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**WOOSTER**


# The Influence of Communication Modality on Sibling Relationship Quality in Young Adults.


Motolani Fayemi

(Advised by Dr. Michael B. Casey)

## INTRODUCTION

 Young adults today have more ways to communicate with siblings than way before. Yet despite frequent contact, many siblings feel their conversations remain surface level check ins lacking genuine understanding. Relationships usually feel more like a routine than a close relationship especially during the transition of moving to college away from siblings.

 In this era of multiple communication modes, does the variety of how we communicate with siblings determine the actual quality and warmth of that relationship—beyond simply how often we talk?



## HYPOTHESES

Media Richness Theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986): Richer media (e.g., video calls) enable more nuanced emotional communication than leaner media (e.g., text messaging).

Social Convoy Model (Antonucci et al., 2014): During young adulthood, sibling relationships require more intentional effort to maintain closeness after geographic separation.

Hypothesis: Controlling for age gap and gender composition, young adults (ages 18–25) who report frequent, multi-mode communication with a sibling will report significantly higher levels of sibling relationship warmth than those who report infrequent or single-mode communication.

## METHOD

Participants: Final sample N=223 young adults (ages 18–25) with at least one sibling.

Gender: 124 women, 92 men, 5 non-binary (gender comparisons used n=216).

Measures:

Lifespan Sibling Relationship Scale (LSRS;  $\alpha = .89$ ): 23 items measuring Adult Affect (feelings), Adult Behavior (actions), and Adult Cognition (thoughts) toward a sibling.

Sibling Communication Method: Frequency & modality of texting, calls, video calls, etc. (1 = Never to 5 = Daily).

Peer Attachment (IPPA;  $\alpha = .84$ ): 25 items measuring closeness, trust, and support in friendships.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations

Scale	N	Mean	S.D			
Total Lifespan	216	56.72	14.71			
Sibling Comm.	211	15.07	5.29			

Please contact [mfayemi26@wooster.edu](mailto:mfayemi26@wooster.edu) for additional information

## RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Main Hypothesis was not supported Hypothesis not supported. More frequent and varied sibling communication predicted lower sibling warmth, not higher.

Possible explanation: Siblings with weaker relationships may communicate more to compensate for perceived distance (reverse causality). Cross-sectional design cannot determine cause and effect.

Positive finding: Sibling communication predicted stronger peer attachments, suggesting sibling interaction may build social skills that transfer to friendships.

Gender patterns: Males reported warmer sibling relationships; females reported stronger friendships.

Practical implication: Communication quality and content may matter more than frequency or variety. Routine "check-ins" may not sustain emotional closeness.

Future research: Longitudinal studies are needed to determine whether more communication weakens sibling bonds or weaker bonds prompt more communication.

Relationship	correlation <sup>®</sup>	p	Results
Sibling Communication × Peer Attachment	0.16	0.021	Positive
Sibling Communication × Total LSRS	-0.65	<.001	Negative
Sibling Communication × Adult Affect	-0.52	<.001	Negative
Sibling Communication × Adult Behavior	-0.72	<.001	Negative
Sibling Communication × Adult Cognition	-0.52	<.001	Negative