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## NEWSLETTER

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# Teacher Criticism and Behavioral Improvement Intention of Secondary School Students: The Effect of the Closeness of Teacher-Student Relationships

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**T**HIS article examines the effects of the type of teacher criticism on behavioral improvement intention in junior and senior secondary students and the teacher-student relationship, as well as the effect of teacher-student closeness on the relationship between teacher criticism and student behavioral improvement intention..

### Research Findings:

- Person criticism from the teacher has a negative effect on student perception of the closeness of teacher-student relationships in both junior and senior secondary school students and weakens their intention to improve their behavior. The closeness of the teacher-student relationship fully mediates the relation between person criticism and student behavioral improvement intention. This type of teacher criticism represents a negation of the student's overall worth, conveying the feeling of aversion, which can easily trigger senses of unfairness and often culminates in emotional reaction and behavioral resistance from the student. Furthermore, person criticism can lead to the formation of negative self-concept in students. When receiving person criticism, the student tends to attribute their error to their deficits in competence, feeling helplessness. Long-term exposure to person criticism reinforces the student's self-negation, prompting their deliberate avoidance of growth opportunities. This finding suggests that person criticism is an inappropriate approach to correcting student behavior.
- Process criticism from the teacher can heighten the perception of teacher-student closeness in senior secondary students but weaken that in junior secondary students. The closeness of the teacher-student relationship also fully mediates the relationship between process criticism and student behavioral improvement intention. However, process criti-

cism can strengthen senior secondary students' behavioral improvement intention by increasing their perception of teacher-student closeness, whereas it can undermine junior secondary students' behavioral improvement intention by diminishing their perception of teacher-student closeness. This may be because senior secondary students, who are in late adolescence, can distinguish between process and person criticism and comprehend goodwill behind the teacher's criticism, thus able to transform criticism into motivation for improvement. Contrarily, junior secondary students, due to their less mature mental development, tend to interpret every type of criticism as absolute negation, and thus develop resistance to the teacher's instruction and alienation from the teacher. This finding implies that junior secondary teachers may face more challenges in correcting student behavior than their senior secondary counterparts.

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