

## 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 & Bucler, 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. (Coie & 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

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

## Summary of Study

- Manipulations
  - Outcome dependency x popularity

## 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

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