

PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL SKILLS IN INCLUSIVE PRIMARY CLASSROOMS IN ROMANIA. A NARRATIVE–PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the interaction between personality traits, social skills and inclusive teaching practices in Romanian primary classrooms. Personality profiles were measured using the age-adapted Big Five Inventory for Children (BFI-C), while social competence was assessed with the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS). Inclusive classroom practices differentiated instruction, emotional support and collaborative routines were evaluated through a structured teacher questionnaire. The mixed-methods design included 118 pupils and 42 teachers from four public schools, complemented by qualitative classroom observations and teacher reflections.

Results show that agreeableness and extraversion were strongly associated with higher social skill levels, and that inclusive practices made significant additional contributions beyond dispositional traits. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) scored lower on social skills; however, qualitative data indicated increased engagement during structured play and guided collaboration when teachers provided emotional scaffolding.

The paper contributes to current debates in inclusive pedagogy by demonstrating how individual dispositions and pedagogical climate jointly shape pupils' socio-emotional functioning. Findings highlight the importance of instructional environments that integrate personality-informed support with relational and collaborative teaching strategies. These results offer practical implications for strengthening inclusive practices in primary education.

Keywords: personality; social competence; inclusive practices; primary education; teacher mediation

1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a central priority for contemporary school systems, reflecting an international commitment to equity, participation and socio-emotional well-being [13]. At the same time, recent psychological frameworks emphasise that educational outcomes can be understood only by examining the interaction between individual dispositions and classroom environments, an approach increasingly supported in modern methodological models [7,15].

Personality traits play a significant role in how children relate to others, manage emotions and adapt to school expectations. Research consistently shows that traits such as extraversion and agreeableness are linked to cooperation, peer acceptance and