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Promotion of Positive Discipline in Schools to Intensify Safe School Environment

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Abstract: This study, entitled Promotion of Positive Discipline in Schools to Intensify Safe Environment, examined the positive discipline practices, challenges, and insights of Key Stage 1 and 2 teachers in Gubat South District to formulate a responsive Capacity Building and Professional Development Plan. Utilizing a descriptive survey method, data were gathered regarding teacher practices across three dimensions: creating stakeholder awareness, applying non-punitive classroom management, and cultivating an inclusive school climate. Findings revealed that teachers actively foster shared responsibility by orienting learners on rights-based discipline policies, regularly communicating positive behavioral progress to parents, and collaborating with school heads and community stakeholders. Within the classroom, educators prioritize co-creating age -appropriate rules with logical consequences, conducting calm private conversations over public reprimands, and fostering psychological safety where learners express themselves without fear of ridicule. These constructive practices directly intensify a safe school environment by establishing predictable routines, mutual respect, and home-school consistency. However, implementation is hindered by conflicting parental corporal punishment at home, insufficient formal training in non-violent management, high teacher workload and stress, overcrowded classrooms, and ambiguity regarding legal boundaries. Teachers emphasized that positive discipline builds learner trust and motivation, though sustainability requires continuous institutional support. The study recommends institutionalizing a school-wide restorative discipline framework, conducting regular parent-stakeholder orientations to align home and school practices, and implementing a structured professional development program featuring peer mentoring and monitoring systems to sustain a safe, child-friendly learning environment aligned with Department of Education child protection standards.

Keywords: *Positive Discipline, Safe School Environment, Non-Punitive Classroom Management, Child Protection, Professional Development, Department of Education.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

A safe, supportive, and nurturing school environment is a fundamental prerequisite for effective learning and holistic student development (UNESCO, 2021). Globally, educational paradigms have dramatically shifted away from punitive, adversarial containment methods toward proactive, rights-based approaches to student behavior management (UNESCO, 2021; UNICEF, 2019). Traditional punitive measures—such as corporal punishment, public shaming, and exclusionary practices—have consistently been proven detrimental to a child's psychological well-being, academic engagement, and long-term socio-emotional growth (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021).

Schools play a vital role in providing learners with a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment where they can develop academically, socially, and emotionally. Maintaining a safe learning environment is essential in promoting positive learner behavior, preventing violence and bullying, and ensuring the protection of children's rights. In recent years, educational institutions have increasingly recognized the importance of adopting positive approaches to discipline that foster respect, responsibility, and self-regulation among learners instead of punitive disciplinary practices. This approach is commonly referred to as Positive Discipline. The Department of Education (DepEd) promotes Positive Discipline as a child-centered, non-violent, and rights-based approach to behavior management that supports the holistic development of learners.

In the Philippines, the implementation of Positive Discipline is anchored on DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, otherwise known as the DepEd Child Protection Policy, which prohibits corporal punishment and all forms of violence against learners. The policy emphasizes the creation of child-friendly schools where discipline is administered in ways that respect the dignity and rights of every learner while fostering a culture of care, respect, and

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accountability. The policy also mandates schools to establish mechanisms that protect children from abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, and other forms of harm.

Further strengthening this initiative is the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10627) and its corresponding DepEd guidelines, which require schools to develop programs and interventions that promote safe learning environments and address bullying incidents effectively. These policies recognize that learner well-being and academic success are interconnected and that schools must cultivate positive relationships among learners, teachers, parents, and stakeholders.

Moreover, the Department of Education continues to reinforce learner protection through various programs and frameworks that promote child rights, mental health, and school safety. The rights-based education framework highlights the responsibility of schools to uphold children's rights while creating positive conditions for learning and development. Positive Discipline aligns with this framework by encouraging constructive behavior management strategies, restorative practices, and meaningful learner participation in maintaining school discipline.

More recently, the Department of Education issued DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026, entitled Guidelines on Ensuring a Safe and Motivating Learning Environment (ESMLE), which consolidates and harmonizes existing policies related to learner rights and protection. The Order emphasizes the creation of learning environments that are safe, supportive, inclusive, and conducive to learning. It outlines comprehensive measures for the prevention of bullying, gender-based violence, and other learner protection concerns, while also providing clear protocols for incident reporting, response mechanisms, mental health support, and psychosocial interventions.

Furthermore, DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026 highlights the importance of a whole-school and whole-community approach in promoting learner welfare. The policy reinforces the roles of school personnel, parents, local government units, and community stakeholders in maintaining a culture of safety, respect, accountability, and support. It also strengthens the implementation of Child Protection Committees and encourages schools to adopt preventive programs and positive behavioral interventions that align closely with the principles of Positive Discipline

Classrooms serve not merely as physical locations for academic instruction but as social microcosms where values are formed, social interactions are practiced, and student futures are shaped. When students feel physically and psychologically secure, they are more likely to participate actively, take intellectual risks, and develop healthy social-emotional skills. Conversely, environments marked by fear, punitive practices, or emotional hostility hinder cognitive performance and well-being.

To guarantee safety in educational spaces, global and national frameworks have established clear legal mandates. On the international stage, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) requires state parties to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence (Article 19) and ensure school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with child dignity (Article 28.2). Furthermore, United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4, Target 4.a) explicitly calls for creating safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all children. In the Philippine context, the Department of Education instituted DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, or the DepEd Child Protection Policy, enforcing zero tolerance for corporal punishment, emotional abuse, and humiliation in basic education.

Central to achieving these mandates is the practice of constructive discipline, a structured, constructive, and rights-based educational approach that teaches positive behaviors while upholding student dignity. Grounded in psychological warmth, clear structural boundaries, and developmental understanding, positive discipline moves away from punitive control through fear and focuses on proactive guidance and non-violent problem-solving.

Because teachers are the primary architects of the learning environment, their awareness of child protection frameworks and their practical utilization of restorative discipline directly dictate whether a school environment is safe or restrictive. Thus, systematically promoting positive behavior guidance among educators serves as a critical foundation for eliminating non-constructive behavior management and creating a secure educational ecosystem. Investigating the current state of positive discipline promotion provides a vital empirical basis for formulating targeted interventions aimed at intensifying a safe and nurturing school environment for all learners.

While these policies strictly prohibit corporal punishment and punitive measures, teachers on the ground frequently encounter an “authority gap.” They face increasing challenges in managing classroom discipline due to diverse learner backgrounds, behavioral issues, curriculum demands, parental expectations, and fear of crossing policy lines. Many educators worry that minor disciplinary actions could be misunderstood as child abuse or policy violations, resulting in legal or administrative sanctions. Consequently, maintaining classroom order has become increasingly complex, leading to teacher stress, instructional disruptions, and an overall decline in the quality of the teaching-learning process.

Global initiatives, such as SDG 4, heavily emphasize the need for safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all. Despite these international mandates, instances of corporal punishment, emotional distress, and exclusionary discipline persist in various educational landscapes. The gap often lies not in the absence of policies but in frontline implementation: the teachers’ practices (UNESCO, 2019).

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Teachers serve as the primary architects of the classroom environment. Their level of awareness regarding child protection laws, their actual utilization of constructive behavioral interventions, and their active promotion of these values within the larger school community directly dictate the psychological and physical safety of students. When teachers successfully bridge the gap between knowing affirmative discipline and practicing it, schools transform into environments where students feel secure enough to take academic risks, express themselves, and thrive without fear of humiliation (Via & Marollano, 2023).

In the local context, educational governing bodies have instituted strict child protection policies to eliminate punitive disciplinary measures. However, frontline educators frequently face the daunting challenge of managing large classes, diverse learner behaviors, and modern behavioral issues without resorting to traditional, punitive habits. There remains a critical need to evaluate how deeply non-punitive discipline has integrated into daily teaching practices (Castino et al., 2023).

In response, international mandates have institutionalized Positive Discipline, an approach anchored in child rights and pedagogical principles. It relies on five core components: identifying long-term developmental goals, providing psychological warmth and clear structural boundaries, deeply understanding child development, recognizing individual differences, and utilizing constructive, non-violent problem-solving (Muthmainnah, 2021).

In the Philippines, this global shift is heavily mandated by the state. Local research emphasizes that the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act 10533) and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) strictly demand the cultivation of safe, inclusive, positive, and learner-centered environments (Tobias, 2026). Central to this is the Department of Education's Child Protection Policy (CPP). While teachers recognize that these child-friendly policies are vital for protecting learners from institutional abuse, studies reveal significant friction during implementation (Sahijuan, 2024). Many educators agree that while the policy framework safeguards student welfare, it often lacks operational clarity regarding how teachers can legally enforce consequences for behavioral disruptions without crossing policy boundaries.

While these policies emphasize nurturing environments, positive reinforcement, and respect for children's rights, they often limit the use of traditional disciplinary measures. As a result, teachers struggle to balance the need for classroom order with the obligation to uphold child-centered approaches. This tension manifests in several ways: inconsistent enforcement of rules, reduced authority of teachers, and difficulties in addressing disruptive behavior without appearing punitive. Consequently, the classroom climate can be affected, leading to diminished instructional time, increased stress for educators, and potential setbacks in pupils' social and academic development. Understanding these challenges is critical to designing a positive discipline intervention plan that aligns with child-friendly principles while ensuring effective classroom management.

Despite the existence of these policies, challenges remain in ensuring their consistent implementation across schools. Incidents of bullying, disruptive behavior, and other disciplinary concerns continue to affect the quality of the learning environment. These issues underscore the need to intensify school-based initiatives that promote affirmative discipline and strengthen awareness among teachers, learners, parents, and stakeholders regarding its principles and practices. Effective implementation of Positive Discipline can contribute to improved learner behavior, enhanced teacher-learner relationships, reduced disciplinary cases, and a more supportive school climate.

Despite the strength of these institutional policies, a persistent gap remains between policy intention and daily classroom reality. Frontline educators frequently contend with heavy workloads, large class sizes, diverse student temperaments, and behavioral disruptions (Castino, 2023; UNESCO, 2019). Lacking operational clarity on how to legally enforce boundaries without violating protection policies, many teachers experience hesitation or revert to traditional, punitive disciplinary habits (Castino, 2023).

This study is born out of that necessity. By assessing the status of teachers' practices in terms of awareness, utilization, and promotion of positive discipline, this research aims to provide an empirical basis for systemic interventions. Ultimately, the findings will serve as the cornerstone for intensifying a safe, nurturing, and genuinely supportive school environment. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the Promotion of Positive Discipline in Schools to Intensify a Safe Environment, anchored on DepEd policies and frameworks. Specifically, it aims to determine how Positive Discipline practices contribute to creating a safe, respectful, and learner-centered school environment and identify strategies that can further strengthen the implementation of child protection and learner welfare programs in schools. Through this study, recommendations may be developed to support school leaders, teachers, and stakeholders in fostering a culture of safety, respect, and positive behavior among learners.

➢ *Problem Statement*

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze teachers' practices in the Promotion of Positive Discipline in School to Intensify a Safe School Environment.

Specifically, this answered the following questions:

- What are the different teachers' practices being adopted in relation to positive discipline along:

✓ Creating awareness among learners, parents, and stakeholders
✓ Providing constructive and non-punitive measures for classroom management

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- ✓ Cultivating a child-friendly and inclusive school environment

- How do teachers' practices of positive discipline contribute to the intensification of a safe school environment?
- What are the different challenges teachers encountered in implementing positive discipline practices within the school context?
- What are the insights of teachers regarding the implementation of positive discipline in intensifying a safe school environment?
- What capacity-building and professional development plan can be proposed to enhance and sustain a safe school environment based on teachers' practices of positive discipline?

II. METHODOLOGY

➢ *Research Design*

This study employed a mixed-methods, quantitative-descriptive research design to systematically examine teachers' practices of positive discipline and their contribution to the intensification of a safe school environment. The descriptive approach is appropriate because it allows the researcher to present the current practices, challenges, and insights of teachers without manipulating variables, while the quantitative method ensures that findings are measurable, objective, and statistically reliable.

The quantitative-descriptive design is used to gather numerical data through a structured survey questionnaire. This approach enabled the researcher to describe the prevalence of positive discipline practices, analyze their relationship with safe school environments, and identify challenges encountered by teachers.

The study population consisted of teachers in Key Stage 1 and 2 from the twenty (20) elementary schools in Gubat South District. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across grade levels, teaching experience, and school type (public and private). The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula to achieve statistical validity.

A researcher-made questionnaire was the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into sections corresponding to the research questions as stated in the statement of the problem. The instrument used a Likert scale to measure the extent of agreement or frequency of practices. Content validity was established through expert review, and reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha.

Permission was sought from school administrators before distributing the questionnaires. Respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was assured. Completed questionnaires were collected, encoded, and prepared for statistical analysis. This study utilized a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, wherein quantitative and qualitative data were collected. For research problems 1 to 4, survey questionnaires were answered to explore teachers' practices in awareness, utilization, and promotion of positive discipline as a basis for intensifying a safe school environment. Similarly, research problem 2 employed quantitative inquiry to identify the ways in which teachers' practices of positive discipline contribute to the intensification of a safe school environment. The subsequent quantitative phase addressed research problems 3 through structured checklists designed to identify the challenges encountered in implementing positive discipline practices within the school context. Frequency counts were used to determine how often specific items were reported, while ranking highlighted the relative importance of these benefits and challenges. This statistical analysis provided measurable evidence of patterns across participants, complementing the qualitative insights.

Research problem 4 was addressed through a structured checklist to propose capacity building and professional development to enhance and sustain a safe school environment based on teachers' practices of positive discipline. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) noted, the sequential explanatory design strengthened validity by combining numerical evidence with rich narrative data, ensuring a comprehensive and practical outcome

The descriptive component of this design was utilized to systematically, accurately, and objectively describe the current status of the variables under study. Specifically, it was used to quantify and describe the exact levels of teachers' practices across the three distinct domains: Awareness of legal and pedagogical frameworks, Utilization of non-violent strategies in the classroom, and Promotion of these values to the wider school community.

To determine the strength and direction of the relationship between teachers' positive discipline practices and indicators of a safe school environment (e.g., reduced bullying, improved trust, inclusivity) Pearson's r Correlation Analysis,(Cohen, J.,et.al (2003) was utilized.

To analyze challenges encountered by teachers, grouping responses into categories such as policy gaps, lack of parental support, and resource constraints, and ranking them to determine the most pressing issue, sum of ranks and overall ranking (Gravetter, F. J., & Wallnau, L. B. ,2017).

To ensure accuracy and reliability by cross-checking quantitative findings with qualitative insights (e.g., interviews, focus group discussions), triangulation was used (Denzin, N. K., 2012).

Identifying these precise gaps provided the concrete empirical data required to craft a highly targeted institutional action plan, achieving the study's ultimate goal of intensifying a safe and secure school environment.

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26nov924

➢ *The Respondents*

The primary respondents of this study were the fifty (50) full-time classroom teachers in Key Stages 1 and 2 of the elementary schools in Gubat South District during the School Year 2026–2027. The study was conducted at Gubat South District, Schools Division of Sorsogon. This specific locale was selected due to its diverse teacher demographics and its active institutional mandate to enforce updated national child protection guidelines. The setting provided an ideal environment to observe how positive discipline policies are applied in daily classroom management.

To ensure data integrity and relevance, specific criteria were established for the selection of respondents: The respondents must be active, full-time teaching personnel in elementary schools who manage an active classroom or homeroom section. Both newly hired and seasoned teachers were included. Non-teaching personnel, administrative staff, and school heads were excluded from the primary respondent pool, as they did not directly manage daily classroom discipline. However, their policy insights were used qualitatively to support the study's conclusions.

➢ *Sampling Technique*

In conducting this study on teachers' practices of positive discipline and their contribution to a safe school environment, the researcher employed purposive sampling as the primary technique. This method was deemed most appropriate because the participants needed to possess specific characteristics directly aligned with the objectives of the research. The focus was on teachers who actively implemented positive discipline strategies such as creating awareness among learners, parents, and stakeholders, providing constructive and non-punitive measures for classroom management, and cultivating a child-friendly and inclusive school environment.

Through purposive sampling, the researcher deliberately selected teachers who had firsthand experiences in applying positive discipline within their classrooms and school communities. These participants were considered information-rich cases, capable of providing meaningful insights into both the benefits and challenges of implementing such practices. By narrowing the sample to those with relevant expertise, the study ensured that the data collected would be highly contextualized and directly responsive to the research questions.

This approach also allowed the researcher to capture diverse perspectives across different grade levels and subject areas, while maintaining the central criterion of active engagement in positive discipline. The purposive selection of participants thus strengthened the credibility of the findings, as it ensured that the voices included were those most capable of articulating the relationship between positive discipline and the intensification of a safe school environment.

➢ *Research Instruments*

The primary data collection tool for this study was a researcher-made, highly structured survey questionnaire administered through Google Forms. This instrument was carefully designed to align with the research objectives and variables, ensuring that each item directly addressed the study's problem statements. The questionnaire was developed by adapting concepts from established child protection manuals, regional education mandates on positive discipline, and existing pedagogical scales.

To comprehensively capture the different facets of the investigation, the instrument was systematically divided into five distinct sections:

- Teachers' Practices in Positive Discipline. This section measures teachers' practices across three dimensions: creating awareness among learners, parents, and stakeholders (e.g., collaborative rule-making, parent engagement, stakeholder communication); providing constructive, non-punitive measures for classroom management (e.g., positive reinforcement, restorative dialogue, behavior contracts); and cultivating a child-friendly and inclusive school environment (e.g., recognition systems, inclusivity practices, respectful communication).; Cultivating a child-friendly and inclusive school environment (e.g., recognition systems, inclusivity practices, respectful communication). Items were rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Never (1) to Always (5).

- Contribution to Safe School Environment. This section assessed how teachers' positive discipline practices contributed to the intensification of a safe school environment. Indicators included reduced bullying, improved trust between teachers and learners, and perceptions of inclusivity. Responses were obtained through focus group discussions.

- Challenges in Implementation. This section identified the different challenges teachers encountered in implementing positive discipline practices. Items covered policy gaps, lack of parental support, resource constraints, and contextual barriers. Respondents rated the severity of each challenge using a weighted scale, allowing for ranking of the most pressing issues.

- Teachers' Insights. This section gathers teachers' reflections and perceptions regarding the implementation of positive discipline. Statements focused on stress reduction, alignment with child protection principles, and perceived effectiveness of positive discipline in intensifying safe school environments. Responses were gathered through focus group discussions.

- Proposed Capacity Building and Professional Development Plan. The final section sought input from teachers on a possible capacity building and professional development plan to enhance and sustain safe school environments. Open-ended questions were included to allow respondents to suggest strategies, programs, or interventions based on their experiences. These qualitative responses complemented the quantitative data

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26nov924

and served as the basis for developing a practical, evidence-based action plan.

➢ *Validation of Instruments*

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data-gathering tools used in this study, the researcher conducted a thorough process of instrument validation. The primary instrument employed was the structured survey questionnaire via Google Form, supplemented by structured interview guides designed to capture practices of positive discipline and their contribution to a safe school environment.

Validation was carried out through expert review by highly proficient teachers, wherein specialists in education, classroom management, and research methodology examined the instruments for content relevance, clarity, and alignment with the study's objectives. Their feedback ensured that each item accurately reflected the dimensions of positive discipline, such as creating awareness among learners and stakeholders, providing constructive and non-punitive measures, and cultivating a child-friendly and inclusive environment. Ambiguous or overlapping items were revised to enhance precision and comprehensibility.

Through these validation procedures, the researcher ensured that the instruments were both valid—accurately measuring the intended constructs—and reliable—producing consistent results when applied in similar contexts. This rigorous process strengthened the credibility of the findings and provided confidence that the data collected would meaningfully address the research questions on positive discipline and safe school environments.

➢ *Data Gathering Procedures*

The data collection process of this study was executed in three progressive phases—Pre-Collection, Actual Collection, and Post-Collection—to maintain administrative transparency, protect respondent rights, and ensure data integrity.

During the pre-collection process, clearances and permissions were ensured. Before administering any instruments, the researcher secured formal administrative clearances to conduct the study. A formal endorsement letter was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) and the respective District Supervisor. To obtain official permission to survey within the chosen stations. The research protocol and instruments were reviewed to ensure compliance with institutional ethical baselines. Upon approval, the researcher coordinated with school heads on the deployment roster of active classroom teachers for the sampling draw.

For the actual collection phase, the administration of the instruments was executed using a hybrid distribution method which is via digital platforms such as Google Forms and through Focus Group Discussions. Each respondent was presented with an Informed Consent Form preceding the survey, which transparently outlined the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the right to withdraw at any point without repercussions.

A brief orientation was conducted to clarify survey directions and emphasize that there are no "wrong" answers, thereby mitigating social-desirability bias. To optimize response rates, the researcher established a tracking matrix. For digital surveys, automated follow-up reminders were scheduled within a strict collection window of approximately two weeks.

Once the target sample size (n) was successfully reached, the collection window was closed, and data processing commenced. Answered Google Forms were screened for completeness, and incomplete surveys or entries with patterned, non-reflective answers were excluded from the final tally. Valid responses were systematically encoded into a digital spreadsheet (e.g., Microsoft Excel) using a strict alphanumeric coding system to ensure anonymity.

The data were tabulated, computed, and analyzed. Statistical treatments, including descriptive statistics and gap analysis, were applied to generate findings aligned with the research objectives.

➢ *Data Analysis Method*

To ensure a systematic, objective, and comprehensive analysis of the gathered data, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed in the study. The use of mixed methods allowed the researcher to examine numerical trends while also exploring the participants' experiences and perspectives in greater depth.

For the quantitative data, the responses obtained from the participants were subjected to appropriate statistical treatment. Specifically, frequency count, rank, sum of ranks, and overall rank were utilized. Frequency count was employed to determine the number of occurrences of each response, thereby identifying the most common or prevalent responses among participants. Rank was used to establish the relative position of each indicator in comparison with the others based on its frequency or level of importance. The sum of ranks was computed by aggregating the ranks assigned to each indicator across the specified criteria, providing a cumulative measure of performance or priority. Finally, the overall rank was derived from the total sum of ranks, indicating the final standing of each indicator and facilitating the identification of the most significant factors, concerns, or perceptions reflected in the data.

For the qualitative data, participants' narratives, open-ended responses, and written reflections were subjected to thematic analysis. The data were organized and interpreted through the process of coding and categorizing, which helped in the formulation of themes.

The qualitative data were first organized and carefully reviewed to gain a holistic understanding of the participants' viewpoints. This was followed by the process of coding, wherein meaningful words, phrases, statements, or ideas

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were assigned labels that captured their essential meanings. Coding enabled the researcher to systematically identify recurring concepts and patterns within the data.

Subsequently, similar and related codes were grouped through categorization. Categorization involved organizing codes into broader clusters based on shared characteristics, meanings, or relationships. This process helped reduce data complexity and facilitated the identification of common ideas emerging from the participants' responses. From these categories, themes were developed. Themes represent overarching concepts, patterns, or central ideas that describe and explain the participants' collective experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding the phenomenon under investigation. The formulation of themes provided a deeper interpretation of the qualitative data and served as the basis for drawing meaningful conclusions and implications from the study.

Through the integration of statistical treatment for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data, the study was able to generate a comprehensive understanding of the research problem, ensuring that both numerical evidence and participant perspectives were adequately represented in the findings.

- *Statistical Analysis*

For research problem 1, the statistical tools used were frequency count and rank. These helped the researcher to determine the practices of teachers in relation to positive discipline. Meanwhile, research problem 3 employed the sum of ranks and overall rank statistics. These statistical tools facilitated determining the challenges encountered in implementing positive discipline practices.

This study utilized several statistical measures to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of the data. Frequency was used to determine the number of times a particular value or response occurred, thereby indicating its relative occurrence compared with other values. Rank referred to the position or order assigned to each indicator based on its comparative performance or level of occurrence among all indicators considered in the study.

Furthermore, the sum of ranks was computed by aggregating the ranks assigned to each indicator across multiple criteria. This measure provided a cumulative assessment of an indicator's performance and served as the basis for comparison among indicators. Lastly, the overall rank represented the final standing of each indicator, derived from the total sum of ranks or the corresponding overall score. The overall rank was used to identify the relative position of each indicator and determine its comparative level of importance or performance within the entire set of indicators analyzed. This statistical approach enabled a systematic and objective evaluation of the data, thereby facilitating the identification of trends, priorities, and areas requiring attention.

- *Qualitative Analysis*

Research Problems 2 and 4 required the use of qualitative data analysis to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences, perceptions, and insights. The narratives provided by the participants served as the primary source of qualitative data. These narratives were systematically examined through a process of coding, categorization, and theme development to identify recurring patterns and meaningful interpretations.

Coding refers to the process of assigning labels or codes to significant words, phrases, sentences, or segments of participants' narratives that reflect key ideas or concepts. Codes serve as the initial building blocks for data analysis by organizing and simplifying large amounts of qualitative information.

Using coding, categorization was undertaken by grouping related codes into broader categories based on shared characteristics or meanings. This process facilitated the organization of similar concepts and enabled the identification of relationships among the coded data. Subsequently, themes were developed from the categories. Themes represent overarching patterns, central ideas, or recurring issues that emerged from the participants' responses. They provided a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences and served as the basis for interpreting and presenting the findings of the study. Through this systematic process of coding, categorization, and theme generation, the study was able to derive meaningful insights from the participants' narratives, thereby enriching the analysis and providing a deeper understanding of the study.

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26nov924

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- *Different Teachers' Practices Being Adopted in Relation to Positive Discipline*

Table 1 Different Teachers' Practices on Creating Awareness Among Learners, Parents, and Stakeholders

Practices	Frequency	Rank
Orient students at the beginning of the school year on classroom norms and rights-based discipline policies.	49	1
Communicate student behavioral progress and positive behaviors to parents regularly, not just misbehavior.	48	2
Conduct orientation sessions/meetings with parents regarding non-punitive discipline methods at home.	46	3
Actively collaborate with school heads and community stakeholders to promote positive discipline.	45	4
Post visible child protection advocacy materials (eg DepED Child Protection Policy/UNCRC rights) In the classroom	38	5

The findings reveal that teachers' positive discipline practices are strongly aligned with the principles of child protection, learner well-being, and rights-based education. The most prominent practice, proactive orientation of learners at the beginning of the school year, reflects teachers' commitment to establishing clear expectations, classroom norms, rights, and responsibilities before behavioral issues arise. This approach is consistent with the provisions of DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 (DepEd Child Protection Policy), which mandates schools to create safe, nurturing, and protective learning environments free from abuse, violence, discrimination, and bullying. The policy emphasizes preventive rather than punitive measures, encouraging schools to educate learners about appropriate behavior and respectful relationships. By introducing behavioral expectations early, teachers help learners internalize self-discipline and understand the consequences of their actions within a framework of respect and accountability. Another significant practice is the consistent communication between teachers and parents, particularly through conferences, homeroom meetings, and digital communication platforms. This finding supports the principle that discipline is a shared responsibility between the school and the home. Teachers regularly provide updates regarding learners' positive behaviors, demonstrating a shift away from deficit-oriented approaches that focus solely on misconduct. This practice reinforces desired behaviors through affirmation and recognition while ensuring consistency between school and home expectations. Such collaboration is supported by the Child Protection Policy, which recognizes the essential role of parents and guardians in promoting learner welfare and positive behavior. Through continuous engagement, parents become active partners in nurturing responsible and respectful learners rather than merely recipients of disciplinary reports. The findings further indicate that teachers actively involve parents in orientations and discussions on non-punitive disciplinary approaches, strengthening the alignment of school and family practices. This aligns with the rights-based perspective embedded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and operationalized through the DepEd Child Protection Policy. Rather than relying on fear, humiliation, or corporal punishment, teachers engage families in understanding discipline as guidance, correction, and skill-building. Such practices promote a child-centered environment where behavioral development is addressed constructively and collaboratively. Consequently, positive discipline becomes a holistic process extending beyond the classroom and into the broader community. The study also highlights the importance of collaboration among teachers, school heads, parents, and community stakeholders. Positive discipline is not treated as an isolated classroom strategy but as a school-wide culture that requires collective support. This perspective is reinforced by the Child Protection Policy's requirement for schools to establish Child Protection Committees (CPCs) tasked with promoting child rights, addressing protection concerns, and implementing preventive interventions. Through coordinated efforts, schools create systems that support learners' social, emotional, and behavioral development while ensuring policy implementation is sustained and responsive to emerging concerns. Although less frequently cited by participants, the use of advocacy materials such as child

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protection posters, anti-bullying reminders, and displays of learner rights remains an important component of awareness-building. These visual reinforcements support the implementation of child protection policies by reminding learners, parents, and stakeholders of their rights and responsibilities. However, the findings suggest that these materials are most effective when complemented by active engagement strategies such as orientations, discussions, and collaborative interventions. Awareness campaigns alone are insufficient unless accompanied by meaningful interactions that translate policy into practice.

Moreover, teachers prioritize co-creating classroom rules with learners, ensuring that behavioral expectations are age-appropriate, understandable, and collectively owned. This participatory practice reflects democratic and learner-centered principles found in positive discipline frameworks. Rather than imposing rules unilaterally, teachers empower learners to contribute to the development of classroom agreements, thereby increasing accountability and compliance. Such an approach supports the Child Protection Policy's emphasis on respecting children's views and promoting their participation in matters affecting them. The participants also described replacing public reprimands with calm, respectful, and private conversations, preserving learner dignity while addressing inappropriate behavior. This practice directly reflects the prohibition of corporal punishment, degrading treatment, and other forms of psychological harm outlined in the Child Protection Policy. Teachers recognize that discipline should correct behavior without humiliating the child. By engaging learners in reflective dialogue, they promote self-awareness, empathy, and responsibility, thereby strengthening teacher-learner relationships and fostering a classroom climate built on trust and respect. A particularly important finding is teachers' emphasis on teaching skills rather than punishing mistakes. Learners who exhibit challenging behaviors are guided to understand the impact of their actions and develop more appropriate alternatives. This reflects the core philosophy of positive discipline, which views mistakes as opportunities for learning and growth. Instead of focusing on blame, teachers prioritize the development of social-emotional competencies such as self-regulation, empathy, responsible decision-making, and conflict resolution. Such practices contribute to a supportive environment where learners feel safe making mistakes and learning from them.

The results also demonstrate strong alignment with the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10627) and its implementing rules under DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013. Teachers actively address bullying, exclusion, discrimination, and peer conflicts through preventive orientations, parent engagement, behavior monitoring, and immediate interventions. These actions support the law's requirement for schools to establish mechanisms for preventing, reporting, investigating, and responding to bullying incidents. The Anti-Bullying Act recognizes physical, verbal, social, gender-based, and cyberbullying as threats to learners' safety and well-being; thus, the teachers' proactive approaches contribute significantly to fostering a secure educational environment where all learners feel respected and protected.

Overall, the findings confirm that positive discipline thrives through engagement, collaboration, guidance, and reinforcement rather than punishment and control. By integrating proactive orientation, parent involvement, collaborative rule-setting, respectful communication, positive reinforcement, child protection advocacy, and anti-bullying interventions, teachers create learning environments that are safe, inclusive, and responsive to learners' needs. These practices embody the principles espoused in DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013, Republic Act No. 10627, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, demonstrating that positive discipline is both a pedagogical approach and a vital mechanism for intensifying a safe and child-friendly school environment.

Teachers employ de-escalation techniques to manage severe behavioral issues, modeling calmness and self-control. Oyangorin (2026) highlighted that teachers' ability to regulate emotions is critical in maintaining classroom harmony and preventing escalation. Emotional regulation demonstrates that discipline is not only about student behavior but also about teachers' capacity to model constructive responses.

Table 2 Teachers' Practices on Providing Constructive and Non-Punitive Measures

Practices	Frequency	Rank
Establish clear, age-appropriate classroom rules and logical consequences together with the pupils.	42	1
Address classroom disruptions through calm, private conversations rather than public reprimands or humiliation.	39	2
Focus on teaching the corrective behavior and underlying skill rather than simply penalizing the student's mistake.	36	3
Use positive reinforcement (e.g., verbal praise, token systems) to encourage acceptable classroom behavior.	35	4
Practice emotional regulation and de-escalation techniques when dealing with severe behavioral issues.	27	5

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Across these practices, the results confirm that teachers are moving away from punitive traditions toward rights-based, skill-focused, and emotionally intelligent discipline. Local findings emphasize co-created rules, private correction, and reinforcement. Global studies (Supsin et al., Abejón-Fuentes, Oyangorin) validated these practices as effective in improving classroom climate, reducing victimization, and fostering positive relationships. Together, they suggest that constructive discipline is both preventive and developmental, ensuring that learners feel respected while acquiring the skills necessary for responsible behavior. The results of this study revealed that teachers were increasingly embracing positive discipline practices that emphasize respect, collaboration, and skill development rather than punitive measures. The most frequently adopted strategies—co-creating classroom rules, private correction of disruptions, and teaching corrective behaviors—demonstrate a clear commitment to fostering learner responsibility and dignity. These practices align with global research (Supsin et al., 2026; Abejón-Fuentes et al., 2025; Oyangorin, 2026), which consistently highlights that constructive discipline improves classroom climate, reduces victimization, and strengthens teacher–student relationships.

Research emphasizes that private correction of disruptions and teaching corrective behaviors uphold student dignity, which strengthens trust and respect. This aligns with findings that constructive discipline reduces bullying and victimization, creating safer learning environments.

The results of this study revealed that teachers are increasingly embracing positive discipline practices that emphasize respect, collaboration, and skill development rather than punitive measures. The most frequently adopted strategies—co-creating classroom rules, private correction of disruptions, and teaching corrective behaviors—demonstrate a clear commitment to fostering learner responsibility and dignity.

Constructive discipline reduced classroom victimization and strengthens school climate (Abejón-Fuentes et al. 2025). Similarly, teacher professional development in positive behavior support consistently improves classroom management and student outcomes, particularly in contexts with high socioeconomic challenges (Supsin et al. 2026). The alignment of this study with global evidence underscored that positive discipline is not merely a localized innovation but part of a broader pedagogical shift toward non-violent, learner-centered approaches.

Moreover, the emphasis on private correction and teaching corrective behaviors reflects the importance of preserving student dignity, which research (Oyangorin, 2026) identified as a cornerstone of building trust and respect in teacher–student relationships. This relational dimension is critical, as constructive discipline not only manages behavior but also nurtures emotional safety and belonging—key predictors of academic engagement.

However, challenges remain. The persistence of parental corporal punishment and strong cultural beliefs in punitive discipline can undermine school-based efforts, as noted in Supsin et al. (2026). Without alignment between home and school, learners may experience conflicting messages about discipline, weakening the consistency needed for behavior change. Additionally, systemic barriers such as teacher workload, large class sizes, and unclear legal boundaries complicate the sustainability of positive discipline practices.

The theoretical underpinnings of positive discipline are further enriched by the Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology, which states discipline within the broader context of resilience, intrinsic motivation and emotional intelligence. Positive psychology emphasizes the cultivation of strengths rather than the correction of weaknesses, resonating with Maslow's humanistic perspective on growth and Roger's emphasis on empathy. In the classroom, these translates into practices that not only manage behavior but also nurture learners' capacity for self-regulation, motivation, and interpersonal respect.

The integration of positive reinforcement and emotional regulation techniques further underscores the holistic nature of discipline being practiced. Teachers are not only guiding students toward acceptable behavior but also modeling emotional intelligence, demonstrating that discipline is relational and developmental. This dual emphasis on skill-building and emotional regulation reflects a rights-based approach consistent with the DepEd Child Protection Policy and international frameworks such as the UNCRC.

The findings affirm that constructive discipline is preventive, developmental, and collaborative. It ensures that learners feel respected, parents are engaged, and stakeholders are aligned in promoting safe school environments. By situating discipline within a framework of positive reinforcement, skill acquisition, and emotional regulation, teachers contribute to a culture of safety, inclusivity, and shared responsibility.

This synthesis strengthens the thesis argument that safe school environments are best achieved through non-punitive, rights-based discipline practices, where learners are empowered, teachers are emotionally resilient, and parents and stakeholders are active partners in child protection and holistic development.

The results highlight that teachers adopt practices centered on safety, inclusivity, and respect, which are foundational to cultivating a child-friendly school environment. These practices—such as co-creating classroom rules, privately correcting disruptions, and teaching corrective behaviors—reflect a deliberate shift away from punitive traditions toward constructive approaches that nurture responsibility and dignity among learners.

This commitment aligns with global research emphasizing the importance of equity and psychological safety. For instance, Supsin et al. (2026) demonstrated that

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classrooms fostering psychological safety significantly reduce anxiety and increase learner engagement, confirming that respect-based discipline is essential for participation. Similarly, Abejón-Fuentes et al. (2025) found that responsive discipline approaches, which accommodate diversity and emphasize collaboration, improve school climate by reducing victimization and strengthening inclusivity. These findings resonate with the practices observed in this study, where teachers consciously integrate values of respect and fairness into their discipline strategies.

Table 3 Teachers' Practices in Cultivating a Child-Friendly and Inclusive Environment

Practices	Frequency	Rank
Create an open classroom atmosphere where students feel safe to express thoughts without fear of ridicule.	50	1
Ensure equal opportunities for all students to participate in classroom activities regardless of academic standing.	49	2
Accommodate diverse student backgrounds, learning needs, and temperaments when managing classroom dynamics.	48	3
Actively prevent and address peer bullying, exclusion, and discriminatory behavior in the classroom.	44	4
Provide a physical environment that is physically safe, orderly, and conducive to collaborative learning.	41	5

Local scholarship further validates these results. Oyangorin (2026) emphasized that equitable participation and structured environments prevent marginalization and promote inclusivity in Philippine schools. The teachers in this study echoed this principle by ensuring equal opportunities for learners regardless of academic standing, thereby operationalizing fairness as a cornerstone of discipline. This demonstrates that positive discipline is not only a behavioral management tool but also a mechanism for advancing equity and social justice within classrooms.

Moreover, the emphasis on collaborative learning and shared responsibility underscores the relational dimension of discipline. By modeling respect and engaging learners in rule-making, teachers create an atmosphere where discipline is understood as guidance rather than punishment. This relational approach strengthens teacher–student trust, which global studies consistently identify as a predictor of improved classroom climate and reduced bullying.

Taken together, the findings and related literature affirm that positive discipline is both developmental and protective. It safeguards learners from harm by preventing bullying and discrimination, while simultaneously empowering them to take responsibility for their actions in a supportive environment. Thus, the discussion demonstrates that cultivating a child-friendly school environment requires a holistic approach anchored in safety, inclusivity, and respect and that is consistent with both international and local educational research.

Teachers prioritize creating spaces where learners feel safe to express thoughts without ridicule. Classrooms emphasizing psychological safety foster higher engagement and reduce anxiety. This practice ensures that discipline is supportive, encouraging learners to participate freely and confidently (Supsin et al., 2026). Ensuring equal opportunities regardless of academic standing reflects a strong commitment to fairness. Equitable participation prevents marginalization and strengthens inclusivity in Philippine schools (Oyangorin, 2026). This practice operationalizes the principle of equity, ensuring all learners feel valued and included.

Teachers adapt strategies to meet varied learning needs and temperaments (Abejón-Fuentes et al., 2025), demonstrating that responsive discipline approaches improve school climate by respecting diversity. This practice highlights sensitivity to individuality, ensuring discipline is flexible and inclusive. Teachers actively safeguard learners from peer bullying, exclusion, and discriminatory behavior. Supsin et al. (2026) confirmed that anti-bullying interventions integrated into positive discipline reduce victimization and enhance classroom harmony. This proactive stance positions discipline as protective, reinforcing dignity and respect.

Teachers provide orderly, secure, and collaborative learning spaces. Oyangorin (2026) noted that structured environments support inclusivity by minimizing distractions and promoting cooperation. This practice extends discipline beyond behavior management to the physical and social dimensions of safety.

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The findings confirm that teachers' practices are anchored in equity, safety, and respect, consistent with international and local research. Global studies (Supsin et al., Abejón-Fuentes) emphasize psychological safety, diversity accommodation, and anti-bullying measures.

Local studies (Oyangorin) highlight fairness, collaboration, and structured environments as essential for inclusivity.

Together, these results demonstrate that cultivating a child-friendly and inclusive environment requires a holistic approach: psychological safety, equitable participation, diversity responsiveness, proactive protection, and supportive physical spaces. This synthesis strengthens the thesis argument that positive discipline is not punitive but developmental and protective, ensuring learners feel respected, secure, and empowered to thrive.

- *How Teachers' Practices of Positive Discipline Contribute to the Intensification of a Safe School Environment*

- *Cultivating Awareness & Shared Responsibility as a Foundation of Safety*

Teachers' practices of positive discipline intensify a safe school environment by cultivating awareness among learners and fostering shared responsibility among teachers, parents, and stakeholders. Through proactive guidance, respectful communication, collaborative rule-setting, and positive reinforcement, learners gain a deeper understanding of appropriate behavior and develop a sense of accountability for their actions. At the same time, the active involvement of parents, school personnel, and community partners strengthens a collective commitment to maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment. These practices are consistent with the principles of the DepEd Child Protection Policy under DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, which emphasizes the protection of children from abuse, violence, discrimination, and bullying through preventive and collaborative approaches.

Supporting this finding, Abejón-Fuentes, Urruticoechea, Martín-Babarro, and colleagues (2025) found that positive discipline measures significantly reduce classroom disruption and school victimization while enhancing school climate. This suggests that positive discipline contributes not only to behavior management but also to the overall sense of security and belonging experienced by learners. When learners perceive their environment as fair, respectful, and supportive, they are more likely to engage positively with peers and teachers, thereby reducing incidents that compromise school safety.

Similarly, Supsin, Siribanpitak, and Chaemchoy (2026) concluded that professional development programs focused on positive behavior support improve classroom management and teacher self-efficacy. Effective classroom management enables teachers to respond to behavioral concerns proactively and constructively, minimizing disruptions and maximizing instructional time. Moreover, teachers who feel confident in implementing positive discipline strategies are better equipped to establish orderly, respectful, and nurturing learning environments where learners feel emotionally and physically safe.

Furthermore, the findings affirm the provisions of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10627) and its implementing guidelines under DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013, which require schools to adopt policies that prevent and address bullying through education, intervention, and stakeholder participation. By promoting awareness, encouraging respectful relationships, and involving parents and stakeholders in disciplinary processes, teachers help prevent behaviors that may lead to bullying, exclusion, or victimization. These collaborative efforts strengthen vigilance and ensure that safety becomes a shared responsibility rather than the sole duty of teachers or school administrators.

Overall, the results indicate that positive discipline strengthens school safety by embedding a culture of respect, accountability, and cooperation within the school community. When discipline is framed as guidance rather than punishment, learners are more likely to internalize positive values and develop self-discipline. Likewise, when teachers, parents, and stakeholders work together to uphold these values, consistency in expectations and interventions is achieved. Consequently, safety evolves from being merely a school policy into a collective mission shared by the entire educational community. This reinforces the goals of DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), all of which advocate for child-centered, rights-based, and protective learning environments where every learner can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

- *Collective Vigilance, Communication And Collaboration Among Stakeholders*

The findings underscore that collective vigilance, effective communication, and collaborative engagement among stakeholders are critical mechanisms for intensifying a safe school environment. Safety becomes more sustainable when it is viewed not as the sole responsibility of teachers or school administrators but as a shared commitment among learners, parents, community members, and partner agencies. Through collective efforts, schools are able to identify risks early, respond appropriately to concerns, and establish protective practices that become part of everyday school life. This perspective is consistent with the principles of DepEd Child Protection Policy under DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, which advocates for a whole-school approach to protecting learners from abuse, violence, discrimination, and bullying.

Research further supports the importance of vigilance and stakeholder involvement in promoting school safety. According to Heraña and Heraña (2026) in the JENER Journal, collaboration was strongly associated with increased school safety capacity in Isabela, Philippines. Their study revealed that vigilance becomes most effective when incorporated into routine governance systems rather

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than activated only during emergencies. Through their proposed Safe School Coordination Protocol, vigilance was strengthened through structured monitoring systems, established referral pathways, and the active participation of law enforcement agencies, local government units, parents, and schools. These findings suggest that safety is enhanced when stakeholders consistently monitor learner welfare and work together to prevent potential threats before they escalate.

Similarly, Adlit et al. (2026), stated that in Perspectives in Sustainable Development Studies, emphasized that transparent communication channels are essential components of violence prevention and child protection. The study highlighted the significance of accessible reporting mechanisms, counseling services, restorative practices, and open dialogue among stakeholders in creating safe and supportive learning environments. Effective communication enables learners, parents, and school personnel to report concerns, seek assistance, and collaboratively resolve issues before they negatively affect learner well-being. When communication is clear, timely, and respectful, trust is strengthened, misunderstandings are minimized, and stronger relationships are built among members of the school community.

Moreover, these findings strongly support the provisions of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10627) and its implementing rules under DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013, which require schools to establish systems for preventing, reporting, investigating, and addressing bullying incidents. The law recognizes that maintaining learner safety requires active participation from multiple stakeholders, including school officials, teachers, parents, and learners themselves. Transparent reporting procedures, collaborative interventions, and continuous monitoring create an environment where learners feel empowered to report concerns without fear and where appropriate support mechanisms are readily available.

The participants' narratives reflect these research findings by emphasizing that safety is sustained through shared accountability and continuous engagement. Teachers highlighted the value of maintaining regular communication with parents, involving stakeholders in positive discipline initiatives, and remaining vigilant in addressing learner concerns. Such practices demonstrate that safety extends beyond physical protection and includes emotional security, respect, inclusion, and a sense of belonging. When teachers, parents, learners, and community stakeholders work together, they create a seamless network of support that protects children's rights and promotes their overall well-being.

Overall, the latest studies confirm that collective vigilance, transparent communication, and multi-sectoral collaboration intensify safe school environments by embedding protection into governance systems, daily routines, and interpersonal relationships. Vigilance enables stakeholders to identify and address risks proactively, communication fosters trust and coordinated action, and collaboration brings together diverse resources and expertise in support of learner protection. Consequently, safety becomes a shared mission rather than an isolated responsibility. Consistent with the goals of DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), these practices ensure that learners feel secure, respected, and valued, knowing that their well-being is collectively safeguarded by teachers, parents, and the wider community.

- *Open Atmosphere and Modeling Respect and Values*

A safe school environment is not only built on rules, procedures, and policies but also on the quality of relationships and the atmosphere of trust cultivated within classrooms. The findings reveal that two practices are particularly influential in intensifying a safe school environment: maintaining an open atmosphere where learners feel free to express themselves and consistently modeling respect and values in daily interactions. Together, these practices transform safety from a set of institutional requirements into a lived experience that learners encounter every day through meaningful relationships with teachers and peers.

The integration of psychological theories into classroom management provides a strong foundation for positive discipline. Positive discipline is anchored on mutual respect, encouragement, and collaborative problem-solving. This perspective aligns with the socio-cultural theory of Lev Vygotsky, which views behavior and discipline as socially constructed through interactions among learners, teachers, and parents. Within this framework, discipline becomes a developmental process where learners acquire values, self-regulation, and social responsibility through guided participation and supportive relationships.

An open atmosphere is fundamental to this process because it allows learners to voice concerns, share experiences, and seek support without fear of ridicule, humiliation, or punishment. Adlit et al. (2026) emphasized that restorative practices and open dialogue are essential mechanisms for preventing violence and protecting children. When learners are encouraged to speak openly, schools are better positioned to identify risks, address concerns promptly, and provide appropriate interventions before situations escalate. This finding resonates with the voice of one learner who shared, “When our teacher listens, we feel safe to speak.” Such a statement demonstrates that psychological safety emerges when learners perceive their teachers as approachable, empathetic, and responsive to their needs.

The importance of creating spaces where learners can freely express themselves is further reinforced by DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026: Guidelines on Ensuring a Safe and Motivating Learning Environment (ESMLE). The Order emphasizes that schools must establish environments where learners can participate without fear of violence, intimidation, harassment, discrimination, or exclusion and where safety is supported through prevention, early

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intervention, reporting mechanisms, and stakeholder cooperation. Moreover, the policy highlights that safety should support learning rather than merely punish misconduct, reflecting the core principles of positive discipline and learner-centered education.

Equally important is the role of teachers in modeling respect and values. Heraña and Heraña (2026) found that teachers who consistently demonstrated fairness, accountability, and respect established stronger relationships with learners and enhanced trust within the school community. One teacher aptly stated, “Respect is not taught—it is shown.” This insight highlights that values are most effectively learned through observation and experience rather than instruction alone. When teachers demonstrate honesty, empathy, fairness, patience, and responsibility, learners are more likely to emulate these behaviors in their interactions with peers and adults.

This finding aligns closely with the provisions of DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 (DepEd Child Protection Policy), which promotes respect for children's rights and dignity while prohibiting practices that may inflict physical or psychological harm. The policy recognizes that respectful treatment by adults creates conditions where learners feel valued, protected, and empowered. Similarly, DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026 underscores the importance of protecting learner dignity, well-being, and rights while promoting a culture of respect, inclusivity, and shared responsibility among all members of the school community

Furthermore, modeling respect and maintaining open communication directly support the objectives of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10627) and its implementing guidelines under DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013. Learners who feel heard and respected are more likely to report incidents of bullying, harassment, or discrimination. At the same time, classrooms characterized by respectful interactions reduce opportunities for aggressive and exclusionary behavior. Open dialogue encourages early reporting, while teacher role-modeling establishes norms that discourage bullying and promote empathy, accountability, and social responsibility.

The synergy between openness and value-based modeling is likewise evident in contemporary international findings. The Safe to Learn Coalition (2025-2026) reported that schools promoting open dialogue and respectful role-modeling experienced lower incidents of bullying and higher levels of learner engagement. These findings suggest that safety is not solely achieved through surveillance or disciplinary policies but through relationships that foster trust, belonging, and mutual respect. When learners are given opportunities to express themselves and teachers consistently embody positive values, schools develop cultures where safety becomes self-sustaining.

Moreover, DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026 adopts a whole-of-society approach in ensuring learner protection, recognizing that parents, local government units, community stakeholders, and school personnel all share responsibility in promoting learner well-being and safety. The Order strengthens Child Protection Committees, reporting mechanisms, counseling services, and psychosocial support systems while emphasizing preventive education and positive behavioral interventions. Consequently, the open atmosphere cultivated by teachers does not exist in isolation but is reinforced by institutional structures that prioritize learner voice, protection, and participation.

Overall, the findings indicate that open communication and the consistent modeling of respect and values are not peripheral practices but central pillars of a safe and motivating learning environment. By listening to learners, honoring their dignity, encouraging dialogue, and demonstrating positive values through everyday actions, teachers cultivate psychological safety and strengthen trust within the school community. Consistent with the goals of DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026, DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, and Republic Act No. 10627, these practices embed protection, respect, and accountability into daily school life. Ultimately, safety is intensified when learners experience discipline as guidance, relationships as sources of support, and schools as communities where every individual is respected, heard, and valued.

- *Diversity Accommodation and Prevention of Bullying*

The findings revealed that teachers consistently emphasized equal participation, recognition of individual differences, and proactive responses to bullying as essential practices in creating safe and supportive learning environments. These practices demonstrate that school safety extends beyond maintaining order and preventing misconduct; it involves creating conditions where every learner feels valued, protected, and empowered to participate fully in school life. Consistent with the principles of DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026: Guidelines on Ensuring a Safe and Motivating Learning Environment (ESMLE), safety is achieved when schools establish inclusive, child-friendly, and motivating environments where learners are free from violence, harassment, intimidation, and discrimination. The policy emphasizes prevention, respect for learner dignity, and shared responsibility among schools, families, and communities in ensuring learner well-being.

Teachers highlighted that accommodating diversity through differentiated instruction, cultural sensitivity, and recognition of learners’ unique abilities and temperaments promotes a strong sense of belonging among learners. By adjusting classroom strategies to meet varying needs, teachers create environments where learners feel accepted rather than marginalized. This finding aligns with Adlit et al. (2026), whose comparative study of child protection policies across Southeast Asia emphasized the importance of restorative and inclusive approaches in responding to diverse learner needs. Their findings indicate that schools that intentionally adopt inclusive practices reduce exclusion and strengthen equity among learners. As reflected in one learner's experience, “When my teacher understands my needs, I feel I belong.” Such experiences demonstrate that diversity accommodation contributes significantly to both academic success and emotional security by fostering

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acceptance and connectedness within the classroom community.

The significance of diversity accommodation is further reinforced by DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 (DepEd Child Protection Policy), which mandates schools to protect learners from discrimination and ensure their right to a learning environment that respects their dignity and individual circumstances. The policy recognizes that learners differ in their developmental needs, backgrounds, abilities, and experiences; therefore, educational practices must be responsive to these differences. When teachers acknowledge and respect learner diversity, they create opportunities for meaningful participation, strengthen self-esteem, and reduce the likelihood of exclusion, thereby contributing to a safer and more supportive school climate.

At the same time, the findings showed that teachers actively prevent bullying by establishing clear behavioral expectations, modeling respect, intervening immediately in conflicts, and educating learners about empathy and responsible behavior. These proactive measures ensure that inclusive environments are protected from threats that may undermine learner well-being. This finding is supported by Heraña and Heraña (2026), whose study on interagency governance in Isabela, Philippines, found that collaboration among schools, families, local government units, and community stakeholders significantly reduced incidents of peer aggression and strengthened school safety capacity. Their findings suggest that effective bullying prevention is most successful when supported by coordinated systems of monitoring, intervention, and stakeholder engagement. As one teacher in their study stated, “Bullying stops when respect becomes everyone’s rule.” This statement closely reflects the perspectives shared by participants in the present study, who emphasized discipline as guidance and respect rather than punishment.

The proactive prevention of bullying is likewise consistent with the mandates of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10627) and its implementing guidelines under DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013. These policies require schools to establish comprehensive anti-bullying programs, reporting mechanisms, intervention procedures, and preventive education initiatives that protect learners from physical, verbal, social, gender-based, and cyberbullying. By implementing clear classroom rules, encouraging respectful interactions, and addressing incidents promptly, teachers operationalize these policy requirements and create environments where learners feel secure from victimization and intimidation.

Moreover, DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026 strengthens the implementation of learner protection initiatives by harmonizing existing policies related to child protection, bullying prevention, learner rights, incident reporting, and psychosocial support. The Order highlights the importance of early identification of risks, preventive interventions, and collaborative responses to learner concerns. This preventive framework reinforces teachers’ efforts to accommodate diversity and address bullying before serious harm occurs. By integrating counseling services, Child Protection Committees, reporting mechanisms, and stakeholder participation, schools are better equipped to create environments where differences are respected, and conflicts are addressed constructively.

The synergy between diversity accommodation and bullying prevention is further validated by the findings of the Safe to Learn Coalition (2025-2026), which reported that schools implementing both inclusive education practices and structured anti-bullying programs experienced lower rates of victimization and higher levels of student engagement across more than sixty countries. These findings suggest that inclusivity and protection are not separate goals but mutually reinforcing dimensions of school safety. A parent's observation from the coalition's report, *“Safety grows when differences are respected, and bullying is not tolerated,”* encapsulates the relationship between these two practices. Learners are most secure when they are accepted for who they are and protected from behaviors that threaten their dignity and well-being.

Overall, the findings confirm that diversity accommodation and bullying prevention are mutually reinforcing practices that intensify safe school environments. Accommodating diversity cultivates acceptance, belonging, and equity, while bullying prevention safeguards these conditions by protecting learners from exclusion, aggression, and discrimination. Together, these practices advance the goals of DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026, DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, and Republic Act No. 10627 by embedding respect, protection, and shared responsibility into everyday school experiences. Consequently, safety becomes more than the absence of harm; it becomes the active presence of inclusion, respect, trust, and collective care, enabling learners to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

- *Guidance Over Punishment*

The findings in Chapter 4 revealed that teachers consistently framed discipline as guidance rather than punishment, emphasizing correction, respect, and values formation as essential components of a safe school environment. This perspective reflects a significant shift from traditional punitive approaches toward a learner-centered and developmental framework where discipline is viewed as a means of teaching responsibility, self-regulation, and positive social behavior. Rather than focusing on penalties and fear, teachers underscored the importance of helping learners understand the consequences of their actions and develop the skills necessary to make responsible decisions. This approach is strongly aligned with the principles of positive discipline, which regard mistakes as opportunities for learning and growth rather than occasions for punishment.

The findings support the work of Abejón-Fuentes et al. (2025), whose systematic review found that guidance-oriented disciplinary approaches reduce classroom disruption, decrease victimization, and improve overall school climate. Their study suggests that punitive

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disciplinary methods may contribute to resistance, conflict, and emotional distress, whereas supportive and corrective approaches encourage accountability and mutual respect. This finding resonates strongly with one participant's statement, “Discipline is guidance, not punishment.” Such a perspective illustrates that teachers view discipline as an educational process that promotes behavioral improvement while preserving learners' dignity and self-worth.

Similarly, Supsin, Siribanpitak, and Chaemchoy (2026) emphasized that professional development in Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) enhances teachers' classroom management skills and self-efficacy. Their findings indicate that educators who employ guidance-based strategies experience less classroom stress, fewer behavioral disruptions, and greater instructional effectiveness. These outcomes are evident in the participants' narratives, which emphasized consistency, fairness, and constructive interventions as means of strengthening learner engagement and maintaining a safe classroom atmosphere. By reframing discipline as guidance, teachers are able to create learning environments characterized by trust, cooperation, and mutual respect.

This guidance-oriented approach is further reinforced by DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026: Guidelines on Ensuring a Safe and Motivating Learning Environment (ESMLE), which promotes preventive, supportive, and developmentally appropriate interventions that protect learner well-being while fostering positive behavior. The policy explicitly emphasizes that school safety should support learning and development rather than merely focus on punishment. Moreover, it advocates for learner support systems, counseling services, psychosocial interventions, and collaborative stakeholder engagement to address behavioral concerns constructively. By prioritizing prevention, guidance, and restoration, the policy reinforces the notion that discipline should promote growth and accountability rather than fear or humiliation. Furthermore, the findings align with the principles of DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 (DepEd Child Protection Policy), which prohibits corporal punishment and other practices that may inflict physical or psychological harm on learners. The policy emphasizes respect for children's dignity, rights, and developmental needs, encouraging schools to adopt disciplinary approaches that are corrective, supportive, and protective. Guidance-based discipline therefore serves as a practical manifestation of the Child Protection Policy by ensuring that learner behavior is addressed through education, reflection, and positive relationship-building rather than coercion or shame.

A safe school environment flourishes when this guidance-oriented framework is complemented by an open atmosphere where learners feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of judgment or ridicule. The findings revealed that teachers intentionally cultivate classroom environments characterized by openness, active listening, and mutual respect. Such environments encourage learners to communicate concerns, seek help, and participate meaningfully in classroom discussions. According to Adlit et al. (2026), Southeast Asian child protection policies increasingly integrate restorative practices and open dialogue as vital mechanisms for violence prevention and learner protection. Their study found that when schools provide opportunities for learners to voice their concerns and experiences, potential issues can be identified and addressed before they escalate into more serious problems.

This perspective is reflected in the learner's statement, “When our teacher listens, we feel safe to speak.” Such a response highlights the vital role of teacher responsiveness in creating psychological safety. An open atmosphere dismantles barriers between teachers and learners, replacing silence, fear, and hesitation with trust, confidence, and engagement. Learners who feel heard are more likely to report bullying, seek assistance when experiencing difficulties, and participate actively in school life. Consequently, openness strengthens both individual well-being and collective safety.

The significance of open dialogue is likewise emphasized in DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026, which underscores the importance of reporting mechanisms, stakeholder communication, counseling services, and learner participation in maintaining safe and motivating learning environments. The policy highlights that schools should create conditions where learners can freely participate without fear of intimidation, discrimination, violence, or harassment while ensuring that concerns are addressed promptly and appropriately. Through such measures, openness becomes an important preventive strategy that supports both learner protection and positive discipline.

Equally important is the consistent modeling of respect and values by teachers. Positive discipline is most effective when learners observe the very behaviors being promoted within the classroom. When teachers demonstrate fairness, empathy, honesty, accountability, and respect in their daily interactions, they provide learners with concrete examples of how positive values should be expressed. This reflects the socio-cultural perspective of Lev Vygotsky, which views learning and behavioral development as products of social interaction and guided participation. Learners internalize values not merely through instruction but through observing how those values are lived by significant adults within their environment.

Ultimately, the findings suggest that discipline as guidance, combined with open communication and the modeling of respect and values, forms a powerful foundation for intensifying safe school environments. Consistent with DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026, DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, and the principles of positive discipline, these practices move beyond behavior management toward the development of responsible, respectful, and resilient learners. They foster trust, strengthen relationships, and cultivate a culture in which learners feel protected, valued, and empowered. As a result, safety becomes more than the absence of harm; it becomes the active presence of respect, dignity, belonging, and shared responsibility throughout the school community.

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26nov924

➢ *Different Challenges Teachers Encountered in Implementing Positive Discipline Practices Within the School Context*

Table 4 Different Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Implementing Positive Discipline Practices within the School Context

Practices	Sum of Ranks	Overall Rank
Inconsistent discipline practices between home (parental corporal punishment) and school environments.	75	1
Insufficient professional development or formal training and capacity-building workshops on practical, non-violent classroom management.	80	2
High teacher workload and stress levels leading to difficulty maintaining emotional regulation during disruptions.	160	3
Difficulty shifting from traditional punitive measures to constructive approaches.	210	4
Managing large class sizes and overcrowded classrooms while applying individualized positive discipline.	260	5
Lack of operational clarity on legal boundaries and consequences teachers can enforce without violating policies	300	6
Strong beliefs in punitive discipline limit acceptance of positive alternatives.	315	7

The findings reveal that teachers encounter complex systemic, cultural, and personal challenges in implementing positive discipline practices. These challenges underscore the continuing tension between traditional punitive disciplinary approaches and the rights-based, child-centered framework promoted by the Department of Education. Although teachers generally recognize the value of positive discipline in creating safe and supportive learning environments, its implementation is often constrained by factors that extend beyond the classroom. These barriers suggest that positive discipline should not be viewed solely as a classroom strategy but as a comprehensive educational reform requiring institutional support, policy clarity, stakeholder collaboration, and cultural transformation.

One of the most significant challenges identified is the inconsistency between home-based disciplinary practices and school-based positive discipline approaches. Teachers reported that many parents continue to rely on punitive methods, including harsh verbal discipline and corporal punishment, which often contradict the guidance-based strategies promoted in schools. As noted by Oyangorin (2026), conflicting disciplinary approaches between home and school undermine learners' understanding of behavioral expectations and weaken the long-term effectiveness of positive discipline. When learners experience punishment at home and guidance at school, they may receive mixed messages regarding accountability, responsibility, and conflict resolution. This concern is particularly relevant within the context of DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 (DepEd

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Child Protection Policy), which explicitly prohibits corporal punishment and requires schools to promote disciplinary approaches that respect children's dignity and rights. The policy recognizes that learner protection is a shared responsibility among schools, families, and communities; hence, sustained parent education and engagement are necessary to strengthen alignment between home and school disciplinary practices.

This challenge is further addressed in DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026: Guidelines on Ensuring a Safe and Motivating Learning Environment (ESMLE), which adopts a whole-of-society approach to learner protection by emphasizing the active participation of parents, guardians, local government units, and community stakeholders in promoting safe learning environments. The policy recognizes that school safety and positive behavior cannot be achieved through school-based initiatives alone but require coordinated efforts among all sectors involved in child development. Through strengthened stakeholder engagement, schools can promote consistent disciplinary practices that reinforce positive behavior across different learning environments.

Another major challenge concerns the limited training and professional development opportunities available to teachers regarding positive discipline and non-violent classroom management. Although positive discipline is increasingly advocated in educational policies, many teachers reported feeling insufficiently prepared to manage difficult behaviors without resorting to traditional punitive responses. Supsin et al. (2026), said that capacity-building programs significantly improve teacher confidence and effectiveness in implementing positive behavioral interventions. This finding aligns with the objectives of DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026, which emphasizes preventive interventions, learner support systems, and developmentally appropriate behavior management practices. However, without sustained professional development, teachers may struggle to translate policy expectations into classroom practice. The challenge therefore extends beyond awareness and requires systematic investment in teacher capacity-building, coaching, mentoring, and continuous learning opportunities.

The findings also reveal that teacher stress and workload significantly affect the implementation of positive discipline. Heavy teaching loads, extensive administrative responsibilities, and classroom management demands often limit teachers' capacity to respond calmly and constructively to behavioral issues. Abejón-Fuentes et al. (2025) identified teacher stress as a major factor contributing to reactive disciplinary responses and reduced implementation of positive discipline practices. This concern is particularly important because positive discipline relies heavily on emotional regulation, patience, empathy, and reflective decision-making. Recognizing this reality, DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026 highlights the importance of psychosocial support systems and holistic well-being within school environments. While the policy predominantly focuses on learner welfare, its emphasis on supportive school cultures suggests that teacher wellness must also be prioritized to ensure successful implementation of guidance-oriented disciplinary practices.

A related challenge involves deeply entrenched beliefs favoring punitive discipline. Many teachers have themselves been educated and socialized within systems where punishment was viewed as an effective means of controlling behavior. Consequently, shifting toward restorative and constructive approaches requires more than technical training; it requires fundamental changes in mindset and professional identity. This challenge illustrates what educational scholars describe as cultural inertia, wherein longstanding practices persist despite evidence supporting alternative approaches. The persistence of punitive beliefs stands in contrast to the philosophy embodied in DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, which advocates learner-centered, rights-based disciplinary approaches that preserve children's dignity and protect them from physical and psychological harm. Positive discipline therefore requires a cultural transformation in which discipline is increasingly viewed as an opportunity for teaching, guidance, and character formation rather than punishment and control.

Structural barriers likewise emerged as significant impediments. Teachers reported that overcrowded classrooms limit their ability to provide individualized interventions and meaningful support to learners exhibiting behavioral challenges. Positive discipline depends on understanding learners' unique needs, building relationships, and providing timely guidance; however, these processes become difficult when teachers manage large numbers of students simultaneously. As Oyangorin (2026) observed, excessive class sizes often force teachers to rely on generalized management techniques rather than personalized interventions. While teachers strive to uphold child-centered approaches, structural realities may hinder their implementation. This finding highlights the need for policy-level interventions addressing teacher-student ratios, support personnel deployment, and resource allocation to strengthen positive discipline initiatives.

Uncertainty regarding permissible disciplinary actions also emerged as an important concern. Teachers expressed hesitation about applying disciplinary interventions for fear of violating existing child protection and learner rights policies. While such caution reflects increasing awareness of learner protection standards, it may also create confusion if policies are not accompanied by clear operational guidelines. In this regard, DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026 contributes significantly by consolidating and harmonizing existing learner protection policies, including those related to child protection, bullying prevention, incident reporting, and disciplinary interventions. The Order provides schools with more coherent guidance on prevention, response mechanisms, reporting procedures, and support services, thereby helping address ambiguities that may hinder teachers' confidence in implementing positive discipline.

Furthermore, the implementation of positive discipline is closely linked with the goals of the Anti-Bullying Act of

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2013 (Republic Act No. 10627) and its implementing guidelines under DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013. These policies require schools to establish proactive systems for preventing bullying, promoting respectful relationships, and addressing learner concerns through constructive interventions rather than purely punitive sanctions. Teachers' uncertainty regarding disciplinary responses may therefore be addressed through stronger orientation programs that clarify how positive discipline supports anti-bullying efforts while remaining fully compliant with learner protection policies.

Overall, the challenges identified in this study demonstrate that successful implementation of positive discipline requires multi-level interventions involving teachers, parents, school leaders, policymakers, and community stakeholders. Cultural barriers such as parental reliance on punitive discipline and entrenched beliefs about punishment must be addressed through sustained advocacy and parent education. Systemic barriers, including limited training, policy ambiguity, overcrowded classrooms, and excessive workload, require institutional reforms and resource support.

Personal barriers involving teacher stress, emotional regulation, and professional confidence necessitate ongoing mentoring and wellness initiatives. Consistent with DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013, and DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2026, positive discipline can only be fully realized when schools move beyond isolated classroom practices and establish a coordinated, rights-based system that promotes learner protection, shared responsibility, and a culture of respect. Ultimately, these policies affirm that positive discipline is not merely a behavioral management technique but a fundamental mechanism for ensuring safe, inclusive, and motivating learning environments for all learners.

- *Insights of Teachers Regarding the Implementation of Positive Discipline in Intensifying a Safe School Environment*

Teachers' insights reveal that the implementation of positive discipline plays a pivotal role in intensifying a safe school environment. Their perspectives converge on the idea that discipline is not about punishment or control, but about cultivating respect, responsibility, and collaboration. The following themes highlight how teachers' practices transform discipline into a collective mission that embeds safety into everyday routines and relationships.

- *Cultivating Awareness & Shared Responsibility*

Teachers emphasized that awareness among learners and shared responsibility among stakeholders form the foundation of a safe school environment. When learners understand their rights and responsibilities, they become more mindful of their actions, reducing risky behaviors and fostering accountability. Positive discipline cultivates responsibility through modeling respect and guidance rather than fear or coercion. Shared responsibility builds trust between learners, teachers, and parents, ensuring that safety measures are consistently applied and respected. This collective approach transforms discipline into a mission of care and protection, embedding safety into everyday routines and values.

- *Collective Vigilance, Communication & Collaboration*

Teachers highlighted that vigilance is most effective when it is collective, with all stakeholders contributing to identifying risks and preventing harm. Safety becomes proactive when parents, teachers, learners, and community members act as guardians, embedding protective practices into daily routines. Effective communication strengthens this vigilance by minimizing misunderstandings and ensuring that policies and concerns are clearly shared among stakeholders. Collaboration amplifies these efforts, as teachers model respect, parents reinforce discipline at home, and community members advocate for child protection. Together, vigilance, communication, and collaboration weave a strong safety net that intensifies the safe school environment and sustains trust across the school community.

- *Open Atmosphere & Modeling Respect*

A safe school environment thrives when classrooms embody openness, allowing learners to express themselves without fear of judgment. Teachers noted that such openness nurtures dialogue, curiosity, and confidence, dismantling barriers between learners and educators. Modeling respect complements this openness, as teachers demonstrate fairness, accountability, and courteous language in their daily interactions. Learners naturally emulate these behaviors, turning respect into a lived practice rather than a written rule. The synergy of openness and respect fosters mutual trust, reduces conflicts, and embeds values into classroom culture, thereby intensifying safety and responsibility.

- *Diversity Accommodation & Bullying Prevention*

Teachers underscored that accommodating diversity and preventing bullying are interconnected pillars of a safe and inclusive school environment. By recognizing varied backgrounds, learning needs, and temperaments, educators create a culture where differences are valued rather than merely tolerated. Proactive prevention of bullying safeguards this inclusivity, sending a clear message that respect and empathy are non-negotiable values. Interventions against exclusion or aggression affirm the dignity of each learner and protect the climate of belonging. Together, diversity accommodation and bullying prevention intensify safety by fostering equity, empathy, and mutual trust across the school community.

Across these themes, teachers' insights converge on the principle that positive discipline is guidance, not punishment. It strengthens safety by cultivating awareness, fostering shared responsibility, embedding respect, promoting collaboration, and protecting diversity. These practices transform discipline into a cultural foundation for safety, ensuring that learners feel secure, respected, and empowered within a community committed to child protection. Ultimately, the teachers' voices affirm that a safe school environment is not incidental but intentional,

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26nov924

sustained through collective vigilance, respect, and shared responsibility.

➢ *Capacity Building and Professional Development Plan that may be Proposed to Enhance and Sustain a Safe School Environment Based on Teachers' Practices of Positive Discipline*

The proposed capacity building and professional development plan reflects a comprehensive framework designed to enhance and sustain a safe school environment through the consistent application of positive discipline practices. Each objective directly addresses the challenges teachers face, while the strategies provide actionable steps that align with child protection policies and rights-based approaches.

- *Consistency Between Home and School Discipline*

Strengthening consistency between home and school discipline approaches ensures that learners receive unified guidance rooted in non-punitive strategies. Parent orientation sessions on positive discipline and child protection policies serve as the foundation for this alignment. By equipping parents with knowledge of rights-based practices, schools foster a supportive environment where discipline is not fragmented but reinforced across settings. The expected outcome is a culture where teachers and parents apply child-friendly discipline consistently, reducing confusion and reinforcing learners' sense of security. Positive discipline is both a practical strategy and a theoretical framework. It bridges micro-level classroom practices with macro-level institutional policies, ensuring that discipline is consistent, respectful, and growth-oriented. In the Philippine setting, these insights must be harmonized with the DepEd Child Protection Policy (2012) and international frameworks such as the UNCRC (1989), which mandate child-centered approaches to discipline. By integrating psychological theory, practical strategies, and policy alignment, positive discipline emerges as a holistic approach that strengthens both learner development and school safety.

- *Enhancing Teachers' Knowledge and Skills*

Teachers' capacity to implement constructive classroom management is strengthened through sustained professional development. Capacity-building workshops, collaboration with external experts, and dissemination of simplified policy guidelines provide teachers with practical tools to replace punitive practices with restorative approaches. Training on positive reinforcement, logical consequences, and restorative practices ensures that discipline fosters respect and accountability rather than fear. The development of a school discipline handbook further institutionalizes these practices, creating clear standards for teachers. Ultimately, teachers become equipped with non-violent strategies that enhance safety and nurture a respectful learning environment.

- *Reducing Teacher Stress and Workload*

Recognizing that teacher well-being directly impacts classroom safety, the plan integrates workload management and wellness programs. Redistribution of tasks, administrative support, and digital tools help reduce stress, while debriefing sessions, relaxation activities, and counseling services strengthen emotional regulation. These measures ensure that teachers remain effective in implementing positive discipline without being overwhelmed by excessive demands. The expected output is a healthier school climate where teachers can consistently apply discipline strategies, supported by emotional resilience and reduced stress.

- *Individualized Strategies in Overcrowded Classrooms*

Overcrowded classrooms pose challenges to individualized discipline, yet cooperative learning and peer mentoring provide innovative solutions. Differentiated instruction and flexible seating arrangements reduce disruptions and allow teachers to address diverse learner needs. Student leaders play an active role in promoting responsibility, distributing tasks, and reinforcing discipline practices. Classroom management guides, seating charts, and peer mentoring manuals serve as practical tools to support these strategies. The expected outcome is evidence-based improvement in learner behavior and safety, demonstrating that individualized discipline can be sustained even in large class settings.

This action plan demonstrates that sustaining a safe school environment requires a multi-dimensional approach, one that aligns home and school practices, empowers teachers, supports their well-being, and adapts to diverse classroom realities. By embedding positive discipline into training, policy, and everyday routines, schools cultivate respect, accountability, and collaboration. The expected outputs—consistent application of child-friendly discipline, improved teacher capacity, reduced stress, and evidence-based behavioral improvements—collectively intensify safety and ensure that learners thrive in a secure, respectful, and inclusive environment.

IV. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

➢ *Findings*

- The different teachers' practices being adopted in relation to positive discipline along: Creating awareness among learners, parents, and stakeholders were orienting students at the beginning of the school year on classroom norms and rights-based discipline policies with a frequency of 49 and ranked 1st, followed by communicating student behavioral progress and positive behaviors to parents regularly, not just misbehavior 48 which placed 2nd. Meanwhile, conducting orientation sessions/meetings with parents regarding non-punitive discipline methods at home acquired a frequency of 46 and ranked 3rd. Another practice noted was actively collaborating with school heads and community stakeholders to promote positive discipline, with a frequency of 45 and ranking 4th. Posting visible child protection advocacy materials in the classroom obtained a frequency of 38 and got the 5th rank.

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- Other practices along providing constructive and non-punitive measure for classroom management were, establishing clear, age -appropriate classroom rules and logical consequences together with the pupils acquired a frequency of 42 and ranked 1st, followed by addressing classroom disruptions through calm, private conversations rather than public reprimands or humiliation, with a frequency of 39 and 2nd in rank. Meanwhile, focusing on teaching the corrective behavior and underlying skill rather than simply penalizing the student's mistake obtained a frequency of 36 and ranked 3rd. Using positive reinforcement to encourage acceptable classroom behavior was 4th from the rank with a frequency of 34 and practicing emotional regulation and de-escalation techniques when dealing with severe behavioral issues earned a frequency of 27 and ranked 5th.
- Different practices of teachers along cultivating a child-friendly and inclusive school environment include creating an open classroom atmosphere where students feel safe to express thoughts without fear of ridicule, ranked 1st with a frequency of 50, while ensuring equal opportunities for all students to participate in classroom activities regardless of academic standing has a frequency of 49 and ranked 2nd. Another practice, accommodating diverse student backgrounds, learning needs, and temperaments when managing classroom dynamics was 3rd in rank with a frequency of 48. Meanwhile, actively preventing and addressing peer bullying, exclusion, and discriminatory behavior in the classroom was ranked 4th, with a frequency of 44, and providing a physical environment that is safe, orderly, and conducive to collaborative learning was 5th in rank, with a frequency of 41.
- Teachers' practices of positive discipline were found to directly contribute to the intensification of a safe school environment. By establishing predictable routines, promoting mutual respect, and reinforcing consistency between school and home, teachers create conditions that reduce conflict and foster psychological security. Moreover, collaboration with stakeholders strengthens advocacy for child protection, further embedding safety within the school culture.
- The challenge on inconsistency between home and school environments, particularly where parental corporal punishment conflicts with school-based approaches obtained a sum of ranks of 75 and had an overall rank 1.Closely following is the challenge on insufficient professional development or formal training and capacity-building workshops on non-violent classroom management recorded a sum of ranks of 80 and was ranked 2 overall, High teacher workload and stress levels emerged obtained a sum of ranks of 160 and an overall rank of 3. Difficulty in shifting from traditional punitive measures to constructive approaches garnered a sum of ranks of 210 and an overall rank of 4. Managing large class sizes and overcrowded classrooms while applying individualized positive discipline was ranked fifth, with a sum of ranks of 260. The lack of operational clarity on legal boundaries and consequences teachers can enforce without violating policies obtained a sum of ranks of 300 and had an overall rank of 6. Strong beliefs in punitive discipline limiting acceptance of positive alternatives were ranked seventh, with a sum of ranks of 315.
- Teachers' insights underscore the implementation of positive discipline in building trust and motivating learners. They emphasize that recognition of good behavior is more impactful than punishment, and that consistency and collaboration are essential for sustainability. Importantly, teachers highlight the need for ongoing professional development to adapt to evolving school contexts and challenges.
- In response to these findings, Capacity Building and Professional Development is proposed. This plan includes training workshops on positive discipline strategies, parent engagement programs to align home and school practices, peer mentoring among teachers, and monitoring systems to evaluate discipline outcomes. Policy reinforcement is also recommended to ensure consistency across classrooms and grade levels.

Overall, the findings affirm that teachers' practices of positive discipline are integral to cultivating safe school environments. While challenges persist, the insights and proposed action plan provide a pathway for enhancing and sustaining these efforts through structured capacity building and professional development.

➢ *Conclusions*

- Teachers' practices in positive discipline are diverse and holistic, encompassing awareness-building among learners, parents, and stakeholders; constructive, non-punitive classroom management; and cultivation of child-friendly and inclusive school environments.
- Teachers emphasized collaborative, constructive, and non-punitive classroom management practices to foster positive discipline.
- Teachers prioritize psychological safety and equal learner engagement in cultivating a child-friendly and inclusive school environment.
- These practices contribute to intensifying a safe school environment by fostering respect, consistency, collaboration, and psychological security for learners.
- Teachers face persistent challenges in implementing positive discipline due to limited parental support, learner resistance, resource constraints, and time pressures, which hinder its consistent application in classrooms.
- Teachers' insights affirm that positive discipline builds trust, motivates learners, and sustains safe environments, but its long-term success depends on consistency, collaboration, and ongoing professional development.
- A well-structured capacity-building and professional development plan can enhance and sustain safe school environments by equipping teachers, parents, and stakeholders with the necessary skills and alignment in discipline practices.

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26nov924

➢ *Recommendations*

- Schools should conduct regular orientations and campaigns for learners, parents, and stakeholders to strengthen awareness of positive discipline.
- Schools should formalize and support a school-wide framework for restorative and constructive classroom management.
- Conduct development sessions focused on inclusive pedagogy and peer-mediation programs.
- Promote active collaboration among teachers, parents, learners, and community stakeholders to sustain shared responsibility for safety.
- Schools should strengthen collaboration among parents, learners, and administrators while providing adequate resources and professional development to support teachers in sustaining positive discipline practices.
- Schools should institutionalize professional development programs and collaborative practices to ensure teachers are continuously supported in applying positive discipline strategies with consistency and shared responsibility.
- Schools should implement capacity-building and professional development plans to strengthen teachers' engagement, and establish peer mentoring and monitoring systems to ensure consistent application and reinforcement of positive discipline policies.

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