



## The Use of Positive Reinforcement of the Clean Environment Theme in IPA Learning Motivation and Indonesian Language Class IV SDN 060886 Medan City

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### ABSTRACT

*One of the relevant strategies to increase learning motivation is positive reinforcement, which is closely related to student motivation. Positive reinforcement is able to increase student involvement in group work through simple rewards, encouraging motivation, interest so that students are active in learning. The success of its implementation depends on the role of the teacher in designing contextual learning, such as the theme of a Clean Environment. The purpose of the research is to describe the implementation of positive reinforcement in the learning of IPA and Indonesian Language class IV SDN 060886 Medan, analyze the impact on learning motivation, and compare between subjects. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method, with a subject of 22 grade IV students. The results of this research have implications on several aspects, namely theoretical, practical, academic.*

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## 1. Introduction

Motivation in the sense that develops in society is often equated with 'spirit', and learning outcomes are a result achieved by an individual in developing their abilities through a process carried out with effort with cognitive, affective, psychomotor and mixed abilities that he has to obtain an experience in a relatively long period of time so that an individual experiences a change and knowledge of what is observed both directly or indirectly that will be permanently attached to him, learning results can be seen from the evaluation value obtained by students. Motivation becomes the basis for students to be able to obtain maximum learning results, where the next learning results will be used as the basis for determining the expected achievement of competence. The score obtained in learning results also determines the student's learning achievement which affects whether or not students move to the next level (Rahman, 2021).

Motivation comes from the word motive which is a condition in the individual that encourages the individual to do certain activities whether consciously or not to achieve certain goals (Winarni et al., in Khoirunnisa et al, 2022). Learning motivation can be interpreted as a driving force to do certain learning activities that come from within and also from outside the individual so as to grow the spirit of learning (Monika & Adman in Diandaru, 2023). Learning motivation is an absolute requirement for learning and plays an important role in giving passion or enthusiasm in learning. Learning motivation is not only a driver to achieve good results but also contains efforts to achieve learning goals (Puspitasari in Lalufiansyah and Ariyanto, 2023). In motivation there is a desire that activates, moves, channels and directs attitudes and behaviors in individuals (Dimiyati and Mudjiono in Fernando et al, 2024).



So it can be said that motivation will always determine the intensity of learning efforts for students so that student learning outcomes will increase (Palupi in Saputra, 2023).

Learning motivation has a big role in the success of a student. Learning results will be optimal if there is motivation to learn. The more appropriate the motivation given, the better the learning results will be. Thus, motivation always determines the intensity of learning efforts for students (Bakar dalam Diandaru, 2023).

Learning motivation is one of the factors that determines the learning outcomes of students, a person will get the desired results in learning if there is a desire to learn in him, motivation plays a role as a driver for the achievement of good results. Someone will be encouraged to do an activity because there is motivation in him. The existence of high motivation in learning will achieve optimal results (Fernando et al., 2024).

Motivation has a very important role in the student learning process, where students with strong and clear motivation tend to be more diligent and successful in learning. The more precise the motivation given, the greater the success obtained in the learning process. Motivation functions as a driver that causes learning actions or behaviors, as a director so that the behavior is focused on achieving the desired goals, and as a driver that determines the speed and intensity of students' learning efforts. With good motivation, students are encouraged to do their learning efforts to the maximum so that learning goals can be achieved optimally. Therefore, teachers need to provide the right motivation so that the learning process takes place effectively and produces high learning achievements. The way to direct the student's behavior is by giving assignments, moving closer, giving educational punishments, reprimanding with a gentle attitude and with friendly and kind words.

Motivation plays a very important role in learning activities in universities, and motivation is influenced by the goals that will be achieved by studying. The higher the learning goal, the greater the motivation, and the greater the learning motivation, the stronger the learning activities will be. Learning behavior is closely related in forming a unity which is called the learning motivation process (Kurnia et al., 2024).

Positive reinforcement is a fundamental concept in behavioristic learning theory developed by B.F. Skinner According to Santrock in Hasibuan et al. (2023) positive reinforcement is giving a pleasant stimulus after the expected behavior appears, with the aim of increasing the likelihood that the behavior will be repeated. In the context of education, positive reinforcement serves as a tool to strengthen positive learning behavior and increase student motivation.

Islamiati et al. (2024) explained that positive reinforcement works based on the principle of operant conditioning, where behavior that is followed by pleasant consequences tends to be strengthened and repeated. Meanwhile, Zeirliana, et al (2024) also emphasized that positive reinforcement has a consistent impact on increasing student learning motivation. Thus, it can be concluded that the positive reinforcement strategy is one of the relevant and effective methods to encourage the learning motivation of students in the current learning era.

The effectiveness of positive reinforcement is highly dependent on timeliness, consistency, and relevance to the desired behavior (Effendi, 2020).

The implementation of positive reinforcement in IPA learning requires an approach that can stimulate students' curiosity. Trianto in Musyawir (2022) explained that positive reinforcement in IPA can be in the form of recognition of observation skills, appreciation for questions asked, and appreciation for the ability to connect concepts with daily life.

In learning Indonesian, positive reinforcement plays an important role in developing students' language skills. Aulia and Jamilah's research (2024) shows that giving positive reinforcement, both in the form of praise and other forms of appreciation, is able to increase the spirit, self-confidence, and courage of students in speaking and expressing themselves. This is in line with the findings of Durrotunnisa and Hanita (2022) which proves that the use of positive reinforcement can have a significant impact on increasing students' motivation and confidence to communicate more actively in class. Thus, positive reinforcement can be seen as an effective strategy to encourage language skills and strengthen student participation in the learning process.

The integration of the clean environment theme provides a rich context for the implementation of positive reinforcement. Mulyani (2020) explained that the environmental theme has a high relevance to students' lives, making it easier for teachers to provide meaningful positive reinforcement in learning IPA and Indonesian Language.

Handayani and Pratiwi (2022) found that the systematic use of positive reinforcement increased the learning motivation of grade IV students by 78%, shown through increased attention span, active participation, reduced behavior outside the task, and increased perseverance in doing tasks.

Bandura Himam et al. (2024) emphasized that students' self-confidence increases when they see learning progress through gradual positive reinforcement. Kusuma et al. (2023) showed that students who received positive reinforcement based on progress monitoring had a more stable learning motivation.



Learning motivation includes affective aspects (interest, curiosity), cognitive (learning strategy, expectation of results), and conative (will/tenacity). Positive reinforcement affects motivation by (a) increasing expectations of success through positive feedback, (b) strengthening interest through fun experiences, and (c) facilitating active involvement in learning tasks. Sua-experimental research and field studies in the context of elementary schools in Indonesia show a positive influence between the implementation of positive reinforcement and increased motivation or interest in learning in various subjects. However, the results can vary depending on the amplification design, frequency, and quality of implementation.

The implementation of positive reinforcement that is done consistently is proven to encourage students to be more active in learning activities. Putri and Siregar's research (2021) found that elementary school students who received appreciation in the form of verbal praise and symbolic awards more often showed confidence when answering questions and participating in discussions. Similar results were reported by Ningsih and Lestari (2022), which showed an increase in student involvement in IPA group work after teachers implemented a simple reward system in the form of achievement points.

In addition to increasing participation, positive reinforcement also plays a role in strengthening students' interest and curiosity. Alfiani (2023) reported that giving rewards in the form of stickers and merit boards encourages students to be more enthusiastic about reading and writing in Indonesian subjects. With a fun learning experience, students not only try to complete the task, but also show tenacity in looking for additional information outside the teacher's direction. This indicates that positive reinforcement is able to move the affective and cognitive aspects of learning motivation at the same time. However, the research results also emphasize the importance of applying positive reinforcement that is on target. Deci and Ryan (2020) remind that if students are only oriented towards external rewards, intrinsic motivation can weaken. Therefore, teachers need to balance giving reinforcement with other strategies, for example giving learning challenges that are appropriate to the level of ability or giving opportunities for independent exploration. Qualitative studies by Wulandari and Prasetyo in Munawwir (2025) show that students feel more motivated when positive reinforcement is associated with the meaning of learning, such as maintaining a clean school environment, not just physical rewards.

Hamalik in Nurfadhillah (2021) defines a teacher as a facilitator is someone who facilitates, accompanies, and guides students in the learning process. Sanjaya in Nurhasanah (2023) explains the function of teachers as facilitators including: learning resource providers, learning designers, process assistants, encouragement providers, and learning environment managers.

In the implementation of positive reinforcement, Djamarah and Zain in Rahman (2021) emphasized that teachers must identify the right moment to give positive reinforcement, choose the type of positive reinforcement according to the characteristics of the student, and ensure its effectiveness. Rahayu and Susanto (2021) showed that a good facilitator teacher was able to increase student involvement up to 89%.

Arends (2020) proposed a PRAISE model for the implementation of positive reinforcement: Instructions (behavior instructions), Urgen (identification of positive behavior), Describe (appreciation), Inform (specific information), Invite (sustainability), and Evaluate (effectiveness evaluation).

Supriyadi (2022) explained the positive reinforcement strategy based on the environmental theme such as the "Environmental Hero" award, nature symbol stickers, and the opportunity to lead green school activities.

Differentiation of positive reinforcement according to student characteristics is also important. Zeirliana, et al (2024) also emphasized that the success of positive reinforcement is greatly influenced by the appropriateness of the form of appreciation with the student's preference, which can be identified through observation or informal interaction.

From the description, it can be concluded that teachers as facilitators have a strategic role in the implementation of positive reinforcement through the functions of learning resource providers, learning designers, and learning environment managers. The effectiveness of positive reinforcement is determined by punctuality, the suitability of the type of reinforcement with the student's characteristics, as well as contextual creative strategies, for example based on environmental themes. Thus, the teacher's role is not only to provide reinforcement, but also to ensure that positive reinforcement functions effectively in building motivation as well as instilling character values in students.

## 2. Methods

Research methods are procedures and schemes used in research. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method. According to Bogdan and Taylor in Marinu (2023, p. 2898) define qualitative research as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behaviors. Then Sukmadinata in Prawiyogi et al (2021, 448) descriptive is a basic research aimed at describing or depicting existing phenomena, whether natural phenomena or human creation. This activity looks at the form of activity, characteristics of change, relationship, similarities, and differences in other phenomena.

When using a descriptive qualitative approach, data analysis is presented as a narrative description rather than numbers or statistical figures, which explain or describe the situation or condition being studied. Data can be in the form of words, pictures, or behaviors.



The population and subjects of this study are students of class IV SDN 060886 Medan City with a total of 22 students in T.A 2025/2026. By using three data collection techniques, namely:

1. Observation

Observation is a method of collecting data that is carried out by observing and recording phenomena that occur in the field directly. According to Abdussamad (2021), observation in qualitative research is carried out intentionally with the aim of understanding the social context and behavior of the research subject in depth.

2. Questionnaire (Questionnaire)

Survey or questionnaire is a data collection method that is done by giving a set of questions or written statements to respondents to answer. Prawiyogi et al (2021) stated that a questionnaire is used to collect data on the attitude, opinion, or perception of respondents towards a certain phenomenon.

3. Documentation

Documentation is a data collection method that is carried out by collecting and analyzing documents that are relevant to the research topic. Mardawani (2020) explained that documentation includes written materials, pictures, or recordings made by individuals or groups that can provide information about the phenomenon being studied.

In qualitative research, data analysis is not done after the data is collected, but runs throughout the research process. It means, since the researcher started doing observations, surveys and documentation, the data has started to be analyzed. Here are the data analysis techniques.

1. Data Reduction

Data reduction is the process of selecting, simplifying, and focusing data that is relevant to the research problem. The data obtained from the field is usually very diverse, so the researcher needs to choose the part that is suitable for the focus of the research.

2. Data Presentation

The compilation of data that has been reduced into a form that is easy to understand. The presentation of data in this research was carried out through observation, questionnaires and documentation in the form of notes and photos of activities. The presentation of this data makes it easier for researchers to understand a clearer picture of how positive reinforcement is used in learning and how it affects student learning motivation.

3. Withdrawal of conclusion and verification

The process of formulating the main findings from the data that has been analyzed. The conclusion is temporary at first, then verified by comparing data from various sources, such as teachers, students, and direct observation results. Thus, the resulting conclusion can really be accounted for.

The process starts from the identification of the problem, then continues with the formulation of the problem and research objectives, theoretical study, and the determination of the research subject. After that, the research continues to the data collection stage through observation, questionnaire, and documentation. The collected data is then analyzed through three steps, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification.

The results of the analysis produce research findings, which are then formulated into conclusions and suggestions. The flow of this research is cyclical, which means that the results obtained can be used as input for further improvement and research.

### 3. Result and Discussion

This research was carried out in class IV SDN 060886 Medan City with a total of 22 students. Data was collected through observation, learning motivation questionnaire, and documentation to see how the implementation of positive reinforcement affects the learning motivation of IPA and Indonesian Language with the theme of Clean Environment.

Based on observation, the teacher applies positive reinforcement in the form of verbal praise, giving star stickers, and simple recognition of the student's efforts. Observation results show that this strategy has a direct impact on students' learning behavior. They seem more enthusiastic to answer questions, more daring to express their opinions, and show confidence when asked to read descriptive texts. Some students who were initially passive began to be actively involved after the teacher praised his courage. This is in line with Skinner's opinion in the operant conditioning theory that behaviors that are given pleasant consequences tend to be repeated.



This research was carried out in class IV SDN 060886 Medan City with a total of 22 students. The research instrument used is in the form of a learning motivation questionnaire with ten statements based on the Likert scale. This questionnaire is designed to get an overview of the extent to which the application of positive reinforcement can affect students' learning motivation in IPA and Indonesian language subjects with the theme of Clean Environment.

The results of the survey processing show that the majority of students are in the highly motivated category. This condition can be seen from the active participation of students in the learning process, sincerity in completing tasks, and consistent enthusiasm when obtaining positive reinforcement from the teacher. This category indicates that positive reinforcement is able to give a strong boost to student involvement in learning activities.

Students in the medium category showed good enough motivation, even though they were not fully stable. Their learning motivation generally appears when they get attention or appreciation from the teacher, but in certain situations there is still a tendency to lack focus or lack of enthusiasm in participating in learning activities.

This study did not find students who were included in the low motivation category. This research shows that over all students have an adequate level of motivation. Thus, it can be concluded that the implementation of positive reinforcement by teachers contributes significantly in increasing students' learning motivation, as well as playing an important role in creating a conducive learning atmosphere and free from indications of low motivation.

In addition to the score distribution, the results of the survey answer analysis show several important patterns:

Appreciation increases the spirit of learning. Most students say they are more excited when the teacher gives a compliment or a small gift after successfully answering a question or completing an assignment.

Positive reinforcement builds confidence. Students feel more confident in expressing their opinions and answering questions even though it is not necessarily correct, especially if the teacher gives support in the form of positive words or smiles.

The theme of Clean Environment strengthens the relevance of learning. Students are not only motivated to learn IPA and Indonesian, but also encouraged to apply the value of caring for environmental cleanliness in daily life.

Positive reinforcement encourages social interaction. Students show greater enthusiasm when working together in groups, which means reinforcement not only increases individual motivation, but also fosters social motivation.

In general, the results of this study confirm that positive reinforcement is able to change the classroom climate to be more interactive, fun, and meaningful.

Research results show that the majority of students are in the high learning motivation category. This fact supports Skinner's operant conditioning theory which emphasizes that behavior followed by positive consequences will be more likely to be repeated. In other words, positive reinforcement in the form of praise, reward, or teacher recognition is proven to be able to encourage students to be more active in learning and active in learning.

The results of this study show that the implementation of positive reinforcement is able to increase student learning motivation, with the majority of students in the high motivation category and students who are not included in the next category are included in the medium category. There are no students who are in the low category, so it can be concluded that the effectiveness of positive reinforcement is considered significant. However, the fact that there are still students in the middle category indicates that this strategy is not fully optimal for all students. This condition opens room for further research to examine the factors that affect the difference in motivational achievement, such as learning style, confidence level, and teacher consistency in providing reinforcement.

On the other hand, most previous studies tend to emphasize the use of positive reinforcement in a general context without including more detailed criteria according to the characteristics of the subject. In IPA learning, this study shows that students are invited to observe the school environment (yard, classroom), discuss the differences between clean and

dirty environments, and receive verbal praise such as "good job" or "very good", as well as simple recognition in the form of thumbs up gestures when daring to express their opinions. Meanwhile, in learning Indonesian, positive reinforcement is applied with more structured criteria, namely the speed of completing the task, the suitability of the title, the accuracy of the use of EYD rules, and the preparation of at least two paragraphs before students are entitled to receive a star stamp. The different criteria-based approach in these two subjects has not been systematically studied in previous literature, especially in the context of thematic learning in elementary school.

Thus, it can be concluded that the research gap lies in the variation in the effectiveness of positive reinforcement towards student learning motivation, both between individuals and between subjects. This research contributes by filling the gap through the application of positive reinforcement based on clear criteria in two subjects at once (IPA and Bahasa Indonesia), as well as through a combination of observation data and questionnaires that provide a more comprehensive picture of the effects.





The results of this study strengthen the view that positive reinforcement is proven to be effective both theoretically and empirically:

- Theoretical: strengthening behavioristic theory (Skinner & Mazur, 2023) which emphasizes reinforcement in the learning process.
- Empirical: proven in the field (Nastiti, 2019) and this study that positive reinforcement is able to increase the learning motivation of elementary school students.

The results of this study have implications on several aspects:

1. Theoretical Aspects

This research reinforces the foundation of the behavioristic theory that positive reinforcement is a key strategy in modifying student learning behavior.

2. Practical Aspects

Teachers can apply simple positive reinforcement such as praise, symbolic awards, or smiles to increase student learning motivation.

3. Academic Aspect

This research adds empirical evidence that the classic strategy of learning psychology can be adapted contextually in thematic learning, especially in themes that are close to student life such as Clean Environment.

#### 4. Conclusion

This research proves that the application of positive reinforcement in thematic learning with the theme of Clean Environment is effective in increasing the learning motivation of students in class IV SDN 060886 Medan City. Most students are classified as having high motivation, while the rest are in the medium category, and there are no students with low motivation. This finding confirms that positive reinforcement strategies, in the form of verbal praise, simple gestures, and symbolic awards, are able to create an interactive, fun, and meaningful classroom atmosphere for students. In addition, the application of positive reinforcement in IPA and Indonesian language subjects showed consistent results, seen from the increased enthusiasm for learning, self-confidence, and active student involvement. Thus, positive reinforcement not only supports the achievement of learning results, but also plays a role in the development of learners' character, including discipline, self-confidence, and caring for the environment. This strategy can be used as an effective alternative in learning practice in elementary school to build sustainable learning motivation while strengthening student character.

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