



Positive Reinforcement Practices and Self-Resiliency of Grade Six Students

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author MRRL designed the proposal and facilitated the conduct of the study. Author ATB performed the data analysis, wrote the protocol reviewed and managed the related literature relevant to the study and served as the editor of the entire article. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/AJESS/2020/v12i230306

Editor(s):

(1) Dr. Nasser Mustapha, University of the West Indies, Trinidad.

(2) Dr. E. Seda Koc, Namik Kemal University, Turkey.

Reviewers:

(1) Fayyaz Ahmad Faize, COMSATS University, Pakistan.

(2) Orhan Karamustafaoğlu, Amasya University, Turkey.

Complete Peer review History: <http://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/62024>

Received 18 August 2020

Accepted 22 October 2020

Published 31 October 2020

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

Aims: To determine the teachers' positive reinforcement practices and its impact on the self-efficacy of Grade Six students in the selected elementary schools in Kiblawan District, Division of Davao del Sur.

Study Design: Descriptive-correlational research design.

Place and Duration of Study: Kiblawan South District, Division of Davao del Sur, School Year 2019-2020.

Methodology: The respondents of the study were the 188 Grade Six students at the 14 elementary schools of Kiblawan South District, Kiblawan, Davao del Sur. Moreover, random sampling technique was used wherein the 188 students were randomly selected out of 355 students through drawing of lots. Data were collected using self-made survey questionnaires which were validated by the experts. Data gathered were treated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

Results: Results of the study showed a high extent of positive reinforcement practices of teachers. A high level of self-efficacy of Grade six students was also noted. Statistical analysis further

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revealed a high and positive significant relationship between teachers' positive reinforcement practices and students self-resiliency. Thus, teachers' reinforcing initiatives were instrumental in increasing the ability of the students to adjust and cope up with the stressors more efficiently and effectively.

Keywords: Positive reinforcement practices; self-resiliency; grade six; students Kiblawan; Davao del Sur.

1. INTRODUCTION

The world is now facing different challenges especially in the field of education, globally, internationally and even locally. The series of ordeals continue to confront the resilience and composure of the people, including the children despite their young age. Several children suffer from emotional and physical trauma before they are ready to handle these challenges efficiently.

In an internal arena, large numbers of children face poverty, malnutrition, physical and emotional abuse at home, bullying at school, and countless other types of adversity. Individual and family circumstances play a large role in whether children face these risks. However, children use nearly as much time in school the same as they engage in their home and community. School is a critical component in a child's life, and where a large part of growing emotionally, socially, and cognitively, takes place. When a child exerts too much effort outside of school, the effects can expand into their school experience, and vice-versa.

Schools across the countries have progressed in their ability to meet many children's needs early with movements. Supplementary effort has been laid on the school surroundings itself, both in terms of how children recognize their school, as well as student-student relationships and student-adult relationships. This push for a more positive school climate has numerous benefits [1;2]. A focus on building resiliency in students is an important measure and preventative action to help buffer children against the hardships that they face both inside and outside the school can significantly increase their chances of becoming vigorous and proficient adults, in spite of the risks and challenges they are into. Being resilient is a very important factor that will enable students to maintain balance in different setting including class situations.

One way to ensure the students' resilience is to encourage learners through positive reinforcement. Through teachers' reinforcement,

students can acquire the skills of self-monitoring, managing their time, setting goals, and self-evaluating. Students can be taught to maintain appropriate behaviours and techniques that can be used to future their overall education goal [3]. Eventually, teachers do not need to regularly offer treats to stimulate behaviour. Students will eventually perceive the reward as not being the driving force of their efforts- and see their grades as the main imperative force of their efforts. Nevertheless, a student can have the best motivation when it comes to academic success, but the overall demeanour of the classroom can predict the outcome of the students. Teachers who fail to integrate effective management in their repertoire will spend more time addressing the behaviour issues than teaching the content. A teacher's ability to shape appropriate classroom behaviour while extinguishing misbehaviour is critical to the learning environment for both students and teachers in the education system. Positive reinforcement strategies are more effective than punishing strategies for increasing and shaping positive behaviour and resilience of students in any learning environment [4]. Therefore, through positively reinforcing students' acceptable behaviours, whether academic or social, the students and the teacher benefit academically, behaviourally, socially, and emotionally.

In the Philippines, Republic Act 10533, Section 5 mandated the Department of Education to adhere to the standards and principles in developing the enhanced basic education curriculum, that it must be learner-centred, inclusive and developmentally appropriate. Along with this perspective, DepEd is committed in providing a quality system of education that prepares learners for productive participation in the Filipino society. This involves providing schools with teachers who are cable and able to help students develop the positive attitude and abilities that a resilient student possess [5].

Elementary school students in Kiblawan South District are not free from the challenges and predicaments experienced in the local

environment. They were also affected with the results of the series of local calamities recently felt which created fear and panic feeling on them. Despite all these, students still strived harder to continue with their studies and comply with the school requirements given. These could be enough evidences to say that students, despite all problems encountered, remained tough and resilient amidst all the trials. Students' resilience may be attributed to the concerted efforts of the schools more particularly the teachers in providing positive measures towards ameliorating the difficulties that children face to help them become more resilient in any situation. Positive reinforcements were given to motivate young learners to focus and hold on to their studies. Thus, this study was conducted to validate whether the positive reinforcement practices of teachers had made an impact on the self-resilience of the Grade Six students. Specifically, this study aimed to:

1. Determine the extent of positive reinforcement practices of teachers when analyzed according to these indicators:
 - 1.1 natural reinforcers;
 - 1.2 token reinforcers;
 - 1.3 social reinforcers;
2. Determine the level of self-resiliency of students when analysed according to these indicators:
 - 2.1 Self-awareness
 - 2.2 Self-regulation
 - 2.3 Strength of Character
3. Identify whether there is significant relationship positive reinforcement practices of teachers and self-resiliency of Grade Six students.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Positive Reinforcement

In behavioral science, positive reinforcement refers to the noteworthy practice of teachers in classroom. This is reinforced among the students to strengthen their behavior whereby a reward is offered as an expression of appreciation of a job well done [6]. The rewarding stimuli are associated with recognition of the desired behavior, done to ensure that the students become more motivated to do better. Three of the indicators involved are: (1) natural reinforcers as reinforcers that occur directly as a result of the behavior (e.g., a student studies hard and does well on her exams, resulting in good grades); (2) token reinforcers as those that

are awarded for performing particular behaviors and can be replaced for something of value (e.g., parents devise a reward system in which the child earns stars, points, or some other token that they can save up and turn in for a reward); and (3) social reinforcers as those that engage others in expressing their approval of a behavior (e.g., a teacher, parent, or employer saying, "Good job!" or "Excellent work!") [7].

Positive reinforcement is regularly given to successfully teach students age suitable behaviors and social skills when these behaviors and skills are deficient, as these deficits can produce disturbance in the classroom. Positive reinforcement is a reward instantaneously given after a desired behavior in order to make that behavior more likely to happen again in the future. A study conducted [8] revealed that teachers can improve their overall classroom atmosphere, aside from increasing constructive interactions with students by effectively employing positive reinforcement, including praise.

Students can be taught with proper attitude and behaviours by establishing classroom routines, modeling appropriate and behaviors, and providing naturally occurring reinforcement in order to improve class atmosphere [9]. Positive reinforcement reinforcement as an efficient method for improving behavior of students has been documented by a study on variety of school conditions for both individual students and groups of students [10].

A research previously conducted stated that scholastic failure, societal rejection, drug abuse, and unlawful activity in adulthood are some of possible long-term, negative outcomes of students' problematic behaviors. Teachers have the chance to make use of positive reinforcement to lessen the occurrence of negative interactions and possibly decrease the probability of these long-term outcomes [11].

2.2 Self -Resiliency of Students

Resilience refers to the *process of becoming*, which children recognize once they acquire a strong certainty about their purpose of existence in the world. When students think that they are worthy and competent of conquering challenges, they turn out to be resilient [12].

On other hand, academic resilience is defined as an increased likelihood of academic success

despite environmental adversities [13]. Resilient students are those who have a strong sense of responsibility and continue to uphold high achievement motivation even when challenged with stressful situation that place them at risk of poor performance [14; 15].

Result of a study reported that both resilience and emotional intelligence are predictors of students' coping at school [16]. Furthermore, it was also reported that higher perceived stress, anxiety and depression in low resilience medical students following completion of a major professional examination [17].

A study on resilience found that resilient students are good in social skills, possess positive self-esteem and positive sense of the future, provide support to mentors or peers, and execute well in school [18]. Research on resilience also supported the notion that students' resilience may increase when they are taught with certain life/social skills [19; 20]. Although children are inherently vulnerable, they also possess a determination to survive and grow [21]. Researchers also agreed that resilient behaviors can be learned and then applied and practiced until they turn into internal strengths [22].

The term self-resiliency is further elaborated as the ability to recover and get better in the face of adversity. An interesting exercise in building resiliency called "putting it in perspective" is through the following steps: have a list of the current scenario; worst case belief; how likely would this event happen; best case belief; most likely outcome and probable solution [23].

There are different resilience competencies that are being identified in an article that should be used and developed to ensure good resilience skills. By being aware of and using these resilience competencies, challenges that occur in your life can be solved easier and significantly less problems will occur. Among these are: (1) self-awareness as the ability to identify one's own thoughts, emotions and behaviours; (2) self-regulation as the ability to regulate thoughts, actions, and emotions; and (3) strengths of character as having the knowledge of top character strengths and knowing how to use them [24].

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in Kiblawan South District, Division of Davao del Sur. The topography of several schools was characterized

as slightly mountainous areas except for Kiblawan Central Elementary Schools which was located at the epicentre of the municipality. All the schools were energized, complete with school buildings, gymnasium, school learning centres and were all accessible to any land transportation.

The respondents of the study were the 188 Grade Six students at the 14 elementary schools of Kiblawan South District, Kiblawan, Davao del Sur who were enrolled in School Year 2019-2020. Moreover, random sampling technique was used wherein the 188 students were randomly selected out of 355 students through drawing of lots. Moreover, descriptive-correlational method was used in this study. Positive reinforcement of teachers and self-resiliency of students were analysed, and subjected into statistical treatment to find out if a correlation exists between them.

Data were collected using self-made survey questionnaires which were validated by the experts. Data gathered were treated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Extent of Positive Reinforcement Practices of Teachers

The extent of positive reinforcement practices of teachers is shown in Table 1. Results show the overall means obtained per indicator: natural reinforcers, social reinforcers and, token reinforcers.

In terms of natural reinforcers, the mean of 4.21 was obtained with a descriptive equivalent of *high*. This means that the teachers oftentimes practiced the provision of natural reinforcement to students such as maintaining an environment of courtesy and respect of diversities and differences; showing patience and fairness among students; letting the students interact with their peers in group activities; and presenting and giving various challenging activities that are adaptable in any learning environment. This result is in support to the notion that educators can condition a natural consequence as a reinforcer by using certain additional strategies. It was recommended that educators must eradicate or trim down the instances that can interfere with the students' observations of the intrinsic consequences of his or her behaviour.

Care should be taken in the selection of reinforcers and their deliverance to the students [25].

In terms of token reinforcers, the mean obtained was 3.90 which is described as *high*. This signifies a high extent of positive reinforcement from teachers. Often, the teacher recognized good works of students by providing tokens such as praises, chocolates, biscuits or other foods, certificates, and medals and ribbons. Tokens have been effective in reducing problem behaviour and for increasing positive behaviour in a variety of subjects under a variety of different conditions and with multiple behaviours. Tokens have been used successfully for different behaviours such as remaining in seat, increasing attention, increasing appropriate verbalizations and social skills, and increasing self-help skills, decreasing inappropriate call-outs in class, decreasing aggressive behaviours, decreasing disruptive behaviours within class, increasing academic behaviours such as completing homework assignments, increasing test performance, increasing academic engaged time and academic performance, and increasing academic accuracy [26].

In terms of social reinforcers, the mean of 4.06 which is described as *high* was obtained. Results indicate that the teachers oftentimes respected the potentials and uniqueness of students; grouped students heterogeneously to promote unity; applied varied strategies for individual and cooperative learning; and appreciated every student's foundation of achievement. These teachers' strategies supported that social reinforcement could provide a long lasting mark among students because it enables students to voice out their learning difficulties to their peers without fear of humiliation [27]. These interventions have successfully increased peers' interactions with their classmates with ID and suggest some positive outcome for peers [28].

Further, the study obtained an overall mean rating of 4.06 which is described as *high*. This

implies that teacher often reinforces the positive behaviour of students by providing a variety of reinforcers that could motivate them in maintaining a desirable performance in the class. It is important for teachers to highly practice positive reinforcement for this helps students learn behaviors necessary to be successful academically and socially [29].

4.2 Level of Self-Resiliency of Grade Six Students

Table 2 indicates the level of self-resiliency of Grade six students in terms of self-awareness, self-regulation, and strength of character. In terms of self-awareness, the mean of 3.88 was obtained with a descriptive equivalent of *high*. This means that Grade Six students oftentimes exhibited self-confidence, willingness to help and assist others who are encountering difficulties, accountability in dealing with varied types of group members, and sympathy towards other students' feelings. This implies that students highly possess the ability to see themselves clearly and objectively through reflection and introspection. This result agreed that self-awareness is necessary to be possessed by the students for them to have better understanding of themselves as unique and separate individuals [30]. Moreover, self-awareness allows students to see things from the perspective of others; practice self-control and better decision-making; work creatively and productively together with other students; and establish self-confidence in communicating with others in the class [31].

The indicator self-regulation obtained the mean score of 3.84, described as *high*. This implies that students oftentimes establish rapport with other students; show flexibility and adjusted one's behaviour within in the group; ensure good behaviour in the midst of other group members; show cooperation; and respect other's beliefs during classroom activities. Conversely, connection among students is essential to promote a positive classroom experience. Connecting with others can greatly improve the communication skills of the students [32].

Table 1. Extent of positive reinforcement practices of teachers in Kiblawan South District

Positive Reinforcement Practices	Mean	SD	Description
Natural Reinforcers	4.21	0.06	High
Token Reinforcers	3.90	0.17	High
Social Reinforcers	4.06	0.12	High
Overall Mean	4.06	0.12	High

Table 2. Level of self-resiliency of grade six students in Kiblawan South District

Areas	Mean	SD	Description
Self –awareness	3.88	0.15	High
Self –regulation	3.84	0.11	High
Strength of Character	3.80	0.07	High
Total	3.84	0.11	High

Table 3. Relationship between the extent of positive reinforcement practices of teachers and the level of self-resiliency of grade six students

Area	Pearson <i>R</i>	p value	Significance $\alpha = 0.05$
Extent of Positive Reinforcement Practices of Teachers			
Level of Self-resiliency of Grade Six students	0.807	<0.0001	Significant
$r^2=0.6512$			

In terms of strength of character, the mean score of 3.80 was obtained which was descriptively defined as *high*. This implies that students oftentimes exhibited leadership in doing group tasks; influence to others to do the best they can; inspires group mates to finish once assigned tasks on time; leads in assigned task and ensures that outputs are accomplished very well and manage oneself and others in doing group tasks. Additionally, promoting character strengths has the potential to improve inquisitiveness, self control and academic achievements [33].

The over-all mean score is 3.84 which was described as *high*. This implies that the level of self-resiliency of students is often exhibited inside the classroom. Students highly possessed the ability to cope up with varied difficulties and be able to pull through amidst stressors. This result supported the notion that students' resilience may increase when they are praised [34] and taught with certain life/social skills [19; 20]. Although children are inherently vulnerable, they also possess a determination to survive and grow [21].

4.3 Significance on the Relationship between the Extent of Positive Reinforcement of Teachers and the Level of Self-Resiliency of Students

Table 3 expounds whether a significant relationship between the extent of positive reinforcement practices of teachers and the level of self-resiliency of Grade Six students exist.

Result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson *r*) test showed the *r*-value is 0.807 which denotes a high correlation, with marked relationship between variables. Further, the p-value of 0.001 which is lower than .05 level of significance was also revealed which indicates that evidences are sufficient to reject the null hypothesis. Hence, there is a significant relationship between the extent of positive reinforcement practices of teachers and the level of self-resiliency of Grade Six students. This result implies that a high correlation exists with marked positive and significant relationship between variables. This further implies that the positive reinforcement practices are instrumental in improving the level of self-resiliency of students and that positive reinforcement strongly influence the resilience of students in the class [6].

Moreover, r^2 value of 0.6512 indicates that about 65.12% of the variances on the level of self-efficacy of students is explained by the level of the variances on the extent of positive reinforcement practices of teachers. This implies that the positive reinforcement practices of teachers affected the self-resiliency of Grade Six students by 65.12%. Other 45% might be influenced by those of other factors that are not covered in the study.

Clearly, the researcher agreed that it is of prime importance that teachers extend extra effort in developing self-resiliency among young students. Resilience is likened into an antibody that enables young students to ward off attackers that might stop even the most formidable individual.

By fostering positive reinforcement, students' self-resiliency is enhanced. This result clearly supported to the notion that offering praise for students' work and efforts can encourage students to perform the difficult tasks and ability to bounce back in the face of academic setbacks and other difficulties [33].

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the relevant findings, it was concluded that there was a significant relationship between the extent of positive reinforcement practices of teachers and the level of self-efficacy of Grade Six students. Reinforcement initiatives of teachers were instrumental in increasing the ability of the students to adjust and cope up with the stressors more efficiently and effectively.

The study recommended that Schools Division officials may utilize the result by designing developmentally appropriate trainings and seminar that will help develop the positive reinforcement skills of teachers. Moreover, programs that will help the students to become more resilient always be may developed and implemented in elementary schools. School heads may encourage teachers to come up with a more focused, organised and detailed behaviour management plan that consistently utilizes positive reinforcement to motivate students to actively engage in class. In addition, teachers shall maintain an environment of courtesy and respect of diversities. They may provide differentiated activities that suits on the individual skills and talents of each students. They may also facilitate extra-curricular activities where students can show their talents without being hesitant to others to boost their self-confidence. Future researchers may conduct a study on the other factors influencing the self-resiliency of students which are not covered in this study.

ETHICAL APPROVAL AND CONSENT

To address the research ethics, the researchers conducted protocols to handle the confidentiality of the participants' identity and the information gathered. Consent letters were given to the participants to seek for their permissions before the conduct of the surveys. Respondents were also informed of their rights such as the 'withdrawal' and 'confidentiality clause.' Survey papers were kept by the researchers for safe-keeping and would be destroyed after two years.

The data obtained were used for research purposes only.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ON “POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT PRACTICES AND SELF-RESILIENCE OF STUDENTS”

NAME: (OPTIONAL) _____ GRADE: _____
 SCHOOL: _____

Part I. POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT PRACTICES OF TEACHERS					
DIRECTIONS: Read each statement carefully and check the level that you think your teacher manifests.					
5	Very High	-This means that the teacher <i>always practiced</i> everything expressed in the statement.			
4	High	-This means that the teacher <i>oftentimes practiced</i> the indicator expressed in the statement.			
3	Moderate	-This means the teacher <i>sometimes practiced</i> the indicator expressed in the statement.			
2	Low	This means the teacher <i>rarely practiced</i> the indicator expressed in the statement.			
1	Never	-This means the teacher <i>never practiced</i> the indicator expressed in the statement.			
A. NATURAL REINFORCERS			1	2	3
My teacher.....					
1. Maintains an environment of courtesy and respect of diversities and differences.					
2. Shows patient and fairness among students.					
3. Let the students interact with peers in every group activities.					
4. Provides different activities that will cater the differences of each student.					
5. Presents and gives various challenging activities that are adaptable in any learning environment.					
B. TOKEN REINFORCERS					
The Teacher.....					
1. Gives good praises in every good action the student did. (e.g very good, good job)					
2. Gives chocolates, biscuits or other foods for a good work done.					
3. Posts on the board the best works of the students for recognition.					
4. Awards students with certificates in every grading period.					
5. Gives medals and ribbons to students at the end of the school year.					
C. SOCIAL REINFORCERS					
The teacher.....					
1. Respects the potentials and uniqueness of each student.					
2. Groups the students heterogeneously to promote unity.					
3. Applies varied strategies for individual and					

cooperative learning					
4. Promotes new skills and encourage students to try new things.					
5. Appreciates the foundation of every student (e.g. tribal, family background).					

Part II. LEVEL OF SELF –RESILIENCY OF GRADE SIX STUDENTS

DIRECTIONS: Read each statement carefully and check the level that suits your self-efficacy as student.

5	Very High	-This means that you <i>always manifested</i> everything expressed in the statement.
4	High	-This means that you <i>often manifested</i> the indicator expressed in the statement.
3	Moderate	-This means that you <i>sometimes manifested</i> the indicator expressed in the statement.
2	Low	This means that you <i>rarely manifested</i> the indicator expressed in the statement.
1	Very low	-This means that you <i>never manifest</i> the indicator expressed in the statement.

A. SELF-AWARENESS	1	2	3	4	5
1. Exhibit self confidence					
2. Am responsible enough in dealing with varied types of group members					
3. Demonstrate courtesy and respect to others					
4. Am willing to teach others who have difficulties					
5. Show sympathy towards other students feelings					
B. SELF-REGULATION					
6. Establish rapport with other group members					
7. Adjust one's behavior within the group					
8. Show flexibility in different situation					
9. Cooperate with group mates during activities					
10. Respect others own beliefs					
C. STRENGTH OF CHARACTER					
11. Show leadership in every activity					
12. Influence others to do the best they can					
13. Am reliable in different kind of works.					
14. Am optimistic, believe that everything is possible					
15. Embrace changes					

Thank you!!!

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Peer-review history:
 The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
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