Social, emotional, and behavioral skills in adolescence

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Who am I?



- Assistant Professor at the University of Padova
- Psicostat core team member *
- Memory & learning lab member

What I do

- SEB skills
 - Measurement
 - Change goals
 - Learning and achievement
- Methodology
 - Meta-research
 - Psychometrics
 - Statistical methods
- Geographical psychology

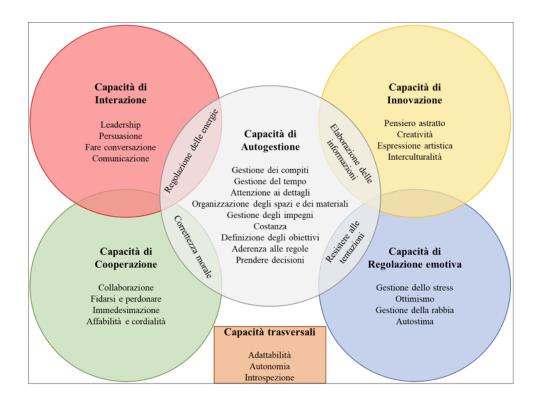
Social, emotional, and behavioral skills

- Definition
- Normative change
- Change goals
 - Students' perspectives
 - Parents' perspectives
 - Teachers' perspectives

A definition (again)

Social, emotional, and behavioral skills represent the abilities to establish and maintain social relationships, regulate emotions, and effectively manage behaviors toward goals and learning and mainly fall into five areas¹:

- Self-management skills
- Social engagement skills
- Cooperation skills
- Innovation skills
- Emotional resilience skills



Normative skill change

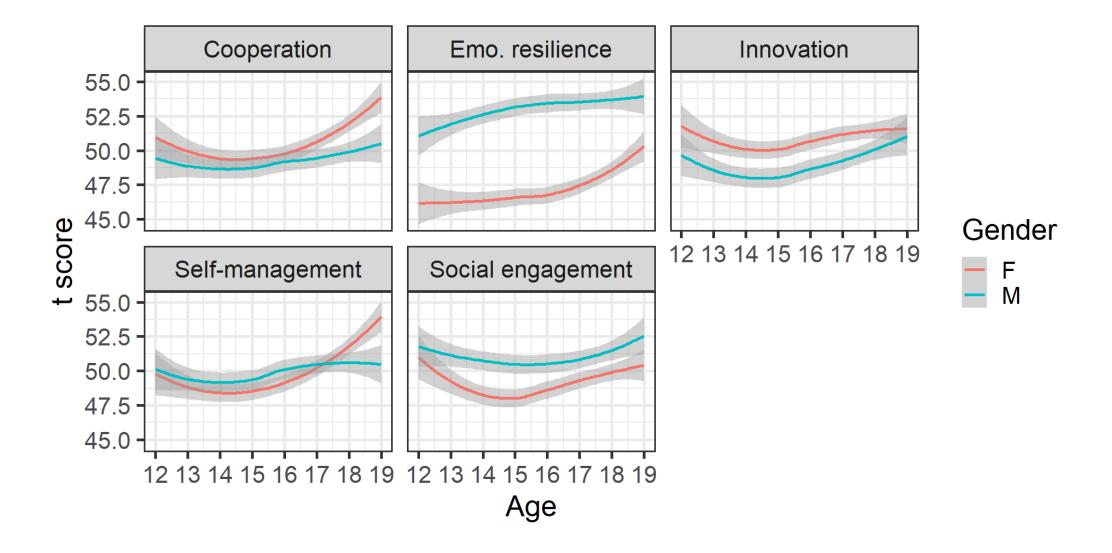
Do we observe normative changes in adolescence?²

- N = 4106 (F = 2215)
 - IT = 2888
 - US = 676
 - GER = 542
- Age = 15.94 (sd = 1.93)
 - Range = [12; 19]
- Measures: BESSI-192

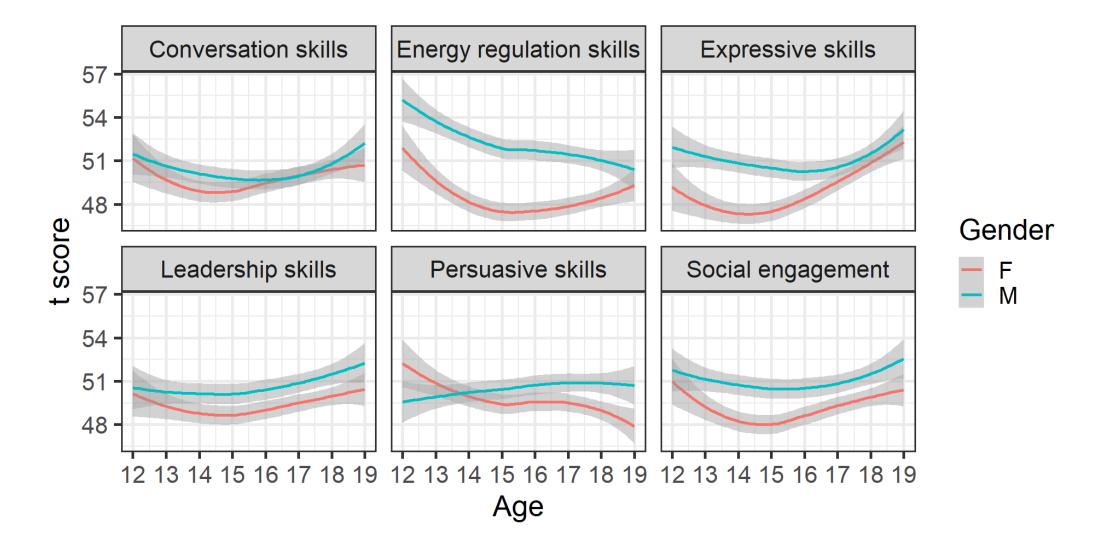
Feraco & Meneghetti (2023) Journal of Intelligence



Results



A focus on self-reported leadership



Change goals and beliefs

Method and people

- A brief definition of the trait/skill: "Whether someone 'tend to behave'/'is capable of behaving' in a social, assertive, and energetic way[, when they want or need to do so]"
 - Amount: "How much would you like to increase your level of [skill/trait name]?"
 - Feasibility: "How much do you think you could increase your level of [skill/trait name] during the next year, if you tried to do so?"







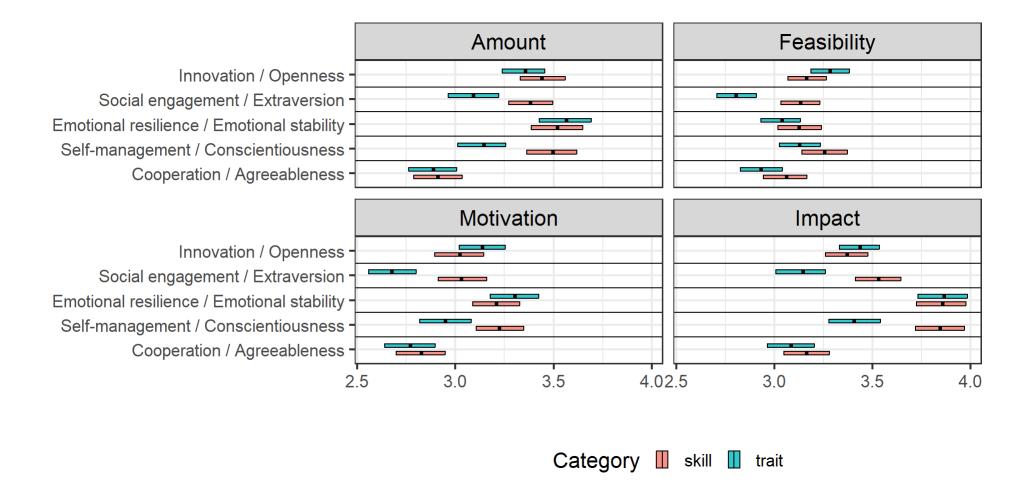




A first study on college students³ • • • •



- N = 264 (F = 184, IT = 276, US = 252)
- Age = 20.83 (*sd* = 2.68 [18; 46])



Feraco, Hudson & Soto (2025) Personality and Individual Differences

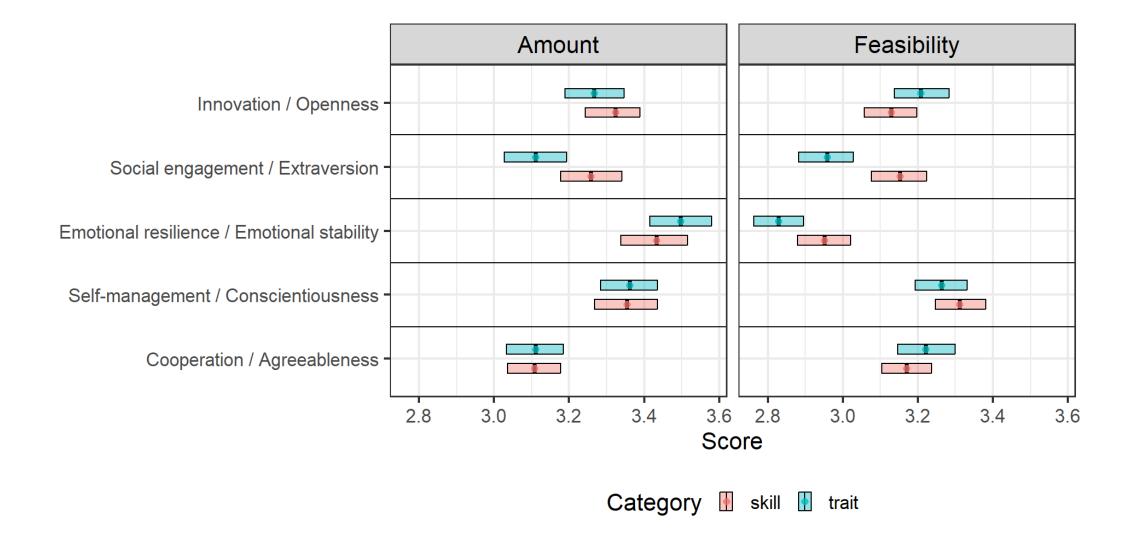
Moving toward adolescents - Students, teachers, and parents opinions 4 4 4 4

	Students	Parents	Teachers
N	676	460	704
Females	424	293	430
Males	250	167	265
Age	16.75 (1.53)	50.19 (5.78)	38.57 (11.37)

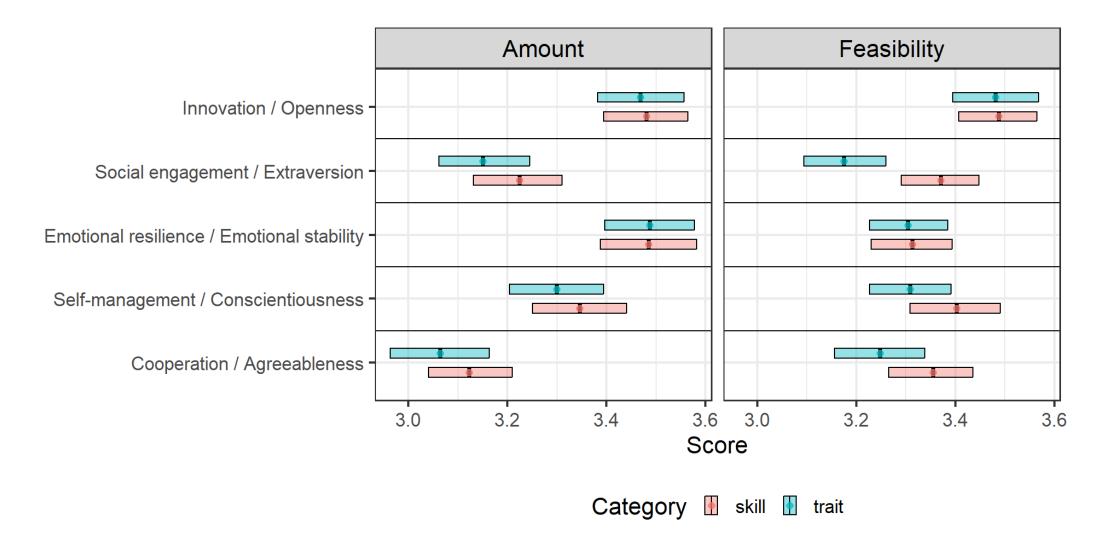
- What are the opinions of high school students about changing their traits or skills?
- What about their parents' and teachers' opinion about changing their students/children traits and skills?

Feraco, Jach ... & Soto (in prep)

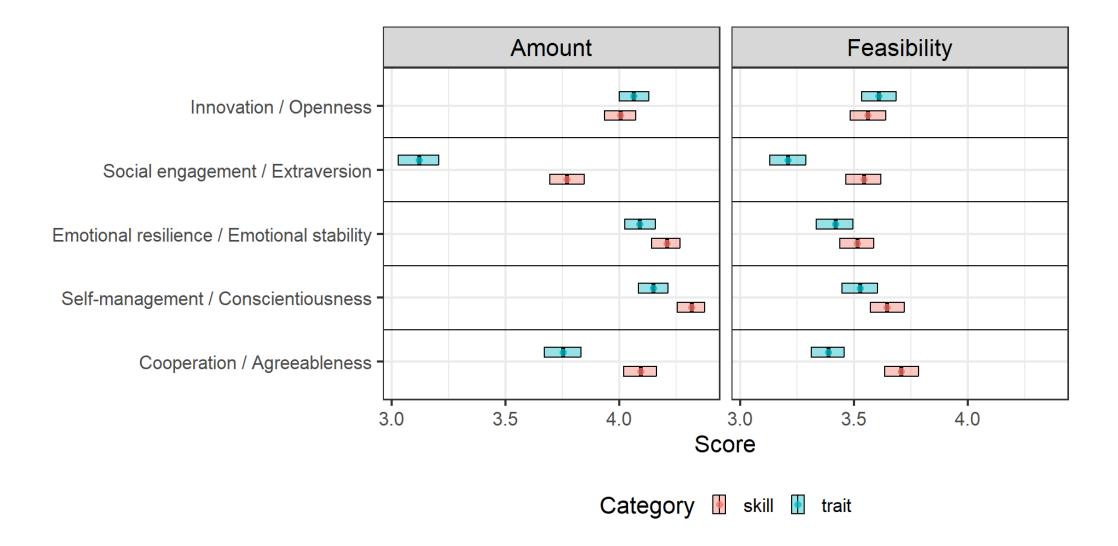
...the students



...their parents

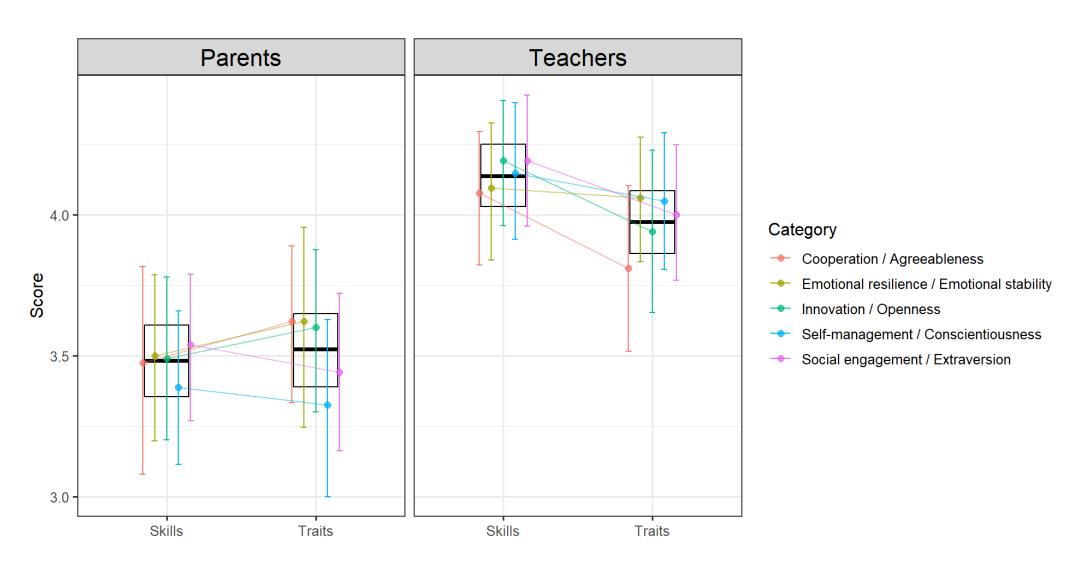


...and their teachers



...what if we ask them whether they want to participate in a workshop?

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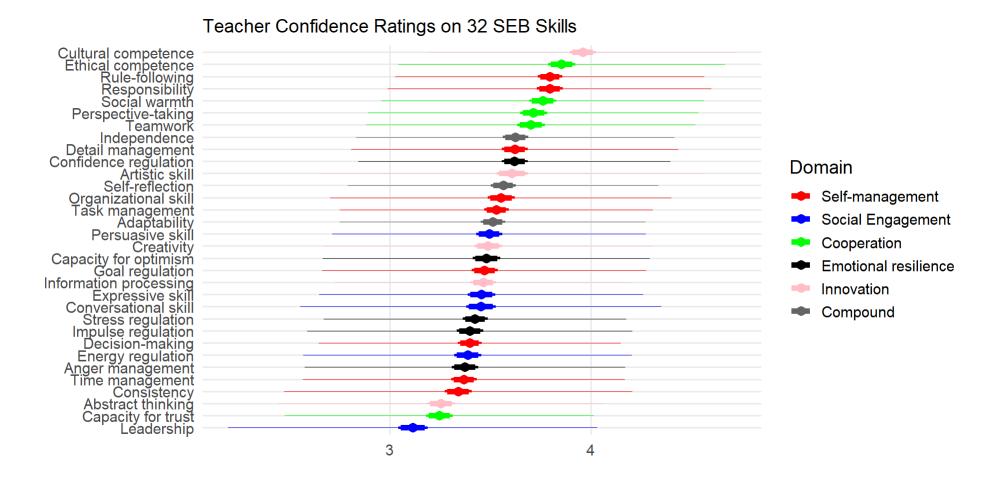


More about teachers 4 4 4 4

Variable		
N (Females)	1480 (1270)	
Age (Mean)	49.12 (9.72)	
Experience (Mean)	17.44 (11.27)	
Class Time (Mean)	10.89 (7.73)	
Grade: Primary (2)	518	
Grade: Middle (3)	364	
Grade: High (4)	432	
Role: Support (1)	374	
Role: Curricular (2)	1016	

Pellegrino ... & Feraco (in prep)

...results



All teachers read definitions of the 20 random SEB skills, and reported about their perceived confidence in teaching it to their students.

Back to the seed questions

Context factors

- Culture & Society
- Family background
- Social roles
- School environment
- Situational demands, chances

Developmental Context

specific set of circumstances, environments, and influences that surround and interact with a developing individual

Developmental tasks

- Identity formation
- Relationship building
- Academic achievement

Antecedents

early predictors of future leadership behavior, emergence and effectiveness

Person characteristics

- Sociodemographic
- Personality traits
- Identity
- Skills
- Motivation

Interpersonal Processes

processes through which a person is granted a leadership role by others

Social interactions

- Leadership & social behaviors
- Perceptions of self and others (peers, parents, teachers)
- Social hierarchies

Outcomes

the extent to which a person fulfills requirement of leadership role and the impact of it

Categories

- Proximal vs. distal
- Person vs. group
- Social vs. task-related

shaping

Thank you all!















Free slides here!



Data, code, and materials needed to reproduce these slides are available at: https://github.com/feracotommaso/Slides/

References

- 1. Soto, C. J., Napolitano, C. M. & Roberts, B. W. Taking Skills Seriously: Toward an Integrative Model and Agenda for Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills. *Current Directions in Psychological Science* **30**, 26–33 (2021).
- 2. Feraco, T. & Meneghetti, C. Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills: Age and Gender Differences at 12 to 19 Years Old. *Journal of Intelligence* **11**, 118 (2023).
- 3. Feraco, T., Hudson, N. W. & Soto, C. J. Differences in change goals between personality traits and social, emotional, and behavioral skills. *Personality and Individual Differences* **241**, 113200 (2025).