

Prevalence of Emotional Reactions Found in SAT Score Release Threads: A Content Analysis on Reddit

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Introduction

- Standardized tests such as the SAT cause enormous levels of stress – cortisol levels rise an average of 15% – as the score is perceived as a significant factor in the college application process
- 1.9 million students in the class of 2023 took the SAT at least once
- The SAT subreddit has 500K members and is a top 1% subreddit ranked by size
- It remains unknown what, if any, emotional responses are being discussed in response to SAT scores on Reddit

The purpose of this study is to examine themes surrounding adolescent emotional well-being within the "Official 2024 US SAT Score Release Discussion Threads" on the SAT subreddit.

Methods

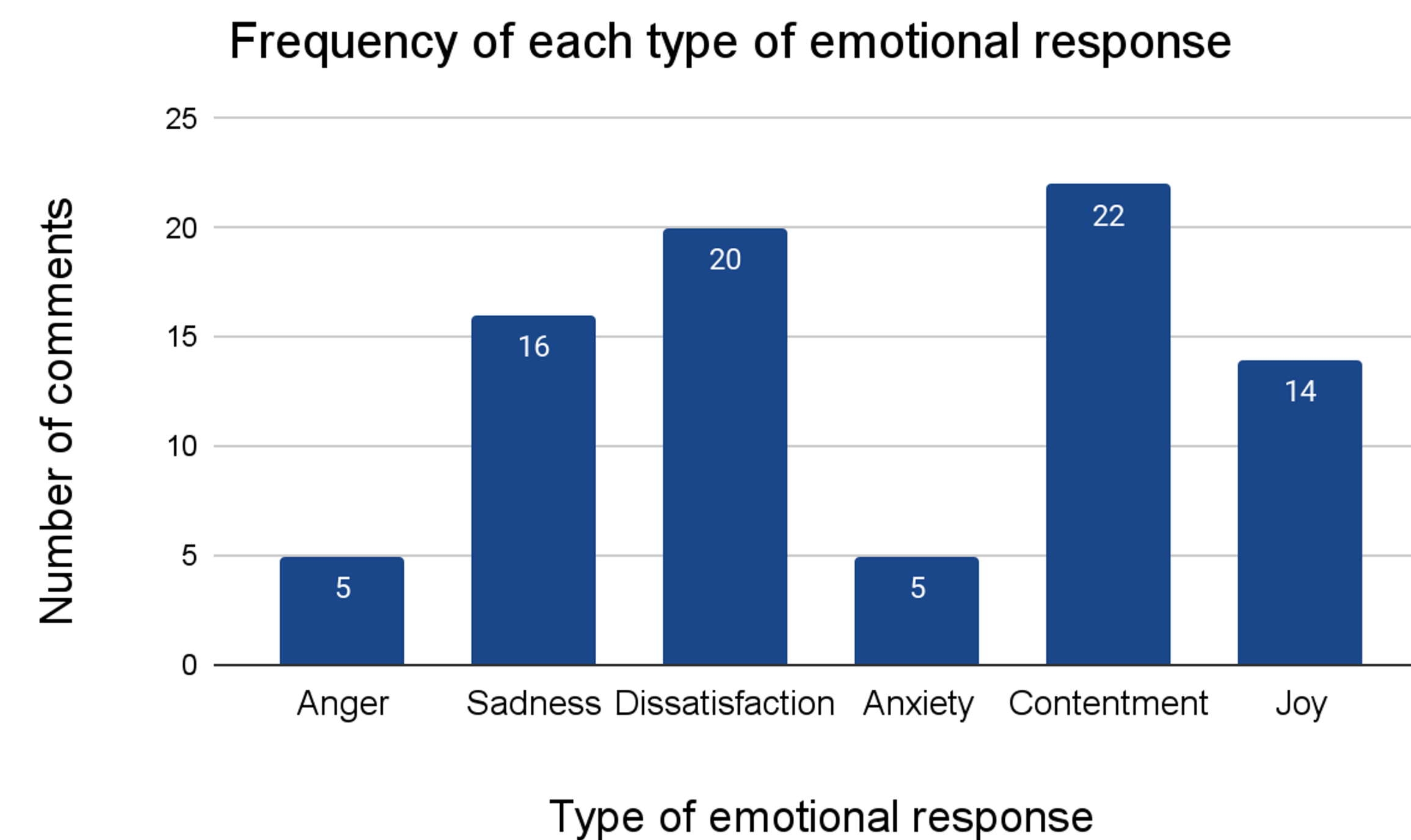
- Design:** Content analysis on comments of four "Official 2024 US SAT Score Release Discussion Threads" posts
- Data Collection:**
 - 25 comments were chosen from each post for a total of 100 comments
 - Comments were sorted by "new" and every third comment was selected that met inclusion criteria
 - Contained text and longer than one sentence
 - Comments were excluded if they only contained emojis
 - Each comment was coded for a specific type of emotional reaction (not mutually exclusive)

Variables	Definitions	Emojis
Feelings of anger	A comment that references feelings of bitterness, irritation, and annoyance about one's score	😡😠😤😡
Feelings of sadness	A comment that references feelings of depression, regret, and misery about one's score	😞😓😭😞
Feelings of dissatisfaction	A comment that references feelings of failed expectations and a sense of disappointment about score	😞
Feelings of anxiety	A comment that makes a reference to constant worries about their potential score, or a comment that references worries about what the next steps are after receiving a score	😟😓😞
Feelings of contentment	A comment in which the writer is satisfied with their score or accepts their score	😊
Feelings of joy	A comment that references feelings of enthusiasm and pleasure about score	😄😁😂😄

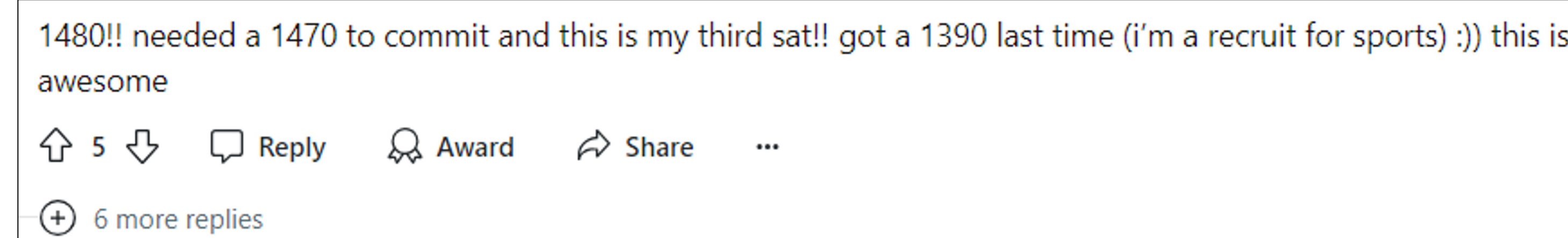
- Data Analysis:** Descriptive statistics were used to determine which emotional reactions were most prevalent and received the most engagement

Results

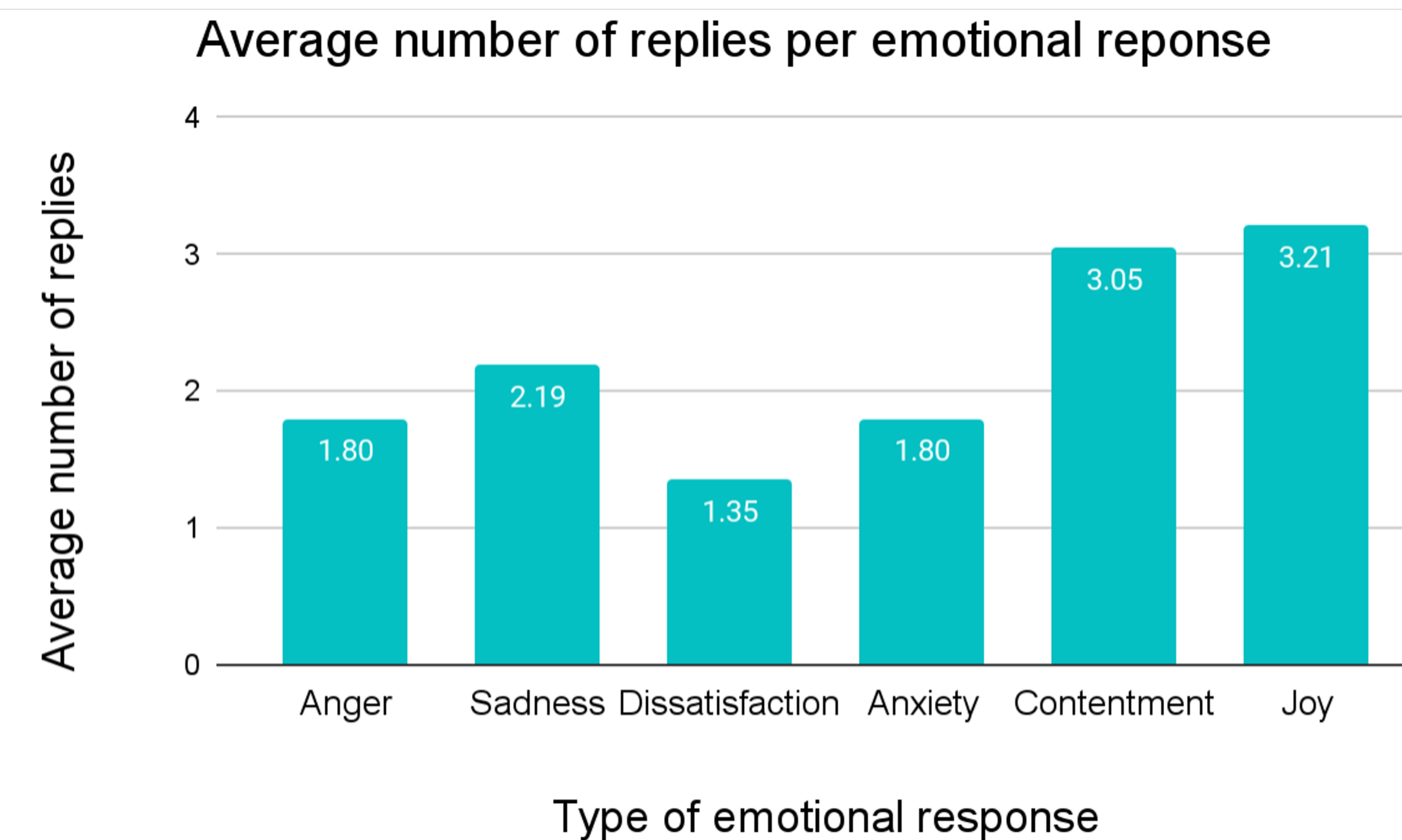
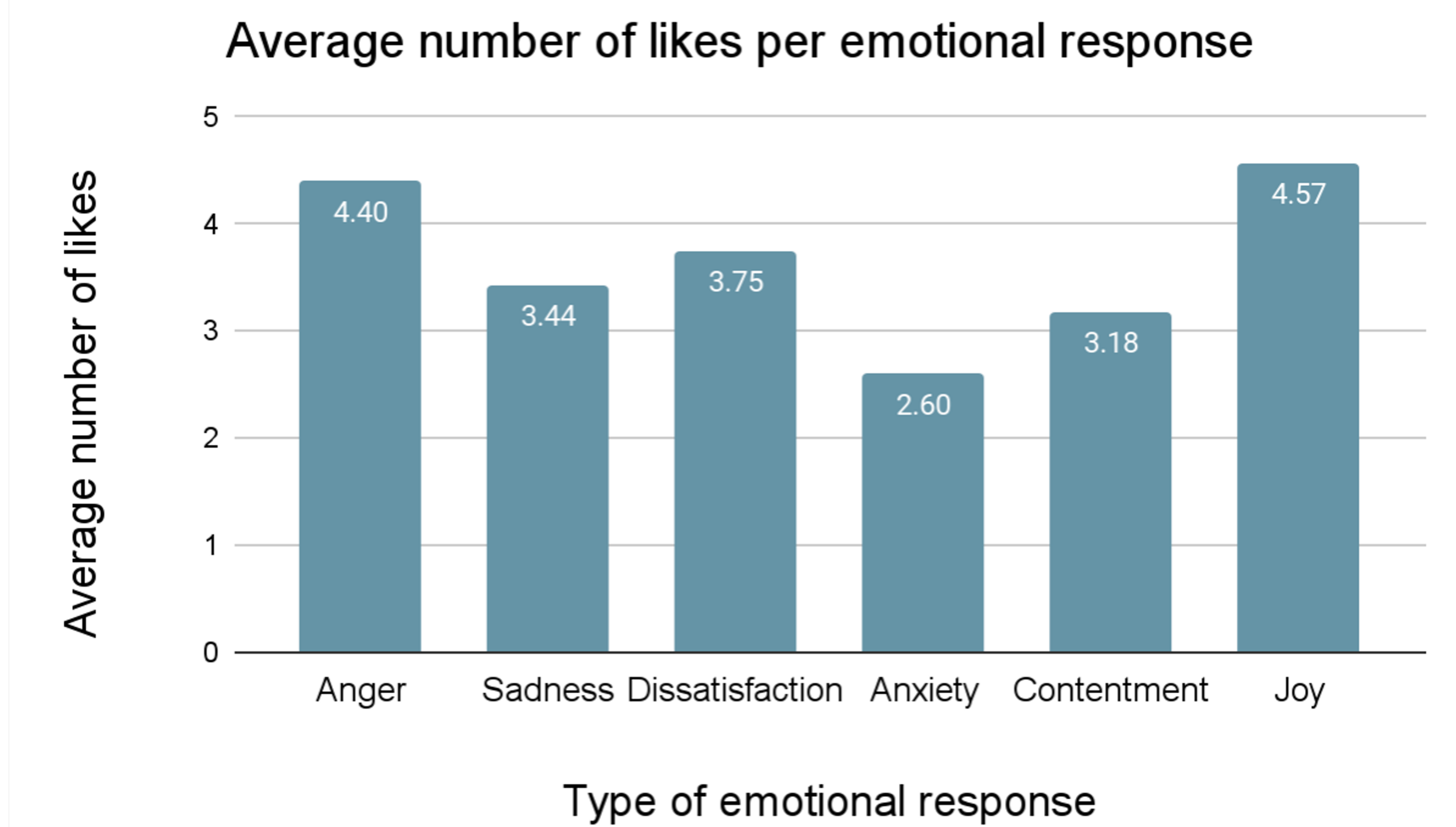
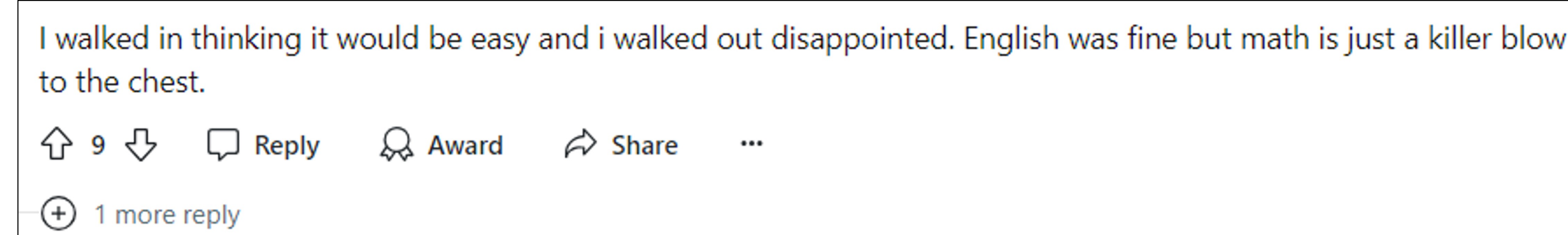
N=100 comments
n=68 comments that displayed emotional response



Comment that displays Contentment & Joy



Comment that displays Dissatisfaction & Sadness



Conclusions

Main Findings

- Feelings of **contentment** were the most prevalent emotional response.
- Feelings of **joy** had the highest average number of likes and shares (most engagement)
- More than ¼ of comments referenced no emotion

Limitations

- Text responses lack tone and body language which are key indicators of emotion
- Users on Reddit are a self selected group and do not represent the general high school population

Implications

- Findings suggest that people like to share and interact with success stories about taking standardized tests
- SAT Subreddit thread seem to not be as receptive towards those expressing negative emotion about their SAT score
- Those who have negative feelings about their SAT test scores may be less likely to share them on the SAT subreddit

Future Directions

- Explore whether posting a reaction to receiving one's SAT score on Reddit improves emotional well-being compared to those who do not post
- Survey adolescents to find out where they receive the most emotional support after receiving a SAT score



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