"The Effects of Popularity and Outcome Dependency on Impression Formation in Children"

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Background Information

- Peers view unpopular children in a consistent negative manner, even though these children have both positive and negative qualities.
- Impressions form and influence expectancies within social interactions (Neuberg, 1989).
- Why, then, do these impressions remain consistent?

Background Information

- There are two theories:
  - People ignore inconsistent information.
  - People change the meaning of inconsistent information.
- How are impressions affected by the demands of social interaction?

Erber & Fiske (1984)

- Erber & Fiske looked at the effect of task dependency on peer impression formation.
- Inconsistent information was attended to and commented on more often for dependent tasks.
  - Attributed to a desire for a better understanding of partner.

LaFontana & Cillessen (2002)

- LaFontana & Cillessen examined the way popularity is defined in terms of school aged children.
  - Popularity for school aged children is in terms of social competence; popularity for adolescence is based on "social hierarchy".
  - Popular children should be more likely to succeed on a group task compared to unpopular children

Salley, et al., (2010)

- How people think about themselves influences how they think about others.
- Salley, et al. examined how children form impressions about themselves.
- Children form self-perceptions based on social ability.

The Current Study

Reasons for Conducting Study	Goal of Our Study
• Labeling a child increases the likelihood for stigmatization (Milich & McAninch, 1992). • Peer rejection can predict a variety of educational outcomes and maladjustment (Ladd, et al., 1998).	• The aim of our study is to examine the effect of expectancy, dependency and self-perceptions on impression formation in children.

Hypotheses

- The dependent condition should result in:
  - Longer time reading inconsistent information,
  - More information recalled,
  - Increase in partner ratings.
- The popular condition should result in an increase in peer ratings.
- Congruent information should result in:
  - Decrease in time reading consistent information,
  - Decrease time on rating scale.

Subjects

Subjects	Recruitment
• 56 children recruited over 2 years. • Ages 7-12 • 20 males and 36 female	• Word of mouth, emails, advertisements, and printed flyers. • Paid participants $15.

Conditions

Popular vs. Unpopular	Dependent vs. Independent
• Supposed partners were either: • Popular and well-liked amongst peers. • Unpopular and not well-liked amongst peers.	• Task was to be: • Completed with aid from the partner. • Completed separately from the partner.

Procedure

Consent and Assent Forms
Task – dependence vs. independence
Self-Description and notecards:
    Likert scale
    4 popular and 4 unpopular keywords
    popularity vs. unpopularity
Partner rating scale
    - 4 composites (all r's $\geq$ .94)
Partner free recall form
    - popular & unpopular items (r's = .97 & .96)
    - popular & unpopular errors
    - popular & unpopular intrusions (r's = .96 & .99)
Timing

Results

T-tests & ANOVAs

IVs:
Popular vs. Unpopular
Dependent on vs. Independent of Partner
Self-concept

DVs:
Partner Ratings
Partner Recall
Timing

Hypotheses: Dependency

- Participants in dependent condition:
  - Recall more information & more positive information
  - More positive partner ratings
  - Spend more time reading their partner's self description and completing the partner ratings and free recall
  - Spend more time reading inconsistent information about partner

- There was no main effect of dependency

Hypotheses: Popularity

- Popular condition: recall more popular items
  - Main effect: pop ($M = 2.16$), unpopular ($M = 1.25$)

- Unpopular condition: recall more unpopular items
  - No main effect but approaches significance: pop ($M = 1.52$), unpopular ($M = 1.94$)

- Popular condition: assign higher popularity ratings
  - Main effect: pop ($M = 6.73$), unpopular ($M = 4.38$)

Hypotheses: Popularity Cont.

- Unpopular and dependent condition:
  - Recall more positive information and total recall
  - Spend longest amount of time to read partner's information and complete ratings and recall

- Unpopular and independent condition:
  - Recall the least amount of positive information and total recall

- No interactions were found which supported these hypotheses

Hypotheses: Self-Concept

- Participants with self-concepts that were similar to the expectations about their partners:
  - Read the partner self-description and cards faster than would participants who viewed themselves as different from partner
  - Effect was expected to be heightened for consistent information

  - No effect of self-description on timing data was found

Discussion

- **Main Effect:** Participants in popular condition recalled more popular items on free recall.
- **Main Effect:** Participants in the popular condition: higher popularity ratings for partners.

- Socialization
- Practical application

Limitations of Study

- Number of participants
  - Lower power
- Limited external validity
  - Socioeconomic status
  - Age
- Unpopular measures on self-description

Future Directions for Research

- Previous results of McAninch et al. (2003)
- Rewrite self-description
- Likert scale on popularity
  - 1-3 = unpopular
  - 4-6 = intermediate
  - 7-9 = popular
- Future: participant rate selves on popularity

Future Directions for Research

- Schematicity
- Importance of being popular to participant
- Measuring schematicity before reading partner information.
- Participant measure of popularity vs. researcher measuring popularity.

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LOVE,
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