

Enforcing Positive Discipline in the Classroom: Accounts of Elementary Teachers

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Abstract— This phenomenological inquiry explored the experiences of the teachers in enforcing positive discipline to the learners of Babak District, Division of Island Garden City of Samal (IGACOS). It utilized a qualitative employing a phenomenological approach in which the primary data gathering was in-depth interviews of the ten participants. Major findings indicated that about their experiences in enforcing positive discipline in the classroom, they shared three emerging themes namely promoting positive discipline, supporting children's development, and collaborating among stakeholders. Furthermore, after analyzing the answers of the participants about their coping mechanisms adopted with the challenges encountered in enforcing positive discipline in the classroom, the following were the emerging themes namely modifying discipline used, maintaining student discipline and recognizing the role of parents in child discipline. Lastly, the insights of teachers in enforcing positive discipline in the classroom. The responses of the participants yielded three emerging themes namely promoting an increase in academic performance, establishing effective classroom management, and providing professional development. Discipline influenced the learning process by creating a stress-free environment for allocating time to various activities, improving planning by observing and maintaining a set daily routine, shaping learner character and boosting their motivation, facilitating the setting of good examples, and positively contributing to better grades. Although educational institutions had a responsibility to enforce the rules or code of conduct governing learner conduct, parents also played a role in ensuring consistency. Home influenced aspects such as dress code, hairstyles, and fundamental decorum. Finally, the advantages of successful classroom management extended to academic-related results, including a reduction in disruptive behaviors and an increase in academic learning and engagement among students.

Index Terms— positive discipline, elementary teachers, phenomenology, Island Garden City of Samal.

1. Introduction

For many years, the issue of school discipline has been debated, with a variety of approaches and procedures being used to address issues that arise in various ways. In order to fulfill the demands of their students as well as the contemporary culture and perception of discipline itself, schools across the nation have been focusing on the necessity to modify the manner of discipline used. While some institutions are "stuck in the mud" or uncertain about how to improve, others are proactive and implementing these much-needed changes. While

some schools are still using the traditional, reactive strategy, these changes have steered them toward the restorative approach, which is proactive (Jones, 2019).

For teachers in primary and secondary schools, maintaining order in the classroom and maintaining student discipline are among their top priorities. Without rules, disruptive and disobedient students take over courses, making it difficult for the teacher to concentrate on teaching (Ulla, 2016). However, physical punishment has drawn attention from all across the world because it puts children at risk for abuse and has repercussions for children's rights (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). It occurs when individuals use physical force, public humiliation, or threats to alter a child's behavior.

Punitive school discipline has been linked repeatedly to consequences like decreased student academic performance, reduced educational achievement, and pushout or pullout into the criminal justice system (Duarte et al., 2023). This is why positive discipline is used in classroom management.

In Tartari's (2018) study about the effects of positive discipline on students' learning processes in Albania, the types of positive and negative relationships that teachers use in the classroom environment were identified through data analysis. It was discovered that positive relationships had a positive impact on the students' academic success. Also, it was observed that good forms of discipline were more prevalent in primary education while negative kinds were more prevalent in secondary education. Since this relationship promotes student learning by influencing their education with morals and constructive concepts for a healthy society, it is advised that teachers create a positive climate of collaboration in the classroom by engaging in as many positive discipline techniques as possible.

Public school teachers in the Philippines, however, spoke out against a bill in Congress that supported constructive discipline as opposed to punitive discipline. In the study of Trinidad (2022) about Filipino teachers' resistance in positive discipline, he found out that teachers argued against the law on the basis of their concern. Some of the teachers' worries are justified, particularly those that concern their employment security and their lack of preparation for using positive discipline (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2016). In this particular instance, it is argued that positive discipline poses a threat to societal stability because it will result in permissive behavior and possibly

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criminal conduct. However, this result is in contrary to the Department Order No. 40, series of 2012, which was released by the Department of Education, forbids the use of corporal punishment and encourages the use of positive discipline. In fact, the Department of Education (DepEd) supports the ban on corporal punishment and the use of positive discipline in both public and private schools (DepEd, 2012).

In the educational process, positive discipline is crucial. Its goal is to produce an environment that is conducive to learning. Positive discipline involves more than just abstaining from punishment and upholding a child's fundamental rights. Additionally, it guarantees a set of pedagogical tools designed to support children's development, arm them with knowledge, enable them to reach their full potential, and get them ready to lead happy, fulfilling lives (Tartari, 2018). Reducing punishment in the classroom and putting more emphasis on good behavior helps pupils learn because they thrive in a positive learning environment (Stevens, 2018). The teachers' implementation of positive discipline and creating a positive learning environment is the purpose of conducting this study. It also wants to explore the experiences of the teachers on their challenges, coping mechanisms and their insights of implementing positive discipline as classroom management especially in students' behavior and its impact to students learning.

2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of the teachers in enforcing positive discipline to the learners of Babak District, Division of Island Garden City of Samal (IGACOS). In addition, the researcher wanted also to delve into the teachers' approaches and strategies used in enforcing positive discipline in the classroom and these approaches helped students have a safe and motivating learning environment.

The researcher also investigated the challenges that the teachers encounter in enforcing positive discipline as part of classroom management and also their ways in overcoming these challenges. Furthermore, this study aimed to look for other insights of the teachers in the application of positive discipline and how it improves learners' welfare and development.

A. Research Questions

This study aimed to explore the experiences of the teachers in enforcing positive discipline to the learners of Babak District, Division of Island Garden City of Samal (IGACOS) as part of classroom management. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of teachers in enforcing positive discipline in the classroom?
2. How do the teachers cope with the challenges they encountered in enforcing positive discipline in the classroom?
3. What are the insights of teachers in enforcing positive discipline in the classroom?

3. Methods

In the present investigation, I made use of a qualitative research design, more specifically a phenomenological method of inquiry. According to Creswell (2015), the goal of qualitative research was to investigate and comprehend the significance of a social or human phenomena that was experienced by an individual or a group of individuals. The primary objective of this research design was to inquire about the lived experiences and perspectives of the participants in the study.

I followed some criteria in selecting the participants such as: (a) the participants must be holding a permanent position at least Teacher I in public elementary schools at Babak District, Division of IGACOS; (b) they were assigned as classroom advisers; (c) these teachers had experienced various challenges enforcing positive discipline in the classroom; (d) they were composed of either male or female teachers; and (e) they were not members of any ethnic minority or Indigenous People (IP) group and were willing to participate in this study. These participants had undergone in-depth interviews.

This research utilized data coding and thematic analysis in analyzing the data. The purpose of qualitative research was to investigate and comprehend the significance of a social or human phenomenon encountered by an individual or group (Creswell, 2015). The primary objective of this research design was to solicit the lived experiences and insights of study participants. In qualitative research, the most distinctive aspect was data analysis. Data analysis involved a number of distinct methods and procedures. Through the organization of data into comprehensive information units, patterns, categories, and themes are being developed (Creswell, 2014). It was the process of organizing, structuring, and deriving meaning from collected data (Polit & Beck, 2010).

4. Results and Discussions

A. Experiences of Teachers in Enforcing Positive Discipline in the Classroom

After analyzing the responses of the participants about their experiences in enforcing positive discipline in the classroom, they shared three emerging themes namely promoting positive discipline, supporting children's development, and collaborating among stakeholders.

1) Promoting Positive Discipline

Positive guidance and discipline are essential for children because they foster self-control, instill a sense of responsibility, and enable them to make considerate decisions. The less time and effort will be spent rectifying misbehavior the more effective adult caregivers are at encouraging appropriate child behavior. Positive discipline steers children away from peril, exemplifies self-control, and teaches them how to make wise decisions. In addition, it fosters positive relationships between children and caregivers, which boosts their self-esteem and confidence.

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positive discipline is used in classroom management.

In Tartari's (2018) study on the impact of positive discipline on students' learning processes in Albania, data analysis revealed the types of positive and negative relationships teachers employ in the classroom. The findings showed that positive relationships positively affected students' academic success. Additionally, good discipline practices were more common in primary education, whereas negative practices were more frequent in secondary education. To promote student learning through moral and constructive concepts for a healthy society, it is recommended that teachers foster a collaborative and positive classroom environment by utilizing as many positive discipline techniques as possible.

2) *Supporting Children's Development*

Teachers who practice positive parenting respect their students' emotions and listen to their concerns and opinions. This teaches the child empathy and kindness toward other children. When teachers establish rules and repercussions, students learn to make sound decisions. Consistently applying positive discipline is one of the most essential things you can do to promote your child's healthy growth. Positive discipline aims to instruct your child in socially acceptable behavior. Positive discipline is essential because it fosters your child's self-control, teaches him to accept responsibility for his actions, and encourages him to treat himself and others with care.

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However, reducing punishment in the classroom and putting more emphasis on good behavior helps pupils learn because they thrive in a positive learning environment (Stevens, 2018). The teachers' implementation of positive discipline and creating a positive learning environment is the purpose of conducting this study. It also wants to explore the experiences of the teachers on their challenges, coping mechanisms and their insights of implementing positive discipline as classroom management especially in students' behavior and its impact to students learning.

3) *Collaborating Among Stakeholders*

The role that stakeholders play in promoting effective student discipline is highly important and cannot be understated. By conducting polls and surveys, you may find out the requirements, concerns, and thoughts that parents and teachers have about engagement and partnership. To promote involvement from a wide variety of families, you should create rules and legislation that are family friendly. It is important to provide ongoing professional development for teachers in schools about the involvement of families and communities with schools.

Teachers, school administrators, students, and parents are all very concerned about the complicated subject of classroom discipline. The public and media pay close attention to the

problem as well. There are several explanatory models of classroom behavior and discipline that have been developed by researchers in disciplines like psychology, economics, school administration, and sociology. One of the hardest and most complicated issues in schools today is poor classroom management or a lack of discipline. Both new teachers and more seasoned educators as well as school officials are nonetheless concerned about this issue. Many articles, statements, and other materials have been written or spoken about this issue by educators, parents, philosophers, and other interested parties. Discipline has been employed in a wide variety of contexts (Tarman, 2016).

According to the researcher's findings from the comparative study of Sharaf (2021) conducted in two schools in Cairo with different socioeconomic backgrounds, extensive and ongoing capacity development efforts are required to support the implementation of positive discipline that will affect the school culture, stakeholders' perceptions of the effectiveness of positive discipline in various contexts, and students' academic performance at all levels.

B. *Coping Mechanisms of Teachers with the Challenges in Enforcing Positive Discipline in the Classroom*

After analyzing the answers of the participants about their coping mechanisms adopted with the challenges encountered in enforcing positive discipline in the classroom, the following were the emerging themes modifying discipline used, maintaining student discipline and recognizing the role of parents in child discipline.

1) *Modifying Discipline Used*

Direct instruction in modifying the discipline used in the classroom is very important. The level of enthusiasm in the classroom is elevated when there is a degree of uncertainty present. The method of direct education entails beginning each and every session by providing the students with specific information about the next activities. The lesson begins with the instructor providing an overview of the activities that the students and he will participate in during this time. He could impose time constraints on certain responsibilities. Include some free time at the conclusion of the term for students to engage in activities of their choice. This is an efficient method for combining the first strategy with the other approaches.

For many years, the issue of school discipline has been debated, with a variety of approaches and procedures being used to address issues that arise in various ways. In order to fulfill the demands of their students as well as the contemporary culture and perception of discipline itself, schools across the nation have been focusing on the necessity to modify the manner of discipline used. While some institutions are "stuck in the mud" or uncertain about how to improve, others are proactive and implementing these much-needed changes. While some schools are still using the traditional, reactive strategy, these changes have steered them toward the restorative approach, which is proactive (Jones, 2019).

The results of research are (1) student achievement level through behavior modification approach included in category good enough; and (2) there is an improvement of student

achievement through behavior modification approach (Gunawan *et al.*, 2018). Likewise, according to the findings of the present meta-analysis, academic interventions can have positive academic and behavioral outcomes. This study found that interventions designed to improve academic skills, such as instruction in the skill, modulating the difficulty of the task, or providing contingent reinforcement for academic performance, also had positive effects on observable behavior difficulties. Positive effects were observed for both increasing time on task and decreasing disruptive behavior, although the effect for the former was more pronounced. The most effective interventions for influencing behavioral outcomes were those administered one-on-one (Warmbold-Brann *et al.*, 2017).

2) *Maintaining Student Discipline*

It has been a traditional objective of all teachers to assist their pupils in self-regulating their conduct in ways that are conducive to learning. Be familiar with the school's policies and processes regarding punishment. Show the pupils that you care about them. Determine along with the class what kinds of behaviors and levels of accomplishment are acceptable and what kinds are not acceptable. Be interested in what students have to say, regardless of whether or not what they have to say is directly relevant to the lesson.

For teachers in primary and secondary schools, maintaining order in the classroom and maintaining student discipline are among their top priorities. Without rules, disruptive and disobedient students take over courses, making it difficult for the teacher to concentrate on teaching (Ulla, 2016).

However, physical punishment has drawn attention from all across the world because it puts children at risk for abuse and has repercussions for children's rights (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). It occurs when individuals use physical force, public humiliation, or threats to alter a child's behavior.

3) *Recognizing the Role of Parents in Child Discipline*

In this capacity, parents provide guidance, impose rules, employ discipline, set limits, establish and enforce consequences, hold their children accountable for their conduct, and instill values. They provide the guidance that aids in the development, growth, and maturation of your children. Teaching their infant responsible behavior and self-control constitutes discipline. The child will learn about consequences and take responsibility for his or her actions if he or she is subjected to appropriate and consistent discipline. The ultimate goal is to teach the infant how to manage their emotions and behavior.

When parents take an active role in their children's education, it may have a positive impact on their children's self-control, sense of self-worth, cognitive development, capacity for social interaction, and overall academic performance. As evidenced by the majority of respondents (66.67 percent of parents and 62.50% of teachers), it is abundantly evident that parents need to be active in fostering student discipline in order for it to be successful. It was determined that the development of interventions with the goal of harmonizing parental and teacher evaluations in some activities connected to primary school education would be advantageous in the process of developing child discipline and character education. According to Ismail

(2018), the findings of this research also have consequences for the care and safety of children.

Similarly, the parents must also be educated on their roles through seminars, meetings, and workshops. By actively involving parents in student discipline issues in schools, school administrators must also promote the open perspective of the balance theory (Imbogo & Flora, 2018).

C. *Insights of Teachers in Enforcing Positive Discipline in the Classroom*

This section discussed the insights of teachers in enforcing positive discipline in the classroom. The responses of the participants yielded three emerging themes namely promoting an increase in academic performance, establishing effective classroom management, and providing professional development.

1) *Promoting an Increase in Academic Performance*

The researcher acknowledges that discipline is an essential component of human conduct and maintains that an organization's ability to work effectively toward the accomplishment of its objectives is severely hindered in the absence of discipline among its members. A student is considered to be disciplined within the framework of an educational system if their behaviors, actions, and inactions are in accordance with the rules and regulations that have been established by the educational institution. However, discipline ideally entails the learner's ability to distinguish between right and wrong in addition to adherence to rules and regulations. It is widely acknowledged that discipline is essential for fostering a positive school environment conducive to strong academic performance. It is a fundamental requirement for effective teaching and learning in schools and a concern for educators.

Weli and Nnaa (2020) looked into how discipline affected pupils' academic achievement in Rivers State's public junior secondary schools. According to the study, providing students with clear rules and holding them accountable for following them will have a big impact on their academic performance. It also cautioned that using corporal punishment on students will have a big impact on discipline and boost high levels of academic performance. It was suggested that a system be developed by head of schools wherein community members from best performing secondary schools have the chance to regularly meet with community members from least performing schools to exchange experiences on discipline-related issues in relation to academic performance. Since students are the intended beneficiaries of school rules and academic interventions, school management must find ways to involve the students more in matters relating to the formulation and implementation of school rules and regulations for an effective non-oppressive school discipline. Their mutual understanding can be expected to aid both sides in looking into and acting upon the variables that weaken their side.

According to Salina (2022)'s study on the impact of discipline on students' academic achievement, discipline in Kenya's primary public schools has a moderately favorable association with and is responsible for variation in academic performance. This suggests that when a student's level of

discipline rises, so does their academic achievement. Academic achievement among the students varies, with 37.7% performing below average (i.e., scoring less than half of possible total score in school examinations). The students' levels of discipline also vary, with 5.6% having little discipline, 26.2% having moderate discipline, 50.6% having strong discipline, and 17.6% having extremely high discipline. The students' academic performance and degree of discipline need to be improved.

2) *Establishing Effective Classroom Management*

Effective classroom management may help minimize disruptive student conduct, create clear standards for how students should behave, and make it simpler for teachers to impart their knowledge. Management of a classroom involves much more than just keeping order in the classroom; it also entails cultivating an environment that is conducive to learning, confirming the students' learning objectives, and assessing how effectively they are learning. In addition, classroom management is often considered an essential component of teaching due to the fact that it contributes to the development of environments that are most conducive to learning.

In her study on enhancing classroom management and discipline, Wamilda (2019) said that when positive reinforcement was used and regular plans were created with the kids' interests in mind, the pupils were less tense. As the penalty and demotivation were lessened and their opinions were acknowledged, they were more attentive in class. She found that respecting pupils' perspectives, using positive reinforcement instead of punishment, and maintaining discipline were all very helpful.

Likewise, in his study on the use of positive discipline as classroom management, Stevens (2018) discovered that all five teachers highlighted the rewards they use—or don't use—in their classrooms when asked how they employ good discipline. Despite the fact that positive discipline has a wide range of elements, all five teachers solely discussed rewards when discussing it in place of offering students choices, utilizing consequences to teach, and teaching students how to solve problems. However, the principal contrasted this by saying that a proper disciplinary system ought to include teaching opportunities. When a student misbehaves, they should be given the chance to apologize and for an adult to explain why the behavior was inappropriate. She intoned that these are excellent teaching opportunities. She concentrated on the educational opportunities that can arise when a child misbehaves rather than the rewards or penalties for misconduct. Children learn and develop from their mistakes when they are given these teaching opportunities, which are a key element of positive discipline. Additionally, it teaches pupils how to make wiser decisions in the future.

3) *Providing Professional Development for Teachers*

The administration of the classroom exercises authority over the pupils from outside the classroom. Leadership in the classroom gives pupils the ability to control their emotions from inside themselves. Teaching is the finest method to educate oneself. And learning by doing is the most effective method of instruction. Training leading to certification in Positive Discipline should be made available by DepEd for parent

educators, teachers, early childhood educators, and any other professionals working in the helping professions.

In his study on how teachers see discipline in the classroom, Mitchell (2019) concluded that public schools need to do more to better prepare teachers for the problems of student discipline and comprehend teachers' viewpoints on policy creation. More research, professional development, and training must be provided to teachers in order to move student discipline and justice from a reactive response to a behavioral incident to a proactive whole school understanding of community accountability. This is similar to how schools approach curriculum and instruction. This dedication to development and training is made possible in large part by the voice and expertise of the teachers, who serve as the frontline authorities on discipline.

5. Implications and Future Directions

A. *Implications*

Actions taken or not taken to control behavior are examples of discipline. Controlling oneself or others, especially under trying situations, and adhering honestly and strictly to laws, norms, and cultural standards and values is self-control. Discipline provides support, advice, and direction in order to manage behavior in order to teach appropriate behaviors and unlearn maladaptive ones. It's all about building a life that is regular, predictable, and stable via the establishment of limitations and the establishment of clear roles, duties, and mutual expectations.

Students may learn and modify their behaviors to better fulfill the objectives of the classroom via the use of positive discipline, which also teaches them how to make better decisions as adults. Among the available options is spending some time to think in depth about oneself and one's life in order to get a more grounded perspective on a problem.

Discipline influences the learning process by creating a stress-free environment for allocating time to various activities, improving planning by observing and maintaining a set daily routine, shaping learner character and boosting their motivation, facilitating the setting of good examples, and positively contributing to better grades. When constructing models of academic performance, it is necessary to take test anxiety, environment, motivation, and emotions into account. Multiple studies have demonstrated a correlation between the discipline of students and their academic performance, with the latter increasing as discipline levels rise.

Although educational institutions have a responsibility to enforce the rules or code of conduct governing learner conduct, parents also play a role in ensuring consistency. Home influences aspects such as dress code, hairstyles, and fundamental decorum. Parents and educators, particularly institution leaders, are two pillars with a significant impact on the development of students. If discipline is not addressed at a young age, attaining quality education with complete learner impact will remain difficult. Therefore, if students at all levels are disciplined, they will acquire the necessary knowledge and skills with relative ease because they are focused and self-

motivated.

Despite their hectic work schedules, parents should invest time with their children to discuss a variety of topics, including discipline. There is also a growing need to strengthen guidance and counseling in schools in order to assist students in attaining predetermined values. An infant or adolescent with strong social and spiritual discipline has an excellent chance of academic success. Self-discipline is the most essential discipline, which the learner should cultivate by setting standards and determining how far they can go despite numerous obstacles. At the height of COVID-19, when schools are closed and parental supervision is in effect, self-discipline will play a crucial role in assuring the continuation of education.

Finally, the advantages of successful classroom management extend to academic-related results, including a reduction in disruptive behaviors and an increase in academic learning and engagement among students. Professional development opportunities for classroom management may be made available to teachers and school staff via local education agencies as well as schools themselves.

B. Future Directions of the Study

Positive and Non-Violent Discipline of Children is a style of thinking as well as a method of teaching that is holistic, constructive, and proactive. It assists children in developing acceptable thinking and behavior in the short as well as long term and encourages self-discipline.

The DepEd may intensify the implementation of Child Protection Policy in schools. Children need both constructive advice and punishment in order to develop self-control, learn responsibility, and develop the ability to make choices that are mindful of their consequences. The more efficient adult caregivers are in encouraging proper child conduct, the less time and effort they will have to spend correcting inappropriate behavior on the part of the children in their care.

As a researcher, I may also recommend that this be conducted with school administrators and other interested parties to determine whether or not positive classroom discipline has had observable long-term effects. It fosters a sense of purpose and belonging among the community's youth. It will continue to be beneficial over time. It provides useful social and life skills that are essential to developing good character. It encourages youngsters to investigate their capabilities and find positive outlets for the strength that they possess inside themselves.

For the benefit of our dear teachers, a focus group discussion may be used as a mechanism for obtaining data on the experiences of teachers in enforcing positive discipline in the classroom. Focus group discussions (FGDs) are done to provide more reliable and valid research findings about the focus of the study.

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