

# Sociocultural Attitudes Regarding Gender Differences in Mathematics Education and Implications for Related Employment

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## ABSTRACT

For many years in several countries there has been gender inequality in mathematics achievement, and girls are less likely to study and specialize in precise sciences. A primary explanation for these gender differences is sociocultural. The attitudes and perceptions prevalent in a society's culture regarding gender can affect students' attitudes and performance in maths education and their choice to pursue professional careers in maths related areas. Studies have found that learning in single-sex classrooms can influence girls' achievements and attitudes. The goal of the present study is to examine the attitudes of girls in mixed and single-sex classrooms towards mathematics and towards gender differences in mathematics. The study population included 281 students in the fifth to ninth grades, attending state-religious schools in Israel. The participants completed a multiple-choice questionnaire, which addressed their attitudes toward mathematics and possible differences between boys and girls. Most of the girls, in both types of classrooms, expressed positive attitudes towards learning mathematics and egalitarian views, although differences were found as girls learning in mixed-sex classes expressed views that were slightly more egalitarian. In addition, girls in single-sex classrooms expressed a moderately higher agreement in the "girls are better" category.

## KEY WORDS

Single-sex classroom, mixed-sex classroom, mathematics, girls' attitudes, gender differences

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**Ezri Skital** is a PhD candidate in sociology at the West University of Timisoara, Romania. He holds 2 degrees in teaching mathematics. He has been an educator and math teacher for over 12 years and lectures at Hemdat Ha-Darom College in Israel.  
Email: ezriski@gmail.com

**Laurentiu-Gabriel Tiru** is an associate professor at the Sociology Department of West University of Timisoara, Romania. His areas of academic interests include research methodology and sociology of communication and mass-media. In recent years, he has coordinated research in various fields of sociology (traditional and online) and has participated as a postdoctoral research expert in several national and international projects.  
Email: laurentiu.tiru@e-uvt.ro

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