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Scrutinizing Pupil's Social Status by Means of a Sociometric Questionnaire

Abstract

This contribution is directed to the way of identification of the social status of a pupil in a school class by means of scrutinizing the ratio between positive and negative choices in the sociometric questionnaire without a choice limitation. In order to find out the social status, two indexes were used: The Index of accepts of the scaled social status Index as well as the Index of non-accepts of the scaled social status of an individual in a social group.

Key words: *Scaled social status, the Index of accepts of the scaled social status, the Index of non-accepts of the scaled social status.*

Every human being as a social creature gets a certain social status in his/her member group which is a result of complexes of mutual relationships within this group. One of the possibilities as to how to scrutinize an individual's social status in a social group can become the method of sociometry that detects the relationships in the framework of small social groups. Its author's name is J. L. Moreno (Kollárik, T., 1993), however, this method was employed and developed by many authors (in our environment especially V. Černoušková and J. Janoušek). These authors focused on the index analysis of the social relationships within the analyzed society, though they did not focus on the examination of a person as well as their formation in society, especially their social status in the framework of a given society and their prospective changes under the influence of the group dynamics that reach an individual's personality as well. For the teaching process, which should support positive development of pupil's personality, it would be appropriate to have a certain tool through which these changes could be recorded. Since we have not found any procedure in accessible literature as to how we should trace the

social status of an individual in a given society, we dared create such a procedure.

We have started with the presupposition that in the framework of human communication each subject transmits and receives both positive and negative signals from his/her social environment, these are therefore certain accepts and non-accepts. The ratio indicator of these transmitted signals can show us the social status that every individual has within prospective society. "The status of group members is multi-dimensionally conditioned; situation factors, group structure, group stability or instability from the point of view of its firmness as well as personality characters of individuals, their skills, positions, behaviour, and characters – all those participate in its position. In spite of this multi-dimensional conditioning of the status, it is possible to accept the idea that the socio-psychological characters – as a socio-psychological category – have a distinctive part in its gaining." (Kollárik, T., 1993, p. 53) A constituted social status is thus, in addition, a retrogressive result of complicated interactions of sympathies and antipathies which an individual receives in society, and at the same time it is an emotional reflection of received accepts and non-accepts. The indicator of the ratio of positive and negative signals from particular society members can quantify the level of an individual's status in society. That is why in our research we focused on the explicit expression of pupils' status under accepts and non-accepts in their school class.

The quantified indicator of the ratio of accepts and non-accepts was operationally called the Index of accepts of the scaled social status; there were two indexes developed – an Index of accepts of the scaled social status (IA_{šss}) and the Index of non-accepts of the scaled social status (IN_{šss}).

Basic formula:

$$I_{A\check{s}s} = \frac{\text{number of accepts}}{\text{number of non-accepts}}$$

$$I_{N\check{s}s} = - \frac{\text{number of non-accepts}}{\text{number of accepts}}$$

The scaling of statuses arose quite simply. We came out of the basic ratio between non-accepts and accepts, as "accepts" we considered positive sociometric choices and non-accepts we considered negative sociometric choices obtained by means of the sociometric questionnaire from within the examined social groups, in our case these were school classes. Where accepts outnumbered non-accepts in individuals there arose a set of positive social statuses within the whole social group

represented by the Index of accepts of the scaled social status (IAšss). A middle set of social statuses within a social group belonged to such a proportion wherein non-accepts constituted half of the number of accepts, it means the resultant value was 1. However, where non-accepts prevailed over accepts, there arose a set of negative social statuses within a social group represented by the Index of non-accepts of the scaled social status (INšss) (for better orientation we have assigned sign “—“ to this Index). It means that the basic sectioning of the research sample into these two indexes was made based on the comparison of the prevailing accepts or non-accepts. According to prevailing numbers of choices, we have installed them into the reader of the prospective Index.

We utilized the results received in that way, in our research to find out the social status of particular pupils in their school class as well as to compare the presumed changes in statuses that took place following the experimental action.

The research findings

The examination of the levels of social statuses within a social group was realized as part of a broader experiment oriented to socialization and emotionalization in school environment using also the sociometric questionnaire with an unlimited number of choices, of our own provenience, directed to positive and negative sociometric choices.

The research sample was made up by 121 pupils of the 5th and 9th grade from four classes of two elementary schools in Banská Bystrica where we conducted the experiment.

In order to create levels of social status we needed to find out in our research sample how the empirical data are portioned out according to statistical testing of the normality of distribution (Laplace–Gausse categorization), which was confirmed to us.

The particularity of our scaling, however, was the fact that the sum 1 (the same ratio of accepts and non-accepts), for understandable reasons, we did not include into the categorization unlike the sum 0 which we could unambiguously assign either to accepts or to non-accepts.

According to the learned basic statistical criteria (arithmetic mean and authoritative divergence) we set the levels of social statuses which reached number 5 for the social statuses of accepts and 5 for the social statuses of non-accepts. The climax of the acceptance status was marked as *persona grata* with absolute absence of non-accepts, and the climax of the non-acceptance status as *persona non grata* with absolute absence of accepts. The described dividing line of the acceptance and

non-acceptance statuses was formed by the border line of person X with an equal number of accepts and non-accepts. (A specific case of this horizontal border line was the stage of absolute absence of both signal data of the sociogram: accept and non-accept. for the sake of a higher discernability of this curious condition of the sociogram we placed this section on the most distinct place of the acceptance statuses under the status of so-called persona non grata keeping in mind the particularity of this person's condition in the examined society. We marked this section with an inscription Persona ANi.) In between the already mentioned climaxes there were two fives of symmetrically scaled statuses of accepts and non-accepts. By means of those we lined up the retrieved indexes into a scaled sociogram of the examined society and found out the sociability of individuals within the examined society.

This is how we created the following levels of the scaled social statuses:

PERSONA GRATA: a personality absolutely accepted with absence of non-accepts, supposed high socialibility (group leader, providing he/she does not lack leading skills – a successful group leader)	Aa
+0.01 to +0.2: a personality easy to accept accepts highly prevail over the number of non-accepts (n. make up approx. one fifth of the accepts number), possible group leader	Al
+0.21 to +0.4: a personality medially easy to accept, non-accepts make up approx. two fifths of the accepts number	Alm
+0.41 to +0.6: a personality medially accepted, non-accepts make up approx. half of the accepts number	Am
+0.61 to +0.8: a personality medially acceptable, non-accepts make up three fifths of the accepts number	Amg
+0.81 to +0.99: a personality acceptable in a more difficult way, non-accepts make up more than four fifths of accepts, the number of accepts is at least twice as high as that of non-accepts	Ag
1: a personality with equal number of accepts and non-accepts	X
-0.99 to -0.81: a personality gently non-accepted, the accepts number is in a zone of only one fifth loss when compared with non-accepts	Nl
-0.80 to -0.61: a personality medially non-accepted, the accepts number is in a zone of two fifth when compared with non-accepts	Nlm
-0.60 to -0.41: a personality medially non-accepted, accept numbers make up approx. half of non-accepts	Nm
-0.40 to -0.21: a personality medium non-accepted, accepts number make up approx. three fifths of non-accepts	Nmg
-0.20 to -0.01: a personality difficultly accepted in a difficult way, accepts number make up less than one fifth of non-accepts – a personality requiring specific socialization approach	Ng

PERSONA NON GRATA: a non-accepted personality, A personality with no single accept, a personality receiving only non-accepts usually also sending only non-accepts – a personality requiring specific socialization approach	<i>Na</i>
a personality with no single accept and no single non-accept, an inert personality indifferent for a given society, presumed low sociability – a personality requiring a very specific socialization approach	<i>ANi</i>

Finally, we may say that our statistical comparison of the differences between a test and re-test following experimental actions to support emotionalization and improvement of social relationships in a school class proved the presupposed difference in a positive way – there happened especially an increase of accepts in their school class society. Scaled sociometry thus appears to be a valid diagnostic tool for scrutinizing the process of socialization of an emotionalization of an individual in a school class society.

Conclusion

The use of our way of scrutinizing the social status of individuals in their society by means of positive and negative choices in the sociometric questionnaire without choice limitation we see particularly for the experimental goals while scrutinizing the development of social relationships in a group (of the dynamics of a social group) under the influence of change-creating socialization activities. Following the application of change-creating activities it is possible to realize a sociometric retest, and the researcher, after processing data, obtains outcomes of both scaled sociograms. A comparison of changes that took place in the time between tests and retests can disclose possible effect of the invasion of change-creating activities upon pro-social relationships in the examined society. The identification of the social status levels in this way can also help objective diagnostics of interpersonal relationships in society.

Thanks to its simple use, the scaled sociometry holds prerequisites to be used not only in scientific-research work of pedagogues, but also in a daily practice of elementary and secondary school pedagogues. It can thus become groundwork for pedagogical interference of the class teacher or of teachers of formative subjects.

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