



High School Students' Preferences for Praise and Reprimand: A Pilot Study

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Abstract

The use of teacher praise is considered an evidence-based practice, yet little praise research has taken place in secondary school settings. Due to developmental differences, high school students likely present unique preferences for praise and reprimand compared to younger students. Therefore, there is a need to study high school students' preferences for evidenced-based strategies. A total of 55 high school students from seven states in the United States, participated in a pilot survey examining preferences for praise and reprimand. Most students reported receiving praise for schoolwork and appropriate behavior was acceptable and receiving rewards (for work and behavior), while still acceptable, was less favorable than praise. Students preferred private praise, messages sent home to parents/guardians, and get out of work passes. Students least preferred public posts or school displays, no recognition, and praise out loud. For reprimands, students most preferred private verbal or written reprimands and least preferred detention or Saturday school. Implications for maximizing praise with high school students by considering student preferences and future research directions are offered.

Keywords Praise Preferences · Reprimand Preferences · High School Students · Adolescents

Teacher praise is an evidence-based classroom management strategy (Ennis et al., 2020; Moore et al., 2019) with more than five decades of research support (Royer et al., 2019). Despite the empirical evidence for the use of teacher praise, very little research has taken place in the middle or high school settings (Floress et al., 2023). The dearth of praise research within the secondary school setting is concerning, given praise is a critical component of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), which is implemented across all grades (K–12) to promote safe, positive, and equitable schools (Center on PBIS, 2022). Though PBIS is often thought of as an elementary or middle school framework, there are over 3,000 high schools in the United States implementing PBIS (14% of all PBIS schools; Freeman et al.,

2017). Limited praise research among older students is also troubling because implementing preventative practices, such as praise, considering students' individual differences is important (Association of American Educators, 1994). Arguably, students' current stage of development (e.g., adolescents) present unique cultural nuances for that group. For example, a small body of literature suggests middle school students prefer praise to be delivered quietly for effort, rather than ability and these preferences may be influenced by adolescent developmental changes occurring during this time (Elwell & Tiberio, 1994; Fefer et al., 2016; Schneider et al., 2021; Turco & Elliott, 1986). Considering educators strive to protect students from aversive learning conditions and respect individuals' values and traditions (Association of American Educators, 1994), it is important to examine high school students' preferences for praise and reprimand.

Few studies have examined praise acceptability in the absence of training or consultation and additional research is needed (Floress et al., 2023). As mentioned, there are ethical implications, but there are also implications for praise efficacy (i.e., how a student is praised may influence effectiveness; Schneider et al., 2021). For example, if a student finds public, verbal praise less preferred than private, written praise, the use of public praise may be less effective (with

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this student) or even punish student engagement. Therefore, the aim of the current study is to examine high school students' preferences for praise and reprimand.

Praise and Reprimand

Behavior Specific and General Praise

Praise is an easy to use, evidence-based classroom management strategy (Ennis et al., 2020; Reinke et al., 2008; Sutherland et al., 2000). Within the praise literature, two types of praise are commonly discussed, behavior-specific praise (BSP) and general praise (GP; Brophy, 1981; Jenkins et al., 2015). Behavior-specific praise is purported to be a superior form of praise because it explicitly identifies what was approved (Anderson et al., 1979). For example, "Nice job remembering to cite your sources" is BSP because approval was specifically given for "citing your sources." On the other hand, GP provides nonspecific approval (e.g., "nice job"; Jenkins et al., 2015).

There is extensive support for the use of BSP. In 2008, Simonsen et al. completed an extensive literature review and identified 20 evidence-based behavior management practices. One of the strategies used to strengthen student appropriate behavior was BSP. In 2019, Royer et al. applied the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) quality indicators and standards to six articles examining teacher BSP. Four of the articles examined BSP among elementary students and two examined BSP among middle or high school students. Using CEC criteria, BSP was deemed a potentially evidence-based practice. Finally in 2020, Ennis et al. examined 50 years of BSP research (among pre-k through grade twelve). Approximately 86% of the studies reported BSP positively impacted student outcomes including the reduction of undesirable behaviors (i.e., disruptive, off-task) and the increase of desirable behaviors (e.g., on-task, compliance).

Praise to Reprimand Ratio

When studying praise, it is common for researchers to also measure teachers' use of reprimand, as a higher praise-to-reprimand ratio is associated with various educational benefits including a positive learning environment, increased student appropriate behavior, and increased student on-task behavior (Caldarella et al., 2020; Stichter et al., 2009). Two types of reprimands are commonly described in the literature: verbal and gestural reprimands. Verbal reprimands include teacher disapproval and can be measured with an increasing degree of intensity (i.e., mild, medium, harsh; Floress et al., 2022). A gestural reprimand is when a teacher

relays disapproval with a nonverbal signal (e.g., hands on hips, physically guiding a student); A verbal reprimand is when a teacher vocalizes a disapproving statement (e.g., "no blurting out;" Floress et al., 2022a, b, c; Reinke et al., 2015).

In the absence of training, teachers are likely to use praise infrequently and rates decline as grade level increases (Floress et al., 2018, 2022a; Floress & Jenkins, 2015). Teachers also tend to use more reprimands than praise (Caldarella et al., 2019; Floress et al., 2022b), which is problematic because a higher praise to reprimand ratio is associated with positive student outcomes. Further, a higher praise to reprimand ratio is especially important when working with students at-risk for behavior problems who are likely more sensitive to teacher praise and reprimand compared to their peers (Downs et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to not only assess students' preferences for praise, but also their perceptions of reprimand as praise and reprimand are used in combination. Studying students' preferences for praise is particularly important among middle and high school students because praise is understudied in the secondary setting (Floress et al., 2023). In a review of the secondary praise literature, 32 studies met criteria for inclusion and of those studies only three examined students' praise preferences (Floress et al., 2023).

Public and Private Praise and Reprimand

As mentioned above, most praise research has taken place in elementary schools; however, Blaze et al. (2014) examined the effects of public and private praise on high school students' behavior. For this study, public praise (or loud praise) was praise delivered loud enough for other students to hear (Blaze et al., 2014), whereas private (or quiet) praise was delivered discreetly so only the student receiving the praise heard. Although Blaze et al. (2014) found public and private praise improved student behavior and were functionally equivalent, older students may prefer private praise and reprimand (Fefer et al., 2016; Schneider et al., 2021). Fefer et al. (2016) and Schneider et al. (2021) surveyed secondary students' preferences for praise and found students preferred private praise.

Public and Private Preferences

Elwell and Tiberio (1994) surveyed 620 students' (grades 7–12) perceptions of teacher praise. Results suggested students found praise acceptable for academic and social behaviors and in most cases preferred private praise. Using a sample of 146 students (grades 5, 7, & 9), Turco and Elliott (1986) found students found public reprimands the most unacceptable for dealing with student misbehavior and a note home (for parents to address misbehavior) the

most acceptable. Fefer et al. (2016) surveyed 764 students' (grades 5–12) preferences for praise. All students, in this study, ranked the various forms (i.e., [a] praise out loud; [b] praise quietly; [c] praise privately in the form of a note; [d] publicly post points toward a class reward; [e] quietly give points, tickets, or tokens to trade in for a reward; [f] say nothing at all) of praise highly, but quiet praise was most preferred. Most recently, Schneider et al. (2021) examined 511 middle school (6–8 grade) students' preferences for praise. Results indicated most students thought they should be praised "sometimes" or "often" rather than "never" and that they should be praised for trying hard and doing quality work rather than for behaving appropriately (Schneider et al., 2021). Students also preferred private rather than public praise and most students preferred to be praised for effort rather than ability.

Tangible and Written Praise and Reprimand

Another form of praise is tangible praise. This is when a student is provided something tangible when a desired behavior is exhibited (Floress et al., 2017). For example, a child may be given candy, a PBIS ticket, or a homework pass after following class expectations, turning in an assignment, or showing kindness to a peer. In contrast, a tangible reprimand is something given (or taken away) when a student displays an undesirable behavior. For example, an office referral slip signifying student misbehavior is an example of a tangible reprimand. A teacher removing a marble from a jar, which students are working to collectively fill to earn a reward (i.e., response cost; Jowett-Hirst et al., 2016), is another example of a tangible reprimand.

Tangible and Written Preferences

Nelson et al. (2008) surveyed students for their perceptions of praise after implementing a peer-to-peer praise note intervention. Students reported liking praise notes and that they would like them in other classes. As mentioned above, Fefer et al. (2016) surveyed students' (grades 5–12) preferences for praise and rewards. Although both rewards and praise were acceptable, students slightly preferred rewards. Both middle school and high school students ranked "free time" as the most preferred reward and "no reward" as the least preferred reward. Research assessing students' preference for reprimand is limited and existing research (Turco & Elliott, 1986) is dated. However, it is likely students prefer private, tangible reprimands (e.g., note or phone call home) rather than verbal, public reprimands (Turco & Elliott, 1986).

Current Study

The use of praise and its benefit to students, teachers, and the classroom environment has been studied since the 1960s (Moore et al., 2019). However, few studies have examined students' preferences for praise and even fewer have examined students' preferences for reprimand. An individual's preference for how they are praised and reprimanded may influence whether praise or reprimand is effective for that individual. Furthermore, because adolescence is a unique stage of development, which presents with its own cultural nuances, it is important to consider how high school students prefer to receive praise and reprimand. To date, only a few studies have examined adolescent students' preferences for praise (Fefer et al., 2016; Schneider et al., 2021). Therefore, the current study aims to fill this gap in the literature by examining high school students' preferences for teacher praise. The following research questions guided this study:

- 1) What are students' opinions on the acceptability of teacher praise and reprimands?
- 2) How do students prefer to be praised or reprimanded?

Method

Participants

Participants were 55 high school students who were recruited from public high schools in the United States. Students from seven states responded to the survey. Twenty-nine participants were from Alaska, 11 from Iowa, seven from Connecticut, five from Illinois, and one each from Arizona, Massachusetts, and Michigan. Thirty-one students attended schools in rural areas, 15 in suburban areas, and nine in urban areas. Sixteen students were in ninth grade, 11 students were in tenth grade, 17 students were in eleventh grade, and 11 students were in twelfth grade. Thirty-one participants identified as female, 20 as male, two as non-binary, one as agender, and one as questioning their gender identity. Forty-nine students were White, and one student each reported their race to be Black, Asian, Asian and White, Indigenous and White, and El Salvadorian; one student did not respond to the demographic question on race. Six students identified as Hispanic, 47 identified as non-Hispanic, and two students selected "Other" as their ethnicity. Across the participants, seven students received special education services, 14 students reported having a 504 Plan, and 26 students received free or reduced price lunch.

Measure

With the author's permission, we adapted the Adolescent Praise Preference Survey (Fefer et al., 2016) for this study. Of the existing praise preference studies (i.e., Burnett, 2001; Fefer et al., 2016; Schneider et al., 2021), to our knowledge none assessed students' preferences for reprimand. Given the overreliance of reprimand to manage student behavior by secondary teachers (Floress et al., 2022), it is important to gauge students' preferences for both praise and reprimand. Thus, the Adolescent Praise Preference Survey was modified to add in the reprimand component to create the Adolescent Praise and Reprimand Preference Survey (APRPS).

We used the original Adolescent Praise Preference Survey (Fefer et al., 2016) as a guide for the creation of Adolescent Praise and Reprimand Preference Survey (APRPS) by adding in reprimand questions. After the reprimand questions were added, we sent the adapted survey to thirteen content experts for content validation. These experts included the original survey author, positive behavior support scholars, high school teachers, a high school counselor, and high school students. The content experts were asked to review the survey and score each item for clarity and relevance for adolescents. Next, we incorporated the reviewer's feedback. Minor adjustments to the survey were made including adding in definitions and examples to aid in clarity, reorganizing the flow of questions, semantic adjustments, and adjusting the scoring mechanism from rank order to a Likert scale for students to rate their preference on how a teacher responds to them with praise or reprimand. Finally, we added in demographic questions.

The final APRPS consisted of 29 items. Specifically, there were nine demographic questions, 12 praise questions, and 8 reprimand questions. For the demographic questions, students responded to multiple choice options or selected all items that applied. For eight of the 12 praise questions and six of the eight reprimand questions, students responded to a 5-point Likert scale (0 = not acceptable, 5 = acceptable, or 0 = never, 5 = very often, or 0 = not prefer, 5 = prefer). The remaining questions were multiple choice or short answer (see S1 for survey).

Procedures

We obtained a list of all public high schools in three midwestern states and one northeastern state through state websites. Then, we created a database of all the high school principals' email addresses through each schools' directory. If we were unable to secure an email address, the school was removed from the database. Following institutional review board approval, we sent recruitment emails to each high school principal. In phase one, 50% of all high schools in

the four states were emailed. In phase two, 100% of principals were sent recruitment emails in three states. Each principal was emailed three times. A total of 1,046 school principals were emailed. In each recruitment email, principals were asked to pass along a flyer describing our study to their 9th through 12th grade students' parents and guardians through their traditional communication portal. In phase three, we recruited high school parents nation-wide through social media and through a newsletter at one midwestern state's University center.

If parents were interested in their child participating in our survey, they were given a link to complete an electronic consent form. At the end of the parental consent process, parents were provided a link to the study survey for them to pass along to their student. Once students accessed the survey link, they completed an electronic student assent prior to being directed to the anonymous survey. All questions in the survey were optional allowing students to skip questions or stop the survey at any time. Finally, student participants could elect to enter a drawing to receive a gift certificate via mail.

Results

Fifty-five students were recruited to complete the survey. On average, 52.83 (96.05%) participants completed the questions on acceptability of praise and rewards, and 50 (90.91%) participants completed the questions on acceptability of reprimands. On questions for which participants rated their preferences for different types of praise and reprimands, an average of 51.5 (93.64%) participants rated praise items and 48.45 (88.09%) participants rated reprimand items. Overall, on average, 50.32 (91.49%) participants completed each of the non-demographic survey items.

Praise and Rewards

First, students were asked if their school had a reward or recognition system in place where they could earn a ticket or token for good behavior that was later traded in for privileges, prizes, or rewards. Fifty-four participants answered, and 12 (22.22%) reported their school did have a system, 39 reported they did not (77.72%), and three (5.56%) reported they did not know. Then, students were asked how often they were praised by a teacher in the week prior to taking the survey. A little more than half of participants ($n=30$; 55.56%) reported receiving one to two instances of praise from a teacher in the last week. Six students (11.1%) reported receiving three to four instances in the last week, two students (3.7%) reported receiving five or more instances in

the last week, and 16 students (29.63%) reported receiving no praise.

Acceptability

Students demonstrated mixed feelings on how they felt about teacher praise for appropriate behavior, but most students reported positive responses. Of the 54 participants who answered, 38 students (70.37%) reported that receiving praise made them feel good about doing the right thing and 13 students (24.07%) responded that praise made them feel like they served as an example to remind other students of how to behave well in class. In contrast, four students (7.41%) reported that receiving praise made them feel embarrassed. Fourteen students (25.93%) reported they did not care if they received praise for their behavior.

Table 1 reports the results of survey questions that asked students about the different contexts in which they received praise and rewards from teachers. Students were asked to rate whether they believed it is appropriate to receive praise for academics and behavior on a five-point scale (1=Not Acceptable, 5=Acceptable). They were also asked to rate how often they received praise in each area on a five-point scale (0=Never, 4=Very Often). Although students largely believed it was acceptable to receive praise from teachers for doing their work ($M=4.19$, $SD=1.06$) and being well behaved ($M=4.25$, $SD=0.98$), they reported rarely receiving such praise (doing work $M=1.38$, $SD=0.99$; behavior $M=1.53$, $SD=0.97$). When asked about their beliefs about the acceptability of receiving rewards for doing work and being well behaved, students were less favorable than they

were for praise, but they still believed rewards were more acceptable than not (doing work $M=3.81$, $SD=1.12$; behavior $M=3.64$, $SD=1.18$).

Preferences

Students were asked to rate their preference for a series of ten rewards on a five-point scale (1=Not Prefer, 5=Prefer). Regarding rewards for doing work (Fig. 1), results indicated students most preferred receiving extra credit ($M=4.53$, $SD=0.75$), private praise only they know about ($M=4.23$, $SD=1.01$), messages home to parents/guardians ($M=4.21$, $SD=1.03$), and get out of work passes ($M=4.00$, $SD=1.21$). Students least preferred receiving public posts on social media or school displays ($M=2.47$, $SD=1.31$), no recognition ($M=2.49$, $SD=1.12$), and praise out loud in front of the class ($M=2.66$, $SD=1.40$). Students were largely neutral on their preferences for tangible rewards such as drink or food items ($M=3.74$, $SD=1.39$) and points or tickets to trade in for a reward or raffle ($M=3.75$, $SD=1.25$), as well as casual gestures such as a high-five or thumbs up ($M=3.60$, $SD=1.24$).

Regarding rewards for being well behaved (Fig. 1), students most preferred receiving extra credit ($M=4.42$, $SD=0.99$), messages home to parents/guardians ($M=4.12$, $SD=1.27$), private praise only they knew about ($M=4.08$, $SD=1.14$), and get out of work passes ($M=4.00$, $SD=1.26$). As with academics, students least preferred receiving public posts on social media or school displays ($M=2.26$, $SD=1.40$), praise out loud in front of the class ($M=2.29$, $SD=1.39$), and no recognition ($M=2.52$, $SD=1.33$).

Table 1 Student opinions on acceptability of teacher praise

Survey Item	Respondents	M (SD)	M (SD)
		1 =Not Acceptable; 5 =Acceptable	0 =Never; 4 = Very Often
Praise for Work			
Do you think it is acceptable for teachers to praise you for doing your work (such as completing worksheets, handing in homework, or getting good grades)?	$n = 53$	4.19 (1.06)	-
How often are you praised at school for doing your work?	$n = 53$	-	1.38 (0.99)
Praise for Behavior			
Do you think it is acceptable for teachers to praise you for being well behaved in school (such as paying attention in class, being kind and respectful to other students, meeting the teacher's expectations, and so on)?	$n = 53$	4.25 (0.98)	-
How often are you praised at school for being well behaved in school?	$n = 53$	-	1.53 (0.97)
Rewards for Work			
Do you think it is acceptable to be rewarded (such as with free time, food item, or extra privileges) at school for doing your work (such as completing worksheets, handing in homework, or getting good grades)?	$n = 52$	3.81 (1.12)	-
Rewards for Behavior			
Do you think it is acceptable to be rewarded (such as with free time, food item, or extra privileges) at school for being well behaved in school (staying in your seat, following expectations, being on-task)?	$n = 53$	3.64 (1.18)	-

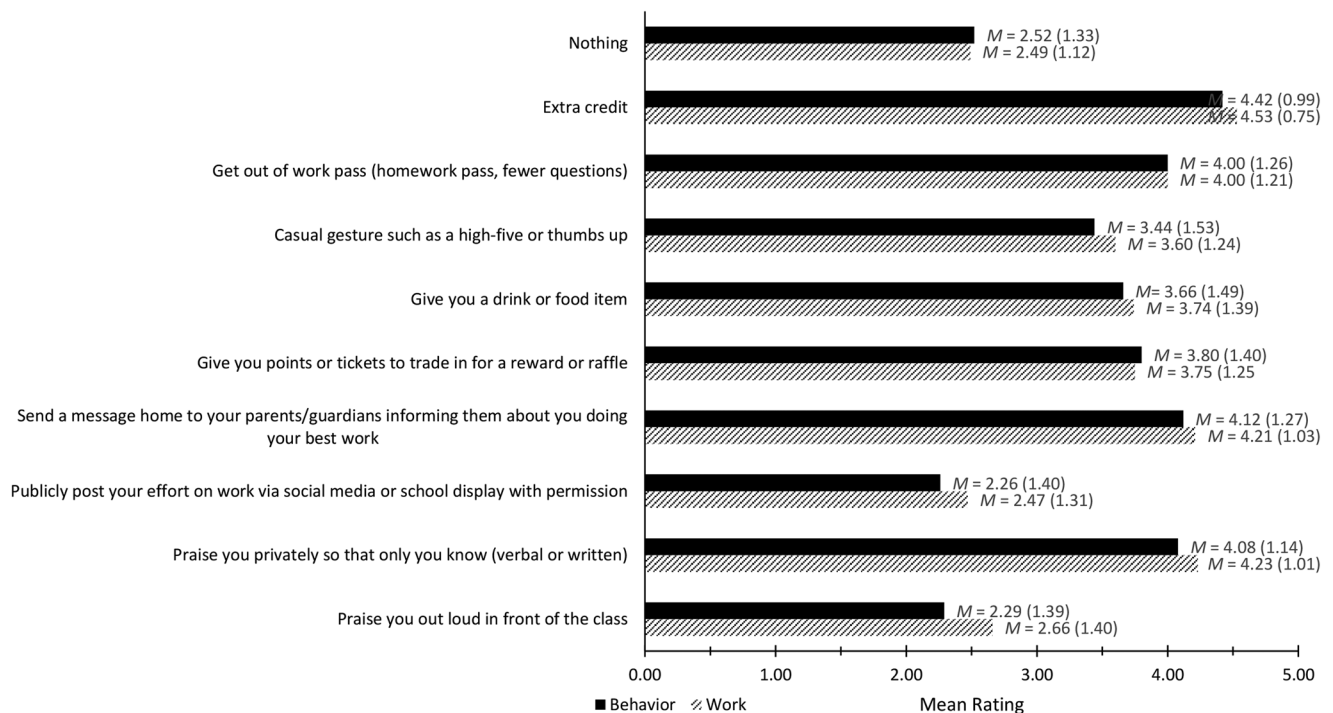


Fig. 1 Mean student rating of preferences on types of praise and rewards. Note Scale indicators: 1 = Not prefer; 2 = Somewhat not prefer; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Somewhat prefer; 5 = Prefer

Students were neutral on receiving points or tickets to trade in for a reward or raffle ($M=3.80$, $SD=1.40$), drink or food items ($M=3.66$, $SD=1.49$), and casual gestures such as a high-five or thumbs up ($M=3.44$, $SD=1.53$).

In addition to rating the items identified by the researchers, students were also provided the opportunity to list additional rewards they would like to earn. Examples of responses included free time or a break from class ($n=3$), phone time ($n=2$), college recommendation letter ($n=1$), music during class ($n=1$), extra work time ($n=1$), and a game or movie day ($n=1$). Additional student comments reflected the quantitative findings. Supporting the belief that high school students do want to be recognized, one student wrote, “Just that they acknowledge the kids that do the right thing all the time too because it’s agitating when you do the right thing all the time but then others don’t and they get all these rewards and you don’t.” Reflecting the results on how rarely students receive praise, another student shared, “Nothing, but I have ADHD and I never turn in my homework because I never remember and I never get praise or recognition if I turn it in without a reminder. So what’s the point in remembering if no one notices?”

Reprimand

In the section of the survey that focused on reprimands, students were first asked how often they had been reprimanded

by a teacher in the week prior to taking the survey. Of the 49 participants who responded, most reported receiving no reprimands in the past week ($n=32$, 65.31%). Thirteen students (26.53%) reported receiving one to two reprimands in the past week, four students (8.16%) reported receiving three to four reprimands in the past week, and no students reported receiving five or more reprimands in the previous week.

Acceptability

Table 2 reports the results of survey questions asking students about the different contexts in which they receive reprimands from teachers. Students were asked to rate whether they believed it is appropriate to receive reprimands for academics and behavior on a five-point scale (1 = Not Acceptable, 5 = Acceptable). They were also asked to rate how often they received reprimands in each area on a different five-point scale (0 = Never, 4 = Very Often). Overall, students believed it was acceptable for teachers to reprimand students when they do not do their work ($M=4.08$, $SD=1.23$) and when they misbehave ($M=4.40$, $SD=1.14$). Despite the students’ belief that teacher reprimands were appropriate in these contexts, the respondents reported very rarely receiving such reprimands (not doing work $M=0.94$, $SD=0.98$; misbehavior $M=0.58$, $SD=0.73$).

Table 2 Student opinions on acceptability of teacher reprimands

Survey Item	Respondents	M (SD)	M (SD)
		1 = Not Acceptable; 5 = Acceptable	0 = Never; 4 = Very Often
Reprimands for Work			
Do you think it is acceptable for teachers to reprimand you for not doing your work?	<i>n</i> = 50	4.08 (1.23)	-
How often are you reprimanded for not doing your work?	<i>n</i> = 50	-	0.94 (0.98)
Reprimands for Behavior			
Do you think it is acceptable to be reprimanded for misbehaving in school?	<i>n</i> = 50	4.40 (1.14)	-
How often are you reprimanded for misbehaving in school?	<i>n</i> = 50	-	0.58 (0.73)

Preferences

Students were asked to rate their preference for a series of 11 reprimands on a five-point scale (1 = Not Prefer, 5 = Prefer). Regarding reprimands for not doing work (Fig. 2), results indicate students most preferred receiving private verbal or written reprimands or corrections that only they know about ($M=4.16$, $SD=1.13$) and least preferred detention or Saturday school ($M=1.92$, $SD=1.35$). Students were neutral in

their preferences on all other listed reprimands, including receiving no reprimand at all ($M=2.90$, $SD=1.56$). Regarding reprimands for misbehavior (Fig. 2), results mirrored those for reprimands for not doing work. Students most preferred receiving private verbal or written reprimands or corrections that only they know about ($M=4.32$, $SD=1.11$), least preferred detention or Saturday school ($M=1.89$, $SD=1.40$), and were neutral in their preferences on all other listed reprimands, including receiving no reprimand at all ($M=2.83$, $SD=1.62$).

As with the preferences on types of praise, students were also provided the opportunity to list additional reprimands they believed were appropriate to receive. Examples of responses included cleaning the classroom ($n=1$), sending students home or in school suspension ($n=1$), and staying after school to study ($n=1$). Other comments reiterated some of the choices presented in the survey items. For example, one student wrote, “Talk after class and get a warning,” and another wrote, “To keep you after class and talk to you about it to see what’s wrong or give you a note saying they’re disappointed in you.”

Discussion

In this study, we assessed high school students’ opinions and preferences on teacher praise and reprimands. These results are an important contribution to the field as teacher praise is considered an evidence-based practice, secondary praise

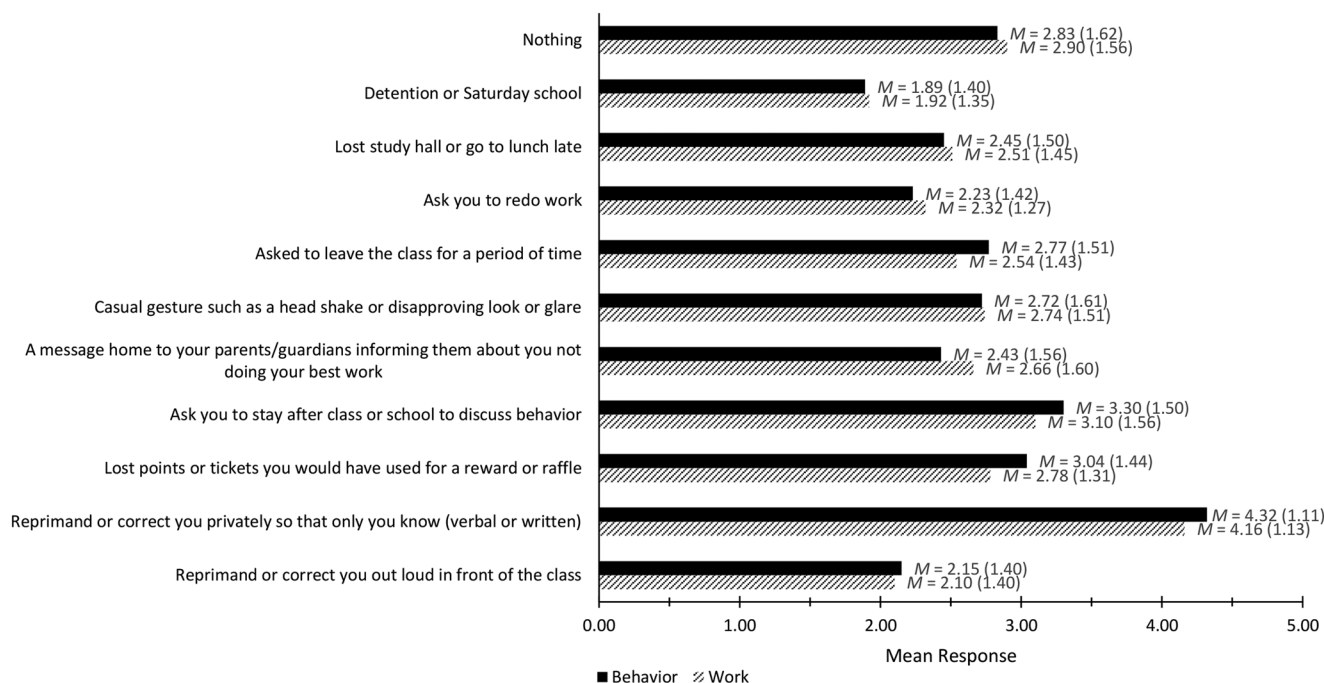


Fig. 2 Mean student rating of preferences on types of reprimands. Note Scale indicators: 1 = Not prefer; 2 = Somewhat not prefer; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Somewhat prefer; 5 = Prefer

research is limited, and praise preference research is especially scarce (Ennis et al., 2020; Moore et al., 2019). Yet, as students enter older grades, preliminary research suggests they receive fewer praise statements and more reprimands than praise (Floress et al., 2018, 2022a; Floress & Jenkins, 2015). Understanding student preferences are important considerations for intervention planning and ultimately student success (Kazdin, 2000). Furthermore, delivering praise to high school students via their preferred method may reduce aversive learning conditions (Association of American Educators, 1994).

These findings should not discourage teacher praise and rewards. Rather, the emphasis is for teachers to consider matching their praise and rewards to student preferences based on the student's age and developmental considerations to maximize the effects of praise (Schneider et al., 2021). Overall, the high school students in this study indicated it is acceptable to receive teacher praise for schoolwork and behavior; however, receiving a reward for work was only neutrally acceptable. Fefer and colleagues (2016) found similar results indicating that high school students prefer no reward for doing their best work. Given praise is a free and readily available teacher strategy, understanding that students may prefer praise over rewards is encouraging particularly for high schools with limited budgets. With the increase in high schools implementing PBIS (Freeman et al., 2017), PBIS teams should consider how to positively acknowledge student behaviors. It is possible that an emphasis on tangible rewards is unnecessary. That said to best match students with strategies to strengthen students' appropriate behavior, schools should assess their students' preferences.

Understanding student preferences is only one piece of the larger puzzle. Delivering praise via students' preferred method may improve the efficacy of praise (Schneider et al., 2021) or reprimands, however, preferences do not necessarily equate to effectiveness (DeLeon & Iwata, 1996). That is, just because a student indicates that they prefer a teacher to recognize or communicate with them in a particular way, does not mean their behavior will improve or maintain when that method is used. In theory, effective praise is meant to strengthen student appropriate behavior and research has demonstrated student behavioral and academic improvements (Downs et al., 2019; Sutherland et al., 2000). However, a few students ($n=4$) in our study indicated that receiving teacher praise was embarrassing. It is possible that if a student frequently feels embarrassed by teacher praise, it could result in that student refraining from behaviors that previously led to praise (i.e., may punish behaviors a teacher wants to strengthen; Kazdin, 2000). Although most of our respondents indicated that they feel good when they receive teacher praise, the few who indicated embarrassment may

be a population of students who experience higher rates of adversity, and their preferences may be particularly important for teachers to consider.

For teacher reprimands, this is one of the first studies of this kind to assess student preferences on reprimands. The high school students in this study indicated that reprimands are acceptable for their behavior and work. Although students find reprimands to be acceptable, it is important to understand that these results do not advocate for the use of reprimands. Rather, when students need to be corrected, a reprimand can be seen as acceptable. Like praise, these students prefer to be reprimanded privately. Additionally, these students rated Saturday school or detention and communication home with guardians as least preferred. It is possible that these types of reprimands function appropriately (i.e., reduce problematic behavior) for students in this sample. Importantly, our respondents indicated they do not get reprimanded frequently. It is possible, results could be different for students who experience frequent reprimands. Regardless, the type of reprimand delivered may be important to consider and may have implications for the student-teacher and student-parent relationship. Schools have been found to be proactive with communicating home about negative student behaviors (Baker et al., 2016). However, these types of communications can be a source of stress for adolescents and can tarnish relationships. Research indicates that positive relationships between adolescents and their teachers (Roorda et al., 2011) and parents/guardians are associated with improved academic achievement (López Turley et al., 2010). Interestingly, one of the rewards students most preferred were messages home to parents/guardians. Thus, schools are encouraged to communicate with student homes with positive messages and are cautioned against frequent communication regarding negative student behaviors.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be considered. First, is the small sample size, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions about high school preferences regarding teacher praise and reprimands. Despite the small sample size, themes found in similar research (e.g., Fefer et al., 2016) emerged from our data which is encouraging. Future researchers are encouraged to replicate this study to increase the number of responses to make stronger conclusions about high school preferences on teacher praise and reprimands. Furthermore, future researchers should examine how preferences change based on student characteristics (e.g., socioeconomic status, academic achievement).

Second, the respondents to our study likely resulted in selection bias. Participants may have completed our survey because they experience more frequent praise from their

teachers. Further, each students' parent/guardian needed to pass on the survey link to their high school child to complete. It too is possible that those that completed the survey had more positive relationships with the adults in their home. Together, our participants may experience more positive encounters with praise, potentially influencing how they responded to the survey. Thus, future researchers should employ methods that obtain responses from a variety of students. One recommendation to gather a variety of student responses is to have high schools administer the survey to their students.

Finally, our survey assessed how participants felt when receiving teacher praise but did not assess how participants felt when receiving reprimands. Knowing preferences and how students feel when receiving teacher feedback may help inform teacher practices. This may particularly be informative for teacher reprimands, given the overreliance of reprimands in secondary school settings (Floress et al., 2022). Future researchers are encouraged to add in a statement to assess student feelings when receiving a reprimand.

Implications for Practice

Despite the limitations, implications for practice can be gleaned from the results of this study. First, we agree with scholars (e.g., Downs et al., 2019) that teachers should positively acknowledge adolescent students. When delivering praise, teachers should do so via the student preference mode. Although it is difficult to individualize the delivery of every praise statement, teachers should attempt to communicate with their students via their preferences as much as possible. Further, matching a student to their preferred method of praise delivery is possible for students' receiving Tier 3 praise interventions (see Floress et al., 2020 regarding using praise within a Multi-tiered Systems of Support framework). If preferences are not known, or when praise is delivered universally (Tier 1) it appears to be safe to deliver praise privately to high school students. To gain student preferences, teachers can survey their students or observe student behaviors when a teacher statement is delivered. While adolescents in this study indicated teacher reprimands are acceptable, teachers are cautioned against reprimanding students at high levels and should deliver more praise than reprimands.

Declarations

Ethical Approval There are ethical and efficacy implications in considering high school students' preferences for praise and reprimand. When delivering praise, teachers should match students with their preferred method of praise and reprimand. If preferences are unknown, or when praise is delivered universally (Tier 1) it appears safe to deliver praise privately to high school students.

Conflicts of Interest We have no known conflicts of interest to disclose.

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