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## Categories of Tolerant/Intolerant Behavior for Systematic Observation of School Children

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Any systematic behavior observation differs from naive observation of human behavior in that (a) a minimum of *control* is involved, and (b) a certain *intention* is obvious.

These two conditions do not touch the postulate of *directness* of behavior observation (JAHODA, DEUTSCH and COOK, 1962; THOMAE *et al.*, 1962) which is one of its best advantages. *Categorization* and *quantification* of the observed behavior which is necessary and desirable can be facilitated by them.

For the empirical validation of a questionnaire measuring tolerant/intolerant attitudes of 12 to 14 year old school children (SCHMIDT and EULER, 1966) we tried to determine the extent of tolerant/intolerant behavior during *school hours*. A *systematic* method of behavior observation seemed to be most appropriate to us.

THOMAE (1959, 1963) also subsumes under "direct" methods of behavior observation *random observation* and *permanent observation*. JAHODA *et al.* (1962) consider also *participant observation* and the observation in *standardized situations*.

Random observations are probably not adequate enough for a record of tolerant/intolerant behavior units, and permanent observation is impossible when school behavior is observed. A participant behavior method is excluded from the very beginning, and an observation in experimental or testing situations is against our intentions of observation of "natural" behavior.

A method of systematic behavior observation proves to be appropriate if applied—according to JAHODA *et al.*—"if the study aims at a description or diagnosis in such categories which can be

defined before the needed information is collected" (p. 81). ZANDER (1962, p. 130) points to the "application of specific categories" for "recording, rating, or... interpreting" the behavior of a group or its members, too.

At first we have to try to determine which behavior can be called "tolerant" and which can be called "intolerant", and we must find a frame of reference for this determination.

For the delineation of this frame of reference the classification of THOMAE (1963) for the description of the behavior of an adolescent individual which aims to be as complete as possible served: behavior during play and leisure, behavior towards peers, behavior towards teachers and educators, behavior towards himself, behavior towards objects and object-oriented tasks, behavior to values. In the clinical interviews within the framework of the study of the "authoritarian personality" by ELSE FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK similar areas of attitudes are discriminated: attitudes towards parents and childhood, attitudes towards other people, attitudes towards oneself, attitudes towards principles, ideals and ideologies. The content categories covering the items of our Tolerance Questionnaire (1966, p. 79) contain corresponding classes of attitudes: attitudes towards members of the peer group, attitudes towards education and guidance, attitudes to outgroups, attitudes towards personal privileges, attitudes towards ambiguity.

We then tried to put up four main categories which we considered to be satisfactorily discriminable in practical observation of children during school hours:

- I. behavior towards peers;
- II. behavior towards teachers and educators;
- III. behavior towards values and objects;
- IV. behavior expressing attitudes towards himself.

Within each of these behaviors areas we formed subcategories assumed to have a hypothetical reference to tolerance/intolerance, i. e. to concrete behavior units which can be labelled as more tolerant or more intolerant with the orientation towards a model of a tolerant/intolerant personality. FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK's concept of the "prejudiced" and "unprejudiced" was a helpful guide for this classification.

I. *Behavior towards peers.* According to FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK the unprejudiced is characterized by "a great capacity for intense interpersonal relationships" and an increased "self-sufficiency" (p. 475).

The prejudiced, on the other hand, tries to gain power and success by a kind of superficial adjustment. He appreciates those people most "who are higher up in social hierarchy" (p. 420). When aggressive he expresses bad temper, moralistic condemnation, and destructive activity. If one calls the unprejudiced "tolerant" and the prejudiced "intolerant", the following categories for the observation of school children towards members of the peer group can be discriminated:

- (a) *Role taking behavior* (integrative submission vs. demand for leadership)  
 integrative submission (tolerant): accepts the better and the stronger member in the group; acknowledges them objectively without imitating them; changes according to situation and ability between leading and following; is fair in discussion; does not interrupt others, shows adjustment;  
 demand for leadership (intolerant): seeks to dominate in play, game, and in class; this being impossible joins the dominating group; tries to flatter members of this group and brags; tends to be tyrannical and important; yields to the leader in the class; is unfair in discussions.
- (b) *Fellow-feeling* (+ vs. —)  
 + (tolerant): defends the weak against the strong; is more helpful; lends things; is indulgent when others fail; does not interfere when he discovers chatting in the class; is more impartial; is a good loser in games; is a good listener in discussions; does not strike back immediately when offended.  
 — (intolerant): exhibits his domination towards the weaker; refuses to give aid; is exaggeratedly didactic; favors punishment of the wrongdoer; rejects interference with own matters; is less impartial; is a bad loser; looks for excuses of his failures; is annoyed when criticized or ignored; is a bad listener in discussions.
- (c) *Consideration for others* (+ vs. —)  
 + (tolerant): is appreciative when together with others; is sociable and friendly; is considerate.  
 — (intolerant): is more inconsiderate; changes his affection for others depending on advantage; is usually friendly towards others with lower status; criticizes suggestions and actions.

By no means it is claimed that these and the following subcategories are independent from each other. Moreover it would be difficult to observe and judge pupils of a class on more than one main category or even on more than one subcategory simultaneously. To classify too many specific ways of behavior increases judgment errors, above all the halo effect. As adequate situations for a behavior observation on main category "I" especially breaks, recesses, sports, and relaxed lessons like drawing are of special importance.

II. *Behavior towards teachers and educators.* In her interviews FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK found that prejudiced people tend to acknowledge authorities more often (or at least show no open criticism)

whereas they may criticize them strongly during their absence. The prejudiced accept concepts and opinions of authorities without great reflexion. The unprejudiced, however, respect authorities because of their human qualities despite criticism rather than because of their authority and power. We found the following subcategories:

- (a) *Readiness for integrative submission* (+ vs. —)
- + (tolerant): is yielding after arguing and ready to submit; acknowledges the teacher's orders by understanding; behaves more "democratic"; puts questions, asks for explanations; refuses obedience from time to time ("troublesome student").
  - (intolerant): is adaptive even when the own opinion has to be given up; does not express his own view, repeats the teacher's point of view; is dependent on the teacher's authority, submits without hesitating; shows exaggerated obedience ("fawning").
- (b) *Criticism* (+ vs. —)
- + (tolerant): is more critical towards the teacher's opinions; expresses reasonable, objectively founded criticism.
  - (intolerant): is more uncritical; does not discuss views presented by the teacher; gets easily into a rage, opposes without objective reasons.

A third subcategory "respect" (genuine vs. not genuine) had been put up but revealed not to be very appropriate for observation. As adequate situations for observation and judging behavior on main category II, all school hours during which an intense interaction between educators and students take place seem to be appropriate.

III. *Behavior towards values and objects.* FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK characterizes the unprejudiced personality by "great creativity" and greater "imaginability" (p. 466), the prejudiced one, however, by "formalism" and thinking in stereotypes. The prejudiced often takes over religious and ideological principles in an extremely dogmatic way; his behavior towards values is much more determined by a set of rigid rules. The more unprejudiced on the contrary is more likely involved in conflicts and doubt, he examines traditional concepts and ideals before adopting them.

- (a) *Value judgment* (more objective vs. more subjective)
- more objective (tolerant): recognizes values in the objects themselves; acknowledges the inherent significance of values and objects (e.g., acknowledges despite being non-Protestant the achievement of Luther).
  - more subjective (intolerant): realizes in the first place the material and functional importance of objects; judges values and facts according to his own advantage; judges alien, different, and dissenting people in categories of his own convictions.

(b) *Conventionalism* (— vs. +)

- (tolerant): does not adopt religious and ideological ideas without inner struggle; judges and acts more often spontaneously and flexibly; is many-sided and behaves towards others in a differentiated way; acknowledges and tolerates traits and attitudes of others which are contrary to his own.
- + (intolerant): accepts values like dogmas without criticism and more likely in an extreme form; rejects and condemns values extremely; more likely shows rigid opinions and behavior; sticks to traditional evaluations.

Observing behavior according to main category III does not seem to be very easy. We found lessons like religion (scripture lessons), political lessons, German (English) lessons, history and biology lessons to be adequate for observation.

IV. *Behavior towards himself*. FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK found that the unprejudiced respect personal independence and autonomy, whereas the prejudiced have a need for adherence to strict rules. The unprejudiced person is able to judge and criticize himself more objectively, whereas the prejudiced is less able to. These tendencies should be expressed in the following subcategories:

(a) *Self-appraisal* (+ vs. —)

- + (tolerant): admits more easily his weaknesses and mistakes openly; tends more to indifference and unconcern towards himself; shows normal ambition.
- (intolerant): is less ready to admit his own weaknesses and mistakes, but tends to cover and excuse them; “condemns” his own mistakes and weaknesses; shows in play, games, and school hours more exaggerated ambition.

(b) *Independence* (+ vs. —)

- + (tolerant): is more apt to step forth in a self-assured way; shows a strong, independent self-esteem, defends his opinion against a possible majority; makes own propositions and defends them.
- (intolerant): shows self-confidence depending on authorities (teachers and respected students); adopts judgments of these authorities and judgments of the majority.

The “behavior expressing attitudes towards himself” seems to be best observable during physical education, during breaks, and during relaxed lessons.

So far we have nine observation units of “tolerant” and “intolerant” behavior. Each observation unit is assumed “to approach the definition of one category” or “according to its intention to be complete enough so that the observer can interpret it” (BALES, 1962, p. 158). This categorization was possible by associating the behavior of the “prejudiced/unprejudiced” to the “intolerant/tolerant”. Categories Ia and IIa have been put up in accordance with categories a and c in THOMÆ’s descriptions (1962, p. 44–47).

The observer’s task is only to record whether any behavior unit described as tolerant or intolerant is present. He should have a

behavior check list for each student with all categories (or for each category with all students) and tally that behavior into the respective column. By economic reasons it is best to divide bigger school classes into several groups for the purposes of observation. Each group of students should be observed at least two weeks. To minimize the halo effect single categories should be counted successively though this procedure could be difficult in practice. The observer should change his perspective several times in the classroom. A seat behind the pupils is no severe disadvantage since only few teachers lecture from the desk alone. Also the presence of the observer does not seem to be a problem, for the students are adapted to the presence of teacher students, for instance. For the observer a certain time of adjustment, maybe one week, seems to be of advantage. Of course, with this period there is the danger of the judge becoming prejudiced himself. It is desirable to employ more than one observer at the same time. They should practice together and discuss the judgment categories. During the period of observation itself the judges should not confer about the judges.

*An observation experiment.* With the proposed system of categories 35 students (14 female, 21 male) of the 7th grade (average age 13.3) have been observed in a Catholic elementary school in the outskirts of a large city in the Ruhr area. The total time of observation was 6 weeks (only the mornings). The female observer was well acquainted with the observation units, since she had participated in the construction of the behavior observation check list.

The number of all recorded "tolerant" behavior units was 1923 and did not differ significantly from the 1710 observed "intolerant" behavior units.

One week before and after the observation the same students were administered the Tolerance Questionnaire (SCHMIDT and EULER, 1966) with a lapse of 10 weeks including 2 weeks of holidays. The retest coefficient of correlation was  $\rho = 0.75$ . According to the results of the first study which, of course, were unknown to the observer, the observed students were divided into a group with extremely high and a group with extremely low tolerance scores. The 7 students (upper 20%) with the highest scores of the Tolerance Questionnaire (T+ group) had a mean of 17.3 and a SD of 1.34, the 7 students with the lowest score (T- group) a mean of 7.9 and a SD of 1.25.

Table I shows the frequencies of observed tolerant/intolerant behavior units in the T+ and the T- group.

Table I

## Tolerance Questionnaire

	T+	T-
"Tolerant" behavior	553	308
"Intolerant" behavior	256	540

Chi<sup>2</sup> = 169.7; df = 1; p < 0.001

Table II shows the frequencies of behavior units in the single judgment categories.

Table II

	Tolerant behavior		Intolerant behavior	
	T+	T-	T+	T-
<i>Category I</i>				
Role taking behavior	62	41	35	70
Fellow-feeling	69	47	37	72
Consideration for others	70	37	41	68
<i>Category II</i>				
Readiness for integrative submission	65	35	30	71
Criticism	55	21	37	72
<i>Category III</i>				
Value judgment	55	18	20	53
Conventionalism	48	29	33	42
<i>Category IV</i>				
Self-appraisal	60	32	17	52
Independence	69	38	23	58

Except for "conventionalism" ( $p < 0.05$ ) the test of  $\chi^2$  for fourcell tables yielded significant differences ( $p < 0.01$ ) in the frequencies of tolerant/intolerant behavior between the T+ and T- group. Individual profiles show that the direction of these differences is the expected one. The correlation between questionnaire and directly observed behavior of all 35 students was still significant ( $\phi = 0.38$ ). But the questionnaire as well as the proposed behavior observation check list are not primarily intended to yield individual prognoses. Both instruments should be used for research purposes.

### *Summary*

A check list for the systematic observation and judgment of tolerant/intolerant behavior of school children by one or more independent observers is proposed. The categories are oriented to ELSE FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK's prejudiced/unprejudiced personality syndrom, and they consider THOMAE's description of different behavior areas. The results of a 6 week systematic observation of 35 thirteen year old school children are in agreement with the scores of the Tolerance Questionnaire (SCHMIDT and EULER, 1966).

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