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Behavioural and Emotional Strengths of Sociometrically Popular, Rejected, Controversial, Neglected, and Average Children

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Behavioural and Emotional Strengths of Sociometrically Popular, Rejected, Controversial, Neglected, and Average Children

Many behavioural and emotional characteristics are associated with children's peer relationships. The purpose of this study is to examine behavioural and emotional strengths of sociometrically popular, rejected, controversial, neglected, and average children. 773 third-grade children (51% girls) are assessed with a sociometric questionnaire and self-evaluations of their behavioural and emotional strengths and difficulties. Teacher evaluations are also used to assess the children's academic competencies and behaviour. Univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to analyse the data. Results indicate that children in the popular status group assess their behavioural and emotional strengths as being better than children in the rejected status group. The behavioural profile of the controversial status group is similar to that of the rejected status group. Children in the neglected status group differ from other sociometric status groups in some behavioural and emotional strengths. Issues pertaining to gender differences are also discussed.

Keywords: sociometric status, behavioural and emotional strengths, behavioural and emotional difficulties, school achievement, peer relationships

Introduction

Children with positive peer relationships are typically described as better adjusted than those who have problems with peers. Successful peer relationships are connected to positive development in childhood (Nelson et al. 2010; Teunissen et al. 2011) and later in adulthood (Gest et al. 2006), whereas problems in peer relationships are associated with developmental risk factors (Almquist and Brännström 2014; Gest et al. 2006; Laine et al. 2010; Parker and Asher 1987; Woodward and Fergusson 2000).

Previous studies have indicated that children's peer relationships correlate with their behavioural and emotional characteristics (e.g., Bierman, 2004; Braza et al. 2007; Coie, Dodge, and Coppotelli 1982; Coie, Dodge, and Kupersmidt 1990; Newcomb, Bukowski, and Pattee 1993). A major focus of peer relationships research has largely been on children's deficits, problems, and pathologies, for example, in aggressive behaviour (e.g., Faris and Ennett 2012; Rodkin and Berger 2008; Pellegrini and Long 2008), depressive symptoms (e.g., Blöte et al. 2012; Teunissen et al. 2011; Bell-Dolan, Foster, and Christopher 1995), and learning disabilities (Kiuru et al. 2011). Therefore,

the main purpose of this study was to assess the behavioural profiles of children with different peer relationships and highlight especially the behavioural strengths of the children.

Five peer nomination-based sociometric status groups (popular, rejected, controversial, neglected, and average) are widely used to describe how well-liked a child is among his or her peers (Coie et al. 1982). Many ways to define sociometric status groups have been created on the basis of Coie's et al. (1982) classification criteria (e.g., Asher and Dodge 1986; DeRosier and Thomas 2003; Newcomb and Bukowski 1983). All these classification practices have five sociometric status groups similar to Coie et al. (1982) and are still widely used in peer relationship studies (McMullen, Veermans, and Laine 2014).

Children who are well-liked by their peers have many positive behavioural and emotional features compared to their less popular counterparts. Sociometrically popular children usually have better cognitive skills (Newcomb et al. 1993), and they are more socially competent than other children (Coie et al. 1982; Newcomb et al. 1993). They have less aggressive/disruptive behaviour (Braza et al. 2007; Coie et al. 1982, Newcomb et al. 1993) and depressive symptoms (Teunissen et al. 2011). Especially prosocial behaviour (e.g., helping, cooperating, and sharing with peers) correlates strongly with peer acceptance, positive peer interaction, and better peer relationships (Clark and Ladd 2000; Coie et al. 1982; Newcomb et al. 1993; Penner et al. 2005).

Rejected children are typically described as having low rates of prosocial behaviour, high rates of aggressive/disruptive and inattentive/immature behaviour. Peer rejection is also characterized by socially anxious and avoidant behaviour (Bierman, 2004; Braza et al. 2007; Coie et al. 1990; Nelson et al. 2010; Nelson et al. 2016). According to previous studies, being rejected by peers is associated with many problems in childhood such as victimization and social withdrawal (Laine et al. 2010; Nelson et al. 2010), depressive symptoms (Teunissen et al. 2011), and loneliness (Asher et al. 1990; Laine et al. 2010; Parkhurst and Asher 1992).

Controversial children are both well-liked and disliked by their peers, and their behavioural profile is associated with a combination of positive and negative features. Children in the controversial status group display both prosocial and aggressive/disruptive forms of behaviour and are seen as social leaders (Braza et al. 2007; Coie et al. 1982; Coie et al. 1990; Nelson et al. 2016; Newcomb et al. 1993). Many studies have indicated that controversial children are socially active, and they

have visibility in their peer group although they are not actually well-liked (Coie et al. 1982; Nelson et al. 2010; Nelson et al. 2016; Newcomb et al. 1993). The behavioural profile of controversial children is the most complex and difficult to define exactly (Hill and Merrell 2004).

Children in the neglected status group are neither well liked nor disliked by their peers. In many studies, they are described as less socially active and less aggressive than other sociometric status groups (Coie et al. 1982; Cantrell and Prinz 1985; Newcomb et al. 1993). Compared to rejected children, neglected children are not more depressed, anxious (Bell-Dolan et al.), or lonely than other children (Asher et al. 1990). According to Wentzel and Asher (1995) and Soponaru, Tincu, and Iorga (2014), neglected children are characterised as highly motivated and self-regulated learners with compliant behaviour.

Children's behavioural and emotional strengths have been defined as those skills, characteristics, and competencies that promote a child's capacity to deal with stress and the reverse; create a sense of coping and enhance successful relationships with peers, family members, and other adults (e.g., teachers) (Epstein 2004). Well-accepted children are described as more prosocial and better behaviourally and emotionally adjusted than children with problematic peer relationships. Especially being rejected by peers has a strong correlation with poor prosocial skills, whereas socially isolated behaviour is more strongly related to problems with emotional functioning (Marryat et al. 2014). In addition to problems and deficits, it is also important to study children's strengths and competencies to understand how children in different sociometric status groups diverge in terms of positive characteristics.

According to earlier studies, boys and girls differ in their social and emotional behaviour and academic achievement. Girls foster more intimacy, conflict resolution, and helping in their relationships (Bukowski, Hoza, and Boivin 1994; Parker and Asher 1993), less frequently have behavioural problems (Gibb, Fergusson, and Horwood 2008), and manage better at school than boys (Renato 2016; Steinmayr and Spinath 2008; Voyer and Voyer 2014). Some studies have demonstrated gender differences between the status groups. Braza et al. (2007) have found differences in seizing object aggression. This kind of aggressive behaviour is connected to peer rejection with girls and neglected status with boys. Nelson et al. (2010) have also found gender differences in physical aggression and relational victimization. Girls in the controversial status group are more physically aggressive and relationally victimized than girls in the

rejected status group whereas these differences are not prominent among the boys' status groups. According to these findings, it can be expected, that there are also gender differences.

Some earlier studies have addressed the idea that peer preference is combined with many skills and abilities (e.g., better social and emotional regulation skills, academic achievement, psychological adjustment, and family functioning) (e.g., Newcomb et al. 1993; Teunissen et al. 2011; Patterson, Vaden, and Kupersmidt 1991). However, children's behavioural strengths and competencies have received almost no attention in previous studies on sociometric status and students' behavioural profile. One reason might be that many behavioural measurement tools are concentrated on evaluating children's difficulties and problems. Therefore, behavioural strengths were measured in this study to fill this gap in extant literature with two strengths-based assessment tools: The Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale 2 (BERS-2), which evaluates children's behavioural and emotional strengths (Epstein 2004) and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), which has one strength-based scale (prosocial behaviour) in addition to problem-based scales (Goodman 1997; 2001).

Within this frame, three research questions were addressed: (1) Do children's self-rated emotional and behavioural strengths, problem behaviours, and teacher-rated school abilities vary between sociometric status groups? (2) Are there any gender differences in children's self-rated behavioural and emotional strengths, problem behaviours, and teacher-rated school abilities? And (3) Are there any status-by-gender interaction effects in children's self-rated behavioural and emotional strengths, problem behaviours, and teacher-rated school abilities?

Methods

Participants

The original sample was third-grade students from 31 schools and 68 classes. In Finland, third graders are usually 9 to 10 years old, and that age group was selected because, in many recent peer relationship studies, data from preschool school-aged children (e.g., Braza et al. 2007; Nelson et al. 2010; Nelson et al. 2016) or adolescent samples (e.g., Blöte et al. 2012; Faris and Ennett 2012; Kiuru et al. 2011) have been used. Third graders are capable of using self-ratings more fluently than younger age groups. There were 773 children (379 boys, 394 girls). To ensure maximum validity, only those classes were included in this study where the measurement rate was at least 68% and that had at least five students in the class. A recommendation in peer nomination studies is that very small school classes (under five students) and school classes with a low measurement rate on the sociometric questionnaire (less than 68% of the response rate) should be removed from the final sample (Cillessen 2009). After this step, the sample was 739 children (354 boys, 385 girls) from 30 schools and 50 school classes. The participants in this study were overwhelmingly of Finnish origin, and less than 5% were from other ethnicities.

Procedures

Data were collected during the spring 2011 as part of an ISKE Network (Eastern Finland Education Development Project) from seven municipalities in Eastern Finland. Children filled in their self-evaluation questionnaires during their normal school day. Parents of all the included participants had given informed consent for their child to participate in this study (for a more accurate review, see Sointu, et al. 2014).

Measures

Sociometric status

Children's sociometric status was assessed with a traditional sociometric questionnaire (Coie et al. 1982; DeRosier and Thomas 2003) in which children were asked to name three classmates with whom they want to spend the most time and three classmates with whom they want to spend the least time. Cross-gender nominations were permitted. Liking scores (L) were created by calculating the sum of the positive nominations a child received from his or her peers and disliking scores (D) were calculated by totalling the negative nominations a child received. The L and D scores were standardised within school classes, so the class size did not affect the frequency of liking or disliking. A social impact (SI) score (sum of L and D scores) and a social preference (SP) score (L minus D) were computed for each child and then standardised within the school classes. Those standardised variables have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. Children were classified into five sociometric status groups according to the following criteria (all the scores are standardised z scores): popular ($SP > 1.0$; $L > 0$; $D < 0$), rejected ($SP < -1.0$, $L < 0$, $D > 0$), controversial ($SI > 1.0$, $L > 0$, $D > 0$), neglected ($SI < -1.0$, $L < 0$, $D < 0$), and average ($-.5 < SP < .5$, $-.5 < SI < .5$) (DeRosier and Thomas 2003). Every child could belong to only one status group. The problem with sociometric studies is that the classification criteria are not unambiguous, and because of this, there are always children who cannot be classified (DeRosier and Thomas 2003). Those children whose social preference, social impact, liking, or disliking scores did not fit into any of the sociometric status groups were excluded from this study. The final sample was 406 children (218 boys and 188 girls). There were 88 popular (50 girls, 38 boys), 96 rejected (38 girls, 58 boys), 44 controversial (15 girls, 29 boys), 76 neglected (33 girls, 44 boys), and 135 average (68 girls, 67 boys) children.

Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale 2

The translated Finnish version of the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale 2 BERS-2 was used to assess children's emotional and behavioural strengths. The BERS-2 includes 52 items that assess children's emotional and behavioural strengths (e.g., "If I hurt or upset others, I tell them I'm sorry."), and these form five subscales

(Interpersonal Strength [IS], Intrapersonal Strength [IaS], Family Involvement [FI], School Functioning [SF], and Affective Strength [AS]). The BERS-2 also has an overall Strength Index score that consists of these five subscales. There is also an optional Career Strength (CS) in the original BERS-2 that measures vocational orientations (Epstein 2004). This subscale was not used in this study. The BERS-2 is a multi-informant assessment tool that has separate questionnaires for parents, teachers, and youths. Only the youth rating scale was used in this study since we were interested in self-ratings.

The Finnish version of BERS-2 has acceptable measurement properties, and it is also a psychometrically sound instrument in Finnish schools (Lambert, Sointu, and Epstein 2018; Lappalainen et al. 2009; Sointu et al. 2014). In this study, Cronbach's alphas were calculated for each subscale, and they were $\alpha = .88$ for IS, $\alpha = .80$ for IaS, $\alpha = .76$ for FI, $\alpha = .76$ for SF, $\alpha = .79$ for AS and $\alpha = .94$ for Strength Index. The BERS-2 items are rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale (from 1 to 4). Children mark 4 if the statement is very much like the child and 1 if the statement is not at all like the child (Epstein 2004).

SDQ-Fin

SDQ-Fin is the Finnish version of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman 1997; 2001), and it was used to measure both children's strengths and problem behaviour (Borg et al. 2012; Koskelainen, Sourander, and Kaljonen 2000; Koskelainen, Sourander, and Vauras 2001). The SDQ-Fin consists of prosocial behaviour, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, emotional symptoms, and peer relationship problems scales. Goodman, Lamping, and Ploubidis (2010) recommend using a three-subscale version of the SDQ in general population samples. These subscales were the prosocial scale (5 items), externalising problems (10 items; conduct problems & hyperactivity/inattention scales), and internalising problems (10 items; emotional symptoms & peer relationship problem scales). In this study, the measurement scale in the SDQ was from 1 to 3, where 1 means that a child does not have the measurable characteristic and 3 means that a child has the characteristic. Thus, high scores denote that a child has internalising and externalising symptoms or high prosocial behaviour. The Cronbach's alphas were calculated and they were good (for the prosocial scale $\alpha = .73$, for externalising problems $\alpha = .72$, and for internalising problems $\alpha = .75$).

Teacher evaluations of abilities

The teacher evaluations of academic achievement and behaviour at school were utilised to gain a more holistic view of children's management at school. Teachers evaluated their students' reading, writing, and mathematical skills behaviour at school (behaviour towards other students and teachers), and diligence (e.g., taking care of assignments and belongings). Rating scales were from 4 to 10, which is a standard Finnish subject rating (4 is the poorest rating and 10 is the best). The total scores of these evaluations were calculated to demonstrate children's academic achievement (reading, writing, and mathematical skills) and behaviour at school (behaviour towards other students and teachers, diligence). Diligence was merged with behaviour because diligence and behaviour towards other children and teachers have a strong positive correlation ($r = .61, p < .001$). This combined rating of child behaviour was used as the teacher evaluation of students' overall behaviour in this study. The Cronbach's alphas were calculated and they were excellent (for academic achievement $\alpha = .82$ and for behaviour at school $\alpha = .75$).

Data Analyses

The univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse the differences between self-rated behavioural and emotional strengths and difficulties and teacher-rated school adjustment between sociometric status groups, gender, and status-by-gender interaction. The Bonferroni correction of the post-hoc test was used to indicate the differences between groups.

Results

Preliminary analyses

First, the intercorrelations between variables were calculated. Most of the correlations were statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The highest positive correlation was between interpersonal strengths and overall strength index ($r = .92, p < 0.01$), and the highest negative correlation was between school functioning and externalising problems ($r = -.47, p < 0.01$; for more information, see Table 1):

Table 1 near here

Differences between sociometric status groups

Behavioural and emotional strengths

A univariate analysis of variance indicated that there was a significant main effect of sociometric status group on intrapersonal strengths (BERS-2) $F(4, 41) = 3.34, p = .010, \eta^2_p = .03$, school functioning (BERS-2) $F(4, 405) = 3.33, p = .011, \eta^2_p = .03$, affective strengths (BERS-2) $F(4, 405) = 3.17, p = .014, \eta^2_p = .03$, strength index (BERS-2) $F(4, 405) = 3.21, p = .013, \eta^2_p = .03$, and prosocial behaviour (SDQ-Fin) $F(4, 403) = 5.04, p = .001, \eta^2_p = .05$. The main effect of sociometric status on interpersonal strengths (BERS-2) was nonsignificant $F(4, 405) = 2.25, p = .063, \eta^2_p = .02$. However, according to post-hoc analyses, there was a significant main effect between popular and rejected status groups (see Table 2 and Figure 1).

Behavioural and emotional difficulties

The ANOVA showed that there were significant main effects of status group on externalising problems (SDQ-Fin) $F(4, 403) = 5.08, p = .001, \eta^2_p = .05$, internalising problems (SDQ-Fin) $F(4, 403) = 5.29, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .05$, and total difficulties score (SDQ-Fin) $F(4, 403) = 6.08, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .06$ (Table 2 and Figure 1).

Teacher evaluations

The ANOVA showed a statistically significant main effect of social status on academic achievement $F(4, 370) = 3.95, p = .004, \eta^2_p = .04$, and behaviour at school $F(4, 370) = 12.66, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .12$ (see Table 2 and Figure 1).

Gender differences

The main effect of gender was significant for affective strengths (BERS-2) $F(1, 405) = 21.57, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .05$, prosocial behaviour (SDQ-Fin) $F(1, 403) = 21.88, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .05$, externalising problems (SDQ-Fin) $F(1, 403) = 8.45, p = .004, \eta^2_p = .02$, and teacher-rated behaviour at school $F(1, 370) = 44.22, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .11$. There were no statistically significant gender differences for other variables (see Table 2).

Status-by-gender interaction effects

A significant status-by-gender interaction effect occurred only for prosocial behaviour $F(4, 403) = 3.17, p = .014, \eta^2_p = .03$. Separate status-by-gender analyses were conducted on girls and boys to find the differences between girls' and boys' status groups. Differences between status groups for prosocial behaviour were significant only for boys $F(4, 212) = 5.84, p < .001$. All the other status-by-gender interaction effects were nonsignificant.

Table 2 near here

Figure 1 near here

Discussion

This study examined how sociometric status groups differ in terms of children's self-assessed behavioural and emotional strengths, difficulties, and teacher-rated academic achievement and behaviour at school. The salient finding was that sociometrically popular children have many behavioural and emotional strengths and fewer difficulties compared to other sociometric groups. These differences were particularly evident in a comparison with the rejected status group, and popular children also showed higher achievement and fewer behaviour problems as assessed by teachers. Sociometrically popular children are typically described as prosocial, well-adjusted, and academically competent, whereas the behavioural profile of rejected children would seem to be the opposite of that of popular children (Coie et al. 1982; Newcomb et al. 1993; Soponaru et al. 2014). This study indicates that sociometrically popular children have a more positive view of their own behavioural and emotional strengths, and their more positive behavioural profile also appears when the self-assessment measurement tool was used.

The second prominent finding was that children in the rejected status group assessed their behavioural and emotional strengths similar to children in the controversial status group. Previous studies have established that children in the controversial and rejected status groups differ in their behavioural profiles, especially with regard to prosocial behaviour. Controversial children usually use both prosocial and aggressive strategies to gain power and resources in the peer group (Braza et al. 2007; Coie et al. 1982; Newcomb et al. 1993). One explanation for this contradictory finding is that the behavioural profile of the controversial status group is difficult to define exactly because their status in the peer group depends on the characteristics appreciated by the peer group (Hill and Merrell 2004). Some of them can gain positive nominations from peers for non-behavioural characteristics (e.g., physical attractiveness, athletic skills, family socioeconomic status) (Adler and Adler 1998) and, thus, differ from the rejected status group.

Boys and girls differed from each other under some circumstances. Girls reported having more affective strengths than boys. This result replicates the results of earlier studies because girls are described to be more intimate, supportive, and helpful than boys in their friendships (Bukowski et al. 1994; Parker and Asher 1993).

According to this study, girls also perform better at school, have better prosocial behaviour, and fewer externalising problems than boys.

The only status-by-gender interaction was in prosocial behaviour and in separate status-by-prosocial analyses; this interaction was only found for boys. One explanation for this phenomenon is that among elementary school-aged children, gender differences in social and emotional behaviour are not yet as prominent as later in life. Girls are typically more prosocial than boys (Bukowski, Hoza and Boivin 1994; Parker and Asher 1993), and, for this reason, the status group is not as significant a factor for girls' prosocial behaviour as it is for boys.

Limitations

This study also had several limitations. First, the use of the self-measurement tool can lead to distortions. Younger age children usually overestimate their skills and competencies (Stipek 1984), especially the children who have problems with peers (Zakriski and Coie 1996).

A second substantial limitation is related to measuring peer popularity and rejection. According to LaFontana and Cillessen (2002) and Parkhurst and Hopmeyer (1998), in addition to sociometrically popular children (those who receive many positive nominations in sociometric questionnaires), there are also children who do not necessarily get positive nominations, but are viewed as popular by their peers. This phenomenon is known as *perceived popularity*. In this study, only sociometrically popular children's behavioural and emotional strengths were examined, and in subsequent studies, it would be interesting to compare the behavioural and emotional strengths of both sociometrically popular children and those who are only perceived as popular. In addition, aggressive-rejected and withdrawn-rejected children were not separated in this study. The behavioural basis of aggressive-rejected and withdrawn-rejected children differ from each other (Bierman 2004; Zakriski and Coie 1996), and in future studies, it would be useful to separate these distinct types of rejected children.

A third limitation pertains to causality: does positive social status trigger the development of behavioural and emotional strengths, or does the occurrence of these strengths lead to an increase in sociometric status over time? This is a correlational study only, and thus, conclusions on such a direction of causality cannot be determined. It is important to clarify in future studies whether it is children's peer status that has an

effect on children's emotional and behavioural well-being or if it is their behaviour and emotional status that impacts children's likeability among peers.

This study had also many strengths. First, the strength-based assessment tool (BERS-2) was used in this study. Primarily difficulties-based assessment tools have been used in many studies that have focused on the behavioural profiles of sociometric status groups (e.g., Cantrell and Prinz 1985; Coie et al. 1982; Laine et al. 2010). It is also important to assess children's strengths to obtain an overall view of children's behaviour (Nickerson 2007) and find the behavioural characteristics where children with problematic peer relationships need support.

Second, in many sociometric studies, children's behavioural and emotional characteristics are evaluated by their peers, parents, teachers, direct observations, or meta-analyses (Braza et al. 2007; Coie et al. 1982; Hill and Merrell 2004; Newcomb et al. 1993; Woodward and Fergusson 2000) instead of self-assessment. The BERS-2 has also been shown to be a valid measurement tool for self-assessment (Sointu, et al. 2012), whereas many deficit-based tools (e.g., SDQ-Fin) prefer adult-based evaluations (Kuhn et al. 2017). Regardless of the limitations of self-assessment tools, the use of self-ratings enables the viewing of children's behavioural and emotional life from their own perspective and, thus, provides for better understanding of children's subjective well-being.

Conclusion

In conclusion, despite limitations, this study provided new insights into the behavioural profiles of sociometrically diverse status groups. It was found that children's social status in the peer group was connected to their self-assessed behavioural and emotional strengths. Children with positive peer relationships have more favourable picture of their own skills and competencies than children who have problems with peers. It is important to recognise that children's peer relationships and their behavioural and emotional well-being are not separate phenomena, but rather, influence each other. Encouraging children's behavioural and emotional skills in the classroom may enhance their social and emotional functioning and, thus, promote the development of positive

peer relationships. Enhancing children's strengths and competencies in a classroom context is important for the development of all children but especially for children with problematic peer relationships.

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Table 1. Intercorrelations between Variables.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. IS	-	.76**	.68**	.73**	.70**	.92**	.67**	-.45**	-.18**	-.35**	.08*	.22**
2. IaS		-	.68**	.68**	.68**	.88**	.54**	-.37**	-.32**	-.39**	.14**	.15**
3. FI			-	.63**	.61**	.83**	.47**	-.36**	-.22**	-.32**	.06	.16**
4. SF				-	.58**	.83**	.52**	-.47**	-.24**	-.40**	.25**	.35**
5. AS					-	.82**	.59**	-.31**	-.14**	-.25**	.12**	.19**
6. SI						-	.66**	-.46**	-.25**	-.40**	.14**	.24**
7. Pro							-	-.35**	-.11**	-.25**	.07	.22**
8. Ext								-	.57**	.88**	-.27**	-.39**
9. Int									-	.89**	-.24**	-.18**
10. Dif										-	-.29**	-.32**
11. Aca											-	.45**
12. Beh												-

Note. 1. IS = Interpersonal Strengths (BERS-2), 2. IaS = Intrapersonal Strengths (BERS-2), 3. FI = Family Involvement (BERS-2), 4. SF = School Functioning (BERS-2), 5. AS = Affective Strengths (BERS-2), 6. SI = Strength Index (BERS-2), 7. Pro = Prosocial Behaviour (SDQ-Fin), 8. Ext = Externalising Problems (SDQ-Fin), 9. Int = Internalising Problems (SDQ-Fin), 10. Dif = Total Difficulties Score (SDQ-Fin), 11. Aca = Academic Achievement (teacher evaluation), 12. Beh = Behaviour at School = behaviour towards other children and teachers, diligence (teacher evaluation). * p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

Table 2. Behavioural and Emotional Strengths, Difficulties, Teacher-rated Academic Achievement and Behaviour of Popular, Rejected, Controversial, Neglected, and Average Children.

	Status					F values (df)	Partial η^2	Gender			
	Popular	Rejected	Controversial	Neglected	Average			Boys	Girls	F values (df)	Partial η^2
	M SD	M SD	M SD	M SD	M SD			M SD	M SD		
1. Interpersonal Strengths	3.53 ^a (.35)	3.34 ^a (.48)	3.36 (.45)	3.44 (.40)	3.44 (.37)	2.25 (4, 405)	.02	3.40 (.44)	3.48 (.36)	3.74 (1, 405)	.01
2. Intrapersonal Strengths	3.67 ^{ab} (.29)	3.48 ^a (.47)	3.50 (.32)	3.47 ^b (.40)	3.57 (.36)	3.34* (4, 405)	.03	3.54 (.40)	3.58 (.37)	.00 (1, 405)	.00
3. Family Involvement	3.57 (.34)	3.42 (.46)	3.46 (.34)	3.42 (.39)	3.51 (.38)	1.96 (4, 405)	.02	3.48 (.40)	3.51 (.37)	.17 (1, 405)	.00
4. School Functioning	3.56 ^{ab} (.35)	3.35 ^a (.48)	3.32 ^b (.46)	3.44 (.41)	3.47 (.36)	3.33* (4, 405)	.03	3.42 (.44)	3.49 (.37)	.42 (1, 405)	.00
5. Affective Strengths	3.43 ^a (.44)	3.20 (.52)	3.19 (.59)	3.15 ^a (.60)	3.35 (.48)	3.17* (4, 405)	.03	3.17 ^a (.55)	3.41 ^a (.45)	21.57*** (1, 405)	.05
6. Strength Index	3.56 ^a (.30)	3.37 ^a (.42)	3.34 (.37)	3.40 (.36)	3.47 (.33)	3.21* (4, 405)	.03	3.42 (.38)	3.50 (.33)	3.10 (1, 405)	.01
7. Prosocial Behaviour	2.72 ^{abc} (.30)	2.47 ^a (.37)	2.46 ^b (.40)	2.53 ^c (.40)	2.58 (.38)	5.04*** (4, 403)	.05	2.49 ^a (.41)	2.66 ^a (.33)	21.88*** (1, 403)	.05
8. Externalising Problems	1.43 ^{ab} (.33)	1.62 ^{ac} (.37)	1.69 ^{bde} (.34)	1.51 ^d (.29)	1.48 ^{ce} (.33)	5.08*** (4, 403)	.05	1.57 ^a (.35)	1.45 ^a (.31)	8.45*** (1, 403)	.02
9. Internalising Problems	1.42 ^a (.33)	1.67 ^a (.39)	1.58 (.33)	1.54 (.36)	1.54 (.36)	5.29*** (4, 403)	.05	1.56 (.37)	1.52 (.34)	2.03 (1, 403)	.01
10. Total Difficulties Score	1.42 ^{ab} (.30)	1.64 ^{ac} (.32)	1.63 ^b (.29)	1.52 (.30)	1.51 ^c (.30)	6.08*** (4, 403)	.06	1.56 (.32)	1.49 (.29)	.58 (1, 403)	.00
11. Academic Achievement	8.39 ^a (.78)	7.90 ^a (.79)	8.20 (.92)	8.29 (.85)	8.12 (.89)	3.95*** (4, 370)	.04	8.08 (.83)	8.24 (.88)	2.07 (1, 370)	.01
12. Behaviour at School	9.01 ^{abc} (.75)	8.17 ^{ade} (.85)	8.46 ^b (.79)	8.89 ^d (.73)	8.62 ^{ce} (.88)	12.66*** (4, 370)	.12	8.35 ^a (.82)	8.93 ^a (.81)	44.22*** (1, 370)	.11

Note. Interpersonal Strengths, Intrapersonal Strengths, Family Involvement, School Functioning, Affective Strengths, and Strength Index are from BERS-2. Prosocial Behaviour, Externalising Problems, Internalising Problems, and Total Difficulties Score are from SDQ-Fin. Academic Achievement and Behaviour at School are teacher evaluations. Means with the same superscripts are significantly different at the $p < .05$ level (Bonferroni corrected post-hoc comparisons)

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

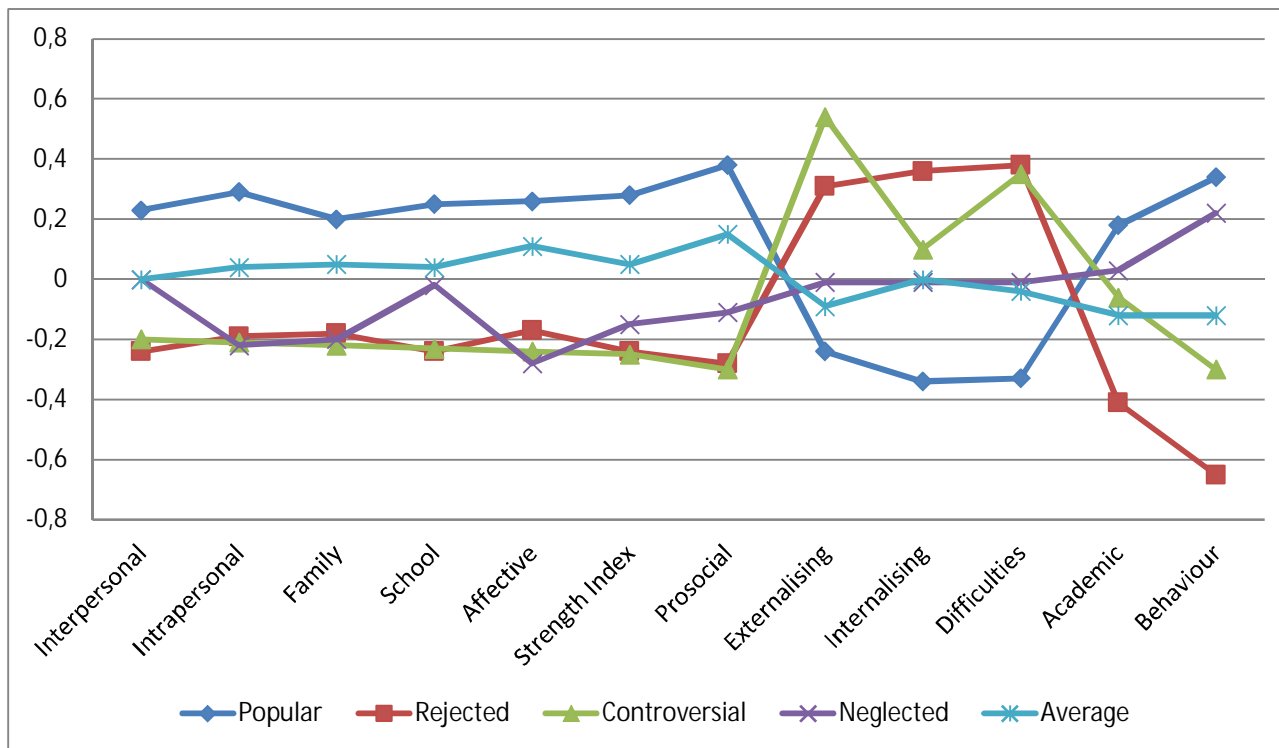


Figure 1. Behavioural profiles of sociometrically popular, rejected, controversial, neglected, and average children.