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## Korean and American Teachers' Praising Styles and Teaching Practices

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*Praising is a crucial part of teaching performance that greatly impacts student performance and self-esteem. South Korean teachers are traditionally known to possess authoritarian attributes, whereas U.S. teachers have contradictory beliefs in terms of why and how to use praise. We used Q methodology among 16 American and 22 Korean teachers to understand their subjective views on their teaching and praising practices, intentions and orientations of praising in teaching. Five praising types were obtained. Most American teachers, dubbed as Proud Hedonistic Praisers, showed strong confidence in their teaching and a higher preference of praising. In contrast, most Korean teachers had diverse praising intentions and orientations, dubbed as Humanistic (avoid praising), Authoritarian Behaviorist (use of criticism for controlling students' behaviors and learning), Hedonistic Behaviorist (praise for maintaining good relations with students), or Student-centered Hedonistic Praisers (praise to help students).*

Praise is often defined as verbal reinforcement, positive feedback (Brophy, 1981), positive evaluation (Kanouse, Gumpert, & Canavan-Gumpert, 1981), or favorable interpersonal feedback (Baumeister, Hutton, & Cairns, 1990). Providing and receiving praise is a crucial part of social interaction. It is frequently adapted in classroom interactions because praising strategies are considered to be important teaching skills that may help teachers with classroom management, and with rapport building with students, as well as motivation boosters to students (Saeverot, 2011).

Although praising is a common teaching practice, culture influences the way people praise. The East Asian philosophy behind praising (or "sparing praising") may be influenced by Confucius: *People who praise you are your enemies and people who criticize you are your teachers*. Some scholars have shown that Chinese and Japanese teachers are less likely to praise compared to their American counterparts (Lewis, 1995; Salili, 1996). Much research on praise in the U.S. shows contradictory arguments over praise, emphasizing both negative and positive effects (Brophy, 2004; Kohn, 1993; Stipek, 2001). Many American teachers have realized that a high frequency of praise can impact student behavior, which could be beneficial for teacher-students relationship and learning (Kern, & Clemens, 2007) while some scholars caution that praising can be used to control students' behavior (Henderlong & Lepper, 2002; Saeverot, 2011). Korean teachers, coming from a Confucius culture, possess skepticism and practice praise less frequently (Jeon & Kim, 2012; Yun, Kim, & Kim, 2009), which could negatively affect students' self-efficacy in classrooms (Yun et al., 2009).

Much research has focused on the effect of praising while little research has been done on how teachers perceive praising and how their style influences teaching practices, competence in teaching, and learning (Yun et al., 2009). Thus, in this study, we aim to contribute to the field of teaching and teacher education as well as teacher professional development in terms of the motivational practices of praising, and we focus on teachers' perceptions of their values in regard to teaching and praising practices, intentions and orientations of praising, and contentment with teaching. The results of the study may give teachers insights toward understanding the effects of their praising tendencies in teaching practices. In addition, we examine cultural differences in terms of perceptions of praising.

Utilizing Q methodology we selected Korean teachers who come from a Confucius culture and tend to hold criticism, and American teachers who come from an individualistic culture and tend to value individuals' rights and protection of self-worth (Kern, & Clemens, 2007). Q methodology allows us to utilize people's subjective views, opinions, and perceptions to capture a phenomenon (Brown, 1980), in this case, the patterns of teachers' praising and teaching practices. Using Q methodology, this study explores how selected teachers in South Korea (hereafter referred to as Korea) and the U.S. (hereafter referred to as America) perceive their use of praise (intention and orientation) and the relationship of praise to teaching attributes and contentment.

### Dimensions of Praise and Praise Research

#### Two Dimensions of Praise

Praise can be defined as intentional feedback on the basis of "positive *appraisal* made by a person of another's products, performances, or attributes" (Kanouse, Gumpert, & Canavan-Gumpert, 1981, p. 98). Although this study is explorative in nature, praising in terms of intention (emotional support vs. control) and orientation (approach vs. avoidance) was primarily utilized as the conceptual framework to capture praising styles.

**Intentions of praise.** Brophy (1981) noted that teacher praise "goes beyond mere affirmation of correctness of response" (p. 6), implying that it is wise to examine the intention before giving praise (Kohn, 1993). When people praise behavior, performance, and work, they usually expect the reoccurrence of these behaviors (Alberto & Troutman, 2009; Baumeister, Hutton, & Cairns, 1990; Brophy, 1981; Kohn, 1993; Thompson, 1997). Many teachers share similar purposes when utilizing praise, such as managing the classroom effectively (Brophy, 1981). Madsen, Becker, and Thomas (1968) found that praise was a key strategy in achieving effective classroom management. Furthermore, for some teachers, giving praise implicitly forces students to continue good performance (Baumeister, Hutton, & Cairns, 1990). These types of intentions may be called *cognitive controlling intentions*. Teachers with a teacher-centered style might praise students because of controlling intentions (Ryan, Mims, & Koestner, 1983). Other teachers use praise to provide emotional support (Babad, 1990; Henderlong & Lepper, 2002; Kohn, 1993) or to express their feelings about behavior or performance (Brophy, 1981; Burnett, 2002) rather than to control. Like parents who use praise to support autonomy rather than to control (Pomerantz, Grolnick, Price, 2005), some teachers use praise only to support their students. This second type of intention can be called *emotional supportive intention*. Teachers who have this

kind of intention do not use praise as a strategy for managing the classroom, rather they value supporting students more than guiding students' behavior (Kamins & Dweck, 1999). Teachers with a learner-centered teaching style might praise students with this kind of intention.

**Orientation to praise: Approach vs. avoidance.** Most living organisms are fundamentally motivated by an approach-avoidance orientation (Harmon-Jones, 2010; Schneirla, 1959). This motivational orientation originates from a hedonistic principle: the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain (Elliot, 2006). In this context, praise is considered a stimulus, which creates an approach orientation (Leung & Lam, 2003) because it makes people feel good (Burnett & Mandel, 2003). According to self-enhancement theory, people want to maintain positive values or self-image and avoid negative feedback (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009; Kwang & Swann, 2010)—to receive praise (Kwang & Swann, Jr., 2010) and to escape from blame or criticism. Teachers who value the self-enhancement principle might try to give more praise to their students.

In contrast, some people dislike praise or feel anxious when they receive it (Brophy, 1981; Kanouse et al., 1981; Kohn, 1993) because they feel pressure to please, or fear failure in the future (Dweck, 1999; Mueller & Dweck, 1998). Thus, several scholars have warned about the side effects of praise (Kohn, 1993; Mueller & Dweck, 1998). Some studies indicate that praise does not always obtain positive results (Henderlong & Lepper, 2002). When praising children's abilities, goodness and worth, praising might boost performance, but may not promote longer lasting intrinsic motivation that leads to mastery orientation (Kamins & Dweck, 1999). In a different vein, avoidance of praising in Eastern cultures can be supported by self-effacement theory. People who have a collectivist orientation tend to avoid being praised and praising others (Chen, Bond, Chan, Tang, & Buchtel, 2009). For example, Asians tend to downplay rather than enhance themselves.

### **Research on Use of Praise**

Much research on praise in America has focused on type of praise (process vs. person) (Kamins & Dweck, 1999), skills (Ginott, 1975), effects (Brophy, 1981; Kohn, 1993), relationship to motivation (Henderlong & Lepper, 2002; Mueller & Dweck, 1998), and frequency (Brophy, 1981). The content and type of praise are important not only for categorizing its functions but also for studying its effectiveness. Praise can be either general or specific; General praise usually has negative effects (Brophy, 2004; Kohn, 1993) and some argue that person-focused praise is ineffective (Stipek, 2001). Measurements of praise or related variables are usually based on the recipient's attitude (Burnett, 2001) or preference (Burnett, 2001; Pety, Kelly, & Kafafy, 1984). Although some studies support that teachers who use frequent praise are more successful due to the teachers' feedback (praising) in students' appropriate behaviors (Kern & Clemens, 2007), one study showed that teachers do not engage in praising much (Beaman & Wheldall, 2000). More studies need to be done for further investigation.

While many studies in the West have shown the benefits of praise, historically a large number of Korean teachers operating from within a Confucius cultural framework have been skeptical and use praise less frequently. Some may use criticism and even scolding more than praise. Often, this type of practice causes students to detest school (Jeon & Kim, 2012; Yun et al., 2009). A few

South Korean studies have emphasized the positive relationship between teachers' use of praise and students' socio-emotional and cognitive development (Jeon & Kim, 2012; Yun et al., 2009), and the effects of praise on students' schooling and self-efficacy (Yun et al., 2009). Some studies have shown that teachers use praise and encouragement to help students have positive emotional experiences in school, which could lead to positive academic achievement (Lee, 2007; Song, 1988). However, more Korean studies have focused on characteristics of praising, types of praise, and interactions between students and teachers related to praising.

### **Q Methodology and Concourse Development**

Q methodology (Q) was developed by William Stephenson in order to investigate any type of human subjectivity using statistical applications of correlation and factor analysis (Brown, 1980). Q helps to identify clusters of individuals who share similar perspectives. The Q allows researchers to obtain reliable results using a systematic and objective procedure when studying subjectivity. Thus, the Q factors capture generalizable subjective perspectives. When using Q, between 20 to 80 strategically (theoretically) sampled participants are sufficient enough because the subjects possess "the status of variables" (Brown, 1980, p. 191) and this small sample of participants can demonstrate the patterns of certain phenomenon. Also, the sample size in Q is represented by the number of Q statements (called Q sample) rather than the set of participants (called P set) (Brown, 1980).

**Validity, reliability, and limitation.** For Q, validity and reliability are treated differently than the traditional R (factor analysis) approach, and validity and reliability are not a primary concern in Q methodology (Brown, 1980; Stephenson, 1953). As Q is based on subjective perspectives, it does not need an 'objective' operational definition nor validity measures, as the latter needs objective operational definitions (Brown, 1980; McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Thus, if participants complete the sorting procedures and provide valid points of view, a Q study has a solid validity (Brown, 1980). The reliability in Q depends on replication of the factors: when administered the same Q statements with the same conditions of instruction to different groups of participants, the results will still represent reliably similar viewpoints on the topic, which shows that the obtained factors represent general opinions on the topic (Van Exel & De Graaf, G, 2005). On the other hand, reliability of the factors depends on the numbers of sorts and factor loading (See analytical method section for factor loading calculation) in a factor. If enough participants sort in the same way when interpreting the factor with the appropriate factor loadings, then the reliability of the factors is assured (Brown, 1980).

Although Q methodology is still relatively a less conventional research methodology, it has been used in some disciplines such as political science, nursing, journalism, and education (Bang & Montgomery, 2013; Janson, Miller, & Rainey, 2007; Ramlo, McConnell, Zhong-Hui, & Moore, 2008). The limitation of Q methodology is most often associated with reliability and therefore the generalizability due to its small number of subjects (Thomas & Baas, 1992). However, this criticism regarding generalizability of Q may not be justified because the reliability in Q relies on replicability, and not the statistical reliability of R factor analysis (Thomas & Baas, 1992).

**Concourse and Q statement development.** Q methodology starts with the development of all possible statements regarding the phenomenon, dubbed a *concourse*. In our case, the concourse

involves teachers' praising. The concourse in this study includes statements about a wide spectrum of views on individual praising style, as well as views on teaching/instruction, classroom management, and attitudes toward teaching, to yield the best descriptors for the sorting procedure. To conceptualize praising style, we did an extensive literature review and decided to adapt two dimensions of praise (intention and orientation), which are conceptually orthogonal (see Literature Review section). When teachers praise students, they might have at least two different intentions marking opposite ends of a continuum: emotional support and control. Meanwhile, teachers who have non-controlling intentions can also be divided into two groups: praising approach and praising avoidance. A teacher's intention can be independent from his/her orientation to praise. It is possible that a teacher who has a controlling intention might have the avoidance orientation (i.e., try not to praise students often), but another controlling teacher might have the approach orientation (i.e., try to praise students often). With these two orthogonal dimensions, we created twenty Q statements using these four dimensions based on the literature review, named as follows: Behavioristic (controlling intention with approach orientation), Hedonistic (non-controlling intention with approach orientation), Authoritarian (controlling intention with avoidance orientation), and Humanistic (non-controlling intention with avoidance orientation). Seven items (e.g., learner-centered activity, climate building, etc.) from Conti's (1998) Principles of Adult Learning Scale were added in order to see whether teachers' classroom management and teaching styles were associated with their use of praise (Conti, 1998). In addition, we also created and utilized items regarding teachers' attitudes toward teaching (e.g., flexibility, contentment with teaching, etc.).

### Research Questions

In summary, this study contributes to the field of teaching and teacher education in terms of motivational practices of praising. The research questions were as follows:

1. What are the patterns of teachers' values in regard to teaching and praising practices, intentions and orientations of praising, and contentment with teaching?
2. What are the characteristics of these patterns and how they can be interpreted?
3. What is the distribution of American and Korean teachers among the praising types?

### Method

#### P Set (Participants)

Twenty-two Korean teachers ranging from 27 to 55 years old (mean=38.55, SD=8.80) participated in the study. Most participants were female (19 females and 3 males) and teach in a metropolitan city in South Korea, with the exception of two graduate students who have had little teaching experience other than a practicum. Most participants were in M.Ed. or Ph.D. degree programs, or professors in education majors. Their teaching experience ranged from 0 to 28 years. Sixteen American teachers (three males) who were in M.Ed. programs in a medium-size state university in the Midwest participated in the study (age range from 22 to 42 years: mean=27.38, SD=5.30). Teaching experience ranged from 0 to 13 years. Table 1 provides detailed demographic information.

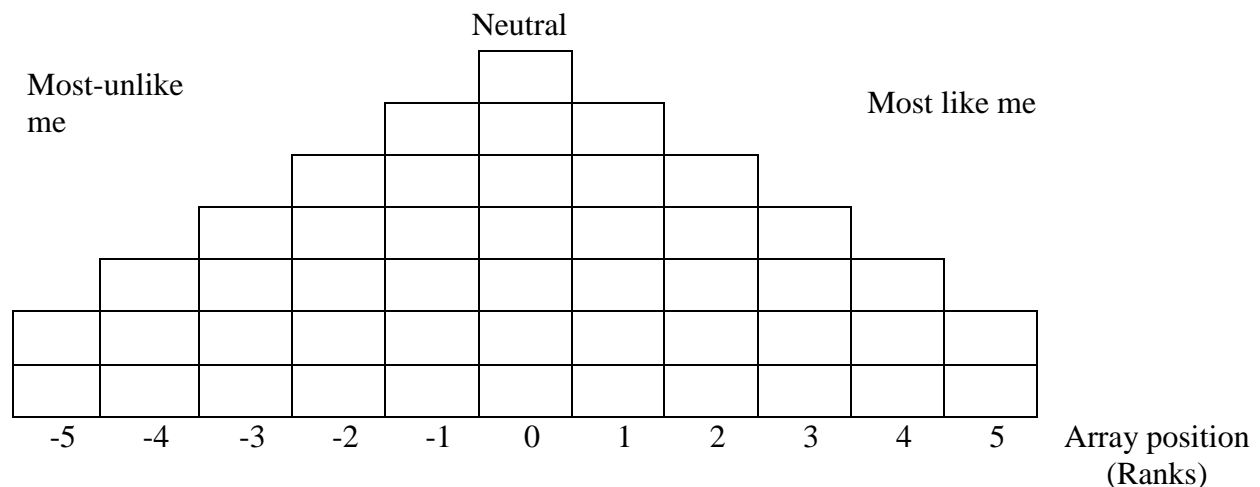
## Procedure

After obtaining approval from the Human Subject Review Board, South Korean teachers were recruited from participants who attended a Q methodology workshop held by the primary author during the summer of 2012 in a national university in Busan, South Korea. American teachers had taken a graduate education course (a semester long) in a state university. Because this study does not compare Korean and American teachers' praising style but rather explores general phenomenon, it was not necessary to obtain identical sample sizes, demographic characteristics, or environments between South Korean and American samples.

A package of consent forms, 47 Q statement cards, a response grid (Q grid) in a normal distribution, and a demographic survey including open-ended questions about the rationale behind sorting were distributed to the participants. Participants were asked to sort the Q statements about their teaching and praising practices onto the Q board with one condition of instruction: "What are your views and beliefs on praising and teaching?" (Figure 1). The participants sorted the 47 statements initially into three piles (Most Like Me, Neutral, and Most Unlike Me); then they sorted the statements alternately into the Q grid by salience: those that they most agreed with (+5) to those least agreed with (-5). Before they reported their sorts, participants were encouraged to review the final placements and make any changes. For the open-ended question, participants were asked to comment on their positioning of the statements, especially those items that they had ranked  $\pm 5$ . Personal information about each participant (age, teaching experience, teaching subject, major, etc.) was also collected.

*Figure 1. Q-sort Grid*

Condition of instruction: "What are your views and beliefs on teaching and praising?"



## Analytical Method

Utilizing PQ Method 2.11 (Schmolck, 2012), we used centroid factor analysis to obtain an initial estimate of potential factors. Then, Varimax rotation was used to arrive at the five-factor solution that would capture the most divergent viewpoints, with stable, reliable factors (Kim, 2008). The level of significance was determined at  $f > .42$  or above with 99% confidence interval

$(2.58 * 1 / \sqrt{38})$  (Brown, 1980; Kim, 2008). A five-factor solution was retained with more than four defining sorts for each factor, followed by the calculation of a z score for each statement. Factor arrays and the ranks for statements on each factor, distinguishing and consensus items, demographic information, and comments from the open-ended questions were utilized for the interpretation of the factors.

## Results

The five factors were named Type 1: *Proud Hedonistic Praisers* (18% variance: 12 sorts), Type 2: *Humanistic Praisers* (8% variance: 4 sorts), Type 3: *Authoritarian Behaviorist Praisers* (8% variance: 4 sorts), Type 4: *Hedonistic Behaviorists* (10% variance: 4 sorts), and Type 5: *Student-centered Hedonists* (17% variance: 9 sorts). Table 1 demonstrates the five-factor solution and describes the participants.

Five confounded sorts were found: two were loaded significantly on more than one factor, and three were insignificant on any of the factors. In general, correlation coefficients between factors were small, which showed uniqueness and independence of each factor ( $r_{12} = .018$ ,  $r_{13} = .193$ ,  $r_{14} = .399$ ,  $r_{15} = .616$ ,  $r_{23} = .165$ ,  $r_{24} = .126$ ,  $r_{25} = .282$ ,  $r_{34} = .180$ ,  $r_{35} = .327$ ,  $r_{45} = .440$ ). Although correlation between Types 1 and 5 were rather high due to their hedonistic characteristics, theoretically they present unique characteristics that are worth examining (correlations are less important as long as each factor show unique characteristics). Types 1 and 5 emphasized any positive classroom activities that enhance the relationship with students (35% variance). Interestingly most American participants were characterized as Type 1 (11 out of 15 Americans and 11 out of 12 sorts in Type 1: see Table 1), whereas Korean teachers were characterized by the remaining four types. Table 2 shows Q statements, rank order, and distinguishing statements in each type.

### Type 1: Proud Hedonistic Praisers

Eleven sorts of American and one sort of Korean teachers were defined as Type 1: Proud Hedonistic Praisers [age 22 to 49 years (mean: 28.50; SD: 7.6); teaching experience 0 to 13 years (mean: 5.00, SD: 4.82)]. The distinguishing statements and rank orders for Type 1 are demonstrated in Table 2 and 3, illuminating the theoretical sorting distribution that signifies the strongest opinions of this type.

Type 1 teachers exhibited greater pride in their profession compared to other types. They believe that teaching is a crucial role in society and are happy, proud, and satisfied with their role. They do value having a good relationship with students. They also exhibited strong confidence in running, managing, disciplining, instructing, and praising, as well as assessing students' capabilities. Type 1 teachers did not show dominance in any specific philosophy behind praising other than they do not think that praise has negative effects and use praise for excellent performance. They showed extreme confidence in their teaching performance, including when to praise, as well as contentment with teaching. Open-ended comments included:



I am happy [that] I am a teacher. It is the only job I could see myself doing and loving each day. As an early childhood teacher a great classroom environment is important, praise is included in a good classroom environment with routines to help them achieve.

I love my career ...Being a teacher is in the classroom and outside the classroom. I am a mentor, coach, role model, and a teacher...

I love my job...I love the rapport I have with my students. ... I believe having a good relationship with my students gets me many more opportunities to engage them.

Teachers of this type were younger with fewer years of teaching experience than those in the other types.

### **Type 2: Humanistic Praisers**

Four Korean teachers were characterized as Type 2 (see Table 2 and 4): Humanistic Praisers [age 28 to 48 years (mean: 37; SD: 9.59); teaching experience 5 to 24 years (mean: 12.75; SD: 8.99)]. The humanistic praising style is characterized by emotional supportive intention and avoidance orientation. Teachers exhibiting this style are very conscious about the negative effects of praising and believe praising may interfere with students' intrinsic motivation. Thus, they prefer to give informative feedback rather than praise and believe that exaggerated praising is not effective. They use praise to emphasize students' strength and are good at classroom management. They also believe that they are experienced teachers. However, Type 2 teachers were also either less satisfied with their jobs or less concerned about their role in society. One of the open-ended comments was, "...I have witnessed that some students try hard to live up to the praise they are receiving rather than trying to understand their strength and weakness. It is better to communicate with them about their aspiration to support and help them rather than manipulating them." Most participants in this praising type teach elementary school students (1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade).

Teachers with the humanistic praising style believe that they use praise to encourage rather than control. They try not to praise too much because they believe praise can stifle students' intrinsic motivation. These teachers also dislike praise because of its perceived negative effects on students' feelings. Kohn (1993), for instance, strongly argues that teachers should not use certain types of praise in the classroom. Teachers of this type focus on their students' strength, consider themselves good classroom managers, and recognize the negative effects of praise.

### **Type 3: Authoritarian Behaviorist Praisers**

Three Korean teachers and one American teacher were defined as Type 3 (see Table 2 and 5): Authoritarian Behaviorists Praisers [age 25 to 42 years (mean: 35.75; SD: 7.80); teaching experience 0 to 10 years (mean: 3 years; SD: 4.69)]. This type of teacher reported that they prefer to use criticism and praise to increase students' achievement. They seem to have clear intentions when using praise to manage classrooms, and are demanding and strict when it comes to learning, goal setting, and assessment. Teachers with this praising style also show that they have little open dialogue with their students, and hence notice that students do not turn to them

for sympathy. They try to help students to learn, but somehow fail to create a good relationship. Interestingly, although they are interested in students' achievement, they reported that they have a hard time to adjust their lesson to individual student's level and needs, and do not believe that they do a good job managing the classroom. Regardless whether all these findings are correlated, these teachers seem to be insecure and are not satisfied with teaching (see Table 4). Teachers in this type have fewer years of teaching experiences compared to other types.

Open-ended comments included:

It might be true that praising reinforces students' desirable behaviors but it also reinforces other accompanying and undesirable behaviors as well. That is why it is difficult to direct and modify students' behaviors.

Praising unintentionally and unconditionally is not effective. I believe that praising can be effective and students will learn more when they know what exactly they did right or wrong. They should earn praise when they did well and they should receive criticism when they did not get it right.

Students can benefit from constructive criticism. Well-disciplined classrooms are important to learning.

Although it may be that the authoritarian praisers know what they are doing, they believe they struggle in maintaining discipline and building a trusting relationship with their students, which might influence their low level of teaching efficacy and satisfaction based on their open-ended question responses and Q statements they sorted.

#### **Type 4: Hedonistic Behaviorists**

Three Korean and one American teacher were defined as Type 4 (see Table 2 and 6): Hedonistic Behaviorist Praisers. [age range 28 to 36 (mean: 30.5 years old; SD: 3.70) and teaching experience 4 to 7 years (mean: 5.75 years; SD: 1.26)]. Teachers of this type believed that all students like praise and more praise makes them happier. They also believed that they praised more frequently than other teachers and attempted to give praise to all students, showed warmth and caring toward their students, and believed in the (positive) effect of praise, while praising with the clear intention of modifying student behaviors.

Open-ended comments that reflect the hedonistic behaviorists are:

Praising students with calculated intention is more appropriate rather than inflated praising. At the same time, when students get more praising, their relationship with teachers could last longer.

I experienced that I had [a] hard time knowing how much I have achieved because I did not get praise.

In the beginning of the year, I find it easy to choose one or two students who are modeling good behavior and praising them. Young students strived to please their teacher. So, they all follow suit when praise is given.

Teachers who are oriented to behaviorism try to use lots of praise to control their students (Kohn, 1993). Behaviorists emphasize the positive roles of praise in modifying student behavior. Because praise is easy to use as a positive reinforcer in the classroom compared to material reinforcers (i.e. candy or stickers), behaviorists strongly recommend that teachers use praise to manage the classroom and build appropriate behaviors (Brophy, 1981). Although teachers of this type often use praise as a means of control, they value building a trusting relationship with students through communication.

### **Type 5: Student-Centered Hedonistic Praisers**

Eight Korean teachers and one American teacher defined Type 5 (see Table 2 and 7): Student-centered Hedonistic Praisers [age 27 to 55 (mean: 40.33 years old; SD: 10.30) and teaching experience 0 to 26 years (mean: 9.88 years; SD: 8.13)]. These teachers paid greater attention to students and their needs, and placed greater value on having a good relationship with students and were confident that they had warm relationships. They also helped students to discover and boost their academic and socio-emotional strength. They believed that the more praise the better, and they praised all students. Their classrooms were more democratic, interactive, and learner-centered rather than controlled and well disciplined. They are highly satisfied with their job and enjoy teaching.

Open-ended comments included:

I like finding strengths from students and I believe that developing a trusting relationship with students would encourage students' intrinsic motivation. That is my job.

Praising always makes people happy. ... I also want to build [a] sincere relationship with students.

When I praise students with open-mind during the class (sic), I saw my students enjoying lessons, feeling comfortable, and being happy.

I believe that interaction between teacher and students is the most important component of the purpose of education. It is more important finding students' strength and maximizing their strength rather than trying to pull out something they [students] do not possess.

Age, years of teaching, and educational degrees did not seem to be specifically associated with praising type, although most sorters (teachers) teach at the college level (six of nine). This praising style can be illustrated with a combination of an emotional supportive intention and approach orientation. These teachers try to praise students often, without any intention to control. They also believe that praise is well-intentioned feedback and it makes students feel good about themselves.

### Discussion and Implications

Both Korean and American teachers exhibited all five praising styles (proud hedonistic, humanistic, hedonistic behaviorist, authoritarian behaviorist and student-centered hedonistic) associated with their perception of their relationship with students, contentment with teaching, classroom management, and teaching practices. The results in particular showed that most American teachers were characterized as proud hedonistic praisers, while most Korean teachers were characterized as one of the four other types (humanistic, authoritarian, hedonistic behaviorists, and hedonistic). Three types (1, 4, and 5) accounted for close to half of the participants, and teachers believed that praise would support students emotionally and help students to trust them, resulting in amicable teacher-student relationships. The study also showed that some teachers believe that praising helps students not only to build self-esteem, but also to trust their environment and relationships with people. The results provide insight into some possible cultural differences in praising and various opinions by teachers related to the benefits and disadvantages of praising that are discussed further below.

### Intention and Orientation

The Korean teachers' praising styles (Types 2-5) were more diverse compared to the American teachers. Their styles also showed clear intentions (controlling vs. non-controlling) and orientation (more praising vs. less praising). Some teachers liked to use praise for classroom management (authoritarian and hedonistic behaviorists) as well as relationship building and emotional support (student-centered hedonistic praisers and hedonistic behaviorists), whereas other teachers tried to avoid praise due to perceived negative effects (humanistic praisers). Both hedonistic praisers and behaviorists believed that praising provided emotional support more than controlling did though, hedonistic behaviorists stressed praise for control. The difference between hedonistic praisers and behaviorists involves intention: hedonistic praisers use praise purely for emotional support (non-controlling) whereas hedonistic behaviorists use praise for control (Kohn, 1993). Behaviorists emphasize the positive role of praise in modifying student behavior (Brophy, 1981). Teachers with a purely hedonistic praising style utilize a combination of emotional support and approach orientation in this study.

Both authoritarian and hedonistic behaviorists believe that praising could be a key strategy for effective classroom management. Humanistic praisers in this study, on the other hand, avoid praise because they are aware of its negative effects, which could come from their negative experiences with praise and cultural expectations (Suzuki, Davis, & Greenfield, 2008). As discussed earlier in the literature review, East Asians tend to avoid being praised and also praising others, which might have influenced some Korean participants' praising avoidance tendency (Chen, Bond, Chan, Tang, & Buchtel, 2009). Likewise, because Korean teachers, like Chinese and Japanese, are traditionally regarded as authority figures of knowledge and wisdom, it is assumed that some Korean teachers believe that their role is providing corrections and criticism to help students to learn more, (characteristics of authoritarian style of praising). According to Shim (1993), students reported that 70% of high school teachers (compared to 58% middle school and 23% elementary school teachers) used negative language, such as scolding, criticizing, underestimating, pointing out weakness, threatening, and cursing, rather than

praising. Interestingly, our results showed that authoritarian behaviorists are more likely found among Korean teachers, while many American teachers recognize that praising has more positive effects than negative, and more likely emphasize the importance of building an amicable relationship with students (other than being a proud teacher).

It is also interesting that none of the American teachers were characterized by the humanistic praising style. While most American teachers believed that praise should be much more encouraged than discouraged, Korean teachers with the humanistic praising style try not to praise too much because praise can stifle students' intrinsic motivation. Those teachers also dislike praise because of its negative effects on students' feelings. In particular, Kohn (1993) endorses the humanistic praising style and strongly argues that teachers should use encouragement rather than praise. According to Yun et al., (2009) South Korean pre-service teachers (attending school in 1990s and 2000s) reported that the praise they liked the most (and received the most) was related to teachers' *encouragement* for their *effort* rather than for their ability. Because encouragement emphasizes effort more than results, Korean students get more praise for their efforts, which also supports Lewis's (1995) and Salili (1996)'s studies on the Chinese and Japanese pattern of sparing praise and encouraging process and effort. Thus, the humanistic praising style is a unique representation of modern Korean teachers' praising style compared to that of American teachers, although both hedonistic praising styles are currently more dominant among South Korean teachers.

### **Praising Style and Contentment with Teaching**

Because praising style is a kind of teacher attribute, it is greatly related to classroom management style and teaching practices. Humanistic praisers (Type 2) seem to believe that they can maintain a well-disciplined classroom, unlike authoritarian behaviorists, who do not feel that they have control over the classroom despite their intention to use praise as a means of control. Teachers who have an authoritarian praising style usually have high intentions to control student behavior and have high expectations of compliance to classroom rules, while showing little warmth and allowing little open dialogue between teachers and students (Deci, Spiegel, Ryan, Koestner, & Kauffman, 1982). That is, these teachers usually praise students to show their authority or to emphasize difference in status. This attitude may interfere with their interaction and relationship with students, which in turn prevents them from gaining respect. A Korean study shows that an authoritarian attitude and commanding language result in negative interactions between teachers and students (Kim & Noh, 1993). Conversely, other studies show that positive and healthy interactions between teachers and students positively influence students' emotionally and increase their self-esteem and adaptation to schooling (S. Moon, 2004; E. Moon, 2001; Choi & Shin, 2003). These studies show what authoritarian behaviorists in our study might be experiencing in their classroom.

Unlike teacher-centered teachers (like authoritarian behaviorists) who show a strong desire for control, student-oriented teachers (like hedonistic praisers) allow students to make their own decisions or ask them to work independently. The results of the present study showed that both hedonistic praisers and behaviorists are eager to praise their students and believe that they are building a positive relationship. Several teachers indicated that praising encourages positive energy, and students subsequently do better in learning. Several Korean studies have shown that

teachers who encourage democratic conversation, use less commanding language (like hedonistic praisers), and encourage students to express themselves freely not only help students to achieve academically but also enhance their emotional health (Song, 1988; Yang, 2003).

Contentment with teaching was associated with the type of student-teacher relationship (amiable or hierarchical). Most American teachers (in Type 1) are more content with teaching and believe that their role is important. Hedonistic praisers also believe that they have a warm and trusting relationship with their students and that their students listen to them. These teacher types also enjoy teaching more than other types and are the most satisfied. On the contrary, authoritarian behaviorists are not satisfied and expressed they would change their job if they could. When teachers have an amiable relationship with their students, that relationship not only influences the students to have a positive school experience (Song, 1988; Yang, 2003) but also brings teachers greater satisfaction. Authoritarian behaviorists might benefit from hedonistic praisers' perspectives to reexamine their perspectives on praising.

### **Limitations and Future Studies**

As noted, a common skepticism of Q study concerns generalizability. Q offers replicability, but not the type of generalizability that is typically sought within more quantitatively oriented studies. Thus, when interpreting one should keep this in mind. One of the limitations of this study is related to the female dominant sample, which might impact the defining sorts. Thus, even though many professionals in education are female, it would be better to balance the population. Another limitation is that we did not observe the teachers' praising, and that the results are based on the teachers' views rather than their behaviors. Thus, the readers should keep these in mind when interpreting and attempting to generalize the results.

This study provides practical insights for teachers in the association between the use of praise and learning. Professional development (i.e., coaching programs) would help teachers understanding their praising practices. Teachers could reflect upon their praising tendencies and could foresee whether their praising style (authoritarian behaviorism) may cause frustration and conflict with students as well as their own satisfaction in teaching. Thus, understanding teachers' praising styles could help in classroom management, build positive relationship with students, and help motivate students in learning. The design of a professional development program can come from a combination of the results from studies on the effects of praising, and the praising styles including the effects of intentions and orientations.

Future studies might examine how students perceive the effect of praise on learning and how praising styles could influence students' motivation (e.g., mastery and performance goal orientations). Also observing teachers' praising and comparing this with the results of the present study would provide further information. In addition, cross-cultural and cross-national comparative studies in teaching and teacher-training using the results of the study could be of great potential for future research.

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Table 1. *Factor Matrix of Defining Sorts*

Sorter	Loading by Type (factor)					NT	Age	Sex	TY	Teaching Grades	Teaching Specialty	Degree
	1	2	3	4	5							
1	<b>0.84X</b>	-0.10	0.12	-0.01	-0.00	A	24	F	ST	9-12	Language Arts	BA
2	<b>0.78X</b>	-0.12	0.18	0.36	0.04	A	26	F	4	9-12	Science	BA
3	<b>0.75X</b>	0.19	-0.07	0.17	0.36	A	24	F	1	4-12	Language Arts	BA
4	<b>0.73X</b>	0.09	-0.07	0.23	0.34	A	38	F	13	4-8	Math	BA
5	<b>0.70X</b>	0.06	-0.05	0.06	0.32	A	28	M	2	4-8	Social Science	BA
6	<b>0.65X</b>	-0.01	0.44	0.02	0.28	A	24	M	1	7-12	Math	BA
7	<b>0.62X</b>	-0.29	0.16	0.36	0.13	A	26	F	3	K-3	Early Childhood	BA
8	<b>0.59X</b>	0.23	-0.15	0.27	0.20	A	26	M	13	9-12	Computer	BA
9	<b>0.57X</b>	-0.03	0.48	-0.04	0.21	A	22	F	1	9-12	Social Science	BA
10	<b>0.56X</b>	0.11	-0.13	0.34	0.23	A	27	F	4	K-3	Elementary	BA
11	<b>0.55X</b>	0.07	-0.12	0.27	0.49	A	28	F	7	K-8	Special Education	BA
12	<b>0.55X</b>	0.01	0.43	-0.17	0.27	K	49	F	11	College	Education	Ph.D.
13	-0.02	<b>0.75X</b>	0.11	-0.01	0.05	K	28	F	6	1-6	English Education	M.Ed.
14	-0.25	<b>0.69X</b>	-0.02	0.14	0.36	K	42	M	16	1-6	Technology	Ph.D.
15	0.15	<b>0.68X</b>	0.08	-0.07	-0.47	K	30	F	5	K-3	Early Childhood	M.Ed
16	0.01	<b>0.63X</b>	-0.02	0.06	0.49	K	48	F	24	1-6	Elementary	ABD
17	-0.11	0.19	<b>0.75X</b>	0.13	0.24	K	41	F	ST	9-12	Education	M.Ed.
18	0.42	0.31	<b>0.52X</b>	0.03	-0.06	A	25	F	1	9-12	Science	BA
19	-0.06	0.01	<b>0.74X</b>	0.18	-0.06	K	35	M	10	1-6	Elementary	M.Ed.
20	0.02	-0.02	<b>0.63X</b>	-0.06	0.24	A	42	F	1	College	Education	M.Ed.
21	0.05	-0.03	0.08	<b>0.78X</b>	0.30	K	29	F	7	K-3	Early Childhood	M.Ed.
22	0.29	0.15	-0.12	<b>0.70X</b>	0.09	A	28	F	4	K-3	Early Childhood	BA
23	0.02	0.28	0.19	<b>0.51X</b>	0.25	K	29	F	6	7-9	Special Education	M.Ed.
24	0.13	-0.02	0.08	<b>0.50X</b>	-0.10	K	36	F	6	College	Computer	M.Ed.
25	0.15	0.41	0.00	0.00	<b>0.81X</b>	K	27	F	2	College	Counseling	M.Ed.
26	0.35	-0.01	0.19	0.14	<b>0.78X</b>	K	33	F	4	7- College	Counseling	M.Ed.
27	0.29	0.09	0.09	0.02	<b>0.76X</b>	K	52	F	26	College	Early Childhood	Ph.D.
28	0.31	0.13	0.24	0.22	<b>0.66X</b>	K	32	F	ST	ST	Education	BA

TEACHERS' PRAISING TYPOLOGY

29	0.33	-0.11	0.30	0.44	<b>0.65X</b>	K	44	F	18	College	Early Childhood	Ph.D.
30	0.29	0.01	0.14	0.41	<b>0.64X</b>	K	49	M	10	K-3	Early Childhood	M.Ed.
31	0.28	0.35	0.24	-0.44	<b>0.58X</b>	K	41	F	12	1-6	Elementary	BA
32	0.15	0.09	0.28	0.48	<b>0.54X</b>	K	55	F	8	10-12	Science	M.Ed.
33	0.43	0.31	-0.03	0.37	<b>0.48X</b>	A	30	F	9	9-12	Special Education	
	Confounded											
34	0.28	0.02	0.21	0.36	0.33	K	48	F	28	7-9	Social Science	BA
35	0.47	-0.11	0.28	0.30	0.51	K	39	F	3	College	Physical Education	M.Ed.
36	0.29	0.21	0.25	0.50	0.44	K	31	F	10	K-12	Education	Ph.D.
37	-0.09	-0.28	-0.23	-0.09	-0.01	A	23	F	ST	9-12	Social Science	BA
38	0.24	0.20	0.18	0.38	0.38	A	27	F	3	9-12	Special Education	M.Ed.
% Var.	18	8	8	10	17							

Note. NT: Nationality, A: American, K: South Korean, TY: Years of teaching, ST: Student teaching

Table 2.  
Factor Q-Sort Values for Each Statement

No.	Q Statements	Rank by type (factor)				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	I often praise students with clear intentions.	0	3	2	5	0
2	I believe praise is helpful for managing my classroom.	1	-1	2	3	0
3	If I praise more, then students perform better.	0	0	1	2	1
4	I often use praise to decrease students' negative behavior.	0	-2	-3	2**	-2
5	I usually praise students to modify problem behaviors.	-1	-3	-1	4**	3
6	I usually praise excellent performance.	3**	-4**	0	-1	0
7	I usually praise a student only when he/she has achieved academic progress.	-1	-5*	-1	-5	-4
8	I believe praise spoils students.	-4	2**	-5	-5	-4
9	I use criticism as well as praise to increase students' achievement.	1	1	5**	-2	-1
10	I praise the behaviors which satisfy my expectation or standard.	0	-3	-2	1	-3
11	Every student likes receiving praise.	0	0	1	5**	2
12	I praise students to emphasize their own strength.	1	4	4	2	3
13	The more praise I give a student, the happier he/she is.	-1	0	2	3	2
14	I practice praising all students in my classroom.	-2*	2	0*	4	2
15	I believe even exaggerated praise is effective.	-3	-5*	-4	0	-1
16	Praise stifles students' intrinsic motivation.	-3	5**	-3	-4	-5
17	I give students informative feedback rather than praising them.	0	3	3	-2**	1
18	Sometimes praise results in negative effects.	-2	4*	1*	-1	-1
19	I worry about negative effects of my praise.	-2	3**	-2	-2	-2
20	I am careful when praising students.	-2*	0	1	0	3
21	I use one basic teaching method because I have found that most students have a similar style of learning.	-4	-2	0	-3	-2
22	I use methods that foster quiet, productive desk work.	-3	1**	-5	-4	-2
23	I help students diagnose the gaps between their goals and their present level of performance.	1	0	4**	-1	1
24	I have individual conferences to help students identify their educational needs.	0	1	2	-3**	4*
25	I encourage dialogue among my students.	3	1	3	2	4*
26	I utilize the many competencies that most students already possess to achieve educational objectives.	3	-1	3	-1	2
27	I arrange the classroom so that it is easy for students to interact.	2	0	-3**	0	2
28	I stick to the instructional objectives that I write at the beginning of a program.	1	2	0	0	0
29	I maintain a well-disciplined classroom to reduce interferences to learning.	2	3	-2	3	-3
30	I avoid discussion of controversial subjects that involve value judgments.	-3	-2	-2	-3	-1
31	I am very satisfied with my job as a teacher.	5	-3	-4	1**	3
32	If I had the opportunity to start over in a new career, I would not choose to become a teacher.	-5*	1*	4**	0*	-4*

TEACHERS' PRAISING TYPOLOGY

33	I perform a vital function in society as a teacher.	5**	-2	0	-2	-1
34	I praise students more frequently than other teachers do.	-1*	1	-3**	3*	1
35	I know the negative effects of praise.	-1	4**	-1	-2	0
36	I am good at recognizing students' behavioral changes.	2	2	1	1	3
37	I am good at finding students' strengths.	1	5	1	1	4
38	It is easy for me to find appropriate timing to praise students in the classroom.	2	0	0	2	1
39	I have a big repertoire of praise statements.	-1	-1	-1	-1	0
40	I am confident with controlling disruptive behavior in the classroom.	3*	-2	-1	1	-1
41	To be honest, I am still not good at establishing a successful classroom management system.	-4	-3	2**	-4	-3
42	I established routines well to keep activities running smoothly in my class.	4**	-1	-1	0	1*
43	It is hard for me to adjust my lessons to the proper level for individual students.	-2	-4**	5**	0	-2
44	I use a variety of assessment strategies to gauge my students' learning.	4*	-1	3	1	0
45	I cannot wait for this year to be over so that I will not need to teach these students next year.	-5	-4	-4	-3*	-5
46	Many of my students turn to me for a listening ear or for sympathy.	2**	-1	-2	-1	5**
47	I have a warm and trusting relationship with my students.	4	2	0	4	5*

Note. \*( $p < .05$ ), \*\*( $p < .01$ ) denote distinguishing statements for each type. Statements 8 and 38 are consensus statements that are not significant ( $p > .01$ ) in any of the factors.

Table 3.

*Type 1. Proud Hedonistic Praisers Theoretical Sort*

No.	Q Statements	Ranking
<i><u>Proud teacher: Strong satisfaction regarding job and their role as a teacher in society</u></i>		
33	I perform a vital function in society as a teacher.	5**
31	I am very satisfied with my job as a teacher.	5
32	If I had the opportunity to start over in a new career, I would not choose to become a teacher.	-5*
45	I cannot wait for this year to be over so that I will not need to teach these students next year.	-5
<i><u>Confident teacher: Strong teacher efficacy</u></i>		
42	I established routines well to keep activities running smoothly in my class.	4**
44	I use a variety of assessment strategies to gauge my students' learning.	4*
40	I am confident with controlling disruptive behavior in the classroom.	3*
21	I use one basic teaching method because I have found that most students have a similar style of learning.	-4
41	To be honest, I am still not good at establishing a successful classroom management system.	-4
<i><u>Praising and relationship with students</u></i>		
6	I usually praise excellent performance.	3**
8	I believe praise spoils students.	-4
16	Praise stifles students' intrinsic motivation.	-3
20	I am careful when praising students.	-2*
14	I practice praising all students in my classroom.	-2*
47	I have a warm and trusting relationship with my students.	4
25	I encourage dialogue among my students.	3
46	Many of my students turn to me for a listening ear or for sympathy.	2**

Note. \*( $p < .05$ ), \*\*( $p < .01$ ) denote distinguishing statements for this type.



Table 4.

*Type 2. Humanistic Praisers Theoretical Sort*

No.	Q Statements	Ranking
<i>Concerns of the negative effects of praising</i>		
16	Praise stifles students' intrinsic motivation.	5**
35	I know the negative effects of praise.	4**
15	I believe even exaggerated praise is effective.	-5*
18	Sometimes praise results in negative effects.	4*
19	I worry about negative effects of my praise.	3**
6	I usually praise excellent performance.	-4**
12	I praise students to emphasize their own strength.	4
1	I often praise students with clear intentions.	3
7	I usually praise a student only when he/she has achieved academic progress.	-5*
8	I believe praise spoils students.	2**
5	I usually praise students to modify problem behaviors.	-3
10	I praise the behaviors which satisfy my expectation or standard.	-3
17	I give students informative feedback rather than praising them.	3
<i>Teaching method and relationship with students</i>		
37	I am good at finding students' strengths.	5
43	It is hard for me to adjust my lessons to the proper level for individual students.	-4**
45	I cannot wait for this year to be over so that I will not need to teach these students next year.	-4
29	I maintain a well-disciplined classroom to reduce interferences to learning.	3
41	To be honest, I am still not good at establishing a successful classroom management system.	-3
36	I am good at recognizing students' behavioral changes.	2
47	I have a warm and trusting relationship with my students.	2
<i>Job satisfaction and pride</i>		
31	I am very satisfied with my job as a teacher.	-3
33	I perform a vital function in society as a teacher.	-2

Note. \*( $p < .05$ ), \*\*( $p < .01$ ) denote distinguishing statements for this type.

Table 5.

*Type 3. Authoritarian Behaviorists Theoretical Sort*

No.	Q Statements	Ranking
<i>Orientation and intention of praise:</i>		
<i>Criticism, control, and relationship with students</i>		
9	I use criticism as well as praise to increase students' achievement.	5**
23	I help students diagnose the gaps between their goals and their present level of performance.	4**
12	I praise students to emphasize their own strength.	4
34	I praise students more frequently than other teachers do.	-3**
17	I give students informative feedback rather than praising them.	3
16	Praise stifles students' intrinsic motivation.	-3
14	I practice praising all students in my classroom.	0*
1	I often praise students with clear intentions.	2
2	I believe praise is helpful for managing my classroom.	2
46	Many of my students turn to me for a listening ear or for sympathy.	-2
<i>Teaching practices</i>		
43	It is hard for me to adjust my lessons to the proper level for individual students.	5**
44	I use a variety of assessment strategies to gauge my students' learning.	3
41	To be honest, I am still not good at establishing a successful classroom management system.	2**
27	I arrange the classroom so that it is easy for students to interact.	-3**
29	I maintain a well-disciplined classroom to reduce interferences to learning.	-2
<i>Job contentment</i>		
32	If I had the opportunity to start over in a new career, I would not choose to become a teacher.	4**
31	I am very satisfied with my job as a teacher.	-4
45	I cannot wait for this year to be over so that I will not need to teach these students next year.	-4

Note. \*( $p < .05$ ), \*\*( $p < .01$ ) denote distinguishing statements for this type.

Table 6.

*Type 4. Hedonistic Behaviorist Praisers Theoretical Sort*

No.	Q Statements	Ranking
<i>Intention of praise: classroom management and positive encouragement</i>		
11	Every student likes receiving praise.	5**
1	I often praise students with clear intentions.	5
5	I usually praise students to modify problem behaviors.	4**
14	I practice praising all students in my classroom.	4
8	I believe praise spoils students.	-5
16	Praise stifles students' intrinsic motivation.	-4
34	I praise students more frequently than other teachers do.	3*
13	The more praise I give to a student, the happier he/she is.	3
2	I believe praise is helpful for managing my classroom.	3
4	I often use praise to decrease students' negative behavior.	2**
17	I give students informative feedback rather than praising them.	-2**
3	If I praise more, then students perform better.	2
38	It is easy for me to find appropriate timing to praise students in the classroom.	2
<i>Teaching method</i>		
29	I maintain a well-disciplined classroom to reduce interferences to learning.	3
24	I have individual conferences to help students identify their educational needs.	-3**
22	I use methods that foster quiet, productive desk work.	-4
41	To be honest, I am still not good at establishing a successful classroom management system.	-4
21	I use one basic teaching method because I have found that most students have a similar style of learning.	-3
<i>Relationship with students</i>		
47	I have a warm and trusting relationship with my students.	4
25	I encourage dialogue among my students.	2
<i>Job contentment</i>		
45	I cannot wait for this year to be over so that I will not need to teach these students next year.	-3*
31	I am very satisfied with my job as a teacher.	1**
32	If I had the opportunity to start over in a new career, I would not choose to become a teacher.	0*
33	I perform a vital function in society as a teacher.	-2

Note. \*( $p < .05$ ), \*\*( $p < .01$ ) denote distinguishing statements for this type.

Table 7.

*Type 5. Student-Centered Hedonistic Praisers Theoretical Sort*

No.	Q Statements	Ranking
<i>Student-centered praising</i>		
46	Many of my students turn to me for a listening ear or for sympathy.	5**
47	I have a warm and trusting relationship with my students.	5*
24	I have individual conferences to help students identify their educational needs.	4*
25	I encourage dialogue among my students.	4*
37	I am good at finding students' strengths.	4
16	Praise stifles students' intrinsic motivation.	-5
7	I usually praise a student only when he/she has achieved academic progress.	-4
8	I believe praise spoils students.	-4
20	I am careful when praising students.	3
12	I praise students to emphasize their own strength.	3
36	I am good at recognizing students' behavioral changes.	3
10	I praise the behaviors which satisfy my expectation or standard.	-3
13	The more praise I give to a student, the happier he/she is.	2
14	I practice praising all students in my classroom.	2
<i>Job satisfaction</i>		
45	I cannot wait for this year to be over so that I will not need to teach these students next year.	-5
32	If I had the opportunity to start over in a new career, I would not choose to become a teacher.	-4*
31	I am very satisfied with my job as a teacher.	3
<i>Teaching method</i>		
29	I maintain a well-disciplined classroom to reduce interferences to learning.	-3
26	I utilize the many competencies that most students already possess to achieve educational objectives.	2
27	I arrange the classroom so that it is easy for students to interact.	2
42	I established routines well to keep activities running smoothly in my class.	1*

Note. \*( $p < .05$ ), \*\*( $p < .01$ ) denote distinguishing statements for this type.