

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Amanda Rose, Psychological Sciences; Dr. Ashley Groh, Psychological Sciences

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Adolescent Friendship Quality: Analyzing the Impact of Temperament, Emotional Reactivity and the Role of Gender

Gabrielle Scott, Catherine Everett, Hannah Holladay, Archer Cole, Allie Spiekerman, Sarah Borowski, Ashley Groh, and Amanda Rose

Positive friendships relate to better psychological health. (Stotsky et. al, 2018). During adolescence, dyadic friendships become more important than peer acceptance (Demir & Urberg, 2004) and have consistently related to different indices of adjustment. It is important to consider individual differences that might influence the quality of friendships, such as emotional reactivity. Temperament has been shown to be stable throughout development, and influences individuals' emotional reactivity within friendships. Temperamental characteristics (e.g., emotional intensity) are considered to have significant implications for children's peer relationships (Rothbart & Bates, 1998). Better temperamental reactivity has been found to predict positive friendship quality (Gleason et. al, 2005).

Research on the relation between emotional reactivity and friendship quality among adolescents is limited. The purpose of the current study is to examine the association between emotional reactivity and friendship quality. Two measures of emotional reactivity are considered: trait emotional reactivity (i.e., temperament) and state emotional reactivity (i.e., change in negative emotions from before to after an interaction task). Participants in the study include 180 adolescents (62 boys, 118 girls) in the eighth, ninth, and tenth grade. They completed a series of surveys on Qualtrics as well as a negative valence task (problem talk). Measures include the

Early Adolescent Temperament Questionnaire (Capaldi & Rothbart, 1992; Ellis & Rothbart, 2001), which assesses the extent to which adolescents tend to experience negative affect or negative reactivity. The Positive and Negative Affect Scale (Watson et al., 1999) assessed positive and negative effects before and after task. Lastly, the Friendship Quality Questionnaire (Rose, 2002) assessed positive and negative qualities of the adolescents' friendship. Analyses will be conducted to determine whether there are associations among trait emotional reactivity, state emotional reactivity, and friendship quality. Gender differences will be considered in all analyses.