

## **EN\_99592184 Research Introduction**

“Learning is a means through which we acquire not only skills and knowledge but values, attitudes, and emotional reactions” (Ormrod, 1999, p. 3). One’s education is an undisputably important part of one’s growth as a human. In an increasingly educated world, there is a search for more effective teaching methods. Positivity is a central theme in the study of mindfulness and education, thus, by investigating the effect of positive feedback in an educational setting, we gain an understanding of the impact of mindfulness on student’s academic performance.

While education is such a central part of humanity, different strategies are developed to improve the current education system. Positive teaching methods, as argued by Xie and Derakhshan (2021) in their article, humans are a social species, therefore, positive interpersonal relationships between teacher and student are crucial for a positive learning environment (Xie & Derakhshan, 2021). As we discuss later on, intrinsic motivators (teacher’s influence) and extrinsic motivators (personal motivators) may impact a learner differently depending on their age.

In a correlational study of anxiety levels and teenagers’ school performance, Zapata-Lamana et al. (2021) found that students with stronger positive self-perception, higher happiness perception, and lower anxiety, tended to perform better on memory tests and have higher GPAs. In their discussion, Zapata-Lamana et al. (2021) claim that higher memory performance is also associated with better academic performance, therefore, it is used as a predictor of scholarly achievement.

Furthermore, when investigating positivity in educational settings, it is important to draw a distinction between different approaches. Brummelman et al. (2015) found that there may be a significant correlation between inflated praise and narcissistic personality disorder. In this case, children with parents who focused their praise on the child’s uniqueness and exaggerated achievements were more likely to have narcissistic tendencies. The researchers emphasise the children’s natural ability to overperform which leads to an inflated ego.

In positive education, there is a large focus on praise in the classroom and its effect on young children. Behaviour-specific praise (BSP), defined by Villeda et al. (2014), is praise given to students on a well-executed task or behaviour, with precise attention to the student's specific intentional behaviour and execution. Therefore, BSP differs from the praise previously discussed. This method aims to reduce undesired behaviours and increase desired behaviour (O'Handley et al., 2020). The justification is that by giving learners a learning point from which to replicate positive behaviour, they are more likely to repeat it, as they have concrete goals to aspire to.

Simultaneously, there is an increasing demand for research based on effective teaching methods among university students, given that the number of students enrolling in higher education in the Netherlands grows every year (Ybema et al., 2024). We aim to give insight into more effective teaching styles to improve students' academic performance.

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