

THE RELATIONSHIP OF SCHOOL  
ENTRANCE AGE AND SEX TO  
THE SOCIOMETRIC STATUS OF  
STUDENTS IN GRADES FOUR,  
SIX, EIGHT, TEN, AND TWELVE

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THE RELATIONSHIP OF SCHOOL ENTRANCE AGE AND SEX TO THE  
SOCIOMETRIC STATUS OF STUDENTS IN GRADES FOUR,  
SIX, EIGHT, TEN, AND TWELVE

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An Abstract  
Presented to  
the Graduate Council of  
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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in Education

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by  
Jane Elizabeth Adams  
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## ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of the study was to compare the relationship of school entrance age to the sociometric status of students in grades four, six, eight, ten, and twelve in the classrooms selected for the study in Christian County, Kentucky. A secondary purpose was to examine the effect of sex differences on social acceptance at all grade levels involved in the population included in the study.

Students in the study were divided into three groups and classified as older, middle, and younger, according to their age and grade placement. An overage group was not included in the study since it was not known whether these children had repeated one or more grades, or had entered first grade after December 31 of the year in which they were six years of age.

The groups were defined in the following manner:

1. Older group: children whose sixth birthday occurred between January 1 and April 30 of the year in which they entered first grade as evidenced by their being in the correct grade for their present age.

2. Middle group: children whose sixth birthday occurred between May 1 and August 31 of the year in which they entered first grade as evidenced by their being in the correct grade for their present age.

3. Younger group: children whose birthday occurred between September 1 and December 31 of the year in which they entered first grade as evidenced by their being in the correct grade for their present age.

4. Overage group: children whose birthday indicates that they had either entered first grade after December 31 of the year in which they were six years of age or had repeated one or more grades as determined by their being one or more grades behind the correct grade for their present age.

The sociometric questionnaire, How I Feel Toward Others, developed by Dr. Merl E. Bonney was used to obtain the social acceptance scores of the students. The formula for the significance of difference between means was used to test for the significant differences in the social acceptance scores among students in the older, middle, or younger groups.

A statistical analysis of the data allowed the following conclusions to be drawn:

1. There was no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students who were in the older, middle, or younger groups at any of the five grade levels in the study.



2. There was no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of the total group of boys as compared to the total group of girls when divided into the older, middle, or younger groups.

3. There was no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of the combined group of older boys at all grade levels as compared to the combined groups of middle and younger aged boys and girls at all grade levels.

4. There was no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of the combined groups of older girls at all levels as compared to the combined groups of middle and younger aged girls at all grade levels.

5. There was no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of all students in the older group as compared to all students in the middle or younger groups.

The conclusions of this study would indicate that age was not the most important criterion for social acceptance, but that some other factor or combination of factors was a more important criterion for social acceptance, at least for those children who had successfully progressed through school without ever having repeated a grade. It is well to point out that the overage group which was not included in

the analysis of data may have been a significant factor in the results found by this investigator. The entering school age of the overage group was not determined, but it can be assumed that a large number of the group had repeated one or more grades in school even though some were possibly late entrants. Such an assumption might indicate that students in this study were possibly average or above average in intelligence. It is also interesting to observe that about seventy-three per cent of the overage group were boys.



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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
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by  
Jane Elizabeth Adams  
August 1969

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Jane Elizabeth Adams entitled "The Relationship of School Entrance Age and Sex to the Sociometric Status of Students in Grades Four, Six, Eight, Ten, and Twelve." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education, with a major in Guidance and Counseling.

Elizabeth H. Stokes  
Major Professor

We have read this thesis and  
recommend its acceptance:

Fred A. Bunger  
Minor Professor

John D. Martin  
Third Committee Member

Accepted for the Council:

Wayne E. Stanger  
Dean of the Graduate School



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

An optimum school entrance age has been a matter of concern to educators and administrators for many years. Since the time of compulsory school attendance, state legislatures have enacted laws which determine the requirements for school entrance. In most states, children are admitted on a chronological age criterion. Entrance birth date lines vary from state to state and as these date lines become more rigid and fixed, educators and parents exert more demands for exceptions to the rules. Such demands are the outcome of a concern for more adequately meeting the individual needs and differences of children in an age of ever-expanding knowledge. In recognizing that the aim of education is to provide the opportunity for each individual to develop to his highest potential--socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually, it is imperative that we critically examine the practice of admitting children to school on a strictly chronological age criterion. Rowland (35) points out that at the turn of the century, John Dewey and G. T. Patrick challenged the idea of a fixed age as the criteria for admission to first grade. Evidence accumulated since that time has not resolved this controversial issue.

Educators generally agree that to enter first grade a child should be sufficiently mature or "ready" in four areas of development: social, emotional, physical, and intellectual. Although chronological age is the most widely used criterion for establishing school readiness, it is not necessarily synonymous with any of the four developmental areas. A child's total development should be the criterion for first grade entrance.

The early formative years are vital in the development of the below average, average, and intellectually superior child. Each individual should be challenged by a school program which recognizes that children do differ in their needs and abilities. It is of utmost importance that the first school tasks be ones that meet the child on his own level of maturity. Hawkes (17) points out that many educators believe that the first year or two in school can make or mar the learning experiences of a child throughout his school life and can exert profound effect upon his adult life. Some children have found their early school experiences filled with success, achievement, and approval. Others have found failure, frustration, and despair in attempting tasks which they were not prepared to accomplish. The 1960 White House Conference



on Children and Youth (40, p. 15) recommended that a basic role for all schools regardless of locality, should be to:

make available to all children and youth, those experiences which will stimulate each student to develop his intellectual, moral, spiritual, aesthetic, vocational, physical, and social needs as an individual, as an American citizen, and as a member of the world community.

In providing optimum learning experiences for all children, educators have voiced concern about the social development of early entrants. One of the problems a child encounters is that of social acceptance by his peers. It is generally agreed that how well a child is accepted by his peer group affects the way he learns and feels about himself. One's ideals, motivations, and many of his pleasures are a product of social interaction. In our democratic society it is necessary that an individual be able to find fulfillment in his work and play interaction with others.

Educators and laymen have expressed concern not only that younger school entrants would experience problems in social acceptance by their peers but also that boys who were in the younger group would encounter more difficulties in being accepted than would girls. The major objective of this study is to determine if there is a relationship between school entrance age and the social acceptance of an individual

by his peers. A secondary objective of the investigation is to determine the relationship of sex to the social acceptance of young school entrants. Social acceptance will be measured by a sociometric test administered at specified grade levels.

### Statement of the Problem

More specifically, the major purpose of this study is to compare the relationship of school entrance age to the sociometric status of students in grades four, six, eight, ten, and twelve in the classrooms selected for the study in the schools in Christian County, Kentucky. Students in the study will be divided into three groups and will be classified as older, middle, and younger, according to their age and grade placement. Boys will also be compared to girls at each grade level to determine if there is a difference in the social acceptance of boys and girls in the total group as well as at each grade level.

### Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students who are in the older, middle, or younger age group in grade four.

2. There is no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students who are in the older, middle, or younger age group in grade six.

3. There is no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students who are in the older, middle, or younger age group in grade eight.

4. There is no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students who are in the older, middle, or younger age group in grade ten.

5. There is no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students who are in the older, middle, or younger age group in grade twelve.

6. There is no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of all boys in the older group as compared to all girls in the older group.

7. There is no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of all boys in the middle group as compared to all girls in the middle group.

8. There is no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of all boys in the younger group as compared to all girls in the younger group.

9. There is no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of all boys in the older age group as compared to all boys in the middle or younger groups.



10. There is no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of all girls in the older group as compared to all girls in the middle or younger groups.

11. There is no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of all students in the older group as compared to all students in the middle or younger groups.

#### Definition of Terms

1. Older group: children whose sixth birthday occurred between January 1 and April 30 of the year in which they entered first grade as evidenced by their being in the correct grade for their present age.

2. Middle group: children whose sixth birthday occurred between May 1 and August 31 of the year in which they entered first grade as evidenced by their being in the correct grade for their present age.

3. Younger group: children whose birthday occurred between September 1 and December 31 of the year in which they entered first grade as evidenced by their being in the correct grade for their present age.

4. Overage group: children whose birthday indicates that they had either entered first grade after December 31 of the year in which they were six years of age or had repeated

one or more grades as determined by their being one or more grades behind the correct grade for their present age.

5. Sociometric test: a technique for evaluating the social structure of a group and the extent to which individuals are accepted by their peers at the time the test was given (14).

6. Sociometric status: the degree to which an individual was accepted by others within the group as determined by the score at the time the test was given (14).

#### Limitations of the Study

1. The study was confined to students in Hopkinsville and Christian County Public Schools.

2. No attempt was made to determine what students, if any, had attended kindergarten prior to their admission to first grade.

3. No attempt was made to include the intellectual ability, socio-economic level, or any other factor which might affect social acceptance. It was assumed that there would be no bias in any of these factors which would relate to a particular age group.

4. No attempt was made to include children below the fourth grade since a group administered sociometric instrument is not considered effective with younger children.

5. No attempt was made to examine the acceptance scores of children who were not at the proper grade level for their age. Thus, some of the young children who might have been retained were not included in the study.

### Need for the Study

In 1958 a state wide study was conducted in Kentucky on school entrance age. Its purpose was to determine the advisability of revising the state law which provided that a child should be six years of age on or before December 31 of the year in which he entered first grade. Findings in the study on the relationship of school entrance age to reading, arithmetic, and social adjustment, as evaluated by teachers at the first and fifth grade levels, led the Commission (26, p. 28) to conclude:

that students who enter first grade late (76-79 months on admission to first grade) have a general advantage over students who enter first grade early (68-71 months on admission to first grade).

In investigating the relationship of age of entrance to non-promotion in the first grade, the Commission (26, p. 28) reported:

Despite the fact that the group was probably more a select group, the survey of 'repeat' experience of first graders seems extensive enough to support the conclusion that maturity (as related to age) has a relationship to success in the kind of program Kentucky schools generally provide first graders.



The Commission recommended that the state law be revised to provide that a child must be six years of age by October 1 of the year in which he is to enter first grade. No legislative action was taken on the recommendations of the Commission. Parents and educators have pressed for a more flexible chronological age requirement but little has been accomplished in this direction.

In 1963 the Educational Research Service of the National Education Association (30) conducted a questionnaire survey of practices regarding school entrance age. Replies were received from 325 school districts which enrolled 12,000 or more students. This return comprised eighty-five per cent of the questionnaires sent out initially. The findings indicated that about two-thirds of the districts with kindergartens set the entrance age as five years old by December 1 or January 1; nearly seventy per cent of reporting districts without kindergartens required a student to be six years old on or before December 1 to enter first grade; nearly half of the reporting districts will make exceptions to their established policy for transfer students or students with superior mental and social maturity; and there was no evidence of a trend toward raising the minimum entrance age to school. The geographical areas to which the questionnaires were sent were not designated by the survey.

In 1964 Ilg and Ames (20) summarized the current age requirements among the different states for entrance to first grade. They stated that eleven states had no set entry age and six states had no statewide policy but left the decision up to the local boards of education. In one state a child was admitted if he were six by January 31. In eleven states the birthdate line was set at six by December 31. In three states a child was allowed to enter if he were six by December 1. In five states he must be six some time in November and six states provided that he must be six some time in October. In nine states the birthdate line was set at six by September 1 or September 15. Thus twelve states admit a child if he is five years seven months or five years eight months of age. Twenty states would delay the entrance until the child is five years ten months to six years of age. Chronological age, however, still remains the prime criterion for school entrance.

The survey by the Educational Research Service of the National Education Association (30) and the summary of school entrance age by Ilg (20) indicate that even though chronological age still is the most widely used criterion for entry to first grade, some states and localities do provide for a more flexible school entrance. Educators and parents, not only in

Kentucky, but also in other sections of our nation, have pressed for a more flexible school entrance policy. In order to provide for the individual needs and abilities of children in this technological space age, it is imperative that research studies attempt to find factors which contribute to the learning experiences of children.

Reluctance to admit early entrants to school is often based on the belief that such children will be socially and emotionally maladjusted. The objective of this study is to add further evidence regarding the relationship of school age entrance and sex to the social acceptance of children. Previous studies have been concerned with one or two age or grade levels, whereas this study is concerned with the social acceptance of students in five grade levels. The study groups the students as to their age, grade placement, and sex.

### Review of Related Literature

Many research studies have been concerned with the relationships of school entrance age. Only that literature is summarized here which reports on readiness, sex differences, and social adjustment as it relates to entrance age.

Educators generally agree that a child needs to be sufficiently mature or "ready" to undertake the tasks of a first grade program. Readiness encompasses the emotional,



social, intellectual, and physical development of the child. Swartz's (39) research on readiness reported that readiness was not an age but rather was a developmental stage in the growth pattern. Stonecipher (38) points out that while it is true that children of a given age level are similar, it is also true that they are vastly different in many aspects. Each child must be considered as an individual with different needs, abilities, and developmental patterns. Rowland (35) relates that most educators acknowledge that all children are not ready to enter school at the same age. Heffernan (18,p.58) points out that requiring children to make refined adjustments before they are ready often results in "injured nervous systems and personality feelings of fear, inadequacy, and frustration." In an article on school entrance age, Gelles and Coulson (12) report that Anna Starr, formerly of Rutgers University, has stated that there is no single measure by which to determine the right answer when referring to a particular child. She (12, p. 34) says, "It is not age alone, nor physical size, nor health, nor nursery school experience, nor is it social or emotional maturity alone, but rather a balance of all these working together."

Worcester (42) points out in his study that Nebraska is one state which has shown concern for the readiness of



kindergarten and first grade entrants. State law admits a child to kindergarten if he is five years of age by October 15. He may be admitted on the basis of a readiness test which is administered by a psychologist. Criteria for readiness are stipulated by the State Department of Education. The significant finding in Worcester's study was that readiness was not necessarily determined by how long a child had lived but rather the determining factor was his level of development.

Ames (2) reports on the Weston Study conducted by the Gesell Institute. The significant findings in this study indicate that age alone is not an adequate basis for determining the time of school entrance. She reports that behavioral age encompasses the total development of the child and is the best criterion for determining the time a child should enter school.

In considering the total development of a child, it is apparent that an acceptable social status is an important aspect of personal and emotional adjustment. From kindergarten to second grade, the child becomes increasingly aware of group pressures and of his position in the group. Oak-Bruce (32) emphasized that acceptance by the group provides satisfying fulfillment and a sense of well-being; whereas rejection

and conflict promote feelings of hostility and inadequacy. Russell (36) relates that the way a child feels about himself and the way others feel toward him may very well determine everything he does in the future.

Frerichs (8) points out that the drop-out prone have their beginnings in the pre-school and early elementary school. In his study he found that students with low sociometric scores were more prone to drop out of school, to have an average rank in their graduating class, to take a less active part in high school clubs and varsity sports, and to hold fewer positions of leadership.

Stokes (37) conducted a study on the relationship of school entrance age to the sociometric status of a selected sample of intellectually superior, average, and below average fifth and sixth grade students in the Texas and Louisiana school systems. She found that the children of above average intelligence earned a significantly higher mean sociometric score when compared with those of average or below average intellectual ability. She concluded that children of different levels of intelligence differ in their social acceptance by their classmates. In comparing the social acceptance scores of intellectually superior students who were classified as underage, overage, and normal-age, she found that the underage children were chosen by their classmates as often as were the

normal age or overage intellectually superior children.

Stokes (37, p. 84) states that: "If a child has sufficient intellectual maturity to enter first grade, there appears to be no gain in social acceptance because of additional maturity." Chronological age was not the most important criterion for social acceptance. She suggested the need of a flexible school entrance age as a more valid basis for school entrance than a fixed chronological age.

Miller (28) reports on a study conducted in the Evanston schools by the Research Department in Evanston, Illinois, where children were regularly admitted to first grade if they were six years old by December 31. Children who were six by January, February or March following school entrance in September would be admitted if they were found to possess mental, physical, and social maturity needed for successful school adjustment, as determined by the school psychologist. Other factors than mental age and intelligence quotient were considered. In 1955-56, a follow-up study was conducted on this group. The sociometric rating scale was used to assess peer acceptance or rejection at grade six. The statistical data indicated that there was no significant difference found in the social acceptance of the underage and average age



entrant. The conclusion was that there was no detectable difference between the underage and the average age child at the sixth grade level. This study seems to indicate that chronological age is not as important a factor in social adjustment as had been assumed by many.

Gallagher (11) reports that since Terman's longitudinal studies, it has been generally accepted that gifted children will show superiority in such measurable dimensions as physical development as well as in emotional and social adjustment. Hobson (19) concluded from his study of children who were admitted to first grade on the basis of a mental age of six years two months, that as compared to their fellow classmates, the underage children were less often referred to school officials for emotional, social, and other personality maladjustments.

In reviewing the research of the early admission of able children to school in Warren, Pennsylvania, Birch (4) points out that the sociometric ratings indicate that those admitted early were not treated as outsiders by their classmates. Early entrants were chosen as companions for activities as often as or slightly more often than the regular pupils. Pielstick (34), in discussing research on acceleration,



summarizes that selectively gifted pupils accelerated did not usually suffer personal or social ill effects. Ahr (1) reported that the ratings of social, emotional, physical, and motor development would indicate that early entrants were average in these areas when compared with regular entrants.

Mirman (29) conducted a study on the adjustment of accelerates. In the study there were 128 high school seniors; 64 were accelerated by double promotion and 64 were in the conventional program. All had I. Q.s of 120 or over and none had been accelerated more than one year. His study indicated no significant difference to be found in the social adjustment of the accelerated group. He states that in the light of these findings, hesitancy to accelerate children is not well-founded. He found that boys seemed to be more likely to encounter social problems than do the girls. Perhaps more girls than boys should be accelerated. In maturing at an earlier age, they apparently are able to adjust faster to new groups.

Research has indicated that there is a difference in levels of maturity in girls and boys. F. R. Pauly (33) of the Tulsa, Oklahoma, Public Schools points out that research on sex differences of boys and girls indicates that boys may be approximately twelve months behind girls at the age of six

years and that boys may profit by a later entrance of two or three months. Similar findings on the maturity levels of boys and girls were reported in studies by Wrightstone, Monroe and Hansen (10). The study by Ninmicht, Sparks and Mortensen (31) reported a significant relationship between sex and school success. Girls tended to achieve at a higher rate than boys.

Klausmeier (25) conducted a study of academically superior second grade children, older than their regular second grade classmates, who were accelerated to the fourth grade. He concluded that accelerates performed as well as or better than their older third grade controls at that time. The only negative effect observed was a relatively lower peer acceptance for the accelerated boys.

King (24) compared a group of children who had entered grade 1 before six years of age with a group who had entered after six years of age in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. All the children in the study had I. Q. scores between 90 and 110, had entered the first grade in the same year, and had attended schools in the same district for six years. Her findings were that all differences favored the older child. She found that more younger children were referred to the speech class and to the psychologist and more were rated as maladjusted by

their teachers. These children were in the average range of intelligence and the mental age at the time of school entrance was not considered.

Hamalainen (16) studied the effects of school entrance age policies on 4,000 children of varying intellectual ability in the Nassau County Schools. Children were allowed to enter kindergarten at the age of 4 years 9 months and to enter first grade at 5 years 9 months. He concluded that generally the underage child experienced greater problems of adjustment in all areas in grades 4 through 6. His study pointed out that underage students experienced more difficulties in the areas of social and emotional adjustment in the fourth to sixth grades than they did in the first to third grades as compared to the normal age students.

In a five year cooperative research study by the Illinois Association for Childhood Education, Johnston (21) reports on the findings which related to the effect of chronological age on the emotional adjustment of the students. No significant difference was found in the emotional adjustment of the younger students (born between September 1 and December 31 of the year in which they entered the first grade) as compared to those who were six by August 31. Although the



differences by age groups was not highly significant, the difference found between boys and girls was highly significant. At all levels, the boys were judged to be less well adjusted than the girls.

In an article by Gelles and Coulson (9), the author points out that many young children are able to "keep up" with older children. Evidence of physical, social, and academic maladjustment may not become apparent until years later. Reference is made by the authors to a table by Elizabeth Bigelow for predicting first grade success. She indicates that children under six years of age of average intelligence and equivalent levels of social and emotional adjustment, have relatively little chance for success in first grade. The younger the child, the less chance he has for successful adjustment to first grade tasks. On the other hand, the more intelligent the child, with equivalent levels of social and emotional adjustment, the better chance he has for success and adjustment in the first grade.

It is evident from present research findings that controversy exists concerning the effects of early school entrance on the social development of children. Chronological age may not be as important a factor in determining social development as many have believed it to be. This study



is conducted in an effort to add further evidence on the relationship of school entrance age to the sociometric status of students at five grade levels. None of the studies examined have included all grade levels in their study of social acceptance. There is also some indication that previous research findings support the idea that young boys are less well socially accepted than young girls. The present study also examines the social acceptance of boys at different age levels as compared with girls of their same age.

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CHAPTER II  
DESCRIPTION OF SELECTION AND CLASSIFICATION  
OF THE SAMPLE, THE EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE,  
AND THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT

Procedure for Securing School Cooperation

This study was conducted in Christian County, Kentucky. Two school systems--the Hopkinsville Public Schools and the Christian County Public Schools--were included in the study.

Permission to conduct the study and to use the cumulative folders of students in the selected sample was secured from the superintendents of the Hopkinsville Public School System and the Christian County School System in Christian County, Kentucky. The principal of each selected school was contacted to obtain his permission for students in his school to be a part of the sample. The purpose of the study was explained to the respective classroom teachers in securing their cooperation to administer the tests to the selected sample. With the exception of the sociometric test administered by the twelfth grade teacher, all the tests given in the Hopkinsville Public Schools were administered by the investigator. The tests given in the Christian County Public School System were administered by a guidance counselor

in that system. Care was taken to establish rapport with the students and a choice of participating in the study was offered to the students. No student declined to participate in the study and it appeared that each understood the merit of a sincere response in expressing his "feelings" of friendship toward other members in his classroom at the particular time the test was given.

### Selection of the Sample

In the Christian County School System, students in grades one through eight attend the elementary schools, and students in grades nine through twelve attend the one high school. In the Hopkinsville Public School System, students in grades one through six attend the elementary schools; students in the seventh grade attend the one seventh grade center; students in the eighth and ninth grades attend the one junior high school; and students in grades ten through twelve attend the one high school.

In each school system the sample includes students from one classroom at the levels of grade four, six, eight, ten, and twelve. Grades below four were not included as it was felt that the sociometric test would not be valid below



that grade because the instructions would be too difficult for the students to use. Two-grade intervals were used in order to obtain the progressive development of the students studied.

An attempt was made in each school system to choose an elementary school which was representative of the elementary schools in that it contained students from high, middle, and low socio-economic levels. No other factor of the school population was considered. All high school students attended the one high school in the Christian County School System. In the Hopkinsville Public School System, all seventh grade, junior high and senior high students attended the one school designated for the grade level.

Ten classrooms were included in the study. There were two classrooms from each of the following grade levels: fourth, sixth, eighth, tenth, and twelfth.

### Selection of the Subjects

Within each school and grade selected for the study, the classes were numbered. The principal was asked to select at random one class from each grade level. Since students in the Hopkinsville junior high and in both senior high schools were assigned to classes in the required courses

on the basis of achievement scores and teacher recommendation, it was decided that students in these schools would be selected from the average English classes.

### Procedures for Collecting Data

A total of 284 students was included in the sample of which 59 were fourth graders, 63 were sixth graders, 60 were eighth graders, 55 were tenth graders, and 47 were twelfth graders. Table I shows the distribution of the sample, as to sex and grade level.

TABLE I  
NUMBER AND SEX OF STUDENTS  
AT EACH GRADE LEVEL

| GRADE | BOYS | GIRLS | TOTAL |
|-------|------|-------|-------|
| 4     | 27   | 32    | 59    |
| 6     | 37   | 26    | 63    |
| 8     | 30   | 30    | 60    |
| 10    | 39   | 16    | 55    |
| 12    | 24   | 23    | 47    |
| TOTAL | 157  | 127   | 284   |

Table II shows the distribution of students at each grade level in respect to the above classification. Although data regarding the overage children are not included in this study, the number is included in Table II to explain the discrepancy in the total number in each grade as compared to the number of students included in the analysis.

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS AT EACH GRADE  
LEVEL AS TO AGE CLASSIFICATION

| GRADE | YOUNGER |    | MIDDLE |    | OLDER |    | OVERAGE |    | TOTAL |     |
|-------|---------|----|--------|----|-------|----|---------|----|-------|-----|
|       | B       | G  | B      | G  | B     | G  | B       | G  | B     | G   |
| 4     | 7       | 5  | 6      | 12 | 7     | 10 | 7       | 5  | 27    | 32  |
| 6     | 4       | 8  | 7      | 8  | 11    | 5  | 15      | 5  | 37    | 26  |
| 8     | 11      | 8  | 2      | 7  | 3     | 9  | 14      | 6  | 30    | 30  |
| 10    | 8       | 4  | 9      | 6  | 8     | 4  | 14      | 2  | 39    | 16  |
| 12    | 7       | 5  | 5      | 6  | 3     | 8  | 9       | 4  | 24    | 23  |
| TOTAL | 37      | 30 | 29     | 39 | 32    | 36 | 59      | 22 | 157   | 127 |

Data on the sociometric status of the selected sample were obtained by administering the sociometric questionnaire, How I Feel Toward Others developed by Dr. Merl E. Bonney. Within each classroom selected, every student was given a

list of the members in his classroom. Each student was then given a copy of the sociometric questionnaire and asked to read the scale silently as the administrator read it aloud. A copy of the entire scale can be found in the appendix. The students were asked to rate each member of the class on the basis of friendship and to use the following numerical ratings:

Number 1: My Best Friends

Number 2: My Other Friends

Number 3: Students I Do not Know

Number 4: Students I Know but Are not My Friends

Number 5: Students I Do not Want as My Friends as

Long as They Are Like They Are Now

Number 6: Student's Own Name

It was explained to the students that it was not necessary to use all the numerical ratings but only to use the ones which expressed the feelings of friendship for each member of the class at that particular time. It was also pointed out that each member should receive a numerical rating.



## Description of the Instrument

The Bonney (1) How I Feel Toward Others was developed by Dr. Merl E. Bonney at North Texas State University in Denton, Texas. The sociometric test is a technique for measuring the social structure of groups and the extent to which members of the group are accepted at a particular time. Since the purpose of this study focuses on the social acceptance of students rather than on specific work or play activities, this test appears to be desirable in the complete evaluation of such acceptance.

The scale consists of two degrees of acceptance, two degrees of rejection and one neutral category. Approximately twenty-five minutes are required to complete the test.

Validity and reliability of a scale are important factors in choosing an instrument. Dr. Bonney (1) states that the reliability of the instrument is best answered by constancy scores obtained on choices received on two successive administrations of the scale. Rho correlations between successive group rank ranged from .62 to .94. The time interval on the correlation ranged from one day to four months. Validity is based on the assumption that feelings of one person for another carry their own validity. Such

feelings must be assumed to be honest and sincere responses to the scale used if we are to accept the data as valid. It is generally accepted that honest answers are given to such scales if the person does not feel he will be penalized for his candid responses.

### Treatment of the Data

Dr. Bonney (1) suggested a weighted scoring method of determining the score of each individual. A +2 was received for each choice as Best Friend; a +1 was received for each choice as Other Friend; a zero was received for a neutral or Don't Know choice; a -2 was received for each choice as Do not Want as a Friend; a -1 was received for each choice as Not My Friend. Thus the individual's raw score was an algebraic sum of the positive and negative feelings expressed toward him by all members of the group who were present at the time the test was given.

A class chart or matrix was made for each classroom. Each student in a classroom was assigned a number and was listed both vertically and horizontally in the same order in both instances. Every numerical choice for each individual was recorded. The total first, second, third, fourth, and fifth choices for each student were tabulated. The weighted

scoring plan described was used to determine the individual's raw score. For example, in a class of thirty students in which all students were present, the highest possible score an individual could receive would be fifty-eight; whereas, the lowest possible score an individual could receive would be minus fifty-eight. An individual does not rate himself but is rated by every other member of his class.

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# CHAPTER III

## PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter is concerned with the presentation and interpretation of the sociometric scores earned by the students selected for the study. The data were analyzed and the implications of the findings will be discussed.

There were 284 students in the selected sample. This study is concerned with the 203 students who were at the correct grade level for their age. It is recalled that children were grouped according to their birthdates as older, middle, younger, or overage. Table III shows the distribution of students as to age group and grade level.

TABLE III

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS AS TO AGE  
GROUP AND GRADE LEVEL

| GRADE | OLDER<br>GROUP |       | MIDDLE<br>GROUP |       | YOUNGER<br>GROUP |       | OVERAGE<br>GROUP |       | TOTAL |       |
|-------|----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
|       | BOYS           | GIRLS | BOYS            | GIRLS | BOYS             | GIRLS | BOYS             | GIRLS | BOYS  | GIRLS |
| 4     | 7              | 5     | 6               | 12    | 7                | 10    | 7                | 5     | 27    | 32    |
| 6     | 4              | 8     | 7               | 8     | 11               | 5     | 15               | 5     | 37    | 26    |
| 8     | 11             | 8     | 2               | 7     | 3                | 9     | 14               | 6     | 30    | 30    |
| 10    | 8              | 4     | 9               | 6     | 8                | 4     | 14               | 2     | 39    | 16    |
| 12    | 7              | 5     | 5               | 6     | 3                | 8     | 9                | 4     | 24    | 23    |
| TOTAL | 37             | 30    | 29              | 39    | 32               | 36    | 59               | 22    | 157   | 127   |

There were eighty-one students whose sociometric scores were not statistically analyzed since their birthdates indicated that they had either entered first grade after December 31 of the year in which they were six years of age or had repeated one or more grades. No attempt was made to determine the reason why these children were overage as compared to their classmates. However, it is interesting to note that of these eighty-one students, seventy-three per cent of the group were boys.

The formula (2, p. 156) for the significance of difference between means was used to test for the significant differences in the social acceptance scores among students who were in the older, middle, or younger groups. In each instance in which three groups were involved, only the highest and lowest of the three sociometric scores were analyzed with the intention that further analysis would be completed only if a significant difference were found in the two extreme scores.

Table IV shows the mean acceptance scores by age groups and grade levels. Data shown on this table were statistically analyzed to determine if a significant difference existed in the social acceptance scores among the older, middle, and younger students at each grade level.

TABLE IV

## MEAN ACCEPTANCE SCORES BY AGE GROUP AND GRADE LEVEL

| GROUP   | GRADE | NUMBER | MEAN<br>ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES |
|---------|-------|--------|------------------------------|
| Older   | 4     | 12     | 18.17                        |
| Middle  | 4     | 18     | 16.11                        |
| Younger | 4     | 17     | 12.59                        |
| Older   | 6     | 12     | 19.92                        |
| Middle  | 6     | 15     | 18.13                        |
| Younger | 6     | 16     | 21.62                        |
| Older   | 8     | 19     | 17.42                        |
| Middle  | 8     | 9      | 18.56                        |
| Younger | 8     | 12     | 17.42                        |
| Older   | 10    | 12     | 8.50                         |
| Middle  | 10    | 15     | 9.53                         |
| Younger | 10    | 12     | 7.75                         |
| Older   | 12    | 12     | 8.08                         |
| Middle  | 12    | 11     | 11.18                        |
| Younger | 12    | 11     | 6.64                         |

In grade four, the mean acceptance scores were 18.17 for the older group, 16.11 for the middle group and 12.59 for the younger group. The hypothesis of no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students who are in the older, middle, and younger groups was tested by the formula for the significance of difference between means. The analysis of the mean acceptance scores of 18.17 and 12.59 produced a t-value of .977. Since a t-value of 2.052, with the proper degrees of freedom, is necessary for a significant difference to exist at the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students in the older, middle, and younger groups was accepted. It will be recalled that no further analysis of scores would be needed if there were no significant difference found in the two extreme scores. The data from this analysis is presented in Table V.

TABLE V

DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SOCIOMETRIC SCORES  
OF OLDER STUDENTS AND YOUNGER  
STUDENTS IN GRADE FOUR

| GROUP   | GRADE | NUMBER | MEAN<br>ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES | df | t-VALUE | t <sub>.05</sub> |
|---------|-------|--------|------------------------------|----|---------|------------------|
| Older   | 4     | 12     | 18.17                        |    |         |                  |
| Younger | 4     | 17     | 12.59                        | 27 | .977    | 2.052*           |

\* .05 level of significance



In grade six, the mean social acceptance scores were 19.92 for the older group, 18.13 for the middle group, and 21.62 for the younger group. The hypothesis of no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students who are in the older, middle, or younger group in grade six was tested by the formula for the significance of the difference between means. The analysis of the mean acceptance scores of 21.62 and 18.13 produced a t-value of 1.03. Since a t-value of 2.045, with the proper degrees of freedom, is significant at the .05 level, the hypothesis of no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students in the older, middle, or younger group in grade six was accepted. Table VI presents the results from this analysis.

TABLE VI

DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SOCIOMETRIC SCORES  
OF MIDDLE STUDENTS AND YOUNGER  
STUDENTS IN GRADE SIX

| GROUP   | GRADE | NUMBER | MEAN<br>ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES | df | t-VALUE | t <sub>.05</sub> |
|---------|-------|--------|------------------------------|----|---------|------------------|
| Middle  | 6     | 15     | 18.13                        |    |         |                  |
| Younger | 6     | 16     | 21.62                        | 29 | 1.03    | 2.045*           |

\* .05 level of significance

The mean social acceptance scores in grade eight were 17.42 for the older group, 18.56 for the middle group, and 17.42 for the younger group. The hypothesis of no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students in the older, middle, or younger group in grade eight was tested by the formula for the significance of difference between means. A t-value of .277 was obtained from the analysis of the mean acceptance scores of 18.56 and 17.42. A t-value of 2.093, with the proper degrees of freedom, is significant at the .05 level. The hypothesis of no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students in grade eight was accepted. Table VII reveals data in regard to this analysis.

TABLE VII

DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SOCIOMETRIC SCORES  
OF MIDDLE STUDENTS AND YOUNGER  
STUDENTS IN GRADE EIGHT

| GROUP   | GRADE | NUMBER | MEAN<br>ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES | df | t-VALUE | t<br>.05 |
|---------|-------|--------|------------------------------|----|---------|----------|
| Middle  | 8     | 9      | 18.56                        |    |         |          |
| Younger | 8     | 12     | 17.42                        | 19 | .277    | 2.093*   |

\* .05 level of significance

The hypothesis of no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students in the older, middle, or younger group in grade ten was tested by the formula for the significance of difference between means. The mean acceptance scores were 8.50 for the older group, 9.53 for the middle group, and 7.75 for the younger group. The analysis of the mean scores of 9.53 and 7.75 produced a t-value of .536. A t-value of 2.060, with the proper degrees of freedom is necessary for significance at the .05 level. The hypothesis of no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students in the older, middle, or younger groups in grade ten was accepted. Data for the analysis are given in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII

DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SOCIOMETRIC SCORES  
OF MIDDLE STUDENTS AND YOUNGER  
STUDENTS IN GRADE TEN

| GROUP  | GRADE | NUMBER | MEAN<br>ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES | df | t-VALUE | t <sub>.05</sub> |
|--------|-------|--------|------------------------------|----|---------|------------------|
| Middle | 10    | 15     | 9.53                         |    |         |                  |
| Older  | 10    | 12     | 7.75                         | 25 | .536    | 2.060*           |

\* .05 level of significance

In grade twelve, the mean social acceptance scores were 8.08, 11.18, and 6.64 for the older, middle, and younger

groups, respectively. A t-value of 1.07 was obtained from the analysis of the mean scores 11.18 and 6.64. With the proper degrees of freedom, a t-value of 2.086 is necessary to be significant at the .05 level. The hypothesis of no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students in the older, middle, or younger groups in grade twelve was accepted. Table IX presents the results of this analysis.

TABLE IX

DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SOCIOMETRIC SCORES  
OF MIDDLE STUDENTS AND YOUNGER  
STUDENTS IN GRADE TWELVE

| GROUP   | GRADE | NUMBER | MEAN<br>ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES | df | t-VALUE | t <sub>.05</sub> |
|---------|-------|--------|------------------------------|----|---------|------------------|
| Middle  | 12    | 11     | 11.18                        |    |         |                  |
| Younger | 12    | 11     | 6.64                         | 20 | 1.07    | 2.086*           |

\* .05 level of significance

The data from the analysis of the mean social acceptance scores among the older, middle, and younger group students in grades four, six, eight, ten, and twelve revealed that there was no significant difference in the social acceptance of the younger group as compared to the middle or older groups at each specified grade level.



Children in the younger group appeared to be chosen as friends by their classmates as often as children in the middle or older groups were chosen. The results indicate that social acceptance is not necessarily dependent on chronological age.

Table X shows the data which were statistically analyzed to determine if a significant difference existed in the social acceptance scores of all boys in an age group as compared to all girls in an age group, the raw scores were combined in the following manner. The raw scores of the older

TABLE X

MEAN ACCEPTANCE SCORES OF OLDER BOYS AND OLDER GIRLS,  
MIDDLE BOYS AND MIDDLE GIRLS, AND YOUNGER BOYS  
AND YOUNGER GIRLS IN ALL GRADES

| GROUP         | NUMBER | MEAN<br>ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES |
|---------------|--------|------------------------------|
| Older boys    | 37     | 15.43                        |
| Older girls   | 30     | 13.87                        |
| Middle boys   | 29     | 12.59                        |
| Middle girls  | 39     | 16.15                        |
| Younger boys  | 32     | 15.62                        |
| Younger girls | 36     | 12.08                        |
| TOTAL         | 203    |                              |

group boys in grades four, six, eight, ten, and twelve were summed as were the raw scores of the middle and younger

group boys in each of the grade levels. The raw scores for the girls were combined in a similar manner.

The mean acceptance scores were 15.43 for the older boys and 13.87 for the older girls. The hypothesis of no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of all boys in the older group as compared to all girls in the older group was tested by the formula for the significance of difference between means. The formula produced a t-value of .525. To be significant at the .05 level, a t-value of 1.994, with the proper degrees of freedom, must be obtained. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of all boys in the older group as compared to all girls in the older group was accepted. Table XI presents the data from this analysis.

TABLE XI

DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SOCIOMETRIC SCORES  
OF ALL OLDER BOYS AS COMPARED TO  
ALL OLDER GIRLS

| GROUP       | GRADE | NUMBER | MEAN                 | df | t-VALUE | t      |
|-------------|-------|--------|----------------------|----|---------|--------|
|             |       |        | ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES |    |         | .05    |
| Older boys  | All   | 37     | 15.43                |    |         |        |
| Older girls | All   | 30     | 13.87                | 65 | .525    | 1.994* |

\* .05 level of significance

The hypothesis of no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of all middle group boys as compared to all middle group girls was tested by the formula for significance of the difference between means. The t-value of 1.13 obtained by comparing the mean acceptance scores of all middle boys with all middle girls showed that the difference of the means 12.59 for boys and 16.15 for girls was not significant. Since a t-value of 1.994 with the proper degrees of freedom is necessary for a significant difference to exist at the .05 level, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of all boys in the middle age group as compared to all girls in the middle age group was accepted. Data for the analysis are given in Table XII.

TABLE XII

DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SOCIOMETRIC SCORES  
OF ALL MIDDLE BOYS AS COMPARED TO  
ALL MIDDLE GIRLS

| GROUP        | GRADE | NUMBER | MEAN<br>ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES | df | t-VALUE | t <sub>.05</sub> |
|--------------|-------|--------|------------------------------|----|---------|------------------|
| Middle boys  | All   | 29     | 12.59                        |    |         |                  |
| Middle girls | All   | 39     | 16.15                        | 66 | 1.13    | 1.994*           |

\* .05 level of significance

All younger boys had a mean social acceptance score of 12.08. Statistical analysis of the significant difference of the means produced a t-value of 1.20. A t-value of 1.994, with the proper degrees of freedom, is significant at the .05 level. The hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean social acceptance scores of the two groups of children being compared was therefore accepted. This analysis is presented in Table XIII.

TABLE XIII

DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SOCIOMETRIC SCORES  
OF ALL YOUNGER BOYS AS COMPARED TO  
ALL YOUNGER GIRLS

| GROUP         | GRADE | NUMBER | MEAN<br>ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES | df | t-VALUE | t <sub>.05</sub> |
|---------------|-------|--------|------------------------------|----|---------|------------------|
| Younger boys  | All   | 32     | 15.62                        |    |         |                  |
| Younger girls | All   | 36     | 12.08                        | 66 | 1.20    | 1.994*           |

\* .05 level of significance

The data from the analysis of the mean sociometric scores indicate that there was no significant difference in the sociometric status of all boys in the older group as compared to all girls in the older group, of all boys in the middle group as compared to all girls in the middle group, or of all boys in the younger group as compared to all girls



in the younger group. Concern has been expressed by educators and laymen that the younger school entrants, especially boys, were likely to experience poor social adjustment in school. The findings of this study did not reveal evidence to support such concern as to sex differences of younger entrants. It is interesting to note that the younger groups of boys not only had a higher mean acceptance score than did the younger groups of girls, but also they had a slightly higher mean acceptance score than did the older groups of boys. The middle groups of girls were the only groups which had a higher mean acceptance score than the groups of younger boys.

Table XIV shows the mean acceptance scores of all boys in each of the age groups and of all girls in each of the age groups. The data were obtained by summing the raw scores of all older group boys, all middle group boys, and all younger group boys. The mean acceptance scores for the older, middle, and younger group girls were obtained in a similar manner. The data were analyzed to determine if there were a significant difference in the mean social acceptance of the three groups of boys. Likewise, the

data for the three groups of girls were tested by statistical analysis.

TABLE XIV

MEAN ACCEPTANCE SCORES OF OLDER BOYS, MIDDLE BOYS,  
YOUNGER BOYS, OLDER GIRLS, MIDDLE GIRLS,  
AND YOUNGER GIRLS

| GROUP         | NUMBER | MEAN<br>ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES |
|---------------|--------|------------------------------|
| Older boys    | 37     | 15.43                        |
| Middle boys   | 29     | 12.59                        |
| Younger boys  | 32     | 15.62                        |
| Older girls   | 30     | 13.87                        |
| Middle girls  | 39     | 16.15                        |
| Younger girls | 36     | 12.08                        |

The mean acceptance scores of the boys was 15.43, 12.59, and 15.62 for the older, middle, and younger groups, respectively. The mean acceptance scores of 15.62 and 12.59 were compared to determine if a significant difference existed between the two means. A  $t$ -value of 1.089 was obtained by the analysis. A  $t$ -value of 1.990 with the proper degrees of freedom is necessary to be significant at the .05 level. It was not necessary to complete further analysis since there

was no significant difference found between the extreme scores. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of all older group boys as compared to all younger group boys was accepted. Table XV reveals the data in regard to this analysis.

TABLE XV

DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SOCIOMETRIC SCORES  
OF MIDDLE AND YOUNGER BOYS

| GROUP        | GRADE | NUMBER | MEAN<br>ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES | df | t-VALUE | t<br>.05 |
|--------------|-------|--------|------------------------------|----|---------|----------|
| Middle boys  | All   | 29     | 12.59                        |    |         |          |
| Younger boys | All   | 32     | 15.62                        | 59 | 1.089   | 1.990*   |

\* .05 level of significance

The mean social acceptance score was 13.87 for the older girls, 16.15 for the middle girls, and 12.08 for the younger girls. The statistical analysis of the differences between the mean acceptance scores of 16.15 and 12.08 was computed. A t-value of 1.318 was obtained. Since a t-value of 1.990 is necessary for significance at the .05 level, the hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean social acceptance scores of all girls in the older group as compared

to all middle group or younger group girls was accepted. It is interesting to observe that the t-value obtained in this analysis was closer to revealing a significance of difference between means than was any other comparison of mean scores in this study. Table XVI presents the results of this analysis.

TABLE XVI  
DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SOCIOMETRIC SCORES  
OF MIDDLE AND YOUNGER GIRLS

| GROUP         | GRADE | NUMBER | MEAN<br>ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES | df | t-VALUE | t <sub>.05</sub> |
|---------------|-------|--------|------------------------------|----|---------|------------------|
| Middle girls  | All   | 39     | 16.15                        |    |         |                  |
| Younger girls | All   | 36     | 12.08                        | 73 | 1.318   | 1.990*           |

\* .05 level of significance

Table XVII shows the mean social acceptance scores of all students in the older, in the middle, and in the younger

TABLE XVII  
MEAN SOCIOMETRIC SCORES OF ALL STUDENTS IN THE  
OLDER, MIDDLE, AND YOUNGER GROUPS

| GROUP   | NUMBER | MEAN ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES |
|---------|--------|---------------------------|
| Older   | 67     | 14.73                     |
| Middle  | 68     | 14.63                     |
| Younger | 68     | 13.75                     |
| TOTAL   | 203    |                           |



groups. The data were obtained by summing the raw scores of all students in an age group at each grade level.

The hypothesis of no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of all students in the older, middle, and younger groups was tested by the formula for the significance of difference between means. The analysis of the mean scores of 14.73 and 13.75 produced a t-value of .471. For significance at the .05 level, a t-value of 1.96 is necessary. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significance in the mean social acceptance scores of the groups being tested was accepted. Table XVIII presents the results of this analysis.

TABLE XVIII

DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SOCIOMETRIC SCORES OF ALL STUDENTS IN THE OLDER GROUP AS COMPARED TO ALL STUDENTS IN THE YOUNGER AND MIDDLE GROUPS

| GROUP   | GRADE | NUMBER | MEAN<br>ACCEPTANCE<br>SCORES | df  | t-VALUE | t <sup>.05</sup> |
|---------|-------|--------|------------------------------|-----|---------|------------------|
| Middle  | All   | 67     | 14.73                        |     |         |                  |
| Younger | All   | 68     | 13.75                        | 133 | .471    | 1.96*            |

\* .05 level of significance

The data which have been statistically analyzed in this study have indicated no significant difference in the social acceptance of boys and girls either as to grade or sex. The

younger school entrants appeared to be chosen as friends by their classmates as often as were the older members of the class. There was no significant difference in the social acceptance of the young boys or young girls as to grade in school. These data suggest that neither chronological age nor sex were the most important factors in social acceptance of students in this study.

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## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the relationship of school entrance age to the sociometric status of a selected sample of students in grades four, six, eight, ten, and twelve in the public school systems in Christian County, Kentucky. Students in the study were classified and divided into three groups as older, middle, and younger, according to their age and grade placement. A secondary purpose was to examine the effect of sex differences on social acceptance at all grade and age levels involved in the population included in the study.

The students in the sample were selected from the Hopkinsville Public Schools and the Christian County Public Schools. One class of fourth, sixth, eighth, tenth, and twelfth grade students was selected from each respective school system. Thus students in ten classrooms participated in the study.

All students in the selected classrooms were given the Bonney How I Feel Toward Others sociometric questionnaire in order to determine the extent to which members of the group were accepted by their classmates on the basis of



friendship. The social acceptance scores were compared to determine if school entrance age, as shown by the older, middle, and younger groups did have a significant relationship to the mean social acceptance scores of boys and girls in the specified grade levels. The social acceptance scores of boys and girls were compared to indicate the relationship of sex to the social acceptance scores of early school entrants.

The formula for the significance of the difference of the means was used to test for the significant difference at the .05 level of significance. Data on the social acceptance scores of the overage group were not included in the statistical analysis since no attempt was made to determine at what age these students entered first grade.

A statistical analysis of the data allowed the following conclusions to be drawn:

1. There was no significant difference in the social acceptance scores among students who were in the older, middle, or younger groups at any of the five grade levels included in the study.
2. There was no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of the total group of boys as compared to the total group of girls when divided by age into the older

middle, or younger groups.

3. There was no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of the combined group of older boys at all grade levels as compared to the combined groups of middle and younger aged boys at all grade levels.

4. There was no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of the combined groups of older girls at all grade levels as compared to the combined groups of middle and younger aged girls at all grade levels.

5. There was no significant difference in the social acceptance scores of all students in the older group as compared to all students in the middle or younger groups.

The conclusions of this study would indicate that age is not the most important criterion for social acceptance but that some other factor or combination of factors is a more important criterion for social acceptance, at least for those children who have successfully progressed through school without ever having repeated a grade. Such evidence would lend support to similar findings in the studies of Stokes (8), Miller (5), Hobson (2), and Birch (1).

The findings of Mirman (6), Pauly (7), Johnson (3), and Klausmeier (4) indicated that boys are more likely to encounter social problems and to have a lower peer acceptance

then are girls. Data of this study did not support such findings. Reluctance to admit early entrants, especially boys, to school on the belief that such children will be socially maladjusted may not be well-founded.

Concern has been voiced by parents and educators that the younger group of boys will encounter problems in social adjustment in grade eight or ten. At this age some boys are not as physically mature as are most girls. The conclusions of this study showed no significant difference in the mean acceptance scores of all boys or in the mean acceptance scores of all boys as compared to all girls in grades eight or ten.

Many studies have been concerned with the factor of intellectual level in relation to age at school entrance. It is well to point out that the overage group which was not included in the analysis of data may have been a significant factor in the results found by this investigator. The entering school age of the overage group was not determined, but it can be assumed that a large number of the group had repeated one or more grades in school even though some were possibly late entrants. Such an assumption might indicate that students in this study were possibly average



or above average in intelligence. The fact that seventy-three per cent of the average group were boys lends support to the contention that boys may experience more difficulty than girls in achieving academic success in school. It was not determined, however, if these boys were younger when they entered school.

Chronological age is the only criterion by which children are admitted to first grade in Kentucky as well as in most school areas. It is obviously one criterion that should be considered, but evidence of the data analyzed would indicate that other factors or combination of factors were more significant than chronological age as a criterion for social acceptance. These data suggest that other factors than chronological age need to be considered in determining school entrance policies.

A flexible school entrance age would perhaps provide a means of more adequately meeting the different needs and abilities of children. Psychological and mental tests are being used in an effort to determine the readiness or total development of potential first grade entrants. Such a screening device could prove invaluable even though it could involve the expenditure of a great deal of money.



### Need for Further Study

On the basis of questions which became apparent in the course of this study, the following topics are suggested for further study:

1. The comparison of the relationship of school entrance age to the sociometric status of students who have repeated one or more grades to students who have not repeated a grade in school.
2. The comparison of the relationship of school entrance age to the sociometric status of students of below-average intelligence with students of normal or average intelligence.
3. The comparison of the relationship of school entrance age to the sociometric status of students of low socio-economic levels with students of average or middle socio-economic levels.
4. The comparison of the relationship of "readiness" for first grade as determined by the Metropolitan Readiness Test to the social acceptance scores of students in grades four, five, and six.

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## HOW I FEEL TOWARD OTHERS

(Scale to be used with elementary school children)

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 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 whom 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.



## HOW I FEEL TOWARD OTHERS

(Scale to be used with junior and senior high students)

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

To the Students:

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 us know which other students you get along with best.

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

Directions: On another sheet of paper you have the names of all the students 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. (You have been given a sheet of paper that you may use to cover your numbers.) 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 whom 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.

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- 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 it is taken up. Remember to keep your choices covered.

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.