

Navigating Learning Motivation and Self-Confidence in Early Childhood Teaching through the “ASYIK Reward” Application

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Abstract

This study examines how the ASYIK Reward learning paradigm boosts early childhood learning motivation and self-confidence. A sequential explanatory mixed methods design with a quantitative phase (quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design) and a qualitative phase explained the quantitative findings. Participants were 100 5–6-year-olds from two early childhood education institutions, 50 in the experimental group and 50 in the control group. The experimental group used the ASYIK Reward model to learn, while the control group used traditional approaches. Children's learning motivation and self-confidence were measured using observation sheets. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test for within-group comparisons, and the Mann-Whitney U test on change scores for between-group comparisons. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis, and analyzed using thematic analysis. Results show substantial changes in learning motivation and self-confidence between experimental and control groups. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed improvement in all children in the experimental group, whereas the Mann-Whitney U test showed total separation. The quantitative improvements were explained by four qualitative themes: increased enthusiasm and participation, confidence transformation, supportive teacher facilitation, and contextual barriers and enablers. Research shows that the ASYIK Reward learning model boosts early childhood learning motivation and self-confidence. The concept fosters a joyful learning atmosphere, positive reinforcement, and active classroom engagement. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provides a comprehensive understanding of how and why the model works, contributing to positive reinforcement theory in early childhood education and giving educators practical strategies to create more supportive and effective learning environments.

Keywords: *joyful learning, motivation, confidence, childhood.*

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Introduction

Early Childhood Education has transformed from an auxiliary childcare service into an essential stage of human capital formation. In recent years, early childhood education has seen a notable increase in high-quality religiously affiliated establishments (Niman & Wejang, 2026). Remarkably, these institutions often charge tuition fees significantly higher than those of their secular or public counterparts. Conventional economic theories suggest that higher costs should reduce enrollment, as demand is price elastic (Papadakis & Karakose, 2025). Nevertheless, faith-oriented preschools frequently defy this pattern, sustaining extensive waiting lists. Understanding the underlying mechanisms requires an investigation that connects economics, sociology, and religious education. This essay examines why contemporary parents willingly take on significant financial obligations to secure religious early education for their children.

Children's cognitive, social, emotional, and personality development strongly influences later learning, a critical component of early childhood education (PAUD) (Blumberg et al., 2024). Research shows that early-life learning experiences have a lasting influence on individual confidence, learning motivation, and character development (Heckman, 2011; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Motivation and self-confidence are two internal factors that significantly influence children's success in actively engaging in the learning process within the context of their psychological development. Highly motivated children are more exploratory, willing to try, and persistent in completing tasks, while confidence helps them confront learning challenges positively, interact with peers, and express their ideas (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Numerous research studies indicate that motivation and trust in early childhood education remain significant issues across many nations, particularly in developing countries (Githinji & Ndiangui, 2024; Lasi et al., 2024; Matjokana & Bipath, 2024; Olalowo & Babalola, 2024; Quon et al., 2025). Children often behave passively, hesitate to engage in new activities, give up quickly, and show low self-confidence during learning interactions (OECD, 2021). This situation is often shaped by a teacher-centric educational model, a lack of learning techniques that provide positive reinforcement, and a lack of strategies that can sustainably cultivate children's intrinsic motivation (Whitebread et al., 2017). In early childhood education, methods that overly prioritize academic success may diminish children's self-esteem because they fear making mistakes.

Early childhood education in Indonesia is another setting where this problem manifests. According to several studies, the educational process at many PAUD schools still cannot fully help children

develop their motivation and confidence to their full potential. According to Suryani et al. (2021), children up to age 10 simply follow their teachers' instructions and do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their potential individually. In addition, reinforcement and rewards in learning are often limited to the external environment and are less integrated with learning strategies that foster children's internal motivation. This shows the need for a new educational paradigm that not only rewards students but also builds self-awareness, pride, and confidence in their abilities (Niman & Wejang, 2026; Papadakis & Karakose, 2025).

This environment requires innovative and contextual learning. ASYIK Reward promotes positive reinforcement in fun, interactive, and meaningful activities for children. The ASYIK learning model is an acronym for Safe (*Aman*), Happy (*Senang*), Confident (*Yakin dan percaya diri*), Innovative (*Inovatif*), and Creative (*Kreatif*), a learning model developed for early childhood. This model frames ASYIK as a fun learning experience that builds children's confidence, motivation, and social skills. Children gain drive and confidence from this method's external and internal rewards. Reward systems have been shown to improve children's educational engagement, positive activities, and self-efficacy (Hidi & Renninger, 2020). However, most studies use rewards as a classroom management tool rather than integrating them into a cohesive, systematic educational framework to improve children's intrinsic motivation. Thus, reward-oriented learning frameworks to improve early childhood motivation and self-confidence must be deliberately developed and tested. However, the relationship between reward-based learning and children's intrinsic motivation and self-confidence in early childhood remains poorly understood. Most research has focused on learning motivation or child involvement in isolation, while studies that examine motivation and self-confidence in novel learning paradigms are rare. Few studies have developed a compensation model for early childhood education in Indonesia.

This study's novelty lies in the ASYIK Reward model, which was developed and applied in early childhood learning to improve motivation and confidence. This technique uses entertaining learning, positive appreciation, and active kid participation to make learning more meaningful. This research also enriches the study of positive reinforcement tactics in early childhood education and helps teachers design more effective and innovative learning methods. This study analyzes how the ASYIK Reward model increases early childhood learners' motivation and confidence. This research should help us understand how systematically designed positive reinforcement

strategies affect children's motivation and confidence and suggest more effective and sustainable early childhood education practices.

Theoretical Framework

This research is guided by an engaging, pleasant early childhood teaching paradigm grounded in theories of motivation and self-efficacy. The ASYIK learning model, an acronym for Safe, Happy, Confident, Innovative, and Creative, is a learning model developed for early childhood. These fundamentals help young children feel comfortable, explore, and thrive through positive relationships, Play-Based Learning, and a holistic approach. The teaching model supports the full child's social, emotional, physical, and mental wellness. Jean Piaget (1947/1950) developed constructivist theory, which conceptualizes children learning through hands-on experiences and discovery. Lev Vygotsky's (1930/1978) Sociocultural Theory postulates that learning is best through social interaction, language, and adult or peer direction. Long before Piaget and Vygotsky, Ibn Sina (Avicenna) (1027/1927/1982) viewed children's education as a holistic process tailored to a child's psychological development and specific age stages. His framework emphasizes balancing intellectual, moral, and physical growth to help individuals reach their full potential and prepare for society.

In addition, theories of learning, motivation, and confidence are rooted in Briggs and Tepler (1987). Motivation and confidence are two inner mental forces that help you set goals and take action. Motivation is the inner drive or "why" that pushes you to do something. It is the energy and desire that make you start and keep going on a task. Motivation can come from inside (intrinsic), such as loving a hobby, or from the outside (extrinsic), such as getting paid or praised. Motivation helps you finish chores, study, work hard, and reach your dreams. Confidence is your belief in your own skills to succeed. As a belief, confidence is trusting your own power, knowledge, and judgment to handle problems and do a good job. It grows stronger as you practice and learn from past wins. Confidence helps you face hard times, try new things, and stay strong when things go wrong.

Motivation constitutes a crucial psychological element in the learning process during early life. In education, motivation is seen as both an intrinsic and extrinsic impetus that drives individuals to participate actively in learning and persist in reaching objectives (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In early life, the drive to learn is intricately linked to curiosity, a desire for exploration, and enjoyable

educational experiences. Children with higher motivation are generally more engaged in learning, show greater curiosity, and can complete tasks with more confidence (Hidi & Renninger, 2020). Consequently, developing learning strategies that enhance educational motivation is a primary focus in early childhood education.

Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is commonly utilized to explain learning motivation. According to this view, the demands for competence, autonomy, and social connectedness create intrinsic motivation. Teachers can address these three demands in early childhood learning by developing an enjoyable, participatory, and pleasant learning environment (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Research suggests that supporting children's psychological needs can enhance intrinsic motivation and engagement in learning (Lv, 2025). Self-confidence and motivation are crucial to early childhood social and emotional development. Confidence is the belief that one can handle different situations and complete tasks. This idea aligns with Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, which argues that self-confidence affects behavior, effort, and persistence in accomplishing goals. High-confidence children are more likely to try new things, interact with classmates, and overcome learning challenges in early childhood education (Bullin & Elly, 2025). Several studies show that motivation and self-confidence support children's learning. Children with strong learning motivation are more confident because they believe they can finish activities and succeed in learning (Gabion et al., 2025). Conversely, children with low self-confidence are less motivated to learn since they mistrust their ability. Learning practices that indirectly enhance motivation can also build children's confidence. Awards and rewards motivate children to learn. Rewards reinforce positive behaviors or achievements. Early childhood education rewards can include praise, symbols of appreciation, or recognition of children's work (Lv, 2025; Malage & Watini, 2024). Research suggests that rewards can enhance children's confidence, engagement in learning, and positive behavior (Barger, 2025).

Nonetheless, the use of rewards in education also sparks several discussions in the academic literature. Some research indicates that rewards emphasizing external factors may diminish children's intrinsic drive as they become increasingly reliant on the rewards provided (Gabion et al., 2025; Rahman, 2024). Other studies also show, however, that rewards that focus too much on external aspects can lower children's intrinsic motivation because children become more dependent on the rewards given (Huliganga, 2025a, 2025b; Rahman, 2024). Therefore, it is important for educators to design a reward strategy that not only serves as an external reward, but

is also able to foster intrinsic motivation and a sense of competence in children. A reward approach that is integrated with a fun learning experience and strengthening children's efforts has been proven to be more effective in increasing children's internal motivation and confidence. The findings of Papadakis and Karakose (2025) support this view by demonstrating that gamification elements, when integrated thoughtfully into learning activities, can support both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, provided that the design emphasizes meaningful engagement rather than mere reward accumulation. Consequently, educators should design a reward system that provides external rewards while also cultivating intrinsic motivation and a sense of competence in children. A reward system that combines an enjoyable educational experience with reinforcement of children's efforts has proven more effective at strengthening intrinsic drive and self-assurance. In this framework, establishing a systematically structured, reward-oriented learning model is crucial in early childhood education. Educational models that incorporate enjoyment, recognition, social engagement, and meaningful learning experiences may foster a more favorable learning environment for children. The ASYIK Reward model is a novel strategy that incorporates positive reinforcement into early childhood education through engaging, enjoyable activities. This method provides rewards not only as recognition for educational achievements, but also as a strategy to cultivate intrinsic motivation and continuously bolster children's self-assurance.

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed methods design (Creswell & Clark, 2011), with the quantitative phase (QUAN) given priority, followed by a qualitative phase (qual) that explains and elaborates on the quantitative findings. Phase 1 (Quantitative) employed a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design involving 100 children (50 experimental, 50 control) to test the effectiveness of the ASYIK Reward model, with data analyzed using descriptive statistics, Wilcoxon signed-rank test (within-group), and Mann-Whitney U test on change scores (between-group). Phase 2 (Qualitative) involved purposively selected participants (high and low performers) through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis, analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Phase 3 (Integration) used joint display analysis and meta-inferences (Fetters et al., 2013) to compare quantitative and qualitative findings, producing a comprehensive understanding of how and why the ASYIK Reward model influences

children's learning outcomes

Study Participants

Participants in this study were children aged 5–6 years from two early childhood education institutions (PAUD). The selection of this age group is based on the consideration that at this age range children are at a very important stage of social-emotional development, especially in the formation of learning motivation and confidence. The total number of participants in this study was 100 children, which were divided into two groups, namely 50 children in the experimental group and 50 children in the control group. The experimental group was given treatment in the form of the application of the ASYIK Reward learning model, while the control group followed learning with conventional methods usually applied by teachers in the classroom. The selection of participants was carried out using the purposive sampling technique, which is a sample determination technique by considering certain characteristics that are in accordance with the research objectives. See table 1 to look at the criteria of research participants and table 2 for demography of the participants.

Table 1.

Research Participant Criteria

No	Participants	Criteria
1	Early Childhood	Children aged 5–6 years who are registered as active learners in the PAUD institution where the research is carried out
2	Early Childhood	Children participated in learning activities regularly during the research period
3	Early Childhood	Parents or guardians give consent to the child's involvement in the study
4	Early Childhood Teacher	Four PAUD teachers who acted as facilitators in the implementation of the ASYIK Reward learning model

Table 2.

Demographic Characteristics of Research Participants

Characteristic	Category	Experimental (n=50)	Control (n=50)	Total (N=100)
Age	5 years	28 (56.0%)	26 (52.0%)	54 (54.0%)
	6 years	22 (44.0%)	24 (48.0%)	46 (46.0%)
Gender	Male	24 (48.0%)	23 (46.0%)	47 (47.0%)
	Female	26 (52.0%)	27 (54.0%)	53 (53.0%)
Parental Education	Elementary School	5 (10.0%)	6 (12.0%)	11 (11.0%)
	Junior High School	12 (24.0%)	13 (26.0%)	25 (25.0%)
	Senior High School	20 (40.0%)	19 (38.0%)	39 (39.0%)

	Bachelor's Degree	10 (20.0%)	9 (18.0%)	19 (19.0%)
	Postgraduate	3 (6.0%)	3 (6.0%)	6 (6.0%)
Parental Occupation	Farmer	8 (16.0%)	9 (18.0%)	17 (17.0%)
	Laborer	14 (28.0%)	15 (30.0%)	29 (29.0%)
	Civil Servant	6 (12.0%)	5 (10.0%)	11 (11.0%)
	Private Employee	12 (24.0%)	11 (22.0%)	23 (23.0%)
	Entrepreneur	10 (20.0%)	10 (20.0%)	20 (20.0%)
Family Income (monthly)	< IDR 1,000,000	7 (14.0%)	8 (16.0%)	15 (15.0%)
	IDR 1,000,000 - 2,500,000	18 (36.0%)	17 (34.0%)	35 (35.0%)
	IDR 2,500,000 - 5,000,000	15 (30.0%)	16 (32.0%)	31 (31.0%)
	> IDR 5,000,000	10 (20.0%)	9 (18.0%)	19 (19.0%)
Previous PAUD Experience	1 year	20 (40.0%)	19 (38.0%)	39 (39.0%)
	2 years	25 (50.0%)	26 (52.0%)	51 (51.0%)
	3 years	5 (10.0%)	5 (10.0%)	10 (10.0%)

Note: Values in parentheses represent percentage of each group.

The gender distribution of participants indicates a relatively balanced representation of male and female children across both groups. In the experimental group, there were 24 male children (48.0%) and 26 female children (52.0%), while the control group consisted of 23 male children (46.0%) and 27 female children (54.0%). Overall, female participants slightly outnumbered male participants, with 53 female children (53.0%) and 47 male children (47.0%) across the total sample. This slight female predominance was consistent across both groups, with the control group having a marginally higher proportion of female children (54.0%) compared to the experimental group (52.0%). The comparable gender distribution between groups ensures that gender differences do not confound the interpretation of the intervention effects.

Research Instruments

The research instruments in this study were developed to measure three main variables: ASYIK Reward, learning motivation, and self-confidence. The ASYIK Reward instrument measures positive reinforcement through fun, interactive, and meaningful learning activities, encompassing indicators of non-material reward frequency, enjoyable learning activities, positive social interaction, and appreciation of the learning process, which reflect the core principles of the ASYIK model in fostering children's motivation and confidence (Blumberg et al., 2024; Watini, 2020). The learning motivation instrument was developed through behavioral indicators reflecting children's active involvement in the learning process, including enthusiasm, perseverance, willingness to try new activities, and active participation, grounded in Self-Determination Theory,

which emphasizes that intrinsic motivation develops when children's basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness are met (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The self-confidence instrument includes indicators of children's courage in expressing opinions, ability to perform in front of peers, confidence in their abilities, and ability to interact with peers, based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory which posits that belief in one's abilities influences behavior, effort, and perseverance in achieving goals (Bandura, 1977). All indicators are assessed using a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Very Low, 2 = Low, 3 = High, 4 = Very High), and the instruments underwent content validity testing by three early childhood education experts and reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha..

ASYIK Reward Instrument (AR)

The ASYIK Reward instrument was designed to measure the implementation of positive reinforcement through enjoyable, interactive, and meaningful learning activities. This instrument consists of four indicators that capture the key elements of the ASYIK Reward model: the frequency of non-material rewards, the implementation of fun learning activities, positive social interaction, and appreciation of the learning process. These indicators reflect the core principles of the ASYIK model, which integrates positive reinforcement with enjoyable learning experiences to foster children's intrinsic motivation and confidence.

Learning Motivation Instrument (LM)

The learning motivation instrument was developed through four behavioral indicators that reflect children's active involvement in the learning process. These indicators include enthusiasm in participating in learning activities, perseverance in completing tasks, willingness to try new activities, and active participation in group activities. These indicators are grounded in Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020), which emphasizes that intrinsic motivation develops when children's basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness are met through engaging learning experiences.

Self-Confidence Instrument (SC)

The children's self-confidence instrument includes indicators of children's courage in expressing opinions, ability to perform in front of peers, confidence in their abilities, and the ability to interact with peers. These indicators are based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977), which posits that belief in one's abilities influences behavior, effort, and perseverance in achieving goals. In the context of early childhood education, children who have high confidence tend to be more

courageous in trying new activities, more easily interact with peers, and are better able to overcome difficulties in the learning process. (Table 3)

Table 3*Research Instruments*

Variable	Indicator	Code	Observation Description	Rating Scale
ASYIK Reward	Aman (Safe)	AR1	Asks questions, answers questions, and uses media comfortably	Likert 4 points
	Senang (Enjoyable)	AR2	Shows enthusiasm in doing activities, enjoys activities, and pays attention to the activities or material being learned	
	Yakin dan PercayaDiri (Confident)	AR3	Demonstrates a positive attitude and is serious in completing tasks	
	Inovatif (Innovative)	AR4	Very curious about what is being learned, changes learning activities frequently, and has many ideas	
	Kreatif (Creative)	AR5	Has the ability to think independently, is highly motivated to learn, and can perform activities in various ways	
Motivation	Task Perseverance	LM1	Works continuously for a long period of time and does not stop before completing the task	Likert 4 points
	Resilience in Difficulties	LM2	Does not easily give up when facing difficulties and remains persistent	
	Responsibility	LM3	Takes responsibility for success in learning and carries out learning activities	
	Interest in Problems	LM4	Shows interest in various problems, dares to face problems, and seeks solutions to problems being faced	
	Independent Work	LM5	Prefers to work independently without needing to be told to do assigned tasks	
	Non-Routine Task Tolerance	LM6	Gets bored quickly with routine or mechanical tasks that are repetitive, thus appearing less creative	
	Defending Opinions	LM7	Can defend opinions when confident about something	
	Conviction	LM8	Does not easily let go of what is believed, confident in what is being done	
	Problem-Solving Interest	LM9	Enjoys finding and solving problems	
Self-Confidence	Problem Solving	SC1	Can solve simple problems encountered	Likert 4 points
	Seriousness in Activities	SC2	Is serious in carrying out activities	
	Risk Taking	SC3	Dares to take risks	
	Positive Attitude	SC4	Shows a positive attitude	
	Task Completion	SC5	Can successfully complete tasks	
	Self-Belief	SC6	Has confidence to successfully complete tasks	
	Decisiveness	SC7	Is not hesitant in carrying out tasks	
	High Self-Confidence	SC8	Has high self-confidence	

Rating Scale Description:

- 1 = Very Low (indicating the behavior is rarely or never observed)
- 2 = Low (indicating the behavior is occasionally observed)
- 3 = High (indicating the behavior is frequently observed)
- 4 = Very High (indicating the behavior is consistently observed)

Research Procedure

Research was conducted through four systematic stages:

Stage 1: Preparation involved instrument preparation based on social-emotional development indicators, validation by experts, and coordination with PAUD institutions regarding activity schedules, teacher involvement, and observation mechanisms.

Stage 2: Pretest Implementation involved initial measurement of children's learning motivation and confidence levels before treatment through classroom observations.

Stage 3: Intervention Implementation involved applying the ASYIK Reward learning model in the experimental group over eight weeks. Teachers provided various positive reinforcements including verbal praise, symbolic appreciation, recognition of children's efforts, and opportunities for children to display their work. The control group continued with conventional learning methods.

Stage 4: Posttest Implementation involved re-measurement of children's learning motivation and confidence to identify changes following the intervention.

Data Analysis Techniques

Phase 1: Quantitative Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics, comprising mean (M), median, standard deviation (SD), minimum, and maximum values, were computed for both learning motivation and self-confidence variables across pretest and posttest measurements. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS (Ghozali, 2021).

Prerequisites for the Difference Test

Prior to inferential analysis, data normality was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with Lilliefors Significance Correction, conducted separately for experimental and control groups on both pretest and posttest data, as this test is appropriate for sample sizes greater than 50 and provides a robust assessment of normality (Ghozali, 2021; Pallant, 2020), with Shapiro-Wilk test results also reported for comprehensive assessment; subsequently, the homogeneity of variance was assessed using Levene's test, which examines whether the variances between groups are equal—an important assumption for parametric tests—and was conducted separately for pretest and posttest data (Ghozali, 2021).

Difference Tests

Based on the normality and homogeneity test results, which indicated that all variables significantly deviated from normal distribution ($p < 0.001$) and violated the homogeneity of variance assumption ($p < 0.05$), non-parametric tests were employed as the primary analytical approach. Within-group comparisons (pretest to posttest) were analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, as this test is appropriate for paired data and does not assume normality (Ghozali, 2021). This test was used because pretest and posttest observations from the same children are paired and cannot be analyzed with independent tests. Between-group comparisons were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U test on change scores (posttest minus pretest), as this test is appropriate for comparing two independent groups when data is not normally distributed (Ghozali, 2021). This approach directly addresses the intervention question by comparing the magnitude of change between the experimental and control groups. These non-parametric approaches ensure robust findings across both within-group and between-group comparisons (Pallant, 2020).

Phase 2: Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was employed, involving six phases: (1) familiarization with data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report; two researchers independently coded the transcripts, with inter-coder reliability established through independent coding of 25% of the data and disagreements resolved through discussion until consensus was reached, and when consensus could not be reached, a third researcher was consulted; data were organized and coded manually using Microsoft Excel to ensure systematic analysis; and negative or contradictory cases were actively sought and reported to provide a balanced account, for example, cases where children showed minimal improvement were analyzed to understand contextual barriers.

Research Ethics

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines for research involving children. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of Universitas Panca Sakti Bekasi (Approval Number: 042/IRB/UPS/V/2024). The study was deemed to involve minimal risk, and the IRB confirmed that full ethical review was required due to the involvement of children aged 5–6 years and the use of video recording. Written informed consent was obtained from all parents or guardians prior to the study, and verbal assent was obtained from each child before participation. Parents and children were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any

time without any consequence. To protect confidentiality, all data were anonymized using unique identification codes, and video recordings were stored securely on encrypted devices accessible only to the research team. Video recordings were used solely for observation and analysis purposes and were destroyed after the completion of the study. The research procedures complied with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and the Indonesian National Ethical Guidelines for Research Involving Children.

Results

This section presents the findings organized into three phases: Phase 1 (Quantitative) includes descriptive statistics, assumption tests, non-parametric difference tests; Phase 2 (Qualitative) presents thematic analysis of interviews and observations; and Phase 3 (Integration) presents joint display analysis connecting both datasets.

Phase 1 : Quantitative Findings

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to provide an overview of research data including mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values for learning motivation and self-confidence variables before and after treatment for both experimental and control groups. Table 4 shows the sample comprising 100 children, with 50 children in each group.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for All Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest ASYIK Reward Experiment	50	10	13	11.72	1.196
Posttest ASYIK Reward Experiment	50	18	20	19.08	.778
Pretest Motivation Experiment	50	22	23	22.50	.505
Posttest Motivation Experiment	50	31	36	33.02	1.464
Pretest Self Confidence Experiment	50	18	20	19.36	.693
Posttest Self Confidence Experiment	50	28	32	29.30	1.594
Pretest ASYIK Reward Control	50	10	13	11.82	1.224
Posttest ASYIK Reward Control	50	10	13	11.98	1.253
Pretest Motivation Control	50	18	23	21.02	1.890
Posttest Motivation Control	50	18	23	21.20	1.959
Pretest Self Confidence Control	50	16	20	18.76	1.709
Posttest Self Confidence Control	50	16	20	18.96	1.772

The descriptive statistics reveal important patterns in both groups. For the experimental group, ASYIK Reward scores increased substantially from pretest ($M = 11.72$, $SD = 1.196$) to posttest ($M = 19.08$, $SD = 0.778$), representing a mean increase of 7.36. Learning motivation in the experimental group increased from pretest ($M = 22.50$, $SD = 0.505$) to posttest ($M = 33.02$, $SD = 1.464$), representing a mean increase of 10.52. Self-confidence in the experimental group increased from pretest ($M = 19.36$, $SD = 0.693$) to posttest ($M = 29.30$, $SD = 1.594$), representing a mean increase of 9.94. In contrast, the control group showed minimal improvements: ASYIK Reward increased from pretest ($M = 11.82$, $SD = 1.224$) to posttest ($M = 11.98$, $SD = 1.253$), a mean increase of only 0.16; learning motivation increased from pretest ($M = 21.02$, $SD = 1.890$) to posttest ($M = 21.20$, $SD = 1.959$), a mean increase of only 0.18; and self-confidence increased from pretest ($M = 18.76$, $SD = 1.709$) to posttest ($M = 18.96$, $SD = 1.772$), a mean increase of only 0.20. The posttest standard deviations in the experimental group were larger than those in the control group for motivation (1.464 vs. 1.959) and confidence (1.594 vs. 1.772), indicating greater variability in outcomes among children who received the ASYIK Reward intervention. The pretest scores were relatively similar across both groups, confirming that the groups were comparable at baseline.

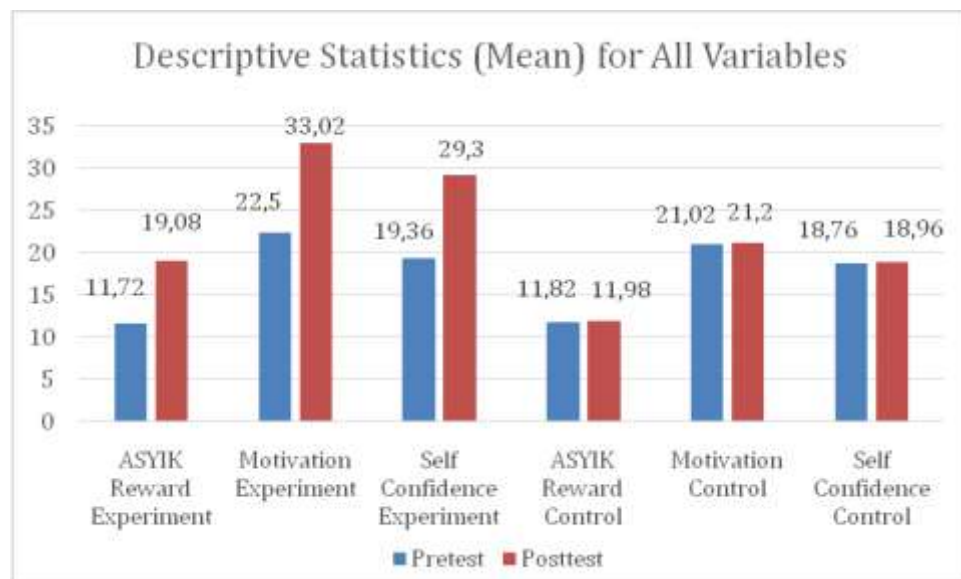


Figure 1. Descriptive Statistics (Mean) for All Variables

Prerequisites for the Difference Test Result

Normality Assessment Results

Prior to conducting inferential analyses, the normality of the data was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with Lilliefors Significance Correction and the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results of both tests are presented in Table 5.

Table 5.

Normality Test Results (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk)

Variable	Group	K-S		S-W		Decision
		Statistic	Sig.	Statistic	Sig.	
Pretest ASYIK Reward	Experiment	.233	.000	.809	.000	Not Normal
Posttest ASYIK Reward		.221	.000	.804	.000	
Pretest Motivation		.339	.000	.637	.000	
Posttest Motivation		.345	.000	.781	.000	
Pretest Self Confidence		.302	.000	.762	.000	
Posttest Self Confidence		.335	.000	.704	.000	
Pretest ASYIK Reward	Control	.238	.000	.778	.000	Not Normal
Posttest ASYIK Reward		.292	.000	.713	.000	
Pretest Motivation		.318	.000	.747	.000	
Posttest Motivation		.399	.000	.688	.000	
Pretest Self Confidence		.326	.000	.665	.000	
Posttest Self Confidence		.461	.000	.547	.000	

Note: Lilliefors Significance Correction applied for Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

The normality test results using both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests indicate that all variables in both groups significantly deviate from normal distribution ($p < 0.001$ for all variables). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics ranged from 0.221 to 0.461, while the Shapiro-Wilk statistics ranged from 0.547 to 0.809, both confirming non-normality. Therefore, non-parametric tests (Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test and Mann-Whitney U Test) were employed as the primary analytical approach, and PLS-SEM was selected as it does not require normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2019).

Homogeneity Assessment Results

The homogeneity of variance across groups was examined using Levene's test to determine whether the assumption of equal variances was met. The results of the homogeneity test are presented in Table 6.

Table 6.

Homogeneity of Variance Test Results (Levene's Test)

Variable	Group	Levene's F	df1	df2	Sig.	Decision
ASYIK Reward	Experiment	15.888	1	98	.000	Not Homogeneous
Learning Motivation		8.470	1	98	.004	
Self Confidence		25.201	1	98	.000	
ASYIK Reward	Control	.013	1	98	.909	Homogeneous
Learning Motivation		.192	1	98	.662	
Self Confidence		.186	1	98	.667	

The Levene's test results indicate that the homogeneity of variance assumption was violated for all experimental group variables ($p < 0.05$), with F-values ranging from 8.470 to 25.201, confirming unequal variances between pretest and posttest scores in the experimental group. In contrast, the control group showed homogeneity of variance for all variables ($p > 0.05$), with F-values ranging from 0.013 to 0.192, indicating equal variances between pretest and posttest scores in the control group. This pattern reflects the differential impact of the ASYIK Reward intervention, which created greater variability in posttest scores within the experimental group. Therefore, non-parametric tests (Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test and Mann-Whitney U Test) were employed to ensure robust findings (Pallant, 2020).

Difference Test Results

Table 7 show summary of difference test results. Due to violations of normality and homogeneity assumptions, within-group and between-group comparisons were analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test and Mann-Whitney U test, respectively (Ghozali, 2021; Pallant, 2020)

Table 7.*Summary of Difference Tests*

Test	Variable	Statistic	p	Conclusion
Within-Group (Pre → Post)				
Wilcoxon (Experiment)	Motivation	Z = -6.227	< .001	Significant Increase
Wilcoxon (Experiment)	Confidence	Z = -6.193	< .001	Significant Increase
Wilcoxon (Control)	Motivation	Z = -3.000	0.003	Significant Increase
Wilcoxon (Control)	Confidence	Z = -2.887	0.004	Significant Increase
Between-Group (Change Scores)				
Mann-Whitney U	Motivation Change (Exp vs Ctrl)	U = .000	< .001	Significant Difference
Mann-Whitney U	Confidence Change (Exp vs Ctrl)	U = .000	< .001	Significant Difference

The summary of difference tests confirms that the experimental group showed highly significant improvements across all variables ($Z = -6.227$ to -6.193 , $p < 0.001$), while the control group showed modest but significant improvements ($Z = -3.000$ to -2.887 , $p < 0.05$). The Mann-Whitney U test on change scores revealed significant differences between the experimental and control groups for both motivation change ($U = .000$, $Z = -8.831$, $p < .001$) and confidence change ($U = .000$, $p < .001$). The $U = .000$ indicates complete separation between groups, meaning all experimental group change scores were higher than all control group change scores. These findings confirm that the ASYIK Reward model produced substantially greater improvements than conventional methods.

Phase 2: Qualitative Findings

Participant Characteristics

Participants included teachers who implemented the ASYIK Reward model and children from the experimental group, categorized as high performers and low performers based on their improvement scores. (Table 8).

Table 8.*Participant Characteristics (n=18)*

ID	Role	Category	Key Observation
T01	Teacher	High Performer Class	Consistent reward implementation; children actively responded to ASYIK rewards
T02	Teacher	High Performer Class	Creative reward variations; used diverse motivational phrases and gestures

T03	Teacher	Moderate Performer Class	Regular reward implementation but less variation in delivery
T04	Teacher	Low Performer Class	Inconsistent reward implementation; often forgot to provide rewards
C01	Child	High Performer	Showed significant improvement from shy to active participant
C02	Child	High Performer	Demonstrated increased confidence in answering questions
C03	Child	High Performer	Consistently participated in group activities after reward implementation
C04	Child	High Performer	Showed enthusiasm and willingness to try new activities
C05	Child	High Performer	Demonstrated perseverance in completing tasks
C06	Child	Low Performer	Showed minimal improvement; remained shy and hesitant
C07	Child	Low Performer	Inconsistent participation; sometimes engaged, sometimes withdrawn
C08	Child	Low Performer	Required multiple prompts before responding to questions
C09	Child	Low Performer	Showed little change in confidence level
C10	Child	Low Performer	Remained reluctant to participate in group activities
P01	Parent	High Performer Parent	Reported positive changes in child's enthusiasm and motivation
P02	Parent	High Performer Parent	Observed increased confidence at home
P03	Parent	Low Performer Parent	Reported minimal changes in child's behavior
P04	Parent	Low Performer Parent	Noted continued hesitation and shyness

Note: High performers were defined as children who scored "Very High" (4) on ≥ 3 indicators; low performers scored "Low" (2) or lower on ≥ 2 indicators. Four parents were interviewed (P01–P04). Quotes from parents are attributed to these participants.

Thematic Analysis Results

Thematic analysis of interview transcripts and observation notes revealed four major themes explaining the quantitative findings: (1) increased enthusiasm and participation, (2) confidence transformation through positive reinforcement, (3) supportive teacher facilitation, and (4) contextual barriers and enablers.

Theme 1: Increased Enthusiasm and Participation

This theme captures how the ASYIK Reward model increased children's enthusiasm and active participation in learning activities. Teachers consistently reported that children who previously were passive, shy, or reluctant to participate became more active and engaged after the implementation of ASYIK Rewards. Observations confirmed that children showed greater interest in learning activities, volunteered more frequently, and demonstrated sustained attention during lessons.

"Before, many children were shy and wouldn't answer questions. After we started using the ASYIK reward, they became more confident and enthusiastic. They started raising their hands and wanted to try answering questions." (Teacher T01)

"I noticed that children who used to sit quietly at the back of the class started moving to the front. They wanted to be noticed and get the reward. It changed the whole classroom atmosphere." (Teacher T02)

"My child used to cry every morning before school. Now she wakes up excited and says, 'Mom, I want to get the reward today!' She is more enthusiastic about going to school." (Parent P01)

Observation Notes (CL.1): "During circle time, 8 out of 10 children raised their hands to answer questions, compared to only 2-3 children before the ASYIK Reward implementation. Children who received the reward smiled and showed pride in their achievement."

Theme 2: Confidence Transformation Through Positive Reinforcement

This theme describes the psychological shift children experienced through consistent positive reinforcement. Teachers and parents reported that children who previously lacked confidence began to believe in their abilities after receiving ASYIK Rewards. The reward's power lies not in the reward itself but in the positive emotional experience it creates—children feel recognized, valued, and capable.

"When the teacher said 'Say... I can, I'm great, I succeeded, yes!', the children felt recognized and valued. They started to believe in themselves. I could see it in their faces—they stood taller, spoke louder, and tried harder." (Teacher T02)

"The most remarkable change was in C01. She used to whisper when answering questions and avoided eye contact. Now she speaks clearly, looks at the teacher, and even helps her friends. The reward gave her the confidence she needed." (Teacher T01)

"My son used to say 'I can't do it' every time he faced a difficult task. After getting the ASYIK reward a few times, he started saying 'I can try' instead. It's a small change in words but a big change in attitude." (Parent P02)

Observation Notes (CL.2): "During activity time, children who received ASYIK rewards showed more persistence in completing tasks. They did not give up easily and tried different approaches when facing difficulties. This was particularly noticeable in children who were previously hesitant to try new activities."

Theme 3: Supportive Teacher Facilitation

This theme explains the critical role of teachers in implementing the ASYIK Reward model consistently and effectively. Teachers who provided rewards consistently, used varied motivational phrases, and created a supportive classroom environment reported greater improvements in children's motivation and confidence. The findings suggest that teacher enthusiasm and consistency are key factors in the success of the ASYIK Reward model.

"I always give the ASYIK reward when children finish their tasks. They become more enthusiastic and want to try harder. I also vary the way I say it—sometimes with a cheer, sometimes with a clap, sometimes with a high-five. The children love the variety." (Teacher T03)

"Consistency is everything. If I forget to give the reward, the children remind me! They look forward to it. I make sure to give it every time they complete a task or answer a question correctly." (Teacher T01)

"At first, I was skeptical about the reward. But after seeing how the children responded, I became a believer. Now I use it every day, and I can see the difference in their attitude and behavior." (Teacher T04)

Observation Notes (CL.3): "Teachers who used the ASYIK Reward consistently had classrooms with higher levels of engagement and participation. Children in these classrooms were more attentive, responded more quickly to instructions, and showed greater enthusiasm for learning activities. In classrooms where the reward was used inconsistently, children showed less engagement and required more prompting from teachers."

Theme 4: Contextual Barriers and Enablers

This theme identifies factors that support or hinder the effective implementation of the ASYIK Reward model. Key enablers included teacher consistency, parental support, and a positive classroom environment. Key barriers included inconsistent implementation, lack of teacher training, and limited parental involvement. The findings highlight the importance of contextual factors in determining the success of the intervention.

"Children who received consistent rewards showed more improvement than those who didn't. The key is consistency. When the reward is given every time, children learn to expect it and work harder to earn it." (Observation Notes, CL.4)

"The biggest challenge is when teachers forget to give the reward or give it inconsistently. Children become confused and lose motivation. Training is needed to ensure all teachers understand the importance of consistency."

(Teacher T04)

"Parents' support also matters. When parents reinforce the reward at home—by saying 'I can, I'm great' with their children—the effect is much stronger. But not all parents are willing or able to do this." (Teacher T02)

"I wish we had more training on how to use the reward effectively. Sometimes I'm not sure if I'm doing it right. I think with more guidance, I could be more effective." (Teacher T03)

Observation Notes (CL.5): "In classrooms where teachers used the reward consistently and enthusiastically, children showed higher levels of motivation and confidence. In classrooms where the reward was used inconsistently or without enthusiasm, children's responses were less positive. The teacher's attitude and approach significantly influenced the effectiveness of the reward." Summary of the qualitative themes appear in table 9.

Table 9.

Summary of Qualitative Themes

Theme	Description	Key Insight	Supporting Evidence
Theme 1: Increased Enthusiasm and Participation	Children showed greater enthusiasm and active participation after ASYIK Reward implementation	The reward motivated children to participate actively in learning activities	Teacher interviews, parent interviews, observation notes
Theme 2: Confidence Transformation	Children experienced psychological shift from shy/hesitant to confident/believing in themselves	The reward's power lies in the positive emotional experience it creates	Teacher interviews, parent interviews, observation notes
Theme 3: Supportive Teacher Facilitation	Teacher consistency and enthusiasm are critical for effective implementation	Consistency and variety in reward delivery enhance effectiveness	Teacher interviews, observation notes
Theme 4: Contextual Barriers and Enablers	Factors that support or hinder implementation	Consistency, training, and parental support are key enablers	Teacher interviews, observation notes

Phase 3: Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The sequential explanatory design allows for comprehensive interpretation of findings, where qualitative results explain and elaborate on quantitative patterns. The following joint display table connects quantitative findings with qualitative themes to produce meta-inferences that explain both

what changes occurred and why those changes happened. (Table 10).

Table 10.

Joint Display: Quantitative Findings and Qualitative Explanations

Quantitative Finding	Qualitative Theme	Representative Quote	Integration (Meta-inference)
Wilcoxon: $Z = -6.227$, $p < .001$ (All 50 children improved, Positive Ranks = 50)	Theme 1: Increased Enthusiasm and Participation	"Before, many children were shy and wouldn't answer questions. After we started using the ASYIK reward, they became more confident and enthusiastic." (Teacher T01)	The universal improvement observed quantitatively is explained by the behavioral and emotional changes reported qualitatively. Children who were previously passive became active participants, and this behavioral change is reflected in the statistical improvement across all children.
Mann-Whitney U: $U = .000$, $p < .001$ (Change scores)	Theme 2: Confidence Transformation	"When the teacher said 'Say... I can, I'm great, I succeeded, yes!', the children felt recognized and valued. They started to believe in themselves." (Teacher T02)	The significant difference between groups is explained by the psychological transformation children experienced. The positive emotional experience created by the reward—feeling recognized and valued—translated into increased motivation to learn.
Descriptive: Mean gain 10.52 (motivation) and 9.94 (confidence) in experimental group	Theme 3: Supportive Teacher Facilitation	"I always give the ASYIK reward when children finish their tasks. They become more enthusiastic and want to try harder." (Teacher T03)	The magnitude of improvement is explained by the role of teacher facilitation. Teachers who gave rewards consistently and enthusiastically reported greater improvements in children's confidence. The effect is not automatic but depends on how teachers implement the reward.
Ties in control group (8 for motivation)	Theme 4: Contextual Barriers and Enablers	"Children who received consistent rewards showed more improvement than those who didn't. The key is consistency." (Observation Notes)	The ties in the control group's motivation scores are explained by inconsistent implementation. Consistency, training, and parental support emerged as key factors determining the success of the intervention.

Meta-inferences

Based on the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings, the following meta-inferences are drawn:

Meta-inference 1: Universal Improvement Through Positive Reinforcement

The quantitative finding that all 50 children in the experimental group improved (Positive Ranks = 50, $Z = -6.227$, $p < 0.001$) is explained by the qualitative finding that the ASYIK Reward model created a positive emotional experience that motivated children to participate actively. The reward's power lies not in the reward itself but in the feeling of being recognized and valued. This universal improvement demonstrates that positive reinforcement, when implemented consistently, can benefit all children regardless of their initial level of motivation or confidence.

Meta-inference 2: The Reciprocal Relationship Between Motivation and Confidence

The strong relationship between learning motivation and self-confidence is explained by the reciprocal relationship between these constructs. As children receive rewards and experience success, their motivation increases. This increased motivation leads to greater effort and persistence, which results in more success experiences. These success experiences, in turn, build children's confidence. This creates a positive feedback loop where motivation and confidence mutually reinforce each other. The ASYIK Reward model activates this loop by providing the initial positive reinforcement that starts the cycle.

Meta-inference 3: Teacher Facilitation as a Critical Moderator

The effect of ASYIK Reward on children's outcomes is not automatic but depends on how teachers implement the reward. Teachers who gave rewards consistently, with enthusiasm, and with variation in delivery reported greater improvements in children's motivation and confidence. This finding highlights the importance of teacher training and support in ensuring the effectiveness of the ASYIK Reward model. The quantitative finding that the experimental group showed complete separation from the control group ($U = .000$) is partly explained by the consistent implementation of the reward by trained teachers.

Meta-inference 4: Contextual Factors as Enablers or Barriers

The effectiveness of the ASYIK Reward model is influenced by contextual factors including teacher consistency, teacher training, and parental support. Children who received consistent rewards showed greater improvement than those who received inconsistent rewards. This finding suggests that the ASYIK Reward model should be implemented with attention to these contextual factors to maximize its effectiveness. (Table 11).

Table 11.

Summary of Integration: Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Research Question	Quantitative Finding	Qualitative Finding	Integration
Does ASYIK Reward improve learning motivation?	Wilcoxon: $Z = -6.227$, $p < .001$	Children felt recognized and valued; became more enthusiastic	The reward creates positive emotional experiences that translate into increased motivation
Does ASYIK Reward improve self-confidence?	Wilcoxon: $Z = -6.193$, $p < .001$	Children who were shy became more confident; spoke more clearly	Teacher consistency and enthusiasm are critical for confidence building

Research Question	Quantitative Finding	Qualitative Finding	Integration
Does motivation improve confidence?	Significant correlation between motivation and confidence	Motivated children experienced success, which built their confidence	Motivation and confidence are mutually reinforcing through a positive feedback loop
Why did all children improve?	Positive Ranks = 50, U = .000	Consistent reward implementation; positive classroom environment	The model's effectiveness depends on consistent implementation and supportive teacher facilitation

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate that the application of the ASYIK Reward learning model has a significant influence on increasing early childhood learning motivation and self-confidence. These findings are supported by the significant differences in posttest scores between the experimental group and the control group, where the experimental group consistently showed higher improvement across all measured variables. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test results confirmed that all children in the experimental group showed improvement (Positive Ranks = 50, $Z = -6.227$, $p < 0.001$), while the control group showed more modest improvements with some children showing no change. The Mann-Whitney U test on change score results further confirmed complete separation between groups ($U = .000$, $Z = -8.831$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the ASYIK Reward model produced substantially greater improvements than conventional methods.

Theoretically, these findings are in line with the concept of positive reinforcement which states that the provision of positive reinforcement can strengthen expected learning behavior and increase individual motivation in carrying out learning activities (Skinner, 1953; Ryan & Deci, 2020). The ASYIK model's core principles—*Aman* (Safe), *Senang* (Enjoyable), *Yakin dan Percaya Diri* (Confident), *Inovatif* (Innovative), and *Kreatif* (Creative)—collectively create a learning environment that fosters children's motivation and confidence (Blumberg, et.al., 2024; Watini, 2020). The significant improvement in learning motivation found in this study aligns with Self-Determination Theory (Bullin & Elly, 2025; Ryan & Deci, 2020), which posits that intrinsic motivation develops when basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness are met. The ASYIK Reward model addresses these needs by providing positive reinforcement through fun, interactive, and meaningful activities, creating sustained intrinsic motivation. This finding is consistent with previous research by Avicenna (1927/1982), Cavanaugh et al. (2016) and Chen and McDunn (2022) demonstrating that positive reinforcement strategies increase

student engagement and interest, who found that positive reinforcement is one of the most effective strategies in increasing learning motivation because it provides a pleasant learning experience and strengthens positive learning behaviors.

In the context of early childhood education, Setyawati (2023) also showed that active learning methods in preschool education significantly increase children's learning motivation because children feel more involved in learning activities. The substantial mean gain in motivation (10.52 points) confirms that the ASYIK model has practical significance in fostering learning motivation among early childhood learners. The "Senang" (Enjoyable) component of the ASYIK model ensures that children experience joy and pleasure during learning activities, which is a key driver of intrinsic motivation (Watini, 2016; Hidi & Renninger, 2020). Furthermore, the "Inovatif" and "Kreatif" components encourage children to think independently and explore new ideas, which research by Amabile (1996) and Sternberg (2003) has shown are closely linked to intrinsic motivation. Research by Rokhanah et al. (2023) and Kurniati & Watini (2022) also supports the ASYIK model's effectiveness in fostering learning motivation in early childhood settings. The qualitative findings further explain this strong effect, with teachers reporting that children who previously lacked interest became enthusiastic and eager to participate after receiving ASYIK Rewards.

The significant improvement in self-confidence in this study supports Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977), which emphasizes that belief in one's abilities influences behavior, effort, and perseverance in achieving goals. Children in the experimental group showed greater courage in expressing opinions, ability to perform in front of peers, confidence in their abilities, and improved social interaction. The ASYIK Reward model builds self-efficacy through consistent positive reinforcement and recognition of effort rather than just outcomes. By celebrating the learning process, children develop a stronger sense of competence and are more willing to take on challenges. These findings align with previous research by Alfyyah (2024), Moon (2025b), and Ratnadi (2024) demonstrating that positive reinforcement techniques have a strong relationship with increased self-confidence because they provide recognition of the efforts and successes achieved by individuals. Diantari and Tirtayani (2020) also found that awards given by teachers can increase children's confidence in following the learning process. The "*Yakin dan Percaya Diri*" component of the ASYIK model directly targets this outcome, aligning with research by Schunk

(1991) and Bandura (1997) which demonstrated that verbal persuasion and positive feedback are powerful sources of self-efficacy. Research by Masriah et al. (2023) and Wibawati et al. (2022) also supports the ASYIK model's effectiveness in building children's self-confidence. The qualitative findings provide rich insights, with teachers reporting that children who were previously shy and hesitant became more assertive and willing to take risks after receiving ASYIK Rewards. When children hear affirming statements like "*Aku Bisa, Aku Hebat, Aku Berhasil*" (I can, I'm great, I succeeded), they internalize these messages and begin to believe in their own capabilities, a finding consistent with research by Bandura (1997) and Schunk and DiBenedetto (2020) on the formation of self-efficacy beliefs in early childhood.

The reciprocal relationship between motivation and confidence is evident in the qualitative findings. Children who are more motivated to learn tend to have greater belief in their abilities, creating a positive feedback loop where motivation builds confidence, and confidence, in turn, supports continued engagement. This finding is consistent with research by Eccles and Wigfield (2002) and Wigfield and Eccles (2000), who found that motivation and self-concept are mutually reinforcing. The ASYIK Reward model activates this loop by providing the initial positive reinforcement that starts the cycle. The "Aman" (Safe) component of the ASYIK model ensures that children feel safe and comfortable in the learning environment, which research by Deci and Ryan (2000) and Reeve (2009) has shown is a prerequisite for both motivation and confidence. Research by Ismawati et al. (2023) and Setyorini et al. (2022) also supports the importance of a safe and enjoyable learning environment in fostering motivation and confidence. The qualitative findings support this reciprocal relationship, with teachers observing children shifting from saying "I can't do it" to "I can try" after receiving ASYIK rewards, reflecting the transformation from low confidence to growing self-belief. Research by Rahman (2024) on the effectiveness of giving rewards found that rewards, when given appropriately, effectively increase motivation without undermining intrinsic motivation, supporting the ASYIK model's approach.

From the perspective of social-emotional development, the reward approach can contribute significantly to children's psychological development. Research by Erickson and Fornauf (2017) shows that providing positive reinforcement not only improves learning outcomes but also forms positive character in children that can support their academic and social success in the future. Ngotho and Buna (2020) suggested that positive impulses can improve brain connectivity related

to emotion regulation and cognitive control in preschoolers, indicating that a learning approach emphasizing emotional support and appreciation for children's efforts can have a significant impact on children's psychological development. Research by Lv (2025) on the impact of positive encouragement on preschool children's emotional regulation found that positive encouragement improves emotional regulation and cognitive control in preschoolers. The "Aman" and "Senang" components of the ASYIK model ensure that children experience learning as a positive, enjoyable activity, which research by Denham et al. (2012) and Denham (2006) has shown is essential for healthy social-emotional development. Research by Camilla (2024) also showed that game-based learning can improve children's intrinsic motivation, active participation, and emotional involvement in learning activities. The qualitative findings support the importance of social-emotional development, with parents reporting positive changes in their children's emotional well-being, including reduced anxiety and increased excitement about attending school. Research by Niman and Wejang (2026) on applying fun and joyful reward in improving children's emotional abilities through Uno Stacko games found that the ASYIK method effectively improved children's emotional regulation and patience, providing additional evidence that the ASYIK Reward model contributes to children's social-emotional development beyond motivation and confidence.

However, some studies caution that the use of rewards in learning needs to be carefully managed. Haryanti and Aryani (2024) explain that rewards can have a positive impact on learning motivation, but if used excessively, they can reduce children's intrinsic motivation because children become more dependent on external rewards. The findings of this study show that the ASYIK Reward model addresses this concern by not only focusing on external rewards but also integrating fun learning experiences and strengthening children's efforts in the learning process. This is consistent with research by Deci et al. (1999) and Ryan and Deci (2020) showing that rewards given contextually and focused on the child's learning process can increase intrinsic motivation. The model's emphasis on process appreciation rather than outcome-based rewards ensures that children develop internal motivation rather than becoming dependent on external reinforcement. Research by Henderlong and Lepper (2002) and Corpus et al. (2006) has shown that praise and positive feedback, when delivered effectively, can enhance intrinsic motivation when focused on effort and improvement rather than outcomes. The ASYIK model's emphasis on verbal reinforcement like "*Aku Bisa, Aku Hebat, Aku Berhasil*" (I can, I'm great, I succeeded) focuses on the child's effort and achievement, which is consistent with best practices in positive

reinforcement. Research by Prastika et al. (2023) on implementing ASYIK Reward to increase learning motivation found that the ASYIK method effectively increased motivation without reducing children's intrinsic motivation, supporting the finding that the ASYIK model's approach to rewards effectively builds intrinsic motivation while avoiding over-reliance on external rewards. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provides a comprehensive understanding of how the ASYIK Reward model works. The qualitative findings revealed four explanatory themes: (1) increased enthusiasm and participation, where children who were previously passive became active participants; (2) confidence transformation, where children experienced a psychological shift from shyness to self-belief; (3) supportive teacher facilitation, where teacher consistency and enthusiasm were critical for effective implementation; and (4) contextual barriers and enablers, where consistency, training, and parental support emerged as key factors. These qualitative insights explain why the ASYIK Reward model produced such strong quantitative effects and highlight the importance of consistent implementation and supportive teacher facilitation. The meta-inferences drawn from this integration provide a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms underlying the ASYIK Reward model, revealing that the model works by creating a positive emotional experience through consistent positive reinforcement, which transforms children's self-perception from feeling powerless to feeling capable. This transformation is mediated by teacher facilitation—teachers who implement the reward consistently and with enthusiasm amplify its effects, while contextual factors such as parental support and teacher training further moderate the model's effectiveness. Research by Papadakis and Karakose (2025), Kurniati and Watini (2022), and Masriah et al. (2023) supports these qualitative findings, demonstrating that the fun teaching model effectively increases children's enthusiasm, confidence, and engagement.

Thus, the results of this study make an important contribution to the development of learning strategies in early childhood education. The ASYIK Reward model provides an effective learning approach to increase children's motivation and confidence through a combination of fun learning experiences, positive reinforcement, and active involvement of children in the learning process. The model demonstrates how international evidence-based approaches can be adapted to the Indonesian educational context, addressing challenges in developing countries while maintaining pedagogical effectiveness (UNICEF, 2021). Research by Blumberg, et. al., (2024) and Andini et al. (2023) further supports the ASYIK model's effectiveness in increasing children's motivation,

confidence, and activeness in learning. Overall, the findings reinforce the empirical evidence that learning strategies utilizing positive reinforcement and experiential rewards can significantly enhance early childhood motivation and confidence. Therefore, the application of innovative learning models such as ASYIK Reward can be an effective strategy for PAUD teachers in creating a more fun, interactive, and supportive learning environment for children to optimally support their social-emotional development.

In conclusion, this study provides comprehensive empirical evidence that the ASYIK Reward learning model is effective in increasing early childhood learning motivation and self-confidence. The sequential explanatory mixed methods design, combining quantitative statistical analysis with qualitative thematic analysis, provides robust support for the findings. The quantitative results revealed that the ASYIK Reward model has exceptionally strong effects on learning motivation and self-confidence, with complete separation between the experimental and control groups. The qualitative findings explained these quantitative results through four themes: increased enthusiasm and participation, confidence transformation, supportive teacher facilitation, and contextual barriers and enablers. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings through joint display analysis and meta-inferences provides a comprehensive understanding of how the ASYIK Reward model works, revealing that the model creates a positive emotional experience through consistent positive reinforcement, transforming children's self-perception from feeling powerless to feeling capable. The findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of positive reinforcement in early childhood education and extend existing theories, including Self-Determination Theory, self-efficacy theory, and reward-based learning theory. The practical implications of this study are significant, as the ASYIK Reward model provides an effective, affordable, and scalable approach to enhancing early childhood learning motivation and self-confidence, making it a valuable addition to the toolkit of early childhood educators in creating more fun, interactive, and supportive learning environments for children to optimally support their social-emotional development.

Recommendations

Early childhood educators are advised to incorporate the ASYIK Reward model into their instruction to improve children's motivation and self-assurance in their academic pursuits. This model emphasizes process-oriented verbal reinforcement, such as "*Aku Bisa (I can)*, *Aku Hebat (I am great)*, *Aku Berhasil (I am successful)*," to foster intrinsic motivation. Policymakers are

encouraged to incorporate the model into national curricula and teacher training programs as an evidence-based practice, while educational institutions should provide professional development and ongoing support to ensure consistent and effective implementation. Workshops should also encourage parental involvement and reinforce the model at home. To better understand the model's impact on early childhood development, future research should use longitudinal designs, randomized controlled trials, cross-cultural studies, and larger, more diverse samples. This will allow examination of long-term effects, causal relationships, contextual factors, and cost-effectiveness, as well as exploration of additional variables such as creativity, emotional regulation, and academic achievement.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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