

Students' results

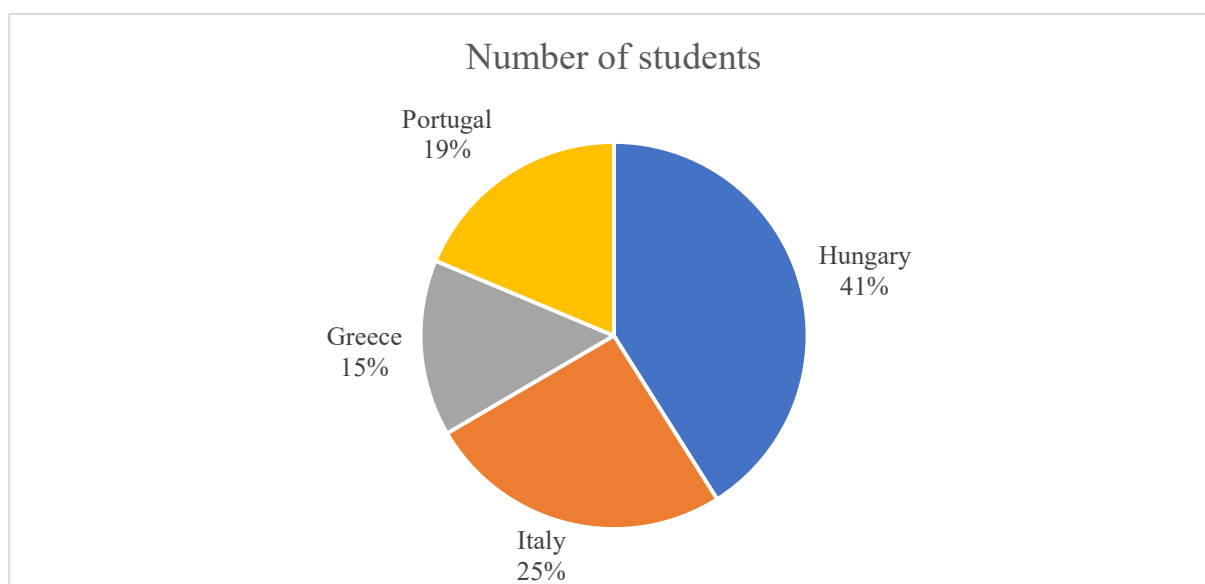
The aim of the study

The aim of the study was to identify the areas of competence that need to be developed in order to improve mental health and to manage conflicts among adolescents.

We focused on the ALARM signals of children struggling with anxiety. The main topics in the self-assessment test were for children: anxiety, stress, burnout, emotional intelligence, social competences.

Sample

The students' sample consist of 380 students from elementary and secondary school. The mean age was 14 years. Students came from 4 countries.

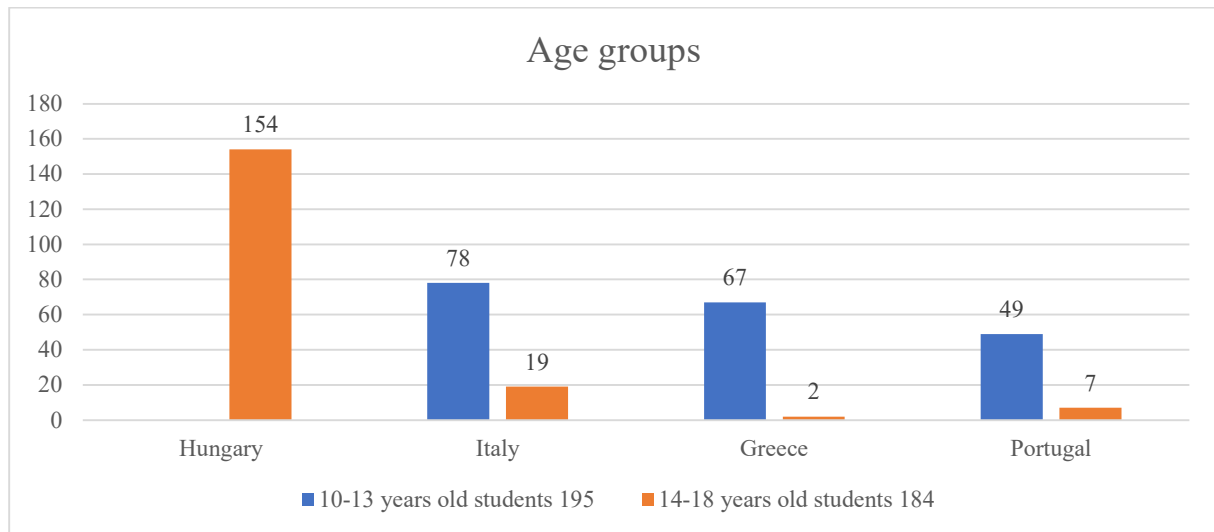


The main difference in the sample that students from Hungary came from secondary school (14-18 years old), while students from Italy, Greece and Portugal are younger (10-13 years old).



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Method and results

We used 4 questionnaires to focus on adolescents' mental health status.

1. Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a critical aspect of human development, influencing various facets of personal and social functioning. In adolescents, a period characterized by rapid physical, cognitive, and emotional changes, EI becomes particularly significant. Understanding how EI develops during adolescence and its implications can provide insights into promoting healthier emotional and social outcomes. Emotional intelligence generally encompasses four main components: (1) Self-awareness: Recognizing and understanding one's own emotions. (2) Self-regulation: Managing and regulating one's emotions in healthy ways. (3) Social awareness: Recognizing and understanding the emotions of others. (4) Relationship management: Using awareness of one's own and others' emotions to manage interactions successfully.

Results

We used the Wong Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) which consist of four dimensions namely self-emotional appraisal, others' emotional appraisal, regulation of emotion and use of emotion.

According to the statistical analyses we could observe there was age group differences in emotional intelligence. The analyses shows that younger adolescents (10-13 years old) shows

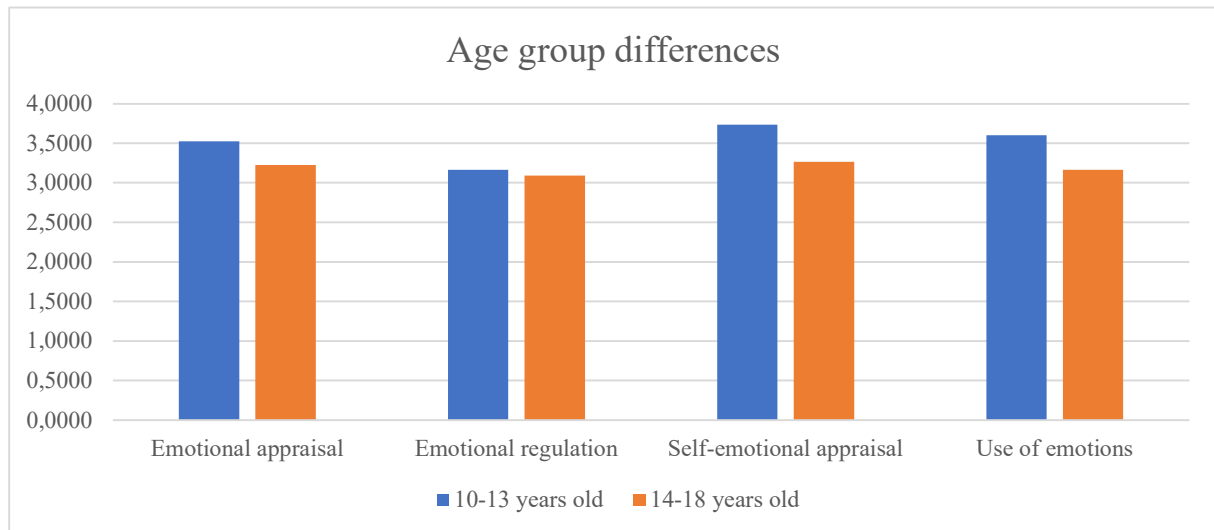


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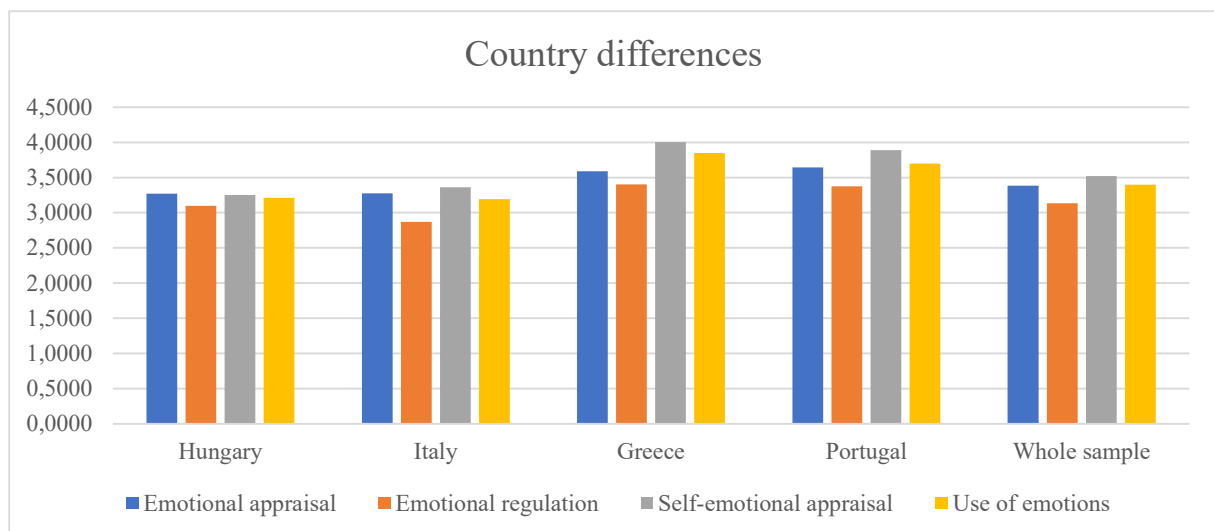
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significantly higher scores in self-emotional appraisal, in emotional regulation and in use of emotions compared to older adolescents (see Figure).



There were also country differences in emotional intelligence. According to the statistical analyses we could observe that in emotional appraisal Portugal adolescents showed the highest score, in emotional regulation adolescents from Greece and from Portugal showed the highest values while in use of emotions and self-emotional appraisal the Greek students' scores stood out (see Figure).



There are some implications of high emotional intelligence (EI) during adolescence which is associated with numerous positive outcomes. For example adolescents with higher EI typically

experience lower levels of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. They are better equipped to cope with stress and emotional challenges. It is also known that emotional intelligence contributes to better academic outcomes by enhancing skills such as motivation, attention within school setting. Adolescents with high EI tend to have more fulfilling and stable relationships. They are more empathetic and effective in managing conflicts, and have fewer behavioral problems.

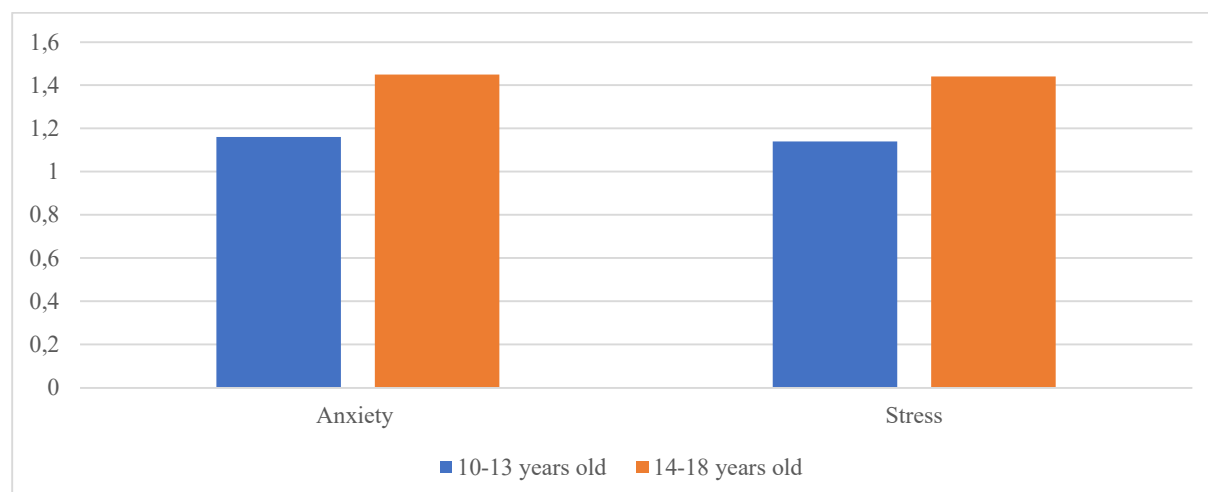
2. Anxiety and stress

Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterized by significant physical, emotional, and social changes. During this time, many adolescents experience heightened levels of anxiety and stress, which can impact their overall well-being, academic performance, and social relationships. Understanding the causes, symptoms, and management strategies for anxiety and stress in adolescents is essential for promoting healthy development and mental health.

Results

We measured the anxiety and stress level with the DASS scale. Adolescents have to evaluate how often they feel the symptoms of anxiety and stress. For each subscales they can get maximum 3 points.

According to the statistical analyses we could observe that older adolescents showed significantly higher level of stress and anxiety in accordance with the developmental changes (see Figure).



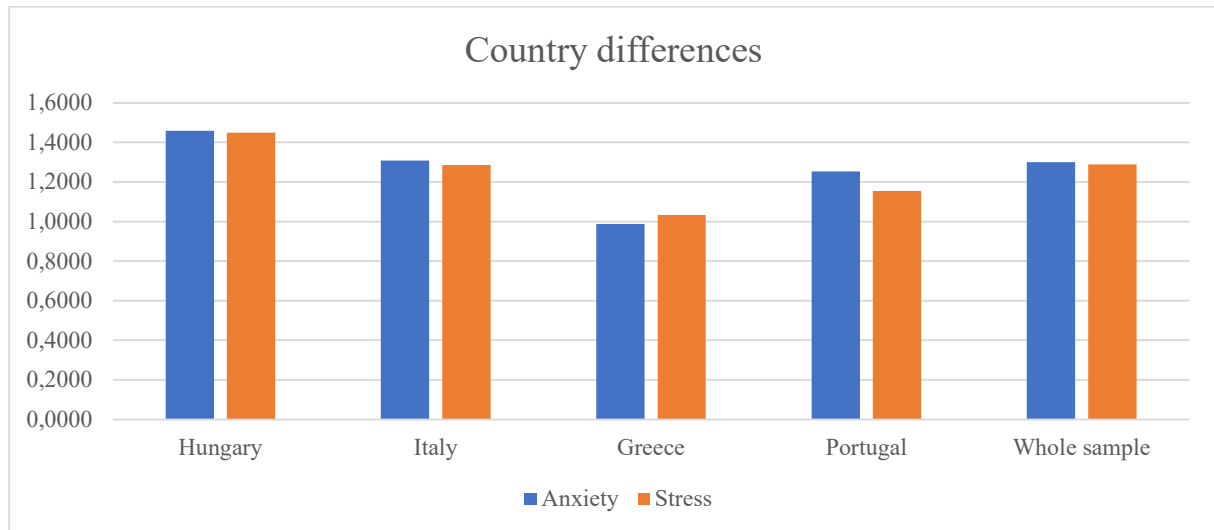


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We could also observe that there was a significant differences between the countries in anxiety and stress level (see Figure). But these results reflect manily the developmental changes because the highest level of anxiety and stress were among Hungarian adolescents but only this group contains adolescents from age 14-18 years.



So we can establish that primarily older adolescents need support in reducing anxiety and stress level. It is really important because high levels of anxiety and stress in adolescence can lead to several negative outcomes. For example it can threatened the mental Health, it could cause some difficulties in academic Performance and in social relationships. Chronic stress can lead to long-term health issues, including weakened immune function and increased risk of illnesses.

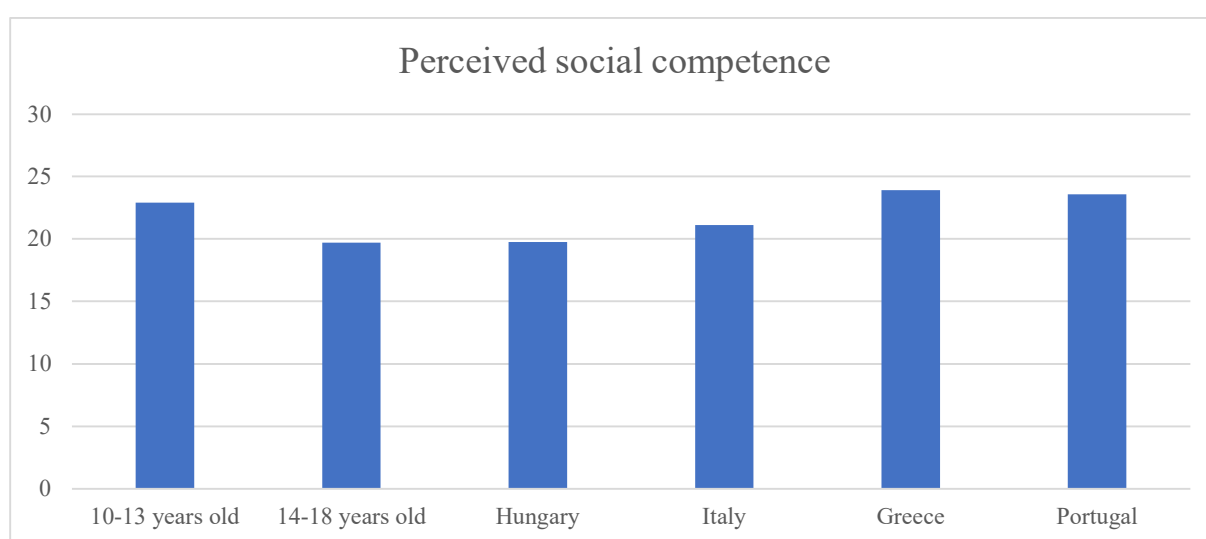
3. Perceived social competence

Perceived social competence refers to an individual's self-assessment of their ability to engage in and manage social interactions effectively. It encompasses a range of skills and behaviors necessary for successful social functioning, such as communication, empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution. Understanding perceived social competence is essential as it significantly impacts various life domains, including mental health, academic success, and overall well-being.

Results

We measured the perceived social competence with a 6-item scale. Adolescents can get maximum 30 points.

The statistical analyses showed that there was a significant differences between younger and older adolescents, and we can also observe that Hungarian adolescents' perceived the less social competence compared to the other countries (see Figures).



Perceived social competence is a vital aspect of an individual's social functioning, impacting mental health, academic performance, and overall life satisfaction. It is shaped by various factors, including family environment, peer interactions, educational experiences, cultural context, and personality traits. Promoting social competence through supportive and enriching environments can lead to healthier, more successful, and fulfilling lives. Understanding and enhancing perceived social competence is essential for fostering well-adjusted and socially capable individuals.

4. Burnout

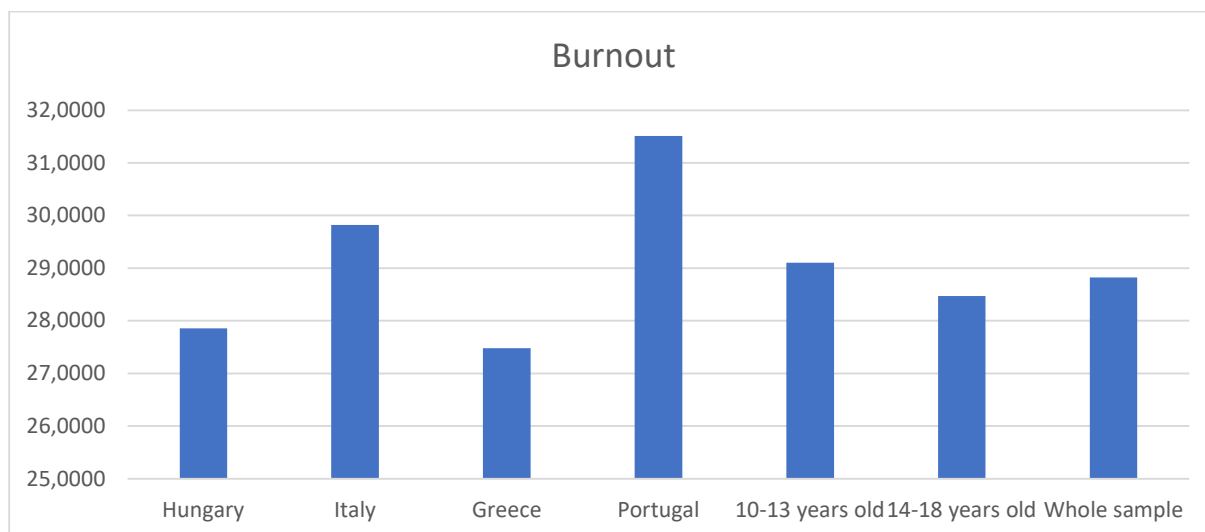
Student burnout is a psychological syndrome resulting from chronic academic stress and demands, characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism towards academic tasks, and a sense of inefficacy. It is increasingly recognized as a significant issue affecting students at various

educational levels, leading to detrimental effects on their mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. Student burnout generally includes three main components:

- **Emotional exhaustion:** Feeling drained and overwhelmed by academic responsibilities, leading to a depletion of emotional and physical resources.
- **Cynicism (or Depersonalization):** Developing a detached and negative attitude towards schoolwork, peers, and educational experiences.
- **Reduced Personal Accomplishment:** Feeling a lack of competence and achievement in academic tasks, which diminishes motivation and self-esteem.

Results

According to the statistical analyses there was no significant age differences and no significant differences between the countries. We could observe that the highest burnout scores showed the Portugal students, and the lowest scores was among Greek students (see Figure).



We formed separate groups among students based on the score of burnout indicators (low and high burnout indicators). The results differed from country to country as in the following table shows.



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	Students with low burnout	Students with high burnout
Greece	31,9 %	36, 2 %
Hungary	31,4 %	26,3 %
Italy	24,7 %	37, 1 %
Portugal	19, 6 %	48, 2 %

According to the statistical analyses we could observe that Portuguese students had the highest percentage of high burnout indicators. Almost the half of the Portuguese students sample showed high level of burnout. In addition, we could also observe that more than a third of Greek and Italian students had a high burnout index.

Student burnout is a pervasive issue with far-reaching consequences for mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. It is essential to recognize the signs of burnout and implement effective strategies to manage and prevent it. By fostering supportive environments, promoting healthy lifestyles, and encouraging realistic expectations, we can help students navigate academic challenges more effectively and maintain their well-being.

Our statistical analyses have also shown that burnout, anxiety and stress have a really strong positive relation. It means that the higher anxiety and stress students experience at school, the more the symptoms of burnout may increase.

Anxiety and stress are common experiences during adolescence, driven by various academic, social, and personal factors. These issues can significantly impact adolescents' mental health, academic performance, and social relationships. Implementing effective management strategies, fostering supportive environments, and seeking professional help when necessary can help adolescents navigate these challenges and promote healthy development.

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