

The Impact of the Utilization of the Positive Discipline Strategies in Enhancing the Classroom Management Practices of the Key Stage 1 Teachers in the Public Elementary Schools in Ragay District I, Division of Camarines Sur

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
Article history: Published: August 2026 Keywords: Positive Discipline Classroom Management Key Stage 1 Nonviolent Discipline Philippines	Positive and nonviolent discipline is central to learner protection and supportive classroom management, but local implementation evidence is limited. This cross-sectional survey described positive-discipline strategies and perceived classroom-management practices among 97 Key Stage 1 teachers in 17 public elementary schools in Ragay District I, Division of Camarines Sur, Philippines, during School Year 2025-2026. A researcher-developed 102-item, five-point questionnaire covered five positive-discipline domains (57 items) and four classroom-management domains (45 items). Weighted means summarized ratings for big, medium, and small schools. Kendall's coefficient of concordance and study-reported chi-square statistics assessed consistency of item rankings; exact probabilities were recalculated. Positive-discipline strategies were rated very highly overall (M=4.78). Reinforcing desirable behavior ranked first (M=4.82), whereas establishing routine ranked fifth (M=4.72). Perceived classroom-management practices were also rated highly overall (M=4.59): grievance mechanism ranked first (M=4.76), while disciplining learners ranked last and was the only domain below 4.50 (M=4.47). Rank concordance was significant for setting classroom rules (W=.77, p=.010), establishing routine (W=.83, p=.004), creating a safe environment (W=.70, p=.017), communicating feelings (W=.78, p=.009), handling conflicts (W=.80, p=.008), teaching responsibility (W=.94, p=.001), disciplining learners (W=.65, p=.034), and grievance mechanism (W=.70, p=.021), but not for reinforcing desirable behavior (W=.49, p=.143). The pattern supports sustaining nonviolent, relational discipline while prioritizing routines, self-regulation, restorative responses, and consistent reinforcement. Because all outcomes were teacher self-reports collected at one time, the findings do not establish that positive-discipline practices caused classroom-management outcomes.

1. Introduction

Classroom management is not merely the suppression of disruption. In the early grades, it includes the routines, relationships, expectations, emotional supports, and instructional conditions that allow young learners to participate safely and productively. Evidence-based classroom-management practices commonly include clear expectations, active supervision, frequent opportunities to respond, specific acknowledgment, and consistent responses to inappropriate behavior.^{1,2} Well-designed classroom management can improve engagement, behavior, motivation, and academic outcomes, although effects depend on implementation quality and context.³ Positive discipline adds an explicit rights-based and developmental orientation. Rather than relying on humiliation, fear, or physical punishment, it seeks to teach self-regulation, responsibility, empathy, problem solving, and respectful participation. The approach combines firmness with dignity: expectations remain clear, but correction is educative and restorative. This distinction matters because corporal punishment is associated with adverse child outcomes across a large research base and across diverse national settings.^{4,5} In the Philippines, the Department of Education Child Protection Policy requires schools to protect learners from abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, and other forms of harm and to use positive and nonviolent discipline.⁶ The Anti-Bullying Act and its implementing rules reinforce school obligations to prevent, report, and respond to bullying.^{7,8} The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers further locate fair, respectful, and caring learning environments within professional practice.⁹ Positive discipline is therefore both a classroom-management approach and an institutional child-protection responsibility. Implementation is nevertheless complex. Teachers must establish predictable routines, communicate expectations, respond to conflict, teach responsibility, reinforce desirable conduct, and provide safe channels for learner concerns. Qualitative and intervention research indicates that classroom climate can improve when teachers receive structured support for relationship-based and proactive management, but training must be translated into consistent routines and situated judgment.^{10,11} High self-ratings alone do not demonstrate effectiveness; they identify perceptions and possible priorities for observation and professional learning.

1.1 Purpose and research questions

This study described positive-discipline strategies and teacher-perceived classroom-management practices among Key Stage 1 teachers in Ragay District I. It addressed four empirical questions and translated the results into an implementation agenda:

- To what extent were setting rules, establishing routines, creating a safe environment, communicating feelings, and reinforcing desirable behavior reported as utilized?
- How consistent were the rank orders of items within each positive-discipline domain?
- To what extent were handling conflicts, teaching responsibility, disciplining learners, and grievance mechanisms perceived as evident?
- How consistent were the rank orders of items within each classroom-management domain?
- What school- and district-level actions were supported by the observed pattern?

The study used the term impact; however, the design did not compare exposed and unexposed groups, model a predictor-outcome relationship, or measure change over time. The journal version therefore uses perceived classroom-management practices and does not make causal claims.

2. Methods

2.1 Research design and setting

The study described a descriptive-evaluative-correlational design. For journal reporting, it is characterized more precisely as a cross-sectional descriptive survey with exploratory rank-concordance analysis. Data were collected from public elementary schools in Ragay District I, Division of Camarines Sur, during School Year 2025-2026. The design supports description of teacher ratings and consistency of item rankings, but it does not support causal inference or a statistical claim that one construct enhanced the other.

2.2 Participants and sampling

The locale was selected purposively. Within the district, total enumeration was used: all 97 Key Stage 1 teachers in the 17 identified public elementary schools were included. The study grouped schools as big (4 schools; 39 teachers), medium (2 schools; 14 teachers), and small (11 schools; 44 teachers). Participants comprised 19 kindergarten teachers and 26 teachers in each of Grades 1, 2, and 3.

Table 1. Distribution of participating schools and Key Stage 1 teachers

School-size group	Schools	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Teachers	Share
Big	4	6	11	11	11	39	40.2%
Medium	2	2	4	4	4	14	14.4%
Small	11	11	11	11	11	44	45.4%
Total	17	19	26	26	26	97	100.0%

2.3 Instrument and response scale

A researcher-developed questionnaire was based on the research objectives, related literature, and education policies. Expert jurors drawn from the graduate faculty, the research adviser, and the Dean reviewed the instrument for clarity, relevance, and alignment. The final table of specifications reported 102 five-point items: 57 on utilization of positive-discipline strategies and 45 on classroom-management practices. The five response bands were 4.50-5.00 (Very Much Utilized/Evident), 3.50-4.49 (Much Utilized/Evident), 2.50-3.49 (Utilized/Evident), 1.50-2.49 (Fairly Utilized/Evident), and 1.00-1.49 (Not at All).

Table 2. Questionnaire structure

Construct	Domain	Items
Positive-discipline strategies	Setting classroom rules	11
	Establishing routine	12
	Creating a safe environment	12
	Communicating feelings	11
	Reinforcing desirable behavior	11
Classroom-management practices	Handling conflicts	11
	Teaching responsibility	12
	Disciplining learners	11
	Grievance mechanism	11

2.4 Statistical analysis

Frequencies and percentages described the sample. Weighted means summarized domain ratings on the 1-to-5 scale for big, medium, and small schools. Kendall's W summarized agreement in item rank orders within each domain. The thesis reports three respondent groups (school-size groups), and its chi-square transformation is consistent with $\chi^2 = m(k-1)W$, where $m=3$ groups and k is the number of items. Exact upper-tail probabilities were recalculated from the reported chi-square statistic and degrees of freedom using the chi-square distribution.¹⁴ Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha=.05$. The summary-table "average" values appear to average the three school-size group means equally; because the group sizes differ, they are reported here as study averages rather than respondent-weighted estimates.

3. Results

3.1 Reported utilization of positive-discipline strategies

All five domains were classified as Very Much Utilized. Reinforcing desirable behavior ranked first ($M=4.82$), followed by creating a safe environment ($M=4.81$), setting classroom rules ($M=4.79$), communicating feelings ($M=4.78$), and establishing routine ($M=4.72$). The study-reported overall average was 4.78. Big-school teachers reported the highest group mean ($M=4.81$), followed by small-school teachers ($M=4.79$) and medium-school teachers ($M=4.75$); these descriptive differences were not tested as independent group effects.

Table 3. Mean ratings for positive-discipline strategy domains

Domain	Big	Medium	Small	Average	Interpretation
Setting classroom rules	4.82	4.76	4.80	4.79	Very Much Utilized
Establishing routine	4.76	4.65	4.74	4.72	Very Much Utilized
Creating a safe environment	4.82	4.81	4.80	4.81	Very Much Utilized
Communicating feelings	4.82	4.73	4.80	4.78	Very Much Utilized
Reinforcing desirable behavior	4.85	4.80	4.80	4.82	Very Much Utilized
Overall	4.81	4.75	4.79	4.78	Very Much Utilized

Item-level contrasts identified practical priorities. Highest and lowest items, respectively, were: simple rules (M=4.91) and modeling adherence (M=4.67); learner participation in routines (M=4.89) and clear routine instructions (M=4.55); physical classroom safety (M=4.94) and avoiding punitive approaches (M=4.55); encouraging expression of feelings (M=4.91) and using positive language to address behavior (M=4.62); and immediate feedback on good behavior (M=4.91) and encouraging self-discipline (M=4.72).

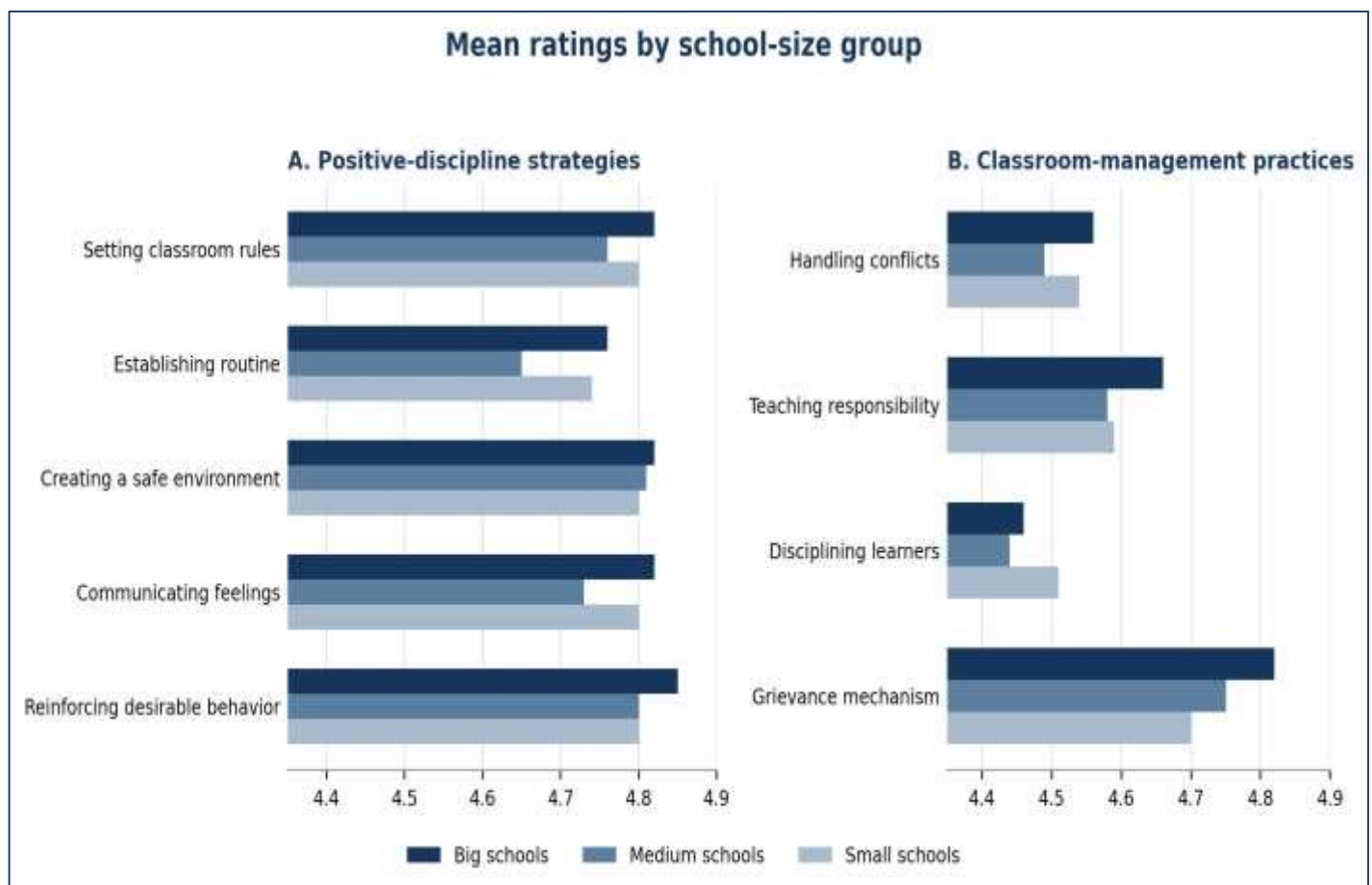
3.2 Concordance of positive-discipline item rankings

The three school-size groups showed statistically significant agreement in the rankings of items for setting classroom rules, establishing routine, creating a safe environment, and communicating feelings. Establishing routine produced the strongest concordance (W=.83). Reinforcing desirable behavior had lower concordance (W=.49) and was not significant (p=.143), indicating that the school-size groups did not rank its 11 items consistently.

Table 4. Kendall concordance for positive-discipline item rankings

Domain	Items	W	chi-square	df	Exact p	Decision
Setting classroom rules	11	.77	23.10	10	.010	Significant
Establishing routine	12	.83	27.39	11	.004	Significant
Creating a safe environment	12	.70	23.10	11	.017	Significant
Communicating feelings	11	.78	23.40	10	.009	Significant
Reinforcing desirable behavior	11	.49	14.70	10	.143	Not significant

Figure 1. School-size-group means across the nine study domains



3.3 Perceived classroom-management practices

The overall classroom-management mean was 4.59, classified as Very Much Evident. Grievance mechanism ranked first (M=4.76), followed by teaching responsibility (M=4.61) and handling conflicts (M=4.53). Disciplining learners ranked fourth (M=4.47) and was classified as Much Evident. Group means were 4.63 for big schools, 4.57 for medium schools, and 4.59 for small schools.

Table 5. Mean ratings for perceived classroom-management domains

Domain	Big	Medium	Small	Average	Interpretation
Handling conflicts	4.56	4.49	4.54	4.53	Very Much Evident
Teaching responsibility	4.66	4.58	4.59	4.61	Very Much Evident
Disciplining learners	4.46	4.44	4.51	4.47	Much Evident
Grievance mechanism	4.82	4.75	4.70	4.76	Very Much Evident
Overall	4.63	4.57	4.59	4.59	Very Much Evident

At item level, managing conflicts more effectively was highest in the conflict domain ($M=4.82$), whereas peer mediation was lowest ($M=4.10$). Learners accepting consequences was highest in teaching responsibility ($M=4.81$), while learner self-discipline was lowest ($M=4.32$). The statement that discipline supports learning led the disciplining domain ($M=4.72$), whereas learner self-control was lowest ($M=4.25$). Open communication was highest within grievance mechanisms ($M=4.87$); learners expressing concerns openly was the sole item below 4.50 ($M=4.40$). The lowest items converge on learner-led regulation, mediation, and voice rather than on teacher-led structures.

3.4 Concordance of classroom-management item rankings

Rank agreement was statistically significant for all four classroom-management domains. Teaching responsibility had the strongest concordance ($W=.94$, $p=.001$), followed by handling conflicts ($W=.80$, $p=.008$), grievance mechanism ($W=.70$, $p=.021$), and disciplining learners ($W=.65$, $p=.034$). These results indicate common ordering of domain items across school-size groups; they do not quantify improvement in learners or an association with the strategy-domain means.

Table 6. Kendall concordance for classroom-management item rankings

Domain	Items	W	chi-square	df	Exact p	Decision
Handling conflicts	11	.80	24.00	10	.008	Significant
Teaching responsibility	12	.94	31.02	11	.001	Significant
Disciplining learners	11	.65	19.50	10	.034	Significant
Grievance mechanism	11	.70	21.00	10	.021	Significant

Note. Exact p values were recalculated from the reported chi-square statistics and degrees of freedom.

4. Discussion

4.1 A strong reported foundation with implementation-specific gaps

The near-ceiling domain means suggest that positive-discipline principles were widely endorsed and self-reported as routine practice. The strongest domain, reinforcing desirable behavior, is consistent with evidence-based recommendations to acknowledge expected behavior specifically and frequently.^{1,2} The high safe-environment rating is also aligned with the Child Protection Policy and professional standards that require respectful, caring, and nonviolent learning environments.^{6,9} However, near-ceiling self-reports can reflect genuinely strong implementation, social-desirability pressure, limited scale discrimination, or some combination. Classroom observations and learner perspectives are needed to establish enactment quality.

Establishing routine ranked lowest among the strategy domains. Predictable routines reduce ambiguity and protect instructional time, but they must be explicitly taught, practiced, reinforced, and revisited after interruptions.^{1,3} The item pattern is revealing: learner participation and independence were rated highly, yet clear instructions and systematic reinforcement were lower. School-based professional learning should therefore focus on short, observable routine cycles—explain, model, rehearse, prompt, acknowledge, and reteach—rather than on routine lists alone.

4.2 From teacher-managed order to learner self-regulation

Disciplining learners was the only classroom-management domain below the highest interpretive band. Its lower items involved self-control, proactive discipline, and behavioral improvement. The related teaching-responsibility domain also placed learner self-discipline last. Together, these findings suggest that orderly teacher-led structures may be more established than the gradual transfer of regulation to learners. Positive discipline is developmental: the goal is not only compliance but also understanding, repair, responsibility, and autonomous self-management.^{10,13}

A stronger instructional sequence would teach emotion vocabulary, pause-and-plan strategies, perspective taking, problem-solving steps, reflection, and restoration after harm. Teachers can use co-created expectations, logical consequences, brief restorative conversations, and individual goal tracking. These practices preserve accountability while avoiding humiliation or physical punishment, which are inconsistent with child-protection policy and are associated with poorer adjustment.⁴⁻⁶

4.3 Learner voice, conflict resolution, and grievance mechanisms

Grievance mechanism ranked first, with high ratings for open communication, fairness, respect, trust, and prompt resolution. Yet learners expressing concerns openly was lower, and peer mediation was the lowest conflict item. A school can have formal channels without every learner feeling able to use them. Age-appropriate feedback routes should therefore include private conversation options, child-friendly reporting forms, trusted-adult identification, class meetings, and clear escalation procedures. Any peer mediation initiative must be trained, supervised, voluntary, and limited to appropriate low-level conflicts; bullying, abuse, or safeguarding concerns require adult-led procedures under policy.⁶⁻⁸

4.4 Understanding concordance and school-size patterns

The significant W values show that big, medium, and small schools often prioritized domain items in similar order. The nonsignificant reinforcement result is useful precisely because its pooled mean was highest: groups agreed that reinforcement was

common overall but differed in which reinforcement practices they ranked most strongly. This may reflect local reward systems, class size, resources, or teacher beliefs. A district learning-action-cell cycle could compare examples of specific praise, feedback, intrinsic-motivation supports, and reward use, then establish common principles while retaining developmental flexibility.

Big schools reported slightly higher overall means than medium and small schools, but the differences were small and descriptive. School-size labels also combine multiple possible influences, including staffing, leadership structures, class composition, access to support personnel, and community context. Without respondent-level variance estimates or an appropriate clustered comparison, these group means should not be interpreted as evidence that school size determines practice.

5. Implementation Agenda

The study offered 21 policy recommendations. Table 7 consolidates them into a smaller set of monitorable actions tied directly to the observed gaps. Targets are proposed for planning and require local approval; they are not outcomes already demonstrated by the study.

Table 7. Consolidated positive-discipline implementation agenda

Priority	Lead actors	Core action	Cadence	Suggested evidence
Routine instruction	School heads; grade teams	Model-and-rehearse routine protocol; visual guides; coaching	Quarterly	Observation checklist completion; fewer transition prompts
Restorative correction	SDO; school heads; guidance staff	Annual training plus case-based LAC sessions and coaching	Annual + monthly	Training completion; fidelity rubric; documented follow-up
Self-regulation	Teachers; guidance staff	Emotion regulation, reflection, goal setting, responsibility charts	Weekly	Learner goal reviews; teacher observation records
Consistent reinforcement	Grade teams	Shared principles for specific praise, feedback, rewards, and intrinsic motivation	Each grading period	Cross-classroom calibration; reinforcement samples
Learner voice and safeguarding	School heads; child-protection committee	Child-friendly, confidential reporting and adult-led escalation	Continuous; quarterly audit	Awareness checks; response timeliness; case-protection compliance
Home-school alignment	Teachers; families	Simple two-way behavior goals and progress feedback	As needed	Family participation; documented goal progress
Implementation monitoring	District supervisors	Semiannual review of positive-discipline practice and targeted assistance	Twice yearly	School action plans; completed technical-assistance cycles

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