

**THE RELATIONSHIP OF ACHIEVEMENT, GRADE, AND
SEX TO SOCIOMETRIC STATUS OF STUDENTS**

BY

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THE RELATIONSHIP OF ACHIEVEMENT, GRADE, AND SEX
TO SOCIOMETRIC STATUS OF STUDENTS

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Presented To
the Graduate Council of
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Master of Arts

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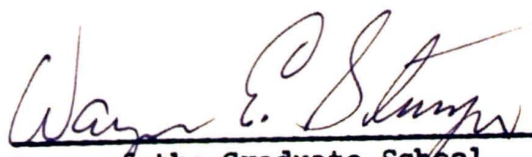
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Research Paper written by Carolyn Young Oglesby entitled "The Relationship of Achievement, Grade, and Sex to Sociometric Status of Students". I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Psychology.


Major Professor

Accepted for the Graduate Council:


Dean of the Graduate School

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Teachers and others who observe the behavior of children in groups often notice that the "bright" children also are the popular children. Conversely, the children who achieve poorly in school often are not well accepted by their peers. They may have fewer friends than the high achievers, and they may fail to be chosen by their classmates for group activities.

Low acceptance by his peers constitutes a problem for any child. In some instances, the teacher may observe that poorly accepted or rejected children in the classroom are either aggressive or shy. If some of these children also are slow learners or under-achievers, the teacher may wonder whether they are poorly accepted for these reasons, or whether their personality traits cause the low acceptance. The rejected child in the classroom needs the help of the teacher and other school personnel in improving his acceptance by his classmates. If the child is to be helped, information is needed about the variables which will affect his acceptance in the classroom.

Although the sum total of a child's traits and abilities make him unique, and he is judged by his peers as an individual, research can isolate variables which may be correlated with acceptance or rejection for groups of children. Knowledge of the nature of some of these variables can give the teacher a basis for helping a rejected child to change or to compensate for a deficiency in ways that will be likely to improve his acceptance by peers.

A number of attempts have been made to study the relationship between children's achievement and their social acceptance, using various criteria for both of these variables. Buswell (1953) undertook an early study in which she sought to determine whether social acceptance was related to school achievement in kindergarten and fifth-grade students. As measures of social acceptance, she used the Ohio Social Acceptance Scale and questionnaires measuring leadership and friendship. The achievement of kindergarten students was measured by the Gates Reading Readiness Test, while the achievement of fifth-graders was measured by the Iowa Every Pupil Tests of Basic Skills. Intelligence test scores of both groups also were studied. An acceptance group and a rejection group in the fifth grade and an acceptance

and neglect group in the kindergarten were established. Buswell found that achievement in school was related to social acceptability, that the intellectual factor associated with this achievement was the basic component in the relationship, and that socioeconomic status as such had little relationship to social acceptability in school. Buswell also hypothesized that achievement is a causal factor in acceptance, since there was no relationship between social acceptability and achievement in kindergarten subjects, but a significant relationship at the fifth grade level. Buswell suggested that, in kindergarten, the future achiever was not more highly chosen because his success was not yet evident. A more recent study (Patton and Edwards, 1970), however, also using readiness test data, found that school readiness skills were related to positive personality growth and peer popularity even in kindergarteners.

Gronlund (1959) reported that the relationship between sociometric status, or social acceptance, of pupils and their academic achievement appeared to be similar to that reported for sociometric status and intelligence, having a low positive correlation. Gronlund cites studies reported by Bonney (1943) and Laughlin (1954) with coefficients of correlation ranging from .14

to .36 between achievement in school subjects and socio-metric status for children in school grades two through seven. It was suggested by Gronlund that achievement tends to follow the pattern reported for intelligence, being related to social acceptance up to a point, with other variables then determining the degree of an individual's acceptance by his peers.

Both Buswell and Gronlund recognize the likelihood of a circular reaction in which achievement influences the child's acceptability to his mates and, in turn, the security and acceptance contribute to better school performance. This could come about through the operation of such factors as improved concentration, greater motivation, and greater social pressure from friends to conform to acceptable work habits, with the better-accepted child being one who has more and closer friends.

A review by Taylor (1965) lists student acceptance by peers among a number of factors that had been found to be positively related to achievement level. Although Taylor's article deals with over-achievers and under-achievers, it has some points of interest for this study. He reports that a number of studies indicate that the over-achiever is aware of and concerned with others, free of interpersonal friction, and may be motivated

by need for social acceptance, while other studies indicate that the under-achiever tends to be overly critical of others and to exhibit asocial or withdrawn behavior. Lawton (1970) has provided additional evidence for the relationship between peer acceptance and achievement. His study used a combined measure of achievement, with standardized test scores and school grades in equal weights, and found that peer acceptance is related to math achievement.

A child's feelings about himself are likely to be strongly affected by the feelings and reactions toward him of significant others. This assumption is one that is both rooted in observation and "common sense" and documented by research. Without including a detailed treatment of the research on the child's self-concept, it is appropriate to mention several studies which have a bearing on the purpose of this study. Guardo (1969), using sixth graders as subjects, found in general a positive linear relationship between sociometric status and self-concept. This author suggested that sociometric status is variously related to self-concept, depending on the labels used for peer nominations; "most popular" was used in his study. Bradley and Newhouse (1975) and Schmuck (1963) also found relationships between

sociometric status and self-concept. There does not appear to be a significant difference between boys and girls in the relationship between these two variables, according to Bradley and Newhouse. Cowen, Zax, Klein, Izzo, and Troost (1965) found that anxiety in nine-year-old children was related positively to discrepancy between self and desired self, and to a tendency to nominate oneself or to be nominated by peers for negative roles in a sociometric situation. Anxiety was related negatively to both I.Q. and achievement. This research suggests an apparent association between lower self-concept and sociometric status, and lower achievement and ability. Significantly, Cole (1974), Roth (1959), and Videbeck (1969) found self-concept to be related to school performance.

Willie (1970) used a social distance scale on which his subjects rated themselves and their classmates. In his fourth through sixth grade rural Southern school children, neither self-ratings nor peer ratings of social distance were significantly related to achievement levels, teacher grades, or class rank. However, there was a significant relationship between scores on sociometric questionnaires and the three criteria of achievement. At the sixth grade level, ability plus all three criteria

of achievement had significant multiple correlations with sociometric scores.

Most of the evidence cited thus far appears to indicate that achievement is a variable that is related to sociometric status, at least for the elementary school child. A further question which has been explored is whether a sex difference exists in the applicability of the achievement variable to sociometric status.

When the dimension of sex differences has been added, some sociological effects appear to emerge. Using a sociometric device for both peer rating and self-rating, Cotler and Palmer (1970) studied the relationships among sex, sociometric, self, and test anxiety factors to academic achievement in fourth through sixth graders. They found that for girls, most intercorrelations between sociometric and self-ratings and achievement were significant, while the same intercorrelations for boys were nonsignificant. Their sociometric device measured "visibility" as well as popularity. Girls with higher measured achievement and higher measured intelligence scores were both more visible and more popular, while girls with lower scores in these two areas had more negative scores. This was not true for boys.

Cotler and Palmer suggested that boys are more frequently judged by their peers on criteria other than academic performance. They suggested that athletic ability, leadership, and social assertiveness may be qualities which make boys more acceptable to their peers. These findings provide support for Wright's (1968) conclusion that girls are more sensitive to and dependent upon social reinforcement in the school situation than boys.

Anastasiow (1967) also found evidence of a greater relationship between self-concept and classroom performance for girls than for boys. Less able boys had lower self-concept scores in the areas of Mental Abilities and School Subjects, while less able girls evaluated themselves lower not only in these areas, but also in Work Habits, Happy Qualities, Physical Appearance, Physical Ability, Social Relations, Teacher, and Social Virtues. These results suggest that girls may be more involved with school achievement, and that achievement is more important to the self-concept of girls than of boys. Simon and Simon (1975), however, found that in their sample of fifth graders, self-esteem and academic achievement were strongly related for both boys and girls. These authors note that their results differ from earlier

studies which had found sex differences in the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. They suggest that the existence of a sex difference may vary, depending on sociological characteristics of different schools and/or various personality characteristics of student bodies and teachers.

When it is noted that most elementary school children are taught by females, and that girls may be more accustomed to pleasing the female parent and to positive social reinforcement, it can be understood how students might consider school achievement more important for girls. Cotler and Palmer (1970) suggested that girls are more prone to academic striving and overcompensation while boys, for reasons associated with differences in incentive value of achievement and social reinforcement, may engage in less compensatory behavior. Their data lend support to such an interpretation and indicate that a child's responsiveness to social reinforcement and his academic performance are related both to intrinsic personality characteristics and to such extrinsic variables as sociometric status.

The age of the sample is thought by some researchers to be an important determinant of the relationship between sociometric status and achievement. Much has

been written on the effects of the adolescent peer group on student achievement. Coleman (1959) suggested that the peer group acts as a deterrent to achievement. In a later book (1961), Coleman concluded that the adolescent culture discourages the valuing and pursuit of academic interests. He suggested that students who were greatest in intellectual potential were members of the leading "crowds" and were not likely to be amenable to academic pursuits. Braham (1965) suggested that the adolescent peer group deters academic achievement by stressing such values as conformity, popularity, and mediocrity, to the detriment of individuality and creativity.

Damico (1975) recently studied the relationship of clique membership in ninth graders to their levels of achievement, using grade-point average as a criterion. She found that group membership was a useful predictor of grade-point average for the total sample and for all groups, male and female, except black females, who were few in number and tended not to have peer groups of their own. Her peer groups were composed of students with wide ranges of abilities, suggesting that group pressure, operating in some unspecified ways, leads many students either to underachieve or to overachieve.

Damico concluded that clique membership is one, but not the only, determinant of academic achievement. Damico's study suggests that adolescents may indeed de-value academic achievement, and that they choose friends on other bases. Wellington and Wellington (1965) found in a study of adolescent underachievers that many were gregarious and socially adept, with low achievement apparently not affecting their peer popularity.

Horowitz (1967) used project TALENT scores of a large, regionally representative sample of high school males and females to isolate factors associated with popularity and rejection. One of his major findings was that while athletes were chosen more frequently than scholars (by several criteria of interpersonal popularity), those who were both athletes and scholars were the most popular of all. This finding suggests that adolescents value both academic and athletic achievement. In this study, the English test total score was the best academic predictor of both popularity and rejection, having a positive relationship with popularity.

Further evidence is provided by Muma (1965), who studied extremes of peer choice (high acceptance, high rejection, and neglect) in preferred associates in

typical school activities. His subjects were students in junior and senior high schools. Muma's findings supported the hypothesis that academic performance is related to peer choice, with the highly accepted group being highest in academic performance, followed by neglect and control groups (difference in academic performance non-significant), and high rejection group (lowest academic performance). Williams and Knecht (1962) earlier had related measures of both ability and achievement in high school students to teacher ratings on a variable called "likability." They concluded that academic achievement (in terms of grades) is more closely related to this likability factor than to student ability. These results, however, are not necessarily indicative of peer acceptability, since teachers were not given a specific referent for likability. Some teachers may have rated the students according to their own feelings, while others may have been judging peer feelings about the rated students.

The peer group effect on achievement has been questioned by Bowles and Levin (1966), among others. It is possible that the adolescent peer group effect on achievement exists and varies from one school and community to another, depending on the value placed on

academic achievement within the community and upon other sociological factors.

The consensus of most research in the area appears to be that achievement is a variable that is related to social acceptance for the elementary school child. However, the relationship between achievement and acceptance is less clear for boys than for girls and for adolescents.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the question of whether significant differences exist in the peer acceptance of a combined sample of fourth and eighth grade students who achieve at high, average, and low levels on a measure of academic achievement. An additional purpose of the study was to determine if such differences in social acceptance in relation to achievement occur for girls, but not for boys, as some of the research cited above has indicated. It was predicted, in accordance with the results of studies by Cotler and Palmer (1970) and Anastasiow (1967), that a sex difference might be found, with achievement related to social acceptance for girls only. If the adolescent peer culture de-values academic achievement, as suggested by Coleman and Braham, its effect might

be expected in the absence of a relationship between social acceptance and achievement in the eighth grade students. Children in the fourth grade were expected to show a significant relationship between social acceptance and achievement, in accordance with the previous research (Buswell, 1953; Willie, 1970). It was predicted that when data for subjects of both sexes and both grade levels were combined, high-achieving students would have significantly higher social-acceptance scores.

Both Muma (1965) and Williams and Knecht (1962) used students' grades as their sole indicator of academic performance. Although most teachers doubtless strive to avoid personal bias in assigning grades, it probably is difficult for teachers to avoid being influenced to some extent by a student's attitude and other subtle factors associated with his likability. Standardized achievement test scores were used in this study, as a more objective measure of achievement. The single achievement criterion used was the total reading score; this choice was based on the assumption that for both fourth and eighth graders, reading is a basic tool for all subject areas. By the fourth grade, a child is expected to read independently in social studies, health,

science, and English or language. Even the mathematics textbook requires reading ability for the child to follow directions and understand examples of problems. Because of this constant need for reading skill, a child may fail or perform poorly in several subjects if his reading skills are inadequate. The importance of reading skill for eighth grade students is perhaps even greater, since wide independent reading is basic to school success at this level.

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested by statistical analysis of the data collected.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean sociometric scores of the total group of students who achieve at high, average, and low levels in total reading scores on standardized achievement tests.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean sociometric scores of 4th and 8th grade boys who achieve at high, average, and low levels in total reading scores on standardized achievement tests.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean sociometric scores of 4th and 8th grade girls who achieve at high, average, and low levels in total reading scores on standardized achievement tests.
4. There is no significant difference in the mean sociometric scores of eighth grade students who achieve at high, average, and low levels in total reading scores on standardized achievement tests.

5. There is no significant difference in the mean sociometric status of fourth grade students who achieve at high, average, and low levels in total reading scores on standardized achievement tests.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects

The original sample included 142 students, including 80 fourth graders and 62 eighth graders, who attended an elementary school and a junior high school in the same rural community. This procedure had the advantage of providing students from a relatively homogeneous background culturally and geographically. Fourth graders were chosen as an appropriate elementary sample because they were expected to be able to read the scale and to work on it independently, in most cases. Eighth graders were chosen because they were in the second year of attendance at the junior high school, where they were exposed to a different environment from their former school and associated exclusively with other young adolescents.

Signed parental permission to use achievement test data was obtained on 103 of the students in the original sample. These included 53 fourth graders and 50 eighth graders. Among these were eleven students for whom achievement test data was not available. The final number of subjects used to form high, average, and low

reading achievement groups was 92, including 43 eighth graders and 49 fourth graders. When grouped by sex to test hypotheses two and three, the sample consisted of 46 boys and 46 girls.

Apparatus

The Sociometric Instrument. The instrument used to measure sociometric status was the How I Feel Toward Others scale developed by Dr. Merl E. Bonney. This scale allows each child to rank every other child in his classroom on the basis of friendship. For this reason, it offers a better indication of each child's status than does an instrument which allows the child only to choose preferred work or play mates from among his classmates. The scale allows each child to be ranked by every other child according to one of the following categories:

(1) My Best Friends, (2) My Other Friends, (3) Students I Don't Know, (4) Students I know but who are not my friends, and (5) Students I do not want to have as friends - as long as they are like they are now. The five categories, in this manner, are divided into two degrees of acceptance, a neutral category, and two degrees of rejection. Further descriptions are provided in the scale to help students make appropriate choices. A copy of the How I Feel Toward Others junior high

scale is included as Appendix B to this paper. The primary scale is identical except for appropriate changes in wording, e.g., "you play with your best friends a lot," rather than, "you are with your best friends a lot."

The How I Feel Toward Others scale appears to be a valid instrument for assessing feelings about others, if one accepts the assumption that feelings carry their own validity for the particular persons concerned. Dr. Bonney bases validity of the instrument on this assumption, as well as on the method of its construction (Bonney, 1954). An additional necessary assumption is that the students will give honest answers in their rankings. The nature of instructions given to the students and assurance of confidentiality of the data should provide assurance that students will give candid responses.

The reliability of the How I Feel Toward Others scale was established by comparing scores on two successive administrations of the scale over time intervals ranging from one day to four months. The Rho correlations between successive groups varied from .69 to .94 (Bonney, 1954). These relatively high positive correlations were considered to be sufficient evidence of

scale reliability for purposes of this study.

Achievement Measure. The single measure of achievement used was the total reading score on the Metropolitan Achievement Test, Form F, Elementary and Advanced levels. This widely used standardized test battery is administered each spring to third and seventh graders in the participating schools, and it provided the most recent objective measure of total reading skill for the students who served as subjects.

Parent Letter. All children in the original sample were given letters to take home to their parents (see Appendix A), requesting permission to obtain achievement test scores from their cumulative school records. Approximately 73% of the letters were returned with permission given.

Definition of Terms

Achievement was defined as each student's total reading subtest score on the Metropolitan Achievement Test, which was administered during the spring of 1976, the academic year just prior to the one in which the study was conducted.

The high achiever was defined as a student whose total reading score on the achievement test was in the seventh, eighth, or ninth stanine.

The average achiever was defined as a student whose total reading score on the achievement test was in the fourth, fifth, or sixth stanine.

The low achiever was defined as a student whose total reading score on the achievement test was in the first, second, or third stanine.

Sociometric status was defined as the student's attained percentage of the maximum possible sociometric score for his classroom on the How I Feel Toward Others scale, multiplied by 100 and increased by a constant of 100.

Procedure

Permission. Permission to engage in the study was obtained from the Dickson County Superintendent of Schools and from principals of the two schools involved. After five classrooms were selected, teachers were contacted in order to obtain their permission and cooperation. Each teacher expressed interest in the results of the sociometric scale and the study.

Collecting Data. The How I Feel Toward Others scale was administered to students in each classroom in the seventh month of the school year. Students had been in constant association since the beginning of the year, which allowed them ample time to form stable

feelings about one another. After being introduced by the teacher in each classroom, the examiner greeted the students, thanked them for their help, and proceeded to read the scale aloud while the students read it silently. Each student then was given a list containing names of all students in the class, which the examiner also read aloud to insure that names were listed correctly and that students could identify each name. Each student then wrote by every name a number indicating his feeling of friendship toward that student. The examiner directed students to use cover sheets as they worked on the scale. This was done to reassure students that the ratings they were giving would not be seen by other students. Also, students were told that only the examiner and their teacher would see the data, and that it would be treated in a confidential manner.

Scoring Procedure. Dr. Bonney (1954) suggested that a weighted scoring be used on the How I Feel Toward Others scale to determine each individual's score. Following this procedure, each child's sociometric score was computed in the following manner: for every choice received as Best Friend, a positive two was given; for every choice as Other Friend, a positive one was given; for every neutral or Don't Know choice, a zero was given;

for every choice as Not My Friend, a negative one was given; and for every choice of Do Not Want as My Friend, a negative two was given. The sociometric score assigned to each student was thus an algebraic sum of the scores assigned to him by every child in the class.

Again following Dr. Bonney's procedure (1954), the maximum score a student could receive was determined by multiplying by two the number of other students in the class who rated him. A student's percentage of this maximum possible score was obtained by dividing it into his actual score. Each score was multiplied by 100 to eliminate decimals. Since some students received negative scores by this method, each score was increased by a constant of 100 to provide a positive value. The scoring procedure made it possible to compare scores from different size classrooms.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The total sample of students in grades four and eight was divided into high, average, and low achievers. They were further divided into boys, girls, eighth grade and fourth grade groups. The number and means sociometric score for each group is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Mean Sociometric Scores for Achievement Groups

	<u>High</u> N/Sociometric score	<u>Average</u> N/Sociometric score	<u>Low</u> N/Sociometric score
Total Sample	14/135	57/127	21/111
Boys	9/133	27/121	10/106
Girls	5/137	30/129	11/115
Eighth Grade	7/120	27/122	9/97
Fourth Grade	7/149	30/132	12/121

In order to test for significant differences in mean sociometric scores of groups, t-tests were computed for each possible pairing of groups. The results for the t-tests of each pairing of groups are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Results of t -tests for Differences in Mean
Sociometric Scores of Achievement Groups

Achievement Groups	t	df
Total Sample		
High and low	2.424*	33
High and average	1.507	69
Low and average	2.464*	76
Boys		
High and low	1.876	17
Average and low	1.573	35
High and average	1.389	34
Girls		
High and low	1.518	14
Average and low	1.116	39
High and average	.465	33
Eighth Grade		
High and low	1.623	14
Average and low	2.697*	34
High and average	.219	32
Fourth Grade		
High and low	2.382*	17
Average and low	1.116	40
High and average	1.865	35

* significant at .05 level

Higher sociometric scores were earned by the high achievers in each group except in the total eighth grade group. In this group, the average achievers had higher sociometric scores. In each group, the lowest score was earned by the low achievers.

When high and low achievers in the total group were compared, it was found that high achievers had significantly higher mean sociometric scores ($p < .05$). Average achievers also had mean sociometric scores which were significantly higher than low achievers ($p < .05$). Between high and average achievers, the difference in sociometric scores was not significant. Hypothesis one must be rejected on the basis of these data.

Statistical analysis by t -tests between each possible pairing of groups of boys revealed that differences in sociometric scores among high, average, and low achieving boys were not significant ($p < .10$ for each t value). The second hypothesis must be accepted on the basis of these data.

The total sample of girls was divided into high, average, and low achievers in order to test hypothesis three. No significant differences in sociometric status were found among high, average, and low achievers when t -tests were computed. The probability level for differences

between high and low achieving girls and between average and low achieving girls was less than .20, while the probability level for high and average achieving girls was greater than .20. Hypothesis three must be accepted.

When the data for the total sample of eighth graders was analyzed, it was found that average achievers had significantly higher sociometric scores than low achievers ($p < .02$). Differences in sociometric scores between average and high achievers and between high and low achievers were not significant. High achievers and average achievers had similar mean scores, but the small sample of high achievers ($N = 7$) did not allow statistical demonstration of a difference between the high and low achievers in the eighth grade sample. Hypothesis four was rejected on the basis of these data.

The total sample of fourth graders was divided into high, average, and low achieving groups to test hypothesis five. A significant difference was found between the sociometric scores of high and low achievers ($p < .05$), with the high achievers having higher sociometric status. The difference between average and low achievers in sociometric scores was not significant. Hypothesis five was rejected on the basis of these data.

For the total sample and for boys, girls, and fourth graders, the differences in mean sociometric scores indicate a trend for high achievers to be more highly chosen as friends and low achievers to be least often chosen as friends, with average achievers having mean sociometric scores which are between the two extreme groups. Not all the differences are statistically significant, however. This trend was seen in eighth graders, since high and average achievers had similar mean sociometric scores, with average achievers actually having the higher mean score. This result may have been affected by the small number of high achievers; however, it might also be taken as support for the contention that high achievement is less valued by adolescents.

The results obtained for boys and for girls, when analyzed separately, yield no support for the sex difference in the relationship between achievement and sociometric status which was suggested by Cotler and Palmer in 1970. In neither sex did high achievers have significantly higher sociometric scores. The fact that high achievers of both sexes did have higher mean scores suggests that research with larger samples might find

achievement to be related to sociometric status for both girls and boys.

The data obtained in this study, suggest that, in general, students who read well have more and closer friends in the community and schools studied. The trend may be for boys who read well to have more and closer friends, but no significant support for this assumption was obtained. The same trend was noted for girls, but again there was no statistical significance. The data suggest that average and good readers have similar status in the eighth grade, and that students in both groups are more highly regarded by peers than poor readers. No special sociometric status appears to be attained by eighth graders or fourth graders who are above average readers as compared to average readers. As in the eighth grade, the tendency is for poor readers to be less frequently chosen as friends than average or poor readers.

These findings must be accepted within the context of certain limitations. The study was conducted in only two schools among students of a rural population in middle Tennessee. The evidence of the various relationships between sociometric status and achievement may be applicable only to similar communities and schools. A

second limitation is that for the achievement scores in this study, national norms were used, rather than local norms. This admits the possibility that the scores used are not representative of the level of achievement attained in the particular schools and classrooms which were studied. However, the use of reading as the achievement criterion makes this unlikely. The question of children's honesty or candor in responding to a self-report questionnaire such as the sociometric scale, constitutes a further limitation. All self-report documents are subject to such limitation. However, no particular advantage is given to any group of children by this limitation.

The most obvious difficulty with an attempt to study relationships between any variable and achievement is that achievement will be confounded by intellectual ability itself. Obviously, most high achievers will be children of average and higher intellectual ability. The question can arise whether these children are chosen as friends because they are "bright" in ways unrelated to academic performance. Perhaps their creativity, wit, and resourcefulness are the qualities which cause them to be chosen. In this study, such variables were not eliminated, and it is possible that these qualities

are concentrated more in the high achieving groups rather than distributed randomly among all groups. The same possibility exists for socioeconomic status. It is possible that among high achieving students, there is a concentration of children from higher socioeconomic levels. These children could have a number of admirable qualities, ranging from the obvious, such as being better dressed, to the more subtle, such as greater vitality due in part to better nutrition. It may be recalled that Buswell (1953), in her original elementary school sample, found little relationship between socioeconomic status and social acceptability. However, this relationship may vary with the community, school, and classroom, and even with the times, since over twenty years have elapsed since the Buswell study.

The findings of the present study must be considered in light of all the above limitations. The relatively small sample, particularly in all high achieving groups, poses a further limitation on interpretation of the data.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the question of whether significant differences exist in the peer acceptance of a combined sample of fourth and eighth grade students who achieve at high, average, and low levels on a measure of academic achievement, the total reading score on a standardized test. An additional purpose was to determine if such differences in social acceptance among these three achievement levels occur both for boys and for girls. The data also were examined to determine if such differences in social acceptance in relation to achievement occur at both eighth grade and fourth grade levels.

Subjects were 43 eighth grade students at a rural junior high school and 49 fourth graders at an elementary school in the same community. Metropolitan Achievement Test scores were used as an achievement measure. Sociometric status was determined by scores on the How I Feel Toward Others scale (Bonney, 1943).

The data obtained in this study suggest that, in general high achievers in total reading scores have significantly higher peer status. When data were examined separately by sex, it was found that differences in

sociometric status among high, average, and low achievers were not significant, although mean sociometric scores were higher for high achievers and lower for low achievers. Among fourth grade students, high achievers had significantly higher sociometric scores than low achievers. The mean score of high achievers was also higher than that of average achievers, although the difference was not significant. Among eighth graders, average achievers had significantly higher sociometric scores than low achievers. At this grade level, average achievers attained a higher sociometric score than high achievers, although the difference was not significant.

Further research is suggested to investigate the following areas:

1. The relationship between sociometric status and total achievement, based on battery median scores on standardized achievement tests.
2. The relationship between sociometric status among same sex peers and various criteria of achievement. Such a study might reveal whether boys tend to choose high achieving boys as friends.
3. The relationship between sociometric status and achievement among senior high school students.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Dear Parents,

A research study will be conducted in _____ grade classes in your child's school by the school psychological intern as a requirement of her training at Austin Peay State University. The intern is supervised by Mrs. Ida Westerman, School Psychologist, and Dr. Elizabeth Stokes, Professor of Psychology at Austin Peay State University.

The researcher will need to see the children's standardized achievement test scores, which are in their school records, in order to complete the study. Their scores will be kept confidential. The children's names will not be used in any way in the study. If you give your permission for the researcher to see your child's achievement test scores for the purpose of this study, please sign below. Your child will need to return this form to the teacher. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Carolyn Oglesby
School Psychology Intern
Dickson County Schools

I give Carolyn Oglesby permission to see the records of my child _____
(Child's Name)
for the research study she is conducting. I understand that all information will be kept confidential, as described above.

Parents Name _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B

The teacher and the pupils should read this entire scale together.

To the Pupils:

You have all taken a lot of tests in Mathematics, science, and other subjects. You have been asked to take those tests so your teachers would know better how to help you in your studies. Now you are asked to tell how you feel toward other students in your room. This is not a test like the others you have taken. There are no right or wrong answers. All you need to do is to tell how you feel toward other students in your room. By doing this you will help the teacher to know which other students you get along with best.

No child will be allowed to see another child's paper.

DIRECTIONS: On another sheet of paper you have the names of all the children in your room. As soon as we finish reading the directions you will be asked to place a number to the left of each of these names, including your own. The numbers which you will use are the numbers of the paragraphs listed below.

Do not put any numbers now. Please put your pencils down until you are told by your teacher to begin.

We must first read all the directions together, so you will be sure to know how to mark your list of names.

Number 1 is for: My Best Friends. How can we tell our best friends from just ordinary friends? Below you will find listed some things which are generally true of our best friends. Put a 1 to the left of the names of those students who are best friends.

- A. You are with your best friends a lot and have fun with them.
- B. You get along well with them, help them whenever you can, and share your problems with them.
- C. You go places with them and talk with them a lot.
- D. You go to their homes and they come to your home quite often.

Number 2 is for: My Other Friends. Besides our best friends all of us have other friends who we like fairly well. Put a 2 to the left of the names of those students you like fairly well.

- A. You are with them sometimes, but you do not always have fun with them.
- B. You are nice to them and get along with them, and talk with them, but not very often.
- C. Sometimes you go places with them, and talk with them, but not very often.
- D. You seldom go to their homes, and they seldom come to your home.

Number 3 is for: Students I Don't Know. There may be some students on your list whom you don't know well enough to know whether you like them or not. It may be that you have not been with them enough to tell much about them. You don't know how you really feel about these students. Put a 3 to the left of the names of those students whom you don't know well enough to rate.

Number 4 is for: Students I know but who are not my friends. All of us know some persons quite well but we do not consider them to be our friends. Put a 4 to the left of the names of those students you do not consider as your friends.

- A. You seldom choose to be with them.
- B. You do not get along very well with them when you are around them.
- C. You do not talk to them or go places with them unless it is necessary to be polite.
- D. You do not like some of the things they do, and the way they act at times.

Number 5 is for: Students I do not want to have as friends-as long as they are like they are now. Nearly all of us find there are a few persons we cannot get along with. These people may be all right in some ways, and may be regarded as good friends by others, but not by us.

- A. You avoid being with them, and you never choose them as partners for a game or sports.
- B. Sometimes you fuss and quarrel with them when you are around them.
- C. You never go places with them and you never talk with them unless you have to.
- D. You dislike very much some of the things they do, and the way they act at times.

Now let us go over the main headings.

- What is number 1 for? (Student response)
- What is number 2 for? (Student response)
- What is number 3 for? (Student response)
- What is number 4 for? (Student response)
- What is number 5 for? (Student response)

You do not have to use all these numbers. You may use any of these as many times as you wish. All you need to do is to show how you feel about each person on your list by putting one of the above numbers to the left of his name.

Be sure to put a number to the left of every name. Do not leave out anyone.

Has everyone found his own name? If your name is not on the list tell the teacher or sponsor so she can have all the students add your name to their lists. As soon as you have found your name or have written it in, put a 6 to the left of it.

If you have any questions, please ask them now.

When you have finished marking your list, turn your paper face down on your desk and leave it there until the teacher takes it up.

Go ahead now and place the other numbers (1-2-3-4-5) to the left of the rest of the names on your list.