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EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS OF CHILDREN
IN BEIRUT

An Empirical Study of Children's Emotional
Problems

A Thesis

by

Iris A. Lahoud

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EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS OF
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Lahoud

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ABSTRACT

NATURE OF THE STUDY

This research is directed towards developing a checklist of emotional problems for elementary school children in Beirut, ranging between the ages of nine and thirteen. The checklist is not meant to be a test that yields scores of adjustment; it will give rather the number of problems which an elementary school child faces. The emphasis will be on the problems which often trouble students in their everyday life, in school, at home, with their friends, with their elders and in their personal relationships. The list will be limited to the problems of elementary students in Beirut schools.

PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTING PROBLEM INCIDENTS

The procedure for collecting the data needed, involves two steps. First, there is need to know the problem areas which are common among the age group of the study. Second, there is need to formulate a checklist with items representing specific difficulties or problems which will have to be checked by a sample representative of the age group with which this study is concerned, for the purpose of determining the frequency of each problem among this population.

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

Subjects used in the first plan of the research were selected from various private schools in Beirut.

The total sample included 240 students, ranging between 9 and 13 years of age. Equal representation in terms of religion and sex was insured. However, as regarding social backgrounds, the subjects seem to belong to the middle and upper middle classes. The group does not, therefore, represent all classes.

METHOD USED IN GATHERING INFORMATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF CHECKLIST

This study adopted Flanagan's "Critical Incident Technique", consisting in asking each individual to describe either in writing or orally, one incident that had happened to him, which shows extreme behaviour. This procedure has several advantages. First, the child is called to be critical in examining his feelings. Second, as the child is not asked to report free-floating feelings, a task which is most probably beyond his ability, but instead to report a problematic incident, this will make available for analysis realistic and concrete evidence. Also, the incidents will demonstrate certain cultural patterns of behaviour, on the basis of which it may be possible to

arrive at an understanding of the nature of adjustment representative of a certain society, its values and its problems.

The subjects were allowed to write in any language, English, Arabic, or French. The answer sheets were kept anonymous, but every child was requested to give his age, sex, nationality and name of school.

CHECKLIST AND ADMINISTRATION TO

TRY-OUT-SAMPLE

The incidents were then analyzed; items to be included on the checklist were so constructed as to include a situation and a behavioural component. The checklist was then given to a try-out-sample comprising 105 subjects, 45 boys and 60 girls, recruited from a cross-section of private elementary schools in Beirut. The structure of the try-out-sample is thus similar in many ways to the first sample. The checklist can be seen in Appendix I, and the instructions for its administration on page 42.

RESULTS

After the administration of the checklist, the number of positive checks was computed for the total sample, and for boys and

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girls separately. Percentages were later found for the total sample, and can be examined on pages 33 to 40, where they are grouped under different headings respectively representing personal problems, home problems and school problems. Some overlapping is expected from one area to another, but in general, personal problems represent problems of an inner directed nature; home problems represent problems involving the relations of the child with his parents and his attitude towards family life; school problems represent problems involving the relation of the child with his teachers and his schoolmates, and his attitude towards school life.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

A sample of 20 subjects was selected at random, to whom the checklist was administered again after a lapse of one week. Pearson r was computed and a correlation of .85 was found to be significant to the one percent level.

As to validity, no criterion other than face validity was considered, since in a checklist what one wants to discover is the problems as they are felt by the subjects. Perhaps it would have been useful to correlate the results of the checklist with clinical symptoms of adjustment or with some kind of a projective test. This endeavour is beyond the facilities of this research, however.

CONCLUSION

Several problems have stood out statistically, in all areas, with percentage higher than 50%. It is thus difficult to draw out distinct patterns of maladjustment, as it seems that conflicts pervade the total relationships of elementary school children in our culture with adults, whether at home or at school. The distribution of scores is also negatively skewed indicating a piling up of problems above the mean.

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CHAPTER I

NATURE OF THE STUDY

This research is directed towards developing a checklist of emotional problems for elementary school children in Beirut, ranging between the ages of nine and thirteen.

Checklists have been widely used in the study of the emotional troubles of children. They have proved to be very helpful in hinting which student is likely to need counseling and in suggesting topics that the counselor can discuss with his counselees. In this study, the checklist is not meant to be a test that yields scores of adjustment based on population norms.

The interpretation of the list will, therefore, rely partly on the number of problems checked in a certain area, and partly on the interpretation of the teacher or counselor of the degree of seriousness that a specific problem has in the life of the person. In this particular checklist the emphasis will be on the emotional problems that often trouble the students in their everyday life, in school, at home, with their friends, with their elders, and problems involving indirectly personal relationships. The list will be limited to the problems of elementary students in Beirut schools.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH.

In advanced countries, many researches on the emotional life of the child have been made. It is not an insignificant fact that no research has yet been attempted in Lebanon along this line. Most probably, this is due to the fact that the role of emotions in the causation of behaviour is underestimated. Yet, it is obvious that modern psychiatry proceeds with the explicit assumption that emotional problems affect the lives of people in general by affecting their physical well-being as well as their social and mental growth. Many physical disorders, for example, are believed to be partly or wholly caused by emotional conflicts. Those include among others perhaps, asthma, tics, obesity, sudden headaches, earache, peptic ulcer and blindness.

Besides, it is also believed that the earlier in a child's life, we begin to direct his development the better are the chances for building a healthy personality. Krugman and Wrightstone share the idea that many of the emotional disturbances and personality maladjustments in the adults are the result of emotional difficulties that have started in childhood.¹ It is also firmly believed that

1. Judith Krugman and Wayne Wrightstone, A Guide to the Use of Anecdotal Records, p.5

such problems of adjustment if detected at an early age can be treated and dealt with by the help of a counselor or a psychiatrist. On the other hand, if disregarded, they may develop from bad to worse and may cause the deterioration of the personality. It is thus advisable that problems of childhood ought to be treated before the child moves into another stage of growth in his life. It is in the elementary school that students with problems need most the services of a counselor and would benefit most in self-understanding and in learning how to face their difficulties and limitations.

In short, the importance of this research, of an applied nature, lies in that it assumes that emotions play an important role in the determination of behaviour; that early prevention of emotional disturbances would lead to the formation of healthier attitude towards school work in particular and life in general. Therefore, the availability of a handy instrument such as a checklist of emotional problems for children, would be very useful in the hands of the teachers and counselors.

EMOTIONAL CARE IN LEBANESE SCHOOLS

Programs of counseling and guidance are not given due importance in the Lebanese Schools. Also, trained teachers who are interested in the development of the child into a well functioning adult, are very few. The majority among them are not aware of the importance of the emotions in determining behavior. They are interested in the child as a learner and not as a growing individual. Many teachers have observed students drop out of school or repeat their classes year after year; they have noticed lonely and withdrawn children as well as restless and oversensitive ones; they have seen aggressive and domineering ones side by side with quiet, obedient and submissive ones; yet, it rarely occurred to them to consider that these different manifestations of temperament may be due to emotional factors. If they are aware of personality problems at all, teachers are more likely to consider as problem students those who disobey, who are aggressive and antagonistic to authority and who violate the rules of the school. While, they tend to report as free from any problems, children who are obedient, quiet, shy, withdrawn and submissive. Wickman remarks that even if teachers are aware of the presence of some problems in a child's life, they may fail to interpret them as symptomatic of maladjustment.² This represents a typical situation

2. E.K. Wickman, Children's Behaviour and Teacher's Attitudes, pp.77-78

in the Lebanese schools which suffer from the lack of trained teachers. There the personal problems of the child that do not stand in the way of the teacher's plans for the class, are not felt, and subsequently the children who suffer from them are not helped.

On the other hand, there is a general tendency among teachers to categorize children into types. They might classify them as the aggressive, the quiet, the obedient, the shy, the impolite, the talkative, etc... Yet, most of the time, teachers miss the most important part of the situation, namely that these behaviours that characterize the child's personality are may be symptoms of severe emotional problems that he is suffering from. The child who is classified as a bully, for example, might be the most insecure of all the children. Many times maladjustment to one's environment may result in aggression and hostility. If this harshness is met on the part of the teachers and parents by rejection, anger, or punishment, the child feels the need to fight them back. On the other hand, if instead, they try to find out what is driving him to react in this rough manner then they can help him to overcome it.

EMOTIONAL CARE IN MODERN SCHOOLS

Studying the emotions of children is a required step in fulfilling the aims of modern education. Modern education is not concerned with only one aspect of the child's life. Its objectives aim at more than teaching students subject matter. It aims at the serious and complicated task of helping the young to develop social and vocational competency as well as mental, emotional, and physical health. These different aspects of the child's life are considered as being interrelated, and that therefore, all rounded development is not only an aim, but a necessity, if personal adjustment is desired.

It is also believed by many psychologists that maladjustment affects learning. Torgerson, for example says: " A maladjusted student is a potential educational failure. The Frustrations resulting from the failure often lead to emotional conflicts and later maladjustment."³

This interrelatedness between adjustment and learning makes the responsibility of the modern teacher heavier and more complex. It is even more so in the case of the elementary teacher, because psychologists assume that whether a child is to develop into a

3. Theodore Torgerson, Studying Children, p.19

wholesome, well adjusted, personality or into a maladjusted adult, is principally determined by the nature and the quality of the growth process during the early years of life ... the growth of a wholesome personality proceeds in a continuous, gradual manner.

This necessitates a thorough understanding on the part of the modern teacher of the nature of growth and adjustment. He ought to be aware of the fact that both growth and adjustment are subjective and thus, they differ in the case of every child. It requires training on the part of the modern teacher to develop interest in every child individually and to study him as a unique individual who has his own troubles, his own needs and desires, and his own way of meeting them. It requires also training, to accept the student as an important individual who has all the right to satisfy his wishes and to express his ideas and fight for them. Yet, side by side with that, students are badly in need of attention, sympathy and care from some one who is willing to listen to them and accept them, and who is worthy of their trust and respect. To this noble and difficult task, modern education has chosen the teacher.

ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN IDENTIFYING

EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

In developing any device for identifying emotional adjustment such as a checklist or an inventory, many difficulties have to be overcome. Most of them pertain directly to the nature of adjustment. Adjustment, which is the desired goal, is a very flexible and wide term. It cannot be measured objectively and quantitatively. It is subjective, and thus varies with people and societies. For example, an event may affect two different people in totally different ways, so that it may constitute a problem in the case of one of them, while in the case of the other, it is just a common, familiar situation. No fixed standards of emotional adjustment are possible, but each child has to be understood in relation to his own surroundings, background, early experience, and life expectations. Florence Teagarden emphasizes the individual difference in emotions. She says that people's reactions to stimuli that arouse emotions of hate, anger, fear, love, joy, frustrations and the like vary with different people in the quickness of the reaction and in the degree and type. Some people react slowly but more violently. The variability in these reactions make up a good part of the individual's personality.⁴

4. Florence Teagarden, Child Psychology for Professional Workers, P.307

It is also argued that problems of adjustment vary not only with different persons but also with different societies and environments. Wickman points that whether a problem exists or not is determined by personal and social attitude. He says: "There can be no problems in behaviour, in the active social sense, unless some one reacts to them as such. Moreover, any form of conduct in a child or adult may become a problem, if it is regarded and treated as undesirable behaviour by the social group in which the individual happens to live."⁵ As a result of this, he adds, it becomes very hard, if not impossible to establish a consistent standard by which to measure or identify problems of maladjustment. Different people look differently at behaviour problems. One behaviour which might be considered a problem in one society might be considered normal in another.⁶ Lecky Prescott supports this argument when he says that, from a social point of view, abnormalities represent the attitudes of a certain society and its values.⁷

As a result of this interrelatedness between the individual,

5. E.K. Wickman, Children's Behaviour and Teacher's Attitude, p.3

6. Ibid.

7. Lecky Prescott, Self Consistency A Theory of Personality, p.7

society and adjustment, it has become quite an impossible task to establish a general definition of adjustment that can be taken as a universal standard or an absolute measure. Some psychologists however, have to a certain extent succeeded in defining adjustment in as general terms as possible. Carl Rogers, for example, defines adjustment as an internal feeling of acceptance towards one's self.⁸ He says: "When all of the ways in which the individual perceives himself - all perceptions of the qualities, abilities, impulses, and attitudes of the person, and all perceptions of himself in relation to others - are accepted into the organized conscious concept of the self, then this achievement is accompanied by feelings of comfort and freedom from tension which are experienced as psychological adjustment."⁹

Again, according to Rogers, the two elements that affect the adjustment of people are, the acceptance of the self as it is and the feeling of content, of easiness and of the simplicity of life that goes with it.¹⁰ To illustrate his point, he quotes a passage written by a woman under psychological care. She says:

8. Carl Rogers, 'Organization of Personality', The American Psychologist, Vol. 2, Sept. 1947, p.364

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

" I've always tried to be what the others thought I should be, but now I am wondering whether I shouldn't just see that I am what I am".

" Well, I've just noticed such a difference. I find that when I feel things, even when I feel hate, I don't care, I don't mind. I feel more free somehow. I don't feel guilty about things.

You know it's suddenly as though a big cloud has been lifted off. I feel so much more content. " 11

Adler, on the other hand, believes that adjustment goes side by side with a "style of life" His belief is that people have inferiority complexes which might be real or imagined. One can influence their development by either checking them or helping them along as a form of compensation. Every one, even as a child, recognizes his inferiority; this leads him towards achievement in life making up for this feeling. While fighting against one's inferiority, each person follows his own way of pursuing his aims and goals in the manner that suits him best. He thus develops his own "style of life" that identifies him as a unique person among the rest of people.¹² It is thus believed that the mechanism of adjustment implies a compensation for the

11. Ibid, p.363

12. Charles M. Harsh and H.G. Schrickel, Personality Development and Assessment, p.336

inferiorities a person suffers from, by developing a style of life. It becomes therefore that the best approach to a particular personality is to understand its style of life, its ultimate goals and ideals and the things that are most significant to it. .

As a summary, it is to be emphasized, again, that for one to develop a device for identifying adjustment, it is necessary to adopt or to establish a certain definition of adjustment, however general it may be, which is flexible enough to account for individual and cultural differences in adjustment and justice to social problems and values.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This research deals only with the emotional problems of school children in Beirut, who range between the ages of nine and thirteen.

The results are drawn from a sample of five hundred incidents, perhaps not representative of the problems of the age group concerned in the whole of Lebanon.

It is noted, as well, that the study of emotions has in itself many limitations. No agreement has ever been reached on the nature of emotions and their effects on personality. Nor has any one been able to develop a device that yields a perfectly objective score of adjustment. All the instruments used for this purpose are based on particular definition of adjustment. The interpretation of results are mostly subjective and the scores or ratings provided ought to be explained in relation to personal background and experiences, and social attitudes and values.

CHAPTER II

CHECKLISTS AS INSTRUMENTS
OF
ADJUSTMENT STUDY

For the study of individual adjustment, several instruments are available to the psychologist. Some of them are based on the intensive clinical observation of normal and maladjusted people. Others depart from a preconceived theory of adjustment. In both cases, the first task is to set a definition of adjustment which will then serve as a basis for classifying observed patterns of behaviour. Such definitions of adjustment may either lean heavily on culturally accepted standards of behaviour, or refer to the individual as repository of conflict and equilibrium regardless of cultural considerations.

It seems true, however, that both these orientations complement each other. That is, cultural deviation or sometimes cultural conformity do not constitute real maladjustment unless they are reflected in a conflict deeply and genuinely felt by the individual; while on the other hand a personal conflict remains unintelligible until one is aware of the cultural context in which it has arisen. The checklist is an instrument which attempts to combine both approaches in making a judgement on the adjustment of people. First of all, a checklist is a list of problem items.

These items are derived from statements made by particular individuals on their own adjustment. They represent therefore states of conflict. Also, the checklist yields a general idea of the source of trouble common in a society, by establishing the frequency of different patterns of behaviour representing difficulties and various states of stress. This represents cultural expectations. The teacher or counselor is thus helped to interpret the items checked by a particular individual as representative of his difficulties, by comparing them to the values or standards commonly accepted in his society.

Another assumption made by checklists is that the number of problems checked by a person is significant in passing a judgement on his state of adjustment. That is, it is considered good judgement if the teacher or the counselor calls for an interview, the student who has checked more problems on the list than the one who has checked a fewer number. However, this may present a serious pitfall, since the problems are not of similar significance in the lives of all people, nor do all people express themselves on the subject of their difficulties and problems with the same freedom. Certain people are so inhibited that they find great difficulty in expressing what is troubling them, or they might be ignorant of the source of their disturbance. While such people might be in a worse position than

those who can freely express their difficulties, they will have a lower score on the checklist. This may be partly corrected, however, by establishing norms which would permit to recognize if the mention of a large number of problems and the lack of such are equally indicative of disturbance. Another difficulty is that with different people, the same behaviour may be the result of different causes and this behaviour might leave different effects. A problem in the life of one person might put him off balance, while ten problems in the life of another may be taken very lightly. This depends upon whether the child "reacts to his problems by trying to meet them, by running away from them, by collapsing under them or by rebelling against them."¹³ It is again to be emphasized that it is left to the subjective judgement of the counselor to differentiate between the symptoms and the cause of the disturbances. It is important that the counselor should try to understand the peculiarity of the problem and significance, and its effect on the life of the child before calling him for an interview.

A more serious limitation of checklists still, is caused by the fact that subjects do not always respond honestly and truthfully, but would instead limit their answers to what they think is best, not to what they really feel. In such a case, the results will be misleading.

13. Judith Krugman and Wayne Wrightstone, A Guide to the Use of Anecdotal Records, p.6

If the checklist is used in a research project, this danger could be perhaps reduced by appealing to the honesty and cooperation of the subjects. If it is used for counseling purposes, the subjects should be made to understand that the counselor will be helpless unless they check their answers with full frankness and sincerity.

To sum up, it seems only fair to say that checklists are not very reliable in discriminating between adjusted and maladjusted people and should not therefore be relied on for research purposes. However, they could be very valuable if used mainly as guides for counseling; They would suggest possible lines for the counselor to follow with his patient and would help to minimize the blunders that counselors are apt to commit in the early interviews of counseling.

PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTING PROBLEM INCIDENTS

The purpose of this research is to provide a tentative checklist of problems which Lebanese school children between the ages of 9 and 13 face. The procedure for collecting the data needed, will involve two major steps; first, there is need to know the problem areas which are common among this age group; Second, to formulate a checklist with items representing specific difficulties or problems which will have to be checked by a representative sample of

the age group with whom this study is concerned, for the purpose of determining the frequency of each problem among this group.

DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECTS

The subjects to be used in this study were selected from a number of private schools scattered over different residential areas in Beirut. These schools were:

- a) The International College of A.U.B. in Ras Beirut.
- b) The Ahlia School in Wadi Abu Jmeal, Beirut.
- c) Ibrin Nuns School in Ashrafeya, Beirut.
- d) The Evangelical Girls' School in Ras Beirut.
- e) The Evangelical Boys School in Ras Beirut.
- f) The British Lebanese Training College (B.L.T.C.) for Boys and Girls.
- g) The "Istiklal" School.

The total sample of this study included 240 students. Their ages ranged between 9 and 13. While it is difficult to assess their socio-economic class position, nevertheless, it is fair to say that in view of the high tuition fees required for admission in the schools which were selected for the study, the students are recruited mostly from the middle and upper middle social classes. In all likelihood, this group does not therefore represent all classes. The problem areas collected, therefore, will not include the problems of the lower class.

Concerning boys and girls, no significant bias is expected because they are equally represented as the sample included 120 boys and 120 girls. As to religion, the schools where this study was carried recruit children from all religions without any discrimination, except for the Ibrin School for Girls where the orientation of the school attracts more Christians than Moslems. Except for this bias, we expect the sample of the study to be almost equally representative of religions.

Although the results of the study will not be examined in terms of those variables, it is important that they should be controlled for purposes of equal representation.

METHODS USED IN GATHERING INFORMATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION
OF CHECKLISTS

In developing checklists of problems which a certain age group faces, several methods have been used, most common among which are the methods of the "SRA. Inventory" and that of the "Mooney Checklist". For purposes of general study of child adjustment and personality development, the projective method has also been used, specially in studies which purport to probe into the deeper dimensions of personality. In general, the methods used for gathering information

about children's problems fall under three main categories: The Observation Method, the Projective Method and the self-report technique.

THE OBSERVATION METHOD

In this method information is gathered through observing the subject in varied situations. The observations would extend over a period of time and at different hours of the day. This gives the observer a general idea of the subject's behaviour and his reactions to different situations. This is very important, due to the fact that people behave differently in different occasions, depending upon their interests in the work done, their health conditions, the people they are dealing with, and what has preceded the time they are being observed at, such as disappointments or frustrations. It is also essential that the subject should not know he is being watched. If he does, he might start calculating his actions in order to impress the observer, or might either become inhibited or overactive.

Notes are always taken during observation for guaranteeing accuracy in describing what really happened. These notes should be clear, comprehensive and free of any interpretative bias, if possible. In carrying such observations, one may want to observe children during

several time samplings and thus have a representative cross-section of the total behaviour of the child, or limit one's self to the observation of a particular trait of behaviour thus having to wait until that particular behaviour occurs.

Usually, if the rules of objectivity, comprehensiveness and clarity of description are followed, it is possible to get a fairly good idea of the subjects personality with particular reference to their behavioural patterns and different reactions. However, there remains many limitations that cannot be avoided. Beside the fact that this method is time consuming, research has shown that the most skilled observers tend to be biased. For they tend to take notice of only certain events while ignoring others, depending upon their orientation, the background and their value judgements. Each observer would record the events that he thinks shows a significant phenomenon in the life of the child. They also often tend to interpret what has taken place instead of just noting what really happened. Of course, these difficulties are not insurmountable; however, for this research it was impossible to use the observation method, since in order to secure objectivity it would be necessary to engage several observers and countercheck their observations. The conditions of this research could not permit this facility.

THE PROJECTIVE METHOD

In psychological circles it is commonly recognized that projective methods of investigation would get better than any other methods now available at the deeper levels of personality and thus permit a more sound determination of personal conflicts and patterns of adjustment. However, the use of such methods requires such special skills and insights as are beyond the reach of the present researcher. Also, projective methods would not yield a wide range of problems as is the purpose of this research. The T.A.T. for instance presents the subject with a number of pictures representing a number of situations which are somewhat unstructured, and requires him to tell a story about each. The stories will of course be varied, but they would be limited to the reactions of the subjects to the same situations, though the situation might be perceived somewhat differently by different people. While a checklist of problems requires not only a representative sample of those problems, but as many of them as possible. Another disadvantage that projective methods present for this study, is that they require much time.

Also, projective methods were not deemed useful for this study on theoretical grounds. The purpose of projective testing is generally to go beyond the manifest level of the behaviours elicited by the test. It purports instead, to reach the depth

of personality as is not accessible to the awareness of the subject, while the purpose of the present study is to collect those problems which are consciously felt as such by the person. Although the person may not be aware of the underlying causes of his problem, this research is concerned with the impact of any such underlying conflicts on the conscious mind and the felt experience of the person.

SELF-REPORT TECHNIQUE

Perhaps the most commonly used technique in gathering information for checklists is the self-report technique. Its value is defended on the ground that it gives a direct picture of the problems of the subject as he experiences them. Some of the best known approaches within the frame of self-reporting are the approach of the S.R.A. inventories, that of Mooney and that of Flanagan.

THE S.R.A. JUNIOR INVENTORY.

This inventory is an adjustment test. The items it includes were derived from several sources. A large number of elementary school students were asked to write each an essay on "my problems", in which they were to include all the problems which they had that they could think of, then. Also, elementary school teachers, guidance

counselors and pediatricians were interviewed. The literature dealing with problems of elementary school children was also studied comprehensively. As a result of this extensive search, it was possible to spot 233 items covering a wide range of problems which children of elementary school age are likely to meet. The validity of those items was then examined by a number of psychologists, guidance counselors and elementary school teachers.¹⁴

MOONEY CHECKLIST

This checklist is a list of problems, which the members of the age group for whom it is meant, are presented with in their life dealings. It attempted therefore, to be exhaustive. For this purpose, it used several sources, among which the analysis of case records kept by the schools; the interviewing of teachers and students alike; the analysis of essays or personal problems by a sample as large as 4000 students; and the analysis of the "expressed problems" of 250 students who for one reason or another sought assistance from psychologists to whom they have voluntarily expressed their problems. For the purpose of checking, the personal data files of 1000 students

14. H. Reininers and R. Bouerfeind, Examiner Manual of the S.R.A. Junior Inventory, p.1.

were reviewed and compared with the list already accumulated from the previous sources. The author also leaned heavily on his personal experience as administrator and counselor, and made an extensive study of the literature dealing with students' and youths' problems.¹⁵

As a result of all these efforts, a sample of 5000 items accumulated at the disposal of the author. Of these 5000 items, those chosen to be included in the final checklist were "either common enough to be checked frequently in large groups of students, or serious enough to be important in an individual case."¹⁶

Another important criterion was whether the items are vague enough in "touchy spots to enable the student to check the item and still feel he can hide his specific problems in later conferences if he chooses to do so!"¹⁷

Other less important criteria were the wording of the item, the degree of familiarity and interest to the student.

15. L. Mooney and L. Gordon, The Mooney Checklist, p.11

16. Op. cit. 12

17. Ibid

FLANAGAN CRITICAL INCIDENT TECHNIQUE

Another method that is gaining more and more popularity in the study of children's problems is Flanagan's critical incident technique, which this research will adapt for reasons which will be explained later. This technique places a heavy emphasis on the study of the behaviour of the individual in the activity. On the basis of collected representative samples of observed behaviour, it aims to obtain objective, quantitative data regarding the activity.

This technique consists in asking each individual to describe either in writing or orally, one incident that had happened to him, which shows extreme behaviour. For it is felt that "extreme behaviour can be more accurately identified than behaviour which is nearly average in character."¹⁸

In this particular research, the aim is to determine the nature and frequency of problems as felt by the specified age group. There is, therefore, need to collect representative incidents describing behaviours under conditions of stress, from which it will be possible to deduce the problems causing the stress. Adapted to this study, this technique will mean that we should ask the children to report critical incidents in their lives. In order to

18. John C. Flanagan, Problems and Procedures in Obtaining Critical Requirements from Critical Incidents, p.5 .

avoid made-up stories and invite an expression of real problems weighing on the minds of the children, it was decided to request the children to report only one or two incidents each.

REASONS FOR ADOPTING THE CRITICAL INCIDENT TECHNIQUE

As mentioned earlier, this study will adopt the critical incident technique. For it is believed that it serves best for collecting the data needed for this kind of research. Actually, before it is possible to formulate a checklist of problems encountered by school children, it is necessary to gather information on situations experienced as problematic by them. For this purpose, the critical incident will require each child to report an incident which occurred to him recently and which presented him with a difficult problem. This procedure will have several advantages. First, the child will be thus called to be critical in examining his feelings. Second, since the child is not asked to report his feelings, a task which is most probably beyond his ability, but instead to report a problematic incident, this will make available for analysis by the researcher, evidence which is realistic and concrete.

Also, the incidents will demonstrate certain cultural patterns of behaviour, the basis of which it will become possible to arrive at an understanding of the nature of adjustment representative

of the society that is being studied, its values and its problems. Such understanding will serve as a reference in the study of individual responses to the checklist once it is established.

Besides, no inventories have been made yet in Lebanon, which could be used for deriving items needed for a checklist of youth problems or children's problems. And inventories prepared in a foreign country would have the short coming of not being all inclusive, in spite of human resemblances. There is henceforth, need for a preliminary study which will investigate problems of local significance. The need is therefore for a method which, while being non-suggestive, would enable us to spot the major problems which children in Lebanon in particular are grappling with.

APPLICATION OF FLANAGAN'S METHOD

This method was applied to subjects drawn from the seven schools mentioned earlier. The subjects were recruited from the fifth and sixth grades. The researcher met with them in groups at times scheduled in agreement with the instructor concerned. They were requested to report only two incidents in order to avoid made-up stories and invite an expression of real problems weighing on their minds.

	<u>Boys</u>		<u>Girls</u>		<u>%</u> <u>of positive checks</u>
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
27. I often have headaches	8	33	24	34	29

H. HOSTILITY

6. I cannot forgive the children who hurt me.	16	21	28	30	41
12. People often try to share my belongings with me.	30	10	32	20	59

I. INSECURITY

2. It annoys me to hear children whisper when I am with them.	32	11	58	3	86
10. I feel afraid to hear that some one has committed suicide.	18	24	50	7	65
81. I would not get over the death of a person dear to me.	38	3	54	5	88

II. HOME PROBLEMS

A. CHILD PARENT RELATIONSHIP

31. It annoys me to see parents scold their children.	31	10	42	16	70
32. My mother is too bossy, she forces me to do things.	10	33	18	40	26
34. I often quarrel with my parents.	25	14	37	20	58

The subjects were allowed to write in any language, English, Arabic, or French. Their answer sheets were kept anonymous but every child wrote his age, sex, nationality and name of school.

This is an identical sample of the form that was used:-

Nationality _____ Age _____
Name of School _____ Sex _____

"Every person becomes troubled or upset at times. He becomes sad or angry or frightened, or he is upset in some other way. We want to know what kinds of things upset people. Think of a time when something happened to trouble you and upset you, then answer the following questions:

- 1- What is the thing that upset you?
- 2- How did it happen?
- 3- Where and when did it happen?
- 4- Who are the people involved?
- 5- What did you do, yourself?
- 6- What did the other people do?

On the second page the following is written:

"Now, think of another incident, different from the first, when you were upset or troubled, then answer the following questions:
(The same questions are repeated).

Since this questionnaire was given in Arabic, it read
as follows:

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

كل شخص منا يضطرب او ينزعج في بعض الاحيان . قد يحزن او يغضب او يخالف
او يحس بانزعاج من شيء ما .

اننا نحب ان نعلم ما هي الاشياء التي تسبب ضيقا وانزعاجا للناس .

افتكر بشيء حدث لك من مدة قريبة سبب لك انزعاجا او ضيقا ، ثم جاوب
الاسئلة التالية :

(١) ما هو الشيء الذي ازعجك ؟

(٢) كيف حدث ذلك ؟

(٣) اين ومتى حدث ذلك ؟

(٤) من هم الاشخاص الذين تدخلوا بالامر ؟

(٥) ماذا فعلت انت ؟

(٦) ماذا فعل الاشخاص الباقون ؟

CHAPTER III

CONSTRUCTION OF CHECK-LIST, ITS ADMINISTRATION AND RESULTS

Items for the check-list were drawn from the problem incidents reported by the subjects of this study, as described earlier. In constructing the items, a number of principles were followed.

First, the statement of an item should include two elements: an expression of upset or disturbance, and a situational context. The emotional tone of the item is thus made to stand out. Also, the provision of a situational context enables the subject to place himself in a concrete and specific setting which he would clearly recognize as familiar, and be therefore able to assess his emotional response to it.

Second, in constructing an item, effort was made to remove peculiarities and make the statement of a situation as general as possible. The rationale of this principle is obvious. An incident as reported by a subject is too private to represent a common experience in the population of an age group. Since the item is to be used as a public stimulus, it has to represent a general situation, with little reference, or not at all, to particularities.

It is obvious that this process of abstraction will involve interpretation, that is, in deriving items for the checklist from

the incidents reported by the children, the researcher depends greatly on his personal judgement. Thus, a single incident reported by a child may suggest several generalizations. Here is an example which illustrates this situation. A child reported the following incident:

"One day as I was studying I wanted to go to my library while my parents were still awake. I called my mother and I told her that I wanted to go to the Library. My mother was washing the clothes and so she asked my father to go with me, and so I got the books I needed. The people who heard the story said, "Does your child feel afraid?"

Possible items that can be drawn from this incident are as follows:

1. I feel afraid at night.
2. I always have to ask for the help of my parents when I want to do something at night.
3. It annoys me that people are surprised when they know that I feel afraid at night.

In order to determine whether such items apply to the age group under study, a try-out of the checklist is indicated.

As a result of the analysis of the problem incidents in the manner already described, - items were drawn, which constitute the checklist. Three main categories were adopted for the grouping and

classification of the items, personal problems, home problems and school problems.

This preliminary checklist appears as follows:

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
TO CHECKLIST

I. PERSONAL PROBLEMS

	<u>Boys</u>		<u>Girls</u>		<u>%</u> <u>of positive checks</u>
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
A. <u>FEAR</u>					
4. I am afraid to stay alone at home.	3	41	37	21	38
19. I am afraid when I have to see a doctor.	3	39	34	25	35
20. I am afraid to be alone in a dark room.	13	31	47	12	57
25. I worry too much if some one dear to me is late.	33	6	44	10	73
30. I am afraid to hear people talk about snakes.	3	40	34	27	35
B. <u>DISSATISFACTION WITH SELF</u>					
21. It annoys me that I am not a boy (answer if you are a girl)			16	40	40
22. It annoys me that I am not a girl (answer if you are a boy)	5	25			20

	<u>Boys</u>		<u>Girls</u>		<u>% of positive checks</u>
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
<u>C. NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING</u>					
9. I am always quarrelling with somebody.	29	10	42	16	67
16. I often feel lonely and upset.	22	15	41	15	60
24. I depend too much on prayers to solve my problems.	29	18	54	3	79
29. People do not believe me even though I tell the truth.	32	9	50	9	78
80. People do not appreciate me when I apologize to them for wrong doing.	25	11	40	17	62
82. There is no one with whom I can discuss my problems and worries.	20	18	33	26	50

D. PERSONAL FREEDOM

3. People often oppose me.	20	10	37	17	54
7. I am not the first in everything	19	22	34	24	50
8. I cannot do all that I want to do.	25	11	49	9	70
15. I cannot do what I want to do at the time that I want to do it.	32	8	41	13	69
79. It annoys me that boys all over have more freedom than girls.	8	26	41	19	46

	<u>Boys</u>		<u>Girls</u>		<u>% of positive checks</u>
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
E. <u>NERVOUSNESS</u>					
1. It annoys me to hear small children cry.	37	7	52	6	85
14. I get nervous and angry very quickly.	23	19	44	16	64
23. I am afraid to see blood	5	36	40	16	42

F. SENSE OF MORALITY

13. I cannot forget that I did something wrong in the past.	31	8	47	4	74
11. I feel disgusted to hear dirty words.	42	1	58	1	95
18. I cannot make myself apologize to any one.	21	9	25	33	43
26. I worry a great deal if I do something wrong.	34	6	57	2	87
28. I am ashamed to hear people talk about love and sex	21	17	36	22	54
83. It annoys me to see small children beg.	34	6	43	1	73
84. It annoys me to see people hit a blind man.	43	1	61		98

G. HEALTH

5. My weak health prevents me to do all the things that my friends do.	20	22	32	22	48
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	<u>Boys</u>		<u>Girls</u>		<u>% of positive checks</u>
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
35. It annoys me that my parents worry too much about me.	25	14	37	20 -	58
42. It annoys me that my mother comes with me wherever I go.	22	16	21	36	40
44. It annoys me that boys are treated at home better than girls.	9	27	30	30	36
45. It annoys me that when my parents face a difficulty they hide it from me.	25	10	30	27	52
46. I feel very bored at home.	29	10	37	18	63
47. My parents do not allow me to go out with my girl-friends. (answer if you are a boy).	8	20			
48. My parents do not allow me to go out with my boy-friends (answer if you are a girl)			29	27	
50. I have to ask for permission for everything I want to do.	15	28	21	39	33
51. My parents get angry and sad if I am not the first in class.	27	13	40	19	64

B. PARENTS' ATTITUDES

33. My father is too strict.	11	28	25	34	33
36. My father and mother often quarrel.	16	14	32	28	54

	<u>Boys</u>		<u>Girls</u>		<u>% of positive checks</u>
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
37. My parents do not do the thing which they say I should do.	19	16	30	26	47
38. It annoys me that parents beat their children.	22	13	46	13	65
49. My mother often changes her mind and does not know whether to agree with me or with my father.	20	11	33	17	50

C. PARENTS' VALUES

40. My parents' way of thinking differs from that of my friends' parents.	21	13	28	28	47
41. My parents think that dancing and movies are bad things.	19	19	25	28	42
43. It annoys me that boys are allowed to enjoy more freedom than girls.	4	33	38	20	40

III. SCHOOL PROBLEMS

A. STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

52. Teachers are not fair in their treatment.	22	14	36	25	55
53. It annoys me that teachers beat the children.	32	11	46	15	74

	<u>Boys</u>		<u>Girls</u>		<u>%</u> <u>for positive checks.</u>
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
55. The teachers do not listen to my complaints.	28	10	46	14	70
60. Some teachers prefer some students to others.	23	13	37	22	57
61. Teachers often punish the innocent student.	33	5	53	8	82
62. Teachers accuse me of doing things I did not do.	40	3	53	6	89
63. I get annoyed when the teachers do not punish students who talk in the class.	28	12	48	12	72
67. I am afraid of teachers	12	26	27	31	37
73. Teachers give heavy assignments.	23	19	43	18	63
75. Teachers do not believe me.	33	10	46	14	75
<u>B. STUDENT-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP</u>					
54. My friends joke during study periods.	37	15	54	5	87
56. Schoolmates interfere with my own business.	36	5	50	10	82
57. It annoys me to see my friends punished.	37	4	53	8	86
64. I hate all students in my class, yet, I have to be with them.					
68. I am not liked by all students.	16	22	31	27	44
69. Students do not listen to me.	28	10	39	31	64

	<u>Boys</u>		<u>Girls</u>		<u>% for positive checks</u>
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
70. Students do not cooperate with me.					
76. Students tease me and annoy me.	19	21	41	20	57
77. My classmates spread stories about me.	25	16	41	20	63
78. Some students in class hate me.	24	14	26	20	48

C. ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCHOOLWORK

58. I am the weakest student in class	24	14	37	19	58
59. I cannot skip classes.	23	14	20	36	41
65. Everybody refuses to help me with my lessons.	18	20	28	28	44
66. It would annoy me to be weak in all courses.	28	12	43	17	68
71. I do not have enough time to finish my school work.	26	11	43	15	66
72. I do not have a quiet place for study.	26	13	45	15	68
74. I worry too much about my school work.	15	28	24	35	37

The category of personal problems includes items which refer to the self and indicate a difficulty in adjustment of a social-emotional nature.

The category of home problems indicates problems which are caused by the relations of the child with members of his family and the conditions of living at home.

The category of school problems includes problems that arise in connection with classmates, teachers, and schoolwork.

TRY-OUT OF THE CHECKLIST

The try-out of the checklist serves two purposes. The first purpose determines the validity of the items by showing whether all items will produce a positive response in the age group of the study. Items which elicit no such response will have to be eliminated.

The second purpose is to establish tentative trends of recurrent problems and tentative norms.

TRY-OUT SAMPLE

The checklist was administered to a new sample of children whose ages range between 9 and 13. The sample included 105 students, 45 boys and 60 girls. The schools which cooperated with this study recruit their students from the middle and upper middle social classes.

Religions are perhaps equally represented, as the schools selected for the try-out study recruit students from all religions indiscriminately.

PROCEDURE

The subjects were assembled in groups in their own schools and were requested to respond to the check-list prepared in their mother tongue with the following instructions:

Name: _____ (Optional) Age: _____
School: _____ Sex: _____

"What are the things that annoy and trouble you? You will find in this booklet a list of the things that disturb children of your age. Read every statement carefully, and if it constitutes a problem in your life put a circle around "Yes", if it does not, put a circle around "No" and if you are not sure or are indifferent put a circle around "?"

Example:

I am very shy - Yes No ?

The questionnaire read in Arabic as follows:

العمر _____ الجنسية _____ المدرسة _____

بنت _____ صبي _____ التاريخ _____

اي الاشياء تزعجك ؟ واي الاشياء تسبب لك بعض المتاعب وتمنعك من ان تكون سعيدا كما تشتهي .

في هذا الكراس الصغير ستجد قائمة بالاشياء التي تزعج الاولاد الذين في سنك اننا نطلب اليك ان تقرأ وصف هذه المشاكل وتجييب اذا كانت المشكلة تنطبق عليك او لا

سيكون وصف هذه المشكلة هكذا:

مثلا : يزعجني انني اخجل كثيرا : نعم لا ؟

اذا كانت المشكلة تنطبق عليك ضع دائرة حول نعم . اذا كانت لا تنطبق عليك ضع دائرة حول لا . وانا كنت غير متأكد ضع دائرة حول علامة الاستفهام هذه : ؟

مثلا : انني اخجل كثيرا : نعم لا ؟

العصر _____ الجنسية _____ المدرسة _____

بنت _____ صبي _____ التاريخ _____

اي الاشياء تهيجك ؟ واي الاشياء تسبب لك بعض المتاعب وتمنعك من ان تكون سعيدا كما تشتهي .

في هذا الكراسي الصغير ستجد قائمة بالاشياء التي تهيج الاولاد الذين في سنك .
اننا نطلب اليك ان تقرأ وصف هذه المشاكل وتجيب اذا كانت المشكلة تنطبق عليك او لا .

سيكون وصف هذه المشكلة هكذا :

مثلا : يزعجني انني اخجل كثيرا : نعم لا ؟

اذا كانت المشكلة تنطبق عليك ضع دائرة حول نعم . اذا كانت لا تنطبق عليك ضع دائرة حول لا . واذا كنت غير متأكد ضع دائرة حول علامة الاستفهام هذه : ؟

مثلا : انني اخجل كثيرا : نعم لا ؟

RELIABILITY OF CHECK-LIST

A test is reliable when the score which is obtained on one day would not vary if the same test is given to the same person on successive days.

Tests that measure knowledges, comprehension and skills possess relatively high statistical reliability. Such outcome once attained remain relatively stable. On the other hand, the normal child is a growing individual and growth requires change. Though the integration of the child must be preserved, his feelings, attitudes, and modes of behaviour change in accordance with his experiences. The items in this check-list present problems that touch on the emotional life of the child. These are subject to change as the individual moves from one stage of growth to another and from one environment to another. For these reasons and others, the reliability of instruments of the like will sometimes appear to be lower than those of good tests of ability and achievement.

The usual procedures in determining reliability are a) the split half method and b) the test-retest method. The purpose in both is to find the co-efficient of correlation which indicates the extent to which the instrument will give the same results over a period of time. In our case, since we cannot split the test into two halves because of the difference of the nature of the problems listed, we adopted the test retest method.

PROCEDURE

Twenty students were selected at random from among those students who had mentioned their names on the checklist and were given the test a second time, after a lapse of one week. The scores on the test and the retest were as follows:

TABLE II

TEST AND RETEST SCORES ON CHECKLIST OF
20 SUBJECTS SELECTED AT RANDOM

<u>Test</u>	<u>Retest</u>
56	60
40	44
26	36
52	54
52	56
✓ 50	42
66	68
26	28
40	44
52	54
✓ 66	52
✓ 48	58
54	56
18	22
✓ 48	26
✓ 32	40
64	58
46	48
✓ 44	54
56	58

We computed the Pearson r correlation and we found a correlation of .85, significant to the one percent level, which is indicative of the reliability of the instrument. One would not expect a higher correlation in such instruments because of the nature of the problems. These problems are such that they would change with the mood of the person over a period of time.

VALIDITY

A test is valid when it measures accurately and truly what it claims to measure. In certain cases, specifically in education, a test is valid when it accurately measures the degree of attainment of a specified educational objective. This implies that validity appears in various degrees and that it depends on the use we intend to make of the test.

The usual procedure to determine the degree of validity of a certain instrument is to correlate it with an outside criterion which is either the real activity which the test aims to predict or to a similar instrument whose validity is already established.

In an instrument like a check-list of emotional problems, there would ultimately be a need to examine whether the check-list can discriminate between well-adjusted and mal-adjusted people. In our case, due to the lack of outside criteria such as other check-lists

or personality tests, or psychologists or even teachers' and parents' reports, the predictive power of the check-list cannot be estimated. However, we assume that a positive response to an item on the check-list indicates at its face value the authenticity of the problem which the item represents. There can be no better criterion to determine the feelings of the individual than his own expression of it, provided that he is honest. The criterion of validity in this case is, therefore, the face value of the response. However, we should be aware that the validity of such checklists may be limited by the dishonesty of the respondents.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The results are categorized into several headings including Personal Problems, Home Problems and School Problems. The specifications of each category are the same as indicated earlier.

PERSONAL PROBLEMS

This area includes thirty problem statements focusing on the pupil's concept of himself. In this section responses indicating "need for understanding", "dissatisfaction with self", "need for security" and "fear", appear frequently. For that reason, twelve subdivisions were included in it. They shall be dealt with, each separately.

FEAR

This area includes problems such as, "I am afraid when I have to see a doctor", "I worry too much if some one dear to me is late"; "I am afraid to be alone in a dark room"; etc... All the problem statements in this area were checked by more than 30% of the students and some were checked by over 70%.

Fear of darkness or of staying alone at home, for example, may be due to the frightening stories that the maids and sometimes

the uneducated mothers relate to the children about monsters and ghosts that appear in the darkness and that eat and kidnap naughty children.

As to worrying about a dear person who is late in showing up, it is probably due to the fact that children see their parents feel very anxious when one of them is late. There are many reasons why parents worry about their children if they are late: they may think that they have had an accident, have lost the way, or that they are not with the right company, or some other reason. Unconsciously the children learn in their turn to worry in like manner.

NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING

This area contains problem statements like, "I am always quarrelling with somebody"; "I often feel lonely and upset"; "There is no one with whom I can discuss my problems and worries". All these problems were checked by more than 50% of the students and some by more than 75%.

⤵ The need for understanding is present in every individual but is mostly felt in the early stages of life when children need attention, care, guidance, help, and understanding, when in trouble.

Children at the age of puberty (such as those in the sample used for the checklist) are faced with various new problems. They feel a great need to have some one who is always ready to help and

guide them and to understand their wishes, needs, likes and dislikes. At home they are disappointed with their busy parents. The father spends most of his time at work and comes home in the evening tired and exhausted. The mother is either too busy with the house work, with a career, or with her social plans and charitable occupations. As a result, they do not have enough time to spend with their own children, to sit and talk with them, to discuss their problems and needs, and to understand their wishes and worries. Mothers in the Middle East are very anxious to satisfy their children's physical needs, such as good food, comfort, suitable clothes, but they usually disregard completely their psychological needs, probably out of ignorance. They treat children of nine or ten years of age as they treat any mature adult. As a normal reaction children, turn to their teachers for understanding and guidance; but due to the lack of training in counseling and guidance, teachers are also, as unqualified in helping the child as his own parents. And, as there is no counseling and guidance system in most of the schools in Lebanon, i.e. a specialist in the fields of counseling and guidance, to dedicate his time to individual students who need understanding and guidance, the Lebanese child is left on his own amidst his troubles and worries.

PERSONAL FREEDOM

Problem statements in this area represent the growing desire in the adolescent to be on his own and to feel independent of the social

and cultural restrictions around him. This area includes problems like, "I cannot do all that I want to do"; "people often oppose me"; "it annoys me that boys all over have more freedom than girls".

^{u6,}
* All problems were checked by more than 45% of the students. It is essential to point out that 80% of the girls' responses were positively significant to the .01 level. This is due to the cultural influence in the East where freedom is more freely enjoyed by boys and where girls are deprived in many parts of rights that help them to grow into good citizens, such as education, self maintenance or the choice of a life's partner. *

SENSE OF MORALITY

Problem statements in this area show the influence of cultural values, on children at a certain age, and their concept of right and wrong. Problems such as "I cannot forget that I did something wrong in the past"; "I feel disgusted to hear dirty words"; "I am ashamed to hear people talk about love and sex"; appear in this area. All of them are checked by more than 40% of the sample and some of them by over 95%. Children, in general, are well guarded from wrong doings and well warned and cautioned of their bad consequences; the result is that if a child makes a mistake, he is so worried that it remains very vivid in his mind and the guilt feeling continues to torture him for a long time after.

As to feeling disgusted when they hear dirty words, it is because they are taught again and again by parents, as well as, by teachers that only the mob, the uneducated, utter such disgusting dirty words.

^{no.}
* We also notice that only 54% of the children gave positive responses regarding the problem statement which says, "I am ashamed to hear people talk about love and sex". Fifty years ago the percentage might have been much higher. At present, the new generation is being educated in a freer atmosphere, where many problems that were taboo 25 years ago are openly discussed in the presence of children. Questions related to sex are answered frankly and honestly. This may be due in part to the fact that a number of schools have established sex education as a part in the curriculum, which seems to have repelled the fallacy of children coming from a cabbage. * N^o.

HOME PROBLEMS

The 20 problem statements in this area dealt with relationship with parents, siblings, home atmosphere, parents' values and parents' attitude. To analyse each phase separately, three sub-divisions were included. They go as follows:

CHILD-PARENT RELATIONSHIP

Statements in this division refer to the child's relationship with his parents. It, thus, include problems like, "My mother is

too bossy, she forces me to do things"; "I often quarrel with my parents"; "My parents get angry and sad if I am not the first in class". Responses to such statements were not as frequent as those related to personal problems. It may be due to culture which inhibits children to talk freely of their home problems and to criticize their parents openly. Problems that obtained a high percentage are the ones that are general in nature and do not refer to a specific individual in the family. For example, the problem statement which says, "It annoys me to see parents scold their children", was checked by 70% of the children, while a problem like, "My mother is too bossy, she forces me to do things", was checked by only 26%.

PARENTS' ATTITUDES

Statements in this area refer to parents' attitudes, either in relation to each other, to the children, or to things in general. Problems like, "My father is too strict"; "My parents do not do the things which they say I should do"; "My father and mother often quarrel" appear.

All the problems in this area were checked by more than 33% and some were checked by 65%. Again, we notice that compared to the areas under personal problems, the percentage is low. This shows that, in general, children are inhibited when it comes to criticizing their parents. On the other hand, it shows that there exists, now-

adays, more understanding between the child and his parents due to education and to the changes that took place in our culture towards a more liberal way of living. ✕

PARENTS' VALUES

Problem statements in this area refer to parents' social and moral values. Only three statements appear and they are: "My parents' way of thinking differs from that of my friends' parents"; "My parents think that dancing and movies are bad things"; "It annoys me that boys are allowed to enjoy more freedom than girls." These problems were checked by 40-47%. None of them was significant to the .01 level. In general, we can say that there exists in most families understanding between the child and his parents, whether it is in their daily relationships, their attitudes, or their values.

SCHOOL PROBLEMS

The 27 problem statements in this area refer to the student's relations with his teachers, his school-mates and his school work. Percentages are high in this area which shows the anxiety of the Lebanese child concerning school in general. He is trained to be too idealistic; he is either criticizing himself very severely, or he criticizes his teachers, his school work, or the curriculum in general. Each of these areas, shall be dealt with separately.

STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

This area includes statements such as, "Teachers are not fair in their treatment"; "Some teachers prefer some students to others"; "Teachers give heavy assignments". ^{no} ~~†~~ All of these problems were checked by more than 37% and some were checked by 89%. Most of the problem statements refer to specific situations where teachers proved to be unfair in their treatment: "Teachers are always accusing the student of doing what he has not done"; "They are always punishing the innocent student"; "They give heavy assignments"; "They prefer some students to others, and they even beat children."

Some of these accusations are true, due to the lack of trained elementary teachers and due to the large number of students in one class. The latter makes it impossible for the teacher to give individual attention to each student and to keep her temper in all situations. But, it is also possible that part of these accusations are imagined by some students who influence the majority to believe their tales of the unfair teacher.

STUDENT-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

This area includes problems that refer to the student's relations with his schoolmates, his sense of belonging, his feelings towards them, and the give and take between them. Problem statements like, "I am not liked by all students"; "Students do not cooperate with me"; "Some

students in class hate me", appear. All the statements were checked by more than 44% and some by 87%.

The high percentage shows that at an early age children are not socially minded; they do not understand each other, they are sensitive to each others' jokes, and they are emotional to the extent of imagining that they even hate each other. As they grow older they become more tolerant, better acquainted with each others' feelings and wishes and therefore more sociable.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCHOOL WORK

This area includes statements like, "I am the weakest student in class"; "I do not have enough time to finish my school work"; "I worry too much about my school work". These are all very normal responses and all of them were checked by more than 37%. This shows eagerness to learn and to excell. It shows that the parents' values towards education, their eagerness to educate their children are transferred to the child himself whose aim concerning school becomes to work hard and to get good results.

POSSIBLE USES OF THE CHECKLIST

This checklist is a list of problem items derived from statements made by particular individuals on their own emotional adjustment. It is not a test, and thus does not measure the scope and intensity of the problems in such a way as to yield a test score. It is, however, considered good judgement if the teacher or counselor would call for an interview the child who has checked many problems on the list and the one who has checked very few ones.* As was mentioned before, this may present a serious pitfall, since the problems are not of similar significance in the lives of all people, nor do all people express themselves on the subject of their difficulties and problems with the same freedom. If eventually all students in a school are to be interviewed, the responses on the checklist may be taken as a good starting point in the interview.

REASONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE CHECKLIST

The administration of the checklist may be promoted by a number of reasons related to the practical need for improving human relations or to the theoretical need for better understanding of developmental problems. It may therefore be effected:

I. TO FACILITATE COUNSELING INTERVIEWS

- a) Checklists are very helpful in hinting to the counselor

* This represents possibly children who fall in the upper and lower quartiles.

which student is likely to need counseling. This is generally based on the number of problems a student checks. The number of problems checked represents, therefore, the score to be assigned to each student. Those scores were tabulated and percentile ranks computed as shown in the following table:-

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES OF TRY-OUT SAMPLE
AND EQUIVALENT PERCENTILE RANKS

<u>Classes of Scores</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>	<u>% Rank (approximate)</u>
69-73	13	99
64-68	5	87
59-63	9	83
54-58	14	74
49-53	14	61
44-48	10	48
30-43	11	38
34-38	10	28
29-33	5	18
24-28	5	13
19-23	4	8
14-18	5	5

P.S. a) Percentile rank corresponds to the midpoint of each class.

b) Mean = 44, while Median = 49.4

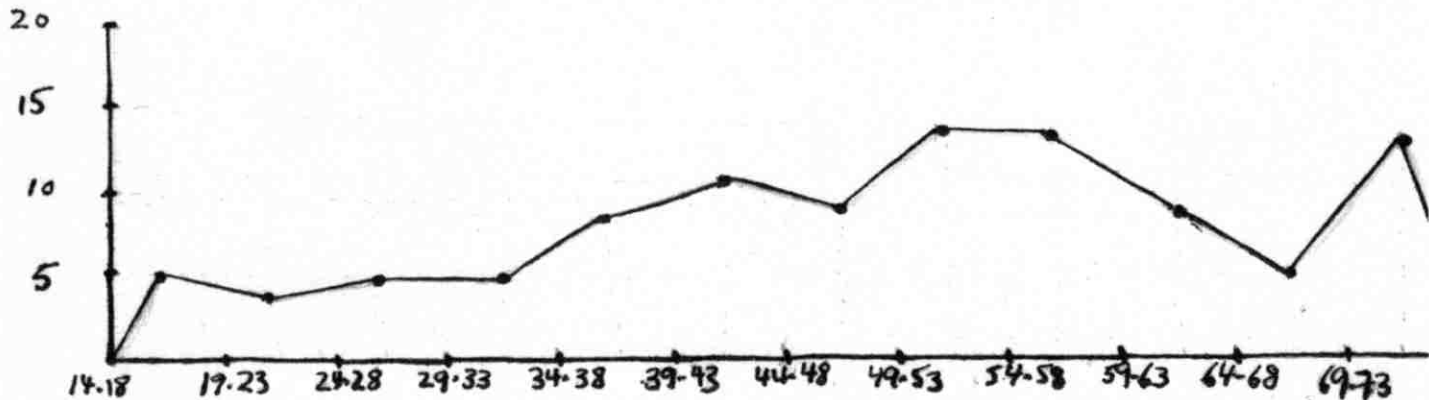
The following is the graphic representation of the distribution of the sample studied:-

TABLE IV

HISTOGRAM OF SCORE DISTRIBUTION OF TRY-OUT SAMPLE

(THE ORDINATE REPRESENTS THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS;

THE ABSCISSA REPRESENTS THE NUMBER OF PROBLEMS).



Children with high percentile ranks as well as those with low percentile ranks may perhaps need counseling by the teacher.

b) The checklist suggests to the counselor topics that he can discuss with his counselees. Their importance lie in the fact that they represent the expressed concern of the counselee.

c) The checklist prepares the student for the interview by giving him an opportunity to think of his own problems and to analyze them.

II. TO PROMOTE SELF-UNDERSTANDING

a) It stimulates the student to think of his own needs and problems.

b) It may help him to reach his own solution for what is troubling him.

III. TO PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN TEACHER AND STUDENT
IN THE CLASSROOM

a) It suggests ways by which the teacher can establish a more personalized relationship with each of his students.

b) It allows for special understanding of the problem-child.

IV. TO PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS OF YOUTH

a) It points out the problems that the young people are concerned with in their personal lives.

b) It shows the influence of culture on the personal life of the child.

c) It points out cultural and social trends that play an important role in shaping the emotional life of the child.

OVERVIEW AND IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY

This study dispels the commonly accepted notion that childhood is generally a period of happy bliss with no major responsibilities to burden it or to upset it. Apparently, as confirmed in this study, childhood is as beset by stress and conflict as other periods of life are believed to be. It is therefore reasonable to align with the conception of Havighurst¹⁹ that tasks are developmental in nature, and that therefore, each stage of development creates problems and conflicts of its own. The proportion which the conflicts of any particular period would assume should be therefore, generally evaluated in terms of criteria relevant to that period. Consequently, there is reason to believe that the problems of childhood are no less important than problems of adults, unless we lose sight of the impact of such problems on the development of children. As a matter of fact, the results borne out by this study confirm the finding of a research study carried by Miss Suad Nassif²⁰ on the same age group. In both studies the proportion of children needful of counsel and guidance is rather high. In the present study, about 50% of the sample complain

19. Fostering Mental Health, p.79.

20. Suad Nassif, Guidance in the Private Elementary Schools of Beirut pp.23, 27, 30.

that there is no one to turn to for advice and counsel; while in the study of Miss Nassif about 75%²¹ mentioned occasions at which they sought assistance, turning by default of a better alternative, to peers and classmates.

Also, the examination of the histogram of the scores obtained by the sample of this study shows a negative skewness, with a mean of 44 and a median of 49.4 indicating that a clear majority of the sample falls above the mean score. If the assumption made earlier in the study that the score obtained by a subject represents the state of his maladjustment, it is then possible to affirm, in the extent that the sample of the study is representative of the total population, that childhood in Lebanon is far from being a period of freedom from conflict and difficulties.

It is however indicated that similar studies be made on larger samples, more representative of the population of children and including therefore lower status families. A survey of the condition of the mental health of early childhood is also indicated.

21. Ibid., p.36.

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APPENDIX I

The following items make up the preliminary list of problems, under the three major categories of personal, home, and school problems. It was given to the students in their native tongue as shown below:-

مشاكل شخصية :

- (١) تعجني رؤية الاولاد الصغار يبكون . نعم لا ؟
- (٢) انزعج من سماع الاولاد يتوششون وانا جالس معهم . نعم لا ؟
- (٣) لا اقدر ان اتحمل الناس الذين يعارضوني . نعم لا ؟
- (٤) اخاف ان ابقى في البيت وحدي . نعم لا ؟
- (٥) يزعجني ان صحتي الضعيفة تمنعني من ان افعل كل ما يفعله رفاقي . نعم لا ؟
- (٦) لا اغفر للاولاد الذين يضروني . نعم لا ؟
- (٧) يزعجني انني لست الاول في كل شيء . نعم لا ؟
- (٨) يزعجني انني لا اقدر ان افعل كل ما اريد عمله . نعم لا ؟
- (٩) يزعجني ان اجد نفسي دائما في خناقة مع احد . نعم لا ؟
- (١٠) اخاف عندما اسمع ان احدا قد انتحر . نعم لا ؟
- (١١) اشمئز من سماع الكلام الوسخ . نعم لا ؟
- (١٢) لا احب ان اشارك احدا في ما يخصني . نعم لا ؟
- (١٣) يزعجني انني لا اقدر ان انسى انني عملت شيئا قبيحا منذ زمن بعيد . نعم لا ؟
- (١٤) يزعجني انني اترفز واغضب بسرعة . نعم لا ؟
- (١٥) انزعج عندما لا اقدر ان افعل ما اريد في الوقت الذي اريد . نعم لا ؟
- (١٦) يزعجني انني احس انني وحيد ومضطرب في اكثر الاوقات . نعم لا ؟
- (١٧) يزعجني انه لا يوجد احد يفهم ما اريد وما احب . نعم لا ؟

- (١٨) لا احبان اعتذر لاحد . نعم لا ؟
- (١٩) اخاف عندما اذهب لانفص عند الطبيب . نعم لا ؟
- (٢٠) اخاف ان ابقى وحيدا في غرفة مظلمة . نعم لا ؟
- (٢١) يزعجني انني لست صبيا (اذا كنت فتاة) نعم لا ؟
- (٢٢) يزعجني انني لست فتاة (اذا كنت صبيا) نعم لا ؟
- (٢٣) اخاف من رؤية الدم . نعم لا ؟
- (٢٤) اتكل كثيرا على الصلاة لحل مشاكلي . نعم لا ؟
- (٢٥) اخاف اذا تاخر شخص احبه عن المجيء . ان يكون شيء عاطل قد حدث له . نعم لا ؟
- (٢٦) ينشغل فكري كثيرا اذا عملت غلطا ما . نعم لا ؟
- (٢٧) اشعر بوجع في رأسي اكثر الايام . نعم لا ؟
- (٢٨) اخجل كثيرا عندما يتكلم الناس عن الحب والزواج والخطبة . نعم لا ؟
- (٢٩) يزعجني ان الناس لا يصدقوني حتى حينما اقول الصدق . نعم لا ؟
- (٣٠) اخاف عندما يتكلم الناس عن الحيات . نعم لا ؟

مشاكل في البيت :

- (١) انزعج من رؤية الاهل يعيطون على اولادهم . نعم لا ؟
- (٢) امي تزعجني عندما تجبرني على عمل شيء ما . نعم لا ؟
- (٣) امي يزعجني لانه قاس جدا . نعم لا ؟
- (٤) يزعجني انني في خناق دائم مع اهلي . نعم لا ؟
- (٥) يزعجني ان اهلي يخافون علي اكثر من اللازم . نعم لا ؟

- ٦ يزعجني ان ابي وامي يتخانقون كثيرا . نعم لا ؟
- ٧ يزعجني ان اهلي لا يعملون الاشياء التي يقولون لي ان اعملها . نعم لا ؟
- ٨ يزعجني ان كثيرا من الاهل يضررون اولادهم . نعم لا ؟
- ٩ يزعجني ان عائلتي كثيرة التعصب والمحافظة . نعم لا ؟
- ١٠ يزعجني ان اهلي يختلفون بتفكيرهم عن اهل اصدقائي . نعم لا ؟
- ١١ يزعجني ان اهلي يعتقدون ان السينما والرقص هي اشياء سيئة . نعم لا ؟
- ١٢ يزعجني ان امي تعتقد انه يجب ان تذهب معي الى مكان اريد الذهاب اليه . نعم .
لا ؟
- ١٣ يزعجني ان الصبيان عندهم حرية اكثر من البنات . نعم لا ؟
- ١٤ يزعجني ان الصبيان يعاملونهم في البيت احسن من البنات . نعم لا ؟
- ١٥ يزعجني ان اهلي اذا وقعوا في مشكلة يخبئونها عني . نعم لا ؟
- ١٦ يزعجني انني اضجر كثيرا في البيت . نعم لا ؟
- ١٧ يزعجني ان اهلي لا يسمحون لي ان اذهب مع اصدقائي الصبيان . (اجيبي اذا كنت بنت)
نعم لا ؟
- ١٨ يزعجني ان اهلي لا يسمحون لي ان اذهب مع اصدقائي الفتيات . (اجب اذا كنت صبيا)
- ١٩ يزعجني ان امي تغير فكرها بسرعة فهي لا تعلم اذا كانت تريد ان توافق معي او مع ابي
نعم لا ؟
- ٢٠ يزعجني انه يجب ان آخذ اذنا من اهلي اذا اردت ان اعمل شي . نعم لا ؟
- ٢١ يزعجني ان اهلي يزعلون ويغضبون اذا لم اكن الاول في صفي . نعم لا ؟

مشاكل مدرسية .

- ١ يزعجني ان المعلمين لا يعاملوننا بحق . نعم لا ؟
- ٢ يزعجني ان المعلمين يضررون الاولاد . نعم لا ؟
- ٣ يزعجني في المدرسة يزعجونني عندما يمزحون وقت الدرس . نعم لا ؟
- ٤ يزعجني ان المعلمين لا يهتمون عندما اشكو من شي . يزعجني . نعم لا ؟
- ٥ يزعجني ان بعض التلاميذ يتدخلون في اشغالي الخاصة . نعم لا ؟

- (٦) يزعجني ان ارى رفاقي يتقاصصون . نعم لا ؟
- (٧) يزعجني انني اضعف التلاميذ في الصف . نعم لا ؟
- (٨) يزعجني انه غير مسموح للتلاميذ ان يقفوا صفا . نعم لا ؟
- (٩) يزعجني ان بعض المعلمين يفضلون بعض التلاميذ على غيرهم لانهم اغنيا . نعم لا ؟
- (١٠) يزعجني ان المعلمين في اكثر الاحيان يقاصصون التلميذ الجوى . نعم لا ؟
- (١١) انزعج كثيرا عندما يقول لي المعلم انني عملت شيئا لم اعمله . نعم لا ؟
- (١٢) يزعجني ان بعض المعلمين لا يقاصصون التلاميذ الذين يتكلمون في الصف . نعم لا ؟
- (١٣) يزعجني انني اكره جميع التلاميذ في صفي ومع ذلك يجب ان ابقى معهم . نعم لا ؟
- (١٤) يزعجني ان الجميع يرفضون مساعدتي في دروسي . نعم لا ؟
- (١٥) يزعجني انني ضعيف في دروسي . نعم لا ؟
- (١٦) يزعجني انني اخاف كثيرا من المعلمين . نعم لا ؟
- (١٧) يزعجني انني لست محبوبا من جميع التلاميذ . نعم لا ؟
- (١٨) يزعجني ان الطلاب لا يستمعون لما اقول لهم . نعم لا ؟
- (١٩) يزعجني ان التلاميذ لا يفعلون الشيء الذي اقول لهم . نعم لا ؟
- (٢٠) يزعجني ان الوقت لا يكفي لكي ادرس جميع دروسي . نعم لا ؟
- (٢١) يزعجني انه لا يوجد مكان هادئ لكي ادرس فيه . نعم لا ؟
- (٢٢) يزعجني ان المعلمين يعطون دروسا كثيرة ليوم واحد . نعم لا ؟
- (٢٣) يزعجني انني دائم التفكير في دروسي . نعم لا ؟
- (٢٤) يزعجني ان المعلم لا يصدق ما اقول له . نعم لا ؟
- (٢٥) يزعجني ان جميع رفاقي في المدرسة يضايقونني ويحرقصوني . نعم لا ؟
- (٢٦) يزعجني ان رفاقي يخترعون قصصا عني . نعم لا ؟
- (٢٧) يزعجني ان بعض التلاميذ في الصف يكرهوني . نعم لا ؟

مشاكل مختلفة :

- (١) يزعجني ان الصبيان عندهم حرية اكثر من البنات . نعم لا ؟
- (٢) يزعجني ان الناس لا يقدروني عندما اعتذر لهم اذا ما فعلت شيئا سيئا . نعم لا ؟
- (٣) يزعجني ان شخصا احبه كثيرا مات . نعم لا ؟
- (٤) يزعجني انه لا يوجد احد اقدر ان اتحدث معه عن مشاكلي والاشياء التي تزعجني . نعم لا ؟
- (٥) يزعجني ان ارى الاولاد الصغار يشحدون . نعم لا ؟
- (٦) يزعجني كثيرا ان ارى احد الاشخاص يضرب شخصا اعنى . نعم لا ؟

اذا كانت لك مشكلة خاصة غير مذكورة هنا ، اكتبها بكل حرية .