

Personality test a tool for schools

August 26 2013



Kids play musical instruments. Credit: Monika

A study of personality in children will inform the development of an Australian-first assessment that helps parents and teachers to better understand a child's personality type.

Monash University's [Personality, Abilities and Individual Differences Research Team](#) (PAID-RT) is currently conducting a national survey inviting Australian [parents and teachers](#) to reflect on the [personality](#) and behaviour of their child or student.

The [online survey](#) will validate and assist the development of an Australian version of a child personality inventory for children aged 3-14, and will be a useful tool for school psychologists, teachers and parents.

Specifically designed to measure personality factors in children, it is believed to be the first time the universally accepted Five Factor Model has been validated for use with Australian children.

The Five Factor Model is based on the idea that five main dimensions are necessary and sufficient for broadly describing human personality. The Big Five factors are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, [agreeableness](#), and neuroticism.

The research, by PhD candidates Laura Hopkinson and Dianne Watt from the Faculty of Education, will also focus on new insights into early intervention for children identified as being vulnerable to [poor mental health](#) outcomes in later years.

"A child personality assessment has the potential to offer valuable information to all professionals working with children, providing the opportunity to individualise treatment or support programs with the aim of increasing child engagement, and therefore program effectiveness," Ms Hopkinson said.

"This personality trait measure is also more in line with a [positive psychology](#) approach to assessment, as it enables a focus on children's individual differences in [personality traits](#) rather than on diagnostic pathology or 'problem' behaviour."

It is hoped the child personality assessment could be rolled out in Australian schools as early as 2015.

"Developing a well-validated child personality assessment will inform early prevention and intervention efforts to promote more positive developmental trajectories, helping children accentuate their adaptability, resilience and overall well-being in the long-term," Ms Watt said.

Those wanting to participate in the survey can do so via the study's Facebook page - facebook.com/ChildPersonalitySurvey

Parents or teachers who participate will receive a brief summary of their child's personality ratings at the completion of the survey.

Provided by Monash University

Citation: Personality test a tool for schools (2013, August 26) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-08-personality-tool-schools.html>

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