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### Editorial

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#### ABSTRACT

This editorial introduces a collection of studies exploring developmental trajectories and psychological adaptations across diverse domains, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between individual differences and contextual environments. Common themes include evidence-based interventions and educational innovation promoting social inclusion, enhancing autonomy, and well-being. The issue brings together considerations of neurodiversity, exceptional cognitive potential, digital engagement, and psychosocial vulnerability within the nexus of developmental processes. Within these diverse contexts, nurturing autonomy, competence, and relatedness serves as a common basis for supporting adaptive functioning and resilience. Together, the contributions reflect a shared vision of development as relational, contextual, and inclusive; this special issue, and the journal more broadly, pursue the integration of clinical, developmental, and social perspectives to foster a holistic understanding of human growth.

**Keywords:** Developmental trajectories; Neurodiversity; Psychological interventions; Autonomy and inclusion; Digital engagement

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The current issue of the JCDP provides an enlightening overview of developmental trajectories and psychological adaptations within a variety of contexts, ranging from neurodiversity to giftedness, digital education, and psychosocial vulnerability. The five contributions brought together here share the same core interest: the interaction between individual differences and the social-educational environment. This interaction is crucial for psychological well-being, learning processes, and identity development influenced by both intrinsic and contextual factors.

Two contributions, **Baccanti et al.** and **Cavallini et al.**, shed light on autism and broader neurodevelopmental conditions, enabling further advancement toward an inclusive understanding of neurodiversity. In the scoping review, Baccanti et al. underline peer-mediated interventions that help enhance social skills in adolescents with autism spectrum disorder and comorbid neurodevelopmental conditions. The findings highlight that structured, evidence-based group programs like PEERS® (Frankel & Laugeson, 2010) and Social Skills Training allow adolescents to develop social participation, autonomy, and communicative competence, which are so crucial to psychosocial development during adolescence. In a complementary way, the scoping review by **Cavallini et al.** on Autism and Menstrual Health points out a significant gap in clinical and educational research regarding the experience of autistic women. Highlighted herein is how hormonal cycles interplay with sensory and emotional regulation, often increasing distress and challenging autonomy. What these works together develop is the need for person-centered and gender-sensitive interventions that consider both the developmental and biological dimensions of neurodiversity. While **Baccanti et al.** focus on social functioning and inclusion, **Cavallini et al.** extend the lens to bodily and gendered experiences, showing how autonomy in self-care is a critical development milestone for neurodivergent individuals.

**Landi et al.**'s mini-review on *Parenting and Gifted Children's Development* extends the discussion from neurodiversity to exceptional cognitive potential. It outlines how parental stress, parenting styles, and school-family collaboration shape both well-being and achievement in gifted youth. The authors note that asynchronous development, in which cognitive skills outpace emotional and social maturity, may enhance family tensions unless buffered by responsive parenting and systemic support. This contribution resonates with the neurodiversity framework emphasized by **Baccanti et al.**, as both stress the need for context-sensitive educational systems able to cope with atypical developmental trajectories, whether driven by deficit, difference, or exceptional ability.

The contribution of **Vadalà et al.** to the issue of *Psychological Vulnerabilities and Digital Radicalization in Incels* brings a sociocultural and clinical aspect to this issue's developmental focus. The article discusses how social isolation, low self-esteem, and distorted online narratives may support identity formation centered on resentment and misogyny within incel subcultures. As mentioned earlier, echoing neurodevelopmental studies, this work argues that unmet psychological needs for belonging and competence, key concepts of Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017), may be related to maladaptive digital behaviors. It then calls for integrative interventions combining clinical support, sexual education, and media literacy in countering digital radicalization. Notably, this framework shares conceptual ground with **Napolitano et al.**'s gamified approach to learning, which uses the same psychological mechanisms for positive engagement: autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

In fact, **Napolitano et al.** present *Play It Cool*, a gamified platform for sustainability education according to the Self-Determination Theory. The system fosters intrinsic motivation and collective agency toward environmental responsibility through the integration of points, challenges, and narratives. The study provides a robust theoretical link

between digital design and motivational psychology, indicating how technology might act as a facilitator of prosocial learning rather than a source of alienation. This constitutes a direct conceptual counterpoint to the analysis of maladaptive digital communities by **Vadalà et al.** Thus, both papers delineate the spectrum of digital influence-from gamified empowerment to ideological entrapment-emphasizing the need for critical, ethically informed design of digital experiences.

These five articles together create one mosaic: developmental adaptation across contexts of difference that are cognitive, neurobiological, gendered, and digital. From the struggles of autistic adolescents toward social inclusion, via challenges for parents in supporting gifted children, to motivational mechanisms underlying sustainable learning and online engagement, one message unfolds: human development is relational and contextual. Interventions strengthening the autonomy, competence, and relatedness-either through education, parenting, or digital design-can turn vulnerability into agency.

The present issue of JCDP thus reflects the journal's commitment to bridging clinical, developmental, and social psychology, advancing an integrated science that recognizes individual differences as intrinsic dimension of human development and functioning.

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