



Motivation: Human Development

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Motivation & human development



Worked Example

Here is an example of a **Paper 3 source** and 15–mark ERQ using **motivation** (HL extension) in the **Human Development** context:

Source 5

Praise is the response that follows a positive or impressive act/behaviour, for example:

- A toddler is praised for helping to tidy their toys away
- A swimmer is praised by their coach for achieving their best time
- A teacher praises her class for having the best attendance in the whole school

Praise can act as positive reinforcement, as it is received as a reward and is likely to motivate the person being praised to repeat, continue or improve the act that garnered the praise in the first place.

Praise has a real impact on self-esteem, e.g., 'Wow, someone really rates me!' This could contribute hugely to a child's development: praise is assimilated into their self-schema so that the child believes themselves to be someone who is *worth* praising.

If praise is given without sincerity or intention, then it becomes meaningless and is unlikely to increase motivation, e.g., every child in a class is praised in the same way, regardless of their effort or achievement.

The psychologist Carol Dweck sees a difference in praise being given for performance as opposed to praise being given for effort. Being praised for making an effort is more meaningful to the learner as effort is something available to everyone whereas mastery or expertise in a skill is not, for example:

- a student is praised for their attempt to make a sponge cake even though the cake didn't rise
- a young footballer is praised for attempting to score a goal throughout the match even though his team lost

If someone is praised for simply being good at something, then, according to Dweck, this is not helpful to others who may not have that person's natural talent, i.e., praised for performance rather than for effort.

Q4: To what extent can we **conclude** that praise is a good motivator if used in moderation? In your answer, use your **own knowledge** and at least **three of sources 2–5**.

[15 marks]

Model answer:



(Here are two paragraphs which could appear as part of a longer response to this question.)

It cannot be convincingly argued that praise is a *bad* motivator: being given a boost to one's self-esteem because your effort/talent has been noticed is unlikely to make someone feel low or worthless. However, as the source points out, for praise to be a positive reinforcer (resulting in the behaviour being repeated), it should be genuine and not based on natural talent alone. It is difficult to measure the point at which praise goes from being a motivating influence to being viewed as a meaningless gesture (and this will differ from person to person), making it very difficult to measure.

Children can be astute barometers of meaningless praise (e.g., the medal at sports day just for turning up) and are often more motivated by competition (i.e., they have 'earned' the praise if they or their team won, particularly if they are the underdogs). Motivation also changes over time: what might motivate a toddler is unlikely to exert the same degree of motivation on a teenager. Some teenagers may actually find praise demotivating, particularly if it is given in a way which appears to patronise them.

Guidance

- The command term "To what extent" requires you to express a view/judgement on the merit, validity, or success of an argument or concept, supported by relevant evidence
- Weigh up the relative merits of the claim
 - What is there in this (and other) source(s) that could be used to back up this argument?
 - Do you know of any research or examples which could be used to support the central claim?
- Consider the difficulties facing researchers investigating variables such as praise and motivation
 - Can they be reliably measured?
- Make sure that your argument is informed by the sources and that it draws from the relevant topics featured in this context
- Include concepts (e.g., causality, bias) to inform your critical thinking and discussion of the source(s) as well as any real-world or anecdotal examples you are aware of

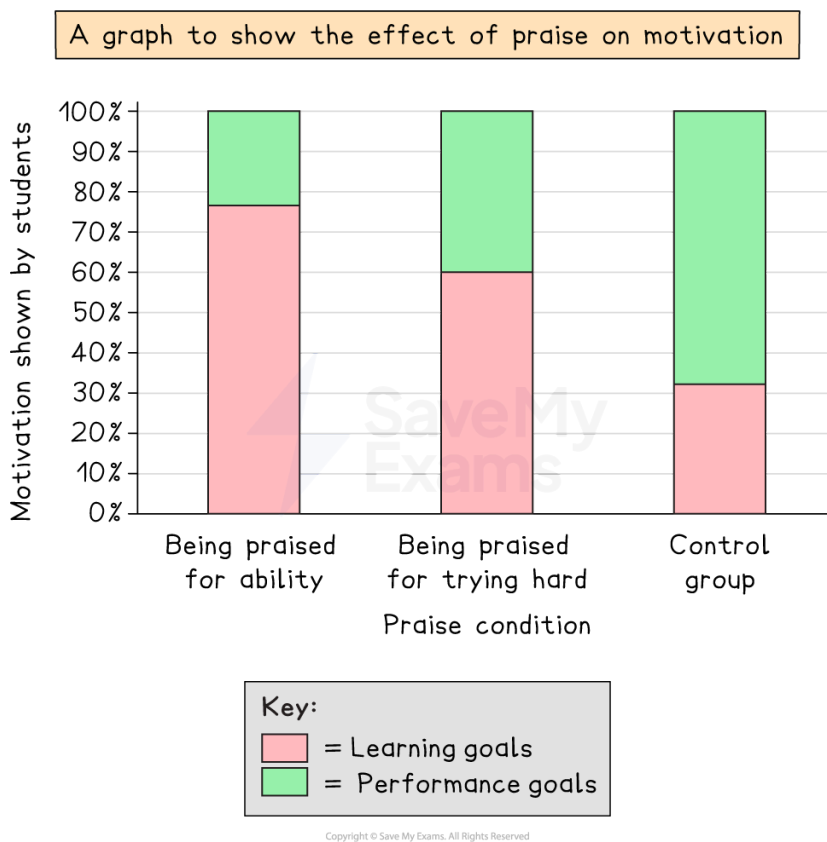
Praise, motivation & development



Worked Example

Here is an example of a **Paper 3 source** and a **3-mark SAQ** using **motivation** (HL extension) in the **Human Development** context:

Source 1:



Q1. Explain **one** limitation linked to the interpretation of the data in this source.

[3 marks]

Model answer:

The x-axis of the graph does not indicate how performance was measured and by whom (teachers? researchers?). This means that the graph lacks detail as to what form the praise took, which ultimately reduces its validity.

or

Praise may take several different forms (e.g., verbal praise, material reward, social approval) so it could be that the praise offered in this study did not suit all learners. This means that the data does not account for individual differences.

Guidance

- Use only the information provided by the graph/chart: do not 'invent' data or make assumptions as to what may be behind the data, e.g., what form of praise was used
- Do not write too much – there are only 3 marks available for this question and you need time to complete the higher-value questions on this paper
- The question is asking for one limitation so don't provide two or more, as you will not be rewarded for this
- The question is asking for what limits interpretation of the data so don't waste time/marks by stating any advantages/strengths



Your notes