

Relationship warmth between college students and older siblings and its effect on their academic motivation.



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Introduction

The Role of Siblings in Young Adulthood

- Siblings are fundamental in the everyday lives of young people, in sharing their roles as models and as sources of advice and support¹.
- Warm sibling relationships lead to increased happiness and self-esteem and provides social and emotional support and comradeship in times of difficulty².
- Young people display a tendency to calculate their capabilities and success based on the comparison of themselves to their siblings³.
- Sibling warmth has an impact on young adults' academic achievement; positive sibling warmth leads to positive outcomes in this area⁴.
- Same-sex sibling dyads experience warmer and more intimate sibling relationships than mixed-sex dyads⁵.

Academic Motivation

- Academic motivation has been defined as the process of instigating and sustaining goal-directed academic activity⁶.
- Motivation is highly relevant in education and learning⁷.
- Crucially connected to a student's academic success at any age⁸.
- Higher levels of academic motivation leads to increased levels of academic achievement and lower levels of dropout rates in education⁹.

Sibling Relationship Warmth and Academic Motivation

- Environmental and interpersonal influences in a young adult's life, i.e., older siblings and parents, often affect college students' academic motivation¹⁰.
- Students who experience warm, positive and open relationships with their older siblings are likely to display higher academic achievement motivation¹¹.
- The association between sibling relationship warmth, academic support and academic motivation is moderated by gender¹² (older siblings often serve as positive role models for their younger siblings, especially where same-sex dyads are concerned¹³).

Limitations of Previous Research

Dominated with a focus on the resemblance between siblings in problem behaviours¹⁴.

Little consideration on how sibling relationships may affect academic motivation during young adulthood¹¹.

No studies based on siblings and academic motivation of Irish college students

Aims of The Present Study

Examine the relationship warmth of college students and their older sibling and investigate its effect on the academic motivation of the college student.

Examine relationship warmth of same-sex vs. mixed-sex sibling dyads and investigate its effect on the academic motivation of the college student.

Method

- Cross-sectional design with correlational analysis.

Materials/ Variables

Demographic Questionnaire

Used to collect data on gender, age, current course level of participant and gender, age and level of academic qualification of their older sibling closest in age to themselves.

The Lifespan Sibling Relationship Scale¹⁵

Used to measure the relationship warmth between the college student and their older sibling.

The College Academic Motivation Scale¹⁶

Used to measure the level of academic motivation of the college student.

Participant Characteristics

- 152 Irish college students with at least one older sibling.

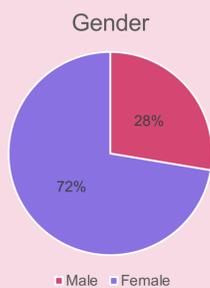


Figure 1: Gender of Participants

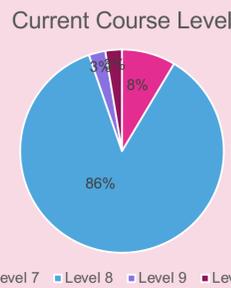


Figure 2: Current Course Level of Participants

Older Sibling Characteristics

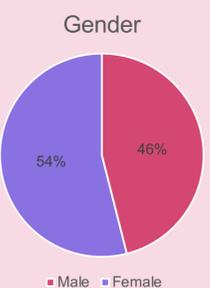


Figure 3: Gender of Older Sibling

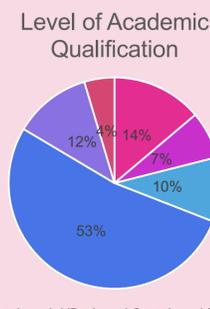


Figure 4: Level of Academic Qualification of Older Sibling

Results

- There was a significant difference in relationship warmth for same-sex sibling dyads ($M=90.64$, $SD=17.64$), and opposite-sex sibling dyads ($M=79.53$, $SD=15.49$); $t(152)=3.95$, $p<0.001$.
- The magnitude in the difference of the means (mean difference = 11.10, 95% CI: 5.54 to 16.67) was moderate ($\eta^2 = 0.094$).

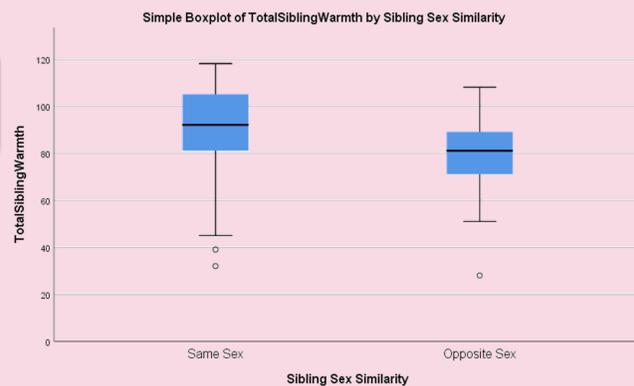


Figure 5: Difference in Sibling Warmth based on Sex Similarity of Sibling Dyad

- Sibling relationship warmth explained 3.5% of the variance in academic motivation.
- Sibling relationship warmth and sibling sex similarity as a model explained 6.2% of the variance in academic motivation, $F(2, 149) = 4.94$, $p=0.008$.

Conclusion

- The results are in the initial stages of being analyzed and the overall findings of this research are being considered.
- The relationship between sibling relationship warmth and the academic motivation of college students is not highly significant.
- The potential reasons for this will be considered.
- It is also expected that the many factors affecting academic motivation and the high number of female participants in this study will be explored within in the discussion of this research project.

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