

Development of Social Problem Solving – A Longitudinal Study (2009–2011) in a Hungarian context

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The aim of our longitudinal study (2009–2011) was to investigate the development of social problem solving (SPS) among adolescents (N=180) in Hungary. At the beginning of the study (2009) the students were 12-year-olds and they were 14 at the last time of measurement (2011). The questionnaire of SPS was adapted (SPSI-R:S, D’Zurilla et al., 2002; for children, mothers and teachers).

The studied SPS-factors were the following: negative problem orientation (NPO), positive problem orientation (PPO), rational problem solving (RPS), impulsivity (I) and avoidance (A). Beside children’s own evaluations, mothers and teachers also evaluated the children’s SPS in each year. The adapted questionnaire showed good reliability and validity (Cronbach α above .85; KMO above .75 for all scales). The mother’s sample represented a range of Hungarian mothers’ educational levels (MEL) in all years.

Based on the self-assessment, four factors (NPO, RPS, I, A) show increasing tendency with age, however, in the case of PPO significant age differences have not been found. The mothers’ ratings are the same in the case of NPO, PPO and RPS, but they think that their 12-year-olds show lower impulsivity and avoidance than their children of 13 and 14 years. According to the teachers’ rating, NPO, RPS and A show increasing tendency with age, however, the values of I and PPO decrease with age. In the case of gender differences, the teachers’ opinions differ significantly from those of mothers and children in all years.

The correlations between children’s and mothers’ ratings are the strongest, and the most divergent evaluations were given by teachers and mothers. The children-mothers correlation values and the correlations between MEL and self-assessment SPS show descending tendency with age. Results are intended to be used as the basis for a development programme in 2013.