

Exploring the Sri Lankan Student Perceptions Pertaining To School Counseling Services in Their Schools

Buddhiprabha D. D. Pathirana^{1*}

ABSTRACT

This study explores the Sri Lankan students' perceptions of their school counselors and counseling services available to them. It comprises of two phases involving data collected through in-depth interviews (n = 10) and semi-structured interviews using a survey questionnaire (n = 126). The data were collected during two measurement points.

Findings convey that the students did not provide positive evaluations of school counseling services during both phases, depicting the reluctance to access it due to several key factors. They are: social stigma associated with accessing counseling services, location of the counseling room, misperceptions pertaining to its aims and objectives, ignorance, and lack of time. The study provides suggestions and recommendations for policy makers, teacher educators and school counselors with the broad aim of improving the quality of the school counseling services in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *School Counseling, Student Perceptions, Sri Lanka*

Sri Lankan Students: Mental Health Profile

Available literature on Sri Lankan students' well-being depict high prevalence of mental health problems among Sri Lankan students, especially adolescents (Rodrigo, Welgama, Gurusinghe, Wijeratne, Jayananda, Rajapakse, 2010; Thalagala, Rajapakse, & Yakkandawala, 2004). Common psychological problems among Sri Lankan students included stress experienced due to exam anxiety, academic pressure, loneliness, social discomfort, distress experienced due to frequent scolding by the parents, problems with teachers (Roderigo et al, 2010; Thalagala et al., 2004), hyperactivity, and inattention. Also reported were issues pertaining to peers (Perera, 2009), dating partners, and video game addiction. A study carried out by Roderigo et al, (2010) found that out of 445 adolescents' school goers, thirty six per cent were screened positive for

¹ Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Department of Philosophy & Psychology, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

*Responding Author

Received: December 12, 2016; Revision Received: January 1, 2017; Accepted: January 27, 2017

© 2017 Pathirana B; licensee IJIP. This is an Open Access Research distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any Medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Exploring the Sri Lankan Student Perceptions Pertaining To School Counseling Services in Their Schools

mild and severe depression while 28% were screened positive for severe anxiety. When Perera (2009) surveyed the 'Mental health of adolescent school children in Sri Lanka, she found that nearly 1 in 5 Sri Lankan adolescents (18.9%) appear to have clinically relevant mental health symptoms.

Findings of these studies clearly point out that mental health service providers in Sri Lanka should be concerned about the mental health needs of its students, particularly adolescents. These studies also call for continuous mental health service provision at the institutional and community level by trained mental health professionals including counseling teachers. In this context, the importance of school counseling looms large.

However, in the Sri Lankan milieu, there seems to be an urgent need for school counselors with 1086 guidance teachers employed in Sri Lankan government schools, providing psychosocial services to 4,004,086 students; making the counselor student ratio to be 1: 3687. This is far below the ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association (The school-counselor- to student ratio of 1:250) (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Further, school counseling in Sri Lanka experiences varied challenges. Among them are the need for more school counseling professionals (Pathirana, 2016), mental health service providers (Samarasekara, Davies & Siribaddana, 2012), fewer resources, Sri Lanka's continuous struggle to develop a national certification and licensing standards for counseling (Pathirana, 2015; Pathirana, 2016), and difficulties in creating a comprehensive counselor trainings.

Despite making repeated calls for the development of counseling services over the past decades, advancements of school counseling have been slow to progress in the Sri Lankan milieu. Even though Sri Lankan education system is striving to make school counseling more accessible than ever to its students; it requires to be noted that allocations to improve the psychosocial wellbeing of its future citizenry is not satisfactory. Especially after considering the recent positive, dramatic economic advances (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2013) made by Sri Lanka.

Also, having realized the importance of the school counseling, Sri Lankan schools also seemed have become more receptive towards school counselors. As a result, many schools in Sri Lanka, especially one in urban areas, seem to be gradually welcoming the services of school counselors. Particularly, when addressing mental health issues within Sri Lankan students. This acceptance and importance attributed to the school counseling services seemed to have increased in many folds after conflict and the impact of Tsunami. As a result, the government of Sri Lanka has also recently initiated to advance school counseling services available to Sri Lankan students (MoE, 2013). This appears to be welcome change from the past scenario of inattention to this arena. Nevertheless, school counseling as a profession appears to be still at a developmental level in Sri Lanka.

Importance of School Counseling

School counselors as important members of the education team, who assist students in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social development and career development is a widely acclaimed fact (American School Counselors Association, 2016). The primary role of the Sri Lankan school counselor in the present education system is considered to be; ensuring students achieve productive, well-adjusted future as fully functioning adults of tomorrow (Pathirana, 2015).

Globally, school counselors have become an increasingly valued addition to education systems. Thus, school counsellors are considered to serve an important role in maximizing student success (Fox & Butler, 2009; Lapan, Gysbers, & Kayson, 2007; Stone & Dahir, 2006). Moreover, responsibility of the school counselors involves supporting a safe learning environment and ensuring the right based approach of the school community (Sandhu, 2000) while providing student friendly/fair and culture sensitive prevention/ intervention programs (Lee, 2001).

School counselors or counseling teachers as they are more popularly known in Sri Lanka are also uniquely positioned to impact the mental health and academic success of the Sri Lankan students. This is mainly due to their knowledge, competencies and skills acquired from their professional training. The direct access and interaction they have with students, class teachers, subject teachers and administrative authorities also provide them with the unique opportunity to also address mental health concerns of the students.

A substantial number of researchers have studied students' perceptions toward school counselors. Most of them have been carried out in the Western world, with a few emanating from Sri Lanka (Chaturika, 2015) or other South Asian countries. As a result, very little is known about the amount of counseling that Sri Lankan students actually receive in schools or how they perceive school counselors and the school counseling service provisions.

Hence, the present study aims to explore the perceptions of Sri Lankan students towards counselors in their schools is timely and necessary one. For the purpose of this study, "student perceptions" is used to refer to how students perceive of the role and tasks of the school counselor to the expectations they have of the counselor.

METHOD

The study comprised of two phases with phase one aiming to explore an in-depth' view of Sri Lankan students towards their school counselors while phase two examined the students' perceptions of their school counselors using a semi-structured interview format.

Phase I

Phase I, Participants - The participants for this phase of the study were 10 adolescents (Girls = 06; Boys = 04) coming from different socio-economic backgrounds and demographic contexts in

Exploring the Sri Lankan Student Perceptions Pertaining To School Counseling Services in Their Schools

Sri Lanka. Before conducting the interview the participants were briefed about the details of the study including the purpose, voluntary participation, and the venue/ time of the meeting. If given consent, during the initial contact, time and venue for the interviews were arranged. None of the respondents refused to participate in the interview.

During this phase the participants were allowed to freely speak of the counseling services they receive in their schools. Out of 10 participants only six mentioned that they have a school counselor in their schools.

Phase II

Table 01: Characteristics of the Participants

	M	S.D	f	%	N.R
Sample Size (N = 126)					
Gender (n = 110)					
Male	16.32*	1.923*	48	38.1	
Female	16.32**	1.567**	62	49.2	
Gender not responded to			10		
Age	16.34	1.67			
Age not responded to					
Educational Level (N = 110)	11.3	1.345			
Grade 08			04	3.2	
Grade 09			06	4.8	
Grade 10			21	16.7	
Grade 11			21	16.7	
Grade 12			42	33.3	
Grade 13			12	9.5	
Completed Education			04	3.2	
Grade not responded to			16	12.7	

N = 126;

For the phase II of the study, participants completed a survey questionnaire which explored the factors affecting psychosocial wellbeing of the Sri Lankan adolescents. This phase of the study explores Sri Lankan students' perception of their school counselors. All information students provided in the survey was anonymous. The demographic sections of the questionnaire included items such as students' grade level, gender while the section which examined the school counselors requested the students to come up with responses to the questions such as, 'Which teacher do you go to when you have a problem?', 'Do you have a school counselor in your school?', 'Do you go to school counselor if and when you have a problem?,' 'If not what are the reasons for it?...

Instrument

The data was collected using semi-structured questionnaire in order to gain answers for defined questions. The items included both open and close-ended questions. However, the study used questionnaires which consisted mainly of closed items. As the instrument is designed and tailored for this study, there are no measures of validity or reliability provided.

RESULTS

Phase I

Findings of the phase I were analyzed using constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1976). Through this qualitative method, the findings were analyzed a number of times until overarching categories of meanings generated by interviewees were identified. The analysis came up with following key themes which can all be categorized as limitations of school counseling. They are further discussed under the sub-categories of: 1. breach of confidentiality, 2. stigmatization associated with school counseling and 3. Characteristics of the school counselor which serves as push factors from students' accessing counseling services. In order to provide detailed descriptions of these sub-categories, narratives of the adolescent participants are provided below each sub-category.

1. Breach of confidentiality

'Apo!' (Sinhalese expression to magnify the strength of the statement) No one goes there... there are some students who go, but I haven't...because when we tell her our problems the whole school get to know them...though she tells that she would never reveal them...but tells everyone (17 year old adolescent girl).

2. Advising

Earlier the counseling teacher in our school was very helpful, I used to tell her everything...she has also taught my mother...and they came to know each other (this girls has been neglected by her mother since she was nine years old. Her mother does not physically or psychologically support her)...later...maybe my mother told her something...since then she is always angry with me...then she used to look at the problems from my mother's perspective...next, told me to do this do that (meaning that the counseling teacher started advising scolding her, based on her mother's feedback about her)...now that she knows (the counseling teacher) that I am studying (doing well in academics) she hugs me and talk to me...I do not mind...(meaning she does not mind the earlier episodes of anger/criticisms/scolding's...)...because she is teacher (meaning she is ready to forgive and forget) (6/Female/17yrs).

3. Perceived characteristics of the counseling teacher

The teacher who have been assigned for counseling at present is a different character...she is very strict...therefore no one tells her anything (meaning that no one goes to her for counseling). She is not suitable for counseling...(6/Female/17).

Exploring the Sri Lankan Student Perceptions Pertaining To School Counseling Services in Their Schools

Yes, we have a counseling teacher in our school...many go...but I don't...because one day I had enough of her...because she took sides...I don't like it when someone scolds (meaning saying negative things) about the teachers that I like...one day I told her one teacher was good and she said no she is not...and this and that... (meaning that counseling teacher told him negative things about the teacher that he liked)then I told her, 'teacher, do not talk bad things about her without you really knowing them to be true...' after that I did not go to her...that day (meaning the day that counseling teacher criticized the teacher he liked) I did not go for counseling but just (meaning without any purpose he visited the school counselor)...(3/Male/17yrs).

Ignorance

I don't know whether our school has a counseling teacher...we have a teacher in charge of discipline...but we can talk to her about anything even though she is good (8/F/18).

However, the study also records that adolescents mentioned name of teachers whom they can approach when they have a problem. Findings convey that the characteristics which adolescents seemed to value in them are confidentiality, ability to listen, and accessibility.

Preference to tell their concerns/ problems to other teachers

I can tell anything to my class teacher...Buddha has told 'do not give internal problems to outside' ...that sir is like that, he has that quality...therefore we tell our problems to that sir...and there is another sir who came for music (came to teach music)...that sir is also good...can talk anything and find solutions (3/Male/17yrs).

We don't have a counseling teacher in our school, if children have problems they talk to the class teacher...then that madam give a solution (4/Male/16yrs).

Phase II: Semi Structured Interviews

Phase II of the study explored

Table 02: Which teacher do you go to when you have a problem?

		f	%
1	Subject Teacher	94	74.6
2	Class Teacher	6	4.8
3	Counseling Teacher	7	5.6
4	All Teachers	3	2.4
5	Other	1	.8
6	Not Responded	15	12.7

N = 126;

Table 02 conveys that the majority of the participants preferred to confide in subject teachers (94, 74.6%), while only few students preferred to confide in class teachers (n = 6, 4.8%),

Exploring the Sri Lankan Student Perceptions Pertaining To School Counseling Services in Their Schools

counseling teachers ($n = 7, 5.6\%$), all teachers included in the above three categories ($n = 3, 2.4\%$) and others outside the school premises other than teachers ($n = 1, .8\%$).

Table 03: Do you have a school counselor in your school?

Yes		No		Not Responded	
<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
72	57.1	46	36.5	8	6.4

In response to this query majority of the participants have said that there is a school counselor in their schools ($n = 72, 57.1\%$) while 46 (36.5%) have said that they do not

Table 04: Do you go to the school counselor in your school, if and when you have a problem?

Yes		No		Not Responded	
<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
09	7.1	80	63.5	37	29.4

$N = 126$

The next objective of this study was to examine how many participants had sought counseling services from school counselors. Only a handful of the participants (7.1%, $n = 09$) reported having visited school counselors at least once in comparison to majority of the participants who had not visited the school counselor in their schools (63.5%, $n = 80$).

Table 05: Factors which prevent Sri Lankan students from accessing counselling services

	Cause	Narratives of the participants
1	Breach of confidentiality, no faith	'She does not maintain confidentiality', 'she cannot be trusted (meaning the school counselor)'
2	Location	'Counseling room is located next to the principal's room', 'School counseling room is near the staff room'
3	Stigmatization	'Students in my school laugh at the those who go to the counseling room'
4	Ignorance	'I do not know whether our school has a counselor', 'I do not know whether we have counseling room in our school'
5	Misperception	'We do not go there only disable students do', 'It is a place for students who experience very severe psychological problems', 'Counseling teacher is responsible for discipline'
6	No need/ No Problems	'We do not have problems therefore we do not go there', 'We do not have a need for school counseling'
7	No time	'we have lot of school work and no time to go to the counseling room'
8	Students like to go to others teachers	'we tell our problems to other teachers and they give solutions'
9	Other	'we like to tell our problems to friends', '

Note: Responded = 43; Not Responded = 83

Exploring the Sri Lankan Student Perceptions Pertaining To School Counseling Services in Their Schools

The specific reasons mentioned by the students were no faith in the counselors, records or rumors of breach of confidentiality by the school counselors on past occasions with other students, location of the counseling room, stigma towards mental health and stigmatization and shame attached to the students who visit the counseling room, student perception of the school counseling room as a place for those with severe psychological problems or for student with disability, lack of time due to academic pressure and commitments, and past records of confidentiality breaching.

DISCUSSION

The present study explored the Sri Lankan student perceptions towards their school counselors/ counseling services available to them, through multiple methods at two different measurement points. Majority of the participants mentioned that they have a school counselor in their schools which indicate that school counseling is functional in the Sri Lankan schools.

Findings conveyed that majority of the participants reported avoiding school counselor as well counseling services even upon availability. The reasons which stood out for not seeking the counseling services were; ignorance, lack of time, issues pertaining to confidentiality, location, stigmatization and misperception. Thus, findings indicate that even those few Sri Lankan schools fortunate in procuring the service of a school counselor may not effectively be offering it to their students in an efficient manner (Pathirana, 2016).

Although Sri Lanka has seen the presence of school counselors' increase in schools, the results of the present study convey that it is still not common for students to seek counseling services. The paper argues that one of the reasons for this could be due to the fact that Sri Lankan school counselors relies heavily on the Western model of one to one counseling approach (i.e. 'expect students to approach them individually when in need of or having personal issues in their lives). On the other hand, the findings convey that Sri Lankan students' are less likely to endorse help seeking behaviors from individuals who are not well known due to their cultural background.

Therefore, the Western and internationally developed frameworks may not be implicitly transportable to the Sri Lankan milieu. Moreover, the traditional Western standards and definitions of counseling may not represent the optimal solutions for Sri Lanka. Thus, the study urges the researchers, educationists and school counselors to explore culture sensitive/ friendly ways of providing school counseling more accessible to Sri Lankan students.

As the present study reports, whether students know about the availability of counseling services in their school or not is a major determinant of whether they access or do not access counseling services, a factor which has been also confirmed by previous research (Fox & Butler, 2007). Thus, the present study recommends that the schools require informing the students whether they have access to this service.

Exploring the Sri Lankan Student Perceptions Pertaining To School Counseling Services in Their Schools

The responses of the students in this study demonstrate that one of the factors which prevent them from approaching the school counselor is the lack of perceived ‘trustworthiness’ of the counselors. Participants in the study felt hesitant to approach the counseling teachers with their problems due to their past perceived/actual experiences pertaining to the breach of confidentiality. Literature (Le Surf & Lynch, 1999; Jenkins & Palmer, 2011; Mushaandja, Haihambo, Vergnani, & Frank, 2013) conveys that issues related to confidentiality serve as a hindrance to students seeking counseling services. Further, literature (Setiawan, 2006) also conveys that students have more positive experiences when their school counselors are trustworthy. Hence, trustworthiness seems makes a difference in building positive relationships and a climate for disclosure. In such a climate, students who have difficulty with their classes can be comfortable in approaching the school counselor for help.

Further, student’s perceptions of mental and psychosocial wellbeing as aspects alien to health in comparison to their views on physical health may also have contributed to their failure to access counseling services. Sri Lankan cultural beliefs promote solving family-related issues inside one’s own family. Thus, participants are also less likely to endorse help-seeking attitudes than students in the Western worlds. This could be one of the reasons that students were reluctant to visit the school counselors. Another reason for students’ reluctance was the misperception that it is place for ‘mentally handicapped students or students with severe psychological problems. Again, such belief calls for awareness on the objectives and benefits of school counseling services to the Sri Lankan students.

Considering the reluctance of the Sri Lankan students to approach school counselors in order to access psychological services, the present study recommends several ways that they be available to students through multiple and varied channels. They are, group activities, lectures on common psychological concerns, parent and teacher consultation, peer support, and classroom guidance along with individual counseling.

Findings conveyed that the location of the counseling room served as push factor which discourage students from accessing counseling services; as it is situated near the Principal’s room or the staff room. A previous study on student perception of school counseling conveys the unavailability of a separate room for school counseling or the counseling room being uncomfortable to discuss issues requiring confidentiality (Chathuruka, 2015). Thus, the present study identifies the importance of comfortable, child friendly location for school counseling away from the staff rooms or the Principal’s room which would make the students feel safe to discuss their problems.

Further, Participants responses also conveyed that school counselor also serve as relief teachers or disciplinary teachers. Even though this could be due to the lack of awareness within the school

Exploring the Sri Lankan Student Perceptions Pertaining To School Counseling Services in Their Schools

authorities pertaining to the role of the school counselor and shortage of staff due to unequal distribution of teachers across the country (MoE, 2013; UNICEF, 2009); literature finds that the dual role of teacher-counselors may adversely affect and place restraints on the counselor's time. It may also discourage students from accessing counseling facilities (Menon, 2010; Walker, Alloway, Dalley-Trim, & Patterson, 2006; Kuhn, 2004). Hence, findings of the present study recommends the concerned authorities to avoid bestowing other roles and responsibilities on counseling teachers, especially overseeing discipline as such duties may prevent students from going to the counselors with their problems.

Further, the paper also recommends several changes to the training and education of the school counselors based on the outcomes of the present study to build trustworthiness within practicing as well as future counselors. Out of them, 1. importance of child friendly/sensitive communication, 2. Understanding their roles and responsibilities as a school counselor (Pathirana, 2015), 3. Fair treatment of students, 4. Establishing a climate of belongings, 5. Competence to carry out required psychosocial interventions in a child friendly and culture sensitive manner are factors which looms large. Among these activities in building trustworthiness and competence within school counselors seemed to be the most important one to popularize school counseling among the Sri Lankan students. Hence, the paper also suggests that Sri Lankan school counselors may want to self-evaluate their services and seek further training, especially in the areas of confidentiality and trustworthiness.

As would be expected with developing profession in any country, there are numerous challenges to school counseling in Sri Lanka such as tremendous shortage of qualified school counselors, as well as an urgent need for more accredited training programs which may serve as factors affecting the student approachability.

Hence, it is recommended that those responsible for the education and training of school counselors require taking note of two important aspects of their training programs: First, paying attention to the communication patterns of counselors, and second, providing information to school counselors to reduce their lack of understanding of Sri Lankan student experiences. Literature also conveys that quality of training and supervision was among common concerns (Pathirana, 2016) in the Sri Lankan milieu; for school counselors. Moreover, accredited professional training programs at the university or teacher training college level must be designed and established. Courses requires to be targeting the knowledge and skills that school counselors need most with opportunities for supervision, practice and professional development. Thus, Sri Lanka is in also an urgent requirement of a National Counseling Licensing Board for licensing and certification of counseling, which offers qualification exams for counselors, including school counselors.

Exploring the Sri Lankan Student Perceptions Pertaining To School Counseling Services in Their Schools

The findings of the present study conveys that majority of the participants had approached subject teachers. Hence, the subject teachers in turn appear to perform a wide variety of counseling tasks. However, these subject teachers may not receive sufficient training in providing counseling services in the Sri Lankan milieu. Therefore, the present study recommends the teachers trainers and concerned authorities to provide at least basic counseling skills and competencies to subject teachers in Sri Lankan schools.

Empirical research on school counseling convey the importance and development of school counseling services that fit the needs of students and the society in Sri Lanka is limited. Thus, the present study contributes to the literature by filling a much required research gap (i.e. Sri Lankan students' perception of the school counseling services and the school counselors in their schools). Even though this study represents a small step in evaluating perceptions about Sri Lankan students about their counseling service provisions, contributes to the information gap on the student utilization of school counseling services. This line of inquiry is very important for the future development of the school counseling services in Sri Lanka; in the context of providing training as well as improving mental health services available to the Sri Lankan student population. The study also provides valuable information for educators, policy makers, school administrators, researchers and most importantly school counselors, in order to improve the quality of the provision of school counseling services in Sri Lanka.

However, there were a number of areas in this study that limit generalization and call for additional research. First, the sample in this study was a convenient sample. Second, the number of times that students have visited the counseling office, or the length of time that these counseling sessions were held (if and when) was not obtained. Third, the instrument was designed and tailored specifically this study. As a result, there are no measures of validity or reliability provided.

Thus, based on its findings the present study makes following suggestions and recommendation for the future research. They are: 1. Conduct empirical research on Sri Lankan school counseling services and service providers with aim of exploring ways to improve school counseling as a profession (e.g. identify factors that might enhance students' utilization of school counseling services and what students need the most from school counseling...), 2. Explore alternative, student friendly and culture sensitive ways of providing school counseling and other psychosocial support services. 3. Explore ways to make school counseling services more accessible for Sri Lankan students, 4. Identify ways to prevent/ minimize stigmatization associated with the accessing school counseling services within Sri Lankan students, and 5. Explore the perceptions of the school counselors in their interactions with students.

Exploring the Sri Lankan Student Perceptions Pertaining To School Counseling Services in Their Schools

In conclusion, it could be said that this study addresses an important area of research that has not been adequately explored in the Sri Lankan milieu. As the present research evidence there is an urgent need to encourage more students to utilize the services of the school counselors.

Acknowledgments

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

REFERENCES

- American School Counselor Association, (2016), Retrieved on 19th of October, 2016, from, <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/administrators/role-of-the-school-counselor>
- Central Bank of Sri Lanka (2013), retrieved on 28th of December, 2014, http://www.cbsl.gov.lk/pics_n_docs/10_pub/_docs/statistics/other/econ_&_ss_2013_e.pdf
- Chathurika, P.R.D. (2015). Students perception on current school counseling services in Sri Lanka (with reference to Anuradhapura zone), Proceeding of the 3rd Global Summit on Education GSE 2015 (e-ISBN 978-967-0792-01-1), 9-10 March 2015, *Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA*. Organized by <http://WorldConferences.net>
- Fox, C. L. and Butler, I. (2009) Evaluating the effectiveness of a school-based counselling service in the UK. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 37 (2), 95-106.
- Fox, C. L., & Butler, I. (2007). "If you don't want to tell anyone else you can tell her": Young people's views on school counselling. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 35(1), 97-114.
- Glaser, B., (1976). *Theoretical sensitivity*. Mill Valley, CA: *Sociology Press*
- Jenkins, P. & Palmer P. (2012)., "At risk of harm"? An exploratory survey of school counsellors in the UK, their perceptions of confidentiality, information sharing and risk management, *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 40:5, 545-559.
- Kuhn, L., (2004). Student perceptions of school counselor rules and functions. Unpublished Master's Thesis. *Baltimore University of Maryland*, Retrieved on 12th of December 2016, from, <http://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/handle/1903/1843/umi-umd-1836.pdf;sequence=1>
- Lapan, R. T., Gysbers, N. C., & Kayson, M. A. (2007). Missouri school counselors benefit all students. Jefferson City, MO: *Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*.
- Lee, C. (2001). Culturally responsive school counselors and programs: Addressing the needs of all students. *Professional School Counseling*, 4, 163-171.
- Le Surf, L., & Leech, A. (1999). Exploring young people's perceptions relevant to counselling: a qualitative study. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 27 (2), 231-243.

Exploring the Sri Lankan Student Perceptions Pertaining To School Counseling Services in Their Schools

- Menon, M.E. (2010). The effect of career counsellors on the decision to pursue higher education: a mixed-methods investigation. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 34(4), 519–536
- Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka (2013). New Vision for Education and Milestones of Progress: Progress in 2012 and Proposed Programmes in 2013, retrieved on 3rd of August, 2014, from, http://www.moe.gov.lk/web/images/stories/publication/report_e.pdf
- Mushaandja, Haihambo, Vergnani, & Frank (2013). Major Challenges Facing Teacher Counselors in Schools in Namibia. *Education Journal*. 2 (3), 77-84.
- National Institute of Education (NIE) (2010). Educational Guidance & Counselling Syllabus, Retrieved on 14th of August, from, <http://www.nie.sch.lk/resource/Guidance&counselling-English.pdf>
- Pathirana, B.D.D. (2015). "Mapping out the potential role for Sri Lankan school counselor: An exploratory study", *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 3(5), 609-618.
- Pathirana, B.D.D. (2016). School counseling in Sri Lanka: Analysis of the past recommending a way forward, *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 4(6), 30-38.
- Perera, H., (2009). Mental health of adolescent school children in Sri Lanka – a national survey. *Sri Lanka Journal of Child Health*. 33(3),78–81. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.4038/sljch.v33i3.642>
- Rodrigo, C., Welgama, S., Gurusinghe, J., Wijeratne, T., Jayananda, G., Rajapakse, S. (2010). Symptoms of anxiety and depression in adolescent students; a perspective from Sri Lanka, *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 4(10), Retrieved on 12th of October, 2016, from, <http://www.capmh.com/content/4/1/10>
- Samarasekara N, Davies M.,L.M., & Siribaddana S. (2012). The stigma of mental illness in Sri Lanka: the perspectives of community mental health workers. *Stigma Research and Action*, 2(2), 93–99.
- Sandhu, D. S. (2000). Alienated students: Counseling strategies to curb school violence. *Professional School Counseling*, 4, 81-85.
- Setiawan, J.L. (2006). Willingness to seek counselling, and factors that facilitate and inhibit the seeking of counselling in Indonesian undergraduate students, *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*. 34 (3), 403-419.
- Stone, C. B. & Dahir, C. A. (2006). The transformed school counselor. Boston, MA: *Houghton Mifflin Company*.
- Thalagala, N., Rajapakse, N., & Yakkandawala, H. (2004). National survey on emerging issues among adolescents in Sri Lanka, *UNICEF*, Sri Lanka, Retrieved on 12th of October, 2016, from, http://www.unicef.org/srilanka/Full_Report.pdf
- Wickramaratne, V. (1988). Counselling interventions in the school setting in Sri Lanka – Its need. *Sri Lanka Journal of Social Science*, 11 (1&2), 29-45.
- UNICEF (2009). Mainstreaming child-friendly schools in Sri Lanka: A case study, retrieved on 14th of August, <http://www.unicef.org/education/files/CFSSriLankaCaseStudyJan2009.pdf>

Exploring the Sri Lankan Student Perceptions Pertaining To School Counseling Services in Their Schools

UNICEF (2013). Country Study: Out of School Children in Sri Lanka, Summary Report, Retrieved from online on 15th of September, 2013,

http://www.unicef.org/srilanka/2013_OSS_Summery_E.pdf

Walker, Alloway, Dalley-Trim, & Patterson (2006). Counsellor practices and student perspectives: perceptions of career counselling in Australian secondary schools. *Australian Journal of Career Development, 1*, 53-60.

How to cite this article: Pathirana B (2017), Exploring the Sri Lankan Student Perceptions Pertaining To School Counseling Services in Their Schools, *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, Volume 4, Issue 2, No. 85, ISSN:2348-5396 (e), ISSN:2349-3429 (p), DIP:18.01.007/20170402, ISBN: 978-1-365-68608-5