



Popularity breeds contempt: The evolution of reputational dislike relations and friendships in high school

Kayo Fujimoto^{a,*}, Tom A.B. Snijders^{b,c}, Thomas W. Valente^d

^a Department of Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences, School of Public Health, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, 7000 Fannin Street, UCT 2514, Houston, TX 77030-5401, United States

^b Department of Sociology, University of Groningen, Grote Rozenstraat 31, 9712 TG Groningen, The Netherlands

^c Nuffield College, University of Oxford, UK

^d Institute for Prevention Research, Department of Preventive Medicine, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90032-3628, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Keywords:

Reputational dislike networks
Friendship networks
Stochastic actor-oriented co-evolution model
Adolescent substance use
Facebook use
Peer status

ABSTRACT

In this study, we examined the dynamics of the perception of “dislike” ties (reputational dislike) among adolescents within the contexts of friendship, perceived popularity, substance use, and Facebook use. Survey data were collected from a longitudinal sample of 238 adolescents from the 11th and 12th grades in one California high school. We estimated stochastic actor-based network dynamic models, using reports of reputational dislike, friendships, and perceived popularity, to identify factors associated with the maintenance and generation reputational dislike ties. The results showed that high-status adolescents and more frequent Facebook users tended to become perceived as or stay disliked by their peers over time. There was a tendency for friendships to promote the creation and maintenance of reputational disliking but not vice versa. Adolescents tended to perceive others as disliked when their friends also perceived them as disliked. There was no evidence that either cigarette smoking or drinking alcohol affected reputational dislike dynamics. This study highlights the important role that the hierarchical peer system, online peer context, and friendships play in driving information diffusion of negative peer relations among adolescents.

© 2016 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Negative peer relations play an important role by influencing peer experiences and generating negative outcomes in childhood and adolescence (Hartup, 2003). Research on child/adolescent developmental psychology has shown that negative peer relationships are correlated with maladjustment, including aggression and victimization, peer rejection, peer acceptance, perceived popularity, social preference, and other interpersonal processes and behaviors (Card, 2010; Rubin et al., 1998; Witkow et al., 2005). In developmental psychology research, negative relations form a social context of “antipathetic relationships” (i.e., mutual dislike at the dyad level) that are distinct from group-level “peer rejections” (i.e., sum of nominations of being disliked by peers that reflect a collection of opinions about a target individual) (Card, 2010; Parker and Gamm, 2003). The constructs of antipathetic relationships

and peer rejection are modestly correlated but still confound each other, methodologically and conceptually. Methodologically, they use the same sociometric items (i.e., dislike, least like, or enemy) for assessing the mutuality and aggregation of dislike, and, conceptually, they overlap each other, as antipathetic relationships are embedded within the group-level construct of peer rejection, which may be the result of interdependent relationships of dislike (Card, 2010).

Although efforts have been made to separate these two effects and to identify their unique associations with social maladjustments (Abecassis et al., 2002; Card and Hodges, 2007; Erath et al., 2009; Murray-Close and Crick, 2006; Witkow et al., 2005), there is an inherent limitation in conceptualizing the complex dynamics of negative relationships in terms of these two constructs. This study examines the dynamics of negative peer relations using a conceptualization of the social context of negative relations that goes beyond the two constructs of the antipathetic relationships and peer rejection in three ways. First, we conceptualize negative relations as reputational dislike relations that reflect information diffusion about perceived dislike at the group level, rather than as dislike relations generated by personal dislike, among one set of

* Corresponding author. Fax: +1 713 500 9750.

E-mail addresses: Kayo.Fujimoto@uth.tmc.edu (K. Fujimoto), Tom.Snijders@nuffield.ox.ac.uk (T.A.B. Snijders), tvalente@usc.edu (T.W. Valente).

high school adolescents in Southern California. Second, we conceptualize negative relations in conjunction with other aspects of peer relations in child/adolescent development (Card, 2010) by conceptualizing them as multiplex networks that involve peer status and friendships. Finally, we address the multilevel nature of negative peer relations (Card, 2010) in a way that allows us to analyze the processes of disliking at the multiple conceptual levels of the individual, dyadic relationships, and groups (Hinde, 1987; Rubin et al., 1998). Our study takes a multiplex stochastic actor-oriented modeling approach (Snijders et al., 2013) to model the interdependent dynamics of friendship and negative peer relations, distinguishing between individual-, dyadic-, and group-level effects.

1.1. Perceived dislike relations (*reputational dislike*)

Individuals with a higher level of social intelligence can manipulate peer groups through “information social influence,” using sophisticated forms of invisible aggression, such as gossiping, manipulating peers to dislike someone, and befriending someone for the purpose of revenge (Garandeau and Cillessen, 2006). Through the process of information social influence, peer agreement with respect to targets who are perceived as being disliked, in addition to dyadic dislike, is an important aspect of the group dynamics of negative peer relations among middle adolescence. From the perspective of peer ecologies, we conceive the group-level perceived dislike as an attempt to achieve a common goal and cohesion for the group members (Saarento and Salmivalli, 2015), as negative peer reputation is more likely to achieve group consensus than is one's personal dislike that tends to be hidden.

In this study, we operationalize negative relations among middle adolescence through the individual's perception of disliked peers (not as personal dislike) and use the term “reputational dislike.” It should be noted that our concept of “reputational dislike” is different from the conventional group-level concept of peer rejection that is based on the aggregation of the personal dislike (or least liked) and known to be associated with social maladjustment in the developmental psychology literature (Card, 2010; Gorman et al., 2011; Witkow et al., 2005). We postulate that “reputational dislike” does not necessarily involve personal feelings, although it could overlap with personal dislike to some extent. Reputational dislike can be regarded more as a reflection of the information diffusion in regard to negative peer relations, rather than an aggregation of intrapersonal dislike that is not necessarily shared by peers. We aim to identify the social mechanisms of the generation or maintenance of reputational dislike in relation to friendship and perceived popularity.

1.2. Multiplex networks of negative relations, perceived popularity, and friendships

Peer relations are organized around a hierarchical clustering of peer groups whereby peer status is determined by perceived popularity among peers (Schwartz and Gorman, 2011). Perceived popularity signifies prestige, visibility, and social dominance (Bellmore and Cillessen, 2006) that reflect an individual's perceived position in the competitive status hierarchy among the group. Perceived popularity and aggression are dynamically related to each other (Cillessen and Borch, 2006; Cillessen and Mayeux, 2004), perhaps because bullies use aggression to achieve a status goal of dominating peers (Sijtsema et al., 2009).

These status-driven negative relations come in tandem with friendships. Because bullies are not necessarily liked or accepted by their peers (de Bruyn et al., 2009; Reijntjes et al., 2013; Sijtsema et al., 2009), they pursue the goal of affection from significant others by striving to realize peer status without losing the affection from the significant others (Huitsing and Veenstra, 2012; Veenstra

et al., 2010). Bullies receive the affection from or are defended by in-group members, such as other bullies, assistants, and reinforcers (Huitsing and Veenstra, 2012), by strategically choosing victims that are already rejected by others (Veenstra et al., 2010) or sharing targets with their friends for aggression (Card and Hodges, 2006). Thus, unpopular adolescents tend to be disliked by higher-status peers (Berger and Dijkstra, 2013) and may be more prone to victimization (Gorman et al., 2011), yet victims are supported by peers who defend each other (Huitsing and Veenstra, 2012).

In summary, negative peer relations operate through complex group processes that involve high-status bullies, unpopular victims, and their friends who respond to bullying behavior. To reflect this complexity, our study conceptualizes the negative peer relations as multiplex networks that are dependent on other relations, such as perceived popularity and friendships.

1.3. Modeling dynamics of negative relations at multiple levels

An increasing numbers of network studies have contributed significantly to examining the group dynamics involved in negative peer relations and their behavioral correlates at multiple levels: individual, dyadic, and group. Cross-sectional network studies have employed multivariate exponential random graph models (ERGMs) (Lazega and Pattison, 1999; Wang et al., 2009) to model local configurations of the multiplex relations composed of liking, disliking, and bullying (Huitsing et al., 2012) and bivariate configurations of defending among bullies and victims (Huitsing and Veenstra, 2012).

To identify the social mechanisms of negative peer relations in combination with friendships, this cross-sectional network analysis can be extended to a longitudinal approach using the stochastic actor-based model (Snijders et al., 2010), or RSiena analysis. This model has been used for studying the co-evolution of networks and for changing individual attributes (Burk et al., 2007; Steglich et al., 2010), allowing researchers to disentangle the effect of networks. This method was applied to the co-evolution of friendship and victimization, treating the latter as a changing individual attribute (Sentse et al., 2013; Sijtsema et al., 2014). The actor-oriented model for the co-evolution of multiplex networks (Snijders et al., 2013) can be used similarly to disentangle the effects of each network on another network. This model was applied in a study of defending and bullying as co-evolving networks (Huitsing et al., 2014). In network analysis, the different levels of individual (node), dyad, triadic, or other subgroup and the entire network are present, mainly in an implicit way. One of the elements of a network-network co-evolution study is the explicit presence of distinct effects at these levels.

In summary, a growing number of network studies have identified network configurations that include networks of negative peer relations and have modeled their complex dynamics co-evolving with other aspects of peer relations and attribute or behavioral correlates at multiple levels by using ERGMs or actor-oriented models. These network methodologies advance our understanding of the multilevel nature of negative peer relations by enabling us to deal with the issue of network interdependencies.

The majority of these prior social network studies, however, have used elementary school children (Berger and Dijkstra, 2013; Dijkstra et al., 2011; Huitsing et al., 2012, 2014; Huitsing and Veenstra, 2012), early adolescents in middle schools (Sentse et al., 2013; Sijtsema et al., 2010), or both (Sijtsema et al., 2009, 2014) in various countries. As far as we know, rarely have any multiplex network studies that combine friendships with negative peer relations examined high school adolescents in the United States. This is important, in part, because different age groups may have different levels of striving for status (Sijtsema et al., 2009), and patterns of negative relations may be different in different cultures. As social intelligence develops with age, group dynamics of

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7538389>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7538389>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)