

A personality profile of Sinhala speaking school children in Sri Lanka

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Personality is "the enduring qualities of an individual, shown in his or her way of behaving in a wide variety of circumstances." The Sinhala version of the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) was used to determine the personality profile of a convenience sample of 306 (142 girls and 164 boys) Sinhala speaking 12-year-old children from four schools in the Gampaha District. The 7 scales of the PAQ assesses the personality dimensions of hostility and aggression, dependence, negative self-esteem, negative self-adequacy, emotional unresponsiveness, emotional instability and negative world view. The scales can be combined to give an overall score indicating the presence or absence of psychological adjustment. The results indicate that whilst 17% of the sample considered themselves to be hostile and aggressive, 83% indicated no such difficulties. Ninety two percent of the sample showed a dependent behavior pattern whilst only 8% considered themselves independent. In terms of self-esteem, 92% of the sample indicated a positive self-esteem whilst only 8% had a negative emotional evaluation of oneself. Ninety three percent of the sample perceived their level of adequacy positively whilst 7% indicated a negative evaluation. Eighty four percent of the sample indicated no difficulty in expressing their emotions though 16% had difficulty in freely expressing them selves. In terms of emotional stability, a majority of 59% indicated an ability to manage emotions appropriately whilst 41% had difficulties in doing so. In terms of world view, 81% of the sample perceived the world to be a good and secure place whilst 19% did not consider so. Overall, 56% of the sample showed psychological adjustment whilst 44% had a maladjusted personality pattern. The results obtained in the personality dimensions of dependency and emotional instability is hypothesised to be due to the Sri Lankan socialisation practices and the type of role models available to children. In order to further explore the findings of this present study, the authors are currently studying a sample of 1313 Sinhala speaking school children in the Colombo District, chosen according to a stratified random sample. Other than these children's' personality profiles (as assessed by the PAQ), potential factors that may contribute to the forming of these profiles are also being explored.

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