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The Salience of differing personality traits in the selection or rejection of peers in middle childhood

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE SALIENCE OF DIFFERING PERSONALITY
TRAITS IN THE SELECTION OR REJECTION
OF PEERS IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

BY

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CHAPTER 1

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

The formation of friendships in the early school years has been found by many researchers to be extremely important for later social adaptation (Asher & Hymel, 1981; Hartup, 1983; West & Farrington, 1973). In a 13-year follow-up study of third grade children, Cowen, Pederson, Baligian, Izzo, and Trost (1973) demonstrated that the single best predictor of later psychotic problems was early peer relation problems. In addition to increased risk of psychoticism, rejected children report being more lonely and more dissatisfied than non-rejected children (Asher, Hymel, & Renshaw, 1984; Asher & Wheeler, 1985; Cassidy & Asher, 1992). One reason for this is that rejected children do not have many friends. Moreover, rejected children participate in less positive social exchanges and receive less positive teacher feedback than their accepted peers (Cunningham, Siegal, & Offord, 1985; Gottman, Gonso, & Rasmussen, 1975; Whalen, Henker, & Dotemoto, 1981). Finally, it is important to study peer relations because peer rejection has been found to be strongly related to academic failure (Asher & Hymel, 1981; Hartup, 1983).

Although it is evident that the study of children's selection of friends is important, investigations of this topic are limited largely to studies involving open-ended questions of why they like or dislike certain peers or behavioral observations of accepted and rejected peers. In the typical case, children are given a sociometric scale in which they are asked to nominate classmates that they like and that they do not like. Then, children are either asked why they like or dislike particular peers, or the behaviors of peers are recorded to determine which child characteristics and behaviors correlate with being accepted or rejected. Although the latter method provides an objective system for determining which child characteristics make him/her liked or disliked, the relative importance of these characteristics remains unresearched. That is, it is not known which aspects of a child's personality and subsequent behavior influence peers most when choosing to accept or reject a child. Thus, an objective investigation of the salience of these traits and behaviors involved in a child's decision to accept or reject a peer is needed to accurately determine specific traits and behaviors children adopt to make them accepted or rejected by their peers. Results of such an investigation have important implications for educational, clinical, and early intervention settings.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between the "Big Five" personality dimensions as applied to children and these children's subsequent acceptance or rejection of fictitious same-sex agemates. Of particular interest was the salience assigned to different personality traits in a child's decision to accept or reject a peer. That is, a major purpose of the present study was to determine which personality traits influence children most when they decide to accept or reject peers. This was investigated by utilizing an information board technique which presented behavioral examples of the Big Five personality traits.

Measuring Sociometric Status

Given that negative outcomes are generally associated with peer rejection, it is important to research why certain children are rejected and other children are accepted. Once it is determined which children are rejected and why, it may be possible to teach these children the behaviors necessary to gain future acceptance and to avoid future rejection.

Traditionally, there are three ways of identifying rejected peers: parent and teacher ratings, self reports, and sociometric techniques (Landou & Milich, 1990). Perhaps the easiest way to identify rejected peers is to get teacher or parent ratings (Landou & Milich, 1990). However, neither of

these methods is a reliable measure of social status (Glow & Glow, 1980). Parents and teachers only see the children in a limited number of settings and their perspective may be biased by their role in maintaining order. They may also place more emphasis on a child's interactions with adults than with peers (Coie, Dodge, & Kupersmidt, 1990). For instance, the child who helps the teacher wash the board may be perceived by the teacher to be accepted by his or her peers because s/he is thoughtful and considerate. But, children may reject this child because s/he cannot relate to the other children.

Another simple way of assessing social status is through self reports. However, this method does not evidence much concurrent validity for children under 12 years of age (Green & Foreland, 1980). Some children do not realize that they are popular while other children are oblivious to the fact that other children do not like them. The method of choice for assessing social status is the sociometric technique, of which there are many varieties (Bower, 1969; Landou & Milich, 1985; Landou & Milich, 1990; Pelham & Bender, 1982).

There are many advantages to using a sociometric technique. The major advantage is that it gives a valid measure of social status (Cowen et al., 1973; Hartup, 1983; Roff et al., 1972). As Landou and Milich (1990) point out, no one knows better than children whom they do and do not

like. Other notable advantages to the sociometric technique are that it is fairly reliable for up to three years over time, and it identifies neglected children as well as accepted and rejected children (Roff et al., 1972). Neglected children are children who are not necessarily disliked, but children who nevertheless do not have many friends. This is important because most research dealing with peer rejection has shown that neglect and rejection are different phenomena (Goldman, Corsini, & de Urioste, 1980; Landou, Milich, & Whitten, 1984). Neglected children and rejected children are both "unpopular" in the sense that they do not have many friends. However, rejected children are actively avoided and disliked, whereas neglected children are simply not sought out (Dodge, Coie & Brakke, 1982; Landou et al., 1984).

There are many different kinds of sociometric techniques. The most commonly used technique is the Positive and Negative Nomination Model. Here, children are told to name the three children in their class with whom they would most like to play and also to name the three children in their class with whom they would least want to play (Coie, Dodge, Terry, & Wright, 1991; Landou & Milich, 1990). Children who receive many positive selections and few negative selections are the accepted peers. Children who receive many negative nominations but few positive

nominations are the rejected peers. In this sociometric procedure, the neglected children are those who neither receive many positive nor many negative nominations. The problem with this technique is that it is impossible to tell how much a neglected peer is liked or disliked by his or her classmates (Asher & Hymel, 1981).

An alternative to the Positive and Negative Nomination Method is the Roster Rating Method (Asher & Hymel, 1981; Cassidy & Asher, 1992; Singleton & Asher, 1977). This method requires all children to be rated by all members of the group on a 5-point Likert scale. The advantage of this method is that it is more sensitive and reliable since all children are rated (Asher & Hymel, 1981). This technique is better than the Positive and Negative Nominations Method for unconfounding the two types of unpopular children (Parker & Asher, 1987). Since all children are rated, it is possible to see how much the neglected children are liked (Landau & Milich, 1991). Oftentimes, neglected children are liked well enough; they just do not initiate interactions (Dodge, Coie & Brakke, 1982). In other words, they tend to be more introverted and have less well-developed social skills than accepted children. Typically, only same-gender peers are used in computing a child's social status prior to adolescence (Cassidy & Asher, 1992). This gives a clearer picture of a child's actual social status among his/her peers

because during middle childhood, boys and girls usually have a strong preference for their own gender.

Once the children are identified as accepted, rejected, or neglected, it is possible to compare rejected children to accepted and neglected children to see why they are disliked. Research indicates that rejected children manifest more aggression than either accepted or neglected children (Coie et al., 1991; Miller & Dreblow, 1990). However, not all aggressive children are rejected and not all rejected children are aggressive. In fact, only about half of all aggressive children are rejected (Coie et al., 1991).

Moreover, there is the issue of temporal precedence. It is not known whether rejected children become aggressive due to the frustrations of being rejected or if the children become rejected because they were aggressive. Yarrow and Campbell (1963), for example, found that a child was more likely to change his or her behavior and make it consistent with his or her reputation than for the reputation to change to become consistent with the behavior. Other traits that have been implicated in peer rejection are physical attractiveness, social skills, name desirability, physical and mental handicaps, and behavioral disorders such as attention deficit (Alvarez, Zarbatany, & Pepper, 1991; Bicket & Milich, 1990; Bromfield, Weisz, & Messer, 1986; Freeby &

Madison, 1989; Haskett & Kistner, 1991; Hui & Yam, 1987; Leak & Ware, 1988; Rogosch & Newcomb, 1989).

Most of the research identifying the traits of rejected children is post hoc inference. First, the child is rejected by his/her peers and then researchers use behavioral observations, self reports, and parent/teacher reports to determine why the child is rejected (Alvarez et al., 1991; Bicket & Milich, 1990; Cassidy & Asher, 1992; Coie et al., 1991; Haskett & Kistner, 1991; Miller & Dreblow, 1990; Morison & Masten, 1991; Scarlett, Press, & Crockett, 1991). The main problem with this approach is that it is hard to determine which came first, the peer rejection or the undesirable traits. All that is observed is the way that rejected children behave. This is not necessarily why rejected children are rejected.

For instance, it is possible for aggression to cause rejection, but it is quite possible for rejection to cause aggression. Another problem with this approach is that even if temporal precedence is established, one cannot infer causality due to third variable problems (F. Bryant, personal communication, September, 1990). For instance, instead of aggression causing rejection, it may be that poor social skills lead to both aggression and rejection. While it is possible to covary out a third variable, the third

variable must be identified first. There are many possible third variables.

Due to the limitations of behavioral observation, it is necessary to devise a method that will provide information on more subtle traits (e.g., personality, temperament, etc.) as well as allow causal inference. This would also require the ability to covary out third variables. In order to do this, particular traits will have to be tested apart from the observable behavior. In other words, subjects will have to be presented with limited and controlled information about the child to be rated.

Some researchers have attempted to test the effects of various traits on peer rejection by having subjects rate fictitious agemates who possess these traits (e.g., Fernald, Williams, & Droesher, 1985; Garwood, Cox, Kaplan, Wasserman, & Sulzer, 1980). However, the subjects often have very limited information about the fictitious peer. For instance, Fernald et al. (1985) had subjects in one condition rate peers when the only information available was a diagnostic label. It is not surprising that the raters favored the "normal" child over the "mentally retarded" child or the "emotionally disturbed" child.

Information Board Technique

Instead of providing limited information, it is possible to have considerable (or more substantial) information available to the rater but to control the presentation of the information. By allowing the rater to choose the information about the fictitious peer, it is possible to see which information is considered most salient (e.g., Davidson, 1991a; 1991b). In Davidson's work on children's decision making, children are presented with a number of alternatives which vary on a number of dimensions. For example, Davidson (1991a) gave 2nd, 5th, and 8th grade children an information board on which there were six bikes from which to choose. Each of the six bikes varied on six dimensions (e.g., size of bike, price of bike, number of friends who have the bike, special features, etc.). This information was contained in a matrix in which the columns consisted of different attributes (dimensions) and the rows consisted of the different bikes (alternatives). Each of the thirty-six squares of the matrix was covered and the child was allowed to reveal one piece of information at a time. The children could reveal as much or as little information as they wished before making a decision. Davidson (1991a) was interested in whether the children would search the information in a systematic or unsystematic fashion. She found that the 8th graders were

more systematic in their search of information than the 2nd or 5th graders.

There are generally two ways to search the information board; systematic (interdimensional and intradimensional) and unsystematic. Systematic searches involve the child searching the board with little shifting between alternatives and/or dimensions. "Shifting" refers to the child continuing the search pattern by looking at a different alternative and dimension than the one previously viewed. Intradimensional searches consist of viewing information within the particular dimension, whereas interdimensional searches consist of viewing information across dimensions. In other words, while intradimensional searches consist of searching information within a dimension, interdimensional searches consist of searching information within an alternative. Therefore, systematic searches involve minimal shifting across dimensions and alternatives.

However, a further distinction may be made regarding the sophistication of the two systematic searches. Interdimensional searching, searching within an alternative and between dimensions, is less effective than intradimensional searching, searching within a dimension and between alternatives, when comparing alternatives in order to make a decision (Davidson, 1991a). Conversely, unsystematic searches consist of many shifts between dimensions and

alternatives. In the more unsystematic searches, children will view one dimension of one alternative and immediately ask to view a different dimension under a different alternative.

This information board method was used with minor changes for the purposes of the present study, to determine which information children find most salient when selecting or rejecting a peer. By restricting the amount of information a child is allowed to examine, it is possible to indicate which information children consider the most important when making a decision. For instance, when Davidson (1991b) restricted the amount of information her subjects could examine, the children began with the categories they considered most important. Once they found an acceptable bike in this category, they moved on to the next most important category.

The "Big Five" Personality Factors

In order to use this method in peer relations, it is necessary that the traits being tested are related to each other by a theoretical construct (P. E. Jose, personal communication, September 21, 1992). An example of such a construct would be personality traits. One of the most enduring taxonomies of personality structure has been "The Big-Five" (McCrae & Costa, 1985; Norman, 1963; Robins & John,

1992). Although there is some variation in labels across theorists, the "Big-Five" personality traits are generally considered to be extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. The repeated identification of these factors in personality ratings has led to the consensus that most personality traits fall within these five broad factors (Digman, 1990; John, 1990). The "Big Five" theorists argue that the five dimensions are fundamental or essential. In other words, the five dimensions cannot be reduced to lower-level traits. In addition, the "Big Five" traits appear to be universal; they have been found in different age groups as well as in different cultures (John, 1990).

Recently, Robins and John (1992) have presented evidence that these five factors are evident in 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students. However, Robins and John did not assess the children's personality directly. Instead, they utilized adults' ratings of the children's personality. It is possible that the results indicating that the "Big-Five" personality structure is evident in children is actually an artifact of the adult raters' bias towards interpreting personality in adult terms or constructs. Nonetheless, this is the age group that was used in the present study.

The elementary school years mark the age at which peer status becomes extremely important. Between 4th and 6th

grade, children become more differentiated in their perceptions of others' behavior (Coie et al., 1990). The bases for negative status among young children are likely to be highly visible negative behaviors (e.g., aggressiveness, temper tantrums, etc.) whereas for older children, more subtle and differentiated negative behaviors such as excessive worrying or aversion to new experiences are likely to be the bases for negative status (Coie, et al., 1990). These subtle and differentiated behaviors could be conceived of in terms of the "Big Five" personality dimensions. For example, children may reject a peer who worries excessively because they perceive him or her as highly neurotic. On the other hand, children may accept another peer who is seen helping a child fix a bike because they perceive him or her as agreeable. Thus, it appears that the "Big Five" personality dimensions could be involved in both acceptance and rejection. However, the personality traits are probably of differential importance to children when their task is to either accept or reject a peer. For example, agreeableness is probably more important than conscientiousness for deciding whether to accept or reject a peer.

The Present Study

One way to represent various levels of the five personality dimension using a decision board methodology is

to utilize vignettes which depict fictitious agemates engaging in various behavior. One advantage of this manner of presentation is that children do not receive all of the information on a fictitious child at once. Instead, they see how a fictitious child behaves in certain situations and the interpretation of these behaviors are left to the subjects. This approach was adopted because this is the typical manner in which children learn about their peers in a real world setting.

Initially, twenty pairs of three to four sentence vignettes were written for each of the "Big Five" personality dimensions. The body of each vignette pair was the same, but the endings differed in order to represent either moderately high inclusion of the personality trait or moderately low inclusion of the trait. For each pair of vignettes, one vignette was written to depict moderately high inclusion of the trait (e.g., agreeableness), while the other vignette was written to depict moderately low inclusion of the trait. Thus, for each of the "Big Five" personality dimensions, twenty vignettes were written to represent a moderately high degree of the personality trait while the other twenty vignettes were written to represent a moderately low degree of the personality trait.

In order to insure that the vignettes were representing the personality traits that they were intended to represent,

they were rated by 10 independent raters prior to their use in this study. First, raters Q-sorted the vignettes into the five personality dimensions in order to insure that the vignettes represented the dimension that they were intended to represent (e.g., extraversion, agreeableness, openness, etc.). Next, the raters rated the vignettes on a seven point scale ranging from -3 to +3 to determine the degree of the dimension in question (e.g., introversion vs. extraversion).

An information board was then constructed to have five fictitious agemates (alternatives) differing on the five personality traits (dimensions). Children were instructed to either select the child that they would like to play with most if they were to meet (accept condition) and later to select the child that they would least like to play with if they were to meet (reject condition). It was thus possible to observe which personality traits were most salient to children when they were either accepting or rejecting a peer.

Before administering the information board procedure, however, measures were taken of both sociometric status and personality. The measure of sociometric status allowed an investigation of how children differing in sociometric status approach the task of accepting and rejecting a peer. Since rejected children have been shown to possess distorted social perception as well as lack social skills and social competence (e.g., Dodge et al., 1982), it was expected that

rejected children may consider different personality traits than accepted children when performing this task. Since rejected children have also been shown to be impulsive (e.g., Hartup, 1983), it was expected that they may be less systematic in their search of information than accepted children. That is, instead of searching the information board in a strategic way, such as staying within a row or column, it was expected that the rejected children may search the information board in a more haphazard fashion.

The measure of personality dimensions allowed a comparison to be made between accepted and rejected children as to the personality traits they manifest. In addition, it was possible to see if children accept children similar to themselves and reject children dissimilar to themselves. A revised version of the Children's Personality Questionnaire (Porter & Cattell, 1985) was used in this study to assess personality dimensions.

The measurement of the "Big Five" in children is on the cutting edge of research in personality. In the only known study to date of the "Big Five" in middle childhood, the authors used the California Q-Set, a personality measure that was administered to the children's parents (Robins & John, 1992). However, because the children themselves did not complete the questionnaires, it is possible that the evidence that emerged to support the "Big Five" is due to the

perceptions of the parents. The Children's Personality Questionnaire requires children to answer forced choice questions and should be sufficient to infer the "Big Five" personality traits in children. Although the CPQ is not based on the "Big Five" personality structure, for present purposes, it was adapted to yield scores on these five dimensions.

Hypotheses

In this investigation of peer relations, eight general hypotheses were examined:

1. Agreeableness was predicted to be the most salient personality dimension regardless of whether children are accepting or rejecting a fictitious peer. A rationale for this expectation is based on the work by Hollander (1958) which suggests that people earn credits within their peer group whenever they conform and pay debits whenever they deviate from the peer group. Hence, agreeableness should be highly salient regardless of whether children are accepting or rejecting a fictitious peer on an information board. However, based on the research which shows rejected children to be less socially competent than accepted children (e.g., Asher & Hymel, 1981), and less academically astute than accepted children (e.g., Hartup, 1983), it was hypothesized that rejected and popular children would differ significantly

on the information they consider most salient when either accepting or rejecting a fictitious peer. Specific predictions were:

- a) Agreeableness would be the most salient personality dimension regardless of sociometric status and task (accepting or rejecting).
- b) Rejected children would focus on extraversion to a greater extent than accepted children since rejected children are more likely to be outgoing and emotionally demonstrative (e.g., Hartup, 1983).
- c) Popular children would focus on agreeableness and conscientiousness to a greater extent than rejected children due to the greater social competency of accepted children as well as their greater ability to differentiate between subtle traits (Coie et al., 1990).

2. The information that is considered when the task is to accept a peer was expected to differ from the information that is considered when the task is to reject a peer.

Specific predictions were:

- a) The most salient traits when selecting peers would be conscientiousness and agreeableness. When selecting peers, children probably focus more on the social competency of the peer they are selecting rather than mere idiosyncrasies the child

may have (e.g., being high strung or shy). In the United States, social skills such as agreeableness and conscientiousness are stressed in school from an early age (e.g., sharing, picking up after oneself). Children who do not conform to these societal norms may be ostracized by their peers since these are seen as basic social skills necessary to function in society (Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989). Therefore, agreeableness and conscientiousness should be the most salient traits when the task is to select a peer. After it is known how socially competent the fictitious peer is, the child may look towards the fictitious peers' idiosyncrasies to make his/her decision.

- b) The most salient traits when rejecting a fictitious peer would be neuroticism and agreeableness. This is because being well adjusted is qualitatively different from the other positive personality traits. Agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and openness to experience are all positive personality traits. While being well adjusted is certainly a positive trait, it is almost expected; it is the absence of being neurotic. Therefore, neuroticism should become important when rejecting peers. If a child does

not conform to an expected trait, s/he may be perceived as different or strange and therefore disliked.

3. There would be a gender difference on the salience of the information. Specific predictions were:

a) Based on the research which shows boys to be more sex-typed than girls (e.g., Liben & Signorella, 1980), it can be inferred that boys may be more concerned with social conformity than girls.

Therefore, it was hypothesized that boys would consider agreeableness more salient than girls.

b) Based on the research by Carol Gilligan (1982) which argues that girls are socialized to be more concerned with social relationships than are boys, it was hypothesized that girls would consider conscientiousness more salient than boys.

4. Based on the matching principle which asserts that people seek and are attracted to similar others (e.g., Berschied, Dion, Walster, & Walster, 1971), it was hypothesized that children would accept fictitious peers who are similar to themselves (as measured by the Children's Personality Questionnaire) and reject fictitious peers who are dissimilar.

5. Based on the research of children's decision making (e.g., Davidson, 1991a), it was hypothesized that 5th graders

would be more systematic in their search of the information board than 4th graders. Specific predictions were:

- a) Fifth graders would exhibit significantly more interdimensional searches than 4th graders, that is, searching on the same alternative but different dimensions.
- b) Fifth graders would exhibit significantly more intradimensional searches than 4th graders, that is, searching on the same dimension but different alternatives.
- c) Fourth graders would exhibit a greater proportion of "shifts" than fifth graders.

6. Based on the research showing rejected children to be more impulsive than accepted children (e.g., Hartup, 1983), it was hypothesized that accepted children would be more systematic in their search of the information board than rejected children. It was further hypothesized that the systematic searches of rejected children would be less effective than the systematic searches of accepted children. Specific predictions were:

- a) Accepted children would exhibit significantly more intradimensional searches than rejected children, that is, searching on the same dimension but different alternatives.

- b) Rejected children would exhibit significantly more interdimensional searches than accepted children since this type of systematic search is considered to be less systematic than intradimensional searches (e.g., Davidson, 1991a). In other words, rejected children would search on the same alternative but different dimensions to a greater extent than accepted children.
- c) Rejected children would exhibit a greater proportion of "shifts" than accepted children.

7. Based on the research which shows fourth and fifth grade girls to outperform fourth and fifth grade boys on measures of planning processes (e.g., Bardos, Naglieri, & Prewett, 1992), it was hypothesized that girls would have a higher proportion of intradimensional searches and interdimensional searches than boys. Further, girls were expected to evidence a lower proportion of "shifts" than boys.

8. Based on the research which shows rejected children to be more aggressive than other children and to have poorer social skills than other children, it was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference between accepted children's self-reported personality and rejected children's self-reported personality. Specific predictions were:

- a) Rejected children would be more neurotic than accepted children.
- b) Rejected children would be less agreeable than accepted children.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Subjects

Participants consisted of fourth (N = 36) and fifth (N = 55) grade students who received parental consent to participate in the study. The children were from predominantly middle class homes and were selected from two public schools in a northern suburb of Chicago. One hundred-eighty letters (Appendix A) were sent to parents and ninety-four (52%) of the parents agreed to allow their children to participate. Three of these subjects had to be dropped due to absences yielding a final sample size of ninety-one. The sample was approximately equally divided between males (N = 42) and females (N = 49). In addition, there were no significant differences between participants and non-participants on sociometric status.

Measures

Class Roster. The children were first presented with a class roster that included all of the children in their class. The children were instructed to rate how much they like to play with each classmate on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from +1 (dislike a lot) to +5 (like a lot).

Roster Rating Technique. A child's social status was computed by calculating the average rating received from same-gender peers. The subjects' total ratings were broken into three equal N-tiles, in order to identify the children who are highly liked, the children who are highly disliked, as well as the children in between. This method has a six-week retest reliability of $r = .82$ (Oden & Asher, 1977).

Positive and Negative Nomination Technique. Because the Roster Rating Method often misclassifies neglected children (Landou & Milich, 1990), children also completed the Positive and Negative Nomination Technique. For the positive nomination procedure, children were given the class roster again and asked to name three children with whom they most like to play. For the negative nomination procedure, the children were asked to name the three children in the class with whom they least like to play. These nomination scores were standardized within classroom and were used to classify children into five distinct groups: popular; rejected; neglected; controversial; and average, according to Coie, Dodge, and Coppotelli's guidelines (1982).

In addition to the standardized positive nominations (standardized selections) and the standardized negative nominations (standardized rejections), two other scores (social preference and social impact) had to be computed in order to classify children into the five sociometric levels.

The social preference score is computed as selections minus rejections. The social impact score, necessary to determine if a child is neglected (or controversial), is computed as the sum of the selections and rejections. These scores were also standardized within classrooms.

According to Coie et al. (1982), popular children had a standardized social preference score greater than 1.00, a standardized selection score greater than 0, and a standardized rejection score less than 0. Rejected children had a standardized social preference score less than -1.00, a standardized selection score of less than 0, and a standard rejection score of greater than 0. Average children had a standardized social preference score between -.5 and .5. Neglected children had a standardized social impact score of less than -1.00, a standard selection score of less than 0 and a standard rejection score of less than 0. Controversial children had a standardized social impact score of greater than 1.00, a standardized selection score of greater than 0 and a standardized rejection score of greater than 0.

Children's Personality Questionnaire. The Children's Personality Questionnaire (CPQ; Porter & Cattell, 1975) is a standardized and factorially derived personality measure designed for use with children ages 8 through 12. It measures 14 factorially independent dimensions of personality. There are four equivalent forms: A, B, C, and

D. Each form consists of two parts with 70 forced-choice questions apiece. The test requires a fourth-grade reading level.

Because there is no children's personality inventory designed to measure the "Big Five" personality dimensions, we selected certain items from the CPQ to represent "Big Five" dimensions by having ten graduate student raters Q-sort the 280 items from Form A and Form D of the CPQ into six categories: extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and miscellaneous. Based on data from the raters, fifty items were selected, ten items for each of the "Big Five" personality dimensions. (See Appendix B.) All of the selected items received a minimum interrater agreement of .80.

Materials

Information Board. There was one practice information board and two experimental information boards. The practice information board was intended to familiarize the children with the personality dimensions as well as to familiarize them with the information board procedure. The one difference between the practice information board and the experimental information boards was that the practice information board was smaller. As a result, it only

consisted of three alternatives (fictitious agemates) rather than five alternatives (fictitious agemates). All other aspects of the practice information board were identical to the experimental information boards.

The experimental information boards were constructed from pegboard and measured 3' x 3'. Alternatives (fictitious agemates) were presented in rows and personality attributes, or dimensions, were presented in columns. The personality attributes are extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Age-appropriate column headers were created for each category (i.e., outgoing versus likes to be alone, goes along with others versus stubborn, easily frustrated versus not easily frustrated, careful versus not careful, and will only do the same thing versus likes to try new things). These headers refer to extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, respectively.

The alternatives consisted of five fictitious same-gender agemates. All of the names that were used on the information board had received average ratings between 1.9 and 2.2 on a three point scale that ranged from 1 (do not like) to 3 (like very much). In other words, all of the names used on the information board received average ratings of being moderately well liked. These ratings were made by

fourth through sixth grade students at a separate Chicago-area school used only for that purpose. (See Appendix C.)

Three-sentence vignette pairs represented the individual cells of the information board and were randomly assigned within a column. (See Appendix D.) These were read to the children. The actual information board had a one-sentence summary of the vignette that was intended to remind the child of the entire vignette. (See Appendix E.) Each of the vignette summaries was covered by an index card with each column being covered by a different color index card. This was meant to help the children remember that each column depicted a different category of behavior.

The vignette pairs depicted a behavior that the fictitious child supposedly performed. The body of each member of a vignette pair was identical, however, the endings differed in order to represent a particular pole of the personality dimension in question (e.g., extraversion versus intraversion). Thus, not only were the vignettes randomly assigned, but the members of the vignette pairs were also randomly assigned. So, on average, there were an equal number of vignettes representing each end of the five personality dimensions.

The vignettes were Q-sorted by ten graduate student raters prior to their use in this study to insure that they were representing the dimensions that they were supposed to

represent. Graduate students were instructed to place each vignette into the category that they felt it represented. The graduate students were provided with six categories: agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, and miscellaneous. Next, the graduate student raters were instructed to rate the vignettes on a scale ranging from -3 to +3 in order to determine how extreme the vignette was. The positive numbers were used for the positive pole (e.g., extraversion) and the negative numbers were used for the negative pole (e.g., introversion). The vignettes that were retained for the study attained a minimum interrater agreement of 0.80. Further, all vignette pairs that were retained for the study had members with comparable absolute values of ratings. Thus, for example, if one member of a vignette pair depicted a child to be moderately agreeable, the other member of this pair depicted a child to be moderately disagreeable.

Procedure

Children were tested on two different occasions. During the first visit, children were tested in a group and completed the two sociometric measures as well as the shortened CPQ. During the second visit, children individually completed the information board procedure. There were two rationales for using two sessions in this

study. The first rationale was a time consideration; it would take approximately ninety minutes per child if all of the data was collected in one session. Children's attention spans are simply not long enough to do all of the testing in one session. Second and more important, there is some overlap of content between the CPQ and the vignettes on the information board. By waiting two weeks before administering the information board technique, it was hoped that these CPQ items would no longer be as salient.

Before participating in the study, the children were told that nobody besides the researchers would see their answers. In addition, the children were told that since only identification numbers appeared on their data sheets, their answers would be anonymous. The children were told that anonymous means that nobody would be able to tell who gave what answers.

The first two measures that were administered were sociometric measures (i.e., the roster rating method and the positive/negative nominations method). The children were presented with a class roster and told, "There are some children who you probably like a lot and others who you probably do not like so much. I would like to learn which classmates you like, as well as which classmates you do not like so much. Please show how much you like each person on this list by circling the number that best tells how you feel

about this person. For example, if you like the person a whole lot, circle the number five on the right. If you really dislike a person, circle the number one on the left. If you do not feel one way or the other about the person, circle the number three in the middle. The other two numbers are for if you sort of like or sort of dislike the child. If you sort of like the person, circle the number four and if you sort of dislike the person, circle the number two." When the children were finished rating their classmates, a blank piece of paper was distributed to them. They were told, "Now, I would like you to write the names of the three kids in this class that you like to play with most. Be sure to write down both the first and the last name." This list was collected and a second blank piece of paper was distributed. The children were told, "On this piece of paper, I would like you to write the names of the three kids in this class that you like to play with the least. Please write down both the first name and the last name."

The sociometric tests were followed by the shortened CPQ. Children were told, "I would like to find out how children feel and act sometimes. This questionnaire has 50 questions, each of which has two choices. Please fill in the box next to the choice that is most like you. Even if you do not feel that either choice is really like you, try to pick

the choice that is more like you. Please answer all questions and remember, there are no right or wrong answers."

Approximately two weeks later, the experimenters returned to the school to test the children individually. The children were taken to a separate room and were given a practice board in order to familiarize them with the information board procedure. The children were told, "I would like to find out how children pick friends. We will play a game where you will make decisions about children from another school who are your age. This is an information board. Underneath each card is a piece of information about a child from a nearby school. If you point to a card, I will read you a very short story about the child. There are five different types of behavior that you can find out about. Each of these categories has a heading at the top and is identified by the color index card that is covering it. You can reveal information from any seven of the cards in order to make your decision. After you have revealed seven cards, tell me which child you would like to play with the most. And remember, you can look at the one sentence summary of the story to help you decide. Listen carefully when I am reading, OK?"

After the child informed the experimenter of his/her choice on the practice information board, the experimenter showed the child the information behind the remaining cards.

This was intended to familiarize the child with the information board procedure as well as familiarize the child with the behavioral dimensions.

After completing the practice run, the children were introduced to the experimental decision boards in a counterbalanced fashion. Half of the children were to choose an accepted peer first and half of the children were to choose a rejected peer first. The order of presentation (i.e., accept board and reject board) was determined by utilizing a random number table.

In the accept condition, children were told, "I have two more information boards that I would like you to try. This information board is the same as the one that you did for me a few minutes ago except that there are five children to choose from instead of three. Because there are more children, you can see the information under twelve of the cards. The information is categorized as before. Remember that different colors represent different behavior categories. These categories are labeled at the top of each column. Your job is to pick the child that you would most like to play with if you were to meet these children. Point to a card that you would like removed and I will read you a short story about this child. A short summary of the behavior will be under the index card that you remove. You can look at these to remind you about the child. After

twelve cards have been read, I will ask you to pick the child that you would like to play with most." The child's moves on the information board were recorded on a data sheet, and the fictitious child that the subject chose was recorded.

The "reject" condition had the same instructions except the children were told, "Some children are not as well liked as others. On this information board, I would like you to choose the child that you would like to play with the least." Again, the child's moves on the information board were recorded on a data sheet and the fictitious child that the subject chose was recorded. After the children completed both information boards, they were thanked for participating. The children were then led back to their classroom. Before another child was removed from his/her classroom, the information boards were set up for the next child. The columns were randomly re-arranged to guard against response bias and the vignettes within the column were randomly re-assigned.

Scoring of the Information Board

Children's performance on the information board was scored for the salience of the five personality attributes (dimensions), the rating of the selected and rejected fictitious peers, and the systematicity of the search (i.e., the proportion of intradimensional searches, the proportion

of interdimensional searches, and the proportion of "shifts").

The children were allowed to reveal the information of 12 cards on each of the experimental information boards. This number of cards was decided upon because it was a good compromise between allowing the children to reveal the information to only one card and allowing the children to reveal the information to all twenty-five of the cards. The children's path through the information board was recorded. So, the first card that the child wanted to be revealed was initially recorded as a "1" and the last card that the child wanted to be revealed was initially recorded as a "12". These scores were then reverse-coded so that the first choice was coded as a "12" and the last choice was coded as a "1". At this point, the five columns were summed to give the salience score for each of the five dimensions. In other words, if a particular child chose alternatives under the agreeableness column for his/her first choice (recoded as a twelve), his/her fifth choice (recoded as a seven), and his/her seventh choice (recoded as a five), his/her salience score for agreeableness would be equal to twenty-four.

The personality rating of the selected and rejected fictitious peers was also recorded. The vignettes had been sorted into the Big-Five personality dimensions and rated on a scale ranging from -3 to +3 by graduate student raters.

The average rating that each vignette received from the graduate students was then recorded. We then noted the vignettes that were revealed for the fictitious selected peer and the fictitious rejected peer and recorded the average rating that they had received. If a vignette for a particular dimension was not revealed, it was recorded as missing data.

Finally, the number of intradimensional searches, the number of interdimensional searches, and the number of "shifts" was recorded for each child on each of the experimental information boards. After the child's first choice, all moves could be characterized as either intradimensional searches, interdimensional searches, or "shifts". Thus, the sum of all intradimensional searches, interdimensional searches, and "shifts" was equal to "11" for each information board. Ergo, in order to categorize the child's search style as predominantly intradimensional, interdimensional, or neither (i.e., shifts), proportions of eleven were coded for each decision board. For example, if a child made eight intradimensional searches, one interdimensional search and two "shifts" on the accept board, this would be coded as .73, .09, and .18 respectively. This child could be said to be searching predominantly interdimensionally on the accept board.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Psychometrics of the Instruments

Children's Personality Questionnaire. Because there is no children's personality inventory designed to measure the "Big Five" personality dimensions, certain items were selected from the CPQ by having ten graduate student raters Q-sort the 280 items from Form A and Form D of the CPQ into six categories: extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and miscellaneous. Based on data from the raters, fifty items were selected, ten items from each of the "Big Five" personality dimensions. All of these items received a minimum interrater agreement of .80.

Initial internal reliabilities on the "Big Five" personality dimensions ranged from .56 (extraversion) to .71 (conscientiousness). After dropping ill-fitting items, the reliabilities ranged from .62 (extraversion) to .74 (conscientiousness). However, an inter-item correlation matrix showed that there was a strong positive correlation between agreeableness and conscientiousness ($r = .64, p = .0001$). Therefore, agreeableness and

conscientiousness were combined to form a single personality dimension. There was also a significant positive correlation between openness to experience and extraversion ($r = .26$, $p = .012$). However, the correlation was not strong enough to warrant combining these two dimensions. These were the only significant positive correlations. This suggests that the remaining personality dimensions may be distinct. After combining agreeableness and conscientiousness, the final reliabilities for the four personality dimensions were .83 for agreeableness/ conscientiousness, .62 for extraversion, .64 for neuroticism, and .71 for openness to experience.

Descriptive Information on Sociometric Status

Sociometric Status. Using the classification approach of Coie et al. (1982), children were classified into six groups: popular, average, rejected, neglected, controversial, and unclassified. Eleven children (12.1%) were classified as popular, fourteen children (15.4%) were classified as rejected, seven children (7.7%) were classified as neglected, seven children (7.7%) were classified as controversial, and twenty-two children (24.2%) were classified as average. Thirty children (33%) were unclassified and were dropped from further analyses when this classification approach was used.

Children were also classified into three groups (i.e., high status, middle status, and low status) using the classification approach of Oden and Asher (1977). Twenty-seven children (29.7%) were classified as high status, thirty-three children (36.3%) were classified as middle status, and thirty-one children (34.1%) were classified as low status.

Hypothesis 1

Agreeableness was expected to be the most salient personality dimension regardless of whether children accepted or rejected a fictitious peer. In addition, it was predicted that rejected children and popular children would differ significantly on the information they considered most salient when they accepted or rejected a fictitious peer.

A 5 (Sociometric Status) x 5 (Personality Dimension) x 2 (Information Board Task) repeated measures ANOVA was performed on the salience of the personality dimensions. Because the Greenhouse-Geiser Epsilon ($G-G = .9362$) was close to 1.00, the p values reported are Greenhouse-Geisser adjusted (See Hays, 1988). The 5 x 5 x 2 repeated measures ANOVA produced a significant main effect for Dimension, $F(4, 196) = 8.00$, $p = .0001$, and a significant Dimension X Sociometric Status interaction, $F(16, 196) = 2.01$, $p = .02$. The two way interaction between Board and Dimension, $F(4,$

196), $p = .26$, as well as the three way interaction between Board, Dimension, and Sociometric Status were not significant.

The means for the salience of the personality dimensions collapsed across Board are agreeableness ($M = 19.98$), conscientiousness ($M = 12.77$), extraversion ($M = 13.74$), neuroticism ($M = 15.64$), and openness to experience ($M = 15.91$). Because of the hypothesis that agreeableness is the most salient personality trait and because the main effect of dimension was significant, pairwise comparisons between agreeableness and each of the other four dimensions were performed. These contrasts were all significant. As predicted, the contrast between agreeableness and the other dimensions revealed that agreeableness was significantly more salient than conscientiousness, $F(1, 49) = 20.39$, $p = .0001$; extraversion $F(1, 49) = 18.31$, $p = .0001$; neuroticism $F(1, 49) = 10.92$, $p = .002$; and openness to experience $F(1, 49) = 9.25$, $p = .004$.

A simple main effects analysis on the Sociometric Status x Dimension interaction indicated that this interaction was due to the extraversion dimension, $F(4, 49) = 2.61$, $p = .05$, and the openness to experience dimension, $F(4, 49) = 2.79$, $p = .04$. A contrast comparing popular and rejected children on the salience of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extraversion failed to reveal a significant difference

between the two groups. In addition, Scheffé analyses comparing sociometric status on the salience of the personality dimensions did not reveal significant differences between the sociometric groups for any of the personality dimensions.

In a parallel analysis, sociometric status was calculated according to Oden and Asher's (1977) criteria. A 5 (Personality Dimension) x 3 (Liking Status) x 2 (Information Board Task) repeated measures ANOVA revealed a solitary main effect for Dimension, $F(4, 352) = 4.83$, $p = .001$. There were no other significant main effects and no significant interactions. Because of the hypothesis that agreeableness is the most salient personality trait and because there was a main effect for the salience of dimension, pairwise comparisons were performed between agreeableness and the other four dimensions. The means for the salience of the personality dimensions collapsed across Information Board are agreeableness ($M = 18.94$), conscientiousness ($M = 13.77$), extraversion ($M = 14.94$), neuroticism ($M = 15.22$), and openness to experience ($M = 15.14$). The comparisons between agreeableness and the other four dimension revealed that agreeableness was significantly more salient than conscientiousness, $F(1, 87) = 34.57$, $p < .01$; extraversion, $F(1, 87) = 20.70$, $p <$

.01; neuroticism, $F(17, 89)$, $p < .01$; and openness to experience, $F(1, 87) = 18.66$, $p < .01$.

In summary, because we found no interactions between Dimension and Information Board task and because orthogonal contrasts revealed agreeableness to be more salient than the other personality dimensions, we can conclude that agreeableness is the most salient personality dimension for both selecting and rejecting a fictitious peer. However, there did not appear to be sociometric differences on the salience of the differing personality traits. These results provide support for Hypothesis one.

Hypothesis 2

The information that was considered most salient when the task was to accept a peer was expected to differ from the information that was considered when the task was to reject a peer.

Contrary to the hypothesis, A 5 (Sociometric Status) x 5 (Personality Dimension) x 2 (Information Board Task) repeated measures ANOVA revealed that there was no significant difference between the salience of the information on the accept board and the salience of the information on the reject board, $F(1, 196) = .09$, $p = .76$. In addition, the interaction between Information Board and Personality Dimension was not significant, $F(1, 22) = 1.02$, $p = .40$.

Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the accept board and the reject board on the salience of the personality dimensions cannot be rejected. In sum, the data fail to support Hypothesis two.

Hypothesis 3

It was predicted that there would be a gender difference on the salience of the personality dimensions.

Contrary to this prediction, a 5 (Personality Dimension) x 2 (Gender of Subject) x 2 (Information Board Task) repeated measures ANOVA indicated that there was not a significant main effect for gender on the salience of the personality dimensions, $F(1, 89) = .81, p = .37$. In addition, the interaction between Gender and Dimension was not significant, $F(1, 42) = .76, p = .56$. Thus, the findings do not allow one to accept the hypothesis that boys differed from girls in the information that they found most salient on the information boards. In sum, the results fail to support Hypothesis three.

Hypothesis 4

It was expected that children would accept fictitious peers who were similar to themselves (as measured by the CPQ) and reject fictitious peers who were dissimilar.

Contrary to this prediction, a correlation matrix between the subjects' self-reported personality (i.e.,

agreeableness/conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism and openness to experience) and the personality rating of the fictitious peer they accepted revealed a significant negative correlation between the subjects' extraversion score and the fictitious peers' extraversion rating ($r = -.268$, $p = .008$). Subjects high on extraversion accepted peers who were low on extraversion. Also contrary to the hypothesis, there was a significant negative correlation between the subjects' openness to experience score and the fictitious peers' extraversion score ($r = -.242$, $p = .016$). Subjects who were high on openness to experience accepted peers who were low on extraversion. No other correlations were significant.

A correlation matrix between the subjects' self-reported personality and the personality rating of the fictitious peer they rejected revealed a significant positive correlation between the subjects' extraversion score and the fictitious peers' neuroticism rating ($r = .278$, $p = .006$), and a significant positive correlation between the subjects' openness to experience score and the rejected fictitious peers' conscientiousness rating ($r = .191$, $p = .047$). So, subjects high in extraversion tended to reject fictitious peers who were high on neuroticism, and subjects who were high in openness to experience tended to reject fictitious peers who were high in conscientiousness. In addition, there was a significant negative correlation between the subjects'

extraversion score and the fictitious peers' openness to experience rating ($r = -.19$, $p = .045$). In other words, subjects high in extraversion tended to reject fictitious peers who were low in openness to experience.

In summary, none of the predicted correlations were significant. The findings do not support the hypothesis that children accept similar others and reject dissimilar others.

Hypothesis 5

Fifth graders were expected to be more systematic in their search of the information board than fourth graders. This is based on the finding that intradimensional and interdimensional searches increase with age, and shifts decrease with age.

Disconfirming predictions, a series of one-way ANOVAs on the proportion of intradimensional searches, the proportion of interdimensional searches, and the proportion of shifts did not reveal a significant difference between fourth and fifth graders. When the task was to accept a peer, fourth graders used intradimensional searches 17% of the time while fifth graders utilized intradimensional searches 13% of the time, $F(1, 89) = 1.52$, $p = .22$. Also, fourth graders utilized interdimensional searches 16% of the time while fifth graders utilized interdimensional searches 18% of the time, $F(1, 89) = .188$, $p = .67$. Finally, fourth

graders shifted 66% of the time while fifth graders shifted 69% of the time, $F(1, 89) = .289, p = .59$.

When the task was to reject a peer, fourth graders used intradimensional searches 17% of the time while fifth graders utilized intradimensional searches 16% of the time, $F(1, 89) = .165, p = .69$. Fourth graders utilized interdimensional searches 14% of the time while fifth graders searched interdimensionally 18% of the time, $F(1, 89) = 1.00, p = .32$. Finally, fourth graders made shifts 69% of the time while fifth graders made shifts 66% of the time, $F(1, 89) = .288, p = .59$.

In summary, the null hypothesis that fourth and fifth graders are equally systematic in their searches of information boards was not rejected. The data do not support Hypothesis five.

Hypothesis 6

Accepted children were predicted to be more systematic in their search of the information board than rejected children.

Contrary to predictions, when sociometric status was computed according to the classification system used by Coie et al. (1982), a series of one-way ANOVAs did not reveal significant differences between children of differing sociometric status on the children's proportion of

intradimensional searches, the proportion of interdimensional searches, or the proportion of shifts.

In a parallel analysis, sociometric status was computed according to Oden and Asher's (1977) classification system. A series of one-way ANOVAs indicated a main effect of sociometric status on the proportion of shifts on the reject board, $F(2, 87)$, $p = .04$. High status children shifted 71% of the time, middle status children shifted 72% of the time, and low status children shifted 58% of the time. This finding is in the opposite direction of that predicted. However, a Tukey B follow-up did not reveal a significant difference between high status and low status children. There were no other significant main effects on the reject board and no significant main effects on the accept board.

In summary, the null hypothesis was not rejected; no difference was found between the proportion of systematic searches for popular children and the proportion of systematic searches for rejected children. These data fail to support Hypothesis six.

Hypothesis 7

It was predicted that girls would have a higher proportion of intradimensional searches and interdimensional searches than boys. Further, it was predicted that girls would evidence a lower proportion of shifts than boys.

When the task was to reject a fictitious peer, a series of 3 (Sociometric Status) x 2 (Gender) ANOVAs on the proportion of intradimensional searches, the proportion of interdimensional searches and the proportion of shifts indicated a main effect of gender, $F(1, 89) = 4.82, p = .03$ on the proportion of interdimensional searches. Girls searched interdimensionally 12% of the time while boys searched interdimensionally 21% of the time. This effect was in the opposite direction of that predicted. Girls searched interdimensionally significantly less often than boys. There was also a main effect of gender on the proportion of shifts, $F(1, 89) = 5.00, p = .03$. Girls made shifts 73% of the time while boys made shifts 60% of the time. This effect, too, was not in the predicted direction with girls evidencing significantly more shifts than boys. There were no significant interactions.

When the task was to accept a fictitious peer, a series of 3 (Sociometric Status) x 2 (Gender) ANOVAs showed no significant differences between boys and girls on the proportion of intradimensional searches, the proportion of interdimensional searches, or the proportion of shifts. In summary, it does not appear to be the case that girls search an information board more systematically than boys.

Hypothesis 8

A significant difference between accepted children's self-reported personality and rejected children's self-reported personality was expected.

When sociometric status was calculated according to guidelines used by Coie et al. (1982), a one-way MANOVA on the four personality dimensions (agreeableness/conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience) revealed a multivariate main effect of sociometric status, $F(4, 71) = 1.66, p = .04$. Univariate F-tests revealed a significant effect for extraversion, $F(4, 71) = 3.58, p = .006$, and a trend for neuroticism, $F(4, 71) = 2.28, p = .056$. Confirming predictions, a Tukey B follow-up indicated that the rejected children were significantly less extraverted than any of the other sociometric groups. A contrast between popular and rejected children on neuroticism revealed that rejected children were significantly more neurotic than popular children, $F(1, 49) = 7.62, p = .014$.

In a parallel analysis, sociometric status was calculated according to Oden and Asher's (1977) classification system. A one way MANOVA of the four personality dimensions revealed a multivariate trend for sociometric status, $F(2, 74) = 1.90, p = .064$. Univariate F-tests indicated a significant effect for extraversion,

$F(2, 74) = 3.85, p = .026$, and a significant effect for neuroticism, $F(2, 74) = 6.68, p = .002$. A Tukey B follow-up indicated that low status children were significantly less extraverted than middle status children, but were not significantly less extraverted than high status children. Consistent with predictions, a contrast between low status and high status children on neuroticism indicated that low status children were significantly more neurotic than high status children, $F(1, 87) = 6.38, p = .014$. A Tukey B follow-up on neuroticism indicated that low status children were significantly more neurotic than either middle status children or high status children. In summary, it appears as if rejected children are both less extraverted and more neurotic than accepted children. These findings support Hypothesis eight.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Support was found for two of the eight major hypotheses. First, the predicted difference between the self-reported personality of rejected children and the self-reported personality of popular children emerged for neuroticism but not for agreeableness. And second, agreeableness was the most salient personality dimension on the decision board regardless of whether children were rejecting or accepting a fictitious peer. However, there was no support found for the sub-hypothesis that popular children and rejected children would differ on the information they consider most salient when either accepting or rejecting a fictitious peer. In addition, there was no support found for the other six major hypotheses.

Personality Differences as Measured by the CPO

The hypothesis that the self-reported personality of rejected children would differ from the self-reported personality of accepted children was partly supported. Rejected children were found to be both more neurotic and less extraverted than popular children. However, no differences emerged between the two groups on agreeableness.

Differences in extraversion and neuroticism may be one of the reasons that some children are rejected. However, it is also possible that children are neurotic and/or introverted because they are rejected. This problem of specifying causal direction is one reason why the decision board methodology was used. We hoped to see which personality dimensions were most important in determining whether a fictitious peer was either accepted or rejected.

Salience of Personality Dimensions

Support was found for the hypothesis that agreeableness is the most salient personality dimension for both peer acceptance and peer rejection. It may be that fourth and fifth grade children are primarily concerned with whether or not another child conforms with the group. If the child conforms, s/he is seen as easy-going and is resultantly liked by his or her peers. If the child does not conform, s/he may be seen as stubborn and willful, and consequently is not well liked by his or her peers. The other personality dimensions may only be meaningful to the peer group once it is known how easy-going (i.e., agreeable) the child is.

However, no support was found for the sub-hypothesis that rejected and popular children would differ on the information they considered the most salient when either accepting or rejecting a fictitious peer. In addition, there

was no support found for the related hypotheses that there would be an interaction between information board and personality dimension on salience of dimension or that there would be a gender difference on the salience of the personality dimensions. It is possible that this was due to a few methodological problems, to which the discussion now turns.

Possible Methodological Problems

First of all, the vignettes contained in the decision boards were rated by graduate students instead of by the target population (i.e., fourth and fifth grade students). It is possible that the fourth and fifth graders did not interpret the stories in the same way as graduate students. For instance, while conscientiousness and neuroticism may be important dimensions to fourth and fifth graders, it is possible that they did not consider the stories presented under these categories to be relevant and thus sampled other categories instead. This may account for the almost equal mean salience scores between conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience. It is possible that this methodological problem caused no difference to be found between boys and girls on the salience of the personality dimensions as well as no difference to be found between the accept board and the reject board.

Another explanation for why the data did not support these hypotheses could be that the decision boards were not balanced. It was the original plan to re-randomize each decision board within each dimension after each subject. Since each vignette had both a positive ending and a negative ending, this theoretically would result in half of the endings within each dimension being positive and the other half of the endings within each dimension being negative. Thus, each decision board, on average, would be made up of half positive vignettes and half negative vignettes. The positive and negative vignettes would also be evenly divided between the five personality dimensions.

However, during the first day of running subjects, we discovered that it took approximately forty minutes per student to administer the decision board procedure and an additional twenty minutes per student to re-randomize the vignettes in the decision board. Because the principals of the schools were eager to have us finish the data collection quickly and because the students were scheduled to begin state testing soon, we attempted to speed up the randomization process. Instead of re-randomizing after each student, we administered the same decision boards to blocks of four children. Since only ninety-one subjects participated, we are not certain that we attained "balanced" decision boards. In fact, observations of the resulting

decision boards suggest that they were not balanced. At times, an entire dimension was composed of either positive or negative vignettes. This could account for subjects either focusing on a particular dimension or skipping to another dimension. If this study were to be done again, it would be a good idea to have a set number of balanced decision boards. It is less risky to have a limited set of balanced decision boards than to rely on randomization, especially if there is a small sample size.

A third methodological problem is that sociometric status may not have been validly measured. Because subjects only rated children of their own gender who were in their homeroom and because the return rate was only about 50%, a child's sociometric status was based on very few observations. Therefore, if a child received only one negative nomination or one low rating, it could negatively affect sociometric status dramatically. This was compounded by the fact that we were forced to administer the sociometric measures and the personality inventory to the children in a small room that was equipped with lunch tables. This setup forced the children to sit next to each other in cramped quarters which seemed to encourage looking at neighbors' responses (i.e., the ratings of particular children, and positive and negative nominations). Seeing the neighbors' responses may have influenced subjects' responses.

Therefore, it is very possible that the sociometric status that was computed for the children was not valid. This could have prevented the hypotheses about sociometric differences in the salience of information from being significant.

On the other hand, it is also possible that the results which show no difference between popular children and rejected children are true and accurate. Perhaps children from different sociometric groups are similar in the information they consider most salient when selecting or rejecting peers.

Match Between Subjects'
Personality and Rating of
Fictitious Peer

The hypothesis that children would accept fictitious peers who were similar to themselves (as measured by the CPQ) and reject fictitious peers who were dissimilar was not supported. This could be due to both methodological and theoretical reasons. The theoretical basis for the hypothesis was the theory that similarity leads to attraction (e.g., Byrne, 1969). This is popularized by the old saying, "birds of a feather flock together". The results of this study however do not support this theory.

Moreover, the alternative hypothesis that opposites attract (complementarity) does not seem to receive much support either, with one exception. Subjects high in

extraversion accepted peers who were low in extraversion. It seems that for this personality dimension, an extraverted child would complement an introverted child and vice versa. For example, the extraverted child may benefit because s/he would be able to be the center of attention while the introverted child may benefit because the extraverted child would initiate the interaction and hence ease the introverted child's apprehension.

On the other hand, methodological problems may have prevented the hypothesis from being supported as well. As mentioned previously, the decision boards were often times not balanced. This could have affected the results in many ways. For example, if the task was to accept a peer but all of the vignettes under the openness to experience dimension were negative, the selected peer was guaranteed to have a rating of "close-minded". Because a scenario like this was repeated in blocks of four, the correlations could have been seriously affected. Many times subjects were simply selecting the lesser of the several evils. So, they may have selected a close-minded individual even though they preferred open-mindedness because this individual was the only one who had any positive attributes. Because all of the dimensions were probably affected evenly, the correlations cannot be validly interpreted.

Strategic Searches

None of the hypotheses having to do with the systematicity of children's searches were supported. Fifth grade students were no more systematic in their searches through the decision boards than fourth graders. There are at least two possible reasons why this hypothesis was not supported. First of all, the age range may not have been great enough to demonstrate increasing sophistication in the method of searching information. Indeed, Davidson (1991a) used a wider age span (i.e., second, fifth, and eighth grades). Perhaps it takes a wider age range to demonstrate the finding of increased searching sophistication with age.

Second, it should be noted that measuring the interdimensional searches, intradimensional searches, and shifts may not be the best way of measuring a child's strategy. This taxonomy makes two assumptions. First of all, it assumes that the children have a preference for one dimension over another. Second, it assumes that there actually is a best choice. However, if these assumptions are not met, it may be just as sophisticated to switch between both dimensions and alternatives simultaneously. While this would register as a shift and be considered unsystematic in Davidson's taxonomy, it may actually be just as strategic as an intradimensional or interdimensional search.

For instance, if children did not prefer one dimension to another, then they could pick a different dimension for each alternative and simply weigh the positives and negatives. There would be no motivation to search either intradimensionally or interdimensionally, since they could make an equally good decision without doing so. If this were true, the subjects could shift every time and still be strategic.

The hypothesis that popular children would be more systematic than rejected children was not supported either. There are two additional reasons to those mentioned previously why this hypothesis may not have been supported. First of all, because sociometric status was a grouping variable, there was no way of manipulating it. As a result, only eleven children were classified as popular while only fourteen children were classified as rejected. There simply were not enough children in either of these groups to demonstrate a significant difference in systematicity even if there was a difference between the two groups. Even when children were classified according to the classification scheme of Oden and Asher (1977), there were only twenty-seven children in the high status group and thirty-one children in the low status group.

A second problem with the computation of sociometric status was mentioned previously. It is possible, due to low

response rate, that the children were not validly categorized into the different sociometric groups. Therefore, the children classified as rejected may not have actually been rejected, and hence may not have demonstrated the behavior expected of rejected children for this reason.

Finally, the hypothesis that girls would be more systematic than boys was not supported. In addition to the explanations for the failings of the previous two hypotheses, it may be that faulty logic was utilized in forming this hypothesis. While it is true that girls mature faster than boys on average, it is also true that boys tend to be better than girls on spatial relations tasks (e.g., Gallagher & Johnson, 1992; Geary, Gilger, & Elliott, 1992). The task was to gather information from a matrix and to make a decision on who the child likes most. It is possible that boys' greater ability in spatial relations tasks led to a more sophisticated level of searching the decision board. However, if this was true, boys should have performed better than girls on both the accept and the reject board. In all probability, the finding that boys were more systematic than girls on the reject board was simply a statistical artifact.

Summary

This study on peer relations was novel in a number of ways. First of all, prior to this study, very little research had been done with the Big Five personality traits

in children. This study attempted to identify the Big-Five personality traits in children by having the children fill out a 50-item self-report personality inventory. The advantage of this method over the one previously employed for this purpose (Robins & John, 1992) is that the children, rather than their parents, filled out the inventory. This helps flush out whether the Big-Five personality structure is evident in children or whether the previous findings of the Big-Five in children were due to an artifact of the adult raters' bias towards interpreting personality in adult terms or constructs.

The reliabilities and inter-item correlation matrices that were obtained on the CPQ suggest that the Big-Five personality structure is evident in fourth and fifth grade children. Specifically, the data found evidence for a Big Four: agreeableness/conscientiousness; extraversion; neuroticism; and openness to experience. Thus, the personality inventory that was created by having graduate students Q-sort CPQ items may be used to identify the Big-Five in fourth and fifth grade children. However, it would be necessary to run a factor analysis on the items to insure that this is a viable personality inventory for identifying the Big-Five personality traits. This would require a sample size of roughly five to ten times the number of items.

A second way in which this study was novel pertains to the information board technique. This is the first known study that utilized the information board technique in order to indicate the differential characteristics of accepted and rejected children. Relatedly, by presenting behavioral examples of the Big-Five personality traits, it was possible to determine which personality traits children take into consideration most when they decide to accept or reject peers. Past studies on the characteristics of children differing on sociometric status have typically been observational in nature. The problem with that approach is that it is impossible to infer causality. For instance, a rejected child may be rejected because s/he is aggressive. On the other hand, a child may be aggressive because s/he is rejected. By employing fictitious peers on the information board, it becomes possible to infer causality.

Finally, the information board technique made it possible to study the decision making strategy that the children employed. From this study, it appears that person perception is qualitatively different from decision tasks such as choosing a bike. This may be due to the fact that in person perception, there is no obviously or objectively correct answer. It would be interesting in the future to compare these two decision making tasks in the same

experiment in order to see if there is support for this impression.

Although the findings in this study were modest, the methodology that was utilized could pay dividends in the future. As mentioned previously, there were some unforeseen methodological problems. If these were removed, it is quite possible that the findings would be more convincing. In addition to removing the methodological problems, the information board technique could probably be enhanced by presenting the vignettes on videotape. Then, each child would view a videotape of the chosen vignette with each square of the matrix representing a summary of the previously viewed videotape. In other words, children would point to a square and then view actors engaging in an activity that pertains to one of the dimensions. This may make the behavior more salient to the subjects because it is more realistic. As a result, there may be more significant findings. However, this enhanced methodology, in addition to being prohibitively expensive, may also cause a host of other problems. For instance, it would be necessary to covary out the attractiveness of the actors to insure that it was the actions and not the attractiveness of the actors that caused them to be either accepted or rejected. Nonetheless, with sufficient pretesting, this technique could be of value in the future for studies in peer relations.

In sum, although there were methodological problems with this study, it did contribute somewhat to the understanding of how children form friendships. It appears as if agreeableness is the most important of the "Big Five" personality traits when children either accept or reject a peer after a first impression.

In addition, this study contributes to the evidence that children manifest the "Big Five" personality traits. The results of the present study found evidence for a "Big Four" taxonomy of personality: agreeableness/conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Perhaps fourth and fifth grade children do not make a distinction between agreeableness and conscientiousness. This possibility should be probed further in the future by utilizing a factor analysis.

APPENDIX A

Initial Letter to Parents

March 22, 1993

Dear Parents,

We are Developmental Psychologists from Loyola University-Chicago. We have been granted permission by Dr. Anderson Jackson, Research Coordinator of District 187, the Board of Education and Mr. Shelton to contact you about a study we are conducting with fourth and fifth graders at South School. The study is investigating what information children consider when choosing a friend. We hope you will allow your child to participate. Let us give you information about the project so you may make an informed decision.

The children will meet with us twice. The first meeting will involve having your child fill out a personality inventory, and having him or her tell us privately who their friends are. Two weeks later, the children will meet with us individually for about 15 minutes and will select their favorite of five fictitious peers that are described to them. They will also be presented with an additional 5 fictitious peers and will be told to pick the child that would least likely be their friend. Of particular interest is what importance children place on certain personality characteristics when choosing a friend or rejecting a peer. There will be no right or wrong answers on these tasks.

No research has been done to look at how children weigh the relative importance of personality characteristics when either selecting or rejecting peers. Research in this area will allow us to investigate this important topic and hopefully develop knowledge to benefit children.

Please note that all the information we collect from your child is confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Further, the information your child provides is anonymous. Your child's name will not appear on any of the data, only a code number will be used.

Finally, should you or your child decide at any point to discontinue your child's participation in our project, for whatever reason, your child is free to do so. If you want your child to participate, please sign the attached consent form and return it to your child's teacher.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to call either Paul Jose, Phil Huntsinger, or Steve Vanden Avond at Loyola University-Chicago, Department of Psychology, (312) 508-3001.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul Jose, Ph.D

Steve Vanden Avond

Phil Huntsinger

Paul E. Jose, Ph.D
Phil Huntsinger
Steve Vanden Avond

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

This project will investigate the importance that children place on certain personality characteristics when selecting or rejecting a peer. It will be conducted during regular school hours at South School as described above.

All of the information that will be obtained from your child will remain confidential. Only the investigators listed above will use the responses that your child gives and the results of this project will be used for research purposes only. In addition, every effort will be made to preserve your child's anonymity in the project. Your child's name will not appear on any of the data. The information will be coded by number and will not be identifiable by anyone other than the investigators.

If your child wishes to discontinue participation in the project or if you should wish to withdraw your child from the study, you or your child are free to do so at any time without prejudice or penalty.

I have read the above and understand it. My child, _____, is allowed to participate in the study.

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

APPENDIX B

Children's Personality Questionnaire

How I Describe Myself

eg. Would you rather watch television or play outside

1. Do you think you're a better talker or a better listener
2. Do you sometimes feel sad and upset for no reason or do you always feel pretty good
3. Do you leave your games or things for someone else to put away after you have used them or do you do it yourself
4. Do your parents ever get angry with you for daydreaming or doesn't it bother them
5. Do you look around carefully in the dark or do you feel there's nothing to be afraid of
6. Would you rather read a book or have friends over
7. Do you feel you can get people to change their minds or do they usually get you to change yours
8. Do you do your homework carefully because it's good to do things that way or don't you care how it's done as long as your teacher will take it
9. If people talk about a game that's a bit dangerous, do you say, "Let's try it". or do you think it's better to keep out of games where you might get hurt
10. If you happen to spill something on your book, do you wipe it off and go on reading or do you keep on feeling bad about it.
11. Do you feel unhappy at a party that keeps going on and on or do you wish the party would last a lot longer
12. Do you often let friends borrow things when they ask or do you usually say, "No"

13. Does your teacher sometimes say that your work is careless and untidy or does she never say so
14. Would you rather do things that are safe and right or dangerous and exciting things
15. When someone makes a joke about you, do your feelings get hurt or do you laugh with the others
16. When you have a new idea, do you like to tell someone or just keep it to yourself
17. When you meet someone new, are you usually quiet or can you talk to them easily
18. Even if your homework was very easy, would you do it carefully or hurry to get it over with
19. Would you rather learn more about the people close to home or explore rough, wild country
20. Do you usually feel that you are doing well or do you often feel sad or like crying
21. When there's a game on the playground, are you usually standing around and watching or are you usually one of the players
22. Do you think most grownups are nice or do you like to make fun of them when they're not around
23. When it is your turn to wash the chalkboard, do you like to do it carefully or sometimes hurry too much
24. When your teacher tells you a story, do you begin to think about a story of your own. or do you listen to what she is saying
25. Do you often feel too upset to do things or are you usually ready to do what needs to be done
26. After school, do you get together with others for games and fun or would you rather do things on your own
27. Do you try to be polite to old people or do you keep away from old people

28. Do you like to dress so that you always look just right or don't you care too much how you look
29. Do people say you're the first one to try exciting things or do they say you're pretty careful
30. Are you ready in the morning to start the new day or do you worry about what might happen
31. Do you like to play quiet games or would you rather play active, noisy games
32. Do grownups think you don't behave very well or do they think you're well behaved
33. Does your teacher often have to tell you to pay attention to your work or do you hardly ever "fool" around
34. Do you like to try learning to do things that you've never done before or would you rather just do the things you're used to
35. Do you think you worry more than your friends or worry less
36. Are you glad to do what your friends want to do or aren't you happy unless they do what you want to do
37. If a child in the school yard was having some trouble with his bike, would you help or would you think he doesn't really need help
38. Do you usually wear your coat neatly zipped and buttoned up or do you just throw it on
39. Do you think more often about your lessons and what you'll learn in school or about exciting things you would like to do
40. Does your stomach sometimes feel upset when it's time to go to school or do you feel ok when it's time to go to school
41. When adults ask you a question, do you talk to them quite a lot or just say what you have to and no more
42. Would you rather not have to be polite to people or do you like to be polite

43. Do you keep your desk or locker neat or is it often a mess
44. When you visit a new building, would you rather find your own way around or would you like to be shown around with a group
45. When people say, "Let's work together on this," do you usually agree or would you rather not be bothered
46. Are you alone most of the time or almost always with at least one friend
47. Do people say that you do what others want you to do or that you are stubborn and do things your own way.
48. Do you remember things you have to do around home or do you often forget all about them
49. Would you rather travel as a member of a spaceship or work with books in a bookstore
50. Do you worry that you may get sick or does that thought never bother you

APPENDIX C

Names Used on Information BoardsBoys Names

Matt

Tom

Joe

Jim

Carl

Tim

Andy

Brian

Kevin

Mark

Dave

Ryan

Chris

Girls Names

Mary

Elizabeth

Heather

Linda

Sarah

Julie

Megan

Candy

Ann

Nancy

Susan

Jennifer

Gloria

APPENDIX D

Vignette PairsAgreeableness

1a) _____ was at a slumber party with his/her friends. _____'s friends wanted to watch movies, but _____ wanted to listen to music. _____'s friends decided that they would watch movies, so _____ agreed to watch movies with them.

1b) _____ was at a slumber party with his/her friends. _____'s friends wanted to watch movies, but _____ wanted to listen to music. _____'s friends decided that they would watch movies, so _____ left the party and went home.

2a) _____ was sitting around watching football on Sunday when his/her father walked in and complained about how much work he had to do. _____ continued to watch the game and said s/he was too busy to help.

2b) _____ was sitting around watching football on Sunday when his/her father walked in and complained about how much work he had to do. _____ asked his/her father if there was anything s/he could do to help.

3a) _____'s mom was sick last week. Since she was not feeling well, she asked _____ to do the laundry and to fix dinner. _____ muttered that s/he would get to it later and went to his/her room.

3b) _____'s mom was sick last week. Since she was not feeling well, she asked _____ to do the laundry and to fix dinner. _____ gladly made spaghetti for dinner and said s/he would do the laundry after doing his/her homework.

4a) When _____ was walking home from school, s/he passed a child who was having problems with his bike. The child asked _____ if s/he would help him put the chain back on. _____ said s/he was in a hurry and could not help.

4b) When _____ was walking home from school, s/he passes a child who was having problems with his bike. The child asked _____ if s/he would help him put the chain back on. _____ said s/he would be glad to help.

5a) _____ was at a birthday party for his/her friend. The other children at the party wanted to play pin the tail on the donkey but _____ wanted to bob for apples. Since all of the other kids wanted to play pin the tail on the donkey and s/he didn't, _____ left the party and went home.

5b) _____ was at a birthday party for his/her friend. The other children at the party wanted to play pin the tail on the donkey but _____ wanted to bob for apples. Since all of the other kids wanted to play pin the tail on the donkey, _____ played the game and even cheered on his/her friends when they tried to pin the tail on the donkey.

Agreeableness continued

6a) _____ and some friends were given permission to go out for lunch together. Most of his/her friends wanted to go to the pizza place by the park but _____ wanted to go to the pizza place by the roller rink. _____ decided to go home because the others were going to the pizza place by the park.

6b) _____ and some friends were given permission to go out for lunch together. Most of his/her friends wanted to go to the pizza place by the park but _____ wanted to go to the pizza place by the roller rink. Since most of his/her friends wanted to go to the pizza place by the park, _____ went along with them.

7a) _____ was supposed to go with his/her family to visit relatives. Although _____ did not particularly care for the relatives, s/he agreed to go along to visit them.

7b) _____ was supposed to go with his/her family to visit relatives. _____ said, "there is no way I am going; I can't stand those people". _____ ended up going to a friend's house while his/her family visited relatives.

8a) One of _____'s friends asked if they could borrow his/her bike for a few minutes to ride home and get a book for school. _____ often let his friends borrow things and s/he said, "sure" and let his/her friend borrow the bike.

8b) One of _____'s friends asked if they could borrow his/her bike for a few minutes to ride home and get a book for school. _____ very rarely let his/her friends borrow things and s/he said, "NO" and didn't let his/her friend borrow the bike.

9a) _____ got a radio controlled car for his/her birthday. When _____ and his/her best friend were playing with the car, the friend asked to drive the car by himself/herself. _____ said sure and handed the friend the controls.

9b) _____ got a radio controlled car for his/her birthday. When _____ and his/her best friend were playing with the car, _____ would not let his/her friend touch the controls.

10a) _____ figured out how to do his/her math homework. A few other kids did not understand how to do it and asked _____ for help. _____ told them to do their own work.

10b) _____ figured out how to do his/her math homework. A few other kids did not understand how to do it. _____ went through the problems step by step with these children and taught them how to do it.

Conscientiousness

1a) _____ had many things to do on Wednesday night. S/he had a lot of homework and s/he was also supposed to wash the dishes and do the laundry. When _____ got home from school, s/he sat right down and started his/her homework so s/he would be able to finish everything.

Conscientiousness continued

1b) _____ had many things to do on Wednesday night. S/he had a lot of homework and s/he was also supposed to wash the dishes and do the laundry. When _____ got home from school on Wednesday, s/he flipped on the TV and watched for two hours. S/he was unable to finish the work s/he was supposed to do.

2a) _____'s parents had guests coming over for dinner. _____ was supposed to clean the livingroom. While his/her mom was in the room, _____ did a good job but, when she left the room, _____ was careless.

2b) _____'s parents had guests coming over for dinner. _____ helped his/her parents clean the house. S/he did a very good job cleaning the house.

3a) _____'s class had a locker inspection on Wednesday. When the teacher opened _____'s locker, it was very neat and clean.

3b) _____'s class had a locker inspection on Wednesday. When the teacher opened _____'s locker, it was filled with trash which included rotten fruit and parts of old sandwiches.

4a) _____ did his/her homework very quickly so s/he could watch television. When _____ got his/her homework assignment back from the teacher, the paper had an "F" on it.

4b) _____ did his/her homework very carefully because s/he wanted to do it right. When _____ got his/her homework assignment back from the teacher, the paper had an "A" on it.

5a) _____'s teacher gave the class an assignment that was very easy. _____ hurried through the assignment so that s/he could get it over with.

5b) _____'s teacher gave the class an assignment that was very easy. Although _____ could have finished it quickly, s/he took his/her time and did it very carefully.

6a) _____ was hurrying down the street to play at a friend's house when s/he remembered that s/he didn't lock the door when s/he left the house. His/her family was not home and the door was supposed to be locked so _____ went back home to lock the front door.

6b) _____ was hurrying down the street to play at a friend's house when s/he remembered that s/he didn't lock the door when s/he left the house. His/her family was not home and the door was supposed to be locked. _____ wanted to get to his/her friend's house quickly so s/he didn't go back home to lock the front door but instead, continued on his/her way.

7a) _____ was going to a play on Saturday night. Before leaving for the play, s/he shot some baskets at the park. When s/he left for the play, his/her hair was not combed.

Conscientiousness continued

- 7b) _____ was going to a play on Saturday night. Before leaving for the play, s/he washed his/her hair and had his/her mother iron the shirt that s/he was going to wear. S/he looked very neat and clean when s/he left for the play.
- 8a) _____ always does his/her homework on time. So far this year, _____ has not missed a single assignment.
- 8b) _____ often forgets to do his/her homework. So far this year, _____ has not handed in two assignments and another three assignments were handed in late.
- 9a) _____ got his/her history homework back last week. At the top of the page, the teacher wrote, "good Job. I can see that you spent a lot of time on this".
- 9b) _____ got his/her history homework back last week. At the top of the page, the teacher wrote, "See Me. This work is careless and untidy".
- 10a) Each student in ___'s class has a chore to do every day. _____'s chore is to wipe the chalkboards down with a wet cloth. To save time, s/he often wipes the board with an old shirt that s/he keeps in his/her desk and wipes them very quickly.
- 10b) Each student in ___'s class has a chore to do every day. _____'s chore is to wipe the chalkboards down with a wet cloth. _____ wipes the boards off very carefully with a wet cloth and leaves them very clean because that is the way the boards are supposed to be cleaned.

Extraversion

- 1a) _____ went to a classmate's birthday party last weekend. S/he had such a good time, s/he hated to see it end. While at the party, _____ talked to many people.
- 1b) _____ went to a classmate's birthday party last weekend. S/he could not wait for it to be over so s/he could be alone. While at the party, _____ did not talk to many people.
- 2a) _____'s teacher broke the class up into small groups of five to talk about their summer vacations. Although _____ didn't know the kids in his/her group. s/he talked a lot with the other kids about his/her summer vacation.
- 2b) _____'s teacher broke the class up into small groups of five to talk about their summer vacations. Since _____ didn't know the other kids in his/her group. s/he didn't say anything and let the other kids do the talking.
- 3a) _____ was at a picnic with his/her friend. _____ didn't know most of the other kids at the picnic so s/he sat off to the side at one of the picnic tables by himself and didn't talk to anyone unless they talked to him/her first.

Extraversion continued

3b) _____ was at a picnic with his/her friend. _____ didn't know most of the other kids at the picnic so s/he introduced himself/herself to some of them and started asking them questions about where they went to school.

4a) _____ went to a high school football game by himself/herself one Saturday. Although s/he saw kids from his/her class at the game, _____ choose to sit by himself/herself.

4b) _____ went to a high school football game by himself/herself one Saturday. When s/he got to the game, s/he noticed that some of her friends were in the stands. _____ sat with his/her friends and played touch football with them after the high school game.

5a) _____ was introduced to his/her best friend's cousin. Although s/he had never met his/her friend's cousin before, _____ began talking to him/her and made a new friend.

5b) _____ was introduced to his/her best friend's cousin. _____ had never met his/her friend's cousin before. _____ said "Hello" and then was very quiet for a long time.

6a) _____ played little league/softball last summer. When _____ arrived for his/her first day of practice, s/he noticed that s/he did not know anyone on the team. By the third game of the season, _____ had only gotten to know one of his/her teammates.

6b) _____ played little league/softball last summer. When _____ arrived for his/her first day of practice, s/he noticed that s/he did not know anyone on the team. By the end of the first practice however, _____ was kidding around with a group of guys/girls.

7a) _____ and his/her friends were at a birthday party. _____ talked a lot and told jokes all night long.

7b) _____ and his/her friends were at a birthday party. _____ didn't talk very much and just listened to the other kids telling jokes.

8a) The children on the playground organized a large game of kickball. _____ decided that s/he would rather watch than play so _____ stood aside and watched the game.

8b) The children on the playground organized a large game of kickball. _____ decided that s/he would rather play than watch so s/he joined in and played the game.

9a) _____ talks in class whenever s/he has an idea or opinion to express. S/he gets good participation grades because s/he enjoys leading a discussion in class.

9b) _____ only talks in class when the teacher calls on him/her. S/he often gets poor participation grades because s/he remains silent unless the teacher actually asks _____ for his/her opinion.

10 a) After school, _____ went home and fixed himself/herself a sandwich. S/he had a choice of playing Nintendo by himself/herself or going to a friends house to play Ping-Pong. _____ decided to play Nintendo by himself/herself.

Extraversion continued

10b) After school, _____ went home and fixed himself/herself a sandwich. S/he had a choice of playing Nintendo by himself/herself or going to a friends house to play Ping-Pong. _____ decided to go to the friends house.

Neuroticism

1a) _____ was about to take a math test. _____ had to wait 10 minutes while the teacher walked back to her car. While the teacher was gone, _____ calmly looked over his/her math book.

1b) _____ was about to take a math test. _____ had to wait 10 minutes while the teacher walked back to her car. While the teacher was gone, _____ began to sweat. _____ became so nervous that s/he got a stomach ache and had to be excused from the test so s/he could go to see the school nurse.

2a) _____'s teacher was interested in how well the students thought they were doing in class. She had them write down on a piece of paper how they thought they were doing. _____ wrote that s/he thought s/he was doing fine.

2b) _____'s teacher was interested in how well the students thought they were doing in class. She had them write down on a piece of paper how they thought they were doing. _____ wrote that s/he was scared that s/he was going to fail the class.

3a) _____'s friends passed him/her in the hallway without saying hello. _____ was sure that his/her friend had seen him/her and felt horrible that his/her friend hadn't dsaid hello. Throughout the day, _____ was very upset and felt as if s/he was going to cry.

3b) _____'s friends passed him/her in the hallway without saying hello. _____ was sure that his/her friend had seen him/her. _____ decided that his/her friend was probably not paying attention and so _____ forgot the whole incident and went about his/her day.

4a) A student at _____'s school made a joke about him/her that made all of the other children laugh. _____ did not laugh at the joke and walked away. _____ felt so bad all day that s/he didn't even eat his/her lunch.

4b) A student at _____'s school made a joke about him/her that made all of the other children laugh. Although the joke was about him/her, _____ laughed at the joke with the other children.

5a) _____ played baseball/softball last summer. In the championship game, s/he made an out his/her first three times up. However, with the game tied in the last inning, _____ hit a game winning home run.

5b) _____ played baseball/softball last summer. In the championship game, s/he made an out his/her first three times up. When _____ came to bat with the game tied in the last inning, s/he was so nervous that s/he had to leave the game.

Neuroticism continued

- 6a) _____ woke up in the morning and s/he had a very dry throat. _____ was worried that s/he was getting very sick. Although his/her dry throat went away, _____ spent the rest of the day worrying about if s/he was going to be sick or even if s/he would have to go to the hospital.
- 6b) _____ woke up in the morning and s/he had a very dry throat. _____'s dry throat went away and s/he decided that it was probably not worth worrying about so s/he went outside to play.
- 7a) _____'s teacher decided to give a free soda to students who were not absent for a whole month. Although _____ was not absent that month, the teacher didn't give him/her a soda. _____ calmly walked up to the teacher's desk and quietly told her that s/he had made a mistake.
- 7b) _____'s teacher decided to give a free soda to students who were not absent for a whole month. Although _____ was not absent that month, the teacher didn't give him/her a soda. _____ got very upset and started to cry.
- 8a) _____ was in a citywide spelling bee last year. Afterwards when asked if s/he had been nervous, _____ replied, "Yes, I was in a contest spellers much better than myself. I did not want people to find out how stupid I was."
- 8b) _____ was in a citywide spelling bee last year. Afterwards when asked if s/he had been nervous, _____ replied, "No, I am a very good speller. Why should I be nervous?"
- 9a) When _____ and his/her friends were eating lunch in the cafeteria, someone commented that _____ had enough food to feed a horse. _____ laughed and mentioned that s/he had a high metabolism.
- 9b) When _____ and his/her friends were eating lunch in the cafeteria, someone commented that _____ had enough food to feed a horse. _____'s face turned red and s/he became silent. When _____ returned from school, s/he went straight to his/her room because s/he was still upset.
- 10a) _____ was scheduled to run in the 50 yard dash at 2:00 in the school track meet. _____ had to wait a while past 2:00 for the race to start. S/he wished the race would start and began pacing back and forth.
- 10b) _____ was scheduled to run in the 50 yard dash at 2:00 in the school track meet. _____ had to wait a while past 2:00 for the race to start. S/he wished the race would start but sat calmly and read a book while s/he waited.

Openness to Experience

- 1a) _____ went to an ethnic restaurant with his/her parents last weekend. A lot of the food looked and smelled strange to _____. Although the restaurant also had hamburgers on the menu, _____ decided to try one of the specialities.

Openness to Experience continued

1b) _____ went to an ethnic restaurant with his/her parents last weekend. A lot of the food looked and smelled strange to _____. S/he decided to play it safe and order a hamburger instead of one of the specialities.

2a) _____ had never been on a roller-coaster before. When s/he went to Great America on a field trip, _____ thought it would be fun to go on Batman. Many of the children were afraid to go on Batman but, _____ convinced a friend to go on it with him/her.

2b) _____ had never been on a roller-coaster before. When s/he went to Great America on a field trip, s/he had a chance to go on one. Instead, s/he decided to go with a group of kids who also did not like roller-coasters.

3a) There is a construction site near _____'s house. After school, s/he likes to explore the site. Many times, the workers leave behind ,materials which _____ likes to collect.

3b) There is a construction site near _____'s house. Many kids like to explore the site after school. _____ says s/he has no interest in exploring the site.

4a) _____'s family went out to dinner every Friday night for Italian food. One Friday, _____'s parents suggested that the family go out for German food. _____ had never tasted German food so s/he told his/her parents that s/he didn't want to go to the German restaurant.

4b) _____'s family went out to dinner every Friday night for Italian food. One Friday, _____'s parents suggested that the family go out for German food. _____ had never tasted German food but decided that s/he would like to go and try German food to see what it was like.

5a) _____ has trouble in creative writing class. The teacher told his/her mother that _____ has a hard time imagining things that could be. Instead, s/he writes only about things that s/he has directly experienced.

5b) _____ is very good in creative writing class. A friend asked _____ how s/he was so creative. _____ explained that often times s/he daydreams and s/he is just writing down what s/he daydreams.

6a) The class was voting on where they would go for their next field trip; the museum or the aquarium. _____ had never been to the museum and s/he didn't know if s/he would enjoy it. Although _____ knew that going to the aquarium would be pretty fun, s/he voted to go to the museum to see what it was like.

6b) The class was voting on where they would go for their next field trip; the museum or the aquarium. _____ had never been to the museum and s/he didn't know if s/he would enjoy it. So, _____ voted to go to the aquarium because s/he had been there and s/he knew that it was pretty fun.

Openness to Experience continued

7a) _____ went to a friend's house for dinner. The friend's mother made a cheesecake for dessert. _____ had never had cheesecake so s/he said s/he did not want a piece.

7b) _____ went to a friend's house for dinner. The friend's mother made a cheesecake for dessert. _____ had never had cheesecake but was eager to try it.

8a) _____ liked to listen to rock music all the time. _____'s cousin had just bought some new African music and asked _____ if s/he wanted to listen to the album. _____ had never heard African music before so s/he decided to take the bus across town to his cousin's house to listen to the African album.

8b) _____ liked to listen to rock music all the time. _____'s cousin had just bought some new African music and asked _____ if s/he wanted to listen to the album. _____ had never heard African music before and didn't know if s/he would like it so s/he told his/her cousin that s/he didn't want to hear the album.

9a) _____'s mother made a new dish for dinner that had garbanzo beans in it. _____ had never tasted garbanzo beans and didn't know if s/he would like them. _____ thought that the beans looked kind of weird and refused to try any of the garbanzo beans.

9b) _____'s mother made a new dish for dinner that had garbanzo beans in it. _____ had never tasted garbanzo beans and didn't know if s/he would like them. Although _____ thought they looked kind of weird, s/he tasted some of the garbanzo beans to see if s/he would like them.

10a) _____ always walked down Jefferson St. to get home from school. One day, _____'s friend asked him/her if s/he ever walked home by going down Washington Street. It would take longer and _____ didn't know if s/he would like walking down Washington St. , so s/he took Jefferson St. home as usual.

10b) _____ always walked down Jefferson St. to get home from school. One day, _____'s friend asked him/her if s/he ever walked home by going down Washington Street. Although it would take longer and _____ didn't know if s/he would like walking down Washington St., _____ took Washington St. home.

APPENDIX E

Summaries of Vignette PairsAgreeableness

- 1a) Watched movies with friends.
- 1b) Left the party.
- 2a) Watched football game.
- 2b) Asked father if he needed help.
- 3a) Went to room when mother asked for help.
- 3b) Helped sick mother.
- 4a) Was in a hurry and did not help.
- 4b) Helped child who was having bike problems.
- 5a) Left the party and went home.
- 5b) Played "Pin the Tail on the Donkey".
- 6a) Did not go out for pizza with friends.
- 6b) Went with friends to the pizza place.
- 7a) Went with parents to visit relatives.
- 7b) Refused to visit relatives.
- 8a) Let a friend borrow the bike.
- 8b) Did not let a friend borrow the bike.
- 9a) Let friend play with radio controlled car.
- 9b) Did not let friend play with radio controlled car.
- 10a) Told children to do their own work.
- 10b) Taught classmates how to do math homework.

Conscientiousness

- 1a) Started homework right away after school.
- 1b) Watched TV and did not finish work.

Conscientiousness continued

- 2a) Was careless about cleaning.
- 2b) Did a good job cleaning the house.
- 3a) Had very neat locker.
- 3b) Locker was filled with trash.
- 4a) Got an “F” on the homework.
- 4b) Did the homework carefully.
- 5a) Hurried through the assignment.
- 5b) Did the assignment very carefully.
- 6a) Went back home to lock the door.
- 6b) Did not go back home to lock the door.
- 7a) Went to a play with uncombed hair.
- 7b) Looked neat and clean for the play.
- 8a) Has not missed a single assignment all year.
- 8b) Often forgets to do homework.
- 9a) Teacher wrote “Good Job” on homework.
- 9b) Teacher wrote, “This work is careless and untidy”.
- 10a) Wiped the chalkboards very quickly.
- 10b) Wiped the chalkboards very carefully.

Extraversion

- 1a) Talked to many people at birthday party.
- 1b) Did not talk to people at birthday party.
- 2a) Talked with other kids about summer vacation.
- 2b) Did not talk about summer vacation.
- 3a) Did not talk to anyone at a picnic.
- 3b) Asked kids questions at a picnic.

Extraversion continued

- 4a) Sat alone at football game.
- 4b) Sat with friends at football game.
- 5a) Talked to friend's cousin.
- 5b) Met someone new and was quiet.
- 6a) Did not get to know teammates.
- 6b) Kidded around with teammates.
- 7a) Talked a lot and told jokes at a party.
- 7b) Listened to other kids telling jokes.
- 8a) Watched a game of kickball.
- 8b) Joined in the game.
- 9a) Enjoys leading class discussion.
- 9b) Is very quiet in class.
- 10a) Stayed home and played Nintendo
- 10b) Went to a friend's house to play Ping-Pong.

Neuroticism

- 1a) Had to wait for a math test.
- 1b) Had to stop the test and go to the nurse.
- 2a) Was not worried about grade.
- 2b) Was scared about failing class.
- 3a) Felt bad because friend did not say, "Hello"
- 3b) Forgot about a friend not saying "Hello"
- 4a) Felt bad about a joke.
- 4b) Laughed at a joke.
- 5a) Hit a game-winning home run.
- 5b) Had to leave game due to being nervous.

Neuroticism continued

- 6a) Worried about having a dry throat.
- 6b) Had a dry throat and went outside.
- 7a) Did not get a soda and cried.
- 7b) Told the teacher about not getting a soda.
- 8a) Was nervous in spelling bee.
- 8b) Was not nervous during spelling bee.
- 9a) Got upset from friend's comments.
- 9b) Laughed when kidded by friends.
- 10a) Paced back and forth before the race.
- 10b) Read a book before the race.

Openness to Experience

- 1a) Tried speciality at ethnic restaurant.
- 1b) Ordered hamburger at ethnic restaurant.
- 2a) Went on Batman ride at Great America.
- 2b) Did not ride a roller-coaster.
- 3a) Enjoys exploring construction site.
- 3b) Is not interested in exploring construction site.
- 4a) Did not want to go to the german restaurant
- 4b) Decided to try German food.
- 5a) Claims daydreams help creativity.
- 5b) Has a hard time imagining things.
- 6a) Voted to go to the museum.
- 6b) Wanted to go to the aquarium.
- 7a) Did not want to try cheesecake.
- 7b) Was eager to try cheesecake.

Openness to Experience continued

- 8a) Did not want to hear African music.
- 8b) Went to listen to African Music.
- 9a) Would not try garbanzo beans.
- 9b) Tried garbanzo beans.
- 10a) Took Jefferson street home.
- 10b) Took Washington street home.

APPENDIX F

Table 1. Correlations of Subject's Personality with Personality Rating of Accepted Fictitious Peer

	<u>Self-Reported Personality</u>			
	Agreeableness/ Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Openness to Experience	Neuroticism
<u>Personality Ratings of Peer</u>				
Agreeableness	.16	.06	.04	-.16
Conscientiousness	.14	.14	.13	.01
Extraversion	.14	-.27**	-.24*	.03
Openness to Experience	-.06	.06	-.11	.06
Neuroticism	.01	.02	.11	-.11

Note. Ns = 78-81.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

APPENDIX G

Table 2. Correlations of Subject's Personality with Personality Rating of Rejected Fictitious Peer

	<u>Self-Reported Personality</u>			
	<u>Agreeableness/ Conscientiousness</u>	<u>Extraversion</u>	<u>Openness to Experience</u>	<u>Neuroticism</u>
<u>Personality Ratings of Peer</u>				
Agreeableness	.16	.14	-.15	-.14
Conscientiousness	-.18	.05	.19*	.01
Extraversion	.09	-.10	-.12	.09
Openness to Experience	-.01	.19*	-.15	.13
Neuroticism	.09	.28**	.07	-.07

Note. Ns = 78-81.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

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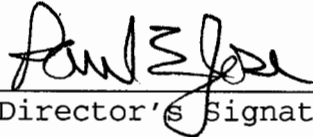
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The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

11/19/93

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