

# In-School Motivational Factors Among Mamanwa Learners: An Analysis of Effort and Persistence, Interest in Learning, and Perceived Value of Learning

1Sherilyn B. Dagsa, 2 Marivic M. Cuizon, PhD,

Email: Sherilyn.dagsa.@deped.gov.ph

*Budlingin Elementary School, Surigao Norte Division, Philippines*

*2Agusan Colleges Inc, Butuan City, Philippines*

**Abstract:** This study examined the level of manifestation of in-school motivation among Mamanwa learners in Alegria District, Surigao del Norte, with particular focus on effort and persistence, interest in learning, and perceived value of learning. A descriptive research design was employed to determine the levels of teacher practices and in-school motivation and to examine their relationship without manipulating the learners' educational or cultural environment. The respondents were 50 Grade 6 Mamanwa learners selected through purposive sampling during School Year 2025–2026. Data were gathered using a validated and reliable researcher-made questionnaire, and ethical protocols, including informed consent and learner assent, were strictly observed. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, and weighted mean were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that Mamanwa learners demonstrated a high level of in-school motivation across all dimensions. Learners consistently exhibited diligence, persistence in overcoming academic challenges, strong interest and curiosity in learning activities, and a positive perception of education as vital for future goals, livelihood, and community development. Despite socio-economic and contextual challenges, the results underscore the learners' resilience, positive learning attitudes, and strong valuation of education, highlighting the importance of supportive and culturally responsive educational practices.

**Keywords:** *Effort and Persistence; In-School Motivation; Mamanwa Learners; Perceived Value of Learning*

## INTRODUCTION

In-school motivation is recognized as a foundation of academic success, learner persistence, and holistic well-being. Beyond influencing achievement outcomes, motivation shapes how learners engage with knowledge, sustain effort in the face of challenges, and perceive the relevance of education in their lives. For Indigenous learners, motivation carries deeper significance, as schooling often intersects with issues of cultural identity, historical marginalization, and social inclusion. When educational environments fail to reflect Indigenous learners' cultural realities, motivation can diminish, leading to disengagement, absenteeism, and early school leaving. Thus, understanding in-school motivation within Indigenous contexts is not merely an academic concern but a critical pathway toward educational equity and social justice.

The importance of culturally responsive education in sustaining Indigenous learners' motivation. Caingcoy (2023) emphasized that pedagogical approaches grounded in learners' cultural identities, languages, and knowledge systems foster stronger engagement and a sense of belonging among Indigenous youth. Similarly, Caliboso et al. (2025) highlighted that Indigenous learners in the Philippine context continue to face persistent motivational barriers arising from language differences, culturally misaligned curricula, poverty, and limited access to educational resources. Although national initiatives such as the Indigenous Peoples

Education (IPEd) Curriculum Framework aim to address these inequities, Nacario et al. argued that policy implementation remains uneven, often failing to translate into classroom-level practices that genuinely support Indigenous learners' motivation and engagement. Collectively, these studies affirm that motivation among Indigenous learners is deeply influenced by both cultural responsiveness and structural conditions within schools.

In Surigao del Norte, the Mamanwa, among the oldest Indigenous groups in the Philippines and often described as early forest dwellers (Ilagan et al., 2022) continue to experience educational marginalization. Empirical studies have documented challenges such as high absenteeism, dropout rates, social isolation, long travel distances to schools, childhood malnutrition, and limited instructional resources. However, much of the existing research has focused on broad community-level issues rather than examining how motivation manifests within the school setting itself. Specifically, there is limited empirical attention to how Mamanwa learners demonstrate effort and persistence, sustain interest in learning, and perceive the value of education in their daily school experiences, dimensions that are critical for designing responsive and effective interventions.

This study addresses this gap by systematically examining the level of manifestation of in-school motivational factors among Mamanwa learners in Alegria District, Surigao del Norte, focusing on effort and persistence, interest in learning, and

perceived value of learning. Drawing from the researcher's professional engagement with Mamanwa learners and grounded in existing theoretical and empirical literature, this research provides context-specific evidence on motivational dynamics within Indigenous classrooms. By identifying key motivational strengths and challenges, the study aims to inform culturally responsive teaching practices, guide school-based support mechanisms, and contribute to policy and program development that honors Mamanwa learners lived realities. Ultimately, this research seeks to strengthen educational practices that not only improve academic engagement but also affirm cultural identity and promote sustained participation in schooling.

### Theoretical framework

This study was anchored on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan (1985). SDT is a comprehensive theory of human motivation, development, and well-being, asserting that humans possess three fundamental and innate psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to the need to feel in control of one's actions and to experience volition and choice. Competence refers to the need to feel effective and capable of navigating one's environment, mastering challenges, and achieving desired outcomes. Relatedness involves the deep-seated need to feel connected to others, to care for and be cared for, and to experience a sense of belonging within a community. When these basic psychological needs are satisfied, individuals are more likely to exhibit intrinsic motivation, greater engagement, and enhanced psychological well-being. Conversely, the frustration of these needs often leads to diminished motivation, disengagement, and various forms of distress.

Self-Determination Theory was profoundly relevant to this study, as it offered a robust framework for understanding the in-school motivation of Mamanwa learners within their distinctive cultural and socio-economic context. The core focus of this study on the level of manifestation of in-school motivation was directly illuminated by Self-Determination Theory. In examining teacher factors, teachers who demonstrated warmth, support, and respect for Mamanwa culture were found to cultivate stronger senses of relatedness and autonomy support, thereby enhancing learner motivation. Teaching methods that were culturally responsive, interactive, and participatory contributed to learners' perceived autonomy and competence, whereas overly didactic or culturally misaligned approaches hindered these needs. Classroom management practices that empowered learner voice, provided clear yet flexible guidelines, and fostered a sense of community further supported autonomy and relatedness within the learning environment.

About family factors, when Mamanwa families held positive beliefs about education particularly when education was viewed as a means of empowerment or cultural preservation, they supported learners' autonomy and reinforced a sense of relatedness to schooling through shared values. Active and

supportive parental involvement that respected and integrated Mamanwa cultural practices strengthened learners' connection to the school community and contributed to the development of competence through

### Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design to describe the existing levels of teacher practices and in-school motivation of Mamanwa learners and to determine the significant relationships between these variables. The design was appropriate as it allowed the objective examination of naturally occurring conditions without manipulating the learners' cultural, social, or educational environment. The study was conducted in Alegria District, Surigao del Norte, Philippines, an area with a substantial Mamanwa Indigenous population. The respondents consisted of 50 Grade 6 Mamanwa learners enrolled in public elementary schools during School Year 2025–2026. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, wherein only learners officially identified as Mamanwa Indigenous Peoples and with secured parental or guardian consent were included in the study. Data were gathered using a researcher-made survey questionnaire composed of two major sections. The first section measured teacher practices in terms of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, while the second section assessed in-school motivation in terms of effort and persistence, interest in learning, and perceived value of learning. Content validity of the instrument was established through expert evaluation by a school principal and two master teachers, whose feedback was used to refine the questionnaire. Reliability was determined through a pilot test, and internal consistency was computed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a high reliability coefficient.

Before data collection, necessary approvals were obtained from school authorities, and informed consent was secured from parents or guardians, with learner assent ensured. The questionnaire was administered within the school premises during the third quarter of School Year 2025–2026. To address possible language barriers, assistance from a teacher or a local Mamanwa speaker was provided when necessary. Ethical standards, including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity, were strictly observed. Responses were quantified using a 5-point Likert scale. Data analysis involved the use of frequency and percentage, and weighted mean to determine the manifestation of in-school motivation of the Mamanwa learners in terms of efforts and persistence, interest in learning, and perceived value of learning

### Sampling technique and Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 50 Grade 6 Mamanwa learners enrolled during School Year 2025–

2026 in selected public elementary schools within the Alegria District, Surigao del Norte. The respondents were drawn from four schools: Budlingin Elementary School (15 learners, 30%), Camp Edward Elementary School (11 learners, 22%), Ferlda Elementary School (16 learners, 32%), and Lourdes Jamero Mordeno Elementary School (8 learners, 16%). All participants were identified as members of the Mamanwa Indigenous group and participated in the study with secured parental or guardian consent.

A purposive sampling technique was employed in this study. Only learners who were officially identified as Mamanwa Indigenous Peoples and were enrolled in Grade 6 in public elementary schools in the Alegria District during School Year 2025–2026 were included. This technique ensured that the data collected were specific to the target population and appropriate for examining in-school motivational factors among Mamanwa learners.

**Results and Discussions**

This section presents the level of manifestation of in-school motivation of the Mamanwa learners in terms of efforts and persistence, interest in learning, and perceived value of learning

Table 1 presents the level of manifestation of in-school motivation of the Manamwa learners in terms of effort and persistence, as reflected in their self-reported learning behaviors. The Table focuses on how learners respond to academic challenges, exert effort in their studies, and persist in completing school-related tasks.

The indicator “*I spend extra time at home completing my school assignments or reviewing my lessons*” obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.54, which is verbally described as *Often* and interpreted as *High*. This result indicates that learners consistently demonstrate diligence beyond regular school hours, reflecting a strong willingness to invest additional effort in their learning. Such behavior suggests a high level of academic commitment and persistence, possibly influenced by the value they place on education and the support they receive from their learning environment, despite challenges they may encounter. This finding confirms Descals-Tomás et al. (2021), whose finding stated that when learners perceive strong teacher and family support, they exhibit increased persistence and behavioral engagement. Motivation extends beyond classroom requirements when learners internalize learning goals.

**Table 1**

*Level of Manifestation of In-school Motivation of the Mamanwa Learners in terms of Efforts and Persistence*

Indicators	Wtd Mea n	SD	Verbal Descriptio n	Interpretat ion
1. When schoolwork is difficult, I keep trying until I understand it or finish it	4.00	0.78 2	Often	High
2. I try my best in all my school subjects.	3.80	0.78 2	Often	High
3. Even if I fail a test, I study harder for the next one.	3.98	0.68 5	Often	High
4. I spend extra time at home completing my school assignments or reviewing my lessons.	4.54	0.61 3	Often	High
5. I don't give up easily on challenging tasks in school.	4.32	0.68 3	Often	High
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>0.33 7</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>High</b>

*Legend: 1.00-1.49-Never/Very Low; 1.50-2.49-Seldom/Low; 2.50-3.49-Sometimes/Moderately High; 3.50-4.49-Often/High; 4.50-5.00-Always/Very High*

In contrast, the indicator “*I try my best in all my school subjects*” registered the lowest weighted mean of 3.80, although it still falls under the verbal description *Often* and interpretation *High*. This finding implies that while learners generally exert effort across subjects, their level of engagement may vary depending on interest, perceived difficulty, or relevance of specific subjects. The slightly lower mean suggests that certain academic areas may require additional support or motivational strategies to help learners consistently apply their best effort in all subjects. This aligns with Raju (2024), who explained that rigid, exam-centric curricula often reduce learners’ holistic engagement, leading to uneven effort across subjects. Motivation may fluctuate depending on relevance and emotional connection to content.

The overall weighted mean of 4.13, with a verbal description of *Often* and an interpretation of *High*, reflects a generally strong manifestation of effort and persistence among the Manamwa learners. This overall picture suggests that learners are motivated to persevere in their studies, continue working despite difficulties, and remain committed to completing academic tasks. Collectively, the results indicate a positive level of in-school motivation, highlighting learners’ resilience and determination as important strengths in their educational experience. The overall result supports D’Andrea Martínez et al. (2023), who emphasized that Indigenous learners demonstrate resilience when learning

environments affirm their identity and provide meaningful support, enabling sustained effort despite socio-economic barriers.

Table 2 presents the level of manifestation of in-school motivation of the Mamanwa learners in terms of their interest in learning. The Table focuses on learners' enjoyment of school, engagement in classroom activities, curiosity, and enthusiasm for learning new concepts.

The indicator "I find the subjects we learn in school interesting" obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.28, which is verbally described as *Often* and interpreted as *High*. This finding is consistent with the observations of Magdadaro and Sacramento (2022), who argued that learner interest is significantly amplified when instruction is contextually grounded and culturally meaningful. By bridging the gap between school content and lived experiences, educators can sustain this high level of intrinsic motivation. Such interest may be attributed to relevant lessons, culturally responsive instruction, or teaching approaches that connect learning to learners' experiences, thereby enhancing their intrinsic motivation to learn.

**Table 2**

*Level of Manifestation of In-school Motivation of the Mamanwa Learners in terms of Interest in Learning*

Indicators	Wt SD		Verbal Description	Interpretation
	Mean	Standard Deviation		
1. I find the subjects we learn in school interesting.	4.28	0.71	Often	High
2. I enjoy going to school	3.96	0.75	Often	High
3. I enjoy participating in classroom activities	3.96	0.87	Often	High
4. I am excited to learn new things during my classes.	4.10	0.85	Often	High
5. I ask questions in class because I am curious about the topic.	4.00	0.85	Often	High
Overall Weighted Mean	4.07	0.37	Often	High

*Legend: 1.00-1.49-Never/Very Low; 1.50-2.49-Seldom/Low; 2.50-3.49-Sometimes/Moderately High; 3.50-4.49-Often/High; 4.50-5.00-Always/Very High*

The indicators "I enjoy going to school" and "I enjoy participating in classroom activities" both recorded the lowest weighted mean of 3.96, although they are still described as *Often* and interpreted as *High*. This

finding suggests that while learners are generally positive about attending school and taking part in activities, certain factors such as learning difficulties, classroom environment, or external responsibilities may affect their level of enjoyment. The relatively lower means imply a need to further enrich school experiences and classroom participation to sustain and strengthen learners' interest. This result aligns with Presnilla-Espada (2023), who documented that poverty, health risks, and infrastructure challenges reduce the enjoyment of schooling despite learners' recognition of its importance. External stressors can diminish affective engagement.

The overall weighted mean of 4.07, with a verbal description of *Often* and an interpretation of *High*, reflects a generally strong level of interest in learning among the Mamanwa learners. This overall picture indicates that learners are motivated, curious, and engaged in their schooling, demonstrating positive attitudes toward learning activities. Collectively, the results suggest that interest in learning is a significant strength of the learners, providing a solid foundation for sustained academic engagement and improved educational outcomes. The overall mean supports Susim (2024), who emphasized that Indigenous learners retain curiosity and interest when psychological needs for belonging and respect are met, even in challenging educational contexts.

Table 3 presents the level of manifestation of in-school motivation of the Mamanwa learners in terms of their perceived value of learning. The table focuses on learners' beliefs about the importance, usefulness, and long-term benefits of education for their personal goals, livelihood, and community.

The indicator "I believe my education will help me achieve my future goals" obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.30, which is verbally described as *Often* and interpreted as *High*. This finding indicates that learners strongly associate education with future success, reflecting a forward-looking mindset and a clear recognition of schooling as a pathway to achieving personal aspirations. Such belief suggests that learners are motivated not only by present academic demands but also by their long-term goals, which can strengthen persistence and engagement in learning. This finding supports Norberte (2024), who noted that Indigenous youth increasingly view education as a pathway to empowerment and social mobility. Perceived future value strengthens learners' commitment to schooling.

**Table 3**

*Level of Manifestation of In-school Motivation of the Mamanwa Learners in terms of Perceived Value of*

<i>Learning</i>					<b>Conclusions</b>
Indicators	Wtd Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Interpretation	
1. I believe my education will help me achieve my future goals.	4.30	0.763	Often	High	This study concludes that the Mamanwa learners in Alegria District, Surigao del Norte demonstrate a generally high level of in-school motivation across the three examined dimensions: effort and persistence, interest in learning, and perceived value of learning. Despite persistent socio-economic and structural challenges, the learners consistently exhibit motivational strengths that support their continued engagement in schooling.  First, in terms of effort and persistence, the findings reveal that Mamanwa learners often persevere when faced with academic difficulties, invest additional time in completing schoolwork, and show resilience following academic setbacks. The high overall weighted mean indicates that learners possess a strong sense of diligence and determination, suggesting that they are willing to exert sustained effort to succeed in their studies. This persistence reflects not only individual motivation but also an underlying recognition of the importance of education, even amid conditions that may otherwise hinder academic engagement.  Second, the results show that interest in learning is also highly manifested among the learners. They frequently find school subjects interesting, enjoy participating in classroom activities, and express curiosity toward new lessons. Although enjoyment of school and participation registered slightly lower means compared to other indicators, these dimensions still fall within a high motivational level. This suggests that Mamanwa learners generally maintain positive attitudes toward learning, but their interest may be influenced by classroom environments, teaching approaches, and external pressures. Nonetheless, interest in learning remains a key motivational asset that can be further strengthened through enriched, culturally responsive instructional practices.  Third, with regard to the perceived value of learning, the learners demonstrate a strong belief in the usefulness of education for achieving future goals, securing livelihoods, and contributing to their community. The findings indicate that learners view education as meaningful and beneficial, even when learning tasks are challenging or less engaging. While variations exist in how deeply learners internalize the personal importance of education, the overall high level of perceived value highlights education as a significant motivational driver that supports learners' commitment to schooling.  Mamanwa learners possess notable motivational strengths, characterized by resilience, curiosity, and a forward-looking appreciation of education. These strengths provide a solid foundation for improving educational outcomes. However, the findings also imply the need for sustained school-based and instructional
2. I think that what I learn in school is important for my life and my community.	4.04	0.727	Often	High	
3. Having a good education is very important to me.	3.72	0.701	Often	High	
4. I believe that the skills I learn in school will help me find a good job or livelihood.	4.14	0.783	Often	High	
5. Learning is valuable even if the tasks are sometimes difficult or boring.	4.06	0.793	Often	High	
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>0.381</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>High</b>	

*Legend: 1.00-1.49-Never/Very Low; 1.50-2.49-Seldom/Low; 2.50-3.49-Sometimes/Moderately High; 3.50-4.49-Often/High; 4.50-5.00-Always/Very High*

In contrast, the indicator “*Having a good education is very important to me*” recorded the lowest weighted mean of 3.72, although it is still described as *Often* and interpreted as *High*. This result suggests that while learners generally acknowledge the importance of education, the personal significance they attach to it may vary. The relatively lower mean may be influenced by contextual factors such as immediate economic needs, cultural priorities, or limited exposure to educational role models, which can affect how strongly learners internalize the value of education. This aligns with Bayod et al. (2021), who explained that immediate economic pressures and survival priorities may compete with long-term educational values among Indigenous families, affecting how learners internalize the importance of education. The overall weighted mean of 4.05, with a verbal description of *Often* and an interpretation of *High*, reflects a generally strong perceived value of learning among the Mamanwa learners. This overall picture indicates that learners recognize education as useful, meaningful, and beneficial despite challenges or difficulties encountered in school. Collectively, the results suggest that valuing learning is a positive motivational factor for the learners, supporting sustained engagement and commitment to their educational journey. The overall result supports Quimbo et al. (2023), who found that rights-based and culturally grounded education strengthens Indigenous learners' valuation of schooling as both a

support to maintain and further enhance motivation, particularly through culturally responsive teaching, contextualized learning materials, and learner-centered strategies. By building on these motivational assets, schools can better support Mamanwa learners' academic engagement, persistence, and long-term educational participation.

Teachers may consider strengthening the already high levels of effort, interest, and perceived value of learning among Mamanwa learners by using culturally responsive and contextualized teaching strategies that connect lessons to learners' lived experiences and Indigenous culture, while providing encouragement and flexible learning activities to sustain persistence across subjects. Teachers and school leaders may collaboratively develop supportive school environments through inclusive curricula, learner-centered practices, and capacity-building programs that enhance cultural competence and address barriers such as absenteeism, hunger, and limited resources. Future researchers may further explore in-school motivation by examining its relationship with academic performance, attendance, and retention, or by employing qualitative and mixed-methods approaches to capture learners' voices and better understand how motivational factors develop over time within Indigenous educational contexts.

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