

## PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFERENTIATION AND AGEING

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The ability to extract an item from an embedded context is synonymous with extent of psychological differentiation and development in the Witkin Group tradition (Witkin et al, 1974). The greater the ability, greater is the differentiation in an individual. Age trends have been observed in this ability. Age trends in Western countries have taken the following form: a progressive increase in differentiation up to around late adolescence, followed by a levelling off upto around the beginning of the fifth decade after which there is a reduction in differentiation. This decline in differentiation, with its link with age, is regarded as ageing. In non-Western settings the decrease in differentiation later in life appears to occur earlier, that is at a point earlier than the fifth decade. Thus ageing begins earlier, it has been suggested. Acculturation influences and physical hardships are explanations advanced for this condition.

The present study attempted to determine the age trends in psychological differentiation in Sri Lanka. Of special interest was the commencement of ageing, in terms of psychological differentiation. For this purpose four age-groups (10-19yr, 20-29yr, 30-39yr, 40 yr and over) were tested with the Concealed Figures Test (CFT) and the results suggest that in Sri Lanka, as in other non-Western countries, ageing commences before the onset of the fifth decade in one's life-span. The present study's findings are noted below.

CPT Results

## Age-Group

	10-19yr	20-29yr	30-39yr	40yr & over
Mean	32.79	42.58	39.10	33.56
S.D.	10.25	13.23	10.95	9.55
n	138	51	50	31

## References:

Witkin, H.A., Dyk, R.B., Faterson, H.F., Goodenough, D.R., & Karp, S.A. (1974) Psychological Differentiation, Potomac, Md.: Erlbaum. N.Y.