Journal of Media Horizons
ISSN: 2710-4060 2710-4052 Volume 6, Issue 3, 2025

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT AS A PREDICTIVE TOOL FOR ENCOURAGING AND SUSTAINING STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Dr. Iram Muzzamil[*1], Dr. Zufishan Muzzamil[2], Dr. Zunaira Muzzamil[3], Zuraiz Muzzamil[4]

[*1]*Assistant Professor, The University of Lahore*
[2]*Akhtar Saeed Trust Hospital*
[3]*Bahria International Hospital Orchard*

[*1]iram.muzzamil@ed.uol.edu.pk, [2]zuffy311@gmail.com, [3]zunairaaa93@gmail.com, [4]Mizzzz2001@gmail.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16558337

Keywords
Positive reinforcement, techniques, schoolteachers, primary students

Article History
Received on 25 April 2025
Accepted on 11 July 2025
Published on 29 July 2025

Copyright @Author
Corresponding Author: *
Dr. Iram Muzzammil

Abstract
Positive reinforce is the practice of enhancing the potential of a desired behavior by rewarding it by providing encouragement in managing students' engagement in academic. This study aimed to investigate the reinforcement influence on students' engagement in learning at educational setting. The study was quantitative in design with the population of teachers in six secondary schools in the Lahore Division. A random sampling technique used from a sample for the study comprised 250 teachers in which 118 were male and 132 were females. The researcher gathered data through a questionnaire in which a Likert scale used to rate different statements on the practices of positive reinforcement. Descriptive and inferential statistics employed to analyze the data. The findings of the study concluded that many of the teachers perceived the positive reinforcement as an effective strategy. The outcome of the study suggests that positive reinforcement plays an important part during teaching and maintains students' desired behavior towards engagement in academics.

INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, there has been an increasing interest in learning how to use positive reinforcement as a predictive tool to support and maintain student behavior. The appropriate use of reinforcement may increase learning outcomes, motivation, and feelings of self-worth along with the student conduct (Aldhilan & Rafiq, 2025). Positive reinforcement is the process of rewarding a desired behavior by offering encouragement, therefore increasing its potential. Learning arises gradually based on the events that follow a particular behavior, and it does not have a particular perspective. It is a reaction that enhances an expectation of behavior. Through the consequences as well as with the application of positive reinforcement, it effectively increases a person's positive behavior, which is necessary for better outcomes (Alberto & Troutman, 2010). It is becoming an increasingly prevalent strategy in educational institutions to promote good student behavior, increase engagement, and create a positive learning environment. To encourage behaviors like participating in class, turning in assignments on time, and interacting politely with teachers and peers, educators and school officials use a variety of positive reinforcement techniques, including praise, awards, tokens, and privileges (Aldhilan, Rafiq & Afzal, 2025). According to Skinner, learning is a dynamic process, and consequences follow behaviors taken by a person in their environment, and they repeat the behavior if outcomes are favorable (Staddon & Cerutti, 2003; Rafiq, Afzal & Kamran, 2022). The basic idea is that

one may change behavior by managing the results of that act.

Research Question

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of positive reinforcement on students' engagement:

Q1. What is the impact of positive reinforcement on students' academic performance?

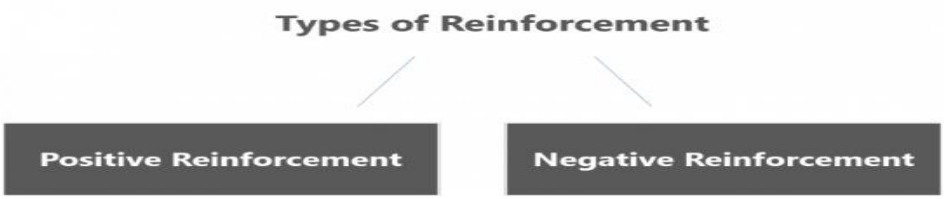
Q2. To what extent does positive reinforcement improve the academic achievement of students in classroom settings?

Literature Review

This literature review offers a comprehensive overview and review of the research work on positive reinforcement and its effectiveness in teaching and learning process (Afzal & Rafiq, 2022). It highlights relevant concepts and methods that give an overview of current levels of understanding and serves in identifying research gaps.

Positive reinforcement

He used the term "Reinforcement," which forms the basis of the applications examined in this exploratory inquiry. The introduction of desirable or pleasant stimuli after the performance of a behavior" is what is meant by positive reinforcement e (Nickerson, 2022). Learning can be viewed as a process of transformation that leads to long-lasting changes since it entails an educator introducing change.



Types of Reinforcement

Reinforcement is a relationship between two environmental events, one of which is a behavior (reaction) and the other being a subsequent occurrence or consequence (Rafiq, Kamran & Afzal, 2024). Reinforcement is only applicable when the behavior grows or stays the same because of the consequence (Alberto and Troutman, 2013). There are distinct types of positive reinforcement tools depending on the situation and the individual, there are four main categories of positive reinforcers that can be applied to improve students' behavior and emotional intelligence (Cherry, 2022). There are two types of reinforcement: Positive Reinforcement and Negative Reinforcement.

Positive reinforcement is a practice for changing behavior that makes behavior more likely to happen. By providing an enjoyable reward once the activity occurs, it reinforces the behavior. The behaviorist B.F. Skinner was the first to introduce positive reinforcement. Skinner maintained that rewarding positive behavior may alter a person's or child's behavior because they would see it as the most advantageous and natural course of action (McCarthy, 2010).

Negative reinforcement is to remove undesirable stimulus to promote positive behavior. Through the prevention, elimination, or avoidance of an unpleasant consequence or adverse stimuli, it reinforces reaction or behavior (Ackerman, 2022). In negative reinforcement, after the individual displays the desired behavior, a stimulus or consequence they view as aversive is removed or taken away. These are varied into the following as

Natural reinforcers are ones that happen as a direct result of the behavior. For instance, students focus on class and put a lot of effort into their tests, and they consequently receive excellent points.

Social reinforcers are expressions of approval for a behavior, such as a teacher sayingor writing “excellent work” to a student. (Kamery, 2004).

Tangible reinforcers are actual and physical rewards for desired behavior such as Candy, snacks, toys, cash, or any other coveted item could be among them. Even

though these rewards have the potential to be quite effective, using them excessively can deter certain behaviors. (Kamery, 2004).

Token reinforcers Token reinforcers are points or tokens awarded for performing certain actions. These can then be exchanged for something of value. For example, a teacher may give students points for completing assignments on time, which can be exchanged for a prize (Kamery, 2004).

Predictive Role of Positive Reinforcement:

Studies suggest that the consistent use of reinforcement can serve as a predictive tool for long-term behavior change (Rafiq, Iqbal, & Afzal, 2024). According to McLeod (2019), reinforcement not only promotes immediate behavioral compliance but also predicts future student engagement when tailored to individual needs and delivered systematically. Reinforcement history plays a crucial role in determining how students respond to subsequent behavioral cues and expectations. Positive reinforcement is a widely used technique to promote actions since it is currently a successful teaching strategy and is likely to be retained after the reinforcement is over. Diedrick (2010) explained that even after the reinforcer is taken away, positive reinforcement can be used to enhance students' social skills and behaviors in the teaching learning environment.

The impact of positive reinforcement on students' academic performance was investigated by Khattak and Ahmad (2018). Students with the same socioeconomic background and no cultural differences were the study's main emphasis. The results of the study indicated that student academic progress is impacted by positive reinforcement. Therefore, teachers can use positive reinforcement to enhance their teaching methods and advance the academic growth of their students.

Eremie and Doueyi-Fiderikumo (2018) studied how positive reinforcement affected students' academic performance. Specifically, the study used a survey design methodology and concentrated on secondary school pupils. The findings of the study demonstrated the potential use of positive reinforcement in raising students' academic performance.

Ismail Adam Ismail (2023) investigated the impact of positive reinforcement on students' intellectual, behavioral, and social involvement in the classroom. The results of the study indicated that the students are more involved in the educational environment when they get positive reinforcement. Thus, when there is a classroom of students observing, students become more receptive than usual to a reward (Ackerman, 2022).

Data analysis and Interpretation

Data was analyzed to determine the extent of positive reinforcement practices teachers employed based on the frequency of occurrences with 250 respondents completed the questionnaire. The responses of the participants were as follows: The first question asked participants about positive reinforcement as an effective way to involve students in the learning process. The response results are shown below:

Positive reinforcement as an effective way to involve students in the learning process

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
Positive reinforcement as an effective way to involve students in the learning process	104	88	21	19	18

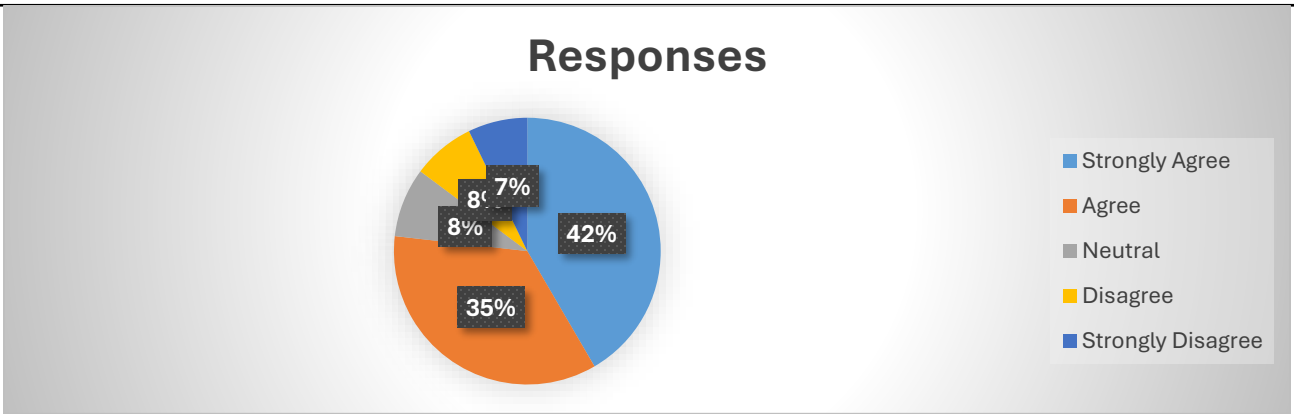


Figure 1. Results from Question 1 of the survey.

The second question in the survey was about how the use of positive reinforcement can reinforce desirable behaviors that are more likely to be repeated. The figure below shows participants' responses:

Employing positive reinforcement strengthens desirable behaviors that are more likely to repeat

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
Employing positive reinforcement strengthens desirable behaviors that are more likely to repeat	95	102	11	22	20

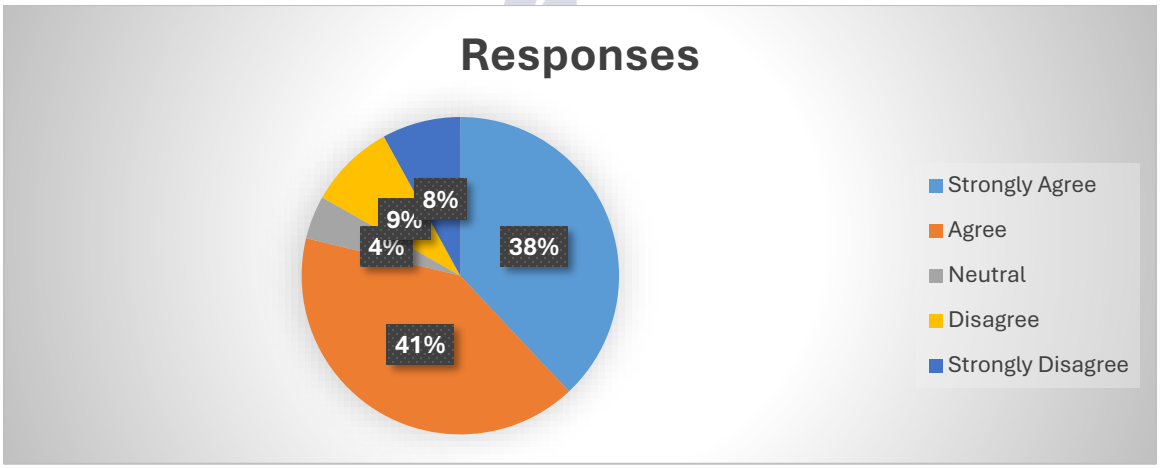


Figure 2. Results from Question 2 of the survey.

The third question centered on the significance of using positive reinforcement to motivate and inspire students' academic growth. The participants' responses are displayed as a percentage in the figure below:

Using positive reinforcement is significant to motivate and inspire students' academic growth.

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
Using positive reinforcement is significant to motivate and inspire students' academic growth	103	99	16	20	12

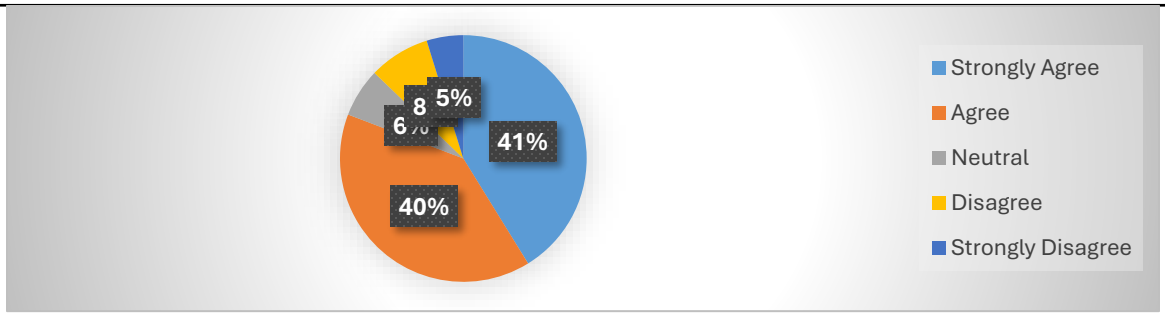


Figure 3. Results from Question 3 of the survey.

The fourth question asked participants that praise, and reward are important for desired behavior in students. Figure 4 shows the results:

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
Praise and reward are important for desired behavior in students	100	86	23	23	18

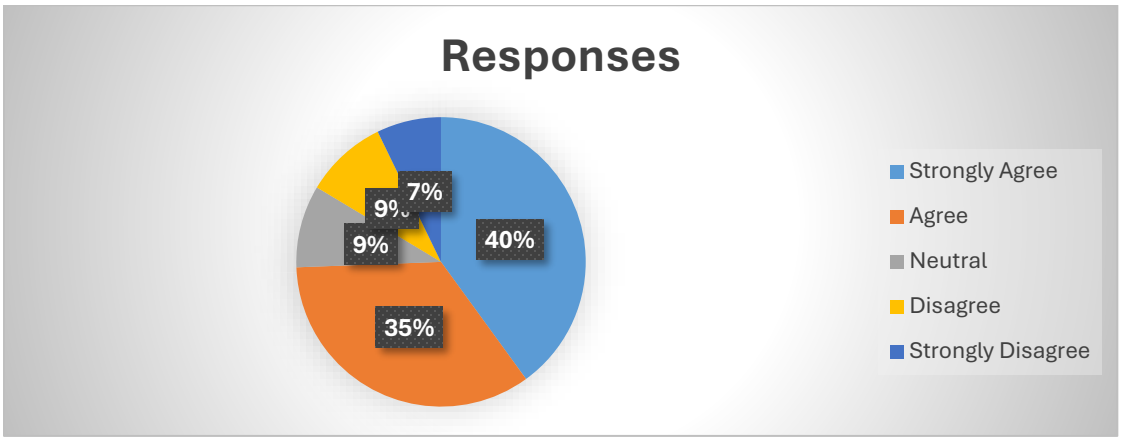
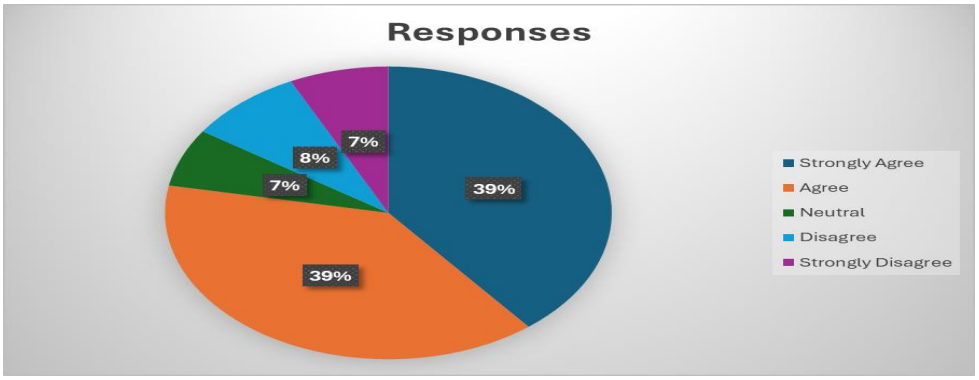


Figure 4. Results from Question 4 of the survey.

In the fifth question, the participants perception required about positive reinforcement is necessary for recognizing students' performance for improving self-confidence.

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
Positive reinforcement is necessary for recognizing students' performance for improving self-confidence.	100	86	23	23	18



Discussion

The level of agreement represented high suggests that teachers and educators value reinforcement strategies and incorporating them into classroom management and instructional design can be beneficial. The outcome of the study indicates common appreciation of the effectiveness of positive reinforcement, reflecting common understanding and acceptance of behaviorist principles, such as those proposed by B.F. Skinner, which emphasize the role of reinforcement in shaping behavior. The difference of perspectives could stem from differing experiences, philosophical views favoring intrinsic motivation, or doubts about its long-term impact. Overall, the results suggest a strong inclination toward using positive reinforcement as a strategy to encourage desirable behaviors, with implications for its continued application in education, management, therapy, and other behavior-focused fields. The outcomes of the study highlights that positive reinforcement worked better for modifying behavior of the learner, motivation, engagement, and classroom discipline so teachers regularly employ reinforcement practices as with the outcomes of the study of Fatima & Tanveer (2023) that good grades in results of the students received more positive reinforcement. They are evidently observed as more motivated towards learning.

Recommendation

- Teachers at all levels should be trained in the use of positive reinforcement to help raise pupils' academic performance.
- Government and educational institutions should provide training to educators on the most efficient techniques to implement positive reinforcement.

References

Ackerman, K. B. (2022). Interventions and Supports for Students in General Education Kindergarten Classrooms.

Adam Ismail, I. (2023). Using Positive Reinforcement to Increase Student Engagement in The Classroom.

Adibsereshki, N., Abkenar, S. J., Ashoori, M., & Mirzamani, M. (2015). The effectiveness of using reinforcements in the classroom on the academic achievement of students with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities*, *19*(1), 83-93.

Afzal, A., & Rafiq, S. (2022). Impact of Teachers' Instructional Techniques on Students' Involvement in Class: A Case Study. *UMT Education Review*, *5*(2), 184-204. https://doi.org/10.32350/uer.52.10

Alberto, P., Troutman, A. C., & Axe, J. B. (2013). *Applied behavior analysis for teachers* (p. 480). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Aldhilan, D., & Rafiq, S. (2025). Transforming Early Childhood Education in Saudi Arabia: AI's Impact on Emotional Recognition and Personalized Learning. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, *14* (4), 2473-2486. https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v14i4.32660

Aldhilan, D., Rafiq, S., & Afzal, A. (2025). Saudi Arabian preschool teachers' perceptions, positive and negative experiences of play-based robotics activities. *Cogent Education*, *12*(1), 2516375. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2516375

Cherry, K. (2022). The basics of prosocial behavior. *Retrieved from very well mind: https://www. verywellmind. com/what-is-prosocial-behavior-2795479*.

Dezfouli, A., & Balleine, B. W. (2012). Habits, action sequences and reinforcement learning. *European Journal of Neuroscience*, *35*(7), 1036-1051.

Diedrich, J. L. (2010). *Motivating students using positive reinforcement* (Doctoral dissertation, SUNY College at Brockport).

Eremie, M., & Doueyi-Fiderikumo, J. (2018). Positive reinforcement on academic achievement of senior secondary school students in river state. *Int. J. Innov. Soc. Sci. Educ. Res*, *6*(2), 48-56.

Fatima, S., Kirmani, N. S., & Tanweer, L. (2023). Impact of Reinforcement Strategies on Students' Learning Behaviors in Classroom at Primary Level. *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, *4*(4), 276-283.

Kamery, R. H. (2004, July). Motivation techniques for positive reinforcement: A review. In *Allied Academies International Conference. Academy of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues. Proceedings* (Vol. 8, No. 2, p. 91). Jordan Whitney Enterprises, Inc.

Laura, C., & Peters, M. A. (2010). Reinforcement in the classroom improves student motivation and performance. *Virginia Department of Education's training and Technical Assistance Center, Virginia Commonwealth University, Partnership for People with Disabilities, School of Education*.

Nickerson, C. (2024). Positive reinforcement: What is it and how does it work? *Simply Psychology*.

Noohi, E., Abaszadeh, A., & Maddah, S. S. B. (2013). University engagement and collaborative learning in nursing students of Kerman University of Medical Sciences. *Iranian journal of nursing and midwifery research*, *18*(6), 505-510.

Rafiq, S., Afzal, A., & Kamran, F. (2022). Impact of School Environment on Students' Academic Achievements at the University Level. *VFAST Transactions on Education and Social Sciences* *10*(4), 19-30. https://doi.org/10.21015/vtess.v10i4.1216

Rafiq, S., Iqbal, S., & Afzal, A. (2024). The Impact of Digital Tools and Online Learning Platforms on Higher Education Learning Outcomes. *Al-Mahdi Research Journal (MRJ)*, *5*(4), 359-369. https://ojs.mrj.com.pk/index.php/MRJ/article/view/342

Rafiq, S., Kamran, F., & Afzal, A. (2024). Assessing Environmental Awareness Integration in the Curriculum: A Case Study of Lahore's Private Schools. *Al-Qudwah*, *02*(04), 86-100. https://al-qudwah.com/index.php/aqrj/article/view/36

Staddon, J. E., & Cerutti, D. T. (2003). Operant conditioning. *Annual review of psychology*, *54*(1), 115-144.

Watling, R., & Schwartz, I. S. (2004). Understanding and implementing positive reinforcement as an intervention strategy for children with disabilities. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *58*(1), 113-116.

IEER
Institute for Excellence in Education & Research