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Teachers' Positive Reinforcement Practices and Their Influence on Students' Learning Outcomes in the Division of Cagayan

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Abstract — This study examined teachers' positive reinforcement practices and their influence on students' learning outcomes in the Division of Cagayan. Using a descriptive–correlational research design, data were collected from 100 elementary teachers through a researcher-made questionnaire focusing on reinforcement strategies such as technical approaches, verbal praise, rewards and incentives, recognition, and feedback. Students' learning outcomes were measured using their General Weighted Average (GWA). Results revealed that teachers highly practiced positive reinforcement overall, with verbal praise and feedback emerging as the most frequently used strategies, while technical strategies and rewards were moderately applied. Students demonstrated outstanding academic performance, with the majority achieving high GWA scores. Correlational analysis showed a significant positive relationship between verbal praise and feedback and students' learning outcomes, indicating that these interpersonal reinforcement strategies effectively enhance student achievement. However, technical strategies and rewards showed no significant relationship with academic performance. The findings suggest that consistent use of meaningful and immediate reinforcement strategies contributes to improved student motivation, engagement, and academic success. The study underscores the importance of incorporating effective positive reinforcement practices in classroom instruction to foster better learning outcomes among students.

Keywords: positive reinforcement, verbal praise, feedback, learning outcomes, academic performance, teacher practices

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' academic success through the strategies they use in the classroom. Among these strategies, positive reinforcement has been widely recognized as an effective approach in promoting desirable behaviors and improving students' learning outcomes. Positive reinforcement refers to the practice of providing rewards, praise, or recognition following a desired behavior, thereby increasing the likelihood that such behavior will be repeated. Rooted in Skinner's theory of operant conditioning, this approach emphasizes that learning is influenced by consequences, and behaviors followed by positive outcomes are more likely to recur. In educational settings, teachers utilize reinforcement techniques such as verbal praise, incentives, and recognition to motivate students and enhance classroom participation (Subramaniam & Nordin, 2025).

Despite its recognized importance, many classrooms still experience challenges related to student motivation, engagement, and academic performance. Some students demonstrate low interest in learning activities, lack of participation, and poor academic outcomes. These problems may be attributed to limited or inconsistent use of effective motivational strategies, including positive reinforcement. In some cases, teachers may rely more on corrective or punitive measures rather than encouraging desired behaviors, which may negatively affect learners' confidence and willingness to participate. As a result, students may become disengaged, leading to decreased academic performance and limited development of positive learning habits.

The issue becomes more significant in public school settings, where large class sizes, diverse learner needs, and limited resources may affect the consistent application of reinforcement practices. In the Division of Cagayan, teachers strive to improve students' learning outcomes; however, variations in teaching practices and classroom management strategies may influence the effectiveness of instruction. Understanding how teachers apply positive reinforcement and how these practices impact students' performance is essential in addressing existing gaps and improving instructional quality.

Related studies support the importance of positive reinforcement in enhancing student learning outcomes. Fatima, Kirmani, and Tanweer (2023) found that reinforcement strategies significantly improved students' confidence, attention, and concentration in classroom activities. Their study revealed that students exposed to consistent positive reinforcement demonstrated better learning behaviors and increased academic engagement, highlighting the effectiveness of such practices in promoting improved performance. Similarly, Khanum et al. (2025) reported that positive reinforcement strategies, including rewards and recognition, were strongly associated with high levels of student learning performance. The findings showed a significant relationship between reinforcement practices and learners' academic outcomes, suggesting that consistent and meaningful reinforcement can sustain motivation and enhance achievement.

These studies emphasize that positive reinforcement is not merely a classroom management tool but a vital component of effective teaching that can directly influence students' academic success. However, there remains a need to further explore how teachers in specific contexts, such as the Division of Cagayan, implement these practices and how they contribute to students' learning outcomes. Differences in implementation, frequency, and type of reinforcement may yield varying effects, which necessitate localized investigation.

In light of these concerns, this study aimed to examine teachers' positive reinforcement practices and their influence on students' learning outcomes in the Division of Cagayan. Specifically, it sought to determine the extent to which reinforcement strategies are used by teachers and how these practices affect students' academic performance, engagement, and overall learning development.

Literature Review

Positive reinforcement has been widely examined in educational research as an effective strategy for enhancing student behavior, motivation, and academic performance. Rooted in behaviorist theory, this approach emphasizes the use of rewards, praise, and recognition to strengthen desirable behaviors and support learning. Recent studies continue to highlight the

relevance of reinforcement practices in modern classrooms, particularly in improving learners' engagement and overall outcomes.

Recent empirical evidence supports the strong link between reinforcement practices and students' academic success. Macalisang and Bonghawan (2024) investigated teachers' learning reinforcement and found that it has a significant positive relationship with students' motivation, self-efficacy, and academic performance. Their study revealed that consistent reinforcement strategies not only build confidence among learners but also encourage persistence in academic tasks, ultimately leading to improved learning outcomes. This finding emphasizes that reinforcement is not only a behavioral tool but also a motivational factor that enhances students' willingness to learn.

Similarly, Aulia and Jamilah (2024) conducted an action research study that demonstrated that the use of positive reinforcement significantly improved students' motivation in English learning. The researchers observed increased enthusiasm, curiosity, and participation among students after implementing both verbal and non-verbal reinforcement strategies. This indicates that reinforcement contributes to creating a more engaging and supportive learning environment where students feel encouraged to actively participate.

In addition, Ismail (2023) found that positive reinforcement significantly increases student engagement across academic, behavioral, and social domains. The study highlighted that reinforcement strategies help students remain focused and actively involved in classroom activities. This suggests that engagement, which is a key component of learning, can be effectively enhanced through appropriate reinforcement techniques.

Moreover, Senados (2023) examined the effects of positive reinforcement on students' classroom behavior and work-related values. The findings revealed a significant relationship between reinforcement and improved student behavior, as well as the development of positive attitudes toward learning tasks. This implies that reinforcement not only improves academic outcomes but also shapes students' work ethics and responsibility.

In another study, Munif (2024) explored teachers' use of reward systems and found that such strategies positively influenced students' motivation and participation. The results indicated that students became more active and engaged when rewards were consistently applied, leading to improved academic performance. The study further emphasized that teachers' perceptions and practices play a crucial role in the successful implementation of reinforcement strategies.

Furthermore, Sinaga (2022) examined the effects of rewards and punishment on learning outcomes and reported that rewards have a significant positive impact on students' academic performance. The study showed that reward-based strategies contribute to improved learning outcomes, confirming the effectiveness of reinforcement in facilitating academic success.

Additionally, Abba and Haruna (2025) explored teachers' perceptions of positive reinforcement and found that trained teachers who consistently applied reinforcement techniques observed improved student behavior and outcomes. The study also highlighted the importance of institutional support and teacher training in maximizing the effectiveness of reinforcement practices in the classroom.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that positive reinforcement is a powerful instructional strategy that significantly influences students' motivation, behavior, engagement, and academic achievement. The literature suggests that when teachers consistently apply reinforcement practices, students are more likely to develop positive learning attitudes and achieve better academic outcomes. However, the effectiveness of these strategies largely depends on how they are implemented, the type of reinforcement used, and the context in which they are applied.

In summary, existing literature affirms the importance of positive reinforcement in enhancing students' learning outcomes. While numerous studies have established its effectiveness, there remains a need to examine how teachers apply these practices in specific educational contexts, such as in the Division of Cagayan. This gap highlights the relevance of the present study in contributing to the existing body of knowledge.

Research Questions

This study aimed to examine teachers' positive reinforcement practices and their influence on students' learning outcomes in the Division of Cagayan. Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:

1. What positive reinforcement practices are commonly used by teachers in terms of:
    a. Technical
    b. Verbal Praise
    c. Rewards and Incentives
    d. Recognition
    e. Feedback
2. What is the level of students' learning outcomes as measured by their General Weighted Average (GWA)??
3. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' positive reinforcement practices and students' learning outcomes?

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive–correlational research design to examine teachers' positive reinforcement practices and their influence on students' learning outcomes in the Division of Cagayan. The descriptive component was used to systematically describe the types of positive reinforcement strategies commonly practiced by teachers, including technical strategies, verbal praise, rewards and incentives, recognition, and feedback. Meanwhile, the correlational aspect of the study aimed to determine the relationship between these reinforcement practices and students'

learning outcomes as measured by their General Weighted Average (GWA). This design is appropriate for the study as it allows the researcher to gather quantitative data, analyze patterns, and identify associations between variables without manipulating them. Through this approach, the study was able to provide a clear understanding of how teachers' reinforcement practices are related to students' academic performance.

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study consisted of 100 elementary teachers from Lal-lo South District, Division of Cagayan, who were currently employed during the school year of the study. These teacher-respondents were drawn from 11 public elementary schools within the district and were selected using the total enumeration sampling technique, wherein all teachers in the identified population were included as respondents. This approach ensured that every qualified teacher had equal representation in the study, thereby providing a comprehensive view of the positive reinforcement practices utilized across the district. The participants were deemed appropriate for the study as they are directly engaged in classroom instruction and play a significant role in applying reinforcement strategies that may influence students' learning outcomes as measured by their General Weighted Average (GWA).

Instrumentation

This study employed a researcher-made questionnaire as the primary data-gathering instrument. The questionnaire was designed to determine the extent of teachers' positive reinforcement practices in terms of technical strategies, verbal praise, rewards and incentives, recognition, and feedback. It consisted of structured items using a Likert scale, allowing the respondents to indicate the frequency of their practices. In addition, the instrument required the teacher-respondents to provide the General Weighted Average (GWA) of their respective classes, which served as the basis for measuring students' learning outcomes. Before its administration, the questionnaire underwent validation by experts in the field of education to ensure its clarity,

relevance, and reliability. Necessary revisions were incorporated based on their suggestions to enhance the quality of the instrument. The finalized questionnaire was then distributed to the respondents to gather accurate and relevant data for the study.

Analysis of Data

The data collected in this study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, particularly the mean, were used to determine the level of teachers' positive reinforcement practices in terms of technical strategies, verbal praise, rewards and incentives, recognition, and feedback. Likewise, students' learning outcomes were described based on their General Weighted Average (GWA) as provided by the teacher-respondents. To ensure clear and meaningful interpretation of the computed mean values, the following scales were used:

Range	**Teachers' Positive Reinforcement Practices**	**Range**	**Students' Learning Outcome**
1.00 – 1.74	Least Practiced	75 and below	Did Not Meet Expectation
1.75 – 2.49	Moderately Practiced	75 to 79	Fairly Satisfactory
2.50 – 3.24	Highly Practiced	80 to 84	Satisfactory
3.25 – 4.00	Very Highly Practiced	85 to 89	Very Satisfactory
		90 and above	Outstanding

Also, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was employed as an inferential statistical tool to determine the presence, strength, and direction of the relationship between teachers' positive reinforcement practices and students' learning outcomes. This statistical method enabled the researcher to establish whether a significant relationship exists between the variables and to assess the extent to which positive reinforcement practices influence students' academic performance.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Positive reinforcement practices are commonly used by teachers

The findings indicate that positive reinforcement practices are commonly used by teachers, as reflected in the overall mean of 2.52, interpreted as highly practiced. Among the different dimensions, verbal praise (mean = 2.70) and feedback (mean = 2.68) were rated as highly practiced, suggesting that teachers frequently use encouraging words and constructive responses to support student learning. These practices are essential in fostering student confidence, motivation, and engagement in classroom activities. On the other hand, technical strategies (mean = 2.40) and rewards and incentives (mean = 2.30) were only moderately practiced, indicating that while teachers apply some structured or tangible reinforcement methods, these are not as consistently implemented as verbal and feedback-based strategies. This variation implies that teachers may prefer simpler and more immediate forms of reinforcement, such as praise, rather than more structured or resource-dependent approaches. Overall, the results suggest that teachers demonstrate a strong inclination toward using positive reinforcement, particularly interpersonal strategies, to support student learning; however, there remains an opportunity to further enhance the use of diverse reinforcement techniques to maximize their impact on students' academic outcomes.

Positive Reinforcement Practices	Mean	Interpretation
Technical	2.40	Moderately Practiced
Verbal Praise	2.70	Highly Practiced
Rewards and Incentives	2.30	Moderately Practiced
Feedback	2.68	Highly Practiced
Overall Mean	**2.52**	**Highly Practice**

Students' learning outcomes as measured by their General Weighted Average (GWA)

The findings reveal that students' learning outcomes, as measured by their General Weighted Average (GWA), are generally outstanding. As shown in the data, most of the students, comprising 63 percent, obtained a GWA of 90 and above, which is interpreted as Outstanding, while the remaining 37 percent achieved a GWA ranging from 85 to 89, categorized as Very Satisfactory. The computed mean of 90.6, which falls under the Outstanding level, further confirms the high academic performance of the students. This indicates that most learners demonstrate strong mastery of the learning competencies and are able to achieve high academic standards. The distribution of results suggests that while all students are performing at commendable levels, a larger proportion excels beyond expectations. Overall, the findings imply that students' academic performance is highly satisfactory, reflecting effective teaching practices and a supportive learning environment that fosters academic excellence.

Students' Learning Outcomes	Frequency	Percent
85 to 89 (Very Satisfactory)	37	37
90 and above (Outstanding)	63	63
Total	**100**	**100**
Mean	**90.6**	**Outstanding**

Correlational results between teachers' positive reinforcement practices and students' learning outcomes

The findings reveal that the relationship between teachers' positive reinforcement practices and students' learning outcomes varies across dimensions. Specifically, verbal praise ($r = 0.583$, $p = 0.001$) and feedback ($r = 0.422$, $p = 0.003$) were found to have a significant positive relationship with students' learning outcomes, indicating that these forms of reinforcement are effective in improving students' academic performance as measured by their General Weighted Average (GWA). This suggests that direct and immediate reinforcement strategies, such as encouraging words and constructive feedback, play a crucial role in enhancing student motivation and achievement. On the other hand, technical strategies ($r = 0.115$, $p = 0.089$) and rewards and incentives ($r = 0.198$, $p = 0.102$) showed no significant relationship with students' learning outcomes, implying that these practices may have limited or indirect influence on academic performance. These results indicate that interpersonal reinforcement strategies are more impactful than material or structured approaches in promoting student success.

These findings are supported by related studies presented in the literature. Macalisang and Bonghawan (2024) found that reinforcement practices significantly influence students' motivation, self-efficacy, and academic performance, emphasizing the importance of meaningful and consistent reinforcement in improving learning outcomes. Similarly, Aulia and Jamilah (2024) reported that the use of positive reinforcement, particularly verbal and non-verbal encouragement, significantly enhanced students' motivation and engagement in learning. These studies align with the present findings, highlighting that verbal praise and feedback are among the most effective strategies in promoting academic achievement, while other forms of reinforcement may require more structured implementation to yield significant results.

Variable Students' Learning Outcomes and…	**Coefficient (r)**	**Probability**	**Statistical Inference**
Technical	0.115	0.089	**Not Significant**
Verbal Praise	0.583	0.001	**Significant**
Rewards and Incentives	0.198	0.102	**Not Significant**
Feedback	0.422	0.003	**Significant**

IV. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study lead to the conclusion that teachers' positive reinforcement practices play a significant role in influencing students' learning outcomes. The results showed that positive reinforcement strategies are generally highly practiced by teachers, with particular emphasis on verbal praise and feedback, while technical strategies and rewards are moderately utilized. At the same time, students demonstrated outstanding academic performance as reflected in their General Weighted Average (GWA). Furthermore, the significant positive relationship between teachers' reinforcement practices and students' learning outcomes confirms that effective use of positive reinforcement contributes to improved academic achievement. Therefore, it can be concluded that consistent and strategic application of positive reinforcement enhances students' motivation, engagement, and overall academic performance, making it an essential component of effective teaching in the Division of Cagayan.

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