

## BACKGROUND

- A key predictor of children’s academic achievement and motivation is parents’ beliefs, which are shaped by feedback from teachers (Eccles & Harold, 1993).
- Praise also impacts children’s motivation, especially in the face of failure (Henderlong & Lepper, 2002; Kamins & Dweck, 1999; Mueller & Dweck, 1998).
  - Praise for ability → performance orientation
  - Praise for effort → learning orientation
- The particular effects of praise depend, in part, on how it is framed linguistically (Cimpian et al., 2007).

## CURRENT STUDY

- Praise for ability (“You’re smart!”) or effort (“You worked hard!”) impacts motivation when given directly to children.
- How do these types of praise impact parents’ perceptions of their child’s academic behaviors and motivation?
- How does praise that combines aspects of ability praise and effort praise (i.e., praise for being a “hard worker”) influence parents’ judgments related to their child’s achievement?

## METHODS

- Online survey of 230 parents of children ages 6-12
- Parents were randomly assigned to receive one of three types of hypothetical feedback, each containing a different type of praise:

Ability or <b>Person</b> Praise  ( <i>n</i> = 84)	“Hard Worker” or <b>Combination</b> Praise  ( <i>n</i> = 75)	Effort or <b>Process</b> Praise  ( <i>n</i> = 71)
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- Following this positive feedback as well as a hypothetical failure scenario, parents provided open-ended responses describing what they would do, think, feel, and say to their child. They also completed several Likert scale ratings.

## FEEDBACK EXAMPLE

“Your child is doing well in class and clearly is a very **hard worker**. They have received outstanding scores on the last two unit tests, and their homework is of excellent quality. They did an impressive job on their last project, which really showed what a **hard worker** they are. I also appreciate their wonderful sense of humor and infectious laugh. They have a positive attitude and show respect to others in the classroom. Such a **hardworking** kid!”

- Person praise: “bright”; “intelligence”; “smart”
- Process praise: “works hard”

## RESULTS

- Parents’ open-ended responses to their child’s success and failure were assigned specific codes (e.g., effort/hard work or ability), which were grouped into “learning-oriented” and “performance-oriented” categories.

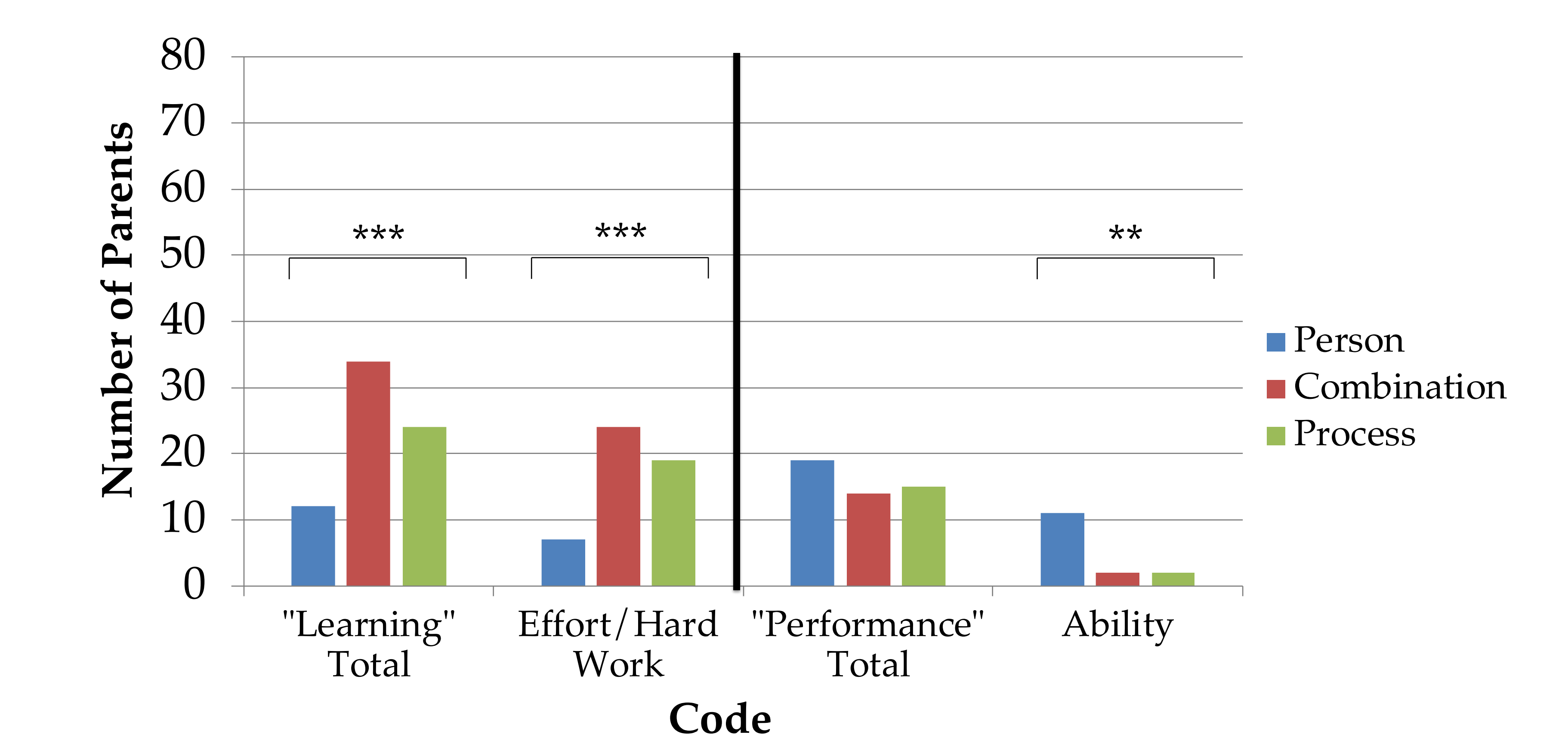
*Learning-Oriented Response:*

“I’d feel like we didn’t study enough or properly. I’d go over some of the questions with her to reinforce the principles.”

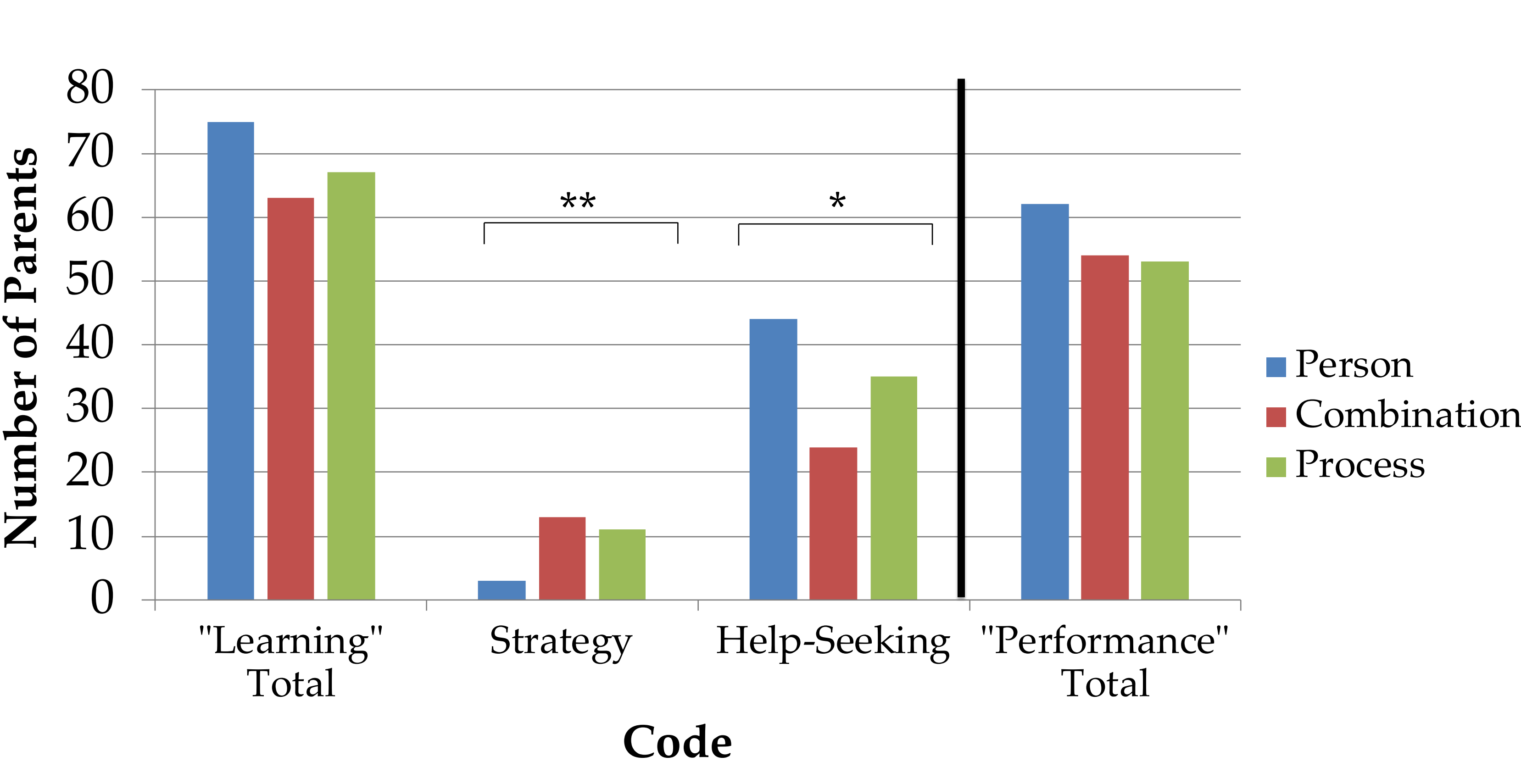
*Performance-Oriented Response:*

“I would feel bad for him since he did try and maybe just didn’t understand the material.”

## Post-Success:



## Post-Failure:



In contrast to the open-ended response data, there were no differences in parents’ Likert scale ratings assessing attributions for their child’s performance, expectations for their child’s future performance and effort, and likelihood of having 14 specific learning- and performance-oriented reactions to failure.

## DISCUSSION

- Differences in parents’ open-ended responses suggest that combination praise might be **more adaptive** than person praise.
- However, regardless of praise type, parents tend to show similar causal attributions and expectations for future performance and effort.
  - Parents’ opinions of their child’s ability might be more stable than children’s opinions of themselves
  - Variety of information in the feedback might have overshadowed the effect of praise
  - Parents might have answered differently if these were non-hypothetical scenarios

## REFERENCES

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