

Adolescent Friendship Quality: Analyzing the Impact of Internalizing and Externalizing Symptoms, Gender, and Age

Friendships play an important role in health and development, especially during adolescence. Studies have found that, among adolescent friendship pairs, there is a positive association between closeness and co-rumination and a positive association between co-rumination and internalizing problems (You and Bellmore, 2011). Additionally, friendships between boys and girls have been found to differ from an early age. Girls typically show connection-oriented goals within friendship pairs while boys value status-oriented goals (Rose and Rudolph, 2006). These differences are also associated with differences in internalizing symptoms (e.g., anxiety, depression) and externalizing symptoms (e.g., fighting, aggression) in boys and girls. While these links are present, research on the connection between friendship quality and internalizing and externalizing symptoms is limited. The purpose of the current study is to examine gender and age differences in internalizing and externalizing symptoms and to examine the associations among internalizing symptoms, externalizing symptoms, and friendship quality. Participants in the study include boy and girl friendship dyads in the eighth, ninth, and tenth grade who participated in a larger study. They completed a series of surveys on Qualtrics. As part of these questionnaires, the Friendship Quality Questionnaire (Rose, 2002) was used to assess qualities of their friendship such as validation and caring, conflict and resolution, affective closeness, emotional closeness, help and guidance, companionship and recreation, and intimate exchange. The Youth Self-Report Form (Achenbach, 1991) assessed internalizing symptoms and externalizing symptoms. Analyses will be conducted to address whether gender and age differences exist in levels of internalizing and externalizing symptoms and whether an association exists between friendship quality and internalizing and externalizing symptoms for boys and girls.