A study of the relationship among and between peer approval, teacher approval and academic achievement in the elementary school

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A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG AND BETWEEN PEER APPROVAL, TEACHER APPROVAL AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

AN ABSTRACT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF SPECIALIST IN EDUCATION

BY
CYNTHIA JUWAN RANDALL SLOAN

ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
ATLANTA, GEORGIA
MAY 1981
ABSTRACT

Purpose

The purpose of this study were: 1) to determine if there was a relationship between peer approval and teacher approval or disapproval; 2) to determine if there was a correlation between peer approval and average achievement in reading and mathematics; and 3) to determine if there was a correlation between teacher approval and average achievement in reading and mathematics.

Subjects

There were 126 respondents from the seven elementary schools selected for the study. Of the 126 subjects, seventy-eight were male and forty-eight were female. There were twelve Caucasians, 113 Blacks and one Hispanic. All of the subjects were in the third grade and from lower to upper middle socioeconomic levels.

Method

Three instruments were employed in this study:

1. The Personal structured interviews. The first four questions gave a rating for peer approval, the second four for teacher disapproval and the last four for teacher approval.

2. The California Achievement Test (CAT). The CAT combines the uses of norm-referenced tests with the objectives-based information of criterion-referenced tests.

-1-
3. The Pearson Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation was used to determine if there were significant relationships between peer approval, teacher approval or disapproval and average achievement. Significant r-values were denoted at the .05 and .01 levels of confidence.

Findings

The analysis of data warranted the following findings:

1. When peer approval and teacher approval were correlated, the data indicated a correlation of .882 for school "A", .757 for school "E", and .458 for school "F"; all of which were significant at the .05 level. It also indicated a correlation of .799 for school "C" and .750 for school "G" which were significant at the .01 level. However, the findings were insignificant when peer approval and teacher approval were correlated for school "B" .376 and school "D" .508.

2. When peer approval and teacher disapproval were correlated, the data indicated a correlation of .515 for school "B" which is significant at the .01 level and .640 for school "D" which is significant at the .05 level. However, when peer approval and teacher disapproval were correlated for the following schools, the findings were: school "A" .040, school "C" .127, school "E" .624, school "F" .359, and school "G" .238.

3. When peer approval and average achievement were correlated, the data indicated a correlation of .613 for school "C" which is significant at the .01 level and .464 for school "F" which is significant at the .05 level. However, when peer approval and average achievement were correlated for the following schools, the findings were: school "A" .388, school "B" .043, school "D" .157, school "E" .655, and school "G" .371.

4. When teacher approval and average achievement were correlated, the data indicated a correlation of .429 for school "A", .726 for school "C", .990 for school "E" and .583 for school "F"; all of which were significant at the .01 level. However, when teacher approval and average achievement were correlated for the following schools, the findings were: school "B" correlated .299, school "D" correlated .157, and school "G" correlated .263.
Conclusions

The analysis and interpretation of the data seem to warrant the following conclusions:

1. There is generally a statistical significant relationship between peer approval and teacher approval.

2. There is generally a statistical significant relationship between and among peer approval and achievement and teacher approval and achievement.

3. There is a statistical significant relationship between teacher approval and average achievement.

4. There is an insignificant or negligible relationship between peer approval and teacher disapproval in all schools, except "B" and "D".

5. Students with low achievement levels were approved of less often than those students on or above the achievement level of their peers.

6. Isolates were those students with lowest achievement levels.

7. Those who were approved of by their teachers were also approved of by their peers.

8. Those students who were approved of most often by their teacher and peers were above grade level.

Implications

The conclusions of this study seem to warrant the following implications:

1. It appears that teachers emit more approval for those students on or above grade level.

2. It appears that students approve of more often those students that are approved of by their teacher.

3. It appears that factors other than achievement are involved in the approval process, i.e., appearance, attitude, socioeconomic background and values.

4. It is apparent that teacher approval greatly influences peer approval regardless of achievement or socioeconomic background.
Recommendations

It is the belief of the writer that the findings of this study warrant the following recommendations:

1. That more research in the area of peer approval, teacher approval and their relationship to academic achievement be conducted.

2. That teacher training institutions and universities include in their curriculum courses of study that will prepare teachers to meet each student's individual need for approval and acceptance.

3. That teachers use sociometric techniques in the classroom to become cognizant of isolates.

4. That teachers use results from sociometric instruments to create a classroom atmosphere which would improve peer status within groups, thus improving the opinion of students toward each other.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION ......................................................... iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................. v
LIST OF TABLES ..................................................... vi

Chapter
I. INTRODUCTION .................................................. 1
   Statement of the Problem ....................................... 2
   Purpose of the Study ........................................... 2
   Limitation of the Study ....................................... 3
   Method of Research ........................................... 3
   Description of Subjects ....................................... 4
   Locale of the Study ........................................... 4
   Operational Steps ............................................. 5

II. SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE ............................. 6

Summary of Related Literature ................................. 16

III. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA ... 18

Introductory Statement ......................................... 18
School A's Distribution of Peer Approval (PA) ratings, Teacher Approval (TA) ratings, Teacher Disapproval (TD) ratings, Reading Achievement (RA), Math Achievement (MA), and Average Achievement (AA) ........................................ 19
School B's Distribution of Peer Approval (PA) ratings, Teacher Approval (TA) ratings, Teacher Disapproval (TD) ratings, Reading Achievement (RA), Math Achievement (MA), and Average Achievement (AA) ........................................ 20
School C's Distribution of Peer Approval (PA) ratings, Teacher Approval (TA) ratings, Teacher Disapproval (TD) ratings, Reading Achievement (RA), Math Achievement (MA) and Average Achievement (AA) ........................................ 22
School D's Distribution of Peer Approval (PA) ratings, Teacher Approval (TA) ratings, Teacher Disapproval (TD) ratings, Reading Achievement (RA), Math Achievement (MA), and Average Achievement (AA) ........................................ 23
TABLE OF CONTENTS--Continued

School E's Distribution of Peer Approval (PA) ratings, Teacher Approval (TA) ratings, Teacher Disapproval (TD) ratings, Reading Achievement (RA), Math Achievement (MA), and Average Achievement (AA) ..................... 24

School F's Distribution of Peer Approval (PA) ratings, Teacher Approval (TA) ratings, Teacher Disapproval (TD) ratings, Reading Achievement (RA), Math Achievement (MA), and Average Achievement (AA) ..................... 25

School G's Distribution of Peer Approval (PA) ratings, Teacher Approval (TA) ratings, Teacher Disapproval (TD) ratings, Reading Achievement (RA), Math Achievement (MA), and Average Achievement (AA) ..................... 26

Summary of Findings ........................................... 28

IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .......................... 30

Statement ...................................................... 30
Recapitulation of Research Design ................................ 30
Criterion of Validity ........................................... 31
Procedure ....................................................... 31
Summary of Related Literature .................................. 32
Summary of Findings ............................................. 33
Conclusions ..................................................... 35
Implications ..................................................... 35
Recommendations ................................................ 36

APPENDIX ......................................................... 37

BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................. 42
DEDICATION

To My Beloved Family

My Husband, Larry

My Sons, Larry Jr. And Laynon

My Mother, Beverly, My Grandmother, Isabell

And A Truly Supportive Friend, Vera

For

Their Kindness, Devotion, Inspiration

And Encouragement

-- C.J.R.S.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with sincere appreciation that I acknowledge the assistance which I have received from all the generous people who helped me in the preparation of this research project.

I am indeed grateful for the cooperation of the students and the parents, principals, and teachers of the students who were enrolled in the seven elementary schools.

I am deeply appreciative to Dr. Samuel Silverstein, retired professor, School of Education, Atlanta University, Drs. Anna Atkinson, Damaris Ouzts, and Robert Smothers of the School of Education, Atlanta University, for their valuable assistance and continued encouragement.
LIST OF TABLES

1. School A's Distribution of Peer Approval (PA) ratings, Teacher Approval (TA) ratings, Teacher Disapproval (TD) ratings, Reading Achievement (RA), Math Achievement (MA) and Average Achievement (AA) ........... 19
2. School B's Distribution of Peer Approval (PA) ratings, Teacher Approval (TA) ratings, Teacher Disapproval (TD) ratings, Reading Achievement (RA), Math Achievement (MA) and Average Achievement (AA) ........... 20
3. School C's Distribution of Peer Approval (PA) ratings, Teacher Approval (TA) ratings, Teacher Disapproval (TD) ratings, Reading Achievement (RA), Math Achievement (MA) and Average Achievement (AA) ........... 22
4. School D's Distribution of Peer Approval (PA) ratings, Teacher Approval (TA) ratings, Teacher Disapproval (TD) ratings, Reading Achievement (RA), Math Achievement (MA) and Average Achievement (AA) ........... 23
5. School E's Distribution of Peer Approval (PA) ratings, Teacher Approval (TA) ratings, Teacher Disapproval (TD) ratings, Reading Achievement (RA), Math Achievement (MA) and Average Achievement (AA) ........... 24
6. School F's Distribution of Peer Approval (PA) ratings, Teacher Approval (TA) ratings, Teacher Disapproval (TD) ratings, Reading Achievement (RA), Math Achievement (MA) and Average Achievement (AA) ........... 25
7. School G's Distribution of Peer Approval (PA) ratings, Teacher Approval (TA) ratings, Teacher Disapproval (TD) ratings, Reading Achievement (RA), Math Achievement (MA) and Average Achievement (AA) ........... 26
8. Summary of Findings ............... 28
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

From the time a child actively begins to notice and play with others he begins to show preferences among playmates. When a child first begins to play with his peers he is likely to limit much of his activity to a small number even if there are many in the group. As children move into the early elementary school grades this tendency continues, however, one aspect of increased social maturity is the ability of children to enter into working relationships with a larger number of children and with this goes wider possibilities for being accepted or rejected as a companion.

Research indicates that a child's social status in a group, as shown by the extent to which he is chosen, sought out, or ignored when others expressed their preferences, can be measured quite early in the elementary school period. After members of a group become acquainted, a given child is likely to maintain about the same status from year to year. In other words, the characteristics in a child about which peer judgments are made seem to remain consistent.

The fact that children tend to maintain a consistent status within a social group during the elementary school period may be due to many circumstances. From the writer's experience, appearance, race, ability, demeanor, and parental status, all have an impact on those circumstances which influence status within a group.
As an educator, the writer has constantly searched for methods of studying children's behavior which would include achievement. Several classroom observations have been made during the writer's teaching career. Among these were:

1. There appears to be a relationship between patterns of classroom interaction and children's achievement.
2. Those children who are brighter academically are chosen more often by their teachers and peers.
3. Those children who have behavior problems are chosen less often by their peers and teachers.
4. Most children strive for approval by their teachers and peers.

It was the sum total of these observations that the idea occurred to the writer to investigate this problem. This study is part of a longitudinal study conducted in the Atlanta Public School System.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between and among peer approval, teacher approval, and academic achievement in the elementary school.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between and among peer approval, teacher approval, and academic achievement in the elementary school.

The purposes of the study were:

1. To determine if there was a relationship between peer approval and teacher approval or disapproval.
2. To determine if there was a correlation between peer approval and average achievement in reading and mathematics.
3. To determine if there was a correlation between teacher approval and average achievement in reading and mathematics.

Limitation of the Study

This study was not designed to account for the many factors, either inside or outside of the classroom, which may have some bearing on the feelings and preferences of the pupils; nor will there be any attempt to determine the teacher's role nor the role of the classroom atmosphere as related to friendship choices.

The highly unstable attitudes of students may also be a limiting factor of the respondents.

The reader is further cautioned to refrain from over-generalizing from findings of this to a broader population.

This study is limited to presenting rather than explaining the patterns of choices as related to academic achievement.

Method of Research

The descriptive method of research was used in this study, employing the use of the personal interview. The interview questions were prepared by the writer. Personal interviews were conducted with third grade students in seven elementary schools in the Atlanta Public School System. The interview questions were designed to determine if there was a relationship between peer approval and teacher approval or disapproval and to determine if there was a correlation between peer approval and teacher approval and the average achievement in reading and mathematics. The first four questions gave a rating for peer
approval, the second four for teacher disapproval and the last four for teacher approval (see Appendix).

The instrument appears to serve the aforementioned purposes of the study. One source of validity for this type of instrument is "A Comparison of Three Methods of Measuring Pupil Status in the Classroom" by Joseph Justman and J. W. Wrightstone. Another source is the "Guess Who" type of instrument which correlates significantly with the Ohio Social Acceptance Scale.

The scores of the California Achievement Test for reading and mathematics were correlated with the interview questions used in the study.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the data. The Correlation Coefficient was to measure the extent of relationship between the variables.

Description of Subjects

There were 126 respondents from the seven elementary schools selected for the study. Of the 126 subjects, seventy-eight were male and forty-eight were female. There were twelve Caucasians, 113 Blacks and one Hispanic. All of the subjects were in the third grade and from lower to upper middle socioeconomic levels.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in seven selected elementary schools in the Atlanta Public School System.

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Operational Steps

The steps in the preparation of this study were as follows:

1. Review of the literature to gain insight into the problem.

2. Secured permission of school system to conduct study.

3. Available schools were assigned.

4. Parental permission of subjects in question was secured.

5. Personal interviews were conducted with subjects.

6. Data obtained from the interviews and California Achievement Test scores were organized and analyzed.
CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

Peer acceptance, teacher approval, and academic achievement are influenced by the society in which we live. Most often, those students who perform well academically, conform to rules and regulations, are accepted by their teachers and peers and are chosen for study partners, seat and play companions and classroom responsibilities.

Margaret Holcomb's study titled "Anxiety, Acceptance and Achievement in 7th Grade Children" focused on the relationship between a child's anxiety, peer acceptance, reading level, and overall school achievement as part of child development. Results show that anxiety does not relate significantly with other variables under examination with exception of age. However, peer acceptance does reflect a relationship with school achievement, reading level and socioeconomic level.¹

Marc Stephen Heller conducted a study of "Teacher Approval and Disapproval by Ability Grouping" which investigated teachers' use of verbal approval and disapproval as a function of subject matter and class ability. The use of these behaviors in instructional versus managerial context was studied. It was found that teachers emit more

¹Margaret Holcomb, "Anxiety, Acceptance and Achievement in 7th Grade Children," New York University, 1974.
disapproval in low ability groups and that these disapprovals are largely managerial.¹

Gary W. Ladd and Sherrie L. Oden investigated the relationship between children’s ideas about how to be helpful to peers and peer acceptance. Children’s unique or deviant ideas about helpfulness were found to be predictive of low sociometric ratings.²

In another study, "Classroom Status and Teacher Approval and Disapproval--Study of Children's Perception," Robert W. Herrman used an instrument designed to measure acceptance, competence, power, teacher approval and disapproval. In this study correlations between teacher approval and status were significant; however, those between disapproval and status were not.³

Cecil V. Millard, author of Child Growth and Development, points out that isolation tend to be the children at either extreme, chronologically, scholastically, mentally, and emotionally.⁴ The rejected children generally fall into three (3) main classifications: Children who are socially unaccepted, shy or passive, children with no significant expressed interests, and children who are more than normally rowdy, rebellious and boastful.⁵

⁵Ibid., p. 347.
Hamalainen stated that an objective of the elementary curriculum is to help children understand and show acceptance of each other. ¹ This supports the premise that there is a need to examine the relationship which children of elementary school age achieve acceptance by the peers and teachers.

Various studies were examined by Samuel Silverstein and described in his doctoral dissertation entitled "A Study of the Extent to Which Membership in Broad Range Classes in Elementary School Leads to Social Acceptance Across Ability Levels" indicates that social acceptability is associated with various factors, particularly those connected with mental ability. Silverstein found that intellectually superior children received proportionately more number one choices and more favorable scale ratings from each other and to their classmates of lesser mental ability than are the latter.² He also found that the intellectually superior children gave to each other proportionately as many rejections as they gave to their less gifted classmates but received fewer rejections from the total population than did their classmates of lesser mental ability; thus, the intellectually superior children did not reject their less gifted classmates any more than they rejected each other, whereas, the children of lesser mental ability rejected the intellectually superior children. Silverstein's final finding was that


there is no difference between the scale ratings expected by intellectually superior children, and those actually received, was rejected.¹

Pintner, Forlando and Freedman studied 819 children in grades 5-8 in three schools in New York City and one school in a small community in New York State. Each child indicated three best friends, ranking in order. The correlation coefficient was found to be higher for chronological age and mental age than for attitude and personality. The investigators concluded that "Physical maturity and to some extent, mental maturity are far more potent in influencing friendship than are the personality traits we have assumed we are measuring."²

Seagoe found that athletic ability, cleanliness, courtesy and similar traits are significant. In a study of large group relationships, the most popular children were those who were particularly able in motor skills, classroom behavior and friendliness with playmates. These were also the healthiest and the best looking.³

Jersild points out in Child Psychology that few children are so strong in their own right that they are unaffected by disapproval from the group.⁴

¹Ibid.


Lawson found in his study that students require recognition, success, acceptance, and a certain sense of security.¹

According to Hodgkinson, pilot projects have indicated conclusively that a large number of children who had previously been marked as "reject" by the schools have astonishing possibilities when given a chance.²

Lilly investigated factors involved in improving social acceptance of unpopular, low achieving students. A five-week treatment was used in which low acceptance students worked with popular peers making a movie to present to the class. Variations in this treatment were designed to isolate variables involved in improvement of social acceptance. Treatment produced significant immediate gains in social acceptance; however, the gains did not endure over a six-week follow-up period. No differentiation was possible among factors involved in improving social acceptance.³

Nagler and Hoffnung administered the Children's Perceived Power-Scale (CPPS) to 1200 suburban elementary grade school children. At each of the four grade levels, three were designated as high powerful (HP) and three as low powerful (LP). Results indicated that children in HP classes were viewed more favorably by their teachers,

obtained higher scores on standardized tests, and were judged to have fewer behavioral problems than children in LP classes.¹

Reilly and Illenberge administered a sociometric device designed to measure the extent of social diffusion along the three dimensions of liking, school competence and social power to students in classrooms organized by pupil teams for instruction and students in conventionally structured classrooms. The results were analyzed in terms of the graded or non-graded structure of the sample schools. Classrooms organized by pupil teams for instruction were consistently less diffuse in social structure than were the conventionally organized classrooms, both graded and non-graded. The authors interpret this lack of social diffusion as the result of the unique instructional setting of the team learning classroom as opposed to the conventionally structured classroom.²

Heller investigated teachers' use of verbal approval and disapproval as a function of subject matter (Math and Social Studies) and class ability: The use of these behaviors in instructional versus managerial context was studied. Five math and five social studies teachers in an inner city junior high school were observed for 6-30 minute periods, 3 while instructing low ability classes and 3 with high ability classes. The Teacher Approval Disapproval Observation Records

¹Sylvan Nagler and Robert Hoffnung, "The Teacher Expectations, Children's Perceived Powerfulness and School Performance."

were used to record teacher-pupil interactions. It was found that teachers emit more disapproval in low ability and that these disapprovals are largely managerial. Math teachers used slightly more disapproval than approvals, while social studies teachers used significantly more. The total number of evaluative remarks did not vary with class ability or subject area. The teachers observed rarely offered approval for good social behavior.¹

That same year Retish conducted a study which investigated the extent to which specific changes in teacher behavior and attitudes influence pupil acceptance by peers. Overt teacher reinforcement three times a day for three weeks was found to result in significant net gains in the sociometric status of experimental students as compared with that of their controls. Pupils were merely identified as "promising" did not, however, improve significantly in sociometric status when compared with controls. Teacher ratings of the children, on the other, were not consistently changed by either treatment; the results depended on grade level. These findings indicate that teachers can use overt reinforcement techniques to alter the social position of students.²

Holcomb's thesis focused on the relationship between a child's anxiety, peer acceptance, reading level, and overall school achievement as part of a child's development. Eight seventh grade classes served as subjects for the study which examined such variables as age, 


sex, socioeconomic levels, scores on Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Iowa Silent Reading Test and Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale with L scale and sociometric ratings of peers. Results show that anxiety does not relate significantly with other variables under examination with exception of age. However, peer acceptance does reflect a relationship with school achievement, reading level, sex, and socioeconomic level.¹

A personalized reading program for children in the elementary grades was used by Mendenhall. The program consists of three interrelated parts: Self-selection and sharing of books, skill development according to individual needs and individual teacher-pupil discussion and evaluation conferences. Sustained silent reading, oral reading once a week to the teacher, book-selling and skills work in small groups or individual work with materials such as SRA Kits were some of the activities utilized in the personalized reading program. The program in the P. K. Yonge Laboratory School was investigated regarding achievement, self-esteem and social acceptance gains and their interrelations. Treatment group, sex, and race were the three independent variables. Results indicated that the personalized reading program students had higher gains on reading test in grades two and four and comparable levels in grades three and six. The control group had higher reading test scores in the first grade, while the experimental group had higher scores on self-esteem and social acceptance. In subsequent grades, these measures increased for experimental females, control males and experimental whites.²

¹Holcomb, "Anxiety, Acceptance and Achievement in 7th Grade Children."

According to Miller and Gerard, social climate of classroom affected performance of minority children. When a minority child was shunned by his classmates, his academic performance declined. Those who were accepted by white classmates tended to hold their own to improve academically.¹

Ladd and Oden investigated the relationship between children's ideas about how to be helpful to peers and peer acceptance. Third and fifth grade children responded to three sociometric measures and were later individually interviewed under four conditions on two occasions in response to different cartoon situations. Children were asked to suggest helpful strategies in response to cartoons showing a child being teased, yelled at and having a school work problem. Children's strategies generated thirteen different categories (consoles-comforts, instructs). The number of responses suggested by each child that was different from those given by peers yielded a uniqueness score. The number of categories indicated by a child's responses yielded a flexibility score. Four separate multiple regressions analysis were performed in which four sociometric dependent variables were regressed on grade, sex, uniqueness and flexibility. For each of the dependent measures, grade and sex accounted for the majority of the variance. Findings for uniqueness were also consistent for each measure. Children's unique or deviant ideas about helpfulness was found to be predictive of low sociometric ratings. Significant findings differed for

males and females on uniqueness and flexibility measures across the four conditions.¹

Coady and Brown studied the concept of "need for approval" in relation to the effects of incentive on the performance of 8-to-10 year old boys and girls (N=120) in a number cancellation task. Children were given either a normative (comparison to peer groups) or competitive (award for above-the-norm performance) or no incentive and their performance was studied in relation to changes over time, sex of the child and level of need for approval. As hypothesized, children with a high need for approval responded better under a normative incentive, while the opposite was true for approval children. Girls were generally more affected by a normative promise and showed these effects earlier in performance than boys.²

Finally, as recent as 1979, Potter clarifies in her study, the relationship between children's social desirability (CSD) responses tendencies and their withdrawal from classroom achievement situations

¹Ladd and Oden, "The relationship Between Children's Ideas About Helpfulness and Peer Acceptance."

by investigating the effects of the child's expectations of peer response. Data gathered included scores on the Children's Social Desirability Scale, scores on an expectancy of response scale constructed for this study, and teacher ratings. Subjects were 120 third and fourth grade boys and girls. No differences were found between high and low scoring CSD subjects on expectancy of negative responses. Paradoxical relationships between response expectancy, responses history and withdrawal from classroom achievement situations were found for high Children's Social Desirability but not low children's Social Desirability subjects.  

Summary of Related Literature

A summary of the literature reveals that:

1. Peer approval appears to reflect a relationship with school achievement, reading level and socio-economic level.

2. An individual's personal and academic growth can be affected adversely or favorably by his position in the group.

3. Isolates tend to be the children at either extreme—chronologically, scholastically, mentally and emotionally. The rejected are usually: 1) socially unaccepted, 2) shy or passive, 3) children who are more than normally rowdy, rebellious and boastful.

4. Physical maturity, and to some extent, mental maturity are far more potent in influencing friendship than are the personality traits we have assumed we are measuring. Athletic ability, cleanliness, courtesy and similar traits are significant.

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5. The most popular children are those who are significantly able in motor skills, classroom behavior and friendliness with playmates.

6. Teachers emit more disapproval in low ability grouping and these disapprovals are largely managerial.

7. Correlations between teacher approval and status are significant; however, those between disapproval and status are not.

8. Students seek recognition, success, acceptance and a certain sense of security.

9. Overt teacher reinforcement results in significant net gain in the sociometric status of students.

10. Children who had been marked as "reject" by the school have astonishing possibilities when given a chance for acceptance.

11. Classrooms organized as pupil teams for instruction were consistently less diffuse in social structure than were the conventionally organized classroom, both graded and non-graded.

12. Treatment produced significant immediate gains in social acceptance.

13. Social acceptability is associated with various factors particularly those connected with mental ability.
CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Introductory Statement

The purpose of this chapter is to present, analyze and interpret the data of this study. The fact that this study is not designed to account for the many factors, either inside or outside of the classroom which may have some bearing on the feelings and preferences of the pupil; nor will there be any attempt to determine the teacher's role, nor the role of the classroom atmosphere as related to friendship choices, must be kept in mind. Another point that must be reminded is the fact that this study is limited to presenting rather than explaining the patterns of choices as related to academic achievement. These factors should be considered in the interpretation of these data.

Table 1 shows the eighteen subjects from school A's total peer approval ratings received, total teacher disapproval ratings received, total teacher approval ratings received, reading achievement, mathematic achievement and average achievement in reading and mathematics.
TABLE 1
SCHOOL A'S DISTRIBUTION OF PEER APPROVAL (PA) RATINGS, TEACHER APPROVAL (TA) RATINGS, TEACHER DISAPPROVAL (TD) RATINGS, READING ACHIEVEMENT (RA) RATINGS, MATH ACHIEVEMENT (MA) RATINGS, AND AVERAGE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL (AA)

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Table 2 shows the twenty-four subjects from school B's total peer approval ratings received, total teacher disapproval ratings received, total teacher approval ratings received, reading achievement, mathematics achievement, and average achievement in reading and mathematics.

**TABLE 2**

SCHOOL B'S DISTRIBUTION OF PEER APPROVAL (PA) RATINGS, TEACHER APPROVAL (TA) RATINGS, TEACHER DISAPPROVAL (TD) RATINGS, READING ACHIEVEMENT (RA) RATINGS, MATH ACHIEVEMENT (MA) RATINGS, AND AVERAGE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL (MA)

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Table 3 shows the eighteen subjects from school C's total peer approval ratings received, total teacher disapproval ratings received, total teacher approval ratings received, reading achievement, mathematics achievement, and average achievement in reading and mathematics.
### TABLE 3

SCHOOL C'S DISTRIBUTION OF PEER APPROVAL (PA) RATINGS, TEACHER APPROVAL (TA) RATINGS, TEACHER DISAPPROVAL (TD) RATINGS, READING ACHIEVEMENT (RA) RATINGS, MATH ACHIEVEMENT (MA) RATINGS, AND AVERAGE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL (MA)

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Table 4 shows the thirteen subjects from school D's total peer approval ratings received, total teacher disapproval ratings received, total teacher approval ratings received, reading achievement, mathematics achievement, and average achievement in reading and mathematics.

**TABLE 4**

SCHOOL D'S DISTRIBUTION OF PEER APPROVAL (PA) RATINGS, TEACHER APPROVAL (TA) RATINGS, TEACHER DISAPPROVAL (TD) RATINGS, READING ACHIEVEMENT (RA) RATINGS, MATH ACHIEVEMENT (MA) RATINGS, AND AVERAGE ACHIEVEMENT (AA) LEVEL

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Table 5 shows the nine subjects from school E's total peer approval ratings received, total teacher disapproval ratings received, total teacher approval ratings received, reading achievement, mathematics achievement, and average achievement in reading and mathematics.

### TABLE 5

**SCHOOL E'S DISTRIBUTION OF PEER APPROVAL (PA) RATINGS, TEACHER APPROVAL (TA) RATINGS, TEACHER DISAPPROVAL (TD) RATINGS, READING ACHIEVEMENT (RA) RATINGS, MATH ACHIEVEMENT (MA) RATINGS, AND AVERAGE ACHIEVEMENT (AA) LEVEL**

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Table 6 shows the nineteen subjects from school F's total peer approval ratings received, total teacher disapproval ratings received, total teacher approval ratings received, reading achievement, mathematics achievement, and average achievement in reading and mathematics.
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Table 7 shows the twenty-four subjects from school G's total peer approval ratings received, total teacher disapproval ratings received, total teacher approval ratings received, reading achievement, mathematics achievement, and average achievement in reading and mathematics.

### TABLE 7

**SCHOOL G'S DISTRIBUTION OF PEER APPROVAL (PA) RATINGS, TEACHER APPROVAL (TA) RATINGS, TEACHER DISAPPROVAL (TD) RATINGS, READING ACHIEVEMENT (RA) RATINGS, MATH ACHIEVEMENT (MA) RATINGS, AND AVERAGE ACHIEVEMENT (AA) LEVEL**

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</table>
Table 8 shows the distribution of subjects' sex, mean achievement, individual schools correlation of peer approval and teacher approval, peer approval and teacher disapproval, peer approval and average achievement, and teacher approval and average achievement of the seven schools involved in the study.
### TABLE 8
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Mean of AA</th>
<th>r</th>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Approval Ratings vs. Teacher Approval</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>.882#</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>.040</td>
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</tr>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.515*</td>
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<td>.640#</td>
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<td>.157</td>
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<td>.757#</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Mean of AA</td>
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<td>------</td>
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<td>M 5 F 4</td>
<td>E</td>
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<td>M 5 F 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Approval Ratings vs. Teacher Approval</td>
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<td>M 13 F 6</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>G</td>
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<td>Teacher Approval Ratings vs. Average Achievement</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>M 12 F 13</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#P < .05
*P < .01
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Statement. This study was designed to determine if there was a relationship between and among peer approval, teacher approval and academic achievement in the elementary school.

The specific purposes of the study were:

1. To determine if there was a relationship between peer approval and teacher approval or disapproval.

2. To determine if there was a correlation between peer approval and average achievement in reading and mathematics.

3. To determine if there was a correlation between teacher approval and average achievement in reading and mathematics.

Recapitulation of research design. The significant aspects of the locale, subjects, and research design of this study are indicated below.

Locale. This study was conducted in seven (7) elementary schools in the Atlanta Public School System in Atlanta, Georgia.

Subjects. There were 126 respondents from the study, 78 males and 48 females. These included Blacks, Caucasians and Hispanics. The subjects of the study were in the third grade.

Period of study. This research was carried out during January-December, 1980.
Method of research. The Descriptive Method of research was utilized in conducting this study.

Instrument. The instruments used in this study were:
1. Personal structured interviews
2. The California Achievement Test.

Criterion of validity. The criterion of validity for appraising the data from the interview questions is the "Guess Who" type of instrument which correlates significantly with the Ohio Social Acceptance Scale. The CAT combines the important uses of norm-referenced tests with the objectives-based information of criterion-referenced tests. Norm-referenced tests are used to determine how well students are performing in relation to other students of a similar age and background; they also give school personnel some assistance in judging the strengths and weaknesses of their curricula; criterion-referenced tests offer information on individual and group mastery of specified objectives.

Procedure. The following procedural steps were used to achieve the purposes of this study:
1. The related literature was surveyed, summarized and presented in the final thesis copy.
2. The writer requested permission to conduct the study from the Atlanta School authorities.
3. The schools were assigned according to availability.
4. The writer requested parental permission of the subjects in question.
5. Personal structured interviews were conducted with the subjects because of their age.
6. California Achievement Test scores were obtained from the Atlanta Public Schools' records.
7. The data obtained from the interview questions was correlated with the CAT scores.

8. The formulation of findings, conclusions, implications and recommendations were compiled for inclusion in the final thesis copy.

Summary of Related Literature

A survey of literature related to this investigation revealed that (moderate) research has been done investigating the relationship between and among peer approval, teacher approval and academic achievement in the elementary schools.

The literature further revealed that those students who perform well academically are approved of most often by their teachers and peers.

Publications and studies are reviewed and summarized below:

1. Holcomb found that peer acceptance does reflect a relationship with school achievement.1

2. Heller found that teachers emit more disapproval in low ability and that these disapprovals are largely managerial.2

3. Silverstein points out that social acceptability is associated with various factors, particularly those connected with mental ability.3

4. Nagler and Hoffnung reported in their study that children in high, powerful classes were viewed more favorable by their teachers, obtained higher scores on standardized tests and were judged to have fewer behavior problems.4

1Holcomb, "Anxiety, Acceptance and Achievement in 7th Grade Children."

2Heller, "Teacher Approval and Disapproval by Ability Grouping."

3Silverstein, "A Study of the Extent to Which Membership in Broad Range Classes in the Elementary School Leads to Social Acceptance Across Ability Levels."

4Nagler and Hoffnung, "The Teacher Expectations, Children's Perceived Powerfulness and School Performance."
5. Pintner and associates agree that physical maturity, and to some extent, mental ability are far more potent in influencing friendship than the personality traits.

6. Millard states that isolates tend to be the children at either extreme chronologically, scholastically, mentally and emotionally.2

7. An individual's personal and academic growth can be affected adversely or favorably by his position in the group.3

8. Lawson points out that students require recognition, success, acceptance and a certain sense of security.4

9. Retish says that overt teacher reinforcement results in significant net gain in the sociometric status of students.5

10. Hodgkin states that children who had been marked as "rejected" by the school have astonishing possibilities when given a chance.6

Summary of Findings

The analysis of the data seems to warrant the following findings:

1. When peer approval and teacher approval were correlated for school "A", the data indicated a correlation of .882 which is significant at the .05 level, however peer approval and teacher disapproval correlated .040.

---

1Pintner; Forlando; and Freedman. "Personality and Attitudinal Similarity Among Classroom Friends."

2Millard, Child Growth and Development.

3Ibid.

4Lawson, "An Analysis of Historic and Philosophic Consideration for Homogeneous Grouping."

5Retish, "Changing the Status of Poorly Esteem Students Through Teacher Reinforcement."

6Hodgkinson, Education Interaction and Social Change.
2. When peer approval and teacher disapproval were correlated for school "B", the data indicated a correlation of .515 which is significant at the .01 level, however peer approval and teacher approval correlated .376.

3. When peer approval and teacher approval were correlated for school "C", the data indicated a correlation of .799 which is significant at the .01 level, however peer approval and teacher disapproval correlated .127.

4. When peer approval and teacher disapproval were correlated for school "D", the data indicated a correlation of .640 which is significant at the .05 level, however peer approval and teacher approval correlated .308.

5. When peer approval and teacher approval were correlated for school "E", the data indicated a correlation of .757 which is significant at the .05 level, however peer approval and teacher disapproval correlated .624.

6. When peer approval and teacher approval were correlated for school "F", the data indicated a correlation of .458 which is significant at the .05 level, however peer approval and teacher disapproval correlated .359.

7. When peer approval and teacher approval were correlated for school "G", the data indicated a correlation of .750 which is significant at the .01 level, however peer approval and teacher disapproval correlated -.238.

8. When peer approval and average achievement were correlated, the data indicated a correlation of .613 for school "C" which is significant at the .01 level and .464 for school "F" which is significant at the .05 level. However, when peer approval and average achievement were correlated at the following schools, the findings were: school "A" .388, school "B" .043, school "D" .157, school "E" .655 and school "G" .371.

9. When teacher approval and average achievement were correlated, the data indicated a correlation of .429 for school "A", .726 for school "C", .990 for school "E" and .583 for school "F", all of which were significant at the .01 level. School "B" correlated .299, school "D" correlated .157 and school "G" correlated .263.
Conclusions

The analysis and interpretation of the data seem to warrant the following conclusions:

1. There is generally a statistical significant relationship between peer approval and teacher approval.
2. There is generally a statistical significant relationship between and among peer approval and achievement and teacher approval and achievement.
3. There is a statistical significant relationship between teacher approval and average achievement.
4. There is an insignificant or negligible relationship between peer approval and teacher disapproval in all schools except schools "B" and "D".
5. Students with low achievement levels were approved of less often than those students on or above the achievement level of their peers.
6. Isolates were those students with lowest achievement levels.
7. Those students who were approved of by their teacher were also approved of by their peers.
8. Those students who were approved of most often by their teacher and peers were above grade level.

Implications

The conclusions of this study seem to warrant the following implications:

1. It appears that teachers emit more approval for those students on or above grade level.
2. It appears that students approve of more often those students that are approved of by their teacher.
3. It appears that factors other than achievement are involved in the approval process, i.e., appearance, attitude, socioeconomic background and values.
4. It is apparent that teacher approval greatly influences peer approval regardless of achievement or socioeconomic background.
Recommendations

It is the belief of the writer that the findings of this study warrant the following recommendations:

1. That more research in the area of peer approval, teacher approval and their relationship to academic achievement be conducted.

2. That teacher training institutions and universities include in their curriculum courses of study that will prepare teachers to meet each student's individual need for approval and acceptance.

3. That teachers use sociometric techniques in the classroom to become cognizant of isolates.

4. That teachers use results from sociometric instruments to create a classroom atmosphere which would improve peer status within groups, thus improving the opinion of students toward each other.
PEER STATUS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. With whom would you most like to play on the playground?

________________________________________________________________________

2. With whom would you most like to read or study?

________________________________________________________________________

3. Whom would you most like to sit next to in class?

________________________________________________________________________

4. If you were going to a party, whom would you like to invite?

________________________________________________________________________

5. Who usually gets fussed at for talking in class?

________________________________________________________________________

6. Who usually gets fussed at by the teacher for not paying attention?

________________________________________________________________________

7. Who usually gets punished or sent to the principal's office?

________________________________________________________________________
8. Who usually gets fussied at for fighting or picking on others?

9. Who usually gets to do things for the teacher?

10. About whom does the teacher usually say nice things for trying hard?

11. Who is usually asked to take things to the office?

12. About whom does the teacher usually say nice things for doing well?
Dear Parent(s):

Last year you gave permission for your child to be included in a five-year study of pupil achievement conducted by the Atlanta Public Schools with assistance from faculty members of universities in Atlanta. The purpose of the study is to find more and better ways of helping our students learn to read well.

Part of the study has included interviewing students in the school about their attitudes toward teachers and peers. All students are asked the same questions, and the interviews are recorded. Everything said in an interview, however, is confidential information for research purposes only.

This year Mrs. Cynthia Sloan, a graduate student at Atlanta University, will be interviewing several students in our school. I hope you will cooperate in making this study more complete by allowing her to interview your child. If you agree, Mrs. Sloan will contact you in the next few weeks to set up a mutually convenient time. Please complete the form below and return it to the school.

Thank you for your continued interest in the school. We have had a good year and look forward to an even better one next year.

Sincerely,

Principal

Elementary School

____ I (we) agree for ______________________ to be interviewed.

child's name

Signature ____________________________

Date ________________________________
LETTER OF AGREEMENT REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN THE LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Dr. Charles E. Billiard, Georgia State University; Dr. Charles Crosthwait, Georgia State University; Dr. John Diehl, Georgia State University; Dr. David M. Herold, Georgia Institute of Technology; Dr. Christopher J. Ramig, Georgia State University; Dr. Samuel Silverstein, Atlanta University; and Dr. Jarvis Barnes, Assistant Superintendent of the Division of Research, Evaluation, and Data Processing, mutually agree that the above researcher(s) may conduct research on a sample of students selected by the Atlanta Public School System as part of the "Longitudinal Study of Pupil Achievement" to be conducted for five years beginning in the 1978-79 academic year by the Division of Research, Evaluation, and Data Processing.

Procedures for data collection and dissemination of findings will be agreed upon jointly between the Atlanta Public School System and the individual researcher(s) named above, with the primary concern always being the protection of the students' and researchers' confidentiality and well-being. Graduate students and others who participate in data collection will be closely supervised by the appropriate researcher(s).

All data collected within the design of this study will be the property of the Atlanta Public School System, and any analyses of the data collected by the above researcher(s) will be shared with the Atlanta Public School System prior to publication. Publications resulting from this study are agreed to be the property of the author(s) of such publications. Furthermore, the presentation or publication of findings related to these data outside the Atlanta Public School System will be by the consent, prior to publication, of the Atlanta Public School System.

Dr. Samuel Silverstein
Date

Dr. Jarvis Barnes
Date
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Articles and Periodicals


Nagler, Sylvan and Hoffman. "Teacher Expectations, Children's Perceived Powerfulness and Social Performance." Yale University 2 (Department of Psychiatry: March 1971)


Books


Unpublished Materials


