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GUIDANCE IN THE PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
OF BEIRUT

An Empirical Study of Children's Problems
in Elementary Schools

A Thesis

by

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CHILDREN'S PROBLEMS 10-14

Nassif

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ABSTRACT

General Purpose

This thesis aims to find the problems of students in the elementary school as seen by the students and their teachers and to find the source from which students seek help when they face problematic situations.

Method of Study

The method of this thesis consists in gathering information through questionnaires on students' problems as seen by students and by teachers, for comparison. The questionnaires are based on the critical incident technique of Flanagan, where each student is asked to write one problem incident. For this purpose, two forms of questionnaires were devised, one for the students and one for the teachers. The questionnaires were distributed to some of the private elementary schools in Beirut.

The Subjects

The study included two samples: first, 200 students whose ages range from 10 to 14 years, and who come mostly from the middle class, and second, 25 teachers.

Results

The results of the two questionnaires were examined and classified. The students' problems were grouped under three main categories: first, the social-emotional category represents 53% of the total number of problems. It includes problems of social interactions and emotional behavior, such as quarrelling, hitting each others, and feelings of guilt.

The next category includes academic problems such as studying, exams, grades, and so on. It represents 27% of the total number of problems.

The third category consists of physical problems, totalling 16.5%, 3.5% mentioned no problems at all.

It is apparent that social and emotional problems rank highest in the order of frequency, counting twice as many as academic and physical problems put together, with academic problems ranking next, and physical problems ranking lowest.

Besides, the teachers primarily indicated problems of physical deficiencies which are easily detected by any person. Problems of stealing, cheating, crying, and sensitivity, were also mentioned.

Comparing teachers' answers with those of the students', a great disparity is found. Teachers mentioned students'

problems that did not appear in the students questionnaires. This means that they are not aware of the real problems of children. They limit their role to the classroom and therefore they are not sensitive to children's problems outside the class. This may explain why most children reported that they consult their friends for help instead of their teachers.

Conclusion

Children in the elementary schools have problems for which they need help. Most of their problems are of the social-emotional types, secondly of the academic, and lastly of the physical nature.

It is not enough to assume that the aggressive behavior that shows itself in the children's problems is only due to the school atmosphere; it is due to cultural and physical factors as well .

The lack of awareness and sensitivity on the part of the teachers may be solved by introducing a program of in-service training which helps the teachers to understand human behavior.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Different foreign countries have established in Lebanon schools of different educational philosophies. Curricula made to suit children in European countries were introduced to Lebanese schools and offered for a time the only opportunity for a good education. Parallel to foreign school systems, a national system developed on the initiative of both private and public enterprise. The emphasis remained though, on learning the material prescribed by the authorities. Consequently, little concern was shown with personal problems of students, and no provision was made in the curriculum for their socio-emotional, academic, and physical adjustment.

The belief that childhood is merely a transitory stage of no significance for the total life of a person, may account for this lack of interest in the problems of childhood. But upon examining the range and magnitude of children's problems at school or elsewhere, one will take a different view towards this matter and will eventually come to realize the bearing that such childhood problems may have in later years of life. Such awareness might in time lead to the provision of a school atmosphere which enables the children to profit from

their school years and enjoy a healthy physical, mental, social, emotional, and academic growth.

Problem of Study

This study rests on the assumption that childhood problems are of great importance for two reasons: First because childhood happiness is an end in itself and second because a happy adulthood depends greatly on a happy childhood. But before one may create conditions apt to lead to a happy childhood, one has to be aware of the many hazards which surround the adjustments of children to their environment.

Since no study has been made yet in Lebanon in this area, an attempt is made in this thesis to study children's problems in the elementary schools as seen by the students themselves and by their teachers. The two views on children's problems, that is, that of students and that of teachers, will be compared in order to examine the degree to which teachers are sensitive to the real problems of childhood.

In order to establish the need for a special guidance service in Lebanese schools, this study will attempt also to examine how serious childhood problems are in the present conditions of schools in Lebanon.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this thesis will be to emphasize the necess-

ity of making teachers alert to the psychological problems which surround the process of learning and adjustment to life. By bringing the notion of a problem to the foreground, it will be possible to meet this purpose and awaken the teacher to his role, not only as a transmitter of knowledge but as a guide to children in connection with their social-emotional, academic, and physical problems.

Method of Study

The study will first analyze the guidance movement, examining the factors which led to its development. Second, it will gather information from a sample of children in elementary schools in Lebanon that will be specified in a later chapter, on the psychological climate which prevails in those schools, which would establish a case either for or against the need for guidance services in school. This information will be gathered through questionnaires prepared in terms of the questions which this study seeks to answer. The chi square method of statistical analysis will be adopted, with the five per cent level of significance.

Limitations

This study will limit itself to the age groups ranging between nine and thirteen years, studying in the private schools of Beirut. The kind of problems which will be detected in this research will mostly represent the problems common to a definite

social class in Beirut. However, this will not reduce the value of the case to be made for the need to establish guidance services in those schools where there is evidence brought out in the study of a high incidence of behaviour problems. There will be need though, to make other surveys, more general and comprehensive, which will give ample data for the formulation of a realistic theory of adjustment to the culture of Lebanon.

CHAPTER II

THE GUIDANCE MOVEMENT

The concept of guidance is a relatively new one in the field of education. It started with the new concept of individualization of education. This concept stresses that the child is a world by himself, has his own capacities, interests, and inclinations, and should be handled as a new living organism which might develop into a unique creature, different from other individuals who preceded him and from those contemporaneous with him.

This concept changes the role of the teacher from that of a "source of knowledge", to that of a guide towards knowledge. It makes him truly a "mid-wife of knowledge", as Socrates hinted years ago.

This undoubtedly revolutionized the whole concept of education, giving guidance a place of honour in the process of teaching-learning. Consequently, guidance is developing rapidly, resulting in an emphasis on the fact of individual differences.

Actually, guidance has always existed since the time there ever was a situation of teaching and learning. For, whenever a person helps another one to make a decision, or to change an

attitude, there is guidance. In this sense, adults, mainly parents, assume the role of guides to the young by both their actions and words.¹

As a movement based on a conscious effort to individualize education, guidance stems from several sources that can be categorized under two main headings; the development of a new philosophy of education and technological and social change.

A New Philosophy of Education

Individualization

The new philosophy of education gave rise to a need for helping the individual. Educators advocating such a philosophy concentrated on the child, realizing that what the child is at present is a miniature of what he will become in the future. It has become therefore the duty of the teachers to know their pupils as individuals over a considerable period of time. Hence, there developed proper instruments for studying the individual, such as cumulative records, health records, anecdotal records, and rating scales among many others.²

With such facilities, it is hoped that the number of school drop-outs will decrease, while more students will find their

-
1. Lester D. Crow and Alice Crow, An Introduction to Guidance, (New York, 1951) pp. 10-11.
 2. Arthur E. Traxler, Techniques of Guidance, (New York, 1945) pp. 5-6.

right place in school. Those who do not have a place in an academic type of schooling could be directed towards a manual or vocational type; some will have to be left completely out of the schooling system. It is the function of the guidance program to help determine who should stay in school and for what purpose, and who should follow some other kind of work. For, as schools are now organized in Lebanon, the children's abilities are not fully developed. Individuals with different needs, interests and abilities are all dealt with almost in the same way, and developed according to one and the same pattern.

Humanitarianism

The humanitarian movement, with its genuine regard for the welfare of all mankind, induced educators to stress the fact that early guidance in school will help the young to develop and grow into better-adjusted adults.³ The humanitarians therefore, thought of guidance as a measure for decreasing the possibilities of mal-adjustments among children. They felt that schools were the best place for such a practice.

The Mental Hygiene Movement

An important source that also contributed to the development of this new philosophy of education is the mental hygiene

3. Ibid., p. 4.

movement. It is a comparatively new movement which realizes the need for the mental treatment of the mal-adjusted. The mental hygienists believe that people should learn while young, to meet life with right attitudes, and that they should be able to get a better understanding of their abilities in relation to their aims in life.⁴

The mental hygienists therefore, cannot but sense an urgent need for counseling and guidance in schools when they see the disasters, misery, and unhappiness in the lives of people; or when they watch work ending unsuccessfully and people spending their lives without any wholesome recreational or educational opportunities.

Yet, although human beings need to be helped and assisted at times, this help is not needed at all times. They only need it when they face life problems. At that time, they feel that they want help in order to solve their problems successfully.⁵

Religion

Another important source which contributed to the guidance movement was religion. Since olden times, religious people

4. Ibid.

5. Arthur J. Jones, Principles of Guidance and Pupil Personnel Work, (New York, 1951) p. 3.

interpreted what they saw in this world, as a constant struggle between the sources of righteousness and those of evil". As a result, they thought that the best way to "build character in our youth" was to train them for the good life. Therefore, religious people exerted pressure on almost all schools, to do this guidance task.⁶ The outcome was that teachers and counselors realized that it is their responsibility to assist youth in deciding for themselves, on matters which require ethical value judgment.

The Technological and Social Change

Later, modern technology brought about changes in the social life of the individual in a variety of aspects. First of all, there developed fewer hours of labor which left more time for leisure.

Different vocations were also introduced with this new technological movement. There was an urgent need for specialization in the various technical fields introduced. As a result, guidance was badly wanted to give each student or child the opportunities to study along the line of his interest. Guidance programs were started in schools to help the student decide on his future vocation.

6. Arthur E. Traxler, Ibid., p. 4.

Technological changes also brought about social changes in regard to the division of labor. Children under sixteen were no more allowed to work in factories. Thus there resulted an increase in the number of students who had to go to school. For that, schools saw the need to vary their offerings to suit all the students. Thus, guidance was introduced to orient students towards the proper field of study.⁷

Yet, the most important part of this technological social change was the change in home life brought about as a result of women working during day and staying away from home and their children. Consequently, the trial to solve economic problems by recruiting women in work led to the creation of various social and emotional problems for their children and themselves. Schools had to meet a new problem, that of giving help and guidance to the children so as to make them better suited to solve the various problems involved in the new trend of employing mothers in work.

7. Arthurh. Jones, Ibid., pp. 7-16.

CHAPTER III

CHILDREN'S PROBLEM INCIDENTS

Description of Subjects

The subjects that were used in this study were selected from a number of private schools in Beirut. These were:

The American University Elementary School.

The British School for Boys. }
The British School for Girls. } BLTC

The American School for Girls.

The Ras-Beirut Istiklal Institute.

The Ikha' Institute for Boys.

The total sample of this study consisted of 200 students. There were 118 fifth and sixth grade boys and 82 fifth and sixth grade girls.

Children going to such schools come largely from the middle class.

The age distribution of the children concerned is shown in the following table:

TABLE I

Age Distribution of Students

<u>Age</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>%</u>
10	30	20	10	15
11	62	44	18	31
12	61	37	24	30.5
13	28	10	18	14
14	19	7	12	9.5
	<u>200</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>100</u>

The above table shows that 61.5% of the students are of the eleven-twelve-year-old group, 15% of the ten year old group, 14% of the thirteen-year-old group, and 9.5% of the fourteen-year-old group.

Procedure for Obtaining Problem Incidents

Students' Questionnaire

A questionnaire was prepared in line with Flanagan's critical incident technique which "consists of a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles."⁸

8. J.C. Flanagan, "The Critical Incident Technique," Psychological Bulletin, Vol. 51, (1954) p. 327.

According to this technique an incident means, "any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about a person performing the act. To be critical, an incident must occur in a situation where the purpose or intent of the act seems fairly clear to the observer, and where its consequences are sufficiently definite to leave little doubt concerning its effects."⁹

Accordingly, the subjects were asked to write down a recent incident that happened to them in school. Only a few mentioned some problem incidents that occurred to them outside school.

The English and Arabic forms of the questionnaire read as follows:

9. Ibid.

Every student in school sometimes faces difficulties and problems. Things happen in school that make the student sad, angry, or upset in one way or another.

When such things happen, the student most probably would wish that someone could help him.

Remember one incident that happened to you recently in which you wished someone could help you.

And now answer the following questions:

What happened?

Why did you need help?

Did anyone help you?

Who helped you?

How did this person help you?

Did you profit from this help?

الاسم: _____ العمر: _____
 المدرسة: _____ الجنس: _____

- كل تلميذ في المدرسة يواجه في بعض الاحيان مصاعب ومشكلات تزعجه .
 - تحدث اشياء في المدرسة تجعل التلميذ حزين او زعلان او مزعوج من شي * ما .
 - عندما تحدث هذه الاشياء يتمنى ، التلميذ لو يساعده احد .
 - تذكر شيئا حدث لك منذ مدة قريبة تمنيت لو يكون هناك شخص يساعدك .
- والان ، جاوب الاسئلة التالية :

ما الذي حدث ؟

اماذا احتجت الى المساعدة ؟

هل ساعدت احد ؟ _____

من هو الشخص الذي ساعدك ؟

كيف ساعدك ذلك الشخص ؟

هل استفدت من هذه المساعدة ؟

Teachers' Questionnaire

Another questionnaire was prepared for the teachers. It was designed to help reveal the extent to which the students' conception of what constitutes a "problem", that is, a situation requiring some kind of guidance, coincides with that of the teachers. For this purpose, the kinds of problem incidents to be reported by the teachers would be compared with those reported by the students.

The Arabic and English forms of the teachers' questionnaire read as follows:

انني اقوم بدراسة حول مشكلات الارلاد في المدارس اللبنانية ،
 لهذا اود ان اجمع معلومات من احزاب خاصة حدثت في المدرسة
 وسببت انزعاجا او مصاعب للتلميذ .

وبما انه يتوفر للمعلم ان يعاين حالات كثيرة كهذه ، ارجو ان
 تتذكروا حادثة جرت مؤخرا حصل فيها انزعاج لاحد الطلبة فاحتاج
 الى معونة .

اية مشكلة قد تؤثر على تصرف الطالب في المدرسة وتوجيه
 على طلب المعونة والعطف والارشاد تفيد الغاية .

صف ما حدث ؟

اين حدث هذا ؟

متى حدث ؟

ماذا فعلتم لمساعدة الطالب ؟ من ساعده ؟

For my Thesis I am conducting a study of the problems of Lebanese School children. I am collecting information about specific situations which have actually arisen in school and which troubled a child or caused him difficulty or upset him.

Teachers have many opportunities to observe such situations. Please recall a recent occasion on which some school child was faced with a problem of some sort. The problem might concern academic assignments, grades, discipline or it might concern health, relations with classmates, or difficulty at home.

I am interested in any problem which somehow affected the child's behavior at school, and which caused him to need help or sympathy or guidance of some sort.

Now tell me about one such situation.

1. Describe what happened?

2. Where did this occur?

3. When did this take place?

4. Was anything done to help the child? If so, just what was done? By whom.

Results of Research

Incidents as Seen by Students

Since we had one incident from each student, the total number of problems amounted to two hundred. A content analysis was made of those problems, which resulted in classifying them into three main categories, social-emotional, academic, and physical, which will be defined in turn as each category is discussed.

The distribution of problem incidents on the basis of those categories is shown in Table II.

TABLE II

Distribution of Problem Categories

<u>Category</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
Social-emotional	106	65	41
Academic	54	26	28
Physical	33	21	12
No problem mentioned	7	6	1
	<u>200</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>82</u>

The above table shows that social and emotional behavior problems represent 53% of the total number of problems. Academic

problems amount to 27%; and physical problems to 16.5%. A small percentage of the students, namely 3.5%, expressly mentioned that they had no problems at all.

It is thus apparent that social and emotional problems rank highest in the order of frequency, counting twice as many as academic and physical problems put together; with academic problems ranking next, and physical problems ranking lowest.

Social-Emotional Problem Incidents

A social problem is that one which is depicted through the individual's attitude and relations with other individuals. This type of attitude or behavior becomes a problem when it does not conform with the accepted standard of behavior adopted by a society.

Behavioral problems are deeply imbedded as all human actions are, in the intellectual as well as in the emotional set-up of the individual. However, for the purpose of this study, problems characterized by a dominant emotional nature and eliciting a social behavior, are termed social-emotional problem incidents, and classified under its heading.

The most important problem incidents according to their order of frequency are those of quarrelling, hitting, pushihment, need for reconciliation after a quarrel, and being cursed or told bad words.

These items were defined as follows:

Quarrelling: Quarrelling is any behavior which includes an argument that causes the exchange of bad or harsh words which result in anger. Two kinds of quarrelling are mentioned; quarrelling with a friend and quarrelling with the teacher.

Hitting: It is any behavior that includes such physical aggression as slapping or beating, as a result of quarrel. Also, this kind includes such cases of being hit by the teacher himself.

Feeling a need for reconciliation: When children feel that they do not want to stay on bad terms with their friends who are angry with them because of a quarrel or some other cause, they need someone to mediate between them for reconciliation.

Being punished by teacher: This includes any incident where the punishment incurred is felt not to be just.

Being cursed or told bad words: When children are angry with each other they exchange insults or other derogatory statements.

Having trouble with belongings: Some children do not know how to manage their affairs. They forget their responsibilities and cannot take over those that deal with caring for their books, pencils, and other belongings. They always want someone to lend them a book or a pencil because they either forget theirs at home or lose it.

Being laughed at: Children laugh at each other to spite them, tease them, or make them angry. This annoys those laughed at, so they seek assistance.

Worrying about home: The girls involved were worried about their parents' illness. Their mind could not be free to study in school.

Stealing or being stolen: Children complain of missing some of their belongings which they attribute to stealing.

Needing help in school activity: If children are interested in taking the responsibility for a school activity such as a play, they seek help, because they lack the leadership and knowledge to anticipate such a thing alone.

Getting along with others: When some children are weaker than others, their friends like to take advantage of them. They invent stories about those weak ones who, in order to prove their innocence, seek assistance and help.

In the following table, the various social-emotional problem incidents are mentioned under the different sub-headings just defined.

TABLE III
Social-Emotional Problem Incidents

<u>Kind of Incident</u>	<u>Total out of 193</u>	<u>Boys out of 112</u>	<u>Girls out of 81</u>
1. Quarreling - with friend	22	12	10
with teacher	2	1	1
2. Hitting - by children	14	13	1
by teacher	3	3	0
3. Feeling a need for reconcilia- tion after a quarrell	9	4	5
4. Being punished by teacher	9	4	5
5. Being cursed or told bad words	5	1	4
6. Having trouble with class belongings	4	3	1
7. Being laughed at	3	3	0
8. Worrying about home	3	0	3
9. Stealing or being stolen	2	1	1
10. Needing help in school activity	2	1	1
11. Getting along with others	2	1	1
12. Miscellaneous ¹⁰	26	18	8
	<u>106</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>41</u>

The proportion of boys reporting social-emotional problems was compared with that for girls by the chi-square method and no

10. Eighteen of these incidents happened outside of school.

significant difference between proportions was found, the girls having nearly as many problems as boys.

The following examples show problem incidents mentioned by the students themselves. They cover those problems that were most mentioned.

1. Quarrelling with a friend - boy, 12

"One day I quarrelled with my friend because he was laughing at me, so we quarrelled together.

"I needed help because he was stronger than me and I couldn't beat him.

"My friend helped me by giving him a painful beating so he fled away wounded.

"I profited from this help and thanked him for what he did and took him to my home."

2. Quarrelling with a friend - girl, 12

"Yesterday a friend of mine whom I am not sure likes me went to my friends and told them that I want to talk something not good about them. When I knew this I asked her not to talk about me because she is good to my face and bad when I'm absent. We quarrelled and she cried.

"I need help because my friends told me everything she said about me and I don't talk to her and she is the girl with whom everybody quarrels.

"My friends helped me by giving me their advice that we

should not quarrel and should be a good example of obedience and love each other.

"I profited from this help because I do not care anymore what she says because I know it is her habit."

3. Hitting each other - boy, 11

"One day I was playing when a boy came and told me "don't play with us". I told him, "why should I leave the game"? and he hit me with his fist so that I fell on the ground.

"I needed help because I could not fight him.

"One boy whom I did not know helped me by hitting that boy with a knife.

"I profited from that help."

4. Punishment by teacher - girl, 11

"When Paul Zughbi took my book and threw it on the teacher's table where she read my name, she punished me by keeping me at noon.

"I needed help because I wanted someone to tell the teacher that Paul threw the book.

"No one helped me because they were all afraid of being punished."

5. Feeling a need for reconciliation - boy, 12

"I had a friend who was very dear to me and we were friends for five years in this school. One day a problem happened to me

and it was that I asked my friend to lend me his fountain pen. As I was writing the pen fell and broke. So he quarrelled with me for this cause and came to hit me. I apologized to him but he did not accept my apology and from that time I've been upset because my friend is angry with me and we were very good friends. For this reason I needed help.

"I needed help from one student to tell my friend that the pen fell from me not on purpose and to ask him to talk to me and become friends again.

"This student helped me and he is my friend's friend.

"He helped me by telling my friend that I did not break the pen on purpose but it simply is the will of God.

"Yes, I profited from this help for my friend apologized to me and I was very glad. The next day I offered my friend a new pen and he apologized again thanking me and thus we became friends again."

Academic Problem Incidents

Any behavior pertaining or belonging to the difficulties students encountered in school while studying, sitting for exams and receiving grades, falls in the academic category of problem incidents. Thus troubles with lessons, recitations, assignments, exams, and grades, are of a major concern to the student and create many troubles for him later.

In most of the incidents that dealt with lessons, arithmetic was the major cause. Students had a great difficulty in understanding and studying arithmetic.

In the following table one will see the distribution of the various kinds of academic problems.

TABLE IV
Distribution of Academic Problems

<u>Kind of Incident</u>	<u>Total out of 193</u>	<u>Boys 112</u>	<u>Girls 81</u>
Having trouble with lessons, recitation and studying	32	14	18
Worrying about exams	10	5	5
Worrying about grades	7	3	4
Miscellaneous	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
	53	25	28

The proportion of boys reporting academic problems was compared with that for girls by the chi-square method, and the difference between proportions was found not to be significant.

The following are a few academic incident the students thought troubled them in school.

1. Having trouble with lessons: boy 12

"The thing that makes a student sad is his lessons. Recently it happened that I was among the last in my class so I went to my teacher to help me in my lessons.

"I needed the help because I was lazy.

"The person who helped me was one of the teachers.

"She helped me from all her heart.

"Yes I profited from this good help."

2. Having trouble with studying: boy 12

"One night I started to review some of my lessons when I found a very difficult lesson in English. The next day we had an exam and I knew nothing.

"So I needed help because I was weak in this language and I wanted someone to help explain those questions.

"Yes someone helped me and he is one of my faithful friends.

"This person helped me by explaining this difficult lesson to me in Arabic.

"Yes I profited from this help because every help is profitable."

3. Worrying about Exams: girl 14

"During every mathematics exam I get panic because if I find that a problem is big or long I become afraid and

I don't solve it. The result comes out that I fail in the exam."

"I needed help because I felt that fright dominates me.

"The person who helped me was my teacher.

"She helped me by explaining the problem to me kindly with her encouraging words. Then she made the solution clear to me. But most of the times I don't understand the problem even if she explains it.

"I profited from her help but not much."

4. Worrying about grades: girl 10

"One day I forgot my civic book at home and I was afraid of the teacher because the one who forgets any book or anything else is punished by having a few grades taken off. I was troubled and mad.

"I needed help after I knew that one friend takes two books to school. So I went to her and asked her for one but she said she forgot one at home.

5. Worrying about grades: boy 12

"One day the teacher took off 15 grades of my average although I did not do anything to bother him. I got very sad and wished he would know that I did not do anything to bother him.

"I needed help so that some friend can come with me to the principal to tell him that I'm innocent.

"Yes, a friend in school helped me.

"He came with me to the office and I told the principal what happened because I was shy to enter his room by myself.

"Yes I profited from this help and he erased the grades that he took away."

Physical Problem Incidents

While some students cited incidents of a social nature, and said that they disturbed them, and others cited incidents of an academic nature, so did also a few mention that physical problems troubled them most. Thus, any behavior that disturbed, troubled, or upset the child physically, was grouped under this category of problem incidents.

The following table shows the types of problems as they were classified.

TABLE V

Physical Problem Incidents

<u>Type of Problem</u>	<u>Total out of 193</u>	<u>Boys out of 112</u>	<u>Girls out of 81</u>
Getting injured in school	14	10	4
Feeling sick in class	5	2	3
Being unable to work because of physical injury	4	2	2
Getting injured outside school	10	7	3
	<u>33</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>12</u>

From this table we can derive that 18.75% of the boys had physical problems and 14.81% of the girls had such problems also.

The proportion of boys reporting physical problems was compared with that for girls by the chi-square method, and no significant difference between proportions was found.

The following are a few examples of the type of physical problem incidents cited:

1. Getting injured in school: boy 14

"I was playing football in the schoolyard with my dear friends, and the principal and teachers were watching the game and encouraging us in the game. There was too much enthusiasm in this game and it happened as I was running, I fell down and broke my leg.

"I needed help so that someone would take me outside the playing field to the doctor to fix my leg.

"The teacher helped me by taking me to the doctor.

"Yes, I profited from this help because without it something bad would have happened."

2. Getting injured in school: boy 10½

"One hit me so that I fell on the ground. My hand started to hurt me and it happened that it was broken.

"I needed help because it was my hand and if no one helped me it will swell and no one will be able to fix it for me.

"My friend helped me.

"He took me to the hospital quickly.

"Yes, I profited from this help."

3. Getting sick in class: girl 10½

"It happened that one day in class my head started to ache. I asked the teacher if I can go to the school nurse to give me an aspro. My friend accompanied me. So I took the aspro and drank it and went back to class. Thus I could pay better attention.

"I needed help because I did not know the school nurse.

"My friend helped me by taking me to her.

"Yes, I profited from this help."

4. Getting sick in class: girl 13

"One day while the teacher was explaining the history lesson in class, I had a headache because the weather was very hot. So I could not pay attention to the explanation. When the bell rang and the teacher left class she told us that we have to learn that lesson well. Then I told myself "I wish I paid attention to the explanations." And before I entered class the next morning, I needed someone to explain the lesson for me.

"I needed the help of my friend so that I'd understand the lesson and get a good grade.

"She helped me by explaining the lesson to me.

"Yes, I profited from this help because when the bell rang and we entered class I got the best grade."

CHAPTER IV

THE HELP GIVEN TO CHILDREN

Another aspect of this study is to investigate the help given to the students. This is done by examining first, the amount of help that the students received as they were faced with a problem, and second, by studying the source of help.

The number of students receiving help and those not receiving help is shown in the following table.

TABLE VI

Number of Students Receiving and not Receiving Help

	Boys	Girls	Total
Students Receiving Help	105	72	177
Students not Receiving Help	7	9	16
Total	112	81	193

From this table, it appears that the great majority of students, that is, 193 students, had problems for which they needed help. This meant that the students could not solve their problems on their own, and were also conscious of a

need for help.

However, this number of problems may be misleading. Students may have mentioned problems which were not really significant for them. We shall assume therefore, that there would be no confusion about the importance of the problems for the student if he actually got help in dealing with it. This indicates that, had the problem been insignificant, the student would not have seriously managed to get help with it.

Table VI also shows that 16 students did not get help, against 177 who did. This difference is significant, and shows that the school population with which this study is dealing experiences problems which are real, and serious enough for the children to want to be helped out of them.

Source of Help

Another question of concern in this study is: whom does the student turn to in seeking advice?

The sources of help available to students are distributed in the following table:

TABLE VII

Distribution of Help Among Teachers and Friends in
the Three Problem Categories

Source of Help	Soc.-Em.	Acad.	Phys.	Total
Teachers	15	13	6	34
Friends	60	22	15	97
Total	75	35	21	131 ¹¹

Using the X^2 test, we find that:

1) The difference in the number of friends vs. teachers giving help to students with Social-Emotional problems is significant at the 1% level.¹²

2) The difference in the number of friends vs. teachers giving help in academic problems is not significant.

3) The difference in the number of friends vs. teachers giving help in Physical problems is significant.

11. 131 is the total number of students who received help from the above mentioned sources. The remaining students that total 46 received help from sources outside of school. And, since our interest is in help given at school, we in this study disregarded them. The total of students who received help however was 177 as is shown in Table VI.

12. 1. $X^2 = 27$ Difference very significant.
2. $X^2 = 2.34$ Difference not significant.
3. $X^2 = 3.84$ Difference significant.

We may conclude then that in connection with social-emotional problems, children turned more to their friends for help than to their teachers. In connection with academic problems, the difference in number of students who received help from friends and that of teachers is of no significance and therefore is due to chance. This may show that the role of teachers is seen as academic since half of the students ask their friends for help and half ask their teachers. In physical problems the students got more help from friends than from teachers.

CHAPTER V

THE TEACHERS' PROBLEM INCIDENTS

Another concern in this study is to find out in what incidents and situation, elementary-school children receive help from their own teachers, whom we expect to be able to understand them most.

Questionnaires were sent out to teachers to fill them out. Only twenty-five out of a hundred have turned theirs in.

Although the proportion of respondents is small, it may be useful to examine the nature of incidents which were reported.

In the following table, those incidents are classified in order of their frequency.

TABLE VIII

Problem Incidents of Students as cited by Teachers

<u>Kind of Problem</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
Physical disability	6	5	1
Stammering		(2)	(1)
Poor hearing		(1)	(0)
Disability to run		(1)	(0)
Tiredness		(1)	(0)

<u>Kind of Problem</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
Stealing	3	1	2
Cheating	3	0	3
Crying	3	0	3
Sensitivity	3	2	1
Being ridiculed	2	1	1
Shyness	2	0	2
Smoking	1	1	0
Miscellaneous	2	2	0
	<u>25</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>

As we see from the above data, the kind of problem that is mentioned most is that of physical disability, next to which comes stealing, cheating, crying and sensitivity.

The following examples will give a vivid picture of those incidents as told by the teachers themselves.

Examples of Teachers' Problem Incidents

Stammering: boy 10

"Sameer is a nice boy of ten. He stammers when he reads. One boy in his class, being jealous of Sameer's best mark in an arithmetic test, mentioned aloud in class that Sameer couldn't read well. He said, "My! Why does he stammer so much?" Poor dear Sameer! He blushed and bent his head in shame.

- "This occurred in class during a reading lesson a few months ago."

- "The teacher rescued the situation tactfully by saying, "Having studied the lesson very well, Sameer tries to read fluently and quickly and thus stammers!"

- "Later, Sameer's reading improved and he did his best to read more slowly."

Stealing and Lying: Girl 11

"At the beginning of the year, I knew of a girl that had the habit of stealing and lying. All the girls used to hate her and never trust her in anything. So I talked to the girls in general about the good habits that I want of each of them and I mentioned the name of the girl and that I guarantee she will be successful, faithful and honest.

- "This happened in the 5th elementary class last year.

- "I praised and the girl in front of the class at the beginning of the year and I said that this girl has grown one year and she has become better and honest. I trust her and I believe she is going to be among the best students. And she did, for I did not notice that she stole anything at all. And, when I notice anything wrong, I talk to her personally. Thank God she has progressed a great deal."

Cheating Girl:

"While I was checking the report cards, I found out that

one of the girls had changed a failing grade to a passing one to show it to her parents.

- "I called the girl after the class, talked to her and asked her what made her do this. I explained to her that what she did was wrong and that her parents will like it much more if they see that, the next time she takes her report card home, she passed the subject she failed first. The child wept and told me how much she was afraid of her parents, but I gave her confidence in herself, encouraged her, and she promised to improve and not to repeat this anymore."

Crying: Girl 6

"Girl who had lost five piasters was crying very hard wanting her money back.

"This happened in school during recess.

"The teacher cooperated with the students in her class and looked for the lost franc. After a short time, a boy found it in the sand. The children expressed their joy in clapping!"

Sensitivity: Boy, 11

"A boy in the fifth elementary class is very sensitive and at the same time runs away from anything that is called a trouble. But for one reason he had to quarrel with one of his friends which led to cutting his relations with that boy and never speaking with him. And because this boy did not

like to be angry with anyone or cause any trouble, he came and asked one to help him and his friend to come to a reconciliation.

- "The quarrel took place during the noon recess a month ago.

- "I helped him in the following ways: first I explained to him that this quarrel isn't as important as he thought even though it shouldn't have happened. Second I brought the boy with whom he quarrelled and reconciliated between them so that now they're better friends than before."

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of the study on children's problem incidents reveal many points worthy of consideration. It is important though, at this point, to make one clear explanation. All through, one should bear in mind that the problems found in the problem categories are problem incidents with which students needed help. They are not the only problems that elementary-school children have. When asked to mention one recent incident which troubled them and for which they needed help, it is assumed, the students would write the problems or incidents that bother them most, for had it not been of some importance to them, they would not remember it.

Consequently, we can say that the results may be more intensive than those of other studies such as those mentioned in the Mooney Problem Check list.¹³ Paul L. Dressel in his section on Helping Pupils with their Problems, points out the advantage of the one-incident technique as against the method of the Mooney Problem Check List, by saying: "A distinct shortcoming of such inventories", "is that they measure frequency of occurrence rather than intensity of problems, and then measure only these problems that were included in the

13. Ross L. Mooney, The Problem Check List, Columbus: The Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University.

inventory."¹⁴

Thus, the results borne in this study of 106 social-emotional problem incidents and 54 academic and 33 physical, from the study of 200 incidents, prove to have some important bearing for guidance purposes.

The obvious conclusion would be that in Beirut, elementary school children have many social and emotional problems for which they need help.

Looking back at table III we find that among the social-emotional problem incidents, quarrelling, hitting, being punished, and feeling a need for reconciliation after a quarrel, rank highest and constitute around 60 per cent of the total problems of this category.

It is evident that those problem incidents are of the aggressive type of problem behavior.

Three factors work together to cause this aggressive behavior in children. They are the normal characteristics of the age itself, the influence of the authoritarian culture of Lebanon, and the lack of understanding on the part of the grown-ups of the needs of this age.

The characteristics of the age ranging between 10 and 14

14. Paul L. Dressel, "Helping Pupils with their Problems" A Basic Text for Guidance Workers, ed. C.E. Erickson (New York, 1954), p. 197.

are in themselves causes for aggressive behavior. Children are sensitive, and like to wrestle and fight. They have a great need for physical activity, specially at eleven, because of sex antagonism on the part of both boys and girls.¹⁵ When not given a healthy and permissive atmosphere for self-expression, children at this age would then turn to be aggressive.

The culture is another factor that may cause aggressive social behavior. As seen by the article of Dr. Pergrouhi Najarian in the Middle East Forum, our culture exhibits forms of authoritarian living in the family which growing adults are not content with.¹⁶ This authoritarianism and restrictions of self-expression cause children to act aggressively on their first opportunity to do so. They show it therefore in their social relationships with their friends, in school mostly, because at home they cannot act as they desire because they are afraid of their parents.

The third factor that may cause aggressive behavior in children of the 10 to 14 age group is the lack of understanding on the adults' part of the needs and characteristics of this age. The children need help and guidance at this age; if this

15. Hanna, Potter, and Hagaman, Unit Teaching in the Elementary School, (New York, 1956), pp. 31-37.

16. Pergrouhi Najarian, "Changing Patterns of Arab Family Life", Middle East Forum, January, 1960, pp. 11-17.

guidance is not given to them, they are likely to react negatively through aggression.

To suggest a change in culture is beyond our ability at the moment but we may suggest a program in which needs of students are dealt with in an understanding way.

/ In relation to guidance in Lebanese schools, this study bears out that an insufficient amount of teacher-help is offered to elementary students in Beirut, relative to the range and kind of problems which bother those students. Also, the fact that help is not easily obtained for the treatment of such problems is annoying in itself.

Thus, the most important conclusion of our results in this study is the establishment of the fact that children in the elementary schools do have personal problems, and are not occupied only with their studies. Like all other human beings, they have problems of adjustment to the various aspects of life.

In the questionnaires, children emphasized in addition to the problems they have, the need for assistance, and the sources from which they sought to receive this assistance. Therefore we can generalize in saying that when students are aware that they have problems for which they need help, we are justified in concluding that a guidance program would be of vital importance to the schools of Lebanon. For guidance functions best

when it meets the demands of people and not when it is forced on them. Also, the children in this study indicated that in most cases they sought help from their age mates and friends. Since it is not expected that age mates will have the kind of maturity needed for such a vital function of counseling, the need for expert advice through a systematic guidance service is to be asserted.

At this point, an important question arises as to why do most of the students seek advice and help from their friends rather than from their teachers when they encounter some problems in school? Is it because teachers are thought of only as subject-matter teachers? or is it because teachers do not readily avail themselves to students when these latter need them? The fact that students do not resort more often to their teachers for help when it is needed, confirms the presence of a formal social climate in school. The school atmosphere therefore may not be as permissive as it could be since it does not allow the students to express their feelings and troubles openly. When most of the students who are faced with problems ask their friends for assistance, then there may be something wrong with the students-teachers-relationships in school. It is likely that this situation is to be blamed on the teachers' attitudes towards the nature of learning.

To have developed such an unpermissive attitude, teachers should have had a reason which seems to be their lack of under-

standing of children's behavior and problems.

In the response of teachers to the questionnaires addressed to them, we find a first justification of the above conclusion. Only 25 per cent of the teachers did reply, which may indicate the general state of indifference which prevails among the teachers of the schools included in the study, towards children's problems. This conclusion is reinforced by evidence obtained from the analysis of the kind of problems which responding teachers have mentioned. Those problems can be classified under three main categories. The first and most frequent one is that of crying, sensitivity, and shyness, which can be labeled as the emotional category. Evidently, the important thing to note in these results is the one dominant characteristic of these categories of problems. They are all of the overt type that can be easily detected by any casual observer. Everyone can recognize the child who cannot run well, who stammers while talking or who steals or cheats.

When a child performs such overt behavior as crying or getting angry, or when a child is shy, the ordinary teacher cannot ignore the problem completely. He will have to face them, otherwise the class cannot be conducted smoothly.

By comparing the data obtained from the students questionnaires with data obtained from that of the teachers, we find the kind of problems usually detected by teachers, are different

from the problems revealed by students. Also, the ability to detect only the overt type of problems indicates the lack of awareness on the part of teachers, for the deeper and more basic problems of students. Therefore, by knowing what teachers consider as problems for the students, and what the children consider as such, determines the lack of the teachers' understanding of their students.

Yet, the lack of sensitivity towards the problems of students not only prevails among Lebanese teachers.

In the study carried by the staff of the Division on Child Development and Teacher Personnel of the American Council on Education it was also found that teachers are not sensitive enough to children's problems. Still, even with such results, we ought not be discouraged, for in this second study we find hope in training teachers. Dr. Daniel Prescott who was mostly responsible for this study, carried a vast in-service training program for teachers, which yielded very encouraging results. Teachers who were before not sensitive to children's problems began on the completion of a special teacher training program to understand underlying causes of behavior and ceased to blame unduly, children whose conduct caused problems for them, and began to try to change unaccepted behavior instead of relying only on punishment.¹⁷

17. Helping Teachers Understand Children. American Council on Education, (Chicago, 1951), pp. 398-399.

In his study on teachers' attitudes to children's behavior, Wickman mentions that, though teachers report some signs of shyness, day dreaming, sensitivity, and withdrawal, yet they do not give it much attention because it is preferred to aggressive behavior and is therefore of no importance to them.¹⁸ Another reason might be the refusal of teachers to deal with difficult problems.

There exists no problem in behavior in the active social sense, unless someone reacts to it as something wrong and against social standards and attitudes. Therefore, any form of behavior in a person may in time become a behavior problem if it is treated as unaccepted by the individual's social group.¹⁹ On the other hand, if most teachers do not react to the children's problem incidents as incidents, this might gradually lead to a lessening of awareness, on the part of the students, of their problems, thus increasing the complexity of these problems. The need for bringing the attention of teachers to the deeper dynamics of behavior is thus again reasserted. For, "The most significant question in connection with children's behavior problems is the question as to what this problem might mean, what kind of a struggle it represents in the child's life, and what the teacher might do to increase

18. E.K. Wickman, Children's Behavior and Teachers' Attitudes, New York, 1928), p. 39.

19. Ibid., p. 3.

his understanding of the child so that he might establish a helpful relationship with him."²⁰

To sum up we can state that the social climate of the school can be improved if teachers realize that their responsibility is to help students in every aspect of their school life and not only in their lessons, thus arriving therefore at an understanding of children's needs. When this understanding is achieved, and a helpful, cooperative atmosphere dominates the school, the students will turn more to their teachers for help than to their friends.

20. Arthur Jersild, Child Psychology, (New York, 1933), p. 584.

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