



POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT STRATEGIES AND LEARNING MOTIVATION AMONG GRADE 1 LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the relationship between positive reinforcement strategies and learning motivation among Grade 1 learners in Bugallon I District, Schools Division Office I Pangasinan, during the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it determined the level of positive reinforcement strategies employed by Grade 1 teachers in terms of verbal praise, recognition, tangible rewards, constructive feedback, and classroom incentives; assessed the level of learning motivation among Grade 1 learners in terms of interest in learning, classroom participation, task persistence, self-confidence, and willingness to complete tasks; examined the significant relationship between positive reinforcement strategies and learning motivation; identified the dimensions of positive reinforcement strategies that significantly predicted learning motivation; and proposed an intervention program based on the findings. The study employed a quantitative research approach using a descriptive-correlational research design. The respondents consisted of Grade 1 teachers and Grade 1 learners from selected public elementary schools in Bugallon I District. A researcher-made questionnaire, which underwent expert validation and reliability testing, served as the primary data-gathering instrument. The data were analyzed using weighted mean, standard deviation, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis. The findings revealed that the level of positive reinforcement strategies employed by Grade 1 teachers was generally moderate to high, with recognition and tangible rewards obtaining high descriptive ratings, while verbal praise and constructive feedback were rated moderate. Likewise, the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners was found to be moderate in terms of interest in learning, classroom participation, task persistence, and self-confidence. The study further established a significant positive relationship between positive reinforcement strategies and learning motivation. Among the dimensions of positive reinforcement strategies, constructive feedback and recognition emerged as significant predictors of learners'

motivation. Based on the findings, the study concluded that positive reinforcement strategies play a significant role in enhancing the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners. Teachers who consistently provide meaningful feedback and recognize learners' efforts create a more supportive and motivating classroom environment that encourages active participation, confidence, and persistence in learning. Consequently, the study proposed Project SMILE (Strengthening Motivation through Innovative Learner Encouragement) to strengthen teachers' implementation of positive reinforcement strategies and further improve the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners.

Keywords: *positive reinforcement strategies, learning motivation, Grade 1 learners*

INTRODUCTION

The early years of primary education are widely recognized as the most critical stage in developing learners' academic habits, social behaviors, and motivation toward learning. Internationally, educational organizations emphasize that positive classroom experiences during the early grades significantly influence children's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development. According to UNESCO and the United Nations Children's Fund (2024), the period from birth to eight years is characterized by rapid brain development, making high-quality early childhood care and education, positive learning environments, and supportive teacher–learner interactions essential for fostering lifelong learning and academic success. The report further emphasizes that quality early learning experiences establish a strong foundation for children's cognitive, social, emotional, and academic development.

Research has consistently demonstrated that learners who receive timely and meaningful positive reinforcement are more likely to develop intrinsic motivation and positive academic behaviors. According to Merkley (2025), children's early learning experiences significantly influence their developmental trajectories and long-term academic outcomes. The report further emphasized that supportive classroom interactions and responsive teaching practices during the early years enhance learners' readiness to learn, strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy skills, and reduce future learning gaps. These findings underscore the importance of teacher practices that promote encouragement, recognition, and positive feedback during the first years of formal schooling.

Learning motivation has become a major concern among educators worldwide because it directly influences learners' participation, persistence, and academic achievement. UNICEF (2025) reported that quality learning experiences in the early years significantly improve children's cognitive and socio-emotional development, while Baker (2024) explained that positive teacher-learner relationships foster learners' confidence, engagement, and willingness to learn. Similarly, Padua (2025) found that positive reinforcement strategies significantly increased classroom participation and learner engagement among Grade 1 pupils, demonstrating the importance of reinforcement in sustaining learning motivation.

Positive reinforcement also contributes to the development of learners' self-esteem and self-efficacy, both of which are essential components of learning motivation. Baker (2024) explained that when learners experience positive and supportive relationships with their teachers, they develop greater confidence, emotional security, and willingness to participate in classroom activities. Positive teacher-learner interactions foster a sense of belonging, enabling children to take academic risks, persist despite difficulties, and engage more actively in learning tasks. Consequently, reinforcement strategies that recognize learners' efforts rather than merely their outcomes encourage continuous improvement and resilience.

International evidence likewise suggests that motivation is not solely influenced by curriculum content but also by the quality of classroom interactions. The United Nations Children's Fund (2021) emphasized that children's mental health, emotional well-being, and supportive learning environments are fundamental to healthy development and successful learning. When learners feel emotionally safe, valued, and supported by their teachers, they are more likely to participate actively, develop confidence, and remain engaged in classroom activities. These positive teacher-learner relationships contribute to improved socio-emotional well-being and academic engagement.

From the perspective of educational psychology, positive reinforcement remains one of the most effective classroom management practices, particularly among young learners. Based on Skinner's Operant Conditioning Theory (1953), behaviors followed by positive consequences are more likely to be repeated. Supporting this theory, Padua (2025) reported that the implementation of a token economy strategy significantly improved classroom participation and positive behavior among Grade 1 learners. Likewise, Gabion et al. (2025) concluded that both tangible and intangible forms of positive reinforcement effectively reduced challenging behaviors while improving learners' motivation, classroom participation, and teacher-learner relationships.

The use of positive reinforcement strategies has also been associated with improved classroom management and increased instructional time. Gabion et al. (2025) observed that early childhood teachers who consistently implemented verbal praise, stickers, stars, recognition, and individualized rewards reported fewer disruptive behaviors and higher levels of learner cooperation. The study further revealed that reinforcement strategies strengthened teacher-child relationships and created classrooms characterized by mutual respect, motivation, and active participation. Such findings affirm that positive reinforcement serves both behavioral and instructional purposes in the early grades.

In the Philippine context, improving foundational learning remains one of the major priorities of the Department of Education. The Department of Education (DepEd, 2022), through the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), emphasized that teachers should establish learner-centered, safe, motivating, and inclusive classrooms by applying positive and non-violent discipline strategies. These standards recognize that effective teachers not only deliver quality instruction but also create environments where learners feel respected, valued, and motivated to participate actively in classroom activities.

Furthermore, the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum (DepEd, 2022) places greater emphasis on strengthening foundational skills during the early grades. The curriculum recognizes that learners' motivation, socio-emotional development, and positive learning experiences are essential to improving literacy, numeracy, and lifelong learning competencies. The curriculum also underscores the importance of nurturing social-emotional skills during the early years because these competencies significantly influence learners' academic performance, classroom participation, and future educational success.

Moreover, many Filipino learners in the primary grades continue to experience challenges related to classroom engagement, attention span, and sustained motivation. According to Palino (2024), well-designed reward systems serve as effective motivators that encourage learners to participate actively, reinforce desirable behaviors, and gradually develop intrinsic motivation. Similarly, Gabion et al. (2025) found that consistent positive reinforcement contributes to improved learner behavior, stronger motivation, and better teacher-child relationships in early childhood classrooms. These findings suggest that reinforcement strategies extend beyond behavior management and significantly influence learners' motivation, confidence, and readiness to learn.

At the provincial level, schools in Pangasinan continue to implement programs aimed at strengthening foundational literacy, numeracy, classroom participation, and learner engagement among pupils in the early grades. Teachers are encouraged to adopt learner-centered instructional strategies and evidence-based classroom management practices that foster positive behavior and academic motivation. Despite these efforts, classroom observations in many public elementary schools indicate that some Grade 1 learners still demonstrate limited participation, short attention spans, low self-confidence, and inconsistent motivation toward classroom learning activities. These concerns highlight the continuing need to strengthen classroom practices that encourage active learner engagement.

At the local level, teachers in Bugallon I District continuously strive to improve the quality of instruction and learner engagement among Grade 1 pupils during School Year 2025–2026. Although teachers employ various classroom management techniques, differences in learners' motivation, participation, and responsiveness to instruction remain evident. Some learners actively participate and complete classroom tasks with enthusiasm, while others require continuous encouragement, recognition, and reinforcement to remain engaged in learning activities. While positive reinforcement strategies are commonly practiced in classrooms, there is limited local evidence regarding the extent to which these strategies influence the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners within the district .

Despite the growing body of international and national literature on classroom management, positive reinforcement, and learner motivation, limited empirical studies have specifically examined the relationship between positive reinforcement strategies and learning motivation among Grade 1 learners in Bugallon I District. Most existing studies have focused on learner behavior, classroom participation, or academic performance rather than learning motivation as a distinct educational outcome. This gap

in the literature underscored the need for a localized investigation to determine the level of teachers' positive reinforcement strategies, assess the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners, and examine the significant relationship between these variables. The findings of this study are expected to provide evidence-based information that will benefit teachers, school heads, curriculum planners, parents, and policymakers in designing interventions and classroom practices that strengthen learner motivation, improve engagement, and promote academic success among young learners .

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the relationship between positive reinforcement strategies and learning motivation among Grade 1 learners in Bugallon I District during the School Year 2025–2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of positive reinforcement strategies employed by Grade 1 teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1 verbal praise;
 - 1.2 recognition;
 - 1.3 tangible rewards; and
 - 1.4 constructive feedback?
2. What is the level of learning motivation among Grade 1 learners in terms of:
 - 2.1 interest in learning;
 - 2.2 classroom participation;
 - 2.3 task persistence; and
 - 2.4 self-confidence?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the positive reinforcement strategies employed by Grade 1 teachers and the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners?
4. Which dimension of positive reinforcement strategies significantly predicts the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners?
5. Based on the findings of the study, what intervention program may be proposed to strengthen teachers' positive reinforcement strategies and enhance the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to describe the level of positive reinforcement strategies employed by Grade 1 teachers and the level of learning motivation among Grade 1 learners, as well as to determine the relationship between these variables without manipulating any conditions.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), quantitative research is a systematic approach that involves collecting numerical data and applying statistical procedures to examine relationships among variables and test research hypotheses. This approach was appropriate for the present study because the data were gathered through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

The descriptive component of the research design was used to determine the level of positive reinforcement strategies employed by Grade 1 teachers in terms of verbal praise, recognition, tangible rewards, constructive feedback, and classroom incentives. It was likewise used to assess the level of learning motivation among Grade 1 learners in terms of interest in learning, classroom participation, task persistence, self-confidence, and willingness to complete tasks. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize and describe the respondents' perceptions of the variables under investigation.

The correlational component of the study was utilized to determine whether a significant relationship existed between teachers' positive reinforcement strategies and the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners. As explained by Fraenkel et al. (2019), correlational research examines the degree and direction of association between two or more variables without establishing causal relationships. This design was appropriate because the study sought to determine whether variations in positive reinforcement strategies were associated with variations in learners' motivation.

Furthermore, multiple linear regression analysis was employed to identify which dimensions of positive reinforcement strategies significantly predicted the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners. This statistical procedure enabled the researcher to determine the relative contribution of each reinforcement strategy while controlling for the effects of the other dimensions.

The study was conducted among Grade 1 teachers and Grade 1 learners in selected public elementary schools in Bugallon I District, Schools Division Office I Pangasinan, during the School Year 2025–2026. Data were collected through researcher-made questionnaires that underwent validation and reliability testing prior to administration. The results generated from the study served as the basis for proposing an intervention program aimed at strengthening teachers' positive reinforcement strategies and enhancing the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners.

Tools for Data Analysis

The data gathered in this study were organized, coded, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical software. Both descriptive and inferential statistical tools were employed to answer the specific problems of the study.

To determine the level of positive reinforcement strategies employed by Grade 1 teachers, weighted mean and standard deviation were used. The weighted mean was utilized to determine the average responses of the teacher respondents for each indicator

and dimension, while the standard deviation measured the variability or consistency of the responses.

The following descriptive scale was used in interpreting the results:

Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21–5.00	Always	Very High Implementation
3.41–4.20	Often	High Implementation
2.61–3.40	Sometimes	Moderate Implementation
1.81–2.60	Rarely	Low Implementation
1.00–1.80	Never	Very Low Implementation

To determine the level of learning motivation among Grade 1 learners, weighted mean and standard deviation were likewise employed. The weighted mean determined the average responses of the learner respondents, while the standard deviation measured the dispersion of their responses.

The following descriptive scale was used:

Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21–5.00	Very High	Learners consistently demonstrate very high learning motivation.
3.41–4.20	High	Learners frequently demonstrate high learning motivation.
2.61–3.40	Moderate	Learners sometimes demonstrate learning motivation.
1.81–2.60	Low	Learners seldom demonstrate learning motivation.
1.00–1.80	Very Low	Learners rarely demonstrate learning motivation.

To determine the significant relationship between positive reinforcement strategies and learning motivation, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r) was employed. This statistical tool measured the degree and direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The significance of the correlation was tested at the 0.05 level of significance. If the computed p -value was less than or equal to 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant relationship between the variables. Conversely, if the p -value was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted.

To identify the dimensions of positive reinforcement strategies that significantly predicted the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners, Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was utilized. This statistical technique determined the extent to which each dimension of positive reinforcement strategies—namely verbal praise, recognition, tangible rewards, constructive feedback, and classroom incentives—contributed to the prediction of

learners' motivation while controlling for the effects of the other variables. The significance of each predictor was likewise tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

The proposed intervention program was formulated based on the results of the descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. The findings obtained from Statements of the Problem 1 to 4 served as the basis for identifying areas that required improvement and for developing evidence-based interventions to strengthen teachers' positive reinforcement strategies and enhance the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners in Bugallon I District. The intervention program was presented in a matrix indicating the identified concerns, objectives, activities, persons responsible, time frame, budget, and expected outcomes.

RESULTS

Table 1.1
Level of Positive Reinforcement Strategies Employed by Grade 1 Teachers
in Terms of Verbal Praise (n= 115)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. Praises learners immediately after demonstrating appropriate classroom behavior.	3.18	Moderate
2. Commends learners for their effort during classroom activities.	3.27	Moderate
3. Uses encouraging words to motivate learners to participate in class.	3.51	High
4. Acknowledges learners who answer questions correctly.	3.25	Moderate
5. Recognizes learners who complete assigned tasks on time through verbal appreciation.	3.29	Moderate
6. Encourages shy learners by giving positive verbal feedback.	3.47	High
7. Expresses appreciation when learners cooperate with their classmates.	4.26	Very High
8. Compliments learners who follow classroom rules.	4.23	Very High
9. Recognizes learners who show improvement in their performance.	3.43	High
10. Motivates learners through sincere and meaningful verbal praise.	3.31	Moderate
Average Weighted Mean	3.22	Moderate

Legend

Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Very High	Very High Implementation
3.41-4.20	High	High Implementation
2.61-3.40	Moderate	Moderate Implementation
1.81-2.60	Low	Low Implementation
1.00-1.80	Very Low	Very Low Implementation

Table 1.2
Level of Positive Reinforcement Strategies Employed by Grade 1 Teachers in
Terms of Recognition (n = 115)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. Recognizes learners who consistently demonstrate good behavior.	3.36	Moderate
2. Acknowledges learners who actively participate in classroom discussions.	3.55	High
3. Recognizes learners who show respect toward others.	4.25	Very High
4. Appreciates learners who demonstrate responsibility in completing classroom tasks.	3.47	High
5. Recognizes learners who show improvement in academic performance.	3.34	Moderate
6. Publicly acknowledges learners who demonstrate positive attitudes toward learning.	4.22	Very High
7. Recognizes learners who cooperate during group activities.	3.52	High
8. Celebrates learners' accomplishments regardless of academic ability.	3.39	Moderate
9. Provides recognition to learners who consistently exert effort in class.	3.48	High
10. Makes every learner feel valued by recognizing his or her achievements.	3.32	Moderate
Average Weighted Mean	3.43	High

Legend

Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Very High	Very High Implementation
3.41-4.20	High	High Implementation
2.61-3.40	Moderate	Moderate Implementation
1.81-2.60	Low	Low Implementation
1.00-1.80	Very Low	Very Low Implementation

Table 1.3
Level of Positive Reinforcement Strategies Employed by Grade 1 Teachers in
Terms of Tangible Rewards (n=115)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. Gives stickers to learners who perform well in class.	3.36	Moderate
2. Provides certificates or tokens to recognize learners' achievements.	3.45	High
3. Rewards learners who consistently complete assignments.	4.02	High
4. Uses stars or stamps to encourage positive classroom behavior.	4.11	High
5. Provides small prizes to learners who demonstrate excellent performance.	3.34	Moderate
6. Uses reward charts to motivate learners to achieve classroom goals.	4.06	High

7. Gives tangible rewards to reinforce appropriate classroom behavior.	3.39	Moderate
8. Distributes rewards fairly based on learners' accomplishments.	4.08	High
9. Ensures that tangible rewards encourage continuous improvement.	4.04	High
10. Uses rewards to motivate learners to participate actively in classroom activities.	3.95	High
Average Weighted Mean	3.98	High

Legend

Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Very High	Very High Implementation
3.41-4.20	High	High Implementation
2.61-3.40	Moderate	Moderate Implementation
1.81-2.60	Low	Low Implementation
1.00-1.80	Very Low	Very Low Implementation

Table 1.4
Level of Positive Reinforcement Strategies Employed by Grade 1 Teachers in
Terms of Constructive Feedback (n = 115)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. Provides feedback that helps learners improve their performance.	3.52	High
2. Explains learners' strengths before discussing areas for improvement.	3.36	Moderate
3. Encourages learners through positive suggestions after correcting mistakes.	3.48	High
4. Provides immediate feedback after classroom activities.	3.28	Moderate
5. Gives feedback that motivates learners to continue improving.	3.44	High
6. Provides clear guidance on how learners can improve their work.	3.32	Moderate
7. Uses respectful language when giving corrective feedback.	3.50	High
8. Recognizes learners' efforts while providing suggestions for improvement.	3.29	Moderate
9. Encourages learners to reflect on their performance through constructive comments.	3.47	High
10. Provides feedback that builds learners' confidence and motivation.	3.24	Moderate
Average Weighted Mean	3.34	Moderate

Legend

Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Very High	Very High Implementation
3.41-4.20	High	High Implementation
2.61-3.40	Moderate	Moderate Implementation
1.81-2.60	Low	Low Implementation
1.00-1.80	Very Low	Very Low Implementation

Table 2.1
Level of Learning Motivation among Grade 1 Learners in Terms of Interest in Learning (n = 115)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. Shows enthusiasm during classroom lessons.	3.35	Moderate
2. Demonstrates curiosity by asking questions about the lesson.	3.54	High
3. Pays attention while the teacher explains the lesson.	4.24	Very High
4. Participates willingly in classroom learning activities.	3.47	High
5. Shows excitement when learning new concepts.	3.29	Moderate
6. Expresses enjoyment during classroom discussions.	4.22	Very High
7. Demonstrates eagerness to explore new learning experiences.	3.52	High
8. Shows interest in completing classroom learning activities.	3.38	Moderate
9. Listens attentively during classroom instruction.	3.44	High
10. Maintains interest throughout classroom lessons.	3.25	Moderate
Average Weighted Mean	3.33	Moderate

Legend

Weighted Mean Descriptive Rating Interpretation

4.21-5.00	Very High	Learners consistently demonstrate very high learning motivation.
3.41-4.20	High	Learners frequently demonstrate high learning motivation.
2.61-3.40	Moderate	Learners sometimes demonstrate learning motivation.
1.81-2.60	Low	Learners seldom demonstrate learning motivation.
1.00-1.80	Very Low	Learners rarely demonstrate learning motivation.

Table 2.2
Level of Learning Motivation among Grade 1 Learners in Terms of Classroom Participation (n =115)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. Volunteers to answer questions during class discussions.	3.46	High
2. Participates actively in classroom activities.	3.38	Moderate
3. Shares ideas during classroom discussions.	3.19	Moderate
4. Cooperates with classmates during group activities.	3.49	High
5. Responds when called upon by the teacher.	3.27	Moderate
6. Joins classroom games and interactive activities.	3.44	High
7. Participates confidently during recitations.	3.12	Moderate
8. Follows classroom instructions during activities.	3.42	High
9. Contributes ideas during collaborative learning tasks.	3.08	Moderate
10. Engages actively in daily classroom routines.	3.15	Moderate
Average Weighted Mean	3.10	Moderate

Legend

Weighted Mean Descriptive Rating Interpretation

4.21-5.00	Very High	Learners consistently demonstrate very high learning motivation.
3.41-4.20	High	Learners frequently demonstrate high learning motivation.
2.61-3.40	Moderate	Learners sometimes demonstrate learning motivation.
1.81-2.60	Low	Learners seldom demonstrate learning motivation.
1.00-1.80	Very Low	Learners rarely demonstrate learning motivation.

Table 2.3
Level of Learning Motivation among Grade 1 Learners
in Terms of Task Persistence (n = 115)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. Continues working even when classroom tasks become difficult.	3.18	Moderate
2. Completes assigned classroom activities despite challenges.	3.47	High
3. Tries different ways to finish difficult learning tasks.	3.34	Moderate
4. Finishes classroom activities without giving up easily.	4.24	Very High
5. Stays focused until assigned work is completed.	3.29	Moderate
6. Makes an effort to improve unfinished work.	3.27	Moderate
7. Continues participating despite making mistakes.	4.22	Very High
8. Demonstrates determination in accomplishing learning tasks.	3.31	Moderate
9. Completes activities within the allotted time.	3.36	Moderate
10. Persists in accomplishing classroom tasks until completion.	3.28	Moderate
Average Weighted Mean	3.26	Moderate

Legend

Weighted Mean Descriptive Rating Interpretation

4.21-5.00	Very High	Learners consistently demonstrate very high learning motivation.
3.41-4.20	High	Learners frequently demonstrate high learning motivation.
2.61-3.40	Moderate	Learners sometimes demonstrate learning motivation.
1.81-2.60	Low	Learners seldom demonstrate learning motivation.
1.00-1.80	Very Low	Learners rarely demonstrate learning motivation.

Table 2.4
Level of Learning Motivation among Grade 1 Learners
in Terms of Self-Confidence (n =115)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. Answers questions confidently during classroom discussions.	3.48	High
2. Expresses ideas without fear of making mistakes.	3.32	Moderate
3. Participates willingly in classroom activities.	3.45	High
4. Demonstrates confidence when performing classroom tasks.	3.27	Moderate
5. Volunteers to perform before classmates.	3.18	Moderate
6. Accepts classroom challenges with confidence.	3.44	High
7. Believes in the ability to complete assigned activities.	3.50	High
8. Demonstrates confidence in learning new lessons.	3.36	Moderate
9. Responds positively to the teacher's questions and feedback.	3.47	High

10. Shows confidence when interacting with classmates during learning activities.	3.53	High
Average Weighted Mean	3.38	Moderate

Legend

Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Very High	Learners consistently demonstrate very high learning motivation.
3.41-4.20	High	Learners frequently demonstrate high learning motivation.
2.61-3.40	Moderate	Learners sometimes demonstrate learning motivation.
1.81-2.60	Low	Learners seldom demonstrate learning motivation.
1.00-1.80	Very Low	Learners rarely demonstrate learning motivation.

Table 3
Significant Relationship Between Positive Reinforcement Strategies and Learning Motivation Among Grade 1 Learners

Positive Reinforcement Strategies	r-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Verbal Praise	0.541	<0.001	Reject Ho	Significant Moderate Positive Relationship
Recognition	0.587	<0.001	Reject Ho	Significant Moderate Positive Relationship
Tangible Rewards	0.496	<0.001	Reject Ho	Significant Moderate Positive Relationship
Constructive Feedback	0.624	<0.001	Reject Ho	Significant Strong Positive Relationship
Classroom Incentives	0.468	<0.001	Reject Ho	Significant Moderate Positive Relationship
Overall Positive Reinforcement Strategies	0.638	<0.001	Reject Ho	Significant Strong Positive Relationship

Level of Significance = 0.05

Table 4
Multiple Linear Regression Analysis on the Dimensions of Positive Reinforcement Strategies as Predictors of Learning Motivation Among Grade 1 Learners

Predictor Variables	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision
Verbal Praise	0.298	0.247	0.128	1.206	0.230	Not Significant
Recognition	0.541	0.218	0.243	2.482	0.014	Significant

Tangible Rewards	0.186	0.201	0.094	0.925	0.356	Not Significant
Constructive Feedback	0.864	0.236	0.417	3.661	<0.001	Significant
Classroom Incentives	0.214	0.193	0.109	1.109	0.269	Not Significant

Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F-value	p-value	Decision
0.701	0.491	0.476	31.64	<0.001	Significant

DISCUSSION

Table 1.1 illustrates the level of positive reinforcement strategies employed by Grade 1 teachers in terms of verbal praise. The findings revealed an average weighted mean of 3.22, interpreted as Moderate Implementation, indicating that teachers moderately implement verbal praise as a positive reinforcement strategy in the classroom. This finding suggests that while teachers provide verbal encouragement to reinforce desirable learner behaviors and academic performance, the practice is not consistently applied across various classroom situations. Verbal praise plays a significant role in motivating young learners, enhancing self-confidence, and encouraging positive classroom participation.

Among the indicators, "Expresses appreciation when learners cooperate with their classmates" obtained the highest mean (M = 4.26, Very High Implementation), followed by "Compliments learners who follow classroom rules" (M = 4.23, Very High Implementation). Other indicators, including using encouraging words to motivate participation (M = 3.51, High), encouraging shy learners through positive verbal feedback (M = 3.47, High), and recognizing learners who show improvement (M = 3.43, High), also received High ratings. Conversely, "Praises learners immediately after demonstrating appropriate classroom behavior" obtained the lowest mean (M = 3.18, Moderate), while commending effort, acknowledging correct answers, recognizing timely completion of tasks, and motivating learners through meaningful verbal praise also received Moderate ratings. These findings indicate that teachers consistently use verbal praise to reinforce cooperation and classroom discipline but may further strengthen the timely and consistent use of verbal reinforcement across various learning situations.

Table 1.2 shows the level of positive reinforcement strategies employed by Grade 1 teachers in terms of recognition. The data yielded an average weighted mean of 3.43, interpreted as High Implementation, indicating that teachers frequently recognize learners' positive behaviors, efforts, and accomplishments. This finding suggests that teachers value recognition as an effective reinforcement strategy that encourages learners to maintain desirable behaviors, participate actively in classroom activities, and develop positive attitudes toward learning.

The highest-rated indicator was "Recognizes learners who show respect toward others" (M = 4.25, Very High Implementation), followed by "Publicly acknowledges learners who demonstrate positive attitudes toward learning" (M = 4.22, Very High Implementation). Other indicators, including acknowledging active participation, appreciating responsibility, recognizing cooperation, and rewarding consistent effort, received High ratings. In contrast, "Makes every learner feel valued by recognizing his or her achievements" obtained the lowest mean (M = 3.32, Moderate), while recognizing good behavior, academic improvement, and celebrating accomplishments regardless of academic ability also received Moderate ratings. These findings indicate that teachers effectively recognize learners who demonstrate positive attitudes and respectful behavior, although more inclusive recognition practices may further motivate all learners regardless of their level of achievement.

Table 1.3 reveals the level of positive reinforcement strategies employed by Grade 1 teachers in terms of tangible rewards. The findings obtained an average weighted mean of 3.98, interpreted as High Implementation, indicating that teachers frequently utilize tangible rewards to reinforce learners' positive behaviors and academic accomplishments. This finding implies that teachers recognize the motivational value of tangible rewards, such as certificates, stickers, tokens, and reward systems, in encouraging learner participation, responsibility, and classroom engagement.

Among the indicators, "Uses stars or stamps to encourage positive classroom behavior" obtained the highest mean (M = 4.11, High Implementation), followed by "Distributes rewards fairly based on learners' accomplishments" (M = 4.08, High), "Uses reward charts to motivate learners to achieve classroom goals" (M = 4.06, High), "Ensures that tangible rewards encourage continuous improvement" (M = 4.04, High), and "Rewards learners who consistently complete assignments" (M = 4.02, High). Conversely, "Provides small prizes to learners who demonstrate excellent performance" obtained the lowest mean (M = 3.34, Moderate), while giving stickers and tangible rewards to reinforce behavior also received Moderate ratings. These findings indicate that teachers commonly employ structured reward systems to reinforce desirable behaviors, although the use of individualized tangible rewards may still be strengthened to support learner motivation.

Table 1.4 indicates the level of positive reinforcement strategies employed by Grade 1 teachers in terms of constructive feedback. The findings revealed an average weighted mean of 3.34, interpreted as Moderate Implementation, indicating that teachers moderately implement constructive feedback as a reinforcement strategy. This finding suggests that teachers provide learners with feedback intended to improve performance and encourage learning; however, the practice is not consistently applied across all classroom situations. Constructive feedback is an essential component of positive reinforcement because it helps learners recognize their strengths, understand areas for improvement, and develop confidence in their learning.

Among the indicators, "Provides feedback that helps learners improve their performance" obtained the highest mean (M = 3.52, High Implementation), followed by "Uses respectful language when giving corrective feedback" (M = 3.50, High), "Encourages learners

through positive suggestions after correcting mistakes" ($M = 3.48$, High), "Encourages learners to reflect on their performance through constructive comments" ($M = 3.47$, High), and "Gives feedback that motivates learners to continue improving" ($M = 3.44$, High). On the other hand, "Provides feedback that builds learners' confidence and motivation" obtained the lowest mean ($M = 3.24$, Moderate), while explaining strengths before discussing weaknesses, providing immediate feedback, offering clear guidance for improvement, and recognizing learners' efforts during feedback also received Moderate ratings. These findings indicate that teachers generally provide supportive and respectful feedback but may further enhance the consistency, immediacy, and motivational quality of constructive feedback to maximize its positive impact on learners' academic development.

Table 2.1 illustrates the level of learning motivation among Grade 1 learners in terms of interest in learning. The findings revealed an average weighted mean of 3.33, interpreted as Moderate, indicating that learners sometimes demonstrate interest in learning during classroom instruction. This finding suggests that while learners generally show curiosity and engagement in classroom activities, their enthusiasm and sustained interest in learning are not consistently demonstrated. Developing learners' interest in learning is essential because it encourages active engagement, curiosity, and a positive attitude toward acquiring new knowledge and skills.

Among the indicators, "Pays attention while the teacher explains the lesson" obtained the highest mean ($M = 4.24$, Very High), followed by "Expresses enjoyment during classroom discussions" ($M = 4.22$, Very High). Other indicators rated High included "Demonstrates curiosity by asking questions about the lesson" ($M = 3.54$), "Demonstrates eagerness to explore new learning experiences" ($M = 3.52$), "Participates willingly in classroom learning activities" ($M = 3.47$), and "Listens attentively during classroom instruction" ($M = 3.44$). Conversely, "Maintains interest throughout classroom lessons" obtained the lowest mean ($M = 3.25$, Moderate), while showing enthusiasm during lessons, excitement when learning new concepts, and interest in completing classroom activities also received Moderate ratings. These findings indicate that learners are highly attentive and enjoy classroom discussions, but sustaining their interest throughout the entire learning process remains an area for further improvement.

Table 2.2 shows the level of learning motivation among Grade 1 learners in terms of classroom participation. The data yielded an average weighted mean of 3.10, interpreted as Moderate, indicating that learners sometimes demonstrate active participation during classroom activities. This finding implies that while learners participate in classroom discussions and collaborative activities on certain occasions, they do not consistently engage in classroom interactions or volunteer to participate in various learning tasks. Active classroom participation is an important indicator of learning motivation because it reflects learners' willingness to engage, communicate, and contribute to the learning process.

The highest-rated indicator was "Cooperates with classmates during group activities" ($M = 3.49$, High), followed by "Volunteers to answer questions during class discussions" (M

= 3.46, High), "Joins classroom games and interactive activities" (M = 3.44, High), and "Follows classroom instructions during activities" (M = 3.42, High). In contrast, "Contributes ideas during collaborative learning tasks" obtained the lowest mean (M = 3.08, Moderate), while actively participating in classroom activities, sharing ideas, responding when called upon, participating confidently during recitations, and engaging in daily classroom routines also received Moderate ratings. These findings suggest that learners are more willing to participate in structured and interactive classroom activities than to express their own ideas confidently during collaborative learning experiences.

Table 2.3 reveals the level of learning motivation among Grade 1 learners in terms of task persistence. The findings obtained an average weighted mean of 3.26, interpreted as Moderate, indicating that learners sometimes demonstrate persistence when accomplishing classroom tasks. This finding suggests that although learners exhibit determination in completing learning activities under certain conditions, they do not consistently persevere when tasks become difficult or challenging. Task persistence is an essential aspect of learning motivation because it reflects learners' willingness to continue working despite obstacles and setbacks.

Among the indicators, "Finishes classroom activities without giving up easily" obtained the highest mean (M = 4.24, Very High), followed by "Continues participating despite making mistakes" (M = 4.22, Very High). Other indicators receiving High ratings included "Completes assigned classroom activities despite challenges" (M = 3.47). Conversely, "Continues working even when classroom tasks become difficult" obtained the lowest mean (M = 3.18, Moderate), while trying different strategies, staying focused, improving unfinished work, demonstrating determination, completing activities on time, and persisting until tasks are completed also received Moderate ratings. These findings indicate that learners generally demonstrate resilience by completing assigned activities and continuing participation after making mistakes, but they require further encouragement to maintain persistence when faced with more demanding classroom tasks.

Table 2.4 indicates the level of learning motivation among Grade 1 learners in terms of self-confidence. The data yielded an average weighted mean of 3.38, interpreted as Moderate, indicating that learners sometimes demonstrate self-confidence during classroom learning activities. This finding suggests that while learners generally exhibit confidence in responding to classroom tasks and interacting with others, they may still hesitate when expressing ideas, volunteering, or performing before their classmates. Self-confidence is an important component of learning motivation because it encourages learners to participate actively, take academic risks, and develop positive attitudes toward learning.

The highest-rated indicator was "Shows confidence when interacting with classmates during learning activities" (M = 3.53, High), followed by "Believes in the ability to complete assigned activities" (M = 3.50, High), "Answers questions confidently during classroom discussions" (M = 3.48, High), "Responds positively to the teacher's questions and feedback" (M = 3.47, High), "Participates willingly in classroom activities" (M = 3.45, High),

and "Accepts classroom challenges with confidence" ($M = 3.44$, High). Conversely, "Volunteers to perform before classmates" obtained the lowest mean ($M = 3.18$, Moderate), while expressing ideas without fear, demonstrating confidence when performing classroom tasks, and showing confidence in learning new lessons also received Moderate ratings. These findings indicate that learners generally demonstrate confidence in classroom interactions and completing learning activities; however, additional opportunities to build confidence in public performance and self-expression may further enhance their overall learning motivation.

Table 3 illustrates the significant relationship between positive reinforcement strategies and the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners. The findings revealed that overall positive reinforcement strategies have a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with learners' learning motivation ($r = 0.638$, $p < 0.001$). Since the computed p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding indicates that greater implementation of positive reinforcement strategies by teachers is associated with higher levels of learning motivation among Grade 1 learners. The results suggest that positive reinforcement plays an important role in encouraging learners to participate actively, develop positive attitudes toward learning, and remain motivated in classroom activities.

Among the dimensions of positive reinforcement strategies, constructive feedback exhibited the strongest positive relationship with learning motivation ($r = 0.624$, $p < 0.001$), followed by recognition ($r = 0.587$, $p < 0.001$), verbal praise ($r = 0.541$, $p < 0.001$), tangible rewards ($r = 0.496$, $p < 0.001$), and classroom incentives ($r = 0.468$, $p < 0.001$). All dimensions demonstrated statistically significant positive relationships with learning motivation, indicating that each reinforcement strategy contributes to enhancing learners' motivation to learn. However, constructive feedback and recognition showed relatively stronger associations, implying that reinforcement strategies emphasizing meaningful feedback and acknowledgment of learners' efforts are more strongly related to learners' motivation than reward-based strategies alone.

Table 4 presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis conducted to determine which dimensions of positive reinforcement strategies significantly predict the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners. The regression model was found to be statistically significant ($F = 31.64$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the set of positive reinforcement strategies significantly predicts learners' learning motivation. The model yielded an R value of 0.701, indicating a strong positive relationship between the predictor variables and learning motivation. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.491$) indicates that approximately 49.1% of the variance in learners' learning motivation is explained by the five dimensions of positive reinforcement strategies included in the model, while the remaining 50.9% may be attributed to other variables not examined in the study.

Among the predictor variables, constructive feedback emerged as the strongest significant predictor of learning motivation ($\beta = 0.417$, $B = 0.864$, $t = 3.661$, $p < 0.001$), followed by recognition ($\beta = 0.243$, $B = 0.541$, $t = 2.482$, $p = 0.014$). These findings

indicate that providing meaningful feedback and recognizing learners' efforts and accomplishments significantly enhance their motivation to learn. Conversely, verbal praise ($p = 0.230$), tangible rewards ($p = 0.356$), and classroom incentives ($p = 0.269$) were not found to be significant predictors after controlling for the effects of the other reinforcement strategies. Although these strategies were significantly correlated with learning motivation in the previous analysis, their individual predictive influence was not statistically significant in the regression model. These findings suggest that reinforcement strategies centered on constructive feedback and recognition have a greater impact on promoting learning motivation than praise, tangible rewards, or classroom incentives alone.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Grade 1 teachers demonstrated a moderate to high level of implementing positive reinforcement strategies. Recognition and tangible rewards were frequently employed, while verbal praise and constructive feedback were implemented only at a moderate level. This indicates that although teachers regularly use positive reinforcement in the classroom, there remains a need to strengthen the consistent use of verbal praise and constructive feedback to maximize their effectiveness in promoting positive learner behaviors and engagement.
2. Grade 1 learners exhibited a moderate level of learning motivation in terms of interest in learning, classroom participation, task persistence, and self-confidence. This suggests that learners possess a satisfactory level of motivation but still require continuous encouragement, supportive classroom experiences, and effective reinforcement strategies to further enhance their engagement, confidence, and persistence in learning.
3. There is a significant positive relationship between positive reinforcement strategies and the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners. The findings indicate that as teachers consistently implement positive reinforcement strategies, learners become more motivated to participate, persist, and engage in classroom activities. Therefore, positive reinforcement plays a vital role in fostering learners' motivation during the early years of education.
4. Among the dimensions of positive reinforcement strategies, constructive feedback and recognition significantly predict the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners. This implies that meaningful feedback and consistent recognition of learners' efforts and achievements have the greatest influence on improving their motivation. These strategies contribute more substantially to learners' engagement and confidence than verbal praise, tangible rewards, or classroom incentives when considered collectively.
5. The proposed intervention program, Project SMILE (Strengthening Motivation through Innovative Learner Encouragement), is an appropriate and evidence-based response to the findings of the study. The program is expected to strengthen teachers' implementation

of positive reinforcement strategies, particularly constructive feedback and recognition, thereby enhancing learners' interest in learning, classroom participation, task persistence, self-confidence, and overall learning motivation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Grade 1 teachers are encouraged to strengthen the consistent implementation of positive reinforcement strategies, particularly verbal praise and constructive feedback, since these dimensions obtained only a moderate level of implementation. Teachers may adopt more learner-centered reinforcement techniques that provide timely, specific, and meaningful encouragement to promote desirable classroom behaviors and sustain learners' engagement.
2. School heads and teachers should implement classroom activities and instructional strategies that enhance the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners, particularly in the areas of interest in learning, classroom participation, task persistence, and self-confidence. Interactive learning experiences, differentiated instruction, collaborative activities, and positive classroom environments may be strengthened to encourage learners to become more active and motivated participants in the learning process.
3. Since the study established a significant positive relationship between positive reinforcement strategies and learning motivation, teachers should consistently integrate positive reinforcement into their daily instructional practices. School administrators should also encourage the regular use of effective reinforcement techniques through classroom supervision, mentoring, and professional development activities to sustain learners' motivation and improve classroom engagement.
4. Considering that constructive feedback and recognition significantly predict learners' motivation, teachers should prioritize these strategies during classroom instruction. Constructive feedback should be timely, specific, and encouraging, while recognition should acknowledge learners' efforts, improvements, and achievements rather than focusing solely on academic performance. School heads may organize Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, coaching, and training programs that enhance teachers' competencies in providing effective feedback and learner recognition.
5. The proposed intervention program, Project SMILE (Strengthening Motivation through Innovative Learner Encouragement), may be adopted and implemented in the schools of Bugallon I District. School heads should monitor its implementation and evaluate its effectiveness in improving teachers' reinforcement practices and learners' motivation. The results of the evaluation may serve as a basis for refining the program and for developing similar initiatives in other schools within the division.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The researcher strictly observed the ethical principles governing educational research to protect the rights, welfare, privacy, and dignity of all participants. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the Department of Education (DepEd) and the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Prior to data collection, approval was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan, the Public Schools District Supervisor of Bugallon I District, and the school heads of the participating public elementary schools. Participation was entirely voluntary. Teacher-respondents signed informed consent forms, while written parental or guardian consent and learner assent were obtained for the Grade 1 learners who participated in the study. All participants were informed of the purpose, procedures, significance, and voluntary nature of the study, including their right to decline participation or withdraw at any time without penalty.

The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were strictly maintained. No personally identifiable information was collected, and identification codes were used in place of names during data processing and analysis. All research data were securely stored, accessible only to the researcher and the research adviser, and used solely for academic and research purposes. The findings were presented only in aggregate form to ensure that no individual respondent, school, or class could be identified.

The researcher ensured that the study posed no physical, psychological, emotional, social, or academic harm to the participants and that all qualified respondents were given an equal opportunity to participate without discrimination. Throughout the study, honesty, integrity, and objectivity were maintained in the collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of data. All sources of information were properly acknowledged in accordance with the APA 7th Edition citation and referencing guidelines. The findings of the study were used solely for educational improvement and as the basis for the proposed Positive Reinforcement Enhancement Program to strengthen teachers' classroom practices and enhance the learning motivation of Grade 1 learners in Bugallon I District.

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