

## GENDER DIFFERENCES IN STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TWO ACADEMIC DOMAINS: MATHEMATICS AND ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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### *Abstract*

*Stereotypes about gender differences in academic abilities are pervasive, mathematics being traditionally considered a "masculine" domain, whereas language and arts a "feminine" one. The current research aims to identify the students' perceptions of two important academic areas in secondary school, mathematics and Romanian language and literature, and also boys' and girls' pattern of causal attributions regarding their performance in these areas. A total of 130 secondary school students, 54 girls and 76 boys, aged between 11 and 15 years old undertook a questionnaire design for the assessment of mathematics and Romanian language on five bipolar scales, and another questionnaire for the attributional style used in explaining the performance in the relevant academic domains, based on ability, effort, task difficulty and chance. There were gender differences in the assessment of Romanian and mathematics only on the "masculine-feminine" dimension, the participants of both genders presenting a strong tendency to favor their own gender group, rather than to endorse the traditional stereotypes. In the case of the attributional pattern for high and low academic performance, there were no gender differences. The relevant aspects of this study are discussed in relation to the analysis of the gender stereotypes impact on students' expectations, academic fit and performance.*

*Keywords: gender differences; academic stereotypes; in-group bias*

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