

Jury report

KHMW Jan Brouwer Thesis Prize 2026 – Behavioural sciences

Luca Wenzel, MSc, Radboud University

Micro-Intervention, Macro Impact? The Influence of Micro Mindfulness-Interventions in Corporate Team Meetings

The jury members read 28 theses with great pleasure and enjoyment. The quality and innovative approach were very impressive, and all of them contributed to a better understanding of and solutions to societal problems, ranging from obesity, to Parkinson, to inclusive education for our youth. The committee was impressed by the tremendous impact science can have on better understanding societal problems and on designing and testing new solutions to improve our society. Each of the submitted theses, along with enthusiastic cover letters from their supervisors, is a sign of the quality of Dutch research in the domain of psychology and pedagogics.

But as it goes with prizes, the jury also had the challenging task of comparing masterpieces. However, after carefully reading all these magnificent works and thorough deliberation, one MSc thesis stood out to us, the work of Luca Wenzel.

In his thesis he addressed an increasingly urgent societal problem, namely the inefficiency and overload of modern meetings in business. If you work in an organization, you may recognize this problem. In his thesis he collaborated with Mercedes Benz, and introduced short, evidence-based practices in the workplace of 48 teams (211 employees). He empirically demonstrated that brief mindfulness-based micro-interventions can improve meeting effectiveness, team cohesion, and employee satisfaction. In other words, with the highest scientific rigor, he has shown that attention, love and kindness to each other and to oneself can improve how organizations work, and whether employees flourish.

His thesis is extraordinary in the sense that it is truly transdisciplinary – meaning it builds a bridge between science and society. The problem is directly relevant to our everyday lives; insights are gained through participation in the workplace, and solutions are developed and tested. Participants are not passive in this study; they benefit directly from science. Moreover, what works at Mercedes Benz, may be applied across industries. Luca Wenzel shows us the route towards this roll-out over countries and industries. Quite frankly, the jury hopes this will also be implemented in academia.

After all, in the past, success in academia sometimes came at the expense of agreeableness and collegiality. As committee members, we were therefore delighted to see an entirely different approach: success through collaboration and a deep human connection. As his supervisor Nasim Badaghi wrote; “Luca has demonstrated not only intellectual rigor but also humility, authenticity, and an admirable balance of high performance with sustainable working practices.”

In sum, Luca Wenzel has improved the way organizations function by adding authentic attention and kindness as ingredients. By combining insights from organizational psychology with positive psychology and the power of micro-interventions, he has paved a route towards

a solution that can be applied across industries within the next years. Because of the high-end quality of the work, the multidisciplinary approach and a clear vision for an actual implementation pathway, Luca Wenzel is the deserving winner of the “Jan Brouwer Scriptieprijs voor Gedragwetenschappen 2026”.

Prof. dr. L. (Loes) Keijsers, hoogleraar pedagogiek Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam

Prof. dr. F.P. (Floris) de Lange, hoogleraar waarneming en cognitie Radboud Universiteit

Prof. dr. H.L.G.J. (Harald) Merckelbach, decaan Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience, hoogleraar rechtspsychologie Universiteit Maastricht

The online meeting of the jury, chaired by KHMW social member drs. M.M.G. (Marijke) Pubben, took place on December 18th, 2025. Also present at the meeting was prof. W.B. (Wim) Drees, academic secretary for the social sciences and humanities of the KHMW.