

## **Vi. Di. Test in the evaluation of diversity perception in childhood: preliminary data**

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This study contributes to the validation of an original diagnostic task, *the Vi.Di. Test*, for the evaluation of diversity in childhood. The test exceeds, both in administration and response modality, some limits of traditional methods, which usually require verbal or graphic production based on skills levels and complex introspective abilities, especially in certain cultural context or clinical conditions. As stimulus-materials, we used caption illustrations where the main character (Tillo for males, Tilla for females) has a “big nose and an ugly look” and deals with everyday life situations.

The child is required to develop a story about the main character using a non verbal multiple choice response.

450 elementary school children, 230 females, 220 males, between 6 and 9 years of age took part to the research. Results highlighted a statistically significant choice distribution in 19 items out of 23. The image of a diversity-unconditioned character was found to be prevailing: Tillo and Tilla feel loved, their school achievement is good, just like relationships with their school-fellows and teacher and have very high expectations for their future social development. Therefore, responses that showed a main character who feels excluded, not loved, uncomfortable and need much attention might reflect uneasiness, especially in older groups.

Only younger children groups, indeed, always give self-centred responses, while older children groups show a different attitude: they are more open towards their peers and more willing to share affection and feelings.

“Negative” choices, indicating that the child feels more loved or less loved than the others, tend to decrease with age.

Test situations that we considered as “normal” (that is, those situations that are more frequently chosen by children) actually appeared to be the most frequently chosen.

Some factor, like developmental fears, are not discriminating. They are so widespread within this sample age that they cannot be considered as pathologies. The test proved to be a valid instrument to quantify qualitative dimensions that cannot be tested with common psychodiagnostic instruments. Moreover, results interpretation is extremely easy.

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