

Peer relations in primary class children : A comparison of peer nomination and peer ratings

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ABSTRACT

One hundred children from Hisar city were assessed for sociometric status. The results revealed that the popular children scored significantly higher positive nominations and positive ratings than the rejected children. In contrast, the rejected children scored significantly higher negative nominations and negative ratings than the popular children. Test-retest reliability of rating scale measure was found to be very high than for nomination measure

Key words : Peer relation, Peer rating, Sociometric status

Sociometric techniques are the measures of interpersonal attraction among the members of a specified group. When applied to children, it provides an evaluation of a child's peer relations from the perspective of peers themselves. Sociometric assessments also show relatively good temporal stability (Coie and Dodge, 1983). A further advantage of the sociometric approach is that status is correlated with other indices of adjustment, both concurrently and predictive (Parker and Asher, 1987; Parker *et al.*, 1995). There is considerable evidence that peer rejection is associated with later difficulties such as delinquency and school drop out; however, there is less evidence that childhood popularity predicts later success.

Three major types of sociometric measures are nomination, paired comparison, and peer rating scale. The nomination method is the traditional and most commonly used method. In this method, children are asked to identify a number of peers (usually three) according to some specified interpersonal criteria. Both positive and negative criteria have been used. For example, "Name three classmates you like very much" versus "Name three classmates you don't like at all". In the paired-comparison technique, a child is presented, in turn, with all possible pairs of peers within the group under consideration. For each pair, the child is asked to state a preference for one or the other peer according to some interpersonal criteria, for example, "Which one would you most like to play with?" Positive or negative interpersonal criteria can be used. The third sociometric procedure, the rating scale measure, requires each child to rate each peer on a Likert-type scale according to some interpersonal criteria, for

example, "How much do you like to play with this child at school"

The main objectives of this study are to identify popular and rejected children in a classroom and to compare the positive nomination and negative nomination scores, positive rating and negative rating scores of popular and rejected children.

METHODOLOGY

Sample:

One hundred 8-9 year old children enrolled from Hisar city were assessed for sociometric status. Later, 16 boys and 16 girls, each 8 popular and 8 rejected, were selected, on the basis of the nomination results, matched on age, sex and grade.

Procedure:

The sociometric status of children was assessed with the help of rating scale and nomination method. At the beginning of the study, photograph of each child was taken individually against a standard background. Photograph of each child in a particular class was presented individually to each class member by the researcher, and he/she was asked to name each child. Photographs were used to overcome any potential memory problems that might occur by relying on names only (Asher *et al.*, 1979; Cassidy and Asher, 1992; Negi and Balda, 2002). The same-sex sociometric scores were computed for each child.

Peer ratings:

All children in the classroom were shown the