



Contribution ID: 73

Type: **Talk**

The role of reciprocated friendships in the behavioral correlates of sociometric categories

Thursday, 12 September 2024 11:10 (20 minutes)

Children live complex social lives that has various aspects, including intimate friendships, peer-acceptance and bullying dynamics which is usually studied separately in research. The study I wish to present aims to investigate the interplays of these three important fields by analyzing the moderating effects of number of friendships on the relation between sociometric categories and behavioral correlates (i.e.: prosocial behavior, leader, disturbs class) and bullying variables (i.e. defender behavior) via moderated logistic regression models. The hypothesis of this study is that number of mutual friendships has a moderating effect on the relationship between behavior and assigned sociometric category (i.e. leading is associated with the popular category but this relationship may be even more pronounced for children with many friends than for those with fewer). Participants were 291 elementary school students from schools located in Budapest, Hungary. Computerized peer-nominations were used to assess number of mutual friendships, behavioral variables, peer acceptance and bullying-roles. Results suggest that the explaining value of behavioral variables for rejected, ambivalent and popular children is excellent, however the investigated effect was present only in a few cases. The conclusion of this study is that number of mutual friendships may have an effect on some the relationship analyzed, however the hypothesis is only weakly supported by the evidence. Questions of limited and unlimited nomination based friendship questions are discussed. The results may facilitate further studies in the direction of more refined logistic regressions and has implications on bullying diagnostics and offers an electronic assessment tool for practitioners that has seen widespread use in Hungary and has helped bring sociometry into the everyday lives of schools.

Are you currently an Early Career Researcher?

Yes, I am still a student or have not yet received my Ph.D.

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Session Classification: Talk Session 6

Track Classification: Social Psychology