Assessing Online and Offline Adolescent Social Skills: Development and Validation of the Real and Electronic Communication Skills Questionnaire

# Details

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## Sample

Sample 1: Adolescents and young adults (N = 657), mean age 21.66 years, apprentices and university students in the Frenchspeaking part of Switzerland
Sample 2: 299 adolescents recruited in French-speaking middle schools (mean age 12.93)

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

Studies examining the associations between Internet use and social skills are increasingly frequent. However, most of them only evaluate offline social skills and consider them as equivalents to online social skills. So far, no instrument allowed differentiating social skills
depending on online versus offline contexts. The present study aimed to develop and validate the Real and Electronic Communication Skills questionnaire (RECS), a new measure evaluating several dimensions of social skills in two different contexts (i.e., face-to-face and
computer-mediated communication). Results of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses among a sample of 657 adolescents and young adults (mean age = 17.68 years; 67% female) showed that the best fitting model for each context is a bifactor solution, with one general factor (Social Competence) and four specific factors (Sociability, Emotion Decoding, Disclosure, and Assertiveness). Each specific factor was differentially correlated with theoretically relevant subscales of the Social Skills Inventory, confirming the external validity of the RECS. The RECS is the first instrument allowing not only to assess social competence in online settings, but also to quantify the relationships between offline social skills and their online counterpart. Given its ease of use and its brevity, the RECS is a useful and promising instrument to capture social skills in both online and offline contexts.

# Outcome

The RECS is the first instrument allowing not only to assess social competence in online settings, but also to quantify the relationships between offline social skills and their online counterpart. Given its ease of use and its brevity, the RECS is a useful and promising instrument to capture social skills in both online and offline contexts.