

Original Article

Motivational Strategies of Values Education Teachers and Their Effects on the Learning Attitudes of Grade 6 Learners

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Abstract. This study examined the motivational strategies employed by Values Education teachers and their effects on the learning attitudes of Grade 6 learners in the Tubao District, Division of La Union, Philippines. A mixed-methods explanatory sequential design was utilized. Quantitative data were collected from 100 Grade 6 learners and 27 Values Education teachers using structured questionnaires that measured motivational strategies (intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, teacher-student relationship, classroom environment, instructional practices) and learning attitudes (engagement, interest, participation, responsibility). Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with a subset of learners and analyzed using thematic analysis. Quantitative and qualitative data were then integrated to draw comprehensive insights and conclusions. Quantitative findings revealed that Values Education teachers employed motivational strategies at a very high level ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.20$), with teacher-student relationship ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.15$) and classroom environment ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.18$) as the most utilized dimensions. Learners demonstrated very high positive learning attitudes ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.26$). Qualitative findings corroborated these results, revealing that learners valued relatable lessons, teacher encouragement, interactive practices, and a safe classroom environment as key factors fostering engagement, interest, participation, and responsibility. Values Education teachers' motivational strategies, particularly relational and intrinsic approaches, significantly enhance Grade 6 learners' learning attitudes. The integration of supportive relationships, meaningful content, and engaging instructional practices within a positive classroom environment effectively promotes values internalization and learner accountability. Findings emphasize the importance of holistic, context-sensitive motivation practices in Values Education at the transitional Grade 6 level.

Keywords: *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao; Learning attitudes; Mixed-methods research; Motivational strategies; Values Education.*

Across global education systems, there is a growing recognition of the importance of Values Education to deal with social cohesion, ethics of citizenship, and well-being. For instance, UNESCO initiatives emphasize “learning to live together” as one of the main pillars of education, and Sustainable Development Goal 4 highlights the need to promote human rights, global citizenship, and sustainability values

(Mochizuki & Vickers, 2024). Nonetheless, even with such efforts, the questions of values formation and motivation of learners continue to be relevant. According to the data provided by the OECD (2023), the average percentage of learners who feel a high sense of belonging in schools is less than 70%. The levels of motivation and engagement in learning are also declining (Mao & Zheng, 2025).

In the Philippines, Values Education is institutionalized in *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao* (ESP), which is an integral part of the K to 12 program under the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. ESP focuses on fostering moral reasoning, social responsibility, and ethical decision-making among students. There are, however, concerns about the neglect of Values Education in conversations, particularly given findings from international tests indicating that Filipino learners still lag behind in fundamental subjects such as reading and math (Masigan, 2024). Although international exams such as PISA rightly call for immediate improvements, there are concerns that they, in effect, sideline attention on affective and values-based aspects in favor of cognitive aspects that are easier to quantify.

Such demand for greater focus on Values Education becomes all the more important for Grade 6 learners, aged 11 to 12 years, who find themselves at the transition to early adolescence. The reason behind this is that this is an age when they begin to develop a sense of autonomy, increased social awareness, and abstract and moral reasoning skills (Gajdošová et al., 2023). This is the age when children begin to shift from the concrete operational stage and apply logic in complex situations. They become more attuned to issues related to dignity, peer approval, and social acceptance. At the same time, they gain the ability to think about their actions and their repercussions (Laureys et al., 2022).

This is where the concept of motivation takes on heightened significance. Motivation in classrooms is not only an inherent psychological phenomenon but is also constructed through how educators create learning experiences, connect with their students, and communicate the value system within the classroom setting. Using the Self-Determination Theory, it can be argued that motivation is a function of how well the learning experience meets the three basic motivational needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Patzak & Zhang, 2025). The above needs in Values Education contexts are met by how educators construct meaning within their classes (intrinsic motivation), use incentives and recognition mechanisms (extrinsic motivation), develop trusting relations with their students (teacher-student relationship), foster a welcoming atmosphere within the class setting (classroom environment), and develop reflective and participatory activities (instructional practices).

Consequently, the learners' reactions to such motivational strategies can be assessed based on their learning attitudes, defined in this study as learning engagement, learning interest, participation, and sense of responsibility. These aspects draw from well-known theories within educational psychology, notably Student Engagement and Self-Regulated Learning theories, which present learning as a complex and active process (Wong et al., 2026). Learning engagement refers to how much effort the learners put into the lessons at school, learning interest is the degree of the learners' emotional involvement in the subject, while participation stands for involvement in practical work.

Hence, the importance of examining the issue of motivations and attitudes to learning, as well as its relevance to teaching Values Education, cannot be undermined, given that much work needs to be done in terms of existing gaps in the literature. First, there are limited studies that investigate motivational strategies of teachers, particularly in Values Education classes. Second, very few scholars have examined the relationship between motivational practices and learners' attitudes among Grade 6 learners, who usually range between the ages of 11 to 12 and whose cognitive skills are becoming more independent, yet at the same time sensitive to their interpersonal relations and moral expectations. Most importantly, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, this topic has not been contextually explored locally, particularly in the Tubao district, Division of La Union.

In view of the above-mentioned limitations, this current study aims at looking into the motivational techniques applied by Values Education teachers and the impact of these strategies on the attitudes toward learning among Grade 6 pupils. Specifically, it seeks to: (1) Identify the motivational strategies employed by Values Education teachers in teaching Grade 6 learners in terms of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, teacher-student relationship, classroom environment, and instructional practices; (2) determine the level of learning attitudes of Grade 6 learners in terms of: engagement, interest in Values Education, participation in class activities, and sense of responsibility toward learning; (3) explore the experiences of Grade 6 learners regarding the implementation of motivational strategies in Values Education classes; and (4) integrate the quantitative and qualitative findings to

generate insights on the influence of motivational strategies on learners' attitudes. The findings of this study matter because they provide empirical evidence to guide Values Education teachers, curriculum developers, and school administrators in designing and implementing motivational strategies that effectively enhance learner engagement, responsibility, and values internalization, particularly during the critical Grade 6 transition period, where early adolescents are developmentally primed for self-regulation and moral reasoning. Without such evidence, Values Education may continue to rely on assumptions rather than context-sensitive, research-backed practices that address the unique motivational needs of Filipino learners.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, specifically an explanatory sequential approach, to examine the motivational strategies of Values Education teachers and their effects on the learning attitudes of Grade 6 learners. The design follows a quantitative phase, then a qualitative phase, and finally the integration of both results (Weil, 2025). It is explanatory because the qualitative component explains, expands, or complements the quantitative findings (Weil, 2025). The researcher found this design most appropriate because the variables (motivational strategies and learning attitudes) are complex and multidimensional. Quantitative data measure the extent and relationships between variables, but they cannot fully capture underlying meanings, contextual factors, or lived experiences. Thus, integrating both types of data provides a more comprehensive understanding of how motivational strategies function in Values Education classrooms and shape learners' attitudes.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The study population consisted of Grade 6 learners and Values Education teachers from 15 public elementary schools in the Tubao District, Division of La Union, during the School Year 2025–2026.

Quantitative Phase

In the quantitative phase, particularly in addressing Research Question 1 with respect to Values Education teachers' motivational strategies, the researcher used complete enumeration, including all Values Education teachers amounting to 27 ($N = 27$) from 15 public elementary schools in the district. All teachers who were teaching Grade 6 Values Education during school year 2025-2026 in the Tubao District were included in the study.

Meanwhile, a sample size of 100 Grade 6 learners ($n = 100$) served as respondents in addressing research question 2 on learning attitudes. The sample size of 100 was determined using G*Power 3.1.9.4, a widely recognized statistical software for power analysis used in statistical research to calculate the required sample size based on desired power, effect size, and significance level, ensuring that the study has sufficient sensitivity to detect meaningful relationships (Verma & Verma, 2020). An *a priori* power analysis was conducted with parameters set at a medium effect size ($r = 0.30$), a significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), and a desired power of 0.93. The required sample size was 100 respondents, yielding an actual power of 0.9303, which exceeds the minimum recommended level of 0.80 and ensures adequate statistical sensitivity (Verma & Verma, 2020).

In distributing the 100 respondents across all fifteen public elementary schools in the district, the researcher employed stratified random sampling. This technique involves dividing the population into homogeneous subgroups or strata (in this case, the fifteen schools in the district) and selecting samples from each stratum in proportion to its size relative to the total population. Considering the sampling frame (official enrollment data of Grade 6 learners per school), the sample allocation per school varied proportionally, with larger schools contributing as many as 13 respondents, medium-sized schools contributing 5 to 9 respondents, and smaller schools contributing 3 to 4 respondents each. To be included in the study, learners had to be officially enrolled as Grade 6 students in the current school year in any of the public elementary schools in the Tubao District, actively taking the Values Education subject, and have obtained parental or guardian consent prior to participation.

Qualitative Phase

In this phase, the researcher used purposive sampling to identify Grade 6 learners interviewed regarding the effect of motivational strategies in Values Education classes. Following the same inclusion criteria of being enrolled in the subject within the school year in any of the public elementary schools in the district, a total of fifteen ($n = 15$) Grade 6 learners served as interview participants. This number was determined through data saturation, or the point at which no new themes emerged from the responses of interview participants (Lim, 2025). This sample size is consistent with the findings of Guest et al. (2006) as cited in Ahmed (2025), a landmark methodological study

demonstrating that thematic saturation in qualitative interview studies is often achieved within the first twelve interviews.

Research Instrument

This study utilized two researcher-made survey questionnaires and one semi-structured interview guide.

Quantitative Phase

In this phase, the researcher developed a Teacher Questionnaire administered to Values Education teachers to address Research Question 1, which aimed to identify the motivational strategies employed in teaching Grade 6 learners. The questionnaire consisted of twenty-five (25) items distributed across five dimensions: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, teacher-student relationship, classroom environment, and instructional practices. These dimensions, as well as the survey indicators, were anchored in Self-Determination Theory, which posits that learners' motivation is influenced by the extent to which teaching practices support autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Germani, 2025). Specifically, intrinsic motivation items reflect autonomy-supportive practices; extrinsic motivation captures externally regulated strategies; teacher-student relationship and classroom environment correspond to relatedness; while instructional practices relate to competence support. Each item described observable teaching practices that operationalize motivational strategies within Values Education instruction. Responses were measured using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 4 (Always), 3 (Often), 2 (Sometimes), to 1 (Never), allowing for the assessment of the frequency of strategy implementation.

The second instrument was a structured questionnaire administered to Grade 6 learners to address Research Question 2, which sought to determine the level of learning attitudes in Values Education. The instrument consisted of twenty (20) items categorized into four dimensions: engagement, interest in Values Education, participation, and sense of responsibility toward learning. These constructs were grounded in the frameworks of Student Engagement and Self-Regulated Learning, which conceptualize learning as a multidimensional process involving behavioral, emotional, and cognitive components (Reeve et al., 2025). Engagement and participation reflect behavioral involvement; interest represents the emotional dimension; and responsibility aligns with self-regulation and learner autonomy. The items were carefully worded in simple, age-appropriate language to ensure comprehension among Grade 6 learners. Responses were measured using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 4 (Strongly Agree), 3 (Agree), 2 (Disagree), to 1 (Strongly Disagree).

Qualitative Phase

To address Research Question 3, a semi-structured interview guide was developed for Grade 6 learners to explore their lived experiences of their teachers' motivational strategies in Values Education classes. The guide consisted of open-ended questions focusing on teaching practices, classroom interactions, and the learning environment, as well as how these influence learners' engagement, participation, and behavior. The qualitative instrument was designed to complement and explain the quantitative findings, consistent with the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Probing questions such as "Can you explain further?", "Can you give an example?" and "How did you feel about that?" were included to elicit deeper and more reflective responses. Revisions were made to simplify language, avoid leading questions, and ensure alignment with participants' developmental level.

Validity

The instruments were subjected to content validation by experts in education, particularly those with specialization in Values Education and classroom pedagogy. This step was considered essential given the inherent complexity of measuring constructs related to values formation, such as responsibility, engagement, and moral behavior, which are not easily reducible to purely quantitative indicators. Expert feedback focused on the clarity, relevance, cultural appropriateness, and theoretical alignment of the items. Necessary revisions were made to refine the wording of items and ensure that the instruments adequately captured the intended constructs.

A pilot test was conducted among a group of respondents with similar characteristics to the study participants to establish the reliability of the quantitative instruments. The pilot sample consisted of 30 Grade 6 learners and 5 Values Education teachers (pilot $n = 30$ learners, 5 teachers) from a non-participating school in a neighboring district. Internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with a minimum threshold of 0.70 considered acceptable. The pilot test yielded satisfactory reliability coefficients across all dimensions: Motivational Strategies Questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.87$) and Learning Attitudes Questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.84$). The results of the pilot testing informed further refinement of the items, including the rewording or removal of ambiguous or redundant

statements. For the qualitative instrument, pilot interviews were also conducted to assess the clarity and flow of the questions. Based on these initial interviews, modifications were made to improve question sequencing, enhance comprehensibility, and ensure that the prompts effectively elicited meaningful and experience-based responses.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection for this study was conducted in two sequential phases, consistent with the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Prior to data gathering, the researcher secured the necessary permissions from the Schools Division Office of La Union and the respective school heads of the public elementary schools in Tubao District. Ethical considerations were strictly observed, including the provision of informed consent, assurance of confidentiality, and voluntary participation of all respondents.

In the quantitative phase, which was conducted face-to-face in the learners' regular classrooms, the researcher administered structured questionnaires to both Grade 6 learners and Values Education teachers. Prior to administration, the purpose of the study and instructions for answering the questionnaires were clearly explained to the respondents. For the learners, the researcher ensured that the language of the instrument was clearly understood and provided guidance, when necessary, without influencing their responses. The accomplished questionnaires were collected immediately after completion to ensure a high retrieval rate. The quantitative survey was conducted in January 2026.

Following the quantitative data collection and preliminary analysis, the study proceeded to the qualitative phase. During the interviews, the researcher utilized the prepared interview guide while allowing flexibility to probe further into relevant responses. With the consent of the participants, the interviews were documented through note-taking and, where permitted, audio recording to ensure accuracy of the data. The qualitative interviews were conducted in February 2026.

Data Analysis Procedure

Quantitative Phase

The quantitative data collected from the survey questionnaires were encoded, cleaned, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). To address the first research objective, which sought to identify the motivational strategies employed by Values Education teachers across five dimensions, descriptive statistics were employed. Specifically, the mean and standard deviation were calculated for each survey item and dimension. The mean provided the average response score, reflecting the perceived level of implementation of each motivational strategy as reported by the learners. The standard deviation indicated the spread or variability of responses, revealing whether learners responded consistently or held divergent perceptions. Higher mean scores were interpreted as greater perceived use of motivational strategies by Values Education teachers.

Table 1. *Method of Scoring for the Motivational Strategies of Values Education Teachers*

Scale Range	Response Category	Verbal Interpretation
3.25 – 4.00	Always	Highly Utilized
2.50 – 3.24	Often	Moderately Utilized
1.75 – 2.49	Sometimes	Slightly Utilized
1.00 – 1.74	Never	Not Utilized

For the second research objective, which aimed to determine the level of learning attitudes of Grade 6 learners in terms of engagement, interest in Values Education, participation in class activities, and sense of responsibility toward learning, descriptive statistics were again utilized. Mean scores were computed for each attitude dimension based on learner responses to the attitude survey, while standard deviations were calculated to assess response variability. The mean scores were interpreted using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1.00 to 4.00, with higher scores indicating more positive learning attitudes as shown in the table below.

Table 2. *Method of Scoring for the Learning Attitudes of Grade 6 Learners*

Scale Range	Response Category	Verbal Interpretation
3.25 – 4.00	Strongly Agree	Very High Level
2.50 – 3.24	Agree	High Level
1.75 – 2.49	Disagree	Low Level
1.00 – 1.74	Strongly Disagree	Very Low Level

Qualitative

To address Research Question 3, the semi-structured interview data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework, which involved familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition, and report production. This systematic approach ensured rigorous and credible qualitative findings grounded in the data.

Quan-Qual Integration

To address Research Question 4, the findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses were integrated during the interpretation phase. This process involved comparing statistical trends with the themes that emerged from the interviews. Through this integration, the study generated meta-inferences, wherein qualitative findings were used to explain, support, and contextualize the quantitative results. This approach provided a more comprehensive understanding of how motivational strategies influence the learning attitudes of Grade 6 learners in Values Education.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to established ethical standards in the conduct of educational research, particularly in ensuring the protection, dignity, and rights of all participants throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, the researcher secured formal permission from the Schools Division Office of La Union and the respective school heads of the public elementary schools in Tubao District. Approval to conduct the study was obtained before the administration of any research instruments. Informed consent was observed for all participants. Values Education teachers were provided with a written consent form outlining the purpose of the study, procedures involved, and their rights as participants. For the Grade 6 learners, parental or guardian consent was obtained, along with assent from the learners themselves. The researcher ensured that participation was entirely voluntary and that participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any form of penalty or disadvantage.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. No identifying information, such as names or personal details, was disclosed in any part of the study. Codes (e.g., Learner 1, Teacher 1) were used to represent participants in data recording, analysis, and reporting. All collected data were handled with the utmost confidentiality and used solely for research purposes. Given that the study involved minors, special care was taken to ensure that the language used in the instruments was age-appropriate and non-threatening. The researcher created a safe and supportive environment during data collection, particularly in the conduct of interviews, to ensure that learners felt comfortable expressing their thoughts without fear of judgment or repercussions.

Furthermore, the study was designed to minimize any potential risk or harm to participants. The questions included in the questionnaires and interview guide were limited to academic and classroom-related experiences and did not involve sensitive or intrusive topics. The researcher maintained neutrality throughout the data collection process and avoided any form of coercion or undue influence. Data gathered from the participants were securely stored and protected from unauthorized access. Only the researcher had access to the raw data, which were kept in password-protected files. After the study is completed, data will be retained for a limited period for verification purposes and then securely disposed of.

Results and Discussion

Quantitative Phase

The quantitative phase of this study presents results addressing Objectives 1-2, including descriptive statistics on teachers' motivational strategies (Objective 1) and Grade 6 learners' learning attitudes (Objective 2).

Motivational Strategies Employed by Values Education Teachers

As shown in Table 3, Values Education teachers in Tubao District consistently employ motivational strategies at a very high level. Among the dimensions, Teacher-Student Relationship and Classroom Environment were the most consistently utilized. The highest-rated dimensions, which are teacher-student relationship and classroom environment, emphasize teachers' efforts to foster supportive, respectful, and emotionally safe learning spaces. Intrinsic motivation and instructional practices were also very highly utilized, indicating that teachers aim to make lessons meaningful, reflective, and applicable to learners' daily lives. Extrinsic motivation was slightly lower, suggesting that while praise and rewards are used, relational and intrinsic strategies are central to the effectiveness of Values Education teaching.

Table 3. *Motivational Strategies of Values Education Teachers*

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Intrinsic Motivation	3.52	0.21	Very Highly Utilized
Extrinsic Motivation	3.18	0.27	Highly Utilized
Teacher-Student Relationship	3.68	0.15	Very Highly Utilized
Classroom Environment	3.60	0.18	Very Highly Utilized
Instructional Practices	3.44	0.22	Very Highly Utilized
Overall	3.48	0.20	Very Highly Utilized

Legend. 3.25–4.00 = Very Highly Utilized; 2.50–3.24 = Highly Utilized;
1.75–2.49 = Slightly Utilized; 1.00–1.74 = Not Utilized.

The consistency with which teachers utilize motivational strategies provides empirical support to what Self-Determination Theory has long argued: that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are not pedagogical luxuries but psychological necessities (Germani, 2025). What is striking, however, is not simply that these strategies are utilized, but the remarkably low standard deviations (an overall SD of 0.20, which is in the very low variability range) accompanying them. This uniformity across fifteen public schools signals something deeper than individual teacher effectiveness. This means that this is a shared professional practice among Values Education teachers. As explained by Daposala (2025), Values Education is a subject centered on values formation, hence teachers also have to model supportive behaviors to their learners. In this sense, the consistency of motivational practices among Values Education teachers shows that they have cultivated a pedagogical culture where emotional safety is treated not as a soft skill but as a non-negotiable foundation.

Learning Attitudes of Grade 6 Learners

Table 4 shows learners' attitudes toward the ESP subject or Values Education, with item-level means, SDs, and interpretations.

Table 4. *Learning Attitudes of Grade 6 Learners in Values Education*

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Engagement	3.36	0.28	Very High Level
Interest in ESP	3.28	0.25	Very High Level
Participation	3.12	0.32	High Level
Responsibility Toward Learning	3.41	0.21	Very High Level
Overall	3.29	0.26	Very High Level

Table 4 shows that Grade 6 learners generally demonstrate very high positive learning attitudes toward Values Education. Among the dimensions, Responsibility Toward Learning showed the highest and most consistent scores, reflecting learners' accountability and commitment. Engagement and Interest in ESP were also very high, indicating learners' emotional investment and attentiveness. Participation was slightly lower, suggesting variability in observable active involvement, likely due to differences in confidence, peer influence, or shyness. Responsibility toward learning emerged as the highest-rated dimension, reflecting learners' strong accountability and commitment. Engagement and interest were also very high, indicating emotional investment and attentiveness. Participation was slightly lower, suggesting variability in observable active involvement due to differences in confidence, peer influence, or shyness.

It is noteworthy that the highest-rated dimension is Responsibility Toward Learning ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 0.21$). This is important for Grade 6 learners who are respondents in this study because it aligns with the developmental characteristics of early adolescence, during which learners begin to exhibit increased capacity for self-regulation and accountability (Memmott-Elison et al., 2020). However, another way to look at this is that the consistency with which respondents rated all dimensions from "High Level" to "Very High Level" could be explained by the limitations of self-rated surveys, especially the tendency of learners to overreport positive behaviors in a values-oriented subject like ESP, where "being good" is explicitly emphasized (Wang & Zang, 2025). While not ruling this out, the researcher nonetheless believed that the comparatively lower Participation dimension ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.32$), which also showed the greatest variability, diverges from what pure social desirability would predict. The fact that participation received meaningfully lower ratings than responsibility suggests that learners were exercising genuine discrimination in their responses. Even Wang and Zang (2025) said that while social desirability inflates scores, it does not entirely erase meaningful variation across constructs. Hence, the results affirm that Grade 6 learners in Tubao District hold positive learning attitudes toward ESP, particularly in their

sense of responsibility, engagement, and interest in the subject.

Experiences of Grade 6 Learners on the Implementation of Motivational Strategies in Values Education Classes

To complement the quantitative findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposively selected subset of Grade 6 learners. Four major themes emerged, reflecting how these strategies influenced learners' engagement, interest, participation, and sense of responsibility.

Theme 1: Encouragement and Support Foster Engagement

Learners consistently highlighted the role of teacher encouragement and individualized support in sustaining their attention and involvement during Values Education lessons. One learner shared, *"Our teacher always asks us how we feel about the lesson and cheers us on when we try our best. Even when our answers are not perfect, she says 'good try' and explains it again"* (Learner 3). Another learner added, *"When I don't understand the lesson, my teacher comes beside me and explains slowly. She doesn't get angry. That makes me want to listen more"* (Learner 7). A third learner reflected, *"My teacher remembers when I did something good last week. She said, 'Remember when you helped your classmate?' That made me feel seen, so I try harder now"* (Learner 11). Learners also reported that feeling recognized and supported made them more willing to participate in discussions and complete tasks. One learner simply stated, *"She believes in us. That's why I believe in myself too"* (Learner 14).

The finding that teacher encouragement and individualized support foster learner engagement is supported by existing literature on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posits that relatedness, including learners' sense of being cared for and valued by their teacher, is a fundamental psychological need that drives intrinsic motivation and positive learning behaviors (Patzak & Zhang, 2025). The qualitative narratives from Learners 3, 7, 11, and 14 are also illustrative as to how supportive teacher behaviors (e.g., affirming imperfect answers, providing slow re-explanation, recalling past successes) satisfy this need for relatedness, thereby sustaining attention and willingness to participate. Needless to say, these narratives explain the quantitative finding that Teacher-Student Relationship was the most highly utilized motivational strategy ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.15$), emphasizing that relational strategies significantly influence learners' engagement.

Theme 2: Relatable and Meaningful Lessons Enhance Interest

Many learners emphasized that intrinsic motivation strategies, such as connecting lessons to real-life experiences and personal values, increased their interest in Values Education. One learner shared, *"When our teacher talks about helping others or respecting people, I remember times with my friends and family, so it feels important to me. It's not just a lesson; it's about my life"* (Learner 5). Another learner explained, *"Our teacher tells stories about her own experiences when she was young. Like when she made mistakes and learned from them. That makes Values Education not boring because it feels real"* (Learner 9). A different learner added, *"I used to think Values Education is just about rules. But now I see it's about how I treat my younger sister and how I talk to my classmates. That's why I like it now"* (Learner 12). Another learner reflected, *"When our teacher asks, 'What would you do if this happened to you?' I really think about it. It's not like other subjects where you just memorize"* (Learner 2).

As can be interpreted from the learners' narratives, relatable and meaningful lessons enhance learners' interest. This directly corroborates the intrinsic motivation dimension of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which emphasizes that autonomy and competence are fostered when learning content is perceived as personally relevant and connected to learners' lived experiences (Germani, 2025). The qualitative accounts from Learners 5, 9, 12, and 2 demonstrate how Values Education teachers' use of real-life scenarios, personal storytelling, and values-based questioning transforms abstract lessons into personally significant narratives, shifting learners' perceptions of Values Education from "just rules" to a subject that informs their daily interactions and moral reasoning.

It is also important to recognize that these insights from interview participants qualitatively support the quantitative findings with respect to intrinsic motivation. In the quantitative phase, the Intrinsic Motivation dimension of teachers' motivational strategies was rated as "Very Highly Utilized" ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.21$), with indicators such as "I connect ESP lessons to real-life situations of learners" ($M = 3.50$) and "I make learners see the importance of values in their daily lives" ($M = 3.50$) reflecting strong teacher emphasis on meaningfulness. Correspondingly, learners' Interest in Values Education was rated at a "Very High Level" ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.25$), with the item "I feel that ESP lessons are meaningful to me" scoring highest within that dimension ($M = 3.31$).

Theme 3: Active Participation Encouraged Through Interactive Practices

Instructional strategies that encouraged collaboration, role-playing, and classroom discussions motivated learners to participate actively. This is manifested in various interview responses where one learner, for instance, enthusiastically described, *"We do skits about being responsible and respectful, and everyone gets to share their ideas. Last week, we acted out a scenario about helping a new student. I got to be the one who welcomed him"* (Learner 4). Another learner shared, *"Our teacher divides us into groups and gives us problems to solve together. Like, 'What will you do if your friend is cheating?' We talk about it, and everyone has to share their thoughts"* (Learner 8). A different learner added, *"I am shy usually, but during group activities in ESP, I can speak because my groupmates listen to me. The teacher makes sure no one is left out"* (Learner 10). One learner simply said, *"ESP is not just listening. We do things. That's why I don't get sleepy in ESP class"* (Learner 6).

These responses from Grade 6 learners show positive practices, especially since, as Kronsted et al. (2026) explained, learners construct deeper meaning when they engage in authentic, dialogic, and experiential tasks rather than passive reception. As illustrated in the interview results with the learners, specific interactive strategies have been employed, including skits about responsibility, group problem-solving about peer cheating, inclusive group work that accommodates shy learners, and think-pair-share routines. More than making learners not feel "sleepy" during class, as Learner 6 described, this demonstrates how Values Education is transformed from a listening-based subject into a participatory experience where learners feel safe to voice their thoughts.

These qualitative insights substantiate the quantitative findings, wherein the Instructional Practices dimension was rated as "Very Highly Utilized" ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.22$), including items such as "I use interactive strategies (e.g., group work, role play)" ($M = 3.45$) and "I design activities that require critical thinking and reflection" ($M = 3.46$). The responses also explain why the Participation dimension of learners' attitudes showed the lowest mean among all attitude dimensions ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.32$). As can be drawn from the interview, participation is not uniformly high because some learners (like Learner 10) experience shyness, yet interactive structures such as group work and think-pair-share specifically address this barrier by providing low-stakes opportunities to practice answers and receive peer support. This further explains the quantitative results by demonstrating that active participation is not merely an outcome of individual confidence but is systematically scaffolded through deliberate, collaborative instructional design.

Theme 4: Positive Classroom Environment Promotes Responsibility

This is one of the themes that emerged as interview participants (Grade 6 learners) described a safe and inclusive classroom atmosphere as crucial for fostering a sense of responsibility. One learner expressed, *"I feel safe to answer questions even if I might be wrong, and I try to do my best because I know it matters. My teacher never laughs at wrong answers"* (Learner 1). Another learner shared, *"In our ESP class, everyone is respected. Even if you have a different opinion, the teacher says, 'That's an interesting way of thinking.' So I am not afraid to speak"* (Learner 5).

A different learner reflected, *"My teacher always says, 'Mistakes are part of learning.' So when I forget my assignment, she doesn't shout. She asks why and helps me do better next time. That makes me want to be responsible"* (Learner 12). Another learner added, *"Our classroom feels like a family. We help each other. The teacher makes sure everyone is included, even the quiet ones"* (Learner 15). One learner concluded, *"Because our classroom is happy and calm, I can focus. I want to do my homework because I know my teacher will appreciate it"* (Learner 9).

As explained by Patzak & Zhang (2025), emotionally safe, inclusive, and respectful environments satisfy learners' basic psychological needs for relatedness and competence, thereby fostering internalized motivation and self-regulated behaviors. This is clearly demonstrated in the responses of learners regarding specific teacher practices such as normalizing mistakes ("Mistakes are part of learning"), validating diverse opinions ("That's an interesting way of thinking"), and creating a family-like, inclusive atmosphere. These illustrative examples from learners complement the quantitative finding where the Classroom Environment dimension was rated as "Very Highly Utilized" ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.18$), with indicators such as "I ensure that learners feel safe to express their ideas" ($M = 3.58$) and "I create an environment where learners feel comfortable participating" ($M = 3.61$).

This quantitative pattern directly corresponds with the qualitative accounts in that learners who feel safe, respected, and supported are not merely compliant but develop genuine accountability, as reflected in their completion of assignments ($M = 3.42$), effort to apply lessons in real life ($M = 3.43$), and commitment to improving their behavior ($M = 3.42$). In this sense, the qualitative emphasis on emotional safety and the quantitative

prominence of responsibility together demonstrate that a positive classroom environment does not merely make learners feel good; it actively cultivates their capacity for self-regulation and accountable behavior.

Integrative Phase

Table 6. *Quantitative-Qualitative Integration*

Motivational Strategy / Learning Attitude	Quantitative Findings (Mean, SD, Interpretation)	Qualitative Findings (Learner Experiences / Themes)	Integrated Insight
Intrinsic Motivation	$M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.21$, Very Highly Utilized	Learners reported that lessons were meaningful, personally relevant, and encouraged reflection on values and self-growth.	Intrinsic motivation effectively fosters engagement and reflective thinking; learners internalize Values Education principles beyond compliance, confirming both cognitive and affective involvement.
Extrinsic Motivation	$M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.27$, Highly Utilized	Learners mentioned occasional use of rewards and recognition, but emphasized that teacher encouragement and emotional support mattered more.	Extrinsic strategies play a supplementary role; intrinsic and relational approaches largely drive sustained motivation.
Teacher-Student Relationship	$M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.15$, Very Highly Utilized	Learners highlighted approachability, encouragement, and emotional support, reporting confidence in participating and expressing ideas.	Strong teacher-student relationships amplify the effects of intrinsic and instructional strategies, promoting engagement, participation, and moral internalization.
Classroom Environment	$M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.18$, Very Highly Utilized	Learners described classrooms as inclusive, positive, and respectful, feeling comfortable and valued.	A supportive environment mediates teacher practices into observable engagement and responsibility; psychological safety is key for active participation.
Instructional Practices	$M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.22$, Very Highly Utilized	Learners enjoyed group work, role-playing, storytelling, and reflective discussions, which made lessons interactive and meaningful.	Well-designed interactive practices translate motivation into active cognitive and affective participation, reinforcing values internalization.
Engagement	$M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.28$, Very High Level	Learners actively participated, asked questions, and shared experiences, feeling motivated to contribute.	High engagement reflects the combined influence of relational, intrinsic, and interactive strategies.
Interest in Values Education	$M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.25$, Very High Level	Learners expressed curiosity and excitement about lessons that connect values to real-life situations.	Sustained interest is fostered when content is meaningful, and teachers integrate personally relevant activities.
Participation	$M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.32$, High Level	Learners actively joined discussions, group work, and presentations; recognition from teachers reinforced their involvement.	Participation is strengthened by relational support and engaging instructional practices, though individual confidence levels influence variability.
Responsibility	$M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.26$, Very High Level	Learners demonstrated accountability, completing tasks and applying learned values; some internalized ethical behaviors.	Learners' sense of responsibility indicates that motivational strategies effectively promote self-regulation, ethical behavior, and values internalization.

Based on the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings as shown in Table 6 above, the following inferences can be gathered:

1. Intrinsic Motivation and Teacher-Student Relationships are primary drivers of engagement, interest, and reflective learning, reinforcing learners' personal connection to Values Education content.
2. Classroom Environment acts as a critical mediator, translating teacher strategies into tangible learner behaviors by creating psychological safety and inclusivity.
3. Instructional Practices serve as the medium through which motivation manifests in observable participation and cognitive engagement.

4. Extrinsic Motivation supports but does not dominate learners' attitudes; relational and intrinsic strategies are more influential in shaping engagement, interest, and responsibility.
5. Overall, learners not only participate behaviorally but also internalize values, demonstrating cognitive, affective, and moral growth, suggesting that Values Education teachers' holistic motivational approach effectively cultivates both learning attitudes and ethical development.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher acknowledges that the quantitative phase relied on self-rated measures completed by young learners (Grade 6). Such measures are susceptible to social desirability bias and ceiling effects, especially in a values-oriented subject where learners may overreport positive behaviors (Wang & Zhang, 2025). However, the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design partially tempers this limitation: the qualitative phase allowed learners to articulate their experiences in their own words, and the integration of both data sets provided a more nuanced understanding. Future studies should consider including observational data or teacher ratings to further reduce self-report bias.

Conclusion

The findings of this study emphasize that motivational strategies in Values Education are most effective when teachers intentionally cultivate supportive relationships, foster a positive classroom environment, and design meaningful, interactive lessons. Rather than relying on extrinsic rewards, sustained learner engagement, interest, participation, and responsibility emerge from relational and intrinsic approaches that satisfy learners' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This is particularly critical for Grade 6 learners navigating the developmental transition toward self-regulation and moral reasoning.

The researcher raises several contributions of this study. Theoretically, this study provides empirical support for and extends Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in the specific domain of Values Education. While SDT has been extensively applied to general academic motivation, its application to subjects such as Values Education, where the goal is not only cognitive acquisition but also moral internalization and behavioral transformation, has remained underexplored. The findings demonstrate that the satisfaction of learners' basic psychological needs for autonomy (through intrinsic motivation strategies), competence (through instructional practices that build confidence), and relatedness (through teacher-student relationships and classroom environment) operates in a distinct manner within Values Education. This study thus extends SDT by showing that in values-oriented subjects, relatedness may play an even more central role than autonomy or competence, particularly for Grade 6 learners who are navigating the developmental transition toward greater self-regulation and moral reasoning.

Empirically, this study makes several contributions. First, it addresses a significant gap in the literature by focusing specifically on Grade 6 learners, a developmental stage characterized by emerging autonomy, heightened social awareness, and increasing capacity for abstract moral reasoning (Mehmott-Elison et al., 2020). Previous studies on Values Education have often focused on younger children or older adolescents, leaving the Grade 6 transition period relatively understudied. The finding that responsibility toward learning was the highest-rated attitude dimension among learners is particularly significant in this regard. It suggests that Grade 6 learners are not merely compliant but are actively developing self-regulatory capacities when placed in supportive motivational environments. This contradicts the assumption that early adolescents are inherently disengaged or resistant to Values Education; rather, the evidence indicates that they are developmentally primed to respond to relational and intrinsic motivational strategies. Second, the study provides localized empirical evidence from the Tubao District, a context that has not been represented in previous Values Education research. The remarkably low standard deviations across motivational strategy dimensions indicate that the consistent use of relational, intrinsic, and environment-focused strategies is not about individual teacher effectiveness but a shared professional practice among Values Education teachers across fifteen public schools. This finding suggests that a pedagogical culture has been cultivated within this district where emotional safety, respect, and supportive relationships are integral to Values Education instruction.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that motivational strategies in Values Education are most effective when relational, intrinsic, and environmental dimensions work in concert within a positive and inclusive classroom climate. The alignment between these strategies and learners' attitudes, particularly their sense of responsibility, affirms that Values Education is not merely about transmitting moral rules but about creating the psychological conditions under which learners internalize values, take ownership of their learning, and apply ethical principles

to their daily lives. For Grade 6 learners standing at the threshold of adolescence, these conditions are developmental necessities.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the most critical recommendation is that Values Education teachers should intentionally prioritize teacher-student relationships and classroom environment as foundational motivational strategies, as these dimensions demonstrated the strongest influence on learners' attitudes, particularly their sense of responsibility, while also creating the psychological safety necessary for values internalization. Specific practices that must be reinforced include normalizing mistakes, providing individualized encouragement to struggling learners, and consistently using interactive strategies like role-playing, group problem-solving, and think-pair-share to scaffold participation for shy students. Schools and district administrators must therefore provide sustained professional development focused on these relational and interactive competencies, while future research should replicate this explanatory sequential design across multiple districts and employ longitudinal methods to examine how motivational strategies shape learners' attitudes over time, particularly during the transition from Grade 6 to junior high school.

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Conflict of Interests

The researcher discloses that he is a teacher in the study locale where the study was conducted.

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