Effects of Popularity and Outcome Dependency on Impression Formation in Children
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Peer Relations in Children

- Peer interactions affect
  - How children interact with each other and their popularity with their peers
  - Self esteem (Ladd & Troop-Gordon, 2003)
  - Outcomes later in life (Pelham & Bucser, 1982; as cited in Krehbiel & Milich, 1986)
- Peer status (Dodge, 1983; as cited in Krehbiel & Milich, 1986)

Peer Rejection

- Rejected children have
  - More aggressive acts towards their peers (Dodge, 1982; as cited in Krehbiel & Milich, 1986)
  - Worse outcomes later in life (Parker et al., 1995; as cited in Bierman, 2004).
- Rejected status is stable into high school. (Coe & Dodge, 1983; Coie & Kupersmidt, 1993; as cited in Krehbiel & Milich, 1986)

Impression Formation

- There are 2 styles of cognitive processes for impression formation: (Neuberg & Fiske, 1987)
  - Categorical Based
    - Use pre-existing schemas for that category
  - Attribute Based
    - Use the unique qualities of the individual

Outcome Dependency

- In outcome independent situations
  - Efficiency is the goal
  - More attention is given to consistent information
- In outcome dependent situations
  - Accuracy is the goal
  - Attention is given to both consistent and inconsistent information

Summary of Study

- Manipulations
  - Outcome dependency x popularity

(Neuberg & Fiske, 1987; Erber & Fiske, 1984; Fiske, 1993)
Methods

• 44 children ages 7 to 12 (mean= 9 years 9 months, SD= 14.52)
  – 19 boys, 23 girls
• 4 participants were excluded from the study because of suspicion
• 1 participant was excluded because of difficulty reading
• Recruited through word of mouth & a newspaper advertisement

Methods

• All participants were assigned randomly to
  – Outcome dependency: Dependent vs. independent on partner
  – Popularity of their partner: Popular vs. unpopular

Methods

• Partner
• Self-Description form & cards
• Read partner self-description
• Read partner’s note cards
• Ratings
• Free Recall

Methods

• Timing
• Timing data
• Recall

Methods

• Paid $15
• Debriefed

Hypotheses

• Main effects of popularity
• Main effects of outcome dependency
Hypotheses

- Main effects of age
- Interactions: dependency x popularity

Previous Research

- Previous research on 124 students at Wofford College
- Results:
  - Participants rated popular partners more positively
  - Unpopular partners were rated more positively in the outcome dependent condition
  - Participants in the unpopular dependent condition recalled less unpopular information (McAninch, Downs, Ramsey, & Wise, 2003)

Inter-rater reliability

Spearman Brown prophecy formula
- total recall $r = .98$
- popular recall $r = .97$
- unpopular recall $r = .98$
- total errors $r = .86$
- popular errors $r = .74$
- unpopular errors $r = .68$
- total intrusions $r = .93$
- popular intrusions $r = .94$
- unpopular intrusions $r = .88$
  Unaware of condition

Results

- Significant main effects:
  - $F [1, 38] = 4.116, p<.05, \eta^2 = .099$ for the expectancy of popularity on the time it took to read unpopular cards
  - $F [1, 35] = 20.866, p<.05, \eta^2 = .374$ for the of expectancy of popularity on partner’s popularity ratings
  - $F [1, 35] = 8.543, p<.05, \eta^2 = .196$ for the expectancy of popularity on the amount of items recalled describing the partner as popular

Discussion

- Expectations of popular partner led to longer reading times for unpopular information
- Expectations of popular partner led to more popular ratings of partner
- Expectations of popular partner led to more popular items recalled

Limitations of this Study

- Small sample size reduced power
- Popularity level of participant was not assessed
- Some of the words were hard for participants to comprehend
Directions for Future Research

• Study true child interactions with actual partners
• Repeat with more subjects

Applications of this Study

• Intervention program for socially rejected children

References