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ABSTRACT OF DOCTORAL THESIS

THE ROLE OF POSITIVE FEEDBACK IN DEVELOPING SELF-ESTEEM AND MOTIVATING PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE TEACHING PROCESS

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CONTENTS

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ARGUMENT

Nowadays, the significance of education in the social context has become increasingly important, as it provides students with essential skills that will facilitate their appropriate career orientation and foster their development as individuals, capable of performing tasks that require ingenuity, initiative and autonomy, ultimately contributing to the development of society.

This study aims to investigate, in a manner that promotes continuous refinement, the implementation of a teaching approach that facilitates the social-emotional development of primary school children through the use of positive feedback to strengthen students' motivation and self-confidence.

We have chosen this topic because I wish to highlight both the essential role of positive feedback and the importance of the teacher in fostering high self-esteem, increasing motivation, directly proportional to the feedback provided and relevant to students' future activities. We have approached this topic because the social and political context of the last post-december years, kept a closed educational contour, full of the former regime's specific rigors, referring to the social context and the hierarchy of relationships of different types. Given that the Romanian language has as a linguistic specificity the rigours of politeness found in other Romance languages, through the existence of politeness pronouns and verbal forms of the second person plural, in the social context, communication is made through the aforementioned filter, which is reflected even in the educational environment, in the interaction and communication relations between student and teacher. Students, when they mature professionally, are still afraid to express themselves freely, to support their opinions and this can lower their motivation to learn, and they end up developing counterproductive behaviour. This is why, over the years, many studies and experiments have been conducted examining the emotional reactions of people, students and employees, to positive feedback and its subsequent effects. Several studies illustrate that people who regularly receive

positive feedback experience positive emotions.

Both positive and negative feedback generate emotions, behaviours, feelings, states, actions and through this side we tried to illustrate the relationship between self-esteem, motivation and engagement through the direct influence of positive feedback.

We observed that positive feedback in any situation, at home, at school, at work, in society, improves, intensifies and accelerates productivity, motivation and maintains the desire to perpetuate the good mood generated by positive feedback.

Positive feedback is the force that generates the mechanisms necessary for the cohesion and good functioning of an individual or a team. When used correctly, it becomes a coach that motivates all team members. But used wrongly, or given at the wrong time, it can destroy the equilibrium of the individual or group, while also affecting motivation and self-esteem.

This is why the teacher, knowing the effect that his/her actions can have, must choose activities that first of all generate a correct self-analysis, activities that create moments of social analysis, as a team, and only then make judgements on the activity of the pupils involved.

CHAPTER I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ON FEEDBACKUL

I.1. From Antiquity to Modernity: A diachronic analysis of feedback

In this chapter, we examine the meaning of feedback and its relevance in various domains, starting from a structural and historical analysis of the concept. Feedback, which involves providing information to individuals or groups about their performance or behaviour, aims to improve or reinforce their actions. It is vital in fields such as education, psychology and business, as it provides valuable information and guidance on how to improve skills and increase effectiveness.

A historical examination of feedback gives us a deeper understanding of its evolution over time, the significant changes in its conceptualisation and practice. Ways of practicing feedback can be traced back to ancient civilizations such as ancient China, ancient Greece and ancient Rome. In ancient China, feedback was an important aspect of the educational system, with teachers providing constructive criticism and guidance to students. Similarly, in ancient Greece, philosophers such as Socrates used a method of questions and dialogues to provide feedback and facilitate learning. Throughout history, feedback has been an essential aspect of the learning process in various contexts (Heron, 2010).

In education, since the 20th century, feedback has begun to be studied more systematically and its importance has been recognised, which has intensified and diversified its research. Thus, different types of feedback have been identified, such as formative feedback, corrective feedback, reinforcing feedback and informative feedback, which we will analyse below. Factors influencing the effectiveness of feedback, such as the timing and frequency of feedback, as well as the characteristics of the giver and receiver of feedback will be explored.

Feedback plays an essential role in the development of individuals in various fields and its evolution over the years highlights its importance and relevance in different professional and life contexts.

I.1.1. The evolution of feedback: A historical perspective

The concept of feedback has had a remarkable journey, evolving from its primitive forms in ancient civilizations to its widespread use in various other fields today. This historical perspective

highlights people's continuing interest in feedback and its role in shaping an individual's personal and social development.

The concept of feedback, in its contemporary sense, is not specifically mentioned in ancient texts from ancient cultures (however, the primary principle of feedback can be discerned). They illustrate the principle of existence and the enduring recognition of the importance of information exchange, self-reflection and regulation, reminiscent of feedback, in the pursuit of knowledge acquisition, self-improvement and ensuring a harmonious existence.

In this analysis, we present examples of fragments of ancient texts from different civilizations, analyzing the principles and notions of wisdom contained in them, which are consistent with feedback-like mechanisms. Although the terminology may be different from that used today, the concepts underlying these texts demonstrate the universal human quest for knowledge, development and the pursuit of improved outcomes through the continuous exchange of information and adaptive response to the environment.

I.1.2. Early origins of feedback

The origins and evolution of the concept of feedback can be traced back to ancient civilisations. In ancient Greece, the principles of effective communication, learning from experience and adapting to achieve desired results were embedded in culture and philosophy. Plato's dialogues encouraged critical inquiry and self-reflection through Socratic questions, an example of intellectual feedback. The Athenian democratic system allowed citizens to express opinions and vote, thus contributing to decision-making through collective feedback (Jowett, 1871). Aristotle and Thales made significant contributions to empirical methods, with Aristotle developing scientific inquiry through observation and adjustment, essential elements of feedback (Hildebrandt, 2002). In the Poetics, Aristotle introduces the concept of "anagnorisis" or recognition, similar to feedback, leading to transformative awareness (Aristotle, Barnes et al., Despite the absence of the term 'feedback' in ancient Greek texts, the principles of effective communication, critical inquiry, citizen participation in governance and empirical observation are evident, emphasising the importance of communication and adaptation for desired outcomes (Hansen, 1999).

In ancient Rome, rhetoric and oratory were advanced. Cicero emphasized tailoring the message to the audience's response, reflecting effective feedback (Wood, 1943). The Roman polity

evaluated public opinion to adapt policies, providing an example of practical feedback (Wiseman, 2008). In the military, leaders such as Julius Caesar analyzed post-battle strategies to adjust them, reflecting feedback in a military context (Goldsworthy, 2003). Although the term "feedback" was not explicitly used in ancient Roman texts, the principles of communication and response are evident in various aspects of society, demonstrating their importance in effective decision-making.

Ancient Chinese philosophy, including Confucianism and Daoism, emphasized self-reflection and adaptation to natural orders. Confucius promoted introspection and learning from mistakes, and Daoism encouraged attunement to natural rhythms, both reflecting feedback (Confucius, 1893; Laozi, 1989). Traditional Chinese medicine used the concept of 'yin and yang' to diagnose and offer remedies, an example of feedback in health (Maciocia, 2005). Ancient Chinese texts such as the 'I Ching' and 'Tao Te Ching' emphasised the cyclical nature of change and adaptation to changing circumstances, reflecting feedback processes (Wilhelm et al., 1967; Le Guin, 1998).

Ancient Egyptian wisdom literature, consisting of proverbs and instructions, emphasized the importance of observation, learning from actions, and adjusting for desired outcomes, reflecting the principles of feedback (Simpson, 2017). The Code of Hammurabi in ancient Mesopotamia emphasized responding to actions and adjusting to legal procedures, demonstrating legal feedback (Roth, 1995). Indian philosophy, through the Vedas and Upanishads, promoted self-awareness and learning from experiences, reflecting feedback principles (Varanasi, 2007).

Thus, although the term 'feedback' was not explicitly used in ancient texts, its principles have been recognised and applied in various cultures and practices, demonstrating the importance of effective communication, learning from experience and adaptation to achieve desired outcomes, which are still relevant today.

I.1.3. Evolution of feedback - Philosophical and religious traditions

The concept of a feedback mechanism is found in religious and philosophical traditions. In Christianity, the sacrament of confession functions as a spiritual feedback, with penitents sharing their deeds with a confessor who offers advice and forgiveness, facilitating moral self-correction and personal progress. In Eastern philosophical traditions such as Buddhism, the relationship between a student and a guru involves continuous feedback, with the guru offering guidance and teachings for spiritual enlightenment and self-realisation. These early religious and philosophical

practices demonstrate recognition of the transformative potential of feedback, emphasising the importance of external input in personal development and self-awareness. The concept of feedback has evolved and adapted with the demands of societies, technological advances and the expansion of knowledge, while retaining the primary principles of communication, adaptation and response to information, even if the term was not explicitly used in the historical context.

I.1.4. Feedback in the Medieval and Renaissance Period

In the medieval and Renaissance period, the concept of feedback manifested itself in various fields. In the segment of rhetorical discourse and persuasive communication, the works of ancient scholars such as Cicero and Aristotle continued to profoundly influence thought. The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in the 15th century facilitated the dissemination of written works, allowing for wider feedback and critical analysis of ideas (Needham, 1986). The Renaissance, with its emphasis on humanism and revival of classical knowledge, promoted knowledge transfer and feedback between scholars and thinkers, intensifying intellectual exchange (Kristeller, 1979).

I.1.5. A change in the historical timeline - The Scientific Revolution

The scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries, a landmark event in the history of feedback, heralded a paradigm shift in the pursuit of scientific knowledge. Key figures such as Galileo Galilei and Johannes Kepler emphasized the importance of empirical observation and experimentation (Hall, 2015). Their methodology, which involved systematic observation, hypothesis formulation, experimentation and refinement based on feedback, was based on the scientific method that underpins modern scientific research.

I.1.6. 18th century - Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution, which began at the end of the 18th century, heralded the invention of automated technologies and machines. Engineers and inventors, notably James Watt, incorporated feedback mechanisms to regulate and optimise the operation of machines. One such example involved Watt's centrifugal governor, which maintained a constant engine speed by adjusting steam flow based on feedback from engine speed, thus representing a pragmatic application of feedback in engineering and automation (Carnot, 1824).

I.1.7. A change in the historical timeline - the Scientific Revolution

André-Marie Ampère, a renowned French physicist, introduced the term feedback in the 1820s while conducting research on the galvanometer. He recognised that the needle of a galvanometer could be stabilised by a feedback mechanism using a coil. This early use of feedback in electrical circuits by Ampère demonstrates the decisive role it plays in the design and analysis of such circuits (Coulomb, 1885).

The concept of feedback has also been used in economic contexts, in particular in relation to price mechanisms and market equilibrium. Economists, such as Alfred Marshall, have referred to feedback mechanisms in pricing as an essential component of examining supply and demand in the market. In this framework, feedback described the impact of price adjustments on market behaviour (Marshall, 1890).

I.1.8. Cybernetics and the modern era - the formal emergence of the concept of feedback

In the middle of the 20th century, the concept of feedback was formally introduced into the interdisciplinary scientific framework of cybernetics. Norbert Wiener, recognised as the father of cybernetics, established feedback as a primary principle in understanding self-regulating systems. Cybernetics has encompassed various disciplines, including biology, psychology, and beyond, emphasizing feedback mechanisms in the control and communication of complex systems (Wiener, 2019).

I.2. Developing the concept of feedback: A formal approach

The principle of feedback, involving the transmission of information about the results of a behavior to a system for self-regulation and adaptation, has been explored throughout history by notable personalities. James Clerk Maxwell introduced the term "feedback" in the 19th century in the context of control theory and mechanical systems, illustrating the adjustment of control mechanisms in response to changes in motor speed (Maxwell, 1868). In the mid-20th century, Norbert Wiener advanced the concept within the interdisciplinary framework of cybernetics, defining feedback as the process of transmitting information about a system's output to it for self-regulation and control in various systems, including mechanical, biological, and social systems (Wiener, 2019).

Wiener's work in cybernetics has profoundly influenced engineering, biology, psychology, and the social sciences, enabling the development of automatic control systems, the study of homeostasis and neural networks, and the understanding of human behavior and learning.

Cybernetic principles have also been applied to the study of complex social systems and organisational behaviour. Thus, the contributions of Maxwell and Wiener have been central to the modern understanding of feedback as a typical process in self-regulation, control and communication in complex systems (Wiener, 2019).

I.3.1 The concept of feedback in education

The understanding of feedback as a process of self-regulation and adaptation has been explored throughout history by notable personalities. James Clerk Maxwell introduced the term "feedback" in the 19th century in the context of control theory and mechanical systems, illustrating the adjustment of control mechanisms to changes in motor speed (Maxwell, 1868). Norbert Wiener advanced the concept in cybernetics, defining feedback as the process of transmitting information about a system's output to it for self-regulation and control in various systems (Wiener, 2019).

In the nineteenth century, industrialization imposed the need for mass education to meet the demands of the workforce and society, emphasizing the literacy and skills needed to operate in new technological contexts (Cohen, 1999). Formal education became essential to prepare an effective workforce, and the standardization of curriculum and assessment practices led to the emergence of standardized tests and the need for feedback (Cubberley, 1919).

Formal assessments and initial grading provided a narrow view of student performance, focusing on end results, which led to the need for individualized and systematic feedback to meet the varied needs of students (Dewey, 1930; Hattie, 2008). By the end of the 20th century, the concept of formative assessment became prevalent, providing continuous feedback to students to improve learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Changes in educational philosophies, such as progressivism and constructivism, supported feedback as a tool for holistic student development (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Technological advances allowed for the personalization of feedback, and the growth mindset paradigm emphasized the importance of feedback for developing intelligence and skills through engagement and effort (Dweck, 2006).

Key developments include Benjamin S. Bloom's work on mastery learning, which highlighted the need for personalized feedback for student progress (Davis & Sorrell, 1995), and the promotion of Assessment for Learning (AfL) by researchers such as Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam, who emphasized the role of informative feedback in improving student achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

I.3.2 Key stages in the development of the concept of feedback in education

The development of feedback in education has evolved significantly, influenced by various educational theories and pedagogical changes. The origins can be traced to ancient philosophical and Socratic methods, where Socrates used interactive dialogues to guide learning, a precursor to feedback (Cohen, 1999). In the 19th century, mass education introduced formal assessments, providing summative feedback through standardised tests and examinations (Cubberley, 1919).

Behaviourist influence, particularly that of B.F. Skinner, highlighted the role of reinforcement and conditioning in education, using rewards and punishments as feedback mechanisms (Black & Wiliam, 1998). The concept of mastery learning, introduced by Benjamin S. Bloom in the 1960s, emphasised the importance of individualised feedback for student success (Davis & Sorrell, 1995).

In the late 20th century, theories of cognitive and constructivist psychology emphasised the active role of learners in knowledge formation, integrating feedback into cognitive and metacognitive processes (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). In the 21st century, digital technology has revolutionised feedback, providing immediate and personalised feedback through online platforms and educational applications (Hattie, 2008).

Contemporary trends emphasize holistic feedback, which incorporates social-emotional development and 21st century skills, recognizing the importance of feedback to students' overall well-being (Dweck, 2006). The evolution of feedback reflects an ongoing commitment to refine learning experiences and promote student success through formative, individualized, and holistic methods.

I.3.3 Contemporary perspectives on feedback practices in education

Continuous innovation in education, driven by the need to improve learning experiences and outcomes, has placed educational feedback at the centre of concern. Feedback has evolved from a simple analysis tool to a catalyst for change in learning. Technology integration and personalised feedback architecture are key trends that are redefining the way teachers interact with students.

This chapter explores the complexities of contemporary educational feedback, building on the foundations laid by visionaries such as John Dewey and the work of Paul Black and Dylan

Wiliam. We analyse its impact on learners and its potential to revolutionise the educational landscape through the interaction of philosophy, psychology and education.

In education, feedback is a vital connection between teachers and learners, stimulating educational efforts in a dynamic and interdependent relationship. It is a symbiotic process that makes it possible to navigate the ever-changing pedagogical landscape, highlighting the importance of understanding the complexity of feedback from a psycho-pedagogical perspective.

I.3.4. The significance of feedback in education

Feedback is an essential feedback loop that informs learners about their progress, guides educational strategies and fosters a culture of continuous improvement. The doctrinal basis of this concept, such as John Dewey's emphasis on the iterative nature of learning, has allowed feedback to evolve to meet the diverse needs of learners.

Feedback has the potential to enhance intellectual development, encourage metacognition and shape cognitive development. Persisting as a key component in the educational process, feedback guides learners along their academic journey, regardless of the learning environment, traditional or digital. More than impacting academic achievement, feedback influences students' social-emotional development, motivating, instilling confidence and promoting autonomy in learning (Burnett, 2001).

Feedback plays a key role in motivating and raising students' self-esteem. Studies show that positive feedback from teachers can significantly increase students' self-esteem and motivation to actively engage in the classroom (Schmidt et al., 2021). Positive feedback for favorable behaviors and academic achievement promotes intrinsic motivation to learn (Tuan, 2020). This motivation leads to increased participation and engagement in self-regulated learning. Teachers who understand the positive implications of formative feedback can use this tool as an effective supportive intervention (Ličen & Bogdanović, 2018).I.4. Definiție și cadru conceptual din perspectivă contemporană

Feedback is defined as a mechanism for regulating the learning process at the microlevel of education, in which the receiver of messages provides the sender with responses and information related to the messages received (Bocos et al., 2021a). This educational process is dynamic and constantly evolving, transcending simple assessment to encompass an overall communication system that informs, directs and enhances the learning experience. Feedback disseminates

information about previous behaviour to shape future actions, and is essential for improving learning outcomes and developing essential skills.

Feedback can take many forms, including verbal observations, written notes or technologically mediated communication, and must be tailored to the individual needs of learners to be effective. In essence, feedback is a dynamic and ongoing dialogue between teachers and learners, not a static exchange of information. This dialogue requires a two-way exchange, with pupils as active participants, not just passive recipients. The success of positive feedback depends on clear communication, alignment with learning objectives and the encouragement of a progress-oriented mindset.

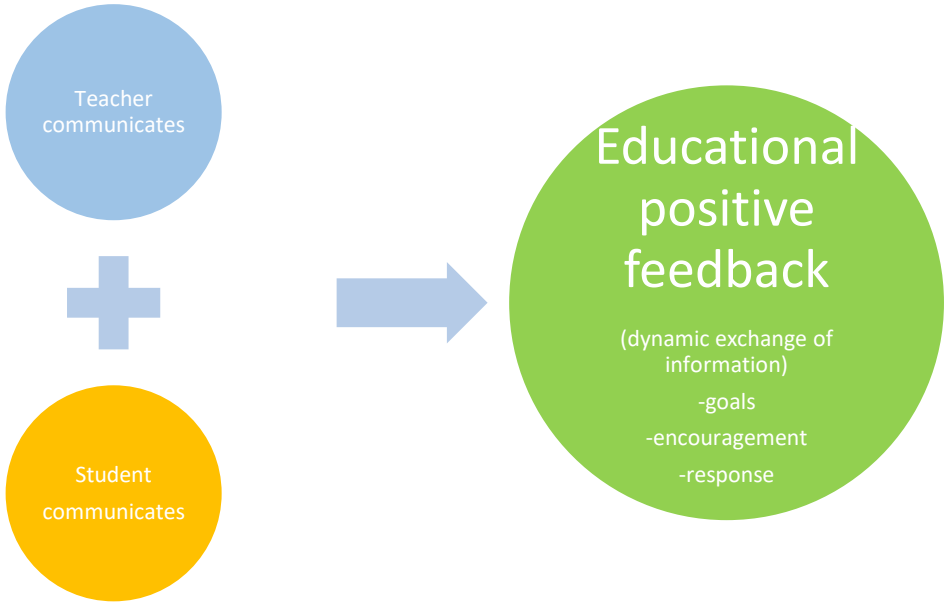

Figure 1.I. *Positive educational feedback in student-teacher interaction*

I.4.1. The importance of feedback in the evolution of the training process

The concept of feedback in education has evolved significantly since the early 20th century, when Thorndike formulated the "Law of Effect" (Thorndike, 1927; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), and Skinner developed behaviorism with incentives and corrections (Wiliam, 2018). The importance of formative assessment was initially emphasized by Benjamin Bloom, who highlighted the benefits of constant feedback in 1968 (Block et al., 1971).

In the 1970s and 1980s, research explored what type of feedback is useful for student progress, culminating in an emphasis on the cognitive aspects of feedback, such as those developed

by Butler and Winne (1995) and Kluger and DeNisi (1996). Black and Wiliam (1998) changed the perspective on formative assessment through the use of feedback.

Twenty years after Black and Wiliam (1998), the literature has integrated feedback into theoretical approaches such as self-regulated learning (Lodge et al., 2018) and cognitive task (Sweller et al., 1998). Modern researchers, including Shute (2008), have emphasized the active role of learners in generating and using feedback to develop learning experiences.

Jerome Bruner emphasized the importance of dialogue and cooperation in learning in the 1960s (Bruner et al., 1966). Feedback, as an integral part of teacher-student interactions, promotes a positive learning atmosphere that fosters both individualized motivation and group cohesion (Wang et al., 2019).

Thus, feedback has evolved from simple behavioral assessments to a complex process tailored to individual student needs, and is essential for long-term skill development and improved educational outcomes (Bocos et al., 2021a).

I.4.2. A taxonomic analysis of the concept of educational feedback

Formative and summative feedback are two distinct but complementary approaches to educational assessment. Formative feedback, a facilitator of continuous learning, enhances performance, promotes self-reflection and encourages progress (Sadler, 1989; Black & Wiliam, 1998). Its essence is to provide prompt and constant feedback, allowing learners to make real-time adjustments. Its iterative nature allows for a continuous cycle of assessment and adjustment, supporting a culture of improvement (Black & Wiliam, 1998). However, effective implementation of formative feedback faces challenges, requiring feedback literacy and the use of technology to personalize feedback.

Summative feedback provides a comprehensive assessment at the end of an instructional phase, reflecting subject matter mastery and student performance (Shepard, 2000). Although criticised for running the risk of promoting a narrow view of learning, summative feedback provides essential data for assessing educational effectiveness (Popham, 2009). Digital technologies have revolutionised summative assessment, but limitations persist, highlighting the need to integrate formative elements.

Constructive feedback, divided into positive and negative, provides a detailed assessment of student performance, highlighting both achievements and areas for improvement (Higgins et

al., 2002; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Negative feedback, although difficult to accept, promotes resilience and adaptation (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Positive feedback, according to Carol Dweck's growth mindset theory, reinforces desirable behaviours and boosts motivation and self-esteem (Dweck, 2006; Schmidt et al., 2021).

Peer feedback promotes active learning and critical thinking, but requires training to ensure the quality and objectivity of assessments (Vygotsky, 1987; Collins et al., 1989). Self-feedback, closely related to metacognition and self-regulated learning, encourages accountability and critical thinking (Zimmerman, 2023; Bandura, 1991). However, subjectivity and initial difficulties require support from teachers to develop effective self-assessment skills.

Feedback, whatever its form, is a major element in the education of students, contributing to the improvement of learning and the development of students' competences. Properly integrated, feedback can transform educational experiences towards improvement (De Landsheere, 1994; Alavi & Kaivanpanah, 2009).

CHAPTER II. STUDY ON EDUCATIONAL FEEDBACK FROM A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE. APPROACHES AMONG LEADING EDUCATIONAL THEORISTS

Feedback is an important component of educational practice, influenced by various theoretical perspectives that determine its design and application in practice. The behaviourist perspective, rooted in the work of B.F. Skinner, emphasises the role of reinforcement in shaping behaviour. Feedback serves as a form of reinforcement, providing information about the appropriateness of actions and guiding students towards desirable behaviours (Wiliam, 2018). The cognitive perspective, championed by Piaget and Vygotsky, focuses on internal mental processes and the role of cognition in learning, with feedback as a means of enhancing students' mental models and promoting deeper understanding (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978).

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes learning as a social process, with feedback being a dialogic process embedded in social interactions (Vygotsky, 1987). This perspective emphasizes the importance of collaborative feedback exchanges in cultural and social contexts. The humanistic perspective, inspired by Carl Rogers, sees feedback as a facilitator of self-discovery and self-actualization, promoting a positive and supportive environment that nurtures intrinsic motivation (Giraldo Baena, 2021).

The information processing perspective compares feedback to detecting and correcting errors in a computer system, emphasizing the importance of specific and timely feedback for improving students' cognitive performance (Sackstein, 2017). Each theoretical perspective offers a unique view of feedback: behaviorism emphasizes external reinforcement, cognitivism deepens mental processes, socioconstructivism integrates feedback into social interactions, humanism prioritizes personal growth, and the information processing perspective focuses on cognitive systems. Understanding these perspectives allows teachers to adapt feedback methods to suit diverse educational contexts and improve learning outcomes (Zimmerman, 2023). This comprehensive context harnesses the potential of feedback in education with the goal of improving student outcomes.

II.1. John Hattie and visible learning. Presenting the impact of feedback on student performance

John Hattie, a renowned educational researcher, has substantially influenced the discourse on student achievement through his extensive meta-analyses documented in the Visible Learning series. Hattie's research focuses on the critical role of feedback in influencing student outcomes. In his work "Visible Learning" (2009), Hattie analyzed a wide range of factors that influence school performance, taking a unique approach by aggregating and synthesizing findings from thousands of studies. This resulted in a comprehensive list of influences, from classroom practices to student demographics, each with an effect size that reflects the impact on learning outcomes (Hattie, 2023).

One of the notable highlights of Hattie's research is the substantial effect size attributed to feedback. Feedback emerges as a strong influencing factor, occupying a prominent position on Hattie's list of indicators. The value of the effect associated with feedback underlines its importance in educational practice, positioning it as a powerful lever for improving student outcomes.

Figure 1.II. Image taken from Visible learning: Continued: A synthesis of over 2,100 meta-analyses on achievement highlights the major impact of feedback

Hattie (2023) points out that effective feedback needs to be closely linked to specific criteria or objectives. It should not be generalised, but rather aligned to learning objectives.

II.2 Benjamin Bloom and Mastery Learning: Cultivating understanding through formative assessment and feedback

Although Bloom's work dates back several decades, the relevance of his contributions remains topical. Contemporary teachers, building on the principles of learning-by-doing, continue to emphasise formative assessment and personalised feedback as integral elements of effective pedagogy (Hattie, 2009). Bloom's model creates a cycle of continuous learning in which feedback contributes to subsequent instruction.

Teachers who adopt Bloom's mastery learning approach are encouraged to integrate frequent formative assessments into their instructional design. Moreover, providing timely and targeted feedback becomes a core component of the teaching process. By prioritizing these elements, teachers can create a learning environment that supports each student's journey to mastery.

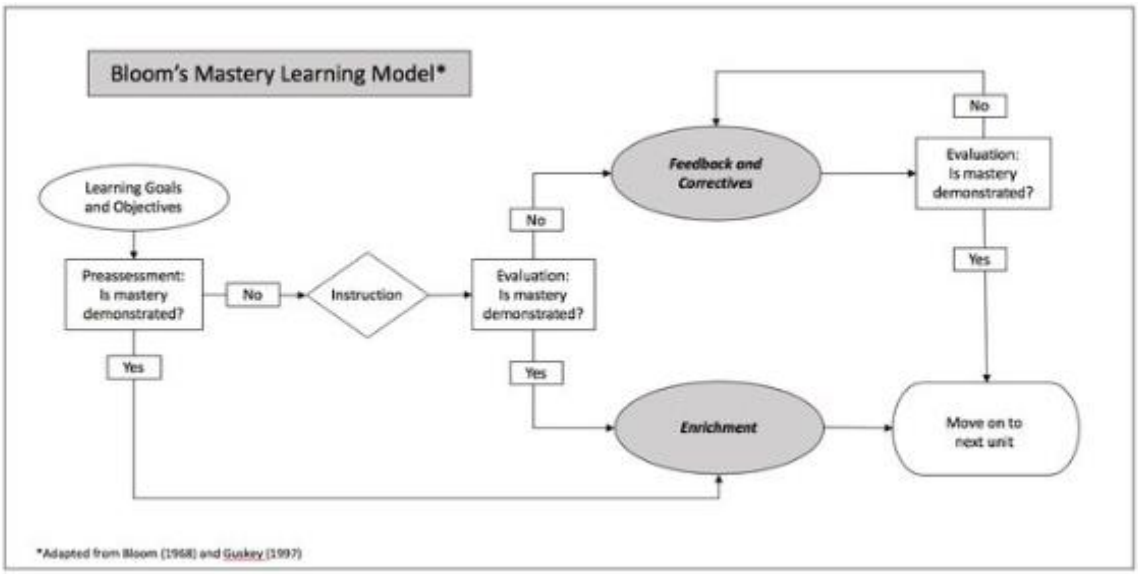

Figure 2.II. Bloom's Mastering Learning Model. Adapted from Bloom (1968) and Guskey (1997)

II.3. Carol Dweck and the impact on mindset: adapting feedback and encouraging progress

Mindset plays a key role in how individuals receive and interpret feedback. In a fixed mindset, feedback is often perceived as a judgment on one's inherent abilities. Criticism can be

taken personally, leading to defensiveness or avoidance of challenge. In contrast, a growth mindset turns feedback into an opportunity for learning and improvement. People with a growth mindset see feedback as guidance on how they can improve their skills through effort and perseverance (Dweck, 2006).

Feedback tailored to a growth mindset is a catalyst for cultivating a learning orientation. Dweck states that feedback should focus on effort, strategies and the learning process rather than just outcomes. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate growth-oriented feedback strategies into their teaching practices. These include recognising and praising effort, providing specific guidance for improvement and encouraging a culture that values learning.

II.4. Robert Marzano and Feedback Strategies: Enhancing Assessment for Better Learning

Robert Marzano, a leading figure in the field of education, has made significant contributions through his in-depth exploration of effective teaching and learning strategies. In his seminal work, The Art and Science of Teaching (2007), Marzano stresses the importance of setting clear learning objectives, stating that they serve as a guide for both teachers and students, allowing them to understand their desired outcomes and effectively direct their efforts.

Formative assessments are essential in the perspective of Marzano, who, in "Formative Assessment & Standards-Based Grading" (2011), emphasizes the value of continuous real-time assessments. These assessments allow teachers to make timely adjustments to instruction, remediate misunderstandings, and provide immediate feedback to guide further learning. Marzano stresses the importance of corrective feedback in Transforming Classroom Grading (2000), indicating that feedback should be accurate, timely, and operational, identifying areas for improvement and providing clear guidance for making improvements.

Integrating technology into assessment and feedback is another issue explored by Marzano, who examines how technology tools can improve formative assessment practices by providing data-driven information about student progress and facilitating personalized feedback. Marzano's strategies are applicable in practice, with teachers encouraged to align learning objectives with instructional activities, embed formative assessments into lessons, and provide specific feedback for improvement.

II.5. David Ausubel and authentic learning

Ausubel's theory focuses on authentic learning, as opposed to rote memorisation. Bryce and Blown suggest that Ausubel believes that meaningful learning occurs when new information is connected to existing cognitive structures, called subsumers (Bryce & Blown, 2023). These subsumers represent the learner's pre-existing knowledge and serve as anchors for assimilating new information. According to Ausubel, feedback plays a crucial role in connecting new information to existing knowledge structures. In the context of meaningful learning, feedback guides learners in making connections between prior knowledge and new information, essential for integrating knowledge into a coherent and meaningful mental framework (Ausubel et al., 1978).

Ausubel stresses that feedback should not only confirm accuracy, but also provide clarification and refinement of mental representations

II.6. B.F. Skinner and the reinforcement of desirable behaviours

B.F. Skinner, significantly influenced the study of human behaviour through operant conditioning theory. According to this theory, behaviour is shaped by its consequences, so behaviours that lead to positive outcomes are likely to be repeated and those that lead to negative outcomes are less likely (Skinner, 1965). A central concept within Skinner's theory is reinforcement, which involves the use of consequences to enhance or eliminate a behaviour. Reinforcement can be positive, adding a stimulus to increase the likelihood of a behavior, or negative, removing a stimulus to achieve the same effect.

Skinner's theories of positive reinforcement are consistent with the development of a positive learning climate. To adopt Skinner's principles, teachers can introduce positive reinforcement into their teaching practices by providing prompt and specific positive feedback, acknowledging efforts and achievements, and establishing a system of incentives that promote desired learning behaviours.

Skinner's research on operant conditioning and reinforcement remains a major contribution to educational psychology and classroom behavior management. The principles of positive reinforcement have been integrated into a variety of teaching methodologies, emphasizing the importance of promoting a positive and stimulating learning environment. In educational settings, positive reinforcement, similar to feedback, plays a key role in encouraging desired learning behaviours and cultivating a positive and productive learning environment.

II.7. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick's principles for quality feedback

The work of David Nicol and Carol Macfarlane-Dick in the field of formative assessment and educational feedback has had a significant influence on the conceptualisation and implementation of effective feedback strategies. In their paper Formative Assessment and Self-Regulated Learning: A Model and Seven Principles of Good Feedback Practice (2006), they emphasise that formative assessment is a dynamic process that catalyses learning, rather than just a method of assessment.

Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick highlight that clearly articulating performance expectations is essential for effective feedback (Nicol, 2019). Students need to understand the standards of achievement in order to assess their own progress.

Feedback needs to be specific and rich in information to be useful, allowing students to make targeted improvements. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick also stress the importance of dialogue between teachers, peers and students, creating a collaborative learning community.

II.8. Kluger and DeNisi's meta-analysis of feedback-based interventions: Revealing conditions for effectiveness

Kluger and DeNisi's meta-analysis in "The Effects of Feedback Interventions on Performance: A Historical Review, a Meta-Analysis, and a Preliminary Feedback Intervention Theory" (1996) is essential to understanding the complexity of feedback interventions. Analyzing and synthesizing data from multiple studies, the authors identified the optimal conditions under which feedback improves performance. This meta-analysis highlights the importance of specificity and actionability of feedback, showing that detailed and concrete feedback is more effective than vague or general feedback (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Timing of feedback also plays an important role, with immediate feedback generally being more effective than delayed feedback.

The authors also highlighted the role of individual differences, such as personality and motivation, in how feedback is responded to. Their study showed that both positive and negative feedback can be effective, but the context and nature of the task are critical to its success.

Kluger and DeNisi's preliminary theory proposal influenced educational research and practice, emphasizing the importance of feedback content, timing, and adaptation to individual differences (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

II.9. Other significant contributions to educational feedback research

Research on educational feedback has been profoundly influenced by numerous scholars, each making valuable contributions to the field. Valerie J. Shute explored adaptive feedback, demonstrating that personalized and contextualized feedback can significantly improve learning outcomes (Shute, 2008). David Carless and David Boud have focused efforts on developing feedback literacy among both students and teachers, emphasizing the importance of the ability to interpret and effectively use feedback received (Carless & Boud, 2018).

Dai Hounsell has promoted the concept of dialogic feedback, emphasizing the need for meaningful conversations between teachers and students to co-construct understanding and foster deep learning (Hounsell et al, 2008). Mary Yorke has investigated peer-to-peer feedback, highlighting the reciprocal benefits of this process for those giving and receiving feedback (Yorke, 2011). Susan M. Brookhart has contributed to the understanding of formative assessment practices, showing the symbiotic relationship between ongoing assessment and effective feedback (Brookhart, 2017).

Royce Sadler introduced the concept of the feedback loop, highlighting the iterative nature of feedback, which allows learners to act on feedback received, thus facilitating continuous improvement (Sadler, 1989).

CHAPTER III. HARNESSING INCENTIVES. THE ROLE OF POSITIVE FEEDBACK IN EDUCATION

III.1. Analysis of the concept of positive feedback in educational contexts

Positive feedback plays a key role in shaping students' learning experiences, unlike traditional approaches that focus on improvement. The definition of positive feedback in education involves giving constructive comments and praise, based on observable evidence, to motivate learners and stimulate their development. Positive feedback can improve students' self-esteem and determination, promoting self-efficacy and a positive psychological state, thus leading to better learning outcomes.

In the learning process, feedback is one of the most useful stimulants (Kuchinke, 2000; Lipnevich et al., 2016; Lipnevich & Panadero, 2021). The impact of feedback on improving student performance and motivation has been demonstrated in various educational research (Alder, 2007; Bartram & Roe, 2008). Used in different disciplines, feedback has gained significant attention in educational contexts, where researchers have been trying for almost a century to understand how it can be optimized to maximize its usefulness for students (Adelman, 1981; Kluger & DeNisi, 1998; Lipnevich et al, 2016; Wang, Gong, Xu & Hu, 2019; Wisniewski, Zierer & Hattie, 2020).

Theoretical research argues that in order to reduce gaps between actual and intended performance, students need to process feedback, analyze it, and take corrective action. Social and cultural approaches stress the importance of cooperation and relevance of action within social and cultural environments (Thurlings et al., 2013; Esterhazy & Damșa, 2019). The conceptualisation and interpretation of feedback remains controversial, with a traditional view seeing feedback as information provided by a teacher. Winstone and Carless (2021) suggest that it is more beneficial to focus on student responsiveness to feedback rather than teacher input.

The theoretical underpinnings of positive feedback derive from social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991) and motivational theories (Deci & Ryan, 1987). It works on the premise that recognition and reinforcement of positive behaviours contributes to the development of self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation. Positive feedback reinforces desired behaviours, following behaviourist principles (Skinner, 1965).

Practical implementation of positive feedback involves using written comments, verbal affirmations and digital platforms to convey positive feedback. Evidence-based strategies, such as

the "sandwich" method (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996) and specific constructive praise (Cameron & Pierce, 1994), have proven effective in a variety of educational settings. Positive feedback increases intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 1987) and contributes to students' positive psychological state.

In order to understand positive feedback, it is essential to examine its theoretical underpinnings and impact on student motivation. This involves an approach that emphasizes the role of the learner in the creation, perception and use of feedback, with a focus on evidence of student responsiveness to feedback. Positive, accurate and observable feedback reinforces desirable behaviours and motivates students to persevere in their development.

We have identified several examples of feedback approaches in the literature, but no single model of uniform implementation in the Romanian educational system. We propose a taxonomy of feedback according to its nature, highlighting the fact that feedback can be effective when provided directly and during the assessment and learning process.

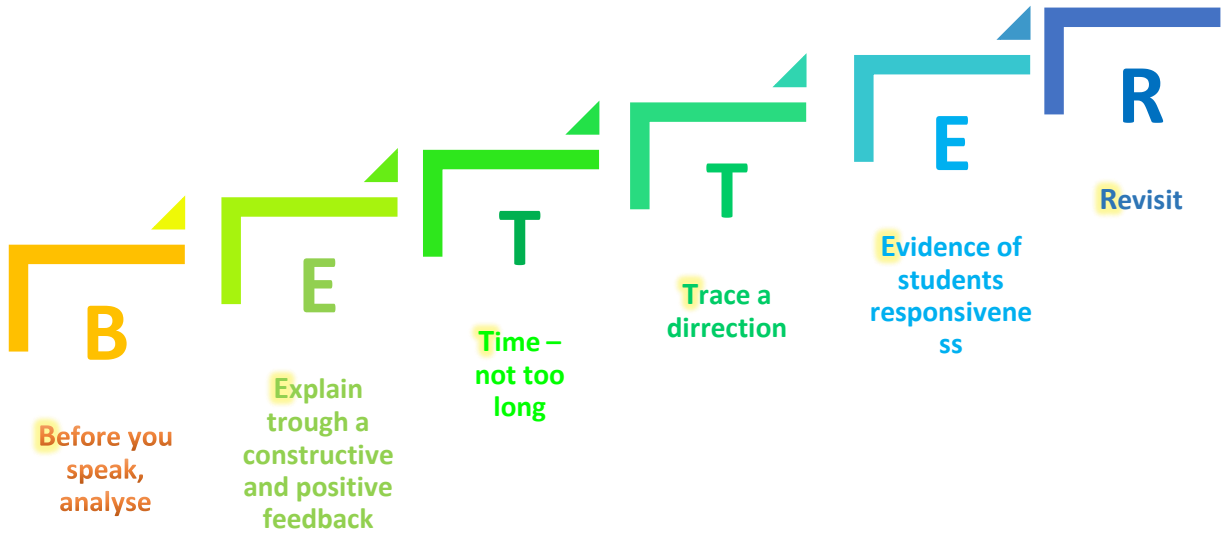

Figure 1.III. BETTER direct positive feedback model (personal design)

Table 1.III. A summary explanation of the BETTER direct feedback stages

Positive feedback model - BETTER	Description

Before you speak, consider	The teacher uses evidence to support the observation. Praise is not feedback.
Explain through constructive and positive feedback	The teacher focuses on the behaviour, describes rather than judges, points out what is desirable, discusses the implications from a positive perspective, gives direction and summarises the comments.
Time	The teacher should set an appropriate time to provide feedback. Delayed or interrupted feedback diminishes its significance, leading to heightened feelings of guilt.
Setting direction	The teacher continues the discussion as initiated, reinforcing desirable educational behaviours by involving the student by proposing solutions to the observed situation (Bocos et al., 2021a).
Evidence of student responsiveness	The teacher should help the student understand the complexity of a task in order to respond positively to subsequent feedback. The pupil can also be encouraged to identify their strengths so that they can translate them into areas where they need to progress.
Revisit	The teacher should review the feedback by making changes, adjustments or improvements if the student's response is negative.

How teachers manage the group of students and each individual student is essential in preventing inappropriate behaviour. Teachers need to have a shared vision of feedback, to provide constructive information about student performance, thus facilitating continuity of learning (Bocos et al., 2021a; Wang, Gong, Xu, & Hu, 2019; Wisniewski, Zierer, & Hattie, 2020). Student engagement in feedback is important, and teachers play a critical role in their perception of feedback (Zhang & Hylang, 2022). Feedback is a mechanism for regulating learning, helping both teachers and students gain valuable insights into the educational process and set desirable goals (Bocos et al., 2021a; Wisniewski, Zierer, & Hattie, 2020).

III.2. Feedback - an effective tool for boosting learner motivation in learning activities

The way teachers manage the group and each individual student influences the prevention of inappropriate behaviour and creates an effective learning atmosphere. Positive feedback and praise can significantly improve student performance, but it must be constructive and avoid demotivation. Teachers need to have a shared vision of feedback, which should be formative, individualized, and offered systematically (Bocos et al., 2021a; Wang, Gong, Xu, & Hu, 2019; Wisniewski, Zierer, & Hattie, 2020). Students respond better to clear, specific, and actionable feedback that supports continuous learning (Muijs & Reynolds, 2017).

For example, using the "sandwich" method in feedback involves alternating compliments with recommendations for improvement: "I like the way you structured the introduction, but you might want to expand on the arguments in paragraph two. In conclusion, you did a good job summarizing the main ideas.". Another approach is to offer specific praise: "You did an excellent job in solving math problems, especially in applying formulas correctly."

Feedback can be provided in a variety of ways, including verbal, nonverbal, and written (Carless & Boud, 2018). An example of nonverbal feedback would be approval through gestures, such as a smile or a nod, to encourage students. Writing a positive comment on a post-it note, such as "Congratulations on your detailed answer today!" can also be effective.

Timely and correct feedback can increase student motivation and engagement, confirming or adjusting the educational pathway to achieve the goals set. Thus, feedback becomes an important part of the educational process, positively influencing students' cognitive, emotional and social development.

III.3. Between fear and trust. The influence of feedback on student self-perception

Romania's recent history, marked by the communist regime and the post-communist transition, has deeply influenced the education system. During the communist period, education was strictly regulated, with the aim of forming a 'new man' obedient to party ideology. After 1990, the system began to reform, culminating in the Education Act of 2011, which promotes the integral and harmonious development of the individual (Article 2(3)).

However, the transformation of mentalities is a slow process. Authoritarian mentalities persist among some parents and teachers, affecting children's development. Statements such as "beating is heaven-sent" reflect a fear-based upbringing, which can lead to counterproductive behaviours and a lack of creativity (Bocos et al., 2021a).

Education today should promote collaboration and empathy, not excessive individual competition. Competition can hinder the development of qualities such as generosity and teamwork. The Education Act 2023 stresses the importance of personal development and active citizenship (Art. 1(3)).

Positive feedback is essential to boost pupils' motivation and self-esteem. Well-worded and timely feedback can increase pupils' motivation and engagement, contributing to their harmonious development and improved educational performance (Wisniewski, Zierer & Hattie,

2020). It is important for teachers to use constructive and specific feedback, tailored to the social and family context of students, to facilitate a positive and productive learning environment.

Table 2.III. Strategies for applying effective positive feedback

Nr. crt.	Strategies	Description
1.	Sandwich feedback	Compliment - making recommendations for improvement/improvement - compliment.
2.	Timely feedback	Feedback that is left waiting is a lost moment.
3.	Individual feedback	Identify the individual needs of the student through a self-analysis carried out by the student together with the teacher. Questions such as "How do you like it?", "What would you like to reinforce?", can be a resource in establishing a plan for improvement.
4.	Feedback provided by answering the four questions	✓ What can the student do?
5.	Specific feedback	✓ What can the learner not do?
6.	Check-in feedback	✓ How does the student's work compare with others?
7.	Individual meetings concluded with an appreciation of a recently achieved objective	✓ How can the pupil do better?
8.	Verbal, non-verbal or written feedback	Providing one-off feedback on a specific skill or knowledge that can be used as praise.
9.	Progressively constructed feedback	It is given consistently, on targets and is intended to establish a pattern.
10.	Tasks completed alternately, with results displayed showing progress	Positive one-to-one conference lasting up to 10 minutes
11.	Peer-to-peer concept	Verbalized through short words ("yes, that's right, right, try again"), grimaces. Don't confuse notes with feelings!
12.	Guest" feedback	Students receive feedback after each learning sequence.
13.	Student note-taking and solicitation of feedback	Student task chart, which is marked with a sticker/stamp when completed.
14.	Correspondence notebooks	Pupil-pupil feedback
15.	Teacher-student discussion and analysis of tests, assignments or objectives from the beginning of the school year	Another outside adult will be involved to provide feedback.

16.	Feedback on notes or post-it notes	The pupil takes notes, compares them in pairs to complete them, then receives paired feedback from the teacher.
17.	Genuine praise	Specific section where the teacher notes comments, stamps or other rewards.
18.	Time to say "I noticed..."	Allows students to ask the necessary questions and have a relevant discussion, to properly self-assess and observe their real progress, where they are and what they want to acquire.
19.	The "yes, no" model	It is not the most efficient use of a teacher's time, but it is extremely effective in terms of the effect it creates.
20.	Teacher feedback	Avoiding repeating certain words of praise (bravo, excellent) without actually stating the reason.

We think we can conclude by saying that the use of feedback as a tool, in any context, by generating satisfaction and well-being, is a strategy with a strong formative character. We have found no logical explanation and no evidence that unconditional help from a teacher would not produce positive results in raising the self-esteem of learners. In stark contrast, however, is the unmistakable manifestation of authority based on power, control and punishment.

III.4. The influence of positive feedback on students' motivation and self-esteem levels

In the context of contemporary education, student motivation and learning effectiveness are closely linked to self-esteem, a multifaceted concept involving an individual's assessment of his or her own abilities. This chapter explores the complex relationship between self-esteem and student motivation, highlighting how robust self-esteem can catalyse academic motivation.

Self-esteem, integrating cognitive and emotional dimensions, involves critical self-evaluation of personal competencies and feelings of self-acceptance (Baumeister et al., 2003). Students with high self-esteem often develop strong beliefs of self-efficacy, increasing their motivation to tackle challenging academic tasks.

Positive feedback is an essential tool in education, with the potential to recognise students' achievements and shape their motivation, self-esteem and engagement. Positive feedback, anchored in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1987), encourages positive behaviours and intrinsic motivation. Learners with a positive self-image exhibit increased intrinsic motivation, engaging in learning for the joy of mastering new skills (Deci & Ryan, 1987). Positive feedback supports psychological needs for autonomy,

competence, and relatedness, fueling genuine interest in learning (Deci & Ryan, 1987). Positive feedback boosts students' confidence, confirming their competence and recognizing the value of their efforts, which fuels academic enthusiasm and persistence (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Students with high self-esteem are more likely to take academic risks, essential for deep and transformative learning (Dweck, 2006).

Self-esteem functions as a protective factor against failure, allowing students to see failures as opportunities for growth (Masten et al., 1990). Students with positive self-esteem actively participate in classroom activities, contributing to an enriched learning environment (Fredricks et al., 2004). The literature confirms that thoughtful feedback develops positive self-esteem. Acknowledging students' efforts and providing guidance for improvement contributes to the cognitive and emotional dimensions of self-esteem (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Well-constructed feedback fosters the perception of challenges as opportunities for growth, positively correlating with self-efficacy and motivation (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Feedback that emphasizes effort and progress promotes a growth mindset, essential for intrinsic motivation (Dweck, 2006). Beyond the cognitive aspects, positive feedback contributes to students' emotional resilience, supporting a positive self-concept (Masten et al., 1990). Students' active involvement in self-evaluation and self-reflection, combined with positive feedback, fosters autonomy and a positive self-image (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994).

Integrating positive feedback into a collaborative educational ecosystem involving teachers, peers and parents provides a comprehensive and harmonised feedback loop, supporting students in their academic endeavours (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

CHAPTER IV. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ON SELF-ESTEEM

IV.1. Self-esteem - evaluative component of the self

In contemporary education, the central role of self-esteem in student motivation is well documented. Self-esteem, a complex psychological construct, encompasses an individual's evaluations of his or her own abilities and personal worth (Constantin, 2004). Zlate (2016) states that self-image includes the totality of perceptions and beliefs about one's own personality, reflected in behaviours and influenced by the experiences and perceptions of others.

Self-esteem is developed through five essential dimensions: emotional, social, professional, physical and predictive self (Baumeister, Smart, Boden, 1996). It influences how individuals perceive themselves and assess their personal worth, leading to positive or negative self-evaluations. A high level of self-esteem is associated with self-appraisal and self-regard, while a low level leads to self-depreciation and poor performance (Zlate, 2016).

In educational settings, positive experiences and personal success contribute to self-esteem, while failures can diminish it. Students with high self-esteem demonstrate greater resilience to failure and perform better (Coopersmith, 1981). Self-esteem is influenced by the feedback received, and positive feedback plays a primary role in the development of healthy self-esteem. Providing positive and constructive feedback in the school environment can boost students' intrinsic motivation and engagement, contributing to a positive perception of self (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Education should support not only students' academic development, but also their personal development, cultivating self-esteem through positive experiences and constructive feedback. This provides a stimulating learning environment in which students are motivated to engage and achieve high performance (Deci & Ryan, 1987; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

IV.2. Self-esteem - the activating spring of learner motivation

In education, achieving positive learning outcomes is closely linked to student motivation. Self-esteem, a multidimensional construct, plays an important role in this context, influencing students' motivation and academic engagement. It encompasses an analysis of one's own aptitudes, values and confirmations, acting as a determining factor in students' engagement in academic activities. Self-esteem correlates significantly with academic motivation and performance, influencing self-confidence, resilience, and perceptions of personal competence (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003; Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2004). Students with high self-esteem

exhibit greater intrinsic engagement and motivation, which enables them to cope with educational challenges and achieve higher academic results.

The relationship between self-esteem and motivation is supported by theories such as expectancy-value theory (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which highlight the importance of self-confidence and perceived control over one's educational experiences. High self-esteem contributes to the development of positive attitudes, constant self-evaluation and increased resilience in the face of failure (Bandura, Freeman & Lightsey, 1999).

Self-esteem has both cognitive and emotional components, influenced by positive feedback and educational experiences. Positive feedback contributes significantly to the development of healthy self-esteem, promoting a positive self-image and strong intrinsic motivation (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Students with high self-esteem are more likely to actively engage in learning, accept challenges, and develop positive interpersonal relationships, all of which contribute to their academic success and personal development (Salas & Rosen, 2010).

IV.3. Self-awareness

Self-identification, or the cultivation of self-awareness, is the central concern of the primary school pupil in terms of the discoveries they make at this age. The need to be individualised, to stand apart, not to be separated as an individual from the rest of the group, to be concerned and assimilated as an individual, as a distinct personality but belonging to the group, to feel an increasingly acute need to express oneself in new situations and to have one's actions validated, socially recognised, useful and valuable, is accentuated as the desire to be unique increases.

These needs of the primary school pupil call for a code of ethics, customs and rules for the application of positive feedback in order to manage the development of the transformations that innovate the pupil's personality.

IV.3. The role of positive feedback in relation to the locus of control and pupil assessment

Dimensions of locus of control include internal control, external control, stability and generality. The internal locus is associated with the belief in personal influence on outcomes and the external locus with the influence of external factors. Stability refers to the constancy of

perceived control, and generality to its applicability across domains. Understanding these dimensions is vital for assessing the impact of locus of control on individual behavior and performance (Cleveland et al., 2020).

Assessment and positive feedback are important tools in strengthening students' locus of control. They enable the development of self-regulation skills and increase confidence in the ability to succeed. Positive feedback provides constructive information that encourages accountability for actions and improved performance. Fair and objective assessment provides clear directions for skill development, strengthening internal locus of control and encouraging self-responsibility in learning (Dallı & Sezgin, 2022; Micomonaco & Espinoza, 2022).

The relationship between locus of control and positive feedback is closely related to individual motivation and performance. Individuals with internal locus of control benefit more from positive feedback due to their orientation towards personal effort and responsibility. In contrast, those with external locus of control attribute success to external factors, thus reducing the benefits of positive feedback and affecting their motivation and performance (Delıbalta & Akbay, 2020; Micomonaco & Espinoza, 2022). Studies in educational psychology emphasize the importance of locus of control in student motivation. It develops a proactive attitude and growth mindset, contributing to better management of academic stress and anxiety (Cleveland et al., 2020).

Effective positive feedback needs to be specific, constructive and personalised, providing clear information and practical solutions to improve performance. Through positive feedback, students feel supported and inspired, leading to significant improvement in academic performance. Locus of control and positive feedback play key roles in the learning process, directly influencing motivation and academic performance.

CHAPTER V. MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING AS AN ACTIVATING MECHANISM FOR THE INVOLVEMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS

V.1. Motivation - a vector for stimulating active involvement

The inherent incentive mechanisms that underpin learning and academic performance are triggered by learning motivation. Autonomous learning occurs when the teacher stimulates the learner's motivation and interest, manifested by a desire to understand and acquire knowledge. Motivation, a fundamental concept in psychology, involves sets of motives such as needs, tendencies and interests that underpin actions and attitudes (Bogdan-Tucicov, 1981). In the literature, learning motivation is defined as a complex phenomenon that guides human behaviour (Cristea, 1998). As an activating mechanism, motivation adjusts the learner's cognitive behavior to achieve the proposed goals (Popenici & Fartușnic, 2009). Motivation for learning is a complex and heterogeneous process, with various theoretical models proposed to explain the initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of goal-directed behavior (Popenici & Fartușnic, 2009).

V.2. The role and forms of education

Motivation in the educational context influences school success and the achievement of educational goals. A motivated learner actively engages with the tasks at hand and constantly adapts his or her learning style (Dweck & Master, 2009). Forms of motivation relevant to learning activity include intrinsic motivation, driven by internal springs, and extrinsic motivation, influenced by rewards and punishments (Gavrilă & Lefter, 2007). In the early stages, primary motivation for learning derives from external factors, but over time, these external motivations can stimulate the development of intrinsic motivation (Lemeni & Miclea, 2004). Maslow's pyramid of needs, adapted by Ausubel and Robinson, emphasizes the importance of social, cognitive, and personal achievement needs in stimulating learner motivation (Ausubel & Robinson, 1969).

V.3. Motivation - a key variable in academic progress

The relationship between teacher feedback methods, student motivation and academic achievement is very important. Positive feedback enhances motivation and academic performance, increasing self-esteem and creating a positive learning environment (Schneider, 2020). The OECD (2003) report stresses that motivation and self-confidence are key variables for academic progress.

The OECD 2023 study highlights the importance of social and emotional skills for educational success, including persistence and achievement motivation.

In the National Education Act 198/2023, motivation and feedback are not sufficiently addressed, highlighting the need to study in detail the phenomenon of motivation and feedback in student development. Positive feedback is essential for raising self-esteem, fostering intrinsic motivation, creating a positive learning environment and promoting perseverance. Teachers can support the development of intrinsic motivation through constructive and positive feedback, diversifying assessment modalities and establishing a safe working environment (Câmpean et al., 2024). Positive feedback helps to develop developmental thinking and increase resilience in the face of challenges (Fong et al., 2018).

V.4 Relationships between teacher feedback and student motivation

Motivation influences students' academic performance (Han & Yin, 2016). Positive teacher feedback has a significant impact on primary school students' motivation, leading to increased engagement (Katsantonis et al., 2023). In China, a study showed that male students receive less directive feedback and more criticism compared to female students, highlighting the importance of positive feedback for student motivation (Guo & Zhou, 2021). Teacher feedback influences student motivation through various theoretical frameworks, such as Self-Determination Theory and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasize the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Liu et al., 2020; Bandura, 1978). Feedback that emphasizes progress and learning aligns students' intrinsic motivation (Steinmayr et al., 2019). Incorporating these theoretical frameworks into feedback practices can promote sustainable and lasting motivation (Guo & Zhou, 2021).

Research indicates that when and how feedback is provided are critical determinants. Immediate and supportive feedback can develop developmentally oriented thinking and positively influence student motivation (Fong et al., 2018). Adopting a holistic approach to providing feedback that integrates cognitive, emotional, and social aspects can maximize its impact on student achievement. Feedback should foster both academic growth and students' overall development, fostering intrinsic motivation and desire to learn.

While there are different views on teacher feedback, a balanced approach is needed that integrates benefits and challenges. Integrating peer feedback and self-assessment exercises can cultivate a deeper understanding of learning progress and develop essential life skills (Schneider, 2020).

CHAPTER VI. A SURVEY OF SELF-EFFICACY, POSITIVE FEEDBACK AND MOTIVATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS FROM THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIV

Our research has focused on the educational context, in which teachers play a determined role not only in transmitting knowledge, but also in shaping students' cognitive and socio-emotional development. Previous studies have indicated that teachers' self-efficacy - that is, their belief in their own ability to influence students' academic achievement - is a key determinant of educational success. This research is rooted in Bandura's (1978) social cognitive theory and explores how teachers' beliefs influence their teaching behaviors and, in turn, student outcomes.

The study set out to investigate the relationships between teachers' self-efficacy, the frequency and nature of positive teacher feedback, and how these behaviours influence student engagement and motivation. In essence, the primary intention was to understand how teachers' beliefs about their own efficacy aligned with their specific teaching behaviors and how these behaviors impacted student experiences and performance.

- **Specific research objectives**

1.To investigate the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their behaviors of providing positive feedback:

- To identify the nuances of the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and the frequency and nature of positive feedback provided.

- Exploring the impact of positive feedback on student engagement and motivation:

2. Determine how positive feedback influences students' active engagement in learning.

- Evaluate the effect of positive feedback on student motivation, focusing on the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

- **The research hypotheses were:**

Teacher self-efficacy and positive feedback:

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant association relationship between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and their behaviors in providing positive feedback.

Alternative hypothesis (H1): There is an association relationship between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and their behaviors in providing positive feedback.

Positive feedback and student engagement:

Null Hypothesis (H0): Positive feedback practices are not significantly associated with student engagement in learning.

Alternative hypothesis (H1): Positive feedback practices are significantly associated with student engagement in learning.

Positive feedback and student motivation:

Null Hypothesis (H0): Positive feedback practices are not significantly associated with student motivation for learning.

Alternative hypothesis (H1): Positive feedback practices are significantly associated with students' learning motivation.

- **The total sample** included 455 teachers aged 19 to 65 years employed in mainstream, state and private education with cities as areas of representation:

Romania: Alba Iulia, Bacău, Brașov, București, Brăila, Cluj-Napoca, Constanța, Craiova, Galați, Iași, Pitești, Ploiești, Oradea, Târgu-Jiu, Timișoara

Republic of Moldova: Chisinau (1 person).

- **Methodology and Study Design**

The study adopted a correlational approach, using self-reported questionnaires to assess the variables of interest. The sample included 455 teachers from various educational backgrounds. The data collected were statistically analysed to identify patterns and associations between the variables studied.

69.2% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement "In the teaching-learning process I constantly give feedback to my students". A total of 21.8 agreed with this statement.

Those with a neutral opinion were only 7.5%, while those who disagreed were only 1.6%.

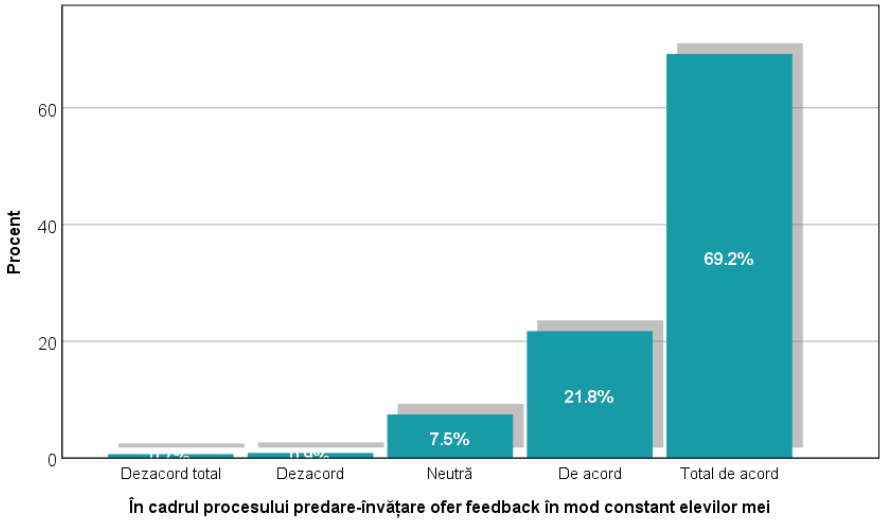

Figure 12.VI. Graphical representation of the sample of subjects on giving constant feedback to students

84.4% of the participants in the survey agree and strongly agree that their students feel motivated by them by giving concrete positive feedback on aspects of the instructional process. Of the remaining respondents, 12.3% have a neutral opinion and 3.3% disagree.

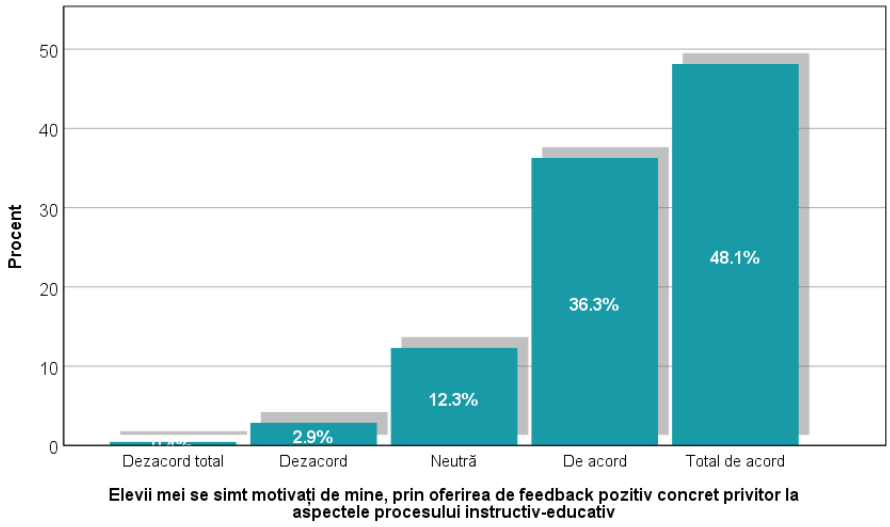

Fig. 25.VI. Graphical representation of the sample of subjects on the perception of students' motivation

Table 31.VI effectively illustrates the critical link between the variables studied, providing a clear and quantifiable picture of the relationships between positive feedback and student motivation, thus highlighting their relevance and impact in the educational context. The correlation

between positive feedback and student motivation is central to the purpose of the research, directly illustrating the impact of teacher behaviour on student motivation. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.703 indicates a strong and significant positive correlation ($p \leq 0.05$), highlighting the importance of positive feedback.

Table 31.VI. Correlational analysis between positive feedback and motivation

		Motivation
Positive feedback	Pearson correlation coefficient	.703**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	455

**Corelaţia este semnificativă dacă p≤0.05.

Table 30. VI. demonstrates the significant correlation between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and their tendency to provide positive feedback, supporting the hypothesis that self-efficacy influences feedback behaviors.Se prezintă în mod clar cum autoeficacitatea profesorilor se aliniază with their practices of providing positive feedback, directly correlating with student engagement and motivation.

Table 30.VI. Correlational analysis between self-efficacy beliefs and positive feedback

		Positive Feedback
Self-efficacy	Pearson correlation coefficient	.507**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	455

**Corelaţia este semnificativă dacă p≤0.05.

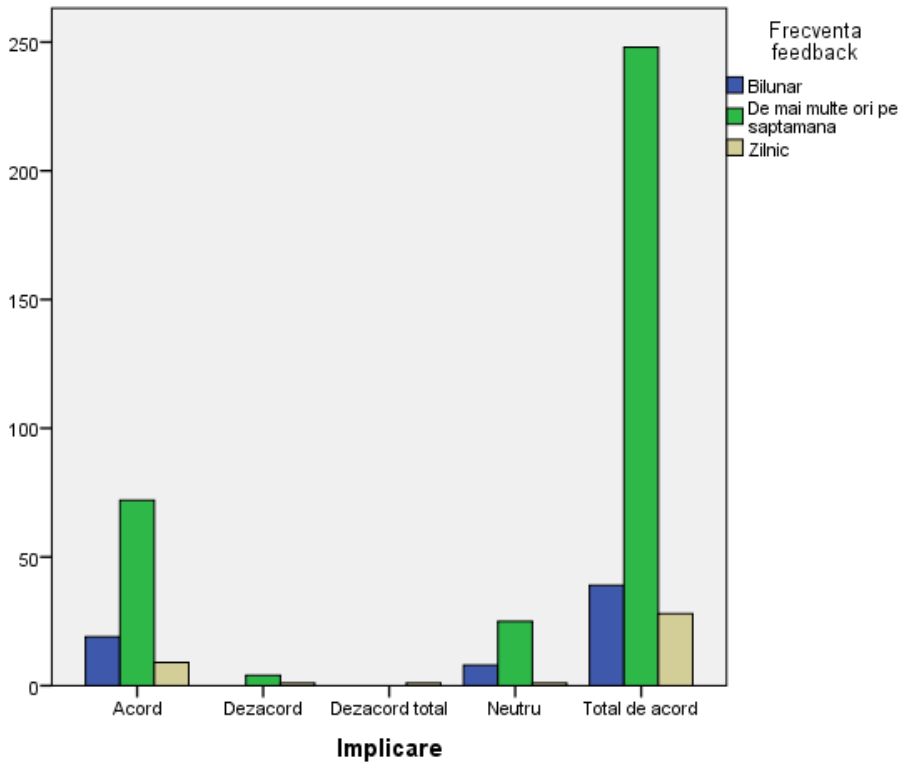

Figure 30. VI. Graphical representation of positive feedback in relation to the frequency with which it is provided from the perspective of engagement

This figure shows the relationship between the frequency of positive feedback and student engagement, confirming hypotheses about the impact of positive feedback on student engagement. The results of the chi-square test confirm the presence of a significant association between the frequency of positive feedback and the opinion on the statement "My students feel motivated by me by providing concrete positive feedback on aspects of the instructional process." ($\chi 2$=14331; df=8; p=0.004).

- **Conclusions** Correlational analysis identified a **significant positive correlation** between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and the provision of positive feedback. This suggests that teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy may be more likely to provide positive feedback to their students. The study confirmed a **significant correlation between the provision of positive feedback and student motivation**. This highlights the importance of positive reinforcement in increasing intrinsic motivation and student engagement in learning. Contrary to expectations, **correlational analysis did not confirm a significant relationship between the provision of positive feedback and student engagement as perceived by teachers**. Further exploration may

be warranted to understand factors contributing to student engagement beyond feedback mechanisms.

Results indicated a **significant association between the frequency of positive feedback and teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and student motivation**. This suggests that the frequency of positive feedback may play a role in shaping teachers' and students' perceptions and experiences in the educational context.

The extent to which positive feedback is provided by teachers is associated with levels of student engagement and motivation. Students who received consistent and meaningful positive feedback demonstrated higher levels of intrinsic engagement and motivation, highlighting the critical role that teacher feedback plays in shaping the learning experience.

CHAPTER VII. A SURVEY OF TEST ANXIETY, LOCUS OF CONTROL AND PERCEPTION OF POSITIVE FEEDBACK-AN IMPACT STUDY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The study investigated the relationships between test anxiety, locus of control and perception of positive feedback among elementary school students. It aimed to understand how these psychological factors influence students' academic performance and well-being.

- The research **aims and objectives** we set out to examine the relationship between test anxiety, perception of positive feedback and locus of control were:

1. To examine test anxiety among primary school students.
2. Investigating the association between test anxiety and preferred assessment type.
3. Investigating the association between test anxiety and perception of positive feedback.
4. Investigating the association between test anxiety and locus of control.
5. Investigating the association between perception of positive feedback and locus of control.

By addressing these objectives, our study aimed to advance our theoretical understanding of the complex interrelationships between positive feedback, test anxiety, and locus of control among elementary school students, while providing useful implications for educational practice and intervention. We aimed to contribute empirical data to inform strategies for promoting positive academic experiences and emotional well-being among primary school students.

- The **research hypotheses** were as follows:

Test anxiety and preferred type of assessment

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant association between primary school students' level of test anxiety and their preferred type of assessment.

Alternative hypothesis (H1): There is a significant association between elementary school students' level of test anxiety and their preferred type of assessment.

Test anxiety and perception of positive feedback

Null hypothesis (H0): There is no significant association between primary school students' level of test anxiety and their perception of positive feedback received from their teacher.

Alternative hypothesis (H1): There is a significant association between primary school students' level of test anxiety and their perception of positive feedback received from the teacher.

Test anxiety and locus of control

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant association between elementary school students' level of test anxiety and locus of control.

Alternative hypothesis (H1): There is a significant association between elementary school students' test anxiety level and locus of control.

Perception of positive feedback and locus of control

Null hypothesis (H0): There is no significant association between primary school students' perception of positive feedback and locus of control.

Alternative hypothesis (H1): There is a significant association between primary school students' perception of positive feedback and locus of control.

- The study used a cross-sectional correlational design. The sample included 455 primary school students from different classes of the state primary school in Cluj-Napoca, from the Onisifor Ghibu Theoretical High School, selected by stratified random sampling technique.

Questionnaires administered included measures of test anxiety, perception of positive feedback, locus of control and other demographic variables. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the chi-square test to determine associations between variables. We observe that in general, test anxiety is low to none in the studied group. Thus, 55.6% of the children answered the question "How scared are you of testing on a scale of 1 to 5?" with a little, and 23.1% of pupils said not at all.

Table 6.VII. Distribution of the sample of subjects according to test anxiety

Test anxiety

		Frequency	Procent
Valid	None	105	23.1
	Very, very cool	14	3.1
	Very strong	21	4.6
	A little	253	55.6
	Strong	62	13.6
	Total	455	100.0

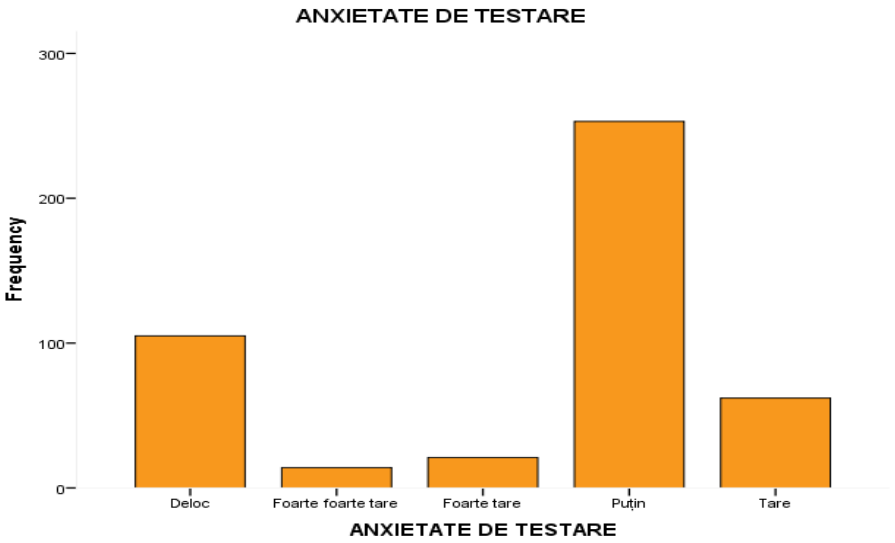

Figure 5.VII. Graphical representation of the sample of subjects according to test anxiety

The data presented reflected the preferences of the students in the study group regarding the different forms of assessment. The majority of students prefer this form of assessment, which may indicate that they are more comfortable with traditional assessments, which are well-structured and familiar.

Table 8.VII. Distribution of the sample of subjects according to preferred type of assessment

Preferred assessment

Preferred assessment

		Frequency	Procent
Valid	Written assessment in class	236	51.9
	Oral assessment in class, from the bench or at the blackboard	124	27.3
	Homework assignments	71	15.6
	Online tests	24	5.3
	Total	455	100.0

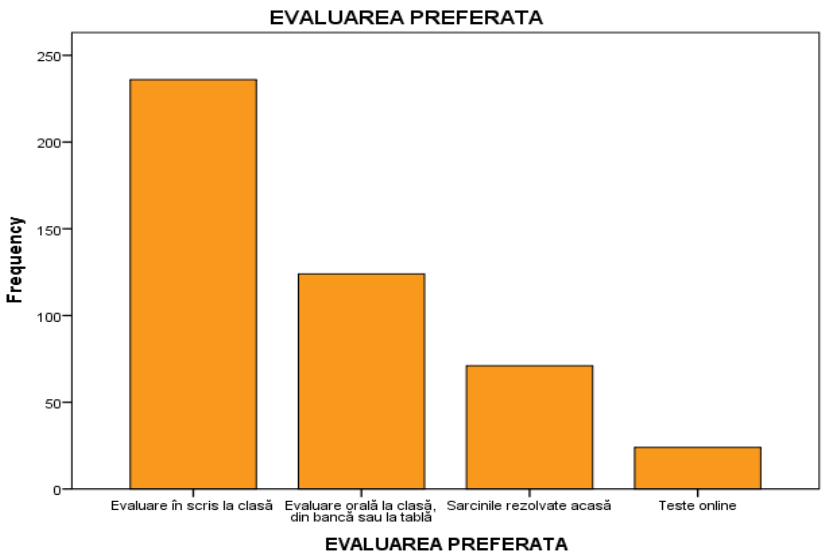

Figure 6.VII. Graphical representation of the sample of subjects according to the preferred type of evaluation

A significant proportion of students prefer oral assessment, suggesting that these students feel more confident in their verbal communication skills and prefer direct interaction with the teacher.

Table 10.VII. Distribution of the sample of subjects according to the type of perceived feedback

Perception of feedback

		Frequency	Procent
Valid	Negative Feedback	203	44.6
	Positive Feedback	252	55.4
	Total	455	100.0

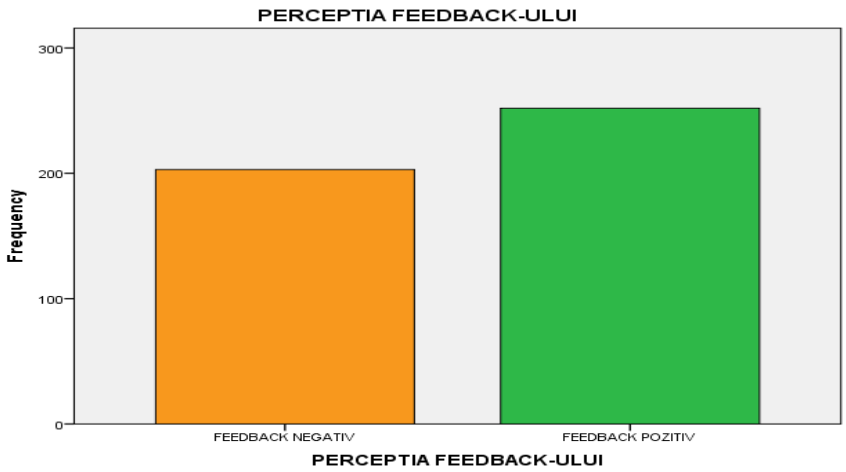

Figure 7.VII. Graphical representation of the sample of subjects according to the preferred type of evaluation

Students' perception of feedback plays a significant role in how they form their attitudes towards learning and towards the subjects they study. The data presented showed that 55.4% of students perceive feedback as positive, while 44.6% perceive it as negative. This information has significant implications for the educational process. Students who perceive feedback as positive feel more confident in their abilities and have higher self-esteem.

Table 12.VII. Distribution of the sample of subjects by type of locus of control

Locus of control

		Frequency	Procent
Valid	Extern	260	57.1
	Intern	195	42.9
	Total	455	100.0

57.1% of students have an external locus of control and 42.9% of students have an internal locus of control.

Locus of control refers to the degree to which individuals believe they have control over events that influence their lives. Students with an external locus of control (57.1%) tend to believe that their success or failure in education is influenced by external factors such as luck, difficulty of tasks or the actions of other people (teachers, peers). Students with an external locus of control

may be less motivated to improve their academic performance because they do not see a clear link between their efforts and their results. As for students with an internal locus of control (42.9%), they see their results as directly related to personal effort and ability. Students with an internal locus of control are often more motivated and resilient in the face of academic difficulties.

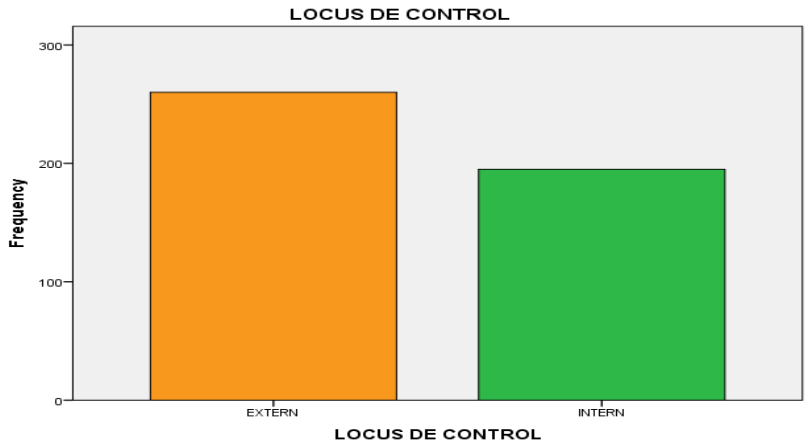

Figure 8.VII. Graphical representation of the sample of subjects according to the type of locus of control

The data reflected that the majority of students in the study group have an external locus of control. In order to improve their perception and attitude towards learning, it is essential that teachers adopt strategies that encourage the development of an internal locus of control, helping students develop confidence in their ability to influence their own academic performance through effort and perseverance.

Table 14.VII. showed the relationship between test anxiety and preferred assessment type, essential for testing the associated hypothesis.

Table no. 14.VII. Distribution of the sample of subjects according to preferred assessment type and test anxiety

	Preferred assessment		Total

		Written classroom assessment	Oral classroom assessment from the desk or blackboard	homeworks	Online test	
Test anxiety	Not at all	63	35	5	2	105
	Very, very e	5	4	5	0	14
	very hard	5	4	11	1	21
	Very loud	141	66	32	14	253
	A little	22	15	18	7	62
Total		236	124	71	24	455

A chi-square test was conducted to determine the association between test anxiety and students' preferred type of assessment. The results of the chi-square test confirm the presence of a significant association between test anxiety and the type of assessment preferred by students. ($\chi 2=57.075$; df=12; p=0.000), confirming Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant association between the level of test anxiety of primary school students and their preferred type of assessment.

Level of test anxiety influences students' preferences for certain types of assessment. Students with different levels of test anxiety prefer different types of assessments, which may imply the need for tailored approaches in assessment methods to reduce anxiety and improve students' performance and learning experience.

Table 18.VII. highlighted the association between locus of control and test anxiety, evidently to test the relevant hypothesis.

Table No. 18.VII. Locus of control in relation to test anxiety

		Locus of control		
		Extern	Intern	Total
Test anxiety	Not at all	59	46	105
	Very, very	10	4	14
	very hard	18	3	21

	Very loud	133	120	253
	A little	40	22	62
Total		260	195	455

Our findings followed the issues outlined below.

- Test anxiety and preferred assessment type: A significant association was confirmed between test anxiety level and preferred assessment type (χ^2=57.075, p=0.000).
- Test anxiety and perception of positive feedback: No significant association was confirmed between test anxiety and perception of positive feedback (χ^2=6.616, p=0.158).
- Test anxiety and locus of control: A significant association was confirmed between test anxiety and locus of control (χ^2=11.743, p=0.019).
- Perception of positive feedback and locus of control: No significant association was confirmed between perception of positive feedback and locus of control (χ^2=0.327, p=0.568).

The study confirmed the hypothesis suggesting a significant association between the level of test anxiety among primary school students and their preferred type of assessment. The results showed no significant association between primary school students' level of test anxiety and their perception of positive feedback received from the teacher. This suggests that students' perceptions of feedback received from the teacher may not be influenced by their level of anxiety. Further exploration of factors affecting students' perceptions of feedback is needed to enhance the effectiveness of feedback giving strategies in educational settings.

The study confirmed the hypothesis that there is a significant association between primary school students' level of anxiety detestation and their locus of control. This implies that students who experience higher levels of test anxiety may exhibit differences in their beliefs about the degree of control they have over their academic performance.

CHAPTER VIII. QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY ON MOTIVATION AND SELF-ESTEEM IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS - EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF POSITIVE FEEDBACK

In education, motivation and self-esteem are vital to the development of students. Positive feedback plays a key role in improving these aspects. According to Bandura's theory, motivation and self-efficacy are influenced by the social environment and the feedback received. Low motivation can lead to withdrawal and disorganisation. Cultivating self-esteem through positive feedback is essential, contributing to students' perception of their competence and the social support they receive.

- The **aim and objectives** of this research were to assess the impact of positive feedback on motivation and self-esteem in primary school students. Objectives included assessing levels of motivation and self-esteem, investigating the influence of positive feedback, identifying moderating factors and providing recommendations for teachers.
- The following were formulated as **research questions**:

1. How does positive feedback influence the motivation of fourth grade students?
2. How does positive feedback impact students' self-esteem?
3. Are there gender differences in the relationship between positive feedback, motivation and self-esteem?
4. What recommendations can be offered to teachers to integrate positive feedback effectively?

- The study proposed the following **hypotheses**:

H0: There is no significant relationship between positive feedback and motivation/self-esteem.

H1: Positive feedback is positively associated with increased motivation and self-esteem.

H0: There are no gender differences in the effectiveness of positive feedback.

H1: There are significant gender differences in the effectiveness of positive feedback.

- **Research design**

The design is pretest-posttest with independent variables (intervention program) and dependent variables (motivation and self-esteem).

- **Intervention program** based on positive feedback delivery strategies. An intervention program based on positive feedback strategies was implemented in the classes selected for participation in this study. Teachers were trained on the content of the intervention programme and techniques for providing positive feedback, such as giving specific praise, encouragement and recognition of effort.

The intervention program included the following components:

- Introduction to positive feedback: theoretical presentation of the concept and benefits of positive feedback. Teachers were informed about the concept of positive feedback and its importance in developing students' self-esteem and motivation.

- Techniques for giving positive feedback: Training teachers on the use of specific praise, constant encouragement and recognition of students' effort through specific guidelines for introducing and providing feedback, individual observation sheets, motivational stickers.

- Practical exercises: Activities and practice scenarios for teachers, enabling them to apply the techniques effectively on a one-to-one basis, whenever required.

- Monitoring and feedback: Follow-up sessions to monitor progress and provide feedback to teachers on the application of the techniques in the classroom. Teachers applied techniques to provide positive feedback in class, with an emphasis on specific praise, constant encouragement and recognition of effort.

Programme duration:

The intervention program was conducted over four months, from September 2022 to January 2023. The intervention included 4 hands-on training sessions for teachers, one each month lasting 2 hours per session.

- **The sample included** 119 4th grade students from the "Onisifor Ghibu" High School, Cluj-Napoca. The gender distribution was almost equal, with 50.4% boys and 49.6% girls.

- **Research tools**

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: measures self-esteem with 10 items on a Likert scale.

MSLQ: assesses students' motivation and learning strategies, with a section on motivation (31 items).

- **Procedure**

The study followed strict ethical procedures, obtaining informed consent. The intervention program was conducted over four months and included teacher training sessions, practice

exercises, and monitoring. Pre- and post-test assessments measured students' motivation and self-esteem.

- **Data analysis and research results**

Data were statistically analyzed using IBM SPSS. Results showed a significant increase in self-esteem and motivation after the intervention. Paired samples t-test confirmed these increases for both boys and girls.Table 1.VIII gives an overview of the sample composition, with an almost equal distribution between boys and girls.

Table 1.VIII. Distribution of the sample of subjects by biological gender

Biological gender

		Frequency	Procent
Validated data	Masculin	60	50,4
	Feminin	59	49,6
	Total	119	100,0

In the table below you can see the Cronbach's alpha values for the scales used in this study.

The alpha validity coefficients of the scales measuring self-esteem, with 10 items, have values of 0.888 and 0.907, respectively, which shows that they have a very good level of fidelity. The alpha validity coefficients of the MSLQ instrument has values of 0.79, and 0.70 respectively which demonstrates that they have a very good level of fidelity.

Table 2.VIII. Validity coefficients of the scales

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Rosenberg Self-esteem scale – pre-test	0,888	10
Rosenberg Self-esteem scale – post-test	0,907	10
MSLQ - pre-test	0,790	31
MSLQ – post-test	0,705	31

Pre-test self-esteem

The average self-esteem score, as assessed at baseline, is found to be 24.65. The values deviate from the mean by plus or minus 3.198. The minimum score found was 10 while the maximum score was 29. We observe that we have a negatively skewed, right-skewed curve (Skewness Skewness Coefficient -2.279), with more extreme values to the left and leptokurtic (Skewness Coefficient 5.745), sharper than a normal distribution.

Table 4.VIII. Self-esteem score

Descriptive statistics
Self-esteem - pre-test

N	Date validated	119
	Missing data	0
Media		24,65
Median		25,00
Mode (Dominance)		27
Standard deviation		3,198
Skewness Skewness coefficient		-2,279
Kurtosis Bolting Coefficient		5,745
Minimum		10
Maximum		29

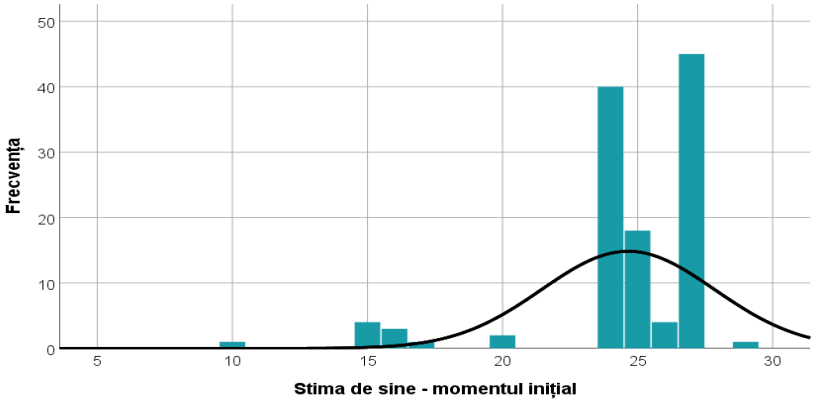

Figure 2.VIII. Level of initial self-esteem

Self-esteem post-test

Analysing the sample according to the self-esteem score at the end of the experiment, the mean value was 36.33. The minimum value found was 30 and the maximum was 40. The values of the self-esteem score deviate from the mean value by plus or minus 2.39.

We have a negative skewness curve, slightly skewed to the right (Skewness Skewness Coefficient -0.275), with more extreme values to the left and flattening (Skewness Coefficient -0.243), flatter than a normal distribution.

Table 6.VIII. Post-test self-esteem score

Descriptive statistics
Self-esteem - post-test

N	Date validated	119
	Missing data	0
Media		36,33
Median		36,00
Mode (Dominance)		36
Standard deviation		2,397
Skewness Skewness coefficient		-,275
Kurtosis Bolting Coefficient		-,243
Minimum		30
Maximum		40

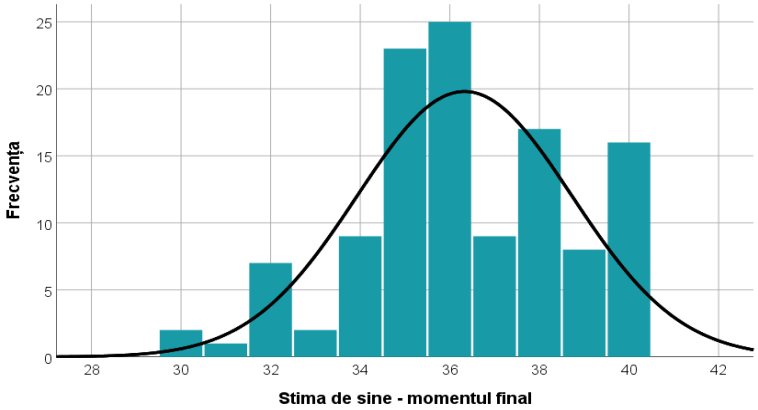

Figure 4.VIII. Post-test self-esteem level

Comparison of self-esteem levels between the two assessment moments

Using the t-test for dependent samples we compared the mean values of the self-esteem level between the baseline and the post-test time. At the baseline time the mean self-esteem score was 24.65, while at the post time it was 36.33.

The results of the statistical analysis (t=-33.376; df=118; p<0.001) show us a statistically significant difference, the values at the final time being significantly higher than at the initial time, thus validating the Alternative Hypothesis (H1): The implementation of positive feedback by teachers is positively associated with an increase in the level of self-esteem among primary school students.

Table 8.VIII. Comparative statistics on self-esteem

Descriptive statistics for paired samples

		Media	N	Standard deviation
Pair 1	Self-esteem - pre-test	24,65	119	3,198
	Self-esteem - post-test	36,33	119	2,397

From the following table we can see that all the students who initially had low self-esteem had high self-esteem at the end. Of the students who initially had a medium self-esteem, 10.8% still had a medium self-esteem at the end, while 89.2% had a high self-esteem at the end.

Table 10.VIII. Progress self-esteem comparative statistics

*Self-esteem - pre-test * Self-esteem - post-test*

			Self-esteem - post-test		
			Medium self-esteem	High self-esteem	Total
Self-esteem - pre-test Low self-esteem	Self-esteem - pre-test Low self-esteem	Frequency	0	8	8
		%	0,0%	100,0%	100,0%
	Medium self-esteem	Frequency	12	99	111
		%	10,8%	89,2%	100,0%

Total	Frequency	12	107	119
	%	10,1%	89,9%	100,0%

Pre-test motivation

It is found that the average score for motivation, as assessed at baseline, is 154.74. The values deviate from the average by plus or minus 18.159. The minimum score found was 62 while the maximum score was 174.

Table 12.VIII. Descriptive statistics motivation

Descriptive statistics
Motivation - pre-test

N	Date validated	119
	Missing data	0
Media		154.74
Median		160
Mode (Dominance)		163
Standard deviation		18.159
Skewness Skewness coefficient		-3.166
Kurtosis Bolting Coefficient		12.869
Minimum		62
Maximum		174

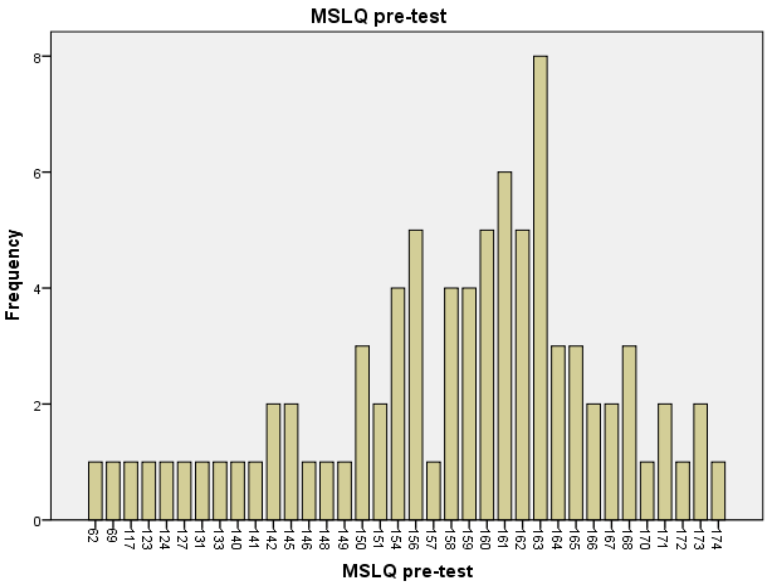

Figura nr. 7.VIII. Nivelul motivației pre-test

Post-test motivation

Analysing the sample according to the motivation score at the end of the experiment, the mean value was 177. The minimum value found was 58 and the maximum 199. The values of the score defining self-esteem deviate from the mean value plus or minus 21.637.

Table 13.VIII. Descriptive statistics post-test motivation

Descriptive statistics

Motivation - post-test

N	Date validated	119
	Missing data	0
Media		177
Median		182
Mode (Dominance)		187
Standard deviation		21.637
Skewness Skewness coefficient		-3.889
Kurtosis Bolting Coefficient		18.516
Minimum		58

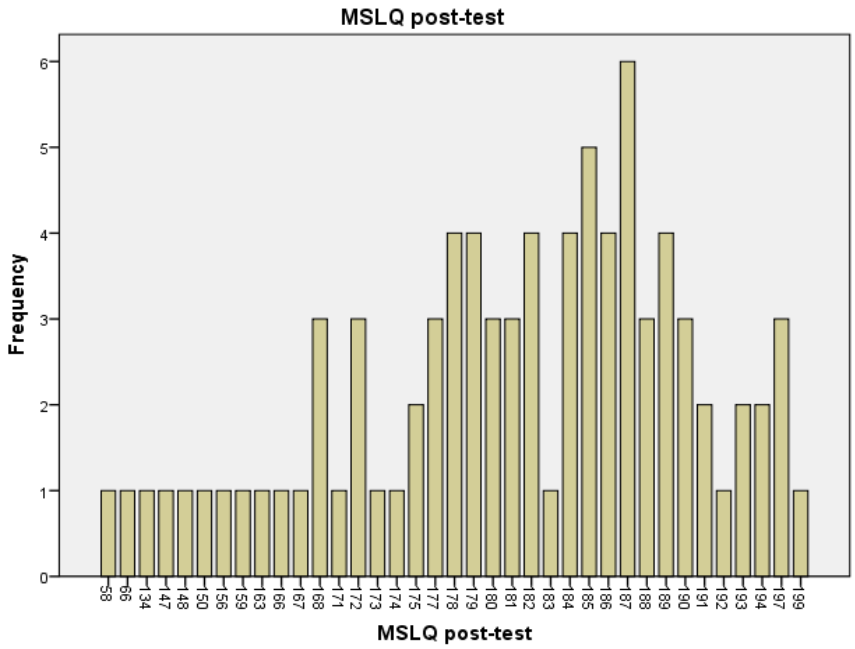

Figure 8.VIII. Level of post-test motivation

Comparison of motivation levels between the two assessment moments

To compare the mean values between the level of motivation between the baseline and the post-test time, paired samples t-test was used. At baseline the mean motivation score was 154, 74, while at the post moment it was 177. The results of the statistical analysis (t=35.871; df=118; p<0.001) show us a **statistically significant difference**, the values at the final time being significantly higher than at the initial time, thus validating the Alternative Hypothesis (H1): Implementation of positive feedback by teachers is positively associated with an increase in motivation levels among primary school students.

Table 14.VIII. Comparative descriptive statistics post-test motivation

Descriptive statistics for the paired samples

		Media	N	Standard deviation
Pair 1	Motivation - pre-test	177.50	119	21.637

	Motivation– post-test	154.74	119	18.159

Comparing motivation levels between the two assessment times for both boys and girls, we observe statistically significant increases for both genders, demonstrating the effectiveness of the program regardless of the gender of the participants.

Table 16.VIII. Comparative descriptive statistics for paired samples

Descriptive statistics for the paired samples

Gendre			Media	N	Standard deviation
Masculin	Pair 1	Motivation pre-test	151.98	60	19,202
		Motivation post-test	174,10	60	22,597
Feminin	Pair 1	Motivation pre-test	173	59	16,912
		Motivation post-test	199	59	20,502

The findings of this study provide evidence supporting the role of positive feedback in increasing motivation and self-esteem among primary school students. There is a positive association between the implementation of strategies to provide positive feedback by teachers and an increase in motivation among primary school students. This indicates that when teachers actively incorporate positive feedback into their instructional practices, students demonstrate increased levels of motivation, potentially increasing their engagement and performance in academic tasks.

There is a positive association between the implementation of strategies to provide positive feedback by teachers and an increase in the self-esteem of elementary students. This highlights the role of positive reinforcement in fostering a sense of confidence and self-worth among students.

Our analyses revealed significant positive effects of the intervention involving giving positive feedback to students on both motivation and self-esteem among primary school students. Specifically, self-esteem and motivation levels increased after the implementation of the proposed intervention program. These results underline the importance of promoting an educational environment characterized by support, support and opportunities for affirmation.

Furthermore, our study found that both genders performed well in terms of increasing motivation and self-esteem levels.

CHAPTER IX. INTEGRATING POSITIVE FEEDBACK. CASE STUDIES

The study included 17 case studies on a group of primary school pupils from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. The main objectives were to investigate the impact of positive feedback on motivation and self-esteem, to explore the role of parental support and to analyse the transformation of pupils' motivation and self-esteem. The research was conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods, including interviews, observations and the use of the Rosenber Self-Esteem Scale.

In this section, the research aimed to investigate the initial and final level of self-esteem of students at the "Gheorghe Surdu" Theoretical High School in Brezoi, using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The aim was to compare quantitative results with qualitative data collected from observations, interviews and other assessment tools in order to identify correlations between measured changes in self-esteem and students' qualitative perceptions of their own personal development and then to conduct and record case studies of 7 students among those who participated in the quantitative research.

The research was structured in three main stages: defining objectives, selecting participants and collecting data. A methodical approach was used to ensure an in-depth understanding of the influence of positive feedback. Teachers were trained through workshops and orientation sessions to effectively integrate positive feedback into the teaching process.

The main objectives included identifying the impact of positive feedback on students' motivation and self-esteem and the role of teachers in stimulating students' active involvement in educational activities. Data collection methods included systematic observations, interviews and questionnaires using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Data were analyzed to identify recurring themes related to student motivation, self-esteem, and the impact of positive feedback.

Systematic classroom observations were conducted to track changes in student behavior, participation, and self-esteem. The frequency and nature of positive feedback provided by teachers was documented through actual student ratings when praised. Interviews were conducted with students, parents and teachers to collect qualitative data about their experiences and perceptions. Open-ended questions were asked to understand their perspectives on the impact of positive feedback.

Table 1.IX. Matrix of teachers' focus group responses

Question	**Answer 1**	**Answer 2**	**Answer 3**	**Answer 4**	**Answer 5**
2. Perception of positive feedback	"It is most appropriate to give positive feedback when a student puts in extra effort, shows improvement, or achieves important goals."	"Positive feedback is defined as recognition of both behaviors and achievements."	"Positive feedback is praising students when they do something well."	"I like to give positive feedback when I see a student trying harder or making progress."	"I find it most appropriate to give positive feedback when a student demonstrates progress, initiative, or goes above and beyond."
3. Impact of positive feedback on self-esteem	"I have noticed that students become more confident and motivated after receiving positive feedback."	"A concrete example is a student who, after several praises for his effort in math, began to actively participate in class and achieve better results."	"Pupils seem more confident and enthusiastic after I tell them something nice."	"One student, after I praised him a few times in math, started to engage more and get better grades."	"I have an example of a student who, after receiving constant praise for his effort in reading, began to read with more confidence in front of the class."
4. Impact of positive feedback on motivation	"Positive feedback boosts students' motivation, they become willing to learn and perform better."	"There is a significant difference in the motivation of students who consistently receive positive feedback compared to those who do not	"Praise makes students more motivated and want to learn better."	"Students who get praise all the time are more motivated than those who don't get much."	"Positive feedback increases students' motivation, making them more actively involved in the learning process."

		receive as much feedback."			
5. Strategies for giving positive feedback	"I prefer to give verbal as well as written feedback, depending on the context. I also give feedback publicly in front of the class, but also privately when necessary."	"I make sure the positive feedback is genuine, I just drop a bravo"	"I like to tell students to their face when they do something well, but sometimes I also write messages. It depends on the situation."	"I try to be honest and tell them exactly what they did well."	"I also try, when I can, to be honest and tell them exactly what they did well, so it's clear to them."
6. Challenges and solutions	"Challenges include limited time to provide individual feedback and how they respond to feedback. The environment they come from is the biggest challenge" (all nod loudly, we digress a little)	"When a student doesn't respond well to positive feedback, I try to understand why and adjust the approach."	"Sometimes I don't have time to give feedback to every student."	"Some people don't react well to praise."	"Most of them know from home the beating, the shouting, it's hard."
7. Evaluation and improvement	"See if feedback works by how students	"I wish I had more resources and courses on how to give positive	"I evaluate the effectiveness of feedback by monitoring improvements	"I would appreciate more resources, I do things	-

	behave and learn better."	feedback, if the student gets it wrong, what can I say well about?"	in student behavior and performance."	intuitively somehow, to improve the way I give feedback, I guess it's not just about praise is it?"	
8. Open questions/ suggestions not covered by discussion	"I suggest colleagues be honest and specific in their feedback to have a real impact on students."	„And I suggest colleagues be honest and tell students exactly what they did right."	"It's important to provide consistent positive feedback and to tailor it to each student's needs and achievements, especially since most hear a different language."	-	-

Surveys/questionnaires: Questionnaires were administered to collect quantitative data on self-esteem using standardized scales such as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

From the data analysis we identified that from the teachers' perspective positive feedback is essential for developing students' confidence, motivation and performance. Teachers recognise its importance and try to provide it in an authentic and specific way, adapting to the needs of each student. However, there are challenges related to limited time and varying student responses, and teachers would appreciate more resources and training to improve their positive feedback practices. Honesty and specificity are essential for feedback to be meaningful and effective.

To validate the findings of the qualitative case study research approaches, we also conducted a quantitative analysis that provides an objective measure of the differences in self-esteem within the selected group before and after the intervention.

Seven case studies were included in the paper, detailed in the following lines.

Table 5.IX. Summary of case studies

NR.	**Gendre**	Age	**Languages spoken**	Anamnesis
1	Feminin	11 years old	Romanian, Romanian	Problems with self-esteem, low motivation, low involvement in class
2	Masculin	11 years old	Romanian, Rromani	Self-esteem issues, financial difficulties, low motivation and academic engagement
3	Feminin	11 years old	Romanian, Rromani	Modest performance, low engagement, low motivation
4	Feminin	11 years old	Romanian, Rromani	Prolonged absenteeism, sub-optimal school performance, complex home environment
5	Feminin	11 years old	Romanian	Special Educational Needs (SEN), diagnosed with Specific Learning Disorder
6	Masculin	11 years old	Romanian	Increased interest in mathematics, participation in educational competitions, desire to become a role model for her sister
7	Masculin	11 years old	Romanian	Appreciation for mathematics and active participation in educational competitions

The section includes details of seven representative case studies, each highlighting the impact of positive feedback on students' motivation, self-esteem and behaviour:

1. Study 1: B.F.E.

Analyses the progress of an 11 year old pupil in an active family context, highlighting the impact of positive feedback on self-esteem, motivation and engagement in school activities.

2. Study 2: D.O.V.

Explores the developmental trajectory of an 11-year-old student with financial difficulties, demonstrating how positive feedback can boost self-esteem, motivation and resilience.

3. Study 3: F.M.F.

Presents the evolution of an 11-year-old student from low engagement to active engagement, highlighting the role of positive feedback in boosting intrinsic motivation.

4. Study 4: F.S.R.

Examines the reintegration process of a student with prolonged absenteeism, demonstrating the impact of a safe educational environment and positive feedback.

5. Study 5: G.L.L.

Examines the educational journey of a student with special needs, highlighting the importance of educational support and positive feedback.

6. Study 6: G.I.A.

Presents the progress of a pupil with an interest in mathematics and the impact of positive feedback from teachers and parents on her motivation and performance.

7. Study 7: G.R.D.

Explores the educational journey of a dedicated student, highlighting the role of positive feedback in cultivating self-esteem and motivation.

At the end of the experiment, on the selected group, it was observed that the self-esteem score had an average value of 26.176. The minimum value found was 23 and the maximum was 30.

In the table and figure below is the graphical representation of the level of self-esteem in the 17 subjects selected for this study. There is an upward trend in the scores obtained at the end of the study.

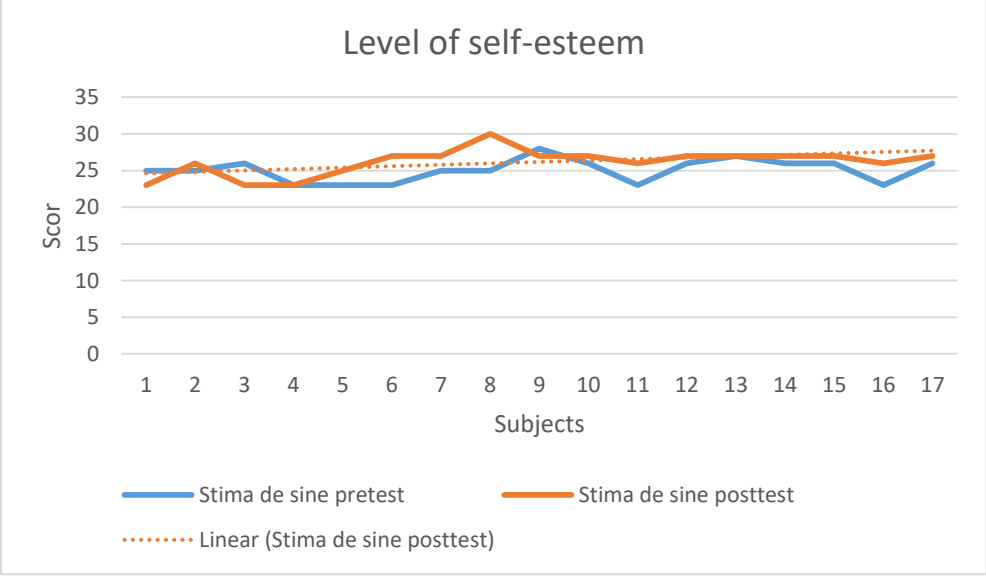

Figure 1.IX. Graphical representation of the biological gender sample

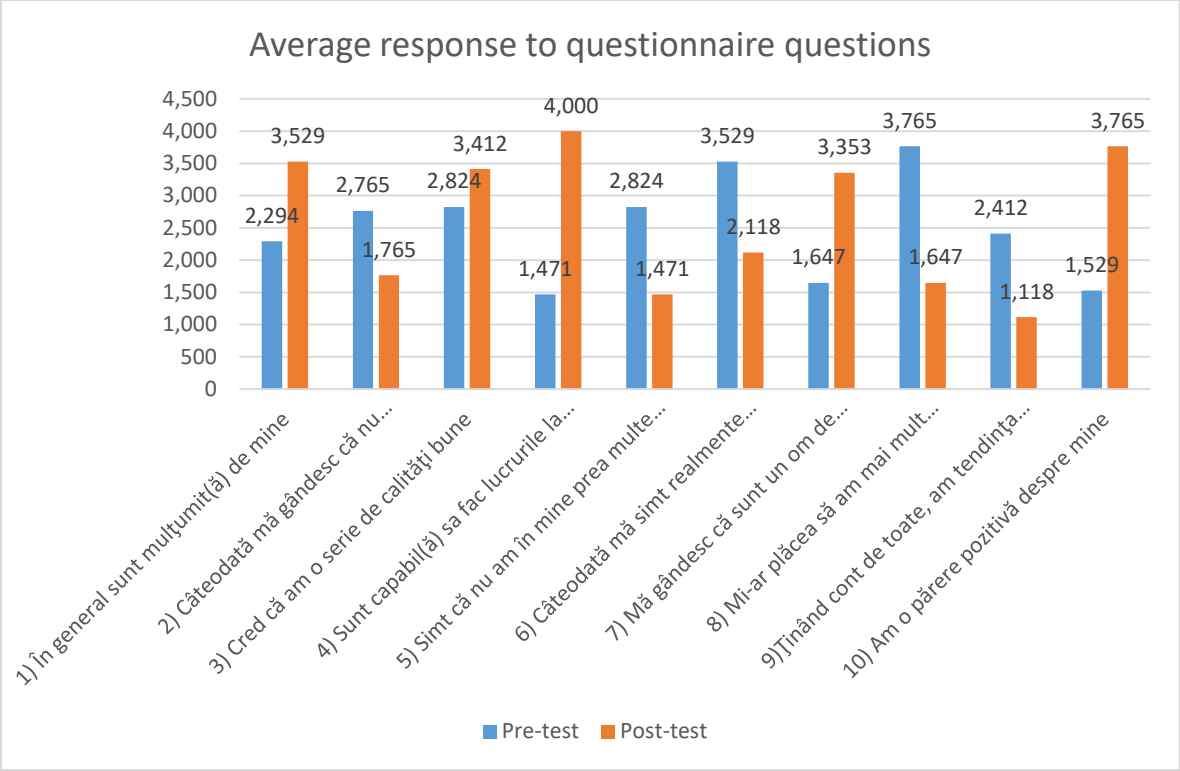

Figure 2.IX. Graphical representation of the sample of subjects on the mean scores of the Rosenberg scale pre-test and post-test

Regarding the mean response to the questionnaire questions we observe, for each item, an upward trend in the value of responses in the post-test stage.

Comparison of self-esteem levels: pre and post test

The results of the statistical analysis ($t=-2.273$; $df=16$; $p<0.05$) show us that there is a statistically significant difference between the level of self-esteem at the pre-test and the post-test.

Table 3.IX. Descriptive statistics on self-esteem

Descriptive statistics for paired samples

		Media	N	Standard deviation
Pair 1	self-esteem – pre-test	25.059	16	1.5601
	self-esteem – post-test	26.176.	16	1.8109

General conclusions

Our research, at a general level, provides valuable insights into the relationships between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, the provision of positive feedback and different aspects of student engagement and motivation. The results presented in Chapter VI, highlight the importance of teachers' perceived self-efficacy and positive feedback in educational settings.

The studies presented in Chapter VI and Chapter VII, confirmed the existence of a significant correlation between the provision of positive feedback and student motivation, highlighting the importance of positive reinforcement in increasing intrinsic motivation and student engagement in learning.

The study in Chapter VII confirmed a significant association between test anxiety levels and the type of assessment preferred by primary school students, indicating that anxiety influences preferences for certain types of assessments. However, no significant association was found between test anxiety and perceptions of positive feedback, suggesting that students' perceptions of feedback are not influenced by their level of anxiety. The study also confirmed a significant association between test anxiety level and students' locus of control, implying that students with high levels of anxiety have different perceptions of control over their academic performance.

An intervention program based on positive feedback, described in Chapter VIII and Chapter IX, had a significant impact on students' levels of self-esteem and motivation. Students who received consistent and meaningful positive feedback demonstrated higher levels of engagement and intrinsic motivation. The interventions had a positive impact on self-esteem, confirming that positive feedback boosts confidence and self-worth, thus contributing to students' overall well-being and level of engagement. Results from chi-square tests confirmed significant associations between the frequency of positive feedback and students' views of its impact on their engagement and motivation.

Teachers should integrate positive feedback into their instructional practices to create an encouraging environment that fosters student motivation and self-esteem. It is also essential to consider students' test anxiety and assessment preferences in order to develop more effective assessment strategies. Understanding the associations between test anxiety and locus of control can lead to the development of interventions designed to promote resilience and adaptive coping strategies among students.

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