



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LITTLE STUDENT'S PERSONALITY DEPENDING ON THE SOCIAL SITUATION OF DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This article reports the results of a theoretical-experimental study on the development of personality in primary school students, examined in relation to the social situation of development. The research assumed that study environments (arts-profile classes – theatre vs. non-profile classes) and the social climate of education (complete nuclear families vs. disadvantaged families) influence personality traits in children aged 8–10, and that personality development differs according to gender. A constative experiment was conducted with a sample of 130 children, and the quantitative results, supported by qualitative analysis and statistical processing, confirmed the research hypotheses. In addition, a formative experimental study was carried out to test the possibility of positively influencing the personality development process through psychological interventions. Two groups were created (experimental and control, each with 11 subjects), with homogeneity verified prior to the intervention. The outcomes of the control experiment demonstrated the effectiveness of the intervention, as shown through three statistical comparisons: experimental group (test–retest), experimental versus control group (retest), and control group (test–retest).

Keywords: *personality, social development situation, psychological climate, constative experiment, formative experiment, control experiment.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the young pupil's personality is a subject of major interest in developmental psychology and education, considering the complexity and influence of social factors on the formation of the child's identity.

At this stage, personality changes are considered crucial, as fundamental traits such as self-esteem, empathy, and emotional regulation are consolidated through significant social experiences that may have a long-lasting impact on the child's developmental trajectory (Racu, 2007). From a social perspective, the development of the young pupil's personality contributes to shaping an adult capable of social integration, collaboration, and constructive conflict management. Consequently, the study of personality within this research acquires not only academic relevance but also a human dimension, directly connected to the individual's future well-being.

Early school age, defined as between 6/7 and 11/12 years, represents a critical period of personality formation, determined by the interaction between genetic predispositions and social environment. The child's personality development during this stage is strongly influenced by the context in which learning and socialization take place. Interactions with family, peers, and teachers shape both immediate behaviors and the long-term psychological structure of the individual (Aniței, 2016).

From a theoretical perspective, personality development has been examined by numerous researchers and specialists in psychology, among them L.S. Vygotsky, J. Piaget, Erik Erikson, S. Freud, G.W. Allport, H. Wallon, A. Binet, E. Verza, M. Zlate, Ig. Racu etc.

The analysis of young pupils' personality development in relation to the social situation of development is highly relevant in the contemporary context, characterized by rapid changes in social, educational, and technological structures. In a world where children are increasingly exposed to multiple influences—ranging from the digitalization of education to cultural diversity and socio-economic pressures—understanding how the social environment shapes personality becomes essential.

2. OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. OBJECTIVE

This study was conducted on a sample of 130 pupils aged between 8 and 10 years.

The overall aim of the research is to examine the specific features of young pupils' personality development in relation to their social situation of development.

To achieve this aim, the following research objectives were established:

- to identify the psychosocial characteristics of young pupils from different social backgrounds (gender, family environment, study profiles, etc.);
- to establish the methodological framework for the psychological assessment and psychodiagnostics of young pupils' personality;
- to evaluate the levels of emotional intelligence and self-esteem;
- to assess self-reported psychological states (anxiety, frustration, aggressiveness, and rigidity);
- to identify the types of aggressiveness and states of nervousness among young pupils;
- to analyze the outcomes of the experimental investigation.

2.2. HYPOTHESES

The following general hypothesis was formulated: we assume that young pupils present differences in personality traits depending on the social situation of development.

This general hypothesis has allowed us to formulate the following working hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: different types of study environments (arts profile classes, e.g., theatre, versus non-profile classes) influence the personality traits of young pupils.

Hypothesis 2: different social and educational climates (nuclear families, disadvantaged families) exert an influence on the personality development of young pupils.

Hypothesis 3: differences in young pupils' personality are determined by gender.

Hypothesis 4: under specially organized experimental conditions, it is possible to influence the personality development of young pupils.

3. METHOD

The experimental research was based on the study conducted through the administration of personality tests, surveys, and questionnaires to primary school pupils.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

No		Theatre profile classes		Non-profile classes (English)		Total
1	Girls	19	17	10	17	63
2	Boys	14	16	21	16	67
3	Total children	33	33	31	33	130
4	Disadvantaged families	16	10	12	17	55
5	Nuclear families	17	23	19	16	75

Within the ascertaining (diagnostic) experiment, five psychological instruments were administered to primary school pupils:

- the Test for Measuring Emotional Intelligence in Children;
- the “Ladder” Test – Assessment of Self-Esteem;
- the Diagnostic of Self-Assessment of Psychological States (H. Eysenck);
- the Survey for Determining the Type of Aggressiveness in Primary School Pupils;
- the Technique for Studying Nervousness and Aggressiveness in Primary School Children.

These tests enabled us to examine the following dependent variables: the Test for Measuring Emotional Intelligence in Children: emotional intelligence; the “Ladder” Test – Assessment of Self-Esteem: self-esteem; the Diagnostic of Self-Assessment of Psychological States (H. Eysenck): anxiety, frustration, aggressiveness, rigidity; the Survey for Determining the Type of Aggressiveness in Primary School Pupils: physical aggressiveness, indirect aggressiveness, verbal aggressiveness, irritability; the Technique for Studying Nervousness and Aggressiveness in Primary School Children: nervousness.

4. RESULTS

In testing Hypothesis 1, which posited that different educational environments (arts-focused class versus non-specialized class) influence personality traits in young school-age children, the application of the T-student test for comparing means across educational profiles revealed the following findings. Statistically significant differences were observed

based on the educational profile in the survey assessing the type of aggressiveness, specifically with respect to the indices of indirect aggressiveness and verbal aggressiveness.

The results of the statistical analysis using the T-student test for indirect aggressiveness showed a t-value of -1.69738 and a p-value of 0.046027. This result is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, indicating significant differences in indirect aggressiveness based on the educational profile. Similarly, the statistical analysis for verbal aggressiveness yielded a t-value of -2.89451 and a p-value of 0.002233. This result is also statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, confirming significant differences in verbal aggressiveness based on the educational profile. For the other dependent variables, no statistically significant differences were identified based on the educational profile, as determined by the T-student test analysis.

For Hypothesis 2: We posited that different social-educational environments (nuclear families [complete] versus disadvantaged families) influence the personality development of young schoolchildren. The following results were obtained. Statistical analysis using the T-student test revealed a t-value of -1.65779 and a p-value of 0.049904. This result is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, indicating significant differences in the rigidity index, as assessed by the self-evaluation of psychological states, based on family background. For the other dependent variables, no statistically significant differences were identified based on family background, as determined by the T-student test analysis.

Regarding the expected results for Hypothesis 3: We hypothesized differences in the personality of young schoolchildren based on the gender variable. The findings are as follows:

Table 2. Statistical Analysis of Results Using the T-Student Test for Gender Differences

No.	Variable	t-Value	p-Value	Significance at $p < 0.05$
1	Anxiety (H. Eysenck)	0.67817	0.249443	Not significant
2	Frustration (H. Eysenck)	0.35495	0.361607	Not significant
3	Aggressiveness (H. Eysenck)	-2.563	0.005758	Significant
4	Rigidity (H. Eysenck)	0.06563	0.473887	Not significant
5	Emotional Intelligence	0.80412	0.21141	Not significant
6	Self-Esteem Evaluation	-3.24786	0.000742	Significant
7	Physical Aggressiveness	-3.21334	0.00083	Significant
8	Indirect Aggressiveness	-1.7494	0.041319	Significant
9	Verbal Aggressiveness	-1.00621	0.158106	Not significant
10	Irritability	-1.09749	0.137245	Not significant

Statistically significant differences were identified for the aggressiveness index variable, self-esteem, physical aggressiveness, and indirect aggressiveness based on the gender of young school-age children.

We can conclude that the working hypotheses, which posit influences on personality traits in young school-age children through differing social-educational climates (family environment and study environment), are partially confirmed. This is evidenced by

statistically significant differences in certain indices (rigidity, indirect aggressiveness, and verbal aggressiveness) across the instruments applied in the ascertaining experiment.

Furthermore, significant statistical associations were established between the study environment, the gender of young students, and their states of aggressiveness. Consequently, aggressive behaviors are more pronounced among schoolchildren from non-specialized classes and are more prevalent among male students.

The findings from the ascertaining research permit the conclusion that differences in personality traits among young students are contingent upon their social developmental context. Moreover, among young school-age children, there exist individuals exhibiting elevated levels of aggressiveness, frustration, anxiety, and rigidity, alongside diminished levels of self-esteem and emotional intelligence. This profile signifies aggressive conduct in both social and familial environments.

The most effective approach to correcting and improving elevated levels of aggressiveness, rigidity, frustration, anxiety, and low levels of self-esteem and emotional intelligence is the development and implementation of a formative intervention program aimed at ameliorating specific personality characteristics in young schoolchildren. This program focuses on reducing aggressive behaviors, enhancing self-esteem, increasing emotional intelligence, and decreasing levels of anxiety, rigidity, and frustration.

“Children’s emotional problems manifest in various forms and impact their lives differently. Some issues are superficial and are easily overcome as children grow and learn to recognize and regulate their emotions. However, other emotional problems may become chronic and develop into mental health disorders if not addressed promptly” (Șova, 2020, p. 13).

Participants in the ascertaining experiment who recorded the highest scores for levels of aggressiveness, frustration, rigidity, anxiety, and irritability, as well as the lowest scores for emotional intelligence and self-esteem, were selected for the formative intervention. Accordingly, out of the 130 children, 22 students were chosen and divided into two groups: the experimental group (EG) and the control group (CG), each consisting of 11 students.

- The experimental group (EG) – (3 girls and 9 boys) was subjected to the formative intervention.
- The control group (CG) – (5 girls and 6 boys) received no intervention.

In selecting the student groups, we considered not only the results of the ascertaining experiment but also the opinions of classroom teachers regarding the students’ emotional conditions.

The homogeneity of the groups was confirmed through the results of the Mann-Whitney U statistical test, as presented in Table 3.

Analyzing Table 3, we observe that for all 11 indices of the applied tests, there are no statistically significant differences in the results between the subjects in the experimental group and the control group at the ascertaining experiment stage. This confirms the homogeneity of the groups and allows for the initiation of the formative experiment.

Table 3. Statistical Results of the Mann-Whitney U Test for Differences Across All Administered Test Indices

No.	Index	U Value	Z Score	p-Value	Significance at $p < 0.05$
1	Emotional Intelligence	35.5	1.60879	0.1074	Not significant
2	Self-Esteem	30.5	1.93712	0.05238	Not significant
3	Anxiety (Eysenck)	60	0	1	Not significant
4	Frustration (Eysenck)	56.5	-0.22983	0.8181	Not significant
5	Aggressiveness (Eysenck)	49.5	-0.68948	0.4902	Not significant
6	Rigidity (Eysenck)	32.5	-1.80579	0.0703	Not significant
7	Physical Aggressiveness	39	1.37897	0.16758	Not significant
8	Indirect Aggressiveness	58	0.13133	0.89656	Not significant
9	Verbal Aggressiveness	35	-1.64163	0.101	Not significant
10	Irritability	43.5	1.08347	0.28014	Not significant
11	Nervousness and Aggressiveness States	45	-0.98498	0.32708	Not significant

Improving the personality characteristics of young school-age children requires an integrated and individualized approach that addresses each child's social, emotional, and behavioral skills (Racu & Cazan, 2018). Positive education, open communication, and interactive activities can facilitate the development of these skills and enhance personality characteristics.

Psychological Techniques and Methods applied in the implementation of the psychological intervention program

Expressive-creative techniques in psychological interventions are therapeutic methods that utilize creativity and emotional expression to assist individuals in exploring and managing their psychological and emotional challenges. These techniques are grounded in the premise that emotional expression and creativity can be leveraged to reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and other psychological issues. Examples include therapeutic writing, therapeutic play, therapeutic storytelling, and role-playing.

Emotional expression techniques involve methods for articulating feelings and emotions in a healthy and constructive manner. These approaches are valuable in psychological therapy to help individuals learn to regulate their emotions and enhance their overall well-being. Examples include maintaining an emotional journal, practicing mindfulness meditation, and verbal expression (Racu, 2011).

Communication techniques encompass methods for engaging in effective and positive interactions with others. These are critical in psychological therapy to support children in improving their communication skills and managing interpersonal relationships more effectively. Examples include active listening, empathy, positive feedback, and non-verbal communication (Racu, 2018; Racu & Cazan, 2018).

Cooperation techniques involve strategies for working collaboratively with others in a positive and constructive manner. These techniques are essential in psychological therapy to help individuals learn to collaborate with others, foster healthier interpersonal relationships, and enhance teamwork skills. Examples include identifying common goals, open and respectful communication, task and responsibility sharing, collaborative problem-solving, and mutual encouragement and support.

Breathing and relaxation techniques are effective methods for reducing stress and anxiety levels, improving sleep quality, and enhancing overall well-being. These techniques can be employed in psychological therapy to assist individuals in better managing their emotions and reducing stress. Examples include deep breathing, meditation, and guided imagery (Racu, 2005).

Group interventions for young school-age children can be an effective approach to addressing psychological and behavioral issues. Within the context of group interventions, children can interact with peers facing similar challenges, which can foster the development of empathy, social skills, and mutual support.

The group psychological intervention program aims to improve specific personality characteristics in young school-age children. To ensure the most effective organization of the sessions within the program, the following main rules for the activities were established and communicated:

- Be active and free;
- Be honest and open;
- Avoid criticism and do not mock others;
- Each person speaks when it is their turn;
- Speak only for yourself;
- Be kind and positive;
- Show respect and offer help;
- Participants have the right to refuse to engage in an activity;
- Everything we do, discuss, and analyze remains confidential within this setting (strict confidentiality).

The evaluation of the effectiveness of the formative intervention program can be achieved through three statistical comparisons conducted at the conclusion of the psychological intervention, based on the results of the administered tests:

- Comparison within the experimental group between the initial test and retest, using the Wilcoxon statistical test;
- Comparison between the experimental group and the control group in the retest phase, using the Mann-Whitney U statistical test;
- Comparison within the control group between the initial test and retest, using the Wilcoxon statistical test.

To assess the effectiveness of the formative program, the following psychological instruments were readministered: the Test Measuring Emotional Intelligence in Children; the “SCARA” Test – Self-Esteem Evaluation; the Self-Assessment of Psychological States Diagnosis (H. Eysenck); the Survey for Determining the Type of Aggressiveness in Young Schoolchildren; and the Technique for Studying Nervousness and Aggressiveness in Young School-Age Children. To determine statistical differences in the control experiment, the Mann-Whitney U and Wilcoxon tests were employed.

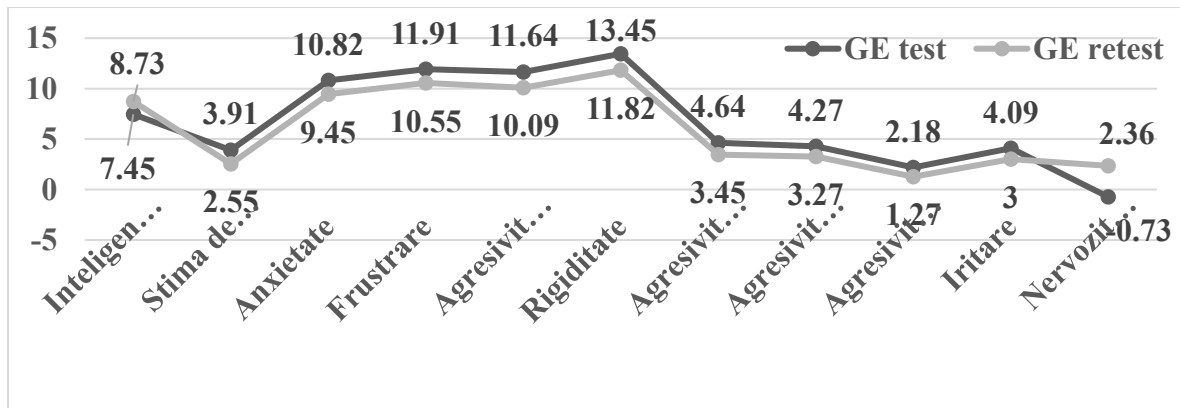


Figure 1. Mean Test/Retest Results of the Experimental Group (EG) Across All Administered Test Indices

Based on the observations from Figure 1, it can be identified that across all indices of the applied tests, following the formative intervention program, there are differences that can be interpreted as progress in improving certain personality traits in young schoolchildren, under the influence of the psychological intervention program for the experimental group.

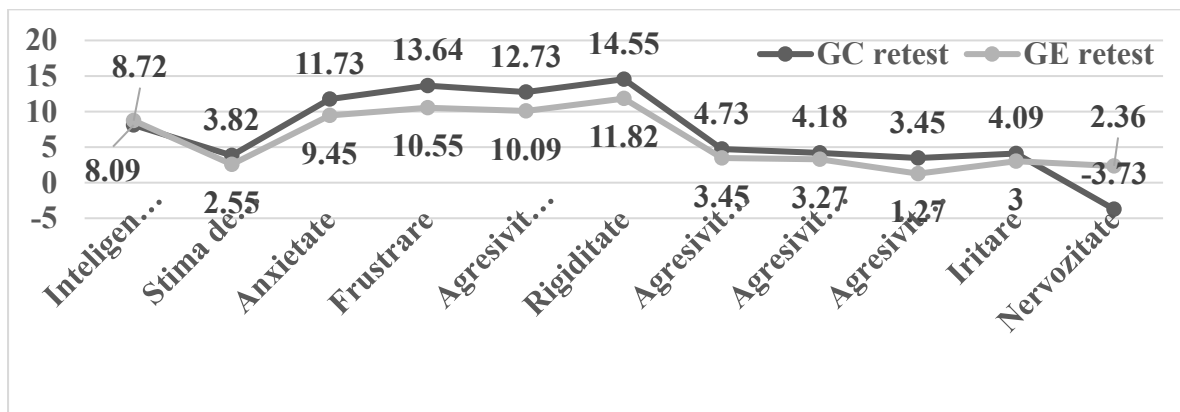


Figure 2. Mean Retest Results of the Experimental Group (EG) Compared to the Control Group (CG) Across All Administered Test Indices

Based on the observations from Figure 2, it can be identified that under the influence of the psychological intervention program, across all indices of the applied tests following the formative program, there are differences that can be interpreted as progress in improving certain personality traits in the experimental group compared to the control group.

Statistical processing using the Mann-Whitney U test was applied to each index of the psychological instruments: the Test Measuring Emotional Intelligence in Children; the “SCARA” Test – Self-Esteem Evaluation; the Self-Assessment of Psychological States Diagnosis (H. Eysenck); the Survey for Determining the Type of Aggressiveness in Young Schoolchildren; and the Technique for Studying Nervousness and Aggressiveness in Young School-Age Children. The results for the experimental group (EG) and the control group (CG) at the retest phase are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Statistical Results at Retest for Experimental Group (EG) vs. Control Group (CG) Across All Administered Test Indices

No.	Index	U Value	Z Score	p-Value	Significance at $p < 0.05$
1	Emotional Intelligence	50.5	0.62382	0.53526	Not significant
2	Self-Esteem	30	-1.96995	0.04884	Significant
3	Anxiety (Eysenck)	29.5	-2.00278	0.0455	Significant
4	Frustration (Eysenck)	29.5	-2.00278	0.0455	Significant
5	Aggressiveness (Eysenck)	23.5	-2.39677	0.0164	Significant
6	Rigidity (Eysenck)	26	-2.2361	0.02574	Significant
7	Physical Aggressiveness	28.5	-2.06845	0.03846	Significant
8	Indirect Aggressiveness	27.5	-2.13411	0.03318	Significant
9	Verbal Aggressiveness	6	-3.54591	0.00038	Significant
10	Irritability	30	-1.96995	0.04884	Significant
11	Nervousness and Aggressiveness States	30	1.96995	0.04884	Significant

Analyzing Table 4, we observe that 10 out of the 11 indices of the applied tests exhibit statistically significant differences in the results between the subjects in the experimental group and the control group at the formative experiment stage. This finding confirms the hypothesized assumption. Therefore, it is possible to improve certain personality characteristics in young school-age children through well-organized activities within the formative intervention program.

The effect size is Cohen's r ($r < 0.1$ = small, $0.1-0.3$ = small-medium, $0.3-0.5$ = medium, >0.5 = large). The 95% CI for r is approximated using the Fisher transformation ($z' = 0.5 * \ln((1+r)/(1-r))$), then $CI_z = z' \pm 1.96/\sqrt{(N-3)}$, transformed back to r), but the values are indicative.

The 10 significant differences have medium-to-large effect sizes ($r = 0.42-0.76$), indicating that the intervention has a substantial practical impact, not just statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). The CIs (approximated) often exclude 0 for large effects, suggesting confidence in the results. For emotional intelligence (non-significant), the small effect size and wide CI imply the need for program adjustments. These metrics reinforce the article's conclusions.

It is crucial to recognize that each child is unique, and an individualized, tailored approach is the most effective in managing aggressive behavior, which is often a symptom of underlying emotional or behavioral issues such as anxiety, depression, or family-related problems. To successfully address aggressive behavior, it is essential to identify and treat the root cause while adopting effective strategies for managing these undesirable behaviors. A consistent and positive approach, both at home and in school, can significantly contribute to reducing such behaviors (Losîi, 2016).

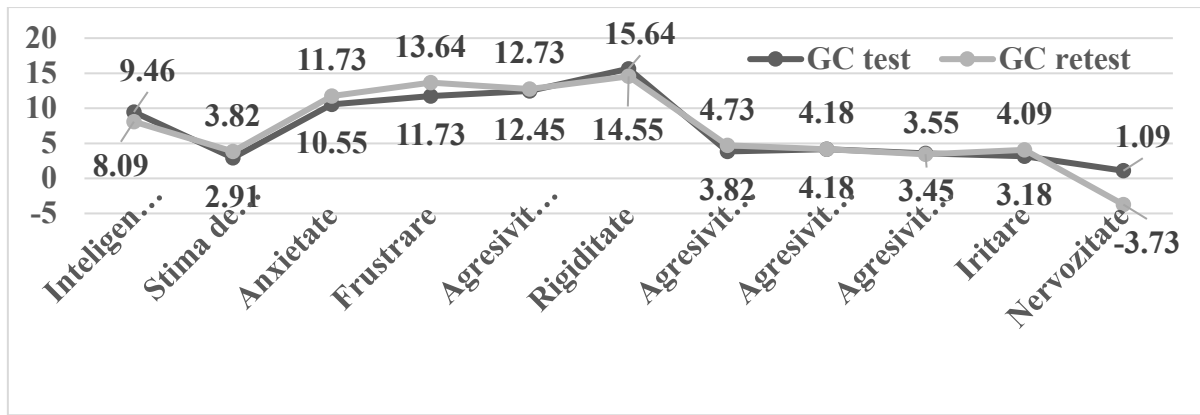


Figure 3. Mean Test/Retest Results of the Control Group (CG) Across All Administered Test Indices

Analyzing Figure 3, we observe that the mean results of the indices from the applied tests show minimal differences. This allows us to conclude that, in the absence of intervention aimed at improving personality traits through the implementation of a formative program with appropriate techniques, the intensity of states such as aggressiveness, anxiety, frustration, and rigidity may remain unchanged.

Considering that the results of certain indices from the tests applied to the control group in the test/retest phases are consistent, statistical processing using the Wilcoxon test does not provide a precise “p” value due to the insufficient sample size. However, it is possible to calculate and present the following results:

Table 5. Statistical Reporting for Wilcoxon Test Data (Test/Retest GC)

Index	W	Z	Mean Difference	Cohen's r	95% CI for r
Emotional Intelligence	12	-1.5799	-28	0.500 (large)	[0.00, 0.81]
Self-Esteem	5	-1.5213	1.43	0.575 (large)	[0.00, 0.87]
Anxiety (Eysenck)	7.5	-1.4703	-7.5	0.520 (large)	[0.00, 0.84]
Frustration (Eysenck)	17.5	-1.3781	-0.27	0.416 (medium)	[-0.05, 0.74]
Aggressiveness (Eysenck)	23	-0.4587	-1.7	0.145 (small-medium)	[-0.50, 0.69]
Rigidity (Eysenck)	12	-1.5799	1.8	0.500 (large)	[0.00, 0.81]
Physical Aggressiveness	10	-1.7838	-0.2	0.564 (large)	[0.04, 0.83]
Indirect Aggressiveness	22	-0.0592	0.22	0.020 (small)	[-0.65, 0.67]
Verbal Aggressiveness	26	-0.1529	0.6	0.048 (mic)	[-0.58, 0.64]
Irritability	6.5	-1.2677	-2.86	0.479 (medium-large)	[-0.08, 0.84]
Nervousness and Aggressiveness States	17.5	-1.0193	7.8	0.322 (medium)	[-0.20, 0.71]

Based on the results presented in Table 5, the following observations can be made: Although $p > 0.05$, the effect size is large, suggesting a potential but statistically non-significant difference due to the small sample size ($N=10$). The wide confidence interval including zero indicates uncertainty. The large mean difference (-28) suggests a decrease, but without intervention, this finding lacks robustness.

For self-esteem (N=7), a large effect size (mean difference = 1.43) suggests a minor positive change, but the CI including zero and no precise p-value limit practical significance. Anxiety (N=8) shows a large, non-significant effect (mean difference = -7.5), indicating a minor reduction, though the wide CI confirms low robustness. Frustration (Eysenck), Aggression, Indirect Aggression, and Verbal Aggression show small to medium effects, high p-values (>0.05), and CIs including zero, indicating stability without intervention. Rigidity has a large but non-significant effect (mean difference = 1.8, CI includes 0). Physical Aggression is nearly significant ($p = 0.075$, large effect, mean difference = -0.2), with a CI partially excluding zero, suggesting a potential minor effect. Irritability (N=7) and Nervousness show medium-large and medium effects, respectively, but are non-significant ($p > 0.05$, CIs include 0), with differences (-2.86 and 7.8) suggesting minor changes but lacking statistical robustness.

Thus, the statistical comparisons conducted using the Wilcoxon test, which indicate the absence of significant differences in the psychological instruments applied before and after the formative experiment, allow us to conclude that without intervention to reduce anxiety, rigidity, and aggressive behaviors in young school-age children, as well as to enhance self-esteem and emotional intelligence through participation in a psychological intervention program, the intensity of aggressive states will remain unchanged or, in the worst case, may intensify.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The social developmental context can significantly influence the formation and development of a young student's personality through interpersonal relationships, experiences, and access to resources. It is crucial to consider these factors in the process of a child's personality development to provide opportunities for them to reach their full potential.

The results of the formative and control experiments demonstrate that psychological interventions aimed at improving specific personality characteristics in young school-age children, through well-structured activities within a group psychological intervention program, are effective. The data obtained from the implementation of the formative program confirm the efficacy of the organized session model in enhancing certain personality characteristics among young school-age children.

Statistical data from the retests conducted after the psychological intervention with subjects in the experimental group confirm that the reduction in anxiety, rigidity, and aggressive behaviors, as well as the enhancement of self-esteem and emotional intelligence in young school-age children, are attributable to their participation in a well-organized formative program.

The statistical results at the level of the formative experiment highlight the effectiveness of the techniques applied within the psychological intervention program. These techniques, used in a variety of adaptable situations tailored to the specific needs of children, contribute to reducing aggressive behaviors, anxiety, depression, and behavioral disorders in young schoolchildren.

The development of social competencies in young school-age children is a continuous process, and these competencies will improve as children grow and further develop their

social and emotional skills. Both family and school must collaborate to support the child's personality development.

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