted to get an in-depth analysis of a smaller sample size of teachers and believed that this style of research would best suit the project (Dawson, 2009). Semi-structured interviews deemed to be most suitable for this study. Rubin & Rubin (1995)
as cited in Vaughn & Turner (2016) describe how “semi-structured interviews build an understanding of our complex users, including their perspectives, expectations, and assumptions, while building a rapport” (p.43). The researcher wanted to enable the teachers to freely express their viewpoints on how their experiences, practices and beliefs impact their classroom management choices. A combination of five one to one, semi-structured interviews were conducted, and two telephone interviews were completed by teachers at the ET school. Further rationale for the research methods chosen will be discussed under the subheading ‘Research Methodology’.

**Positionality**

As a student teacher, the researcher is interested in the development of their teaching style and classroom management skills. The researcher believes that the research will offer an insight into what works for teachers, while best supporting pupils learning. The researcher had attended the ET school in question as a child, meaning they had prior knowledge and experience in the school. However, the researcher anticipated that through the changing of school staff and management, the introduction of new policies, the school would have since changed and developed. Furthermore, the researcher’s relationship and role within the school has significantly changed, allowing for new perspectives from the researcher’s point of view.

**Research methodology**

The project views its topic from a naturalist point of view. Recognizing that “there are multiple constructed realities that can be studied only holistically,” this study will explore the collective views of the group of teachers in search of greater understanding on the topic of study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.37). Thus, this study comes from the viewpoint that society constructs its own knowledge. In naturalist inquiry, Beuving & de Vries (2015) describe how attention is focused on people within their situation. While the researcher considered other viewpoints, the naturalist style of inquiry was deemed to best suit the objectives of this study.
The viewpoint posited that the learning of teacher’s past experiences would play an important role in understanding their educational beliefs and current practices (Beuving & de Vries, 2015).

As influenced by the naturalist point of view, qualitative methods were chosen for this study. The researcher considered the potential limitations of qualitative methods. For example, in comparison to quantitative methods, there is a greater danger of inconsistencies across the data in qualitative research (Anderson, 2010). The researcher may probe the interviewees in different ways, while the interviewees may discuss some anecdotes and practices in detail while ignoring or forgetting others. In turn, this could affect data reliability. Despite this, the researcher decided that qualitative methods would ultimately enable a deeper insight into understanding teachers’ practices, something that would be harder to comprehend through numerical data (Anderson, 2010). Charmaz (2006) describes how qualitative knowledge can provide a contextual understanding, reasons for outcomes and implications of a focused study to a larger scale. The researcher did not need the data to verify motivational or educational theories but could instead look for elements of the theories in action through teacher description of their practice and beliefs (Beuving & de Vries, 2015).

Sample

The researcher identified the population of interest as primary school teachers. However, the researcher recognized they would not have access to interview teachers from a variety of schools. The sampling frame of this study was then focused on a group of teachers from one ET primary school, and the project then became a case study. The sample for this research was drawn from willing participants of this group. Seven ET teachers agreed to be interviewed for this research project. Six female teachers and one male teacher were interviewed. These teachers are at different stages of their primary teaching careers. Three of the teachers are newly qualified teachers, two of whom have completed their final year
placement in the ET school. Three teachers had a significantly greater amount of professional
teaching experience than the others. The final one-on-one interview conducted was with a
student on school placement in the ET school. Inclusion criteria meant the interviewee must
be teaching at the school in some capacity, whether placement or full-time. The telephone
interviews followed a similar format to that of the one-on-one interviews. Both of these
participants had over 10 years of professional primary school teaching experience.

Upon recruitment of the interviewees, the researcher recognized that 4 of the 7
teachers were in a close position, career-wise, to that of the researcher. While one was a
student on final-year school placement, the other three were newly qualified teachers (NQTs),
each having been students less than one year ago. While designing and conducting the
research, the researcher recognized that the varying levels of teacher’s professional
experience would potentially impact the research (Bourke, 2014). The researcher made
assumptions prior to the interviews with the NQTs that, like the researcher, the teacher’s
teaching style and practices were still in development. While conscious of assumptions and
potential bias, a set of background questions were designed and put in place at the beginning
of the interviews. These questions covered how long the interviewee had been teaching for,
why they chose primary teaching as a career and a brief discussion of their own, self-
described, teaching style. The remaining three teachers each had over 10 years of
professional primary teaching experience, and the researcher believed this would provide a
balance in the data.

Data collection

The interview was divided into three sections, encompassing teacher’s experiences,
practice and beliefs. Firstly, the researcher invited the interviewee to discuss their experience
dealing with different behaviours in the classroom and their experience working in different
schools. Secondly, the researcher invited the interviewee to discuss their classroom
management strategies. Finally, the researcher sought clarification and questioned the interviewee on their overall beliefs on the use of extrinsic rewards and the promotion of intrinsic rewards in the primary school classroom. Throughout the interview, the researcher encouraged the telling of stories from the interviewee. This would then form a collection of narratives, which the researcher deemed to be useful, from the standpoint of stories as social or situational products. The researcher did not seek definitions of terminology, nor sought much explanation of motivational theory from the interviewee. Instead, the researcher sought recollections of genuine experience and discussion of current practice, with the aims of eventually connecting them to motivational theory during the analysis of the data.

Upon completion of the literature review, the researcher designed interview questions around the theme of teacher’s experiences, beliefs, and practices. Emerging as frequent occurrences from the literature review, the researcher included questions on pupil autonomy in the classroom, the giving of feedback to pupils and the modelling of skills before lessons, into the interviews. The researcher studied interview questions from previous theses based on similar subjects, whether interviewing teachers or dealing with classroom management strategies and reward systems, from the library at MIE. The researcher then piloted the interview questions by interviewing a fellow Marino student who was on school placement at the time. This enabled the researcher to practice the interview process and make amendments to the style of questioning.

The researcher then recruited teachers in the ET school by verbal agreement and then arranged for the interviews to take place. Five interviews were then carried out over a two-week period. The interviews were audio recorded using an iPhone SE. Each interview was subsequently transcribed on Microsoft word, printed, and coded. The median time frame for each interview was 15 minutes, with the shortest interview being 11 minutes 33 seconds and the longest interview lasting just over 21 minutes.
The closure of the school due to the Covid-19 outbreak resulted in the remaining interviews having to be conducted over the telephone. The researcher contacted both telephone participants and arranged an interview time. These interviews lasted for an average time of 15 minutes. At the beginning of the call, the researcher outlined the purpose of the project and provided information as to how the interviewees’ data would be stored, respected, and protected. The researcher recorded the interviews by having the interviewee on loudspeaker and recording the audio using the audio recording app ‘Hum’ on another iPhone. The researcher used another iPhone as a backup device, recording the audio by recording a video. The researcher then transcribed the audio clips from the telephone interviews and began the process of coding.

**Data analysis, validity & reliability**

The process of thematic coding was used to interpret and analyse the data. The researcher began the process by familiarising themselves with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher read and re-read the interviews, notating ideas, and responses. Initial codes were decided upon before the data was analysed. Three categories of experiences, practices and beliefs were first sought for and colour coded. Upon review, the researcher coded the sections into further detail. Common themes emerged, some in response to similar questions and others during different question sections. Patton (1990) as cited in Braun & Clarke (2006) explains how the process of data analysis ideally progresses from basic organization and description to summary and on to interpretation, “where there is an attempt to theorize the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications often in relation to previous literature” (p.84).

The researcher recognizes that the teachers in this study will have an amalgam of different personalities, teaching styles, and teaching experience. The researcher is not seeking answers from the teachers to affirm prior concepts, nor is there a right or wrong answer to the
questions asked. In this study, the researcher aims to assess and compare the different forms of pupil motivation. However, the questions of this study will not be solved in a yes or no sense, nor in terms of which reward style is conclusively superior. Rather, the researcher will be able to gain a more comprehensive view of the classroom requirements and environment that best suit each style of system.

Limitations

The researcher anticipated several limitations with the conducting of this research project. Firstly, due to time constraints, this thesis does not engage with children and their views. The research focuses solely on the analysis of teacher views on the use of rewards in the classroom and what strategies they deem to works best. Secondly, the size of the sample group limits the potential scope of the findings. Due to practical constraints, this paper cannot investigate the views of teachers in various other types of schools in Ireland, such as Catholic schools and other non-denominational schools. Finally, the variety of teaching experience among the sample group may impact the findings of the project. 2 of the 7 teachers have over 15 years of professional teaching experience, 1 of the 7 has over 10, while 4 of the 7 have 1 year of professional teaching experience or less. As the researcher is looking to understand teacher practices as informed by their experiences and beliefs, the limitation of the lack of professional teaching experience from some teachers may have an impact. However, the researcher recognizes that these teachers will have completed school placements in a variety of different schools. Furthermore, it opens the potential for data to be gathered on what choices NQTs make regarding classroom management strategies and practice.

Ethical considerations

Prior to the interviews, the researcher reviewed the potential ethical issues of the project. Ethics were considered so the researcher could ensure that the participants would not
be harmed in any way because of the research. This meant that each participant was consenting and understood the nature of the project, without the presence of deception on the part of the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher detailed how their privacy would be respected, ensuring anonymity in the project, and the safe storing of data. The ethical concerns for this study were considered by the researcher and subsequently approved by the Marino Ethics Research Committee to be low risk. This was because each research participant was a consenting adult and no incentives were used in attaining their participation.

Reference was made to the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (Teaching Council, 2016) with regards to adhering to appropriate professional conduct throughout the research process. The researcher aimed to uphold the four core values of this code of respect, care, integrity, and trust by following the recommended guidelines. Before each of the interviews, the researcher ensured the interviewee was fully aware of the purpose of the research project. This was done through verbal explanation of the project and discussion of what the interview would entail. The researcher explained how and where the collected data was going to be kept and ensured that confidentiality would be maintained through the altering of any revealing or sensitive information. Each participant was given a consent form to read and then sign, thereby declaring their understanding of the research project and giving their consent to participate. Participants were also made aware that they would be free to withdraw their participation at any stage, without explanation. A copy of the consent form is attached in Appendix 1.

**Conclusion**

The chapter began by articulating the overall aim of the project. The research worldview was then introduced and a rationale for choosing a naturalist style of inquiry was discussed. The positionality of the researcher in this research project was considered. The
researcher then outlined the steps taken in obtaining the data and the reasoning behind those steps. Beginning with sampling, the methodology steps moved on to reviewing the process of data collection for this case study. Information on data analysis validity and reliability was detailed before the ethics were considered. The chapter then assessed the potential limitations of the project and argued potential solutions or considerations for each of the limitations. A statement of results and presentation of data will follow in the next chapter.
Presentation of data, analysis, and discussion of results

This chapter will present, discuss, and interpret the data which was collected towards answering the question; ‘what are teacher’s views on extrinsic rewards and the promotion of intrinsic motivation in the Educate Together primary school classroom?’ For this study, each research participant will be given an alternate name.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher name</th>
<th>Professional primary school teaching experience</th>
<th>Current class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>Junior infants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1st class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>2nd class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>4th class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>5th class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>0 years</td>
<td>6th class (placement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>Learning support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Interviewee information

Four themes emerged from the data, each of which is listed below. These four themes will be presented and analysed in the following sub-chapters.

- Dealing with challenging behaviour & unmotivated pupils
- Teacher views on extrinsic rewards
- Teacher views on intrinsic motivation
- Influence of ET ethos on classroom practice
Themes

**Dealing with challenging behaviour and unmotivated pupils.** Urdan & Schoenfelder (2006) posit that a pupil’s behaviour in the classroom is a product of both situational and individual characteristics. Each of the teachers discussed how they manage such characteristics and deal with behavioural and motivational issues in their classroom. The teachers discussed this topic in terms of previous experience and current practices. Answers varied in depth with some telling anecdotes of challenging experiences and others providing a brief discussion of their current practices.

Interestingly, 6 of the 7 teachers described a similar style of a positive reinforcement, empathetic approach in engaging with the pupils of their classroom. Many of the teachers deemed this style of approach to be an effective strategy, arguing that this prevents pupil misbehaviour and disinterest. For example, Paul detailed his positive reinforcement approach through his use spotlighting and praise, while Cathy mentioned the use of consistent positive encouragement and empathetic feedback, stating “I give lots of positive encouragement and try to make sure each child in the class gets some good feedback from me every day.” Both teacher’s strategies are exemplified in the work of O’Donnell et al. (2012), who describe how a teacher’s affectionate and empathic approach to dealing with pupils can strengthen and increase desired pupil behaviour, thus decreasing negative ones.

Several of these teachers discussed how the building and careful maintenance of the pupil-teacher relationship acts as a foundation for this positive reinforcement approach. Louise stated that “with the older classes you have to earn their respect. It’s not just because you’re the teacher they should automatically trust and respect you. It takes time to build that relationship.” Sharon placed great importance on maintaining a sense of fairness in the classroom for the growth and maintenance of this relationship. Furthermore, several teachers
Teacher views on rewards and pupil motivation.

Overall, there were mixed opinions among the teachers on the use of tangible extrinsic rewards in the form of reward systems and point systems, yet the use of non-tangible extrinsic rewards, in the form of praise and positive...
feedback, was widely supported among the group of teachers. From a practical point of view, 4 of the 7 teachers had some form of tangible extrinsic reward system in place (2nd class teacher Paul had a points system, while 4th class teacher Emma and 5th class teacher Cathy use the dojo points system, and learning support teacher Sharon had a ticket system). The teachers discussed how Golden Time is timetabled for each class in this ET school. Most of the teachers with reward systems tying it in with that, where the children are enabled to either earn or lose minutes depending on their actions or behaviours.

While teachers made the argument for extrinsic reward systems suitting certain pupils, others made the argument for extrinsic reward systems being suited to certain teachers, particularly NQTs. Despite explaining how she does not need a reward system with her current class, 1st class teacher and NQT Rachel explained that she felt using extrinsic rewards can be important as an NQT. She states that “it’s nearly a crutch that you have to have in place. I don’t feel like I have the teacher presence fully yet, so I need something in the background sometimes.” From this perspective, extrinsic reward systems can be viewed as a support for teachers, perhaps for ones who are struggling to control their classroom or who lack confidence in doing so. This suggests that if a teacher’s confidence in their competency grows with experience, they will require less support in the form of using reward systems as crutches. This was a point echoed by the more experienced Maria who stated that in her 16 years of professional teaching experience she only used a reward system while on teaching practice and in her first year of professional teaching.

Despite much support for the use of tangible extrinsic reward systems in certain contexts, several teachers raised concerns regarding such systems, linking to what Louise described as having a “detrimental effect on pupil self-esteem.” Junior infant’s teacher Maria went on to state she “is not comfortable using reward systems.” Maria discussed her experience with several different reward systems over the years, one in which involved
students being placed hierarchically on a red-orange-green scale. She discussed how that system was of no real benefit to any of the pupils because those who were constantly on green did not require the system in the first place. Maria explained that reward systems like that are “very public to everybody and everybody knows who’s where. I think that’s really damaging to a kid’s self-esteem.” Echoing Maria, Sharon stated that having good self-esteem is an essential competent in the learning and development of the child. Maria and Sharon’s point reflect Malow’s hierarchy of needs (1943) in which, esteem is categorized before the top level of self-actualization. Further supporting the points of Louise, Maria, and Sharon, Deci & Ryan (1985) state that the promotion of relatedness by building self-esteem, in which pupils feel comfortable within the classroom context, can positively influence the child’s educational experience.

As previously mentioned, each of the teachers emphasized the need for praising pupils. Building on the work of Rogers (2011) and Deci & Ryan (1997), both of whom describe the importance of pupil esteem, Rachel explains how she uses confidence building strategies and administers “lots and lots and lots of praise” as positive behavioural reinforcers. Rachel explains that in her classroom, there is no need for any reward systems, except for an individualised one for a pupil with special needs. While supporting the use of tangible extrinsic reward systems, Sharon discussed her preference for effective praise as a behavioural reinforcer, arguing that “if you can build regular praise, but meaningful praise into your everyday I think that could be enough for some classes.” The concept of meaningful praise is highlighted by O’Donnell et al. (2012) who state that praise is ineffective unless a pupil’s accomplishments are genuine. In highlighting some paradoxical effects of praise, O’Donnell et al. (2012) describe how it should be purposeful and clear in administration and should be attributed to effort, rather than achievement.
Teacher views on promotion of intrinsic motivation. All seven of the teachers had a strong response when asked about intrinsic motivation, with most teachers highlighting the need for promoting this type of motivation in the classroom. When asked why there was a need for promotion of intrinsic motivation, Rachel stated that children “need to learn that skill of just doing the work or doing the task for the gratification of the task.” As well as the ability to persevere in challenging tasks, Baranek (1996) describes how pupil interest and enjoyment in school comes from intrinsic motivation. The teachers discussed various methods they use to promote this style of motivation in their classroom. Drawing on the work of Baranek (1996), who suggests the benefit of creating an autonomous classroom environment in which pupils perceive themselves as decision makers, Louise, Maria, and Paul discussed how they try to appeal to pupil interest, model tasks and have child-lead activities, all aiming to enhance intrinsic motivation in their pupils.

Each teacher was asked on whether they value child autonomy in their classroom, and to what extent they consider it when designing lessons and classroom management strategies. Most teachers discussed how they include the children of their class in setting the rules at the start of the year. Several teachers use a classroom contract of rules and many of these teachers explained how and why they use them. Both Emma and Sharon described the necessity of having a contract of rules that is created by the members of the class so that it can be used as an effective reference point for when undesirable behaviours are demonstrated. Putting the work of O’Donnell at al. (2012) into practice, Maria explained that in her junior infants’ classroom she would not have rules, as much as she would have expectations.

As well as whole class rule creation, learning support teacher Sharon discussed how she allows the pupils to decide their own rewards. The benefit to this process is highlighted by O’Donnell et al. (2012) who describe how certain rewards will serve as positive
reinforcers in some classroom contexts while the same reward may not be effective in others, or may even have a detrimental consequence for the pupils and classroom environment. Enabling pupils in her class to make decisions for themselves ensures their voice is heard. In this context, what we see is the harnessing of both styles of motivation, a challenge which had been highlighted by Bartlett & Burton (2016). Pupil’s deciding of rewards serves as an autonomy supportive practice within an extrinsic rewards structure as had been set up by Sharon.

Several teachers discussed other ways they go about enabling child-voice. Firstly, Rachel described how she holds votes for classroom decisions. She explains how this strategy enables the children to “feel like they have a choice, even it’s a very limited one that I’ve made for them.” Secondly, Cathy and Emma discussed their use of group and individual project work as a means of promoting pupil autonomy in the classroom. Emma described how she “enjoys having child-lead stuff going on,” while Cathy states that during her project-based lessons her pupils get “a lot of free reign.” The benefit to these styles of activities is supported by Frieberg & Lamb (2009) through which they describe how pupils develop self-discipline. Perhaps, the development of the skill of self-discipline in such styles of activity will be then demonstrated and developed in the other classroom activities.

**Influence of ethos.** The teachers had varying opinions as to the general differences between ET schools and other school types, with some stressing major differences and others arguing for similarities. For example, when comparing her experience working in an all-boys DEIS school to this mixed ET school, Emma states that “there is a huge difference in ethos here as well as where they come from.” She argues that this impacts the way the school must be run. Emma argued that pupils from this ET school’s demographic “would have more understanding as to why they should follow rules. They would have had Maslow’s hierarchy of needs; their needs are up there.” Referencing Maslow’s hierarchy, Emma believes that the
socio-economic background of pupils can potentially affect their ease of achieving Maslow’s self-actualisation in school. However, literature supporting these claims are inconclusive.

Rachel went on to describe differences in school type, from a classroom management and behaviour strategy point of view. She stated, “the DEIS school I was in had a specific code of behaviour and the whole school used the same reward system and every teacher was on the same page because they had to be.” However, Maria argues that “schools are much more alike than they are different” and that many of “the values in ET are also seen in Catholic DEIS schools and gaelscoileanna.” Maria argued the point that “all schools are child-centred” and said the only difference between ET schools and other school types was the religious aspect. Operating under the same curriculum, the NCCA (1999) describe how “child-centredness is central to the vision for the curriculum” (p.9)

Furthermore, the teachers differed in their opinion on the effect of the ET ethos on their teaching. On one hand, the three NQTs (Paul, Rachel, and Emma) stated that the ET ethos greatly influences their teaching. They described different approaches they took in ensuring their classrooms were child centred and child lead. The three teachers described how this approach was different from previous schools that they had taught in for placement (Paul and Emma – DEIS one, Rachel – all-girls school and DEIS one). Perhaps teachers without a fully established teaching style will draw upon the ethos and influence of the school they are in to support their classroom management and teaching style, more than those with a greater amount teaching experience.

3 of the 4 remaining teachers described how the ET values were simply already in line with their own views as educators (while the final teacher, Cathy, stated that the ET ethos does not influence her teaching style or classroom management strategies in that she has always run her classrooms the same way regardless of school context). Maria stated that she
“picked the school that I wanted to teach in because of the ethos and the values being the same values I had.” Louise described how the ET values were “something that I would adopt in my own teaching anyway, in whatever school I’m in.” Sharon described how “as a teacher, they were things that I would have always the thought were really important.” The teacher’s views and educational values align with the ET values and the NCCA teacher guidelines, under the Teaching Council (2016) code of conduct which details its 4 pillars of respect, care, trust, and dignity. The Teaching Council (2016) look to ensure that “teachers’ practice is motivated by the best interests of the pupils/students entrusted to their care,” demonstrating this “through positive influence, professional judgement and empathy in practice” (p.6)

**Teacher views on classroom management strategies.** Several teachers discussed adaptations they have made to their classroom management strategies when things go wrong. NQT Emma discussed how she began the year without any form of reward system but felt she had to introduce one on account of poor behaviour from students in her class. After having introduced a reward system a month into the school year, she described how “the strategy has really worked for some students. The class has a much better atmosphere and they needed more regulations.” Emma’s adaptation is in line with the work of Hidi & Harackiewicz (2000) who describe how more structured, extrinsic reward systems suit some pupils, especially pupils who are not as intrinsically motivated or who require academic support. This argument is shared by O’Donnell et al. (2012) who suggest that positive learning outcomes can come as a result extrinsic reward and reinforcement.

**Data chapter conclusion**

The chapter began by introducing the seven teachers and detailing the themes that emerged from the data analysis. It then presented, discussed, and analysed each of the four themes. Dealing with challenging behaviour and unmotivated pupils, teacher views on
extrinsic rewards, teacher views on promotion of intrinsic motivation, and the influence of ethos.
Conclusion

This final chapter concludes the study, providing a summary of the findings. The conclusions will attempt to answer the questions of the study, as had been detailed in Chapter 1. Aware of the inferential limitations of small-scale studies of this nature, the researcher makes several recommendations. The researcher then suggests ideas for future research, before concluding the dissertation with a closing statement.

Summary of conclusions

**Does the ET ethos effect the way the teachers run their classrooms?** The data revealed that the teachers believe that the child-centred nature of the ET ethos enables positive classroom environments and positive learning experiences. Furthermore, many of the teachers of the school commended the ET ethos describing it as being in line with their personal educational values. However, on account of the variety of classroom management approaches implemented by the teachers, the researcher concluded that the ET teacher’s classroom management choices are more influenced by their own teaching style and the needs of their pupils, and less influenced by the ethos.

**Are extrinsic rewards beneficial, or do they damage a pupil’s natural inclination toward learning?** Despite mixed opinions on the use of extrinsic rewards, the data highlighted that the teachers believe praise to be an effective, positive extrinsic motivator. It emerged that extrinsic reward systems can be suited to some teachers. In this instance, several teachers recommending the use of rewards systems as NQTs. It also emerged that extrinsic rewards can be of benefit to pupils who struggle academically.
Do teachers believe they can effectively manage a classroom relying only on intrinsic pupil motivation? The data demonstrated that the ET teachers were unanimous in their support for the enhancement of intrinsic motivation in primary school pupils. As informed by the teachers, the researcher concluded that this could be achieved through autonomy supportive practices, child choice in classroom processes, collaborative learning, and the use of engaging and age-appropriate tasks. As interpreted by the data, whether a class can be managed solely reliant on intrinsic motivation strategies is ultimately dependent on the pupils of the class and their needs.

Recommendations

Mindful of generalisations, the researcher has linked four practical recommendations with supporting literature, as detailed below.

- Praise should be meaningful and administered carefully. O’Donnell et al. (2012) note this to be an effective tool in boosting pupil esteem and encouraging progress once it is genuine.

- NQTs should avail of support in the form of extrinsic reward systems, if necessary. Noting the work of Cameron (1999; 2001) and Hidi Harackiewicz (2000), the researcher argues that reward systems are easy to use and can be effective in controlling a class, particularly as an inexperienced teacher.

- Experienced teachers need to include and develop more autonomy supportive practices for their pupils to enhance intrinsic interest in school, as had been highlighted by Deci & Ryan (1985) and Guthrie et al. (2000), though child choice and agency.

Further Research
For further investigation into the use of extrinsic rewards and the promotion of intrinsic motivation in the primary school classroom, the researcher recommends the adaptation of this style of study in new school contexts, such as DEIS or SEN. The researcher also recommends the conducting of larger scale projects involving teachers from various ET schools around the country.

**Closing statement**

Whether extrinsic or intrinsic, it is not the aim of the research to determine which is ultimately more beneficial for pupils and more effective to use for teachers. Instead, the more modest aim of this research was to uncover the views on this topic from the perspective of one group of ET teachers, while enabling the researcher to have an insight into teacher’s classroom management practices. Thus, learning from teacher’s experiences and beliefs around classroom management practices to develop their own in the years to come. In the words of Malcolm X (1964), “education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.”
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter of consent

Investigation into teacher views about intrinsic and extrinsic rewards in school –
teacher’s experience, beliefs, and practices with classroom management strategies

Consent to take part in research

I……………………………………… voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind. I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. I understand that participation involves discussing my previous experiences with classroom management and the use rewards systems.

I agree to my interview being audio-recorded and I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially. I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in Eoin Flanagan’s dissertation. I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in Eoin Flanagan’s care until the time when the exam board confirms the results of his dissertation.

I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature of research participant Date

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Signature of participant Date

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Appendix 2: interview questions

Investigation into teacher views on intrinsic motivation and extrinsic rewards.

*teacher’s experience, beliefs and practices with classroom management strategies.*

**Beginning:** Information about research project, consent and data protection.

**P1. Teacher background information**
- How long have you been teaching?
- what made you want to be a primary school teacher?
- What kinds of schools have you taught in (placement or full-time)?
- How would you describe your teaching style?

**P2. Experience.**
- Have you had much experience dealing with challenging behaviour over the course of your career?
- How did you go about dealing with challenging behaviour?

**P3. Practices and Beliefs**
- You mentioned that you are a ___ style of teacher. Have you found any classroom management strategies that you suit your style of teaching?
- What do these strategies achieve?
- Does the Educate Together ethos influence how you work or manage or your classroom in any way?
- Do you need to motivate your students to participate in class?
- Have you got a reward system in place with your current class?
- Do you need to motivate your students to behave and conduct themselves appropriately?
- What are your opinions on the use of extrinsic rewards in the classroom?
- What are your opinions on the use of intrinsic rewards in the classroom?

**Concluding:** Seeking clarification.