

The Impact of Environmental factors on the Acquisition of Social Skills

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Introduction

Social skills and certain behaviors begin to form as early as two months old. These skills include, but are not limited to anger management, empathy, sympathy, and social perceptiveness. Factors like parents being present can have an impact on these skills, but the presence or absence of siblings, the presence or absence of pets, and being homeschooled versus going to a conventional school are the focus of this project. My hypothesis for this project is people will have higher social skills score if they have siblings and pets and if they have been conventionally schooled, rather than not having siblings or pets and if they have been homeschooled. However, it can get complicated if they have two of the criteria rather than all three. For example, if someone was homeschooled, but had siblings and pets, they would have a higher score than a homeschooler with no siblings or pets. I also believe that siblings will have a greater impact on social skills than pets.

Methods

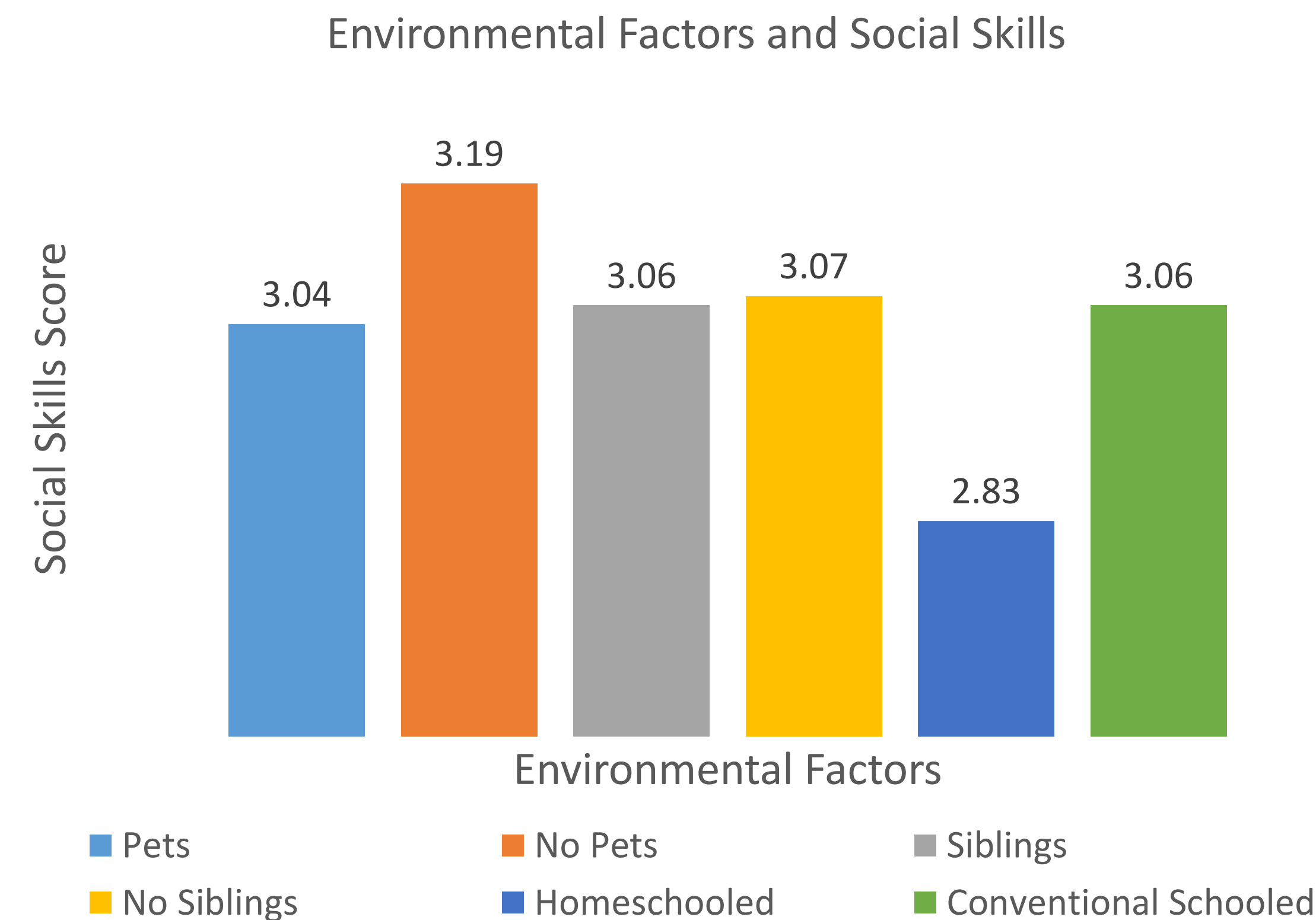
Participants

I gave a survey to 113 participants for this study. My ideal goal was to have roughly an even distribution among these categories; siblings, no siblings, pets, no pets, conventional schoolers, and homeschoolers. I want these numbers for a chance of having more statistically significant statistics. I recruited these numbers by sending an email to fellow students and advertising on Facebook. The only restriction on the participants was that they must have already graduated high school, and must be 18 years old.

Procedures

The 118 question survey was given online to the participants. The 100 questions of the survey was based off of the Scale for Interpersonal Behavior. This questionnaire has 50 actions repeated twice. The first time measuring nervousness, and the second measuring how often people do these certain tasks. The last 18 questions are demographic questions that ask about siblings, pets, and schooling.

Results



Correlations

- The correlation between pets and social skills: $r = .091$, $p = .339$.
- The correlation between siblings and social skills: $r = .001$, $p = .994$.
- The correlation between homeschool and social skills: $r = .063$, $p = .512$.
- The correlation between conventional school and social skills: $r = .022$, $p = .821$

Independent Samples T-tests

- Social Skills in pet owners versus non-pet owners:
 - $t(111) = -.485$, $p = .339$, $d = -.217$
- Social Skills in people with siblings versus no siblings:
 - $t(111) = -.007$, $p = .994$, $d = -.003$
- Social skills in people who were homeschooled versus conventionally schooled:
 - $t(109) = -.658$, $p = .512$, $d = -.277$

Discussion

My results unfortunately do not support my hypotheses. There was no significant evidence that could state that siblings, pets, or conventional schooling had an impact on how social skills were gained. I believe the data I have received was insignificant due to the uneven amount of numbers I received. Only 3 participants were homeschooled, 10 participants had no siblings, and 18 participants had no pets. Due to this skew of numbers, the data was not significant. In the future, I would need to make more of an effort to reach out to more individuals. This can be done by reaching out to homeschool communities. For this experiment, higher numbers is the only solution in all the categories, especially the homeschool, no pets, and no siblings categories. However, in the chart, the average social skills score for homeschoolers was 2.83, and for conventional schoolers it was 3.06. Also, a question in the survey had the participants rank their social skills on a 1 to 5 scale. The average rated score was 3.354, while the average on the social skills scale was 3.105. This could be interpreted as people rate themselves higher than their actual score.

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