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Problem Behaviors Associated With Sociometric Status in an Adolescent Population.

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Problem behaviors associated with sociometric status in an adolescent population

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The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1991
PROBLEM BEHAVIORS ASSOCIATED WITH SOCIOMETRIC STATUS
IN AN ADOLESCENT POPULATION

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in

The Department of Psychology

by Glenda C. Thorne
B.A., Southeastern Louisiana University, 1982
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the usefulness of the classification system developed by Coie and his colleagues (1982) with an adolescent population by examining the relationship between sociometric status and psychopathology. Five hundred thirty-one seventh- through ninth-grade students participated in the study. Following the Coie et al. (1982) procedure, children were identified as either popular, rejected, neglected, controversial, or average. The basis for status group membership was scores adolescents received on positive and negative peer nominations. Four social status variables were derived from these measures: (a) liked most peer nomination scores, (b) liked least peer nomination scores, (c) social impact scores, and (d) social preference scores. Following the administration of the liked most and liked least nomination measures, participants were asked to complete self-report instruments regarding their problem behaviors. In addition, teachers were asked to complete measures which assess the problem behaviors of children identified as members of the various status groups. Scores obtained from self- and teacher- ratings were analyzed using multivariate and univariate statistical analyses. Findings suggested that adolescents classified as rejected and controversial exhibited both internalizing and externalizing disorders, as measured by teacher-ratings, to a greater extent than did popular and average adolescents. Neglected adolescents’ scores did not differ significantly from average or popular adolescents. Rejected children also received higher scores
than popular children on self-ratings of internalizing disorders. No significant differences between status groups were found for self-ratings of externalizing disorders. Further, teacher-ratings of internalizing and externalizing disorders correlated significantly with liked most nomination scores, liked least nomination scores, and social preference scores. Social impact scores correlated significantly with teacher-ratings of internalizing disorders. Finally, self-ratings of internalizing disorders showed a significant relationship with liked most nomination scores, liked least nomination scores, and social preference scores.
INTRODUCTION

From association with the peer group, children learn appropriate moral behavior, important aspects of sexual relationships, the management of aggression, and interpersonal skills. Social development, therefore, has been the focus of research to identify factors associated with poor peer relationships. One method employed frequently to investigate this issue has been to examine the behavioral correlates of social status in the peer group. A child's social status is derived from scores received on sociometric measures such as peer ratings and peer nominations. Subsequently, the relationship between sociometric status and other measures such as peer assessment, behavioral observations, and parent-, teacher-, and self-ratings are examined. The information gleaned from this research is useful when making decisions regarding criteria for selection of children for social skills training, for identifying which social behaviors are necessary for successful interpersonal relationships, and/or for determining which children are at risk for social/emotional adjustment problems.

Studies examining the factors associated with peer status in preschool and middlechildhood years have existed for decades; however, research with an adolescent population is scant. Thus, the present study will attempt to extend the literature which has investigated the correlates of sociometric status in early and middlechildhood to adolescents. Of particular interest will be the issue regarding whether a group of children who have been labeled as sociometrically neglected are at risk for social/emotional adjustment problems.
The review of the literature will be divided into three sections. First, a brief overview of the types of sociometric techniques employed by researchers in the area will be presented. Second, the literature will be reviewed pertaining to factors associated with sociometric status in childhood. Finally, the existing studies which have sought to identify correlates of sociometric status for adolescents will be discussed.

**Sociometric Techniques**

Generally, sociometric measures consist of three major types: peer nominations, peer ratings, and paired-comparison methods. Peer nomination measures, originally developed by Moreno (1934), are the most frequently used technique and require children to identify one or more peers according to some specified criteria. For example, a child may be asked to nominate three peers whom he or she especially likes or three whom he or she does not like. A child's social status score is usually determined by summing the number of nominations received from classmates. In some cases, scores are determined by assigning weights to each choice. For example, if a child is required to nominate three peers whom they especially like, a weight of +3 will be given to their first choice, a weight of +2 to their second choice, and so on.

The issue of the stability of peer nominations has received considerable attention in the literature. Asher and Hymel (1981) reported that test-retest reliability is one of the major assets of nomination measures. Stability over time varies, however, as a function of age, length of time between successive administrations, and valence of the nomination. With elementary school children,
adequate stability has been reported (Booney, 1943; Bush, Ford, & Schulman, 1973; Coie & Dodge, 1983; Coie, Dodge, & Copotelli, 1982; Oden & Asher, 1977; Roff, Sells, & Golden, 1972). For preschoolers, however, reliability coefficients have generally been lower (e.g., Asher, Singleton, Tinsley, & Hymel, 1979; Greenwood, Walker, Todd, & Hops, 1979; Hartup, Glazer, & Charlesworth, 1967).

Stability has also been found to be affected by the length of time between successive administrations of the measure, with the magnitude of reliability coefficients decreasing as the length of time between administrations increases (Coie & Dodge, 1983). A final factor which has been found to affect stability is the valence of the sociometric choice. Social status such as acceptance derived from positive nominations appears to be more stable than status based on negative peer nominations (Hartup et al., 1967).

The second major type of sociometric measures, peer ratings, sometimes referred to as roster-and-rating measures, requires children to rate each peer on a Likert-type scale according to some specified criteria, such as liking or friendship. An advantage of the peer rating technique compared to the peer nomination sociometric is that each child in the group receives a rating from their peers. Because each rating is based on a larger number of data points, the reliability of ratings is greater than that found for nominations. The disadvantages of peer ratings are the same as those found for rating techniques in general (Saal, Downey, & Lahey, 1980). Children may possess a response bias, always selecting a certain point on the scale. Further, children may rate classmates in a steroetypical manner by assigning everyone the same rating. Finally, different
points on the scale continuum may have different meanings for different children.

The third major type of sociometric is the paired-comparison method. With this procedure, children are presented, in turn, with all possible dyads or pairs of peers within the reference group and, for each pair, are required to state a preference for one or the other peer. Again, as with nominations and ratings, a specified interpersonal criterion is used. Children may be presented with pairs of names or photographs of other children. Choices are generally positive; however, negative choices may be asked for (e.g., Burns, 1964).

The major advantage of the paired-comparison technique is its superior reliability. Witryol and Thompson (1953) compared the test-retest reliability of a paired-comparison method to that of peer nominations. Coefficients that ranged from .59 to .96 were found for nominations while coefficients for paired-comparisons were in the .90's. The major disadvantage of this method is the rather lengthy administration time required.

In summary, the three major types of methods used to assess sociometric status consist of peer nominations, peer ratings, and paired-comparisons. Test-retest reliability of these instruments varies as a function of (1) the type of instrument used, (2) the length of time between successive administrations, (3) the age of the population studied, and (4) the valence of the sociometric choice (i.e., whether positive or negative nominations are asked for). Although peer nominations are the most widely used sociometric instrument, peer ratings and paired-comparison techniques have several
advantages compared to nominations. With both peer ratings and paired-comparisons, a score is derived for each member of the reference group. In addition, estimates of stability are greater for ratings and paired-comparison techniques. Paired-comparisons, however, require a lengthy administration time. While peer ratings appear to be superior to nominations in terms of reliability, more recent classification systems employing nominations have increased the utility of these instruments. These will be discussed in the following section of this paper.

Status Group Identification for Preschool and Middlechildhood

Although studies examining the variables associated with peer popularity have existed since the 1930s (e.g., Koch, 1933), several methodological problems have plagued the literature. First, no consistent method has been employed to identify the well accepted or poorly accepted child; peer rating scales, peer nomination measures, and pair-comparison techniques have all been used. Second, a universal categorization system for characterizing high- or low-status children does not exist. High-status children may be labeled popular or accepted, while those of low-status may be classified as unpopular or rejected. Finally, the procedures used for assigning children to various status groups are inconsistent. For example, one study may classify as popular those children who receive ratings which are in the top 20% of their class; whereas, another may identify popular children as those who receive scores on peer nominations which are in the upper 8% of the class. These methodological issues make comparison of findings across studies difficult.
zero; (d) controversial children consisted of those receiving social impact scores greater than one standard deviation above the mean and liked most and liked least standard scores that were each above the mean; and (e) average children were those who received social preference scores between one half of a standard deviation above and below the mean. Coie and his colleagues studied the characteristics of these groups within the context of other variables in order to validate their system.

Peer assessment data which required children to nominate classmates who fit several behavioral descriptions (e.g., peers who cooperate or who disrupt) was also obtained. Analyses of variance procedures were then performed in order to identify behavioral profiles for each status group. Results showed that popular children scored high on the characteristics of leadership, cooperation, and support of peers and low on the characteristics of fights, seeks help, and disrupts. Rejected children scored high on the characteristics of fights, seeks help, and disrupts and low on leadership, cooperation, and supports peers. Children identified as neglected were described as shy and fearful, and as prone to get their feelings hurt easily. They also tended to not be disruptive, aggressive, and argumentative. Controversial children scored high on the characteristics of leadership, supports peers, fights, disrupts, and seeks help and low on the characteristics of shy, fearful, and easily hurt. The differential profiles of the various status groups tends to support the validity of the Coie et al. (1982) classification system.

Variations of the Coie et al. (1982) taxonomy have been employed by numerous researchers (Asher and Wheeler, 1985; Boivin & Begin,
Dodge et al. (1982) investigated the relationship between social status and interactive group behavior. In the first of a series of two studies, fifth-grade children were identified as popular, rejected, or average. Interactive behaviors that naturally occurred in the classroom and on the playground were recorded as either aggressive or prosocial. In addition, peers' responses to the target child's approach behavior were recorded as accepted or rejected.

Findings suggested that rejected children engaged in significantly less task-appropriate solitary activity and more aggressive behavior than average and popular children. Further, the proportion of prosocial approaches that were rejected by peers was significantly greater for rejected children than for popular and average children.

The purpose of the second study conducted by Dodge et al. (1982) was to: (a) improve the low interobserver reliability found in the first study, (b) include children identified by their peers as neglected, and (c) examine possible age differences in status group patterns. Subjects consisted of third- and fifth-grade boys. Findings suggested neglected children engaged in more task-appropriate solitary play and made fewer prosocial approaches than any other group. Also, rejected children engaged in more aggressive and
task-inappropriate solitary activity than any other group. Popular, average, and neglected children did not differ in the amount of time engaged in these activities.

Coie and Kupersmidt (1983) also examined the relationship between social status and children's interactive behavior; however, rather than observing naturally occurring behavior, children were formed into groups based upon their social status. Each play group was composed of one fourth-grade boy from each of four status groups: popular, rejected, neglected, and average. Play groups consisted of both familiar and unfamiliar groups. Familiar groups contained children that were previously acquainted with each other; whereas, unfamiliar groups consisted of members who were not previously acquainted with each other. The purpose of the two groups was to examine the behaviors associated with both the emergence and maintenance of social status.

Behavior observations collected during play sessions addressed the degree of social interaction, the valence and context of interactions, the target child's efforts to initiate social contact with group members, and the target child's reactions to aversive behavior directed toward him. At the end of each play session, positive and negative nomination measures were administered to all group members. Social status scores derived from these nominations were correlated with social status scores obtained during the initial sociometric interview. At the conclusion of the final play session, both nomination measures and peer assessment data were collected. Children were asked to name peers who fit the behavioral descriptions
of leader, cooperative, asks for help, starts fights, shy, and disruptive.

Results showed that although rejected children were extremely active and aversive, they were no more physically aversive than average children. Popular children were more prosocial and engaged in more norm setting in the unfamiliar groups. Neglected children were less interactive and aversive than all other groups; however, they were more visible and active in the unfamiliar group.

Additional analyses revealed that by the third play session, social status in the newly formed group was highly correlated with the initial status acquired in the school-based setting. Results obtained from the peer assessment data showed that popular children were viewed as being more cooperative than rejected or neglected children, but not more so than average children. Rejected children were viewed as the most disruptive, most likely to start fights, and the least cooperative. Further, neglected children were only viewed as shy in the familiar groups.

In a series of two studies, the relationship between social status and peer group entry strategies was investigated by Dodge et al. (1983). In the first study, kindergarten children were identified as popular, rejected, neglected, or average. The children who were designated as average were assigned the role of hosts during the entry sessions. Targeted children of either popular, rejected, or neglected status were required to enter a group of two host children. Entry behaviors or tactics used by the targeted child were classified into one of several categories: (a) wait and hover, (b) attention getting, (c) group-oriented statement, (d) question, (e) self-referent
statement, and (f) disruption. In addition, the hosts' responses to the target child's entry tactics were recorded as accepted, neutral, or rejected. If a host child initiated an interaction with the target child, the target child's response to that initiation was recorded as positive, neutral, or rejected.

Statistical analyses were performed on the overall frequency of entry attempts, the types of entry tactics used, host responses to entry attempts, and target children's responses to host-initiated statements. It was found that popular children were more likely to engage in group-oriented statements than rejected and neglected children and were more likely to receive a positive response from peers to their entry tactics than were rejected children. Rejected children engaged in a higher proportion of disruptive entry tactics than neglected or popular children and were more likely to receive negative peer responses to their entry tactics than other groups. Finally, neglected children engaged in a higher proportion of waiting/hovering tactics than rejected or average children.

In their second experiment, Dodge et al. (1983) examined whether the entry bids observed in the first study would also occur during initial encounters with peers during free play. Subjects were seven-year-old males who were recruited through a flyer distributed to second-grade classrooms of twelve elementary schools. Fifty-six boys participated and were randomly assigned to one of seven play groups. During the play sessions, prosocial entry behaviors were classified as wait and hover, group-oriented statements or questions, and statements that mimicked the group. Peers' responses to each entry bid was coded as accepted, ignored, or rejected. An additional coding system which
involved sequences of entry bids, called entry episodes, was developed for this second study. An episode often consisted of more than one entry tactic. Whether the target child was successful in gaining access to the group as a result of the entry episode was also recorded.

At the end of the final play session, peer nomination information was obtained. Each child was asked to name the two boys in the group whom he liked most and the two boys whom he liked least. Scores received from the nominations were used to designate children as either popular, rejected, neglected, controversial, or average. Analyses of the data examined the group differences in the frequency and type of entry tactics, peers' responses to entry bids, and sequences of entry tactics. Results showed that neglected and rejected children initiated more entry episodes than did normal children. Rejected and neglected children engaged in lower proportions of mimicking tactics and higher proportions of attention-getting and disruptive tactics than normal children. The tactics of group-oriented statements and mimicking the peer group's activity were more likely than other tactics to receive positive responses from peers. The waiting and hovering tactic was the most likely to be followed by an ignoring response.

Dodge et al. (1983) also sought to determine which sequence of entry tactics was the most likely to lead to successful access to the group. It was found that the three-step sequence of waiting and hovering, followed by mimicking the peer group, and finally, making a group-oriented statement was more likely to lead to successful group entry than other sequences.
The study conducted by Dodge et al. (1983) was methodologically superior to previous research in a number of ways. First, the behaviors that lead to peer group status were examined as they developed over time. This type of design allows one to make causal inferences regarding behavior and social status. Second, not only were those behaviors which differentiated social status groups identified, but also the sequence of entry tactics that led to successful group entry was identified. This latter finding has important implications for social skills training research. Previous research (e.g., Gresham & Nagle, 1980; Thorne & Gorrell, 1985) that has attempted to teach children of low social status how to successfully initiate interaction with peers has employed for target behaviors such discrete skills as greeting and asking for and giving information. The findings reported by Dodge et al. (1983) identified a particular sequence of behaviors that lead to successful group entry, rather than single discrete behaviors. Optimal performance in the area of peer interaction should be obtained by teaching low-status children sequences of behavior that lead to successful entry into the peer group.

Like Dodge et al. (1983), Dodge (1983) examined the behavior correlates of social status as they developed over time. Forty-eight boys were recruited through flyers distributed to second-grade classrooms in several elementary schools and randomly assigned to one of six play groups. During free activity, the interactive behavior engaged in by children was observed and recorded. Social status was determined at the end of the final play session. In addition, children were asked to rank their peers according to various
behavioral descriptions. Behavior was analyzed to determine the behavioral antecedents of peer status. Results showed that rejected and neglected children socially approached peers more frequently than other groups. Rejected children engaged in more physical aggression than did all other groups. Popular children engaged in less aggression and were received more positively by peers whom they approached than other groups. Children labeled as controversial engaged in high frequencies of both prosocial and antisocial behaviors.

When rankings on behavioral descriptions were analyzed, it was found that rejected and controversial groups received higher rankings as aggressive than any other group; popular children were perceived as better leaders than average, neglected, and controversial children, while rejected children were perceived as poor leaders more often than any other group; and, popular children were more likely to share things than were average and neglected children, which in turn were more likely to share things than controversial and rejected children.

Whereas the studies previously discussed have employed direct observations of behavior or peer assessment data as dependent measures, Asher and Wheeler (1985) assessed self-reported feelings of loneliness experienced by third- through sixth-grade children who were identified as popular, average, rejected, neglected, or controversial. Following assignment to status groups, subjects were administered a loneliness questionnaire which consisted of 16 items focusing on children's feelings of loneliness, feelings of social adequacy versus inadequacy, and subjective estimations of peer status. It was found that rejected children expressed greater feelings of loneliness and
The relationship between children's perceptions of peer reputations and their social reputations among peers was investigated by Rogosch and Newcomb (1989). First-, third-, and fifth-grade children were identified as popular, average, rejected, or neglected. Next, children were asked to describe their peers' impressions of other children in their class (subject data). Additionally, each child was described by at least 12 of their classmates (target data). The descriptions were content coded according to themes commonly used by children (e.g., good physical ability included descriptors such as "good at sports" and "runs fast"). Discriminant analyses were used to identify the best discriminating variables in the two data sets. Results showed that popular children were largely undifferentiated from average children by both target and subject data. Rejected children were markedly distinguished from average children by reputations held about them by their peers. The variables which characterized them were not liked, actively excluded, equivocal social status, excludes others, nasty-mean, spoiled brat, and immature. Rejected children, however, did not exhibit deficits in how they characterize what peers think of other children. The scores for neglected children indicated an absence of reputational features for members of this group. Like rejected children, there were no differences in the accuracy with which they were able to characterize their peers' reputations.

The relations among sociometric status, and self- and other-perceptions of social competence was examined by Boivin and
Begin (1989). Participants were third- and fourth-grade children who were again classified as popular, average, rejected, neglected, or controversial. Children were asked to complete the Perceived Competence Scale (Harter, 1983) which evaluates children's general self-esteem as well as sense of competence across five different domains: academic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, and behavior/conduct. In addition, teachers completed the Teacher's Rating Scale of Child's Actual Behavior (Harter, 1983) which consists of scales that parallel those on the self-report version. Rejected children's self-perception scores were subjected to a hierarchical cluster analysis which suggested two relatively homogenous subgroups. Following analysis of variance procedures, planned comparisons which contrasted the various status groups with the average group showed that the self-perceptions of popular children were significantly higher than average children on the academic, social acceptance, athletic, and self-esteem scales. One group of rejected children (labeled Cluster A) showed higher perceived physical appearance and self-esteem than the average children. The second group of rejected children (labeled Cluster B) were significantly more negative about themselves than the average children on all dimensions. The self-perceptions of controversial children were significantly more negative than those of average children on the academic, behavior/conduct, and self-esteem scales. Neglected children did not differ from average children on any dimension.

Planned comparisons performed on teacher-evaluated competence (referred to as actual competence by the authors) showed that popular
children were reported to be significantly more competent athletically than average children. Cluster B rejected children and controversial children were evaluated as significantly less competent than average children on the behavior/conduct dimension. Cluster A rejected children and neglected children did not differ from average children on any dimension.

An additional analysis was performed by Boivin and Begin for the purpose of determining whether the relations between peer status and perceived competence could be accounted for by actual competence (i.e., teacher-evaluated competence). ANCOVAs were performed on three perceived competence dimensions (academic, athletic, and behavior/conduct) using teacher evaluations of these dimensions as covariates. It was found that the self-perceptions of Cluster B rejected children were still lower than average children on all three scales. The self-perceptions of neglected and controversial children were lower than average children on the academic competence scale. The first group of rejected children perceived themselves to be more competent athletically than average children when actual competence was controlled. Finally, no differences between popular and average children's perceived competence were found when actual competence was controlled.

Overall, the results obtained by Boivin and Begin (1989) indicated that popular children perceived themselves to be more competent on a variety of dimensions including self-esteem than average children although teacher-evaluated competence revealed that these children are not more behaviorally competent than average children. Not all rejected children perceived themselves as
incompetent. One subgroup displayed negative perceptions in each of
the competence domains as well as low self-esteem. Members of this
group also tended to underevaluate their actual competence. Another
group of rejected children perceived themselves to be more competent
than they actually were. The authors suggested that these two
subgroups of rejected children may be conceptualized as a
withdrawn/rejected group who experience negative self-perceptions and
an aggressive/rejected group who tend to have positive but distorted
perceptions of themselves. Subgroups of rejected children were also
identified by French (1988; 1990); however, French used a more liberal
classification procedure than that developed by Coie and his

French (1988) investigated the possibility that discernible
subtypes of peer-rejected boys could be identified by use of cluster
analyses procedures. Participants were third- and fourth-grade boys
who were classified as popular or rejected on the basis of positive
and negative peer nominations; however, the cutoff criteria used were
more liberal than that employed by Coie et al. (1982) and allowed for
a greater number of subjects to be classified to accommodate the
desired statistical procedures. Rejected boys were those who scored
1/3 standard deviation below the mean on positive nominations and 1/3
standard deviation above the mean on negative nominations. Boys in
the popular group scored 1/3 standard deviation below the mean and 1/3
standard deviation above the mean on negative and positive
nominations, respectively. It was found that one group of rejected
boys exhibited high aggression, low self-control, behavior problems,
and withdrawn behavior while a second group of rejected boys exhibited
withdrawn behavior but did receive elevated scores on measures of aggression, behavior problems, or self-control.

French (1990) again employed cluster analyses to determine whether two discernible subtypes of third- through fifth-grade rejected girls existed. Peer ratings, however, were used to classify participants as popular or rejected. Popular girls were those who scored in the top 20% of their same-sex grade distribution, whereas, rejected girls scored in the bottom 20%. Both teacher and peer assessments of behavior were compared to sociometric status. Results showed that, consistent with previous findings for boys, two large groups emerged from the cluster analysis, one more deviant than the other. The more deviant group was characterized by withdrawal, anxiety, and academic difficulties. The less deviant group, however, displayed greater behavior disorders, aggression, withdrawal, and self-control deficits relative to girls in the popular group. French suggests the possibility that the presence and level of internalizing disorders may differentiate subtypes of rejected girls. Although the findings reported by French appear to provide more specific information regarding the characteristics of rejected children, the selection criteria employed again make comparison of results across studies difficult. A replication of French's findings using the more conservative criteria developed by Coie et al. (1982) would be necessary before concluding that all groups of rejected children can be categorized into aggressive/withdrawn subtypes.

The previous review of studies which utilized the classification system developed by Coie et al. (1982) has shown that a relatively unequivocable profile of behaviors and characteristics exist for
children identified as popular, rejected, and controversial. In general, peer assessments of popular children showed that they were viewed more often than children of other status groups as leaders, cooperative, and supportive of peers (Coie et al., 1982; Coie and Kupersmidt, 1983). Observations of behavior revealed that they engaged in more prosocial and norm-setting behaviors in unfamiliar groups than children belonging to other status groups (Coie and Kupersmidt, 1983); when entering groups, they engaged in group-oriented statements more frequently and were more likely to receive positive responses to their entry strategies (Dodge et al., 1983). Their interactive behavior in groups was less aggressive and they were more positively received than children in all other status groups (Dodge, 1983). Popular children also reported fewer feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction than other children (Asher and Wheeler, 1985) and possessed higher self-esteem and self-perceptions of academic competence and social acceptance than average children. Teachers evaluated popular children as more competent athletically than average children.

Peer assessments of rejected children showed that they were viewed more often as children who fight, seek help, disrupt, and are aggressive than other children (Coie et al., 1982; Coie and Kupersmidt, 1983). When behavior was observed in group settings, they engaged in more task-inappropriate solitary activity and more aggressive behavior than children in other status groups (Dodge et al., 1982). In addition, the prosocial approaches of these children were more often rejected than those of average and popular children (Dodge et al., 1982). They engaged in a greater proportion of
disruptive entry tactics and received a greater proportion of negative responses to their entry bids (Dodge et al., 1983). Further, rejected children socially approached peers more frequently than average and popular children (Dodge, 1983). Self-perceptions of loneliness and social dissatisfaction were greater for rejected children than all other status groups. Their reputations tended to be characterized by more negative statements such as not liked, actively excluded, and nasty-mean. Self-perceptions of competence were lower than average for some, but not all rejected children.

Again, as with popular and rejected children, a fairly consistent profile emerged for children classified as controversial. These children tended to exhibit traits and behaviors which characterized both popular and rejected children. They were described by classmates as leaders and supportive of peers. Other descriptors assigned to them included aggressive, disruptive, seeks help, and fights (Coie et al, 1982). They engaged in high frequencies of both prosocial and antisocial behavior (Dodge, 1983). Self-perceptions of competence in the domains of academic performance and behavior/conduct were lower than those of average children as was self-esteem (Boivin & Begin, 1989).

The findings regarding the behavior and characteristics for neglected children have been equivocable. They have been reported to be fearful, shy, and hypersensitive by some researchers (Coie et al., 1982). Others, however, have noted that they were characterized as shy only in familiar groups (Coie and Kupersmidt, 1983) or that peers did not assess them significantly different than average children in shyness (Dodge et al., 1983). They engaged in more task-appropriate
solitary activity and made fewer prosocial approaches than other children (Dodge et al., 1982). In groups of familiar peers, they were less active; however, they were more visible in unfamiliar groups (Coie and Kupersmidt, 1983). When entering groups of other children, they engaged in more waiting/hovering tactics than average children, but, their attention-getting and disruptive entry bids were equal to those of rejected children (Dodge et al., 1983). Self-perceptions and teacher evaluations of competence did not differ significantly from average children (Boivin & Begin, 1989) and there was an absence of clear characteristics associated with their reputations (Rogosch & Newcomb, 1989).

Because of the inconsistencies regarding the nature of the neglected child and, thus, their at-risk status, Rubin, Hymel, Lemare, and Rowden (1989) conducted a study which examined whether sociometrically identified neglected children exhibited shyness, withdrawal and other characteristics such as loneliness and negative self-perceptions which are generally associated with "internalizing" disorders. Participants were fourth-grade children who were classified as popular, average, rejected, neglected, or controversial according to the procedure used by Coie and Dodge (1983). The controversial group was dropped from data analyses, however, because of the low number of children assigned to this group.

Dependent measures consisted of peer assessments of social behavior, social self-perceptions, and behavioral observations. Peer assessment included three factor scores on the Revised Class Play: Sociability - Leadership, Aggression - Disruption, and Sensitivity - Isolation (Masten, Morison, & Pelligrini, 1985) as well as the
individual items on the Sensitivity - Isolation factor of "rather play alone," "feelings hurt easily," "shy," "often left out," and "usually sad." Self-perceptions were of feelings of loneliness and social competence. Behavior observations collected during four 15-minute play sessions were: (1) positive social or interactive behavior, (2) solitary or noninteractive behavior, and (3) aggressive behavior.

Results revealed that rejected children scored higher on the Aggressive-Disruptive and Sensitive-Isolation factors than all other groups. These did not differ significantly from one another. Rejected children also scored higher on the individual items of "rather play alone," "often left out," and "usually sad" than the other status groups. No significant differences between groups were found for self-perceptions of feelings of loneliness and social competence. The findings reported by these researchers must be interpreted with caution, however, because of the small number of their subject population (N = 81).

Rubin et al. (1989) like Boivin and Begin (1989) did not find significant differences between neglected and average children. These researchers suggested that it is rejected children who are at risk not only for externalizing disorders but for internalizing disorders as well. This notion also appears to be supported by the work of French (1988) who found that one group of rejected boys could be characterized by withdrawn behavior. Boivin and Begin (1989) have suggested that there is little support for making conceptual distinctions between socioimetric neglected and average children and that neglected children are no more at risk than average children. In
addition, Kennedy (1988) has suggested that the category of neglect may simply be an artifact of the classification method.

Together, the findings reported by the sociometric literature provide evidence for the validity of Coie et al.'s (1982) classification system. Its usefulness in identifying factors associated with poor peer relationships has been demonstrated consistently with children of preschool and elementary school age. A relatively consistent profile of behaviors and characteristics has been demonstrated for children classified as popular, controversial, and rejected. Although recent research provides support for the notion that children classified as neglected are not at risk for internalizing disorders, this research has not as yet been widely extended to an adolescent population. Additionally, although Coie et al.'s (1982) initial study included eighth-grade children, the validity of their taxonomy for adolescents has not been well established.

Status Group Identification with Adolescents

Like earlier research with children, studies conducted with adolescents fail to use a consistent classification method to identify status group membership. Generally, peer nomination measures have been administered; however, the method of computing nomination data to assign children to status groups varies (Kuhlen & Lee, 1943; Keislar, 1953; Roff, Sells, & Golden, 1972; Elkins, 1958; Feinberg, Smith, & Smidt, 1985; Loban, 1953). In addition, sociometric status has been most frequently compared to peer and/or teacher evaluations of personality traits. Direct observations of behavior and behavior rating scales have not been used as dependent measures.
Kuhlen and Lee (1943) administered peer nomination measures to sixth-, ninth-, and twelfth-grade children and compared nomination data to information obtained from peer assessments of personality characteristics. Nominations consisted of asking each child to indicate their first and second choices of companions for specified activities (e.g., attending the movies, going for a walk, going skating). Acceptability scores for subjects were derived from the number of nominations a child received. Popular and unpopular groups were identified for each sex and each grade. Popular groups consisted of the highest scoring twenty-five percent and unpopular groups were comprised of the lowest scoring twenty-five percent. Results were reported in terms of the percentage of the highly acceptable and least acceptable groups who were identified by their peers as possessing various characteristics.

Findings suggested that acceptable children were judged more frequently to be cheerful, happy, enthusiastic, friendly, to enjoy jokes, and to initiate games and activities. Traits that demonstrated a negative relationship to acceptability were enjoys fights, seeks attention, bossess others, acts older, and is restless and talkative.

Keisler (1953) used information obtained from "guess who" statements to identify tenth-grade children as socially accepted. Subjects were asked to name someone whom they liked to be with or enjoyed having around and to name someone whom they didn't like to be with or didn't enjoy having around. Social acceptance information was correlated with information regarding personality traits and peer nominations of best friends and classroom companions. Results showed that social acceptance scores correlated moderately with friendliness,
sociability ("a good mixer"), and the number of times chosen as a best friend and classroom companion.

Like Kuhlen and Lee (1943), Elkins (1958) employed peer nomination measures to identify twelve- through fifteen-year-old students as members of the "most chosen," "least chosen," or "average chosen" groups. Following the administration of nomination measures, interviews were held with each child in order to determine the reasons for choice or rejection. Responses were categorized and results analyzed to determine whether different behavior patterns were identified for the three status groups. Results showed that children in the high-status group were chosen because they were good-natured, possessed a sense of humor, had interests similar to the interviewed child, conformed to group norms, accepted others, and were helpful, comforting, intelligent, cheerful, and dependable. Children classified as "least chosen" were described as displaying annoying behavior, creating trouble for others, violating group norms, and being poor in appearance and ruthless.

In a procedure similar to Elkin's (1958), Feinberg et al. (1958) asked thirteen- through fifteen-year-old boys to list adjectives which described four boys in their class whom they would like to sit next to the following semester. Also, they were asked the descriptive adjectives of the four boys who would make them feel uncomfortable to be with in the classroom situation. Analyses first involved calculating the number of times an adjective was used. These scores were then employed to identify acceptance-term clusters and rejection-term clusters. Finally, from these, "cluster dichotomies" (terms which the authors considered to represent opposite poles of the
same general personality characteristics) were computed. In general, accepted peers were characterized as intelligent, fair, able to take a joke, good company, athletic, quiet, conscientious, and honest. Rejected peers were described as pesty, noisy, conceited, silly, and effeminate.

Information obtained from peer nomination data was correlated with personality traits as measured by teachers and peers by Roff et al. (1972). Peer acceptance scores were computed by subtracting the number of liked least nominations a child received from the number of liked most nominations received. Results showed that accepted children tended to be outgoing, friendly, healthy, and bright; whereas, rejected children tended to be hostile, antagonizing, in poor health, and mentally dull.

Loban (1953) administered eighth- through twelfth-grade students sociograms and compared scores on these measures to peer and teacher assessments of social sensitivity. The particular type of sociometric employed by Loban was not stated nor was the manner in which sociometric data was computed in order to obtain a status score for each child. Based on the information regarding social sensitivity, students were divided into two extreme groups. To test the significance of the difference between the means of the sociometric scores for the two social sensitivity groups, t-tests were performed. Results showed that the most sensitive adolescents were more popular with their peers than the least sensitive adolescents.

One recent study conducted by Cavell (1989) has employed the classification system developed by Coie and his colleagues (1982) to validate a measure of adolescent social functioning. Sixth- through
twelfth-grade children were identified as popular, average, rejected, neglected, or controversial. The Measure of Adolescent Social Competence consisted of problem situations in the domains of peer, family, and school. Responses were rated according to their effectiveness. Results showed that controversial adolescents received higher social competence scores than members of other sociometric groups. No other significant differences between groups were found.

In summary, the studies conducted with adolescents have revealed that acceptance by the peer group was associated with positive traits such as cheerfulness, happiness, friendliness, possessing a sense of humor, conforming to group norms, intelligence, and extroversion. Adolescents who were unpopular with peers tended to be aggressive, restless, and talkative. They also were reported to seek attention, create trouble for others, violent group norms, and antagonize. Although these characteristics are conceptually similar to those reported for younger children, several shortcomings exist in the adolescent literature. First, no consistent method for assigning children to various sociometric groups has been employed. Further, social status in the peer group has been generally compared to global personality traits rather than behavioral characteristics.

**Purpose of the Present Investigation**

The adolescent research as well as the literature which investigated the correlates of social status with children have reported inconsistent findings regarding the at-risk status of a group of children labeled sociometrically neglected. Earlier studies have reported that these children tend to be shy and withdrawn (e.g., Coie et al., 1982) and thus may exhibit internalizing disorders to a
greater extent than average children, while more recent research has revealed that neglected children are not significantly different than average children (Boivin and Begin, 1989; Rubin et al., 1989), and, in fact, it is rejected children who exhibit both internalizing and externalizing disorders (Rubin et al., 1989). Research which addresses the at-risk status of neglected children has important implications for identifying which children are in need of social skills intervention.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the usefulness of the classification system developed by Coie and his colleagues (1982) with an adolescent population by examining the relationship between sociometric status and psychopathology. Following the Coie et al. (1982) procedure, children were identified as either popular, rejected, neglected, controversial, or average. The basis for status group membership was scores received on four social status variables: (a) liked most peer nomination scores, (b) liked least peer nomination scores, (c) social impact scores, and (d) social preference scores (the latter two scores were derived from the first two variables).

Following the administration of the liked most and liked least nomination measures, participants were asked to complete self-report instruments regarding their problem behaviors (Youth Self Report; Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1987). In addition, teachers were asked to complete measures which assess the problem behaviors of children identified as members of the various status groups (Child Behavior Checklist - Teacher Report Form; Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1986). Scores
obtained from self- and teacher-ratings of problem behaviors were analyzed using multivariate and univariate analyses of variance.

Predictions concerning the relationships among these variables are stated below.

**Hypothesis 1:** Social status group membership was expected to be associated with significant differences in scores adolescents received on teacher-completed scales which measure childhood psychopathology.

Childhood psychopathology was measured by the Child Behavior Checklist - Teacher Report Form (CBCL-TRF; Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1986). For both males and females, the broad-band categories of Internalizing and Externalizing Disorders were used.

A 5 (status group) X 2 (gender) multivariate analysis of variance using the Internalizing and Externalizing Scales of the CBCL-TRF as the dependent variables was predicted to yield a significant main effect for status. No significant main effect for gender or interaction effect was expected. Subsequent univariate and post hoc analyses were predicted to yield the following results for both males and females:

A. Scores on the Internalizing Scale would be the highest for adolescents who were members of the rejected and controversial groups. Popular, average, and neglected adolescents would receive similar scores, but lower scores than rejected and controversial adolescents (Rejected = Controversial > Popular = Average = Neglected).

B. On the Externalizing Scale, rejected and controversial adolescents were expected to receive the highest scores. Popular, average, and neglected adolescents' scores were
predicted to be similar, but lower than those received by rejected and controversial adolescents. (Rejected = Controversial > Popular = Average = Neglected).

Hypothesis 2: Social status group membership was predicted to be associated with significant differences in scores adolescents received on a measure of self-reported behavior problems.

Problem behaviors were assessed by the Youth Self Report (YSR; Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1986). Both the Internalizing and Externalizing Scales were used for boys and girls. A 5 (status group) X 2 (gender) multivariate analysis of variance was expected to yield a significant main effect for status group. No significant main effect for gender or interaction effect was predicted. Subsequent univariate and post hoc analyses were expected to provide the following results:

A. Scores on the Internalizing Scale would be the highest for adolescents who were members of the rejected and controversial groups. Popular, average, and neglected adolescents would receive similar scores, but lower scores than rejected and controversial adolescents (Rejected = Controversial > Popular = Average = Neglected).

B. On the Externalizing Scale, rejected and controversial adolescents were expected to receive the highest scores. Popular, average, and neglected adolescents' scores were predicted to be similar, but lower than those received by rejected and controversial adolescents (Rejected = Controversial > Popular = Average = Neglected).
METHOD

Subjects

Five hundred thirty-one seventh- through ninth-grade students from three junior high schools participated in the study. The first school had a subject population of 208 (81 seventh-graders, 37 males, 44 females; 63 eighth-graders, 28 males, 35 females; 64 ninth-graders, 31 males, 33 females). The second school had 171 students (70 seventh-graders, 43 males, 27 females; 58 eighth-graders, 28 males, 30 females, 43 ninth-graders, 21 males, 22 females). One hundred fifty-two students in the third school participated (68 seventh-graders, 37 males, 31 females; 44 eighth-graders, 19 males, 25 females; 40 ninth-graders, 20 males, 20 females). Participation was voluntary. These schools were selected because of the size and racial composition of their study body. The number of students for any one grade was relatively small; thus, nearly all students in each grade were well acquainted with all other students in the same grade. School principals were asked prior to data collection whether students within each grade level had sufficient opportunities to interact with each other. Further, because other researchers (Elliott & Gresham, 1988) found that children of different races were disproportionately assigned to various status groups, the schools which participated in the present study were composed of predominantly white students. The racial composition of the first school was 88% white and 12% black; 100% of the students attending the second school were white; for the third school, 89% of the students were white and 11% were black. Teachers (n=25; 4 males and 21 females) were asked to complete behavior rating scales on approximately 10 to 15 students. They were
paid one dollar for each scale completed and participation was voluntary.

Instrumentation

Child Behavior Checklist - Teacher Report Form (CBCL - TRF)

The CBCL-TRF (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1986; see Appendix A) is a 113-item behavior checklist designed to obtain teachers' reports of children's problem behaviors. Teachers were asked to rate the frequency of occurrence of certain behaviors on a three-point scale ranging from 0 = not true, through 1 = somewhat or sometimes true, to 2 = very true or often true. A score for each disorder was computed by summing the item-scores that represent each disorder. Raw scores were then converted to normalized "T" scores as provided on the scoring profiles for data analyses.

In order to determine which problem behaviors covary to form syndromes, the authors performed a principal component analysis for children of each sex at ages six through eleven and twelve through sixteen (Edelbrock & Achenbach, 1984). Research investigating the psychometric properties of the TRF found that, compared to normal children, disturbed children scored significantly higher on all behavior problem scales. Test-retest reliability averaged .89 for the behavior problem scales over a one-week period. Two- and four-month reliability estimates averaged .77 and .64, respectively (Edelbrock & Achenbach, 1984).

The scoring profiles used in the present study were those for twelve- through sixteen-year-old males and females. The scales used for data analyses for both males and females were the broad-band disorders labeled Internalizing and Externalizing. Scores were also
computed for the following subscales for males and females: Anxious, Social Withdrawal, Inattentive, Unpopular, and Aggressive.

**Youth Self-Report (YSR)**

The YSR (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1987; see Appendix B) is a 112-item instrument designed to assess the behavior problems of older children and adolescents. A separate scoring profile is provided for boys and girls, ages 11 through 18. The YSR has most of the same items as the CBCL-TRF. Sixteen items, however, considered inappropriate to ask adolescents were deleted and replaced with 16 socially desirable items which allow respondents to say something favorable about themselves. The favorable items are not included in the problem behavior scales. The frequency of occurrence of various behaviors is rated on a three point scale (0=not true, 1=somewhat or sometimes true, 2=very true or often true). A score for each disorder was computed by summing the item-scores that represent each disorder. Raw scores were then converted to normalized "T" scores as provided on the scoring profiles for data analyses.

The scales employed for data analyses for both males and females were those which measure the broad-band categories of Internalizing and Externalizing. In addition, the following subscale scores were computed for males and females: Somatic Complaints, Depressed, Unpopular, Aggressive, and Delinquent. A test-retest correlation of .69 over a six-month period was reported by Achenbach & Edelbrock (1986). In addition, the youths' self-ratings showed significant correlations with the parent version of the CBCL completed by both mothers and clinicians ($r=.37$ and .55, respectively).
Following the procedure of Coie et al. (1982), positive and negative peer nomination measures were administered to either six or seven classes of students at each of the three schools. Students were given a roster containing the names of all students in their grade level with a number assigned to each student. Participants were then asked to write on the paper provided to them, from the roster placed in front of them, the numbers corresponding to the names of three peers in their grade whom they liked most and three whom they liked least (Appendix C).

The number of times a child was named by peers was calculated for each child. Scores were standardized within each grade and standard scores were used as the dependent variables in multivariate and univariate analyses. After the peer nomination data was obtained, subjects were asked to complete one additional scale, the YSR. This instrument is described in the section above.

**Status group selection**

For each child, a liked most (LM) score was obtained by summing the number of positive nominations he/she received. Similarly, for their liked least (LL) score, the number of negative nominations received from peers was summed. These scores were then standardized within grade levels. Social preference and social impact scores were calculated from liked most and liked least scores. Social preference scores were calculated as liked most standard scores minus liked least standard scores (LMz - LLz). Social impact scores were computed by summing the liked most and liked least standard scores (LMz + LLz). Social preference and social impact scores were standardized within
grade level to ensure equivalent selection procedures across grade levels. These scores were then used to classify students according to five distinct social status groups. Criterion for group classification was the same as that used by Coie et al. (1982): (a) the popular group consisted of all students receiving a social preference score greater than 1.0, a liked most standardized score greater than 0, and a liked least standardized score less than 0; (b) the rejected group consisted of students receiving a social preference score less than -1.0, a liked least standardized score greater than 0, and a liked most standardized score less than 0; (c) the neglected group consisted of students receiving social impact scores less than -1.0 and an absolute liked most score of 0; (d) the controversial group consisted of students receiving social impact scores greater than 1.0 and liked most and liked least standardized scores greater than 0. Therefore, members of this group were above their class mean for both positive and negative peer nominations; (e) the average group consisted of students receiving a social preference score greater than -.5 and less than .5. Using this procedure the following numbers of children were identified: (1) Popular (57; 29 males, 28 females), (2) Average (108; 48 males, 60 females), (3) Rejected (57; 36 males, 21 females), (4) Neglected (23; 14 males, 9 females), and (5) Controversial (24; 9 males, 15 females).

After children belonging to social status groups were identified, their teachers were asked to complete an instrument regarding their problem behaviors (CBCL -TRF). This instrument was described in the above section. The teachers completed these scales approximately two weeks after the peer nomination data was collected.
RESULTS

Two separate 5 (status group) X 2 (gender) multivariate analyses of variance were performed. The dependent measures for the first were the standard scores children received on the the Internalizing and Externalizing Scales of the Child Behavior Checklist - Teacher Report Form. For the second analysis, children's standard scores on the Internalizing and Externalizing Scales of the Youth Self-Report constituted the dependent variable. Significant multivariate effects were followed by appropriate univariate comparisons.

Teacher Evaluation

The first hypothesis stated that social status group membership would be associated with significant differences in scores children received on the Internalizing and Externalizing Scales of the CBCL-TRF. The two-way 5 (Status Group) X 2 (Gender) MANOVA yielded a significant main effect for Status Group, $F(8, 482) = 6.40, p < .000$, based on Wilk's Lambda. No significant main effect for Gender or Status Group X Gender interaction was found. Separate univariate $F$ tests for Status Group indicated a significant group difference for Internalizing, $F(4, 242) = 10.80, p < .000$ and Externalizing, $F(4, 242) = 7.96, p < .000$. Tukey-HSD post hoc analyses showed that rejected children scored significantly higher on the Internalizing Scale than popular and average children. Controversial children also scored significantly higher on the Internalizing Scale than popular and average children. Neglected children's scores did not differ significantly from popular and average children. Further, there were no significant differences between the scores received for rejected and controversial children. These results were consistent with
predictions made. For the Externalizing Scale, rejected children received significantly higher scores than popular and average children as predicted. Controversial children scored significantly higher than popular children; however, their scores were not significantly different than those of average children. This latter finding was not consistent with predicted results. It was predicted that controversial adolescents would receive significantly higher scores than average adolescents. No other significant differences were found. The means and standard deviations for the Internalizing and Externalizing Scales of the CBCL-TRF are displayed on Table 1.

Self-Report

The second hypothesis stated that social status group membership would be associated with significant differences in scores children received on the Internalizing and Externalizing Scales of the Youth Self Report. A two way 5 (Status Group) X 2 (Gender) MANOVA showed a significant main effect for Status Group, \( F(8, 512) = 2.40, p < .02, \) based on Wilk's Lambda. No significant main effect for Gender nor a Status Group X Gender interaction effect was found. Separate univariate F tests for status group indicated a significant group difference for Internalizing, \( F(4, 257) = 4.14, p < .003, \) Tukey-HSD post hoc analyses showed that rejected children received significantly higher scores than popular children. No other significant group differences were found. These findings were not entirely expected given the hypotheses which predicted that rejected and controversial adolescents would receive higher scores than popular, average, and neglected adolescents on both the Internalizing and Externalizing
### Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Internalizing and Externalizing Scales of the Teacher Report Form

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<th>REJ</th>
<th>NEG</th>
<th>CON</th>
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<table>
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INT = Internalizing; EXT = Externalizing; AVG = Average; POP = Popular REJ = Rejected; NEG = Neglected; CON = Controversial.
Scales. The means and standard deviations for the Internalizing and Externalizing Scales of the YSR can be found on Table 2.

**Correlation Analyses**

Pearson Product Moment analyses were performed to examine the relationship between social status variables and Internalizing and Externalizing scores. Social status variables consisted of liked most and liked scores, and social preference and social impact scores. The correlation coefficients for the TRF and YSR can be found on Table 3 and Table 4, respectively. For the TRF, the Internalizing Scale scores showed a significant negative relationship with the liked most scores and social preference scores, \( r = -0.21, p < 0.01 \) and \( r = -0.19, p < 0.01 \), respectively. The Internalizing Scale scores demonstrated a significant positive relationship with the liked least scores and social impact scores, \( r = 0.35, p < 0.01 \) and \( r = 0.19, p < 0.01 \), respectively. Results were similar for the Externalizing Scale of the TRF. This scale showed a significant negative relationship with the liked most scores and social preference scores, \( r = -0.19, p > 0.01 \) and \( r = -0.24, p < 0.01 \), respectively. A significant positive relationship, however, was found for the liked least scores only, \( r = 0.24, p < 0.01 \). The relationship between the Externalizing Scale scores and social impact scores was nonsignificant.

For the YSR, the Internalizing scale scores showed a significant negative correlation with liked most scores, \( r = -0.15, p > 0.05 \), and social preference scores, \( r = -0.19, p > 0.01 \). There was no relationship between Externalizing Scale scores and any of the social status variables. Although the correlations among some measures of childhood psychopathology and social status variables were
Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations for Internalizing and Externalizing Scales of the Youth Self Report

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INT = Internalizing; EXT = Externalizing; AVG = Average; POP = Popular; REJ = Rejected; NEG = Neglected; CON = Controversial.
Table 3

Correlation Coefficients for Internalizing and Externalizing Scales of the Teacher Report Form with Liked Most, Liked Least, Social Preference, and Social Impact Scores

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** p < .01

INT = Internalizing; EXT = Externalizing; LM = Liked Most; LL = Liked; SP = Social Preference; SI = Social Impact.
Table 4

Correlation Coefficients for Internalizing and Externalizing Scales of the Youth Self Report with Liked Most, Liked Least, Social Preference, and Social Impact Scores

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INT = Internalizing; EXT = Externalizing; LM = Liked Most; LL = Liked; SP = Social Preference; SI = Social Impact.

* p < .05
** p < .01
significant, they accounted for very little of the variance of these measures.

Descriptive Analyses

Because of the small number of subjects identified as members of several of the social status groups, inferential statistical analyses could not be performed on the narrow-band subscales of the TRF and the YSR. The means and standard deviations for subscales are presented, however, in Tables 5 and 6, respectively. For the TRF subscales, the means for rejected and controversial adolescents were higher than the means for other status groups on all subscales. The scales consisted of those labeled Anxious, Social Withdrawal, Inattentive, Unpopular, and Aggressive. For the YSR, rejected girls appeared to report more problem behaviors than other groups on the scales labeled Unpopular, Depressed, and Aggressive.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the usefulness of a frequently employed social status classification system (Coie et al., 1982) with an adolescent population. Of particular interest was the at-risk status of a group of sociometrically neglected children. For a number of years, research has reported that sociometrically neglected children display shyness and withdrawal (e.g., Coie et al., 1982; Coie & Kupersmidt, 1983) and, thus, may exhibit broad-band internalizing disorders of psychopathology to a greater extent than do normal children. More recent research, however, has shown that neglected children generally do not differ from average children, and that, in fact, it is the rejected child that exhibits both internalizing and externalizing
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ANX = Anxious; SW = Social Withdrawal; IN = Inattentive;
UNP = Unpopular; AGG = Aggressive; AVG = Average; POP = Popular;
REJ = Rejected; NEG = Neglected; CON = Controversial.
Table 6
Means and Standard Deviations for Youth Self Report Subscales

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SC = Somatic Complaints; DP = Depressed; UNP = Unpopular;
AGG = Aggressive; DEL = Delinquent; AVG = Average; POP = Popular;
REJ = Rejected; NEG = Neglected; CON = Controversial.
disorders (Boivin & Begin, 1989; Rubin et al., 1989). Because of these findings, the predictions made in the present study were that neglected adolescents would not differ significantly from average adolescents in terms of the extent to which they exhibit behaviors associated with psychopathology. Further, it was predicted that sociometrically identified rejected and controversial adolescents would exhibit both internalizing and externalizing disorders to a greater degree than adolescents who were members of all other status groups.

A widely accepted, empirically derived classification system for childhood psychopathology was employed and findings suggested that with adolescents, as with younger children, it is sociometrically rejected adolescents who exhibit more behaviors associated with both internalizing and externalizing disorders. Neglected adolescents did not receive scores significantly different than adolescents identified as average. Further, the results obtained in the present study showed that the group of adolescents labeled as controversial also exhibited a greater number of behaviors associated with internalizing and externalizing disorders than average adolescents. No differences were found between rejected and controversial children. These results are consistent with those reported by Boivin and Begin (1989) who found that teacher-evaluated competence in the domain of behavior/conduct was lower for rejected and controversial children than for average children. Two additional studies (Cantrell & Prinz, 1985; French & Waas, 1985), although not employing the Coie et al. (1982) taxonomy for classification, reported similar findings regarding rejected children and childhood psychopathology.
Some researchers (Boivin & Begin, 1989) have stated that there is little support for distinguishing conceptually between average and neglected children. A careful analysis of the literature, however, suggests that this conclusion may be somewhat premature. Although a growing body of research supports the notion that neglected children may not exhibit problem behaviors, or what may be referred to as behavioral excesses, to a greater extent than do average children, it appears that their difficulty may be one of behavioral deficits rather than excesses. For example, Cantrell and Prinz (1985) administered the Pupil Evaluation Inventory (Pekarik, Prinz, Liebert, Weintraub, & Neale, 1976) to determine how peers described the behavior of children who were identified as neglected, rejected, and accepted. These researchers found that rejected children were significantly higher than accepted and neglected children for items describing physical and verbal aggression, classroom disruption, restlessness, explosiveness, bossiness, unhappiness, immaturity, social isolation, and oversensitivity. Accepted children, however, were rated as significantly more likely to help others, to be considered nice, to comprehend things around them, and to be liked by everyone than rejected and neglected children. These latter two groups did not score significantly different on these items. In addition, neglected children were found to make fewer prosocial approaches than other children (Dodge et al., 1982) and to use more strategies labeled as waiting/hovering when entering peer groups than average children (Dodge et al., 1983). Research examining the specific social skills which neglected children have acquired would be helpful for making decisions regarding their need for intervention.
The present study also investigated the self-perceptions of behavior problems with an adolescent population. Other studies that have examined the relationship between self-perceptions of feelings and behavior and sociometric status have yielded mixed results (Asher & Wheeler, 1985; Boivin & Begin, 1989; Cantrell & Prinz, 1985; Rubin et al., 1989). Asher and Wheeler (1985) found that rejected children reported greater feelings of loneliness than children of other status groups. Rubin et al., (1989), however, used the same measure of loneliness as well as a measure of social competence and found that rejected children did not report greater feelings of loneliness or perceive themselves to be less socially competent than other children. Cantrell and Prinz (1985) examined self-ratings of shyness, unhappiness, and feeling accepted and found no significant differences for status group membership. Two subtypes of rejected children were identified by Boivin and Begin (1989) with one group displaying high self-perceptions of competence and self-esteem and the other displaying low self-esteem and perceptions of competence. In addition, controversial children also displayed lower self-esteem and perceived competence. The results obtained in the present study indicated that rejected adolescents reported a greater number of problem behaviors associated with internalizing disorders than popular adolescents; however, they did not differ significantly from average children. These findings may be partially attributed to the specific developmental characteristics associated with adolescents. Adolescents are generally described as egocentric; therefore, the average adolescent may be very much "in tune" to behaviors which are conceptualized as internalizing. Controversial adolescents did not
perceive themselves to exhibit a greater number of problem behaviors than other adolescents. Replication of these findings are needed, however, before confident conclusions regarding self-perceptions of sociometrically identified groups of adolescents can be made.

Several limitations which have plaqued the adolescent social skills research also exist in the present study. First, much of the social interaction among peers is not readily observable to adults. Behavior ratings completed by teachers, therefore, probably do not provide information that is as accurate for the adolescent as it is for younger children. Second, because of the nature of adolescent peer relationships, their best friends may not be in the same classes which they are in. The procedure used for peer nominations in the present study attempted to overcome this problem by selecting small schools where students were familiar with all other students in the same grade; however, students' familiarity with their peers was not directly measured. Further, subjects were limited to nominating peers who were in the same grade as they were in. Adolescent peer groups are also more heterogenous in terms of age than are groups of younger children.

In summary, the findings reported in the present study provide preliminary support for the use of Coie et al.'s (1982) classification system with an adolescent population. Generally, the results are consistent with those obtained from studies conducted with children and indicate that the group of children identified as sociometrically neglected do not exhibit internalizing disorders of psychopathology to a greater extent than do average children. It is the rejected child or adolescent that exhibits both internalizing and externalizing
disorders. Additional studies like those conducted by French (1988; 1990) and Boivin and Begin (1989) which attempted to identify subtypes of rejected children and their characteristics are needed. Earlier research which has reported that all rejected children tend to be aggressive is misleading and may hamper optimally effective intervention for these children. Findings reported in the present study indicate that the subtypes of aggressive/rejected and withdrawn/rejected that have been identified with younger children may also be useful descriptors for adolescents.
REFERENCES


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56-58, 60-62

University Microfilms International
Instructions to Students

"We are conducting research which looks at what kind of behaviors adolescents who are liked and disliked by their peers engage in. This information will help us to know how to help kids that are disliked by their peers be more popular with peers.

You have two sheets in front of you. One contains a roster with the names of all your classmates on it. There is a number beside each person's name. All of the students who are in your same grade are listed on the sheet.

The second sheet, labeled the Peer Nomination Data, has a place on it for you to record the numbers of those classmates which you nominate.

This is what you do. Look at section I of the Peer Nomination sheet. This section is entitled Peers You Like the Most. You are to identify three peers that you like the most that are in the same grade which you are in and write the numbers which are beside their names on the appropriate place on the form.

Now, section II is labeled Peers You Like the Least. Again, identify three peer whom you like the least (in this class) by writing the numbers beside their names in the appropriate place on the form.
**PEER NOMINATION DATA**

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VITA

Glenda C. Thorne was born on July 18, 1949 in Pensacola, Florida. She received her B.A. degree in Psychology from Southeastern Louisiana University in 1982 and her M.A. in Psychology from Louisiana State University in 1987. She is currently employed by the St. Tammany Parish School Board in Covington, Louisiana.
Candidate: Glenda C. Thorne

Major Field: Psychology

Title of Dissertation: Problem Behaviors Associated with Sociometric Status in an Adolescent Population

Approved:

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Date of Examination:

October 14, 1991