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THE USE OF LOVE COINS REWARDS TO FOSTER INDEPENDENCE IN CHILDREN AGED 5-6 YEARS: A CASE STUDY

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ARTICLE INFO

Submitted : 2025-02-17
Revised : 2025-03-19
Accepted : 2025-03-28

DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.33508/mgs.v53i1.7266>

ABSTRACT

This case study research aims to explain how giving Love Coins Rewards affects the independence of children aged 5-6 years. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews with teachers and parents, and documentation of children's daily activities. Data analysis technique used was based on Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, namely data condensation, data display, and conclusions or verification. The research findings showed that the implementation of the Love Coins Reward system significantly motivates children to increase their independence at school. Children who receive rewards display self-confidence, initiative, and the ability to make decisions independently. These findings indicate that using the love coin as a form of appreciation can be an effective strategy for supporting the development of independence in early childhood. It is recommended that similar programs be integrated into learning activities in kindergarten with full support from teachers and parents to create a learning environment conducive to the formation of children's character and independence.

Keywords: Love Coins Reward, Independence, Children aged 5-6 years

INTRODUCTION

Independence is an important aspect of early childhood development. Independent children can complete simple tasks without relying much on other people, show initiative in various activities, and have confidence in making decisions. According to Hurlock (2002), independence is an attitude of not depending on others in thinking and acting. This is influenced by several independence factors which are divided into two, namely internal factors including gender role factors, intelligence factors, development factors, and external factors including parenting factors, socio-cultural factors (Muthi, et al., 2020). The development of independence in children aged 5-6 years is greatly influenced by the environment, both at home and school. Therefore, an appropriate strategy is needed to support and stimulate children's independence from an early age, considering that children aged 0-6 years are in the golden age or golden age which requires stimulation to achieve optimal development (Khaironi, 2018). The majority of young children are always given help by their parents, especially when they are at home, and this will become a habit when children are outside the home, especially when they are at school, they will always need help from other people in completing the tasks given. When children do not receive help quickly, they will respond in various ways, such as feeling sad and then crying in class. Of course, this affects the child's performance in participating in class activities because the child's mood is unstable. In addition, when the teacher models an activity to the child and then asks the child to perform that activity, the child still asks for help from the teacher. Then, there are also children who have tantrums and want to go home even though it is not yet time to go home. Such things can make the learning process in the classroom unable to run efficiently.

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The events occurring at school indicate that children's independence has not been properly stimulated. However, independence in school is very important, as it directs children toward positive behaviors that support their success in the learning process. Independence is the ability to free oneself from dependence on others in carrying out daily activities (Chairilisyah, 2019). One strategy that can be implemented in kindergarten learning is the Love Coins Reward, a reward system where children receive love coins as an appreciation for their independent behavior. This reward system aims to enhance children's intrinsic motivation, encouraging them to complete various tasks independently, such as tidying up toys, dressing themselves, or completing school assignments without adult assistance, particularly from teachers. Teachers strive to continuously stimulate children's independence in school, and one way to do this is by providing rewards. This is because children generally enjoy receiving rewards or gifts (Arianty & Watini, 2022). Providing rewards can have a positive impact on children by fostering intrinsic motivation. However, giving rewards must be done wisely. According to Deci & Ryan (2020), giving excessive or inappropriate rewards can reduce children's intrinsic motivation. Therefore, it is important to balance rewards by building children's self-confidence and internal motivation so that they remain motivated to learn and develop. Rewards can be given in various forms, such as verbal praise, facial expressions, body language, or physical gifts. Verbal praise may include positive words or phrases that make children happy. Facial expressions or body language rewards can include smiles or thumbs-up gestures. Meanwhile, physical rewards may come in the form of objects, gifts, or certificates of appreciation. Through the use of rewards, children are more likely to exhibit the expected behaviors (Arianty & Watini, 2022).

An interesting aspect of the children at Avicenna Kindergarten Surabaya is that the teachers implement a program they call Love Coins. Love Coins is a reward system that differs from the typical rewards given in schools, such as verbal praise or gifts, because Love Coins Reward can be used as a form of payment at school during specific times. To earn Love Coins Reward, children must follow the teacher's instructions. For example, when the teacher is telling a story in front of the class, children are expected to sit and listen attentively without talking to their friends. Additionally, when the teacher asks a question during the storytelling session, children can earn Love Coins by correctly answering the question. The Love Coins Reward is collected in a pouch and can be exchanged for prizes provided by the teachers at the end of each semester. Children aged 5-6 years old show great enthusiasm whenever the teacher mentions Love Coins Reward, as they are eager to collect as many as possible in their pouches. Therefore, this study aims to explore in greater depth the impact of Love Coins Reward on children's independence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reward is a word that comes from English which means appreciation or prize. According to Mulyasa (as cited in Madiyanah & Farihah, 2020), reward means reward or gift. This reward is a response to behavior that can increase the possibility of the behavior repeating itself. Increases the likelihood of the behavior repeating itself because the child is happy when given a reward. Apart from that, according to Rusdiana (as cited in Firdaus, 2020), rewards are giving awards or prizes to children who excel or have other advantages that other children do not have. Rewards are used as a tool to motivate children to be enthusiastic about learning and competing healthily with their friends. Suparmi (as cited in Verawaty & Izzati, 2020), said that rewards are an effort to foster recognition and feelings in the environment in the form of appreciation in the form of gifts or in the form of words for achievements that have been achieved. From the explanation of the meaning of reward, we can conclude that it is a gift or praise given to a child when they have performed a good deed or achieved something. This is done with the hope that the child will be motivated to repeat the positive behavior or achieve further success. According to Dweck (2017), giving rewards that focus on effort rather than results can help children develop a growth

mindset. Children who are appreciated for their efforts will be more motivated to try new challenges and will not give up easily.

Love Coins Reward is a reward in the form of coins given to children as a way to motivate and appreciate children's abilities, both from an academic and non-academic perspective when participating in learning activities at school. These coins are round in shape and are worth 5 points and 10 points. Love Coins Rewards are given when children arrive on time, are able to do assignments independently without the help of a teacher, are active when the teacher asks questions, are able to do assignments according to instructions, tidy up toys after they have finished playing, and are able to adapt well or condition themselves well during learning activities. Coins are given to children according to the level of difficulty of the task the child is doing, for example for habituation and independence such as the child being able to do the task independently, the child will be given 1 coin which is worth 5 points, whereas when the child is doing academic tasks, such as reading, writing and arithmetic, the child will be given 1 coin which is worth 10 points. Through these love coins, children are enthusiastic about getting them, the more coins they collect, the more prizes they will get, making it easier for teachers to stimulate children's independence from an early age. Children's independence means that children always succeed in carrying out their tasks without help.

Independence comes from the word independent, which means the state of standing alone without depending on other people (Wiyani, 2013). According to Astiati (as cited in Wijayani, 2013), independence is the ability or skill that children have to do everything themselves, whether for their own needs or daily activities without help from other people. Meanwhile, according to Musthafa (as cited in Wijayani, 2013), independence is the ability to make choices and accept the consequences of these choices. Independence is reflected in the way of thinking and acting that is able to make decisions, direct and develop oneself, and be adaptive to the norms that apply in the environment. Independence can be stimulated and become a good habit, from an early age. Early childhood refers to children aged 0-6 years (Khairi, 2018). During this period, the formation of a child's character and personality is very important. The growth and development experienced by children during this period runs very quickly. Children have different unique characteristics along with the stages of development they go through. Therefore, it is very important for children to receive appropriate stimulation from the surrounding environment, because this will greatly influence the child's life in the future (Danauwiyah & Dimyati, 2022). Parents are expected to provide sufficient stimulation to children according to the developmental stages the child is going through. According to Priyanto (as cited in Nuranisa, et al., 2018), early childhood is a group of people who are in the process of growth and development. This growth and development will run well when children receive the right education, whether formal, non-formal or informal. The education given to the child must be able to stimulate aspects of the child's development, which include physical, motoric, cognitive, language, artistic, social emotional and moral religious values. Stimulation of developmental aspects can be said to be successful if children are also involved and disciplined to improve it. Children's discipline starts from within themselves through the application of independence from an early age.

Rewards and children's independence are related to each other. Rewards are not only in the form of trophies or prizes, but can also be in the form of positive words or praise given to children. Rewards have an influence on children's independence. Rewards are given to children with the aim of motivating children's independence. Rewards can motivate children's independence because according to Purwanto (as cited in Puspitasari, 2015), rewards have high value in the world of education. Rewards are given to children with the aim of triggering children's independent learning. Rewards have the benefit of growing motivation in children to do something. Apart from that, rewards have the benefit of increasing the desire to repeat a behavior that can gain recognition. Providing rewards can encourage children to repeat an independent behavior. This is because when children

behave independently, children get recognition by receiving rewards, both verbal and non-verbal. So, according to Ririn Listyawati (as cited in Listyawati, Sadiman, & Hafidah, 2014), in their research they found that giving rewards is more effective in increasing independence in young children. Providing rewards can create a feeling of joy in children which makes them engaged in independent behavior again.

RESEARCH METHODS

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is research whose findings are not obtained through procedures or statistical methods and is more inclined to how the researcher understands and interprets the meaning of an event, interaction, or subject's behavior in a particular situation according to the researcher's perspective (Fiantika, et al., 2022). Apart from that, Creswell (as cited in Murdiyanto, 2020), revealed that the qualitative approach is a research and understanding process based on a methodology that investigates a social phenomenon and human problem. This research uses a case study type of research. A case study is a study that explores a problem with detailed boundaries, takes data in depth, and includes various existing sources of information (Murdiyanto, 2020). The case study in this research is a descriptive case study. Descriptive case study is a form of description of a case that begins with descriptive theory (Prihatsanti, Suryanto, & Hendriani, 2018).

This type of case study research can be used to explain the provision of Love Coins Rewards for the independence of children aged 5-6 years at Avicenna Kindergarten Surabaya. This is because children's independence is stimulated by giving the Love Coins Reward. However, children's independence can also be stimulated by other things. Therefore, through this case study, it is hoped that we can comprehensively explain the provision of the Love Coins Reward for the independence of children aged 5-6 years at Avicenna Kindergarten. This research uses primary data sources, namely 14 children consisting of 8 girls and 6 boys aged 5-6 years at Avicenna Kindergarten Surabaya through observation, and secondary data sources namely interviews with teachers and parents of students aged 5-6 years at Avicenna Kindergarten Surabaya.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection was carried out using three techniques: observation, interview, and documentation techniques. Primary data were collected from observations. In addition, secondary data were collected through interviews and documentation.

1. Observation

The researcher observed the behavior of the subjects at the research location. The researcher focused on the relationship between superacid reward points and children's independence. The type of observation carried out by the researcher is passive participant observation, in which the researcher is present at the events that occur but does not participate or interact with other people (Murdiyanto, 2020).

Table 1. Observation Guidelines

No.	Observed aspects	Indicators	Observation Results			
			BB	MB	BSH	BSB
1.	Emotional Independence	a. Children come to school without crying even though they are separated from their parents. b. Children do not cry when reprimanded by teachers.				
2.	Cognitive Independence	a. The child dares to urinate in his own toilet				

		b. Children eat alone during breaks				
3.	Value Independence	a. Children line up neatly, facing forward b. The child takes his own bag, not his friend's				
4.	Intellectual Independence	a. Children carry out activities according to the teacher's instructions b. Children complete the activities given by the teacher				
5.	Independence of Action	a. Children sit in an orderly manner while the teacher is talking b. Children clean up their own personal belongings				

Notes:

- BB : Undeveloped
MB : Starting to Develop
BSH : Developing According to Expectations
BSB : Developing Very Well

2. Interview

Researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with sources one class teacher and ten parents. The interview technique used is a structured interview. A structured interview is an interview where the researcher knows exactly what will be obtained from the source (Fiantika, et al., 2022).

Table 2. Teacher Interview Guide

Aspect	Interview Questions
Children's Independence	1. How do children perform when doing activities without the help of a teacher?
	2. What do children do when they face difficulties in class?
	3. What do children do when the teacher asks children to come forward to pray or make a presentation in front of the class?
	4. How do children respond when the teacher gives children several options or choices?
	5. What is the child's attitude when the child makes a mistake or breaks the rules in class?
	6. What causes children to become lazy or not enthusiastic in class?
	7. What do children do when they see their friends crying?
	8. What do children do when their friends bully them?
	9. What efforts will the teacher take when the child does not want to obey the teacher's words?
	10. What stimuli do teachers provide to increase children's independence?

Table 3. Parent Interview Guide

Aspect	Interview Questions
	1. What is the definition of children's independence according to parents?
	2. What efforts do parents make to increase children's independence at home?
	3. What things can children do independently?
	4. How does the child perform when doing their own activities at home?
	5. What do children do when they have difficulty or need something at home?

Children's Independence	6. What do children do when guests come to the house?
	7. What does a child do when his sibling cries?
	8. What do parents do when their child breaks the rules given?
	9. When children are faced with several choices, what will the child do?
	10. What do children do when toys at home are broken or lost?

3. Documentation

Documentation techniques are used to obtain facts and data in the form of photos and recordings (Murdiyanto, 2020). The documentation carried out in this research is in the form of photographs.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis techniques are carried out to help researchers find findings (Fiantika, et al., 2022). The data analysis technique in this research is

a. Data Condensation

Data condensation in this research is carried out by sorting, concentrating and discarding unnecessary data from various data that have been collected through observations, interviews and documentation, so that the data condensation process can produce conclusions that can be displayed.

b. Data Display

A data display is a structured and concise collection of information from which conclusions and actions can be drawn. Creating and using these data displays cannot be separated from analysis. This is because the data display still requires analysis to find conclusions that can be drawn. So the data display in this research is a data analysis process that has been summarized to be able to draw a comprehensive conclusion.

c. Conclusion Drawing /Verification

In this research, researchers verified the data by reviewing the data that had been collected so that the results could be justified. Researchers in this study need to draw conclusions competently by providing light conclusions, maintaining openness and skepticism.

Checking the Validity of Findings (Triangulation)

Case Study Research on Providing Love Coins Rewards on the Independence of Children Aged 5-6 Years at Avicenna Kindergarten Surabaya used data triangulation for data validation. Through the use of data triangulation, there is a comparison of interview results with the contents of documents related to the research. Thus, the data obtained from interviewees can be accounted for.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this case study research, children aged 5-6 years at Avicenna Kindergarten Surabaya received Love Coins Rewards after completing assignments and activities given by the teacher. They have personal responsibility and independence in completing each task. Children's independence has several forms according to Steinberg (as cited in Nuranisa, et al., 2018), namely:

- Emotional independence which is related to changes in an individual's emotional relationships, especially with parents. This means that children's emotions are no longer dependent on their parents.
- Cognitive independence which means freedom to act independently without being too dependent on other people.
- Independence of values which means the child's freedom to interpret right and wrong, good and bad, which is useful for him.

Apart from that, according to Azizah (as cited in Lestari, 2019), independence is divided into three forms, namely:

- 1 a. Emotional independence, which is related to how children control their emotions in interacting with other people.
- b. Intellectual independence, which is related to how children overcome problems by considering the values and norms that apply in their environment.
- c. Independence of action, which is related to the development experienced by children in making decisions to act confidently and responsibly.

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that children's forms of independence include emotional independence, cognitive independence, value independence, intellectual independence and action independence. Emotional independence is controlling children's emotions in interacting with other people and not depending on children's emotions on their parents. Cognitive independence is a child's freedom to act without depending on other people. Value independence is a child's freedom to determine what is right and wrong for himself. Intellectual independence is a child's ability to overcome problems by considering the values and norms that apply in their environment. Finally, independence of action is the child's ability to make decisions confidently and be responsible for the decisions they have taken.

9 Based on the findings of this current study the independence of children aged 5-6 years at Avicenna Kindergarten Surabaya belong to the following forms:

- a. Emotional independence: (1) Children appear to have the courage to go to class alone without being accompanied by their parents. One of the efforts made by parents to increase children's independence is by not always accompanying them and giving children opportunities to do it themselves; (2) Children do not get angry or do not cry when reprimanded by teachers when they make mistakes. One of the parents' efforts to increase children's independence at home is to frequently advise children. This is in line with the theory of forms of independence presented by Steinberg (as cited in Nuranisa, et al., 2018), that children's emotional independence can be seen from children's emotions that are not dependent on their parents.
- b. Cognitive independence: (1) The child seems to be brave enough to urinate in the toilet on his own. When children want to go to the toilet to urinate, they are used to approaching the teacher first to ask permission to go to the toilet. After the teacher allows the child to go to the toilet, the child goes to the toilet himself; (2) During recess, the children take their lunch in their bags, then, they open the dining area and eat the lunch they have brought themselves. After they finished eating, they played freely with their friends in the classroom. Children choose their own toys available in the classroom without fighting over toys. This is in line with the theory of forms of independence presented by Steinberg (as cited in Nuranisa, et al., 2018), that the form of cognitive independence is the freedom to act alone without being too dependent on others.
- c. Value independence: (1) Children are able to line up neatly facing the front when the school bell rings, without seeing children fighting for position to occupy the front seat. When their friends line up first, the others immediately occupy the next row in an orderly manner; (2) Apart from lining up neatly, children are also used to taking their own bags neatly. This is in line with the theory of characteristics of independence, one of the characteristics of independence is being able to socialize with others without being accompanied by parents (Nuranisa, et al., 2018).
- 10 d. Intellectual independence: (1) Children carry out assignments according to teacher instructions until completion. In activities at the mathematics center, teachers teach rupiah money to children. Then, the teacher asked the children to sort the rupiah money from smallest to largest. When the teacher asked the children to sort the rupiah bills from smallest to largest, some of them were able to order them correctly; (2) Children are able to complete the activities given by the teacher. It can be seen that after the children learned to sort the rupiah bills at the mathematics center, the teacher distributed worksheets to the children about rupiah bills.

Then, the children work on the worksheet independently. This is in line with the theory of characteristics of independence, one of which is being able to make one's own decisions and choices (Nuranisa, et al., 2018).

- e. Independence in action: (1) Children sit in an orderly and neat manner, which can be seen when in the preparation center, the teacher provides an explanation in advance regarding the activities that will be carried out by the children in class. The teacher asks the children to turn their chairs to face forward. This is done so that children can pay attention to what the teacher says; (2) Children clean up their own personal belongings, it can be seen that when it is time to go home, the teacher gives instructions to the children to tidy up their things on the table. This is in line with the theory of the characteristics of independence in early childhood, namely not depending on other people (Wiyani, 2013).

This conducive learning condition is usually carried out at Avicenna Kindergarten, but not all children always get the Love Coins Reward. Children who get the Love Coins Reward are children who carry out their tasks well to completion and are disciplined and obey every rule. It can be seen that the Love Coins Reward can increase children's motivation, so that children are more enthusiastic about doing independent tasks because they want to get love coins. Apart from that, Love Coins Reward. It can also form positive habits, children begin to understand that completing tasks themselves is a good and useful thing. And finally the Love Coins Reward can increase the sense of responsibility, children begin to show initiative in carrying out tasks without having to be constantly reminded. To get the Love Coins Reward, children try to be good and obey every school order and regulation. Through Love Coins Reward, without realizing it, children's independence is well stimulated.

CONCLUSION

Independence is a situation where children are able to do things themselves without the help of others, make decisions based on existing options, and accept the consequences of their decisions. Independent children have high self-confidence, are able to socialize without company, and have good emotional control. Children's independence is divided into several aspects, namely emotional, cognitive, values, intellectual and action. One method to stimulate children's independence at school is giving Love Coins Rewards, namely points given as a form of appreciation for children's independent and positive behavior in academic and non-academic activities. Providing these rewards increases children's motivation to learn and behave independently, because they want to collect points that can be exchanged for prizes at the end of the semester. The research results show that Superkid reward points contribute to increasing children's independence at school. However, other factors such as awareness and parental support in getting children used to behaving independently at home also play an important role. Thus, Love Coins Reward is not the only factor that encourages children's independence, but it remains an effective method in building independent habits, especially in the school environment.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide insight for educators and parents regarding the importance of giving appropriate appreciation to children in an effort to foster an independent attitude. By implementing effective strategies and supporting a conducive environment, children can grow into individuals who are confident, responsible and have initiative in their daily lives.

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