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[MEASURING CHILDREN PERCEIVED SOCIAL COMPETENCE \(PSC\): STUDIES OF VALIDITY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADOLESCENTS FROM ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL](#)

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Social competence is a multidimensional construct, with emotional, cognitive and contextual dimensions, that plays a central role in the establishment of positive relations by individuals and its well. Applied to the developmental scope, social competencies play a central role, since they allow individuals to establish positive relationships with others, to adopt appropriate behaviours in social situations, among others. In this sense the assessment of social skills should have a central role to understanding developmental process. However, there is a lack of psychological scales concerning the understanding of social skills in children and young adolescents.

In this sense, this study aims to present and discuss studies of validity and stability of a scale that evaluates children and young adolescents 'perceptions about social competence to deal with interpersonal daily life situations and school situations.

Participants were 842 children and adolescents', 477 girls (56.7%) and 365 boys (43.3%), aged 7 to 16 years old ($\mu=11.50\pm 2.00$), attending the 4th (N=278), 6th (N=313), and 9th (N=251) grades, at elementary and secondary schools, in the northern, central and southern Portugal. These participants fulfill the Perceived Social Competence (PSC; [1]), which consists of five social situations, and express the perception of social performance into two subscales related with perceived poor or excellent performance in all of those situations. PSC was administered in two different assessment moments, with an intermission of one year.

Results indicate psychometric qualities of PSC, namely, reliability (consistency and stability) and validity, in this sense the usefulness of PSC to assess social competence is proved. In addition results also indicates gender differences with statistical significant differences in 6th grade, boys

increase his perceived social competence and girls decrease, as if developmental and educational transitions from childhood to adolescence create a different way of looking to social competence in boys and girls. Implications are drawn to the development of future educational interventions that promote social competence of boys and girls.

Implications are discussed for the development of educational and counseling interventions within scholar and familiar contexts.