

## **GENDER DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON ROMANIAN ADOLESCENTS**

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### *Abstract*

*Literature on gender differences in adolescents' emotional and social skills and competences is quite scarce. Research has rather focused on exploring gender differences in emotional intelligence which denotes the ability of identifying and understanding emotions. Further examination of emotional and social functioning in relation to demographic characteristics may prove useful to researchers and practitioners searching for a better insight into development of adolescents. This paper presents a summary of the results we obtained in a cross-sectional study that was carried out on a convenience sample of 458 high school students. Data were collected as part of a larger study of characteristics of academically underachieved adolescents. Among other measures, participants filled out the Profile of Social and Emotional Competences (PSEC) – a multidimensional questionnaire which aims at measuring seventeen emotional and social competences. Girls scored higher in expression of emotions, self-presentation, empathy, responsibility in social relationships, gratification and support, interpersonal engagement, ability to develop positive interpersonal relationships, assertiveness, communication and cooperation, while boys scored higher in emotional self-regulation and flexibility in emotions and behaviors. For significant differences, the effect size ranged from 0.22 to 0.94 ( $M = 0.43$ ; median = 0.39). The findings are relevant in interpreting individual differences in how adolescents gain acceptance and popularity or are rejected in their peer groups.*

*Keywords: emotional and social competences; adolescents; gender differences*

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