

Child Response to Process Praise vs. People Praise: A PC-CARE Case Study

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ABSTRACT

- The purpose of this study is to add to current research on Praise by examining how the specific objective content of praises may shape the behaviors and motivational framework of children.
- In this case study, video-recorded interactions between a father and six-year-old son in PC-CARE were observed and coded using our people/process Praise coding system. All sessions were transcribed and coded and pre- and post- sessions were compared.
- Results indicate that process praise was associated with a higher number of neutral responses such as task persistence and play-focused behaviors than either positive or negative responses.

INTRODUCTION

- Positive attention, approval and affection through parent praise influences a child's cognition and behavior (Zentall & Morris, 2010).
- Praise can also shape children's motivational frameworks (Gunderson, Gripshover, Romero, Dweck, Goldin-Meadow, & Levine, 2013). Two motivational frameworks studied include the Incremental and Entity Theory (Gunderson et al, 2013).
- When a child is praised for hard work and deliberate practice ("process praise"), a child attributes success to effort and believes their abilities are controllable, aligning with Incremental Motivational Theory (Cimpian, 2010).
- Having an Incremental Motivational framework is associated with being more pro-socially adaptable and producing mastery oriented responses to setbacks (Blackwell et. al., 2007).
- When a child is praised for inherent characteristics ("people praise"), they are more likely to believe the source of success is a result of who they are, aligning with the Entity Motivational Framework (Mueller & Dweck, 1998).
- With an Entity Motivational Framework, a child might believe their attributes are unchangeable, which can elicit a helpless response to setbacks (Zentall & Morris, 2010).
- Praise is an important component of parenting interventions such as PCIT and PC-CARE. However, these interventions do not require specific objects of praise, instead recommending praise be "labeled" (specific positive sentence) rather than "unlabeled" (general positive phrase or word).
- The purpose of this Case study is to look at how the content of praise ("process" or "people") shape the child's behavior and motivation; and the implications of the results for the practice of PCIT and PC-CARE.

HYPOTHESES

- We hypothesize that the parent's use of process praise will have a more significant effect on the child's task persistence and focus than the parent's use of "people praise," and will result in more positive child responses

METHOD

Participant

- This case study focuses on a six-year-old Caucasian boy and his 40-year-old biological father, who self-referred into PC-CARE for treatment of the child's disruptive behaviors.

Measures

- Based on previous research looking at type of praise, (Gunderson et al, 2013) we developed a coding system that distinguished between process praise and people praise.

Praise Definitions

- Process praise: Specific verbalization that praises child's effortful action.
- People praise: Specific verbalization that praises the child's attributes.
- Praise subcategories: Prosocial behaviors and approaches; Persistence and Attentiveness; Emotion/behavior regulation

Process Praise vs. People Praise Examples

Process Praise	People Praise
"You're focusing carefully on stacking those blocks"	"You are a good block stacker"
"Good job staying in your seat"	"You are so good"
"Good helping"	"You're a good helper"

Child Response

- Positive response: Constitutes child affirming or acknowledging the praise through verbalizations, or gestures such as eye contact, nods, smiles, or laughter
- Neutral response: Continuing the task or action for which they are being praised
- Negative response: Constitutes the child exhibiting explicit frustration or defiance through negative gestures or verbalizations in response to the praise.

Child Response Examples

Positive Response	Neutral Response	Negative Response
Smiles or laughs	Task persistence	Frowns or shakes head
Makes eye contact or nods	Play-talk with toys	Acts defiant or is aggressive
"Cool, right?"	"Huh?"	"Ugh, no!"

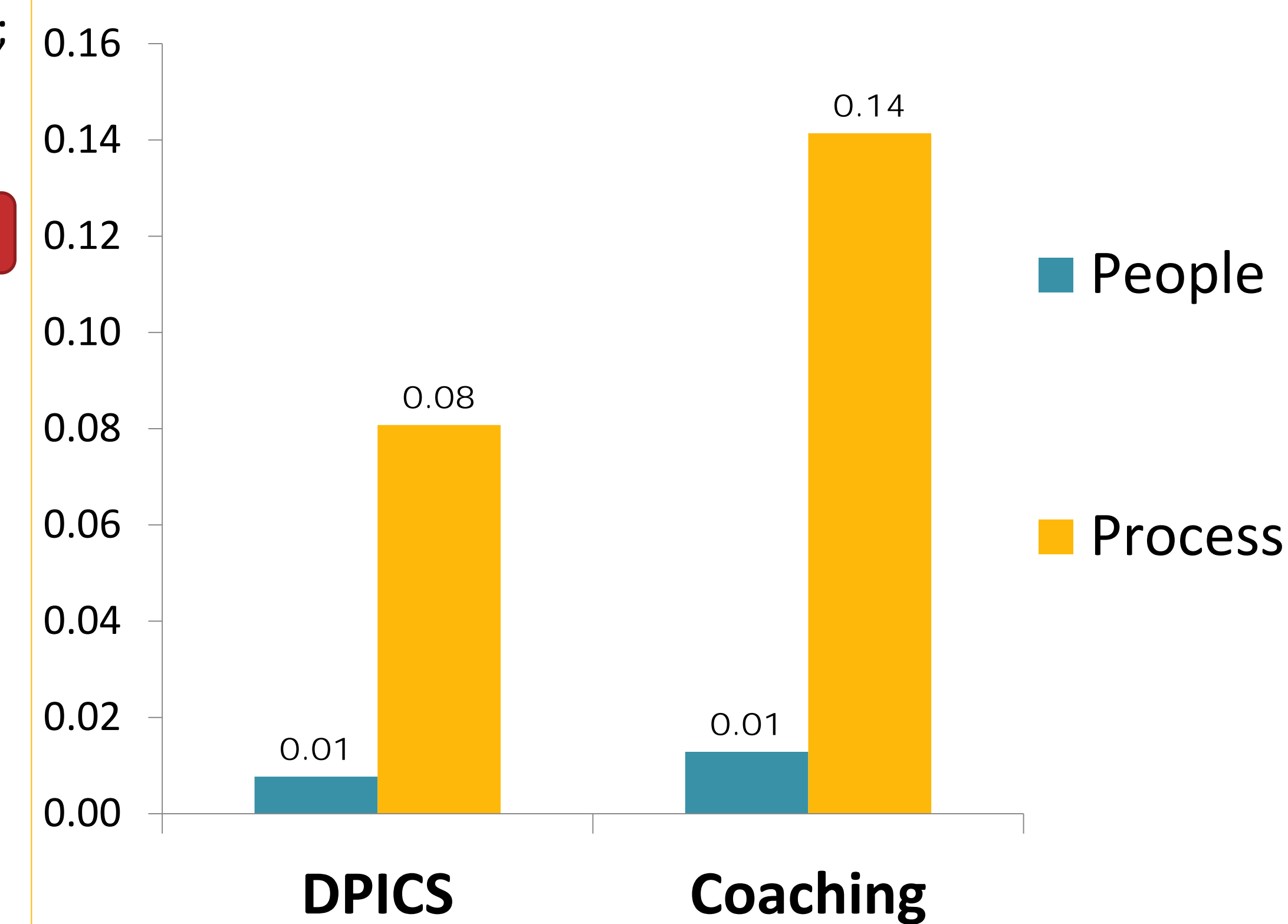
METHOD cont.

Coding Procedure

- Both the parent and child verbalizations in the videos of the four-minute Child-Directed Interaction (CDI) as well as the 15-20 minute coaching portion of the six PC-CARE sessions were transcribed. All caregiver verbalizations were coded according to Praise Project manual guidelines.
- The videos were re-watched and the child's responses to each process or people praise were coded using the "Child Response" categories.
- Reliability was assessed by re-coding video transcriptions with our scheme and attaining 85% intercoder reliability. Any codes where there was disagreement were discussed, and consensus on the codes was reached.

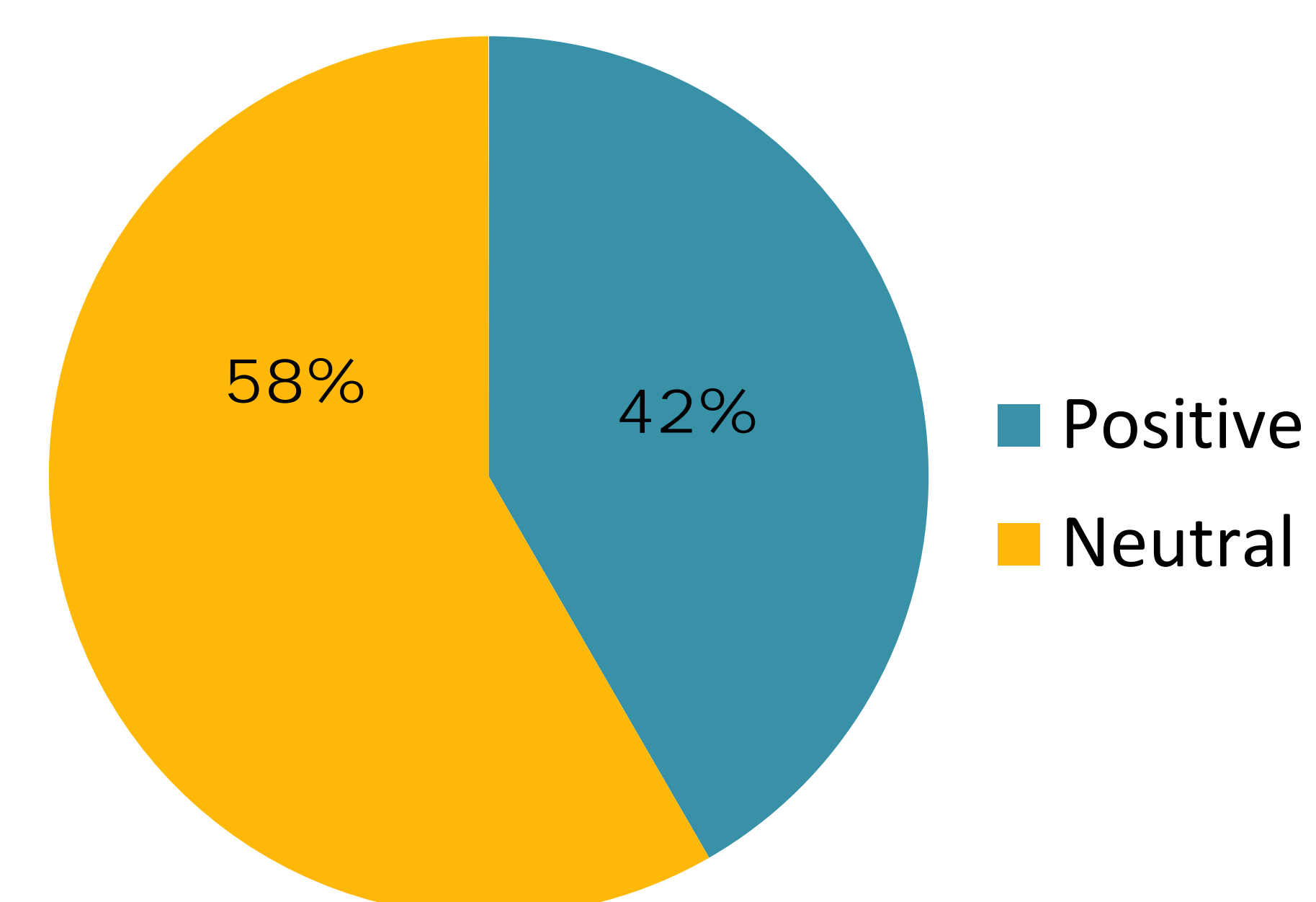
RESULTS

Graph 1. People vs Process Praise During DPICS or Coaching By Percentage



Out of 649 total parental verbalizations, a higher percentage of both praise types were used during coaching than during DPICS, with Process praises (.081%, 0.141%) exceeding People praises (.008%, .012%) overall.

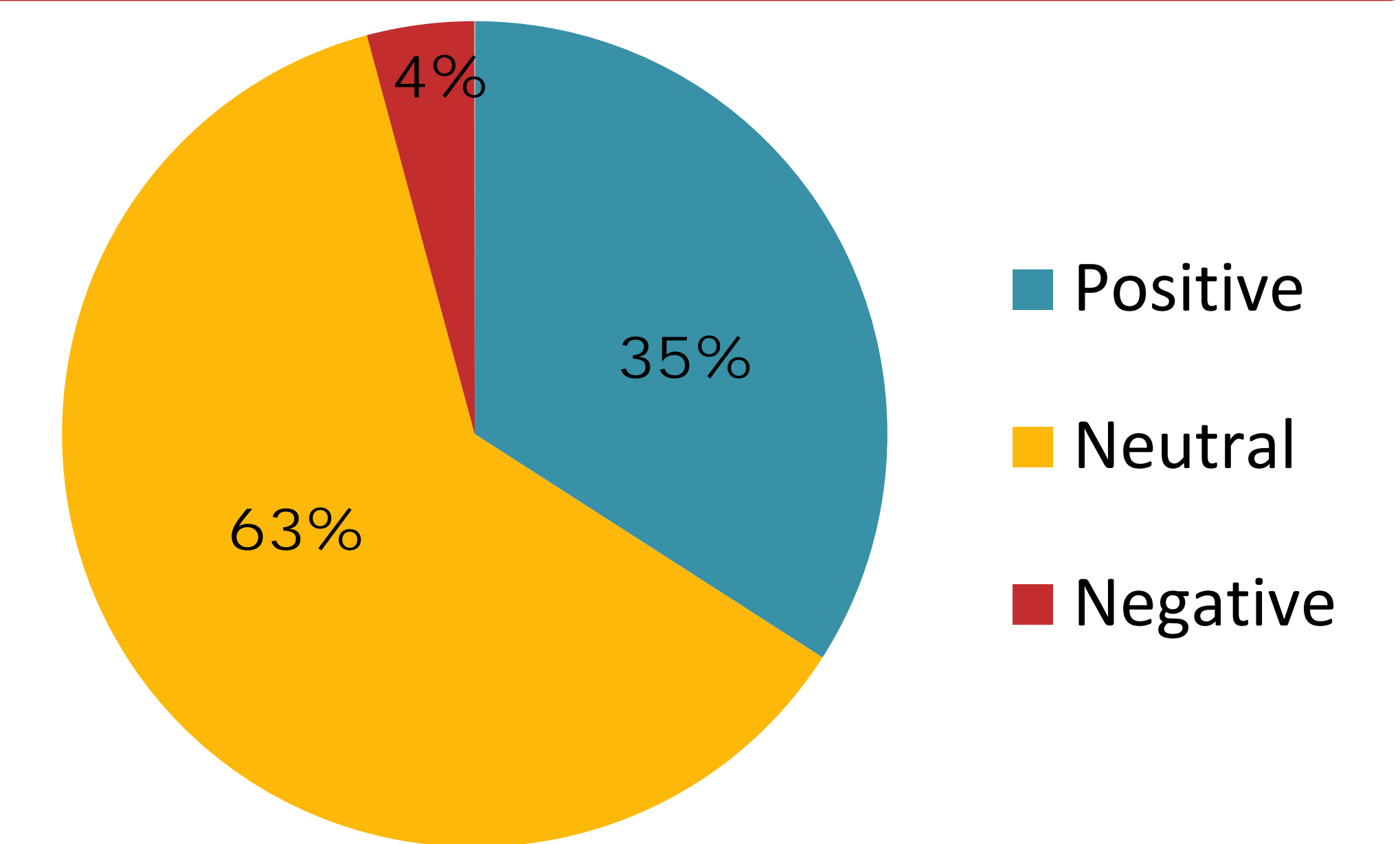
Graph 2. Child Response for all People Praise



Out of 12 total child responses to People praise, 7 were coded as neutral (58%) and 5 (42%) were coded as positive. Zero child responses to People praise were coded as negative.

RESULTS Cont.

Graph 3. Child Response for all Process Praise



Out of 72 total child responses to Process praise, 44 child responses were coded as neutral (63%), 25 were coded as positive (35%), and 3 were coded as negative (4%).

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- Results of this case study show that the caregiver primarily gave process praises and the client had primarily neutral responses to all praise types.
- The neutral responses of the child consisted of task persistence and continued focus on their own play actions and talk.
- The positive and neutral responses to both praise types vastly outnumbered the negative responses, of which there were very few.

DISCUSSION

- The purpose of this study was to examine whether specific types of praise influenced the motivational framework of children as well as their behavior.
- Contrary to our expectations, our findings did not indicate a significant difference in the child response percentages to People praise versus Process praise.
- However, the results show an overall beneficial and non-disruptive effect for the usage of both process and people praises.
- Both types of praise seemed to help the child maintain focus on their current task while experiencing a supportive environment with caregiver.

Implications for PCIT and PC-CARE

- While conducting PCIT or PC-CARE sessions, Therapists can coach caregivers to praise effort as well as inherent traits or abilities to promote task persistence and enhanced relationship quality through positive child responses like smiles, laughter and eye contact.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

- Due to the low frequency of People praise in this study, a comparison between the effects of People vs Process praise was difficult to make.
- As this study is case-specific, further studies should be conducted in order to generalize these findings.