

# The Relationship Between Stress Levels, Communication Skills, and Relationship Satisfaction

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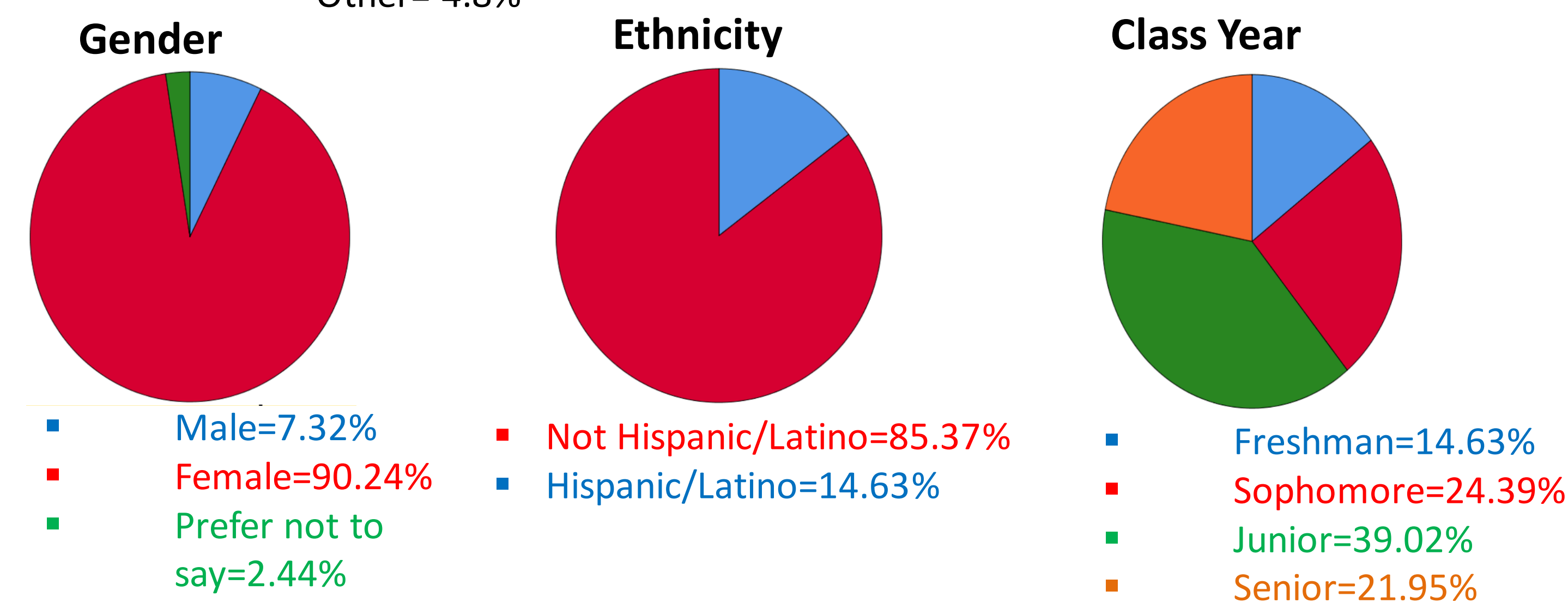
## Introduction

Objective: To assess the influence of stress levels and communication skills on relationship satisfaction for college students.

- When couples are experiencing high levels of stress, this can take a toll on their communication skills, leading to lower overall relationship satisfaction (Lavner et al. 2016).
- Research has found:
  - As stress levels increase, relationship satisfaction will decrease (Lavner et al, 2016)
  - As stress levels increase, communication skills decrease (Nguyen et al., 2020).
  - As communication skills decrease, relationship satisfaction will decrease.
- Hypotheses:
  - Relationship satisfaction will be higher when couples have better communication skills.
  - Communication skills will decrease when there are higher levels of stress.
  - Relationship satisfaction will be lower when there are high levels of stress.

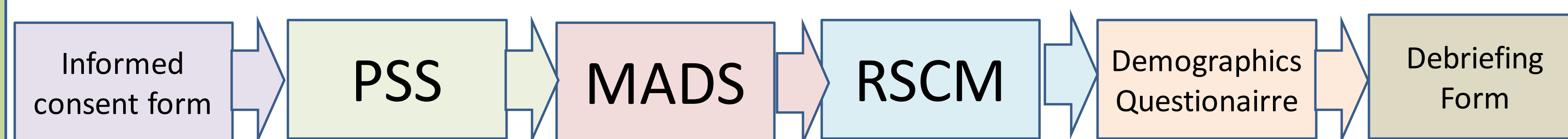
## Method

- Participants: 41 ECSU undergraduates, at least 18 or older, mean age= 20.41 ( $SD=1.52$ ).
- Racial Background:
  - White/Caucasian= 73.2%
  - Black/ African American= 12.2%
  - Asian=9.8%
  - Other= 4.8%



- Measures:
  - Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Wickrama et al., 2013)
  - Managing Affects and Differences Scale (MADS; Arellano & Markman, 1995)
  - Relationship Satisfaction Composite Measure (RSCM; Park et al., 2019)

Procedure:



## References

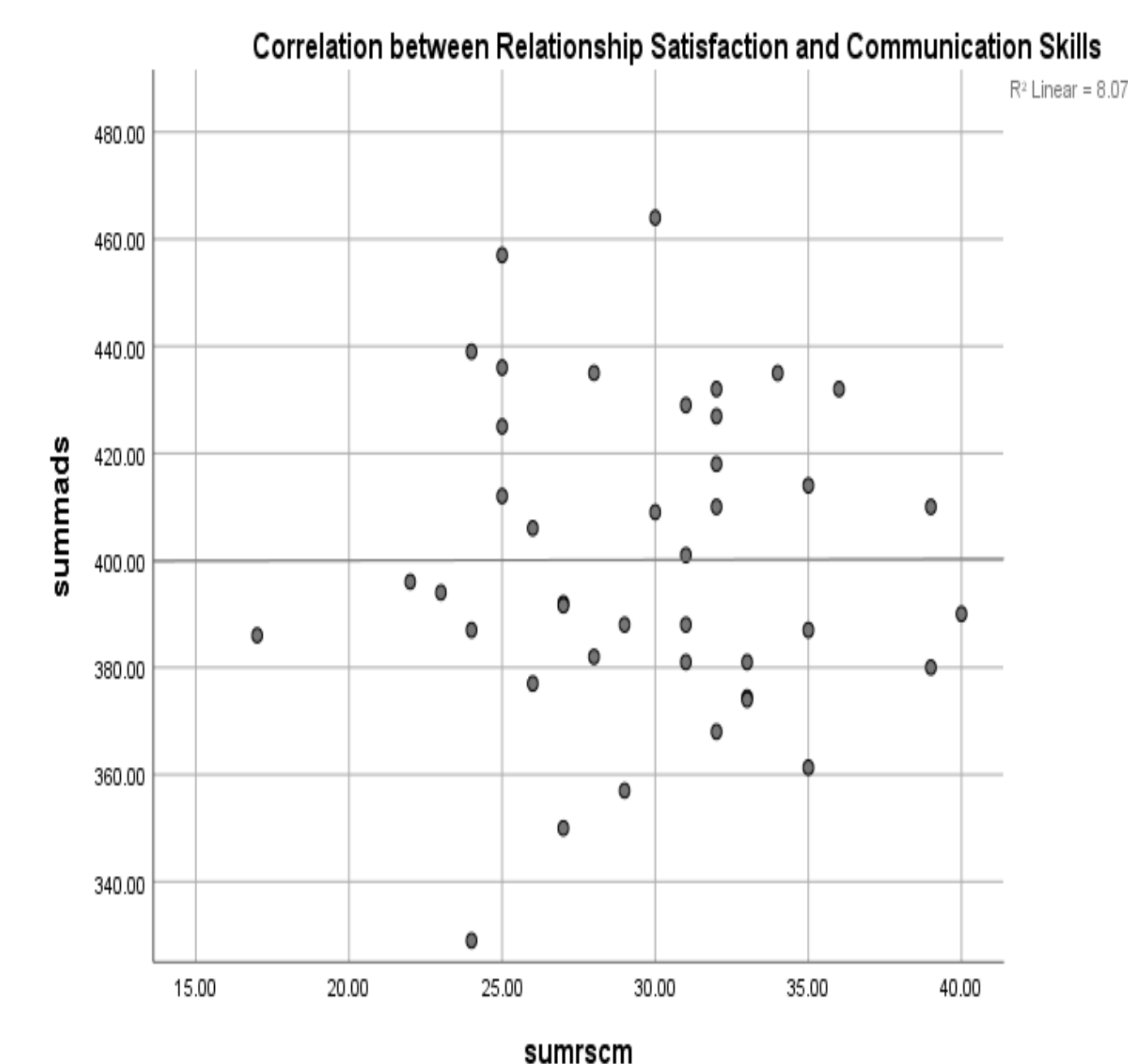
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## Results

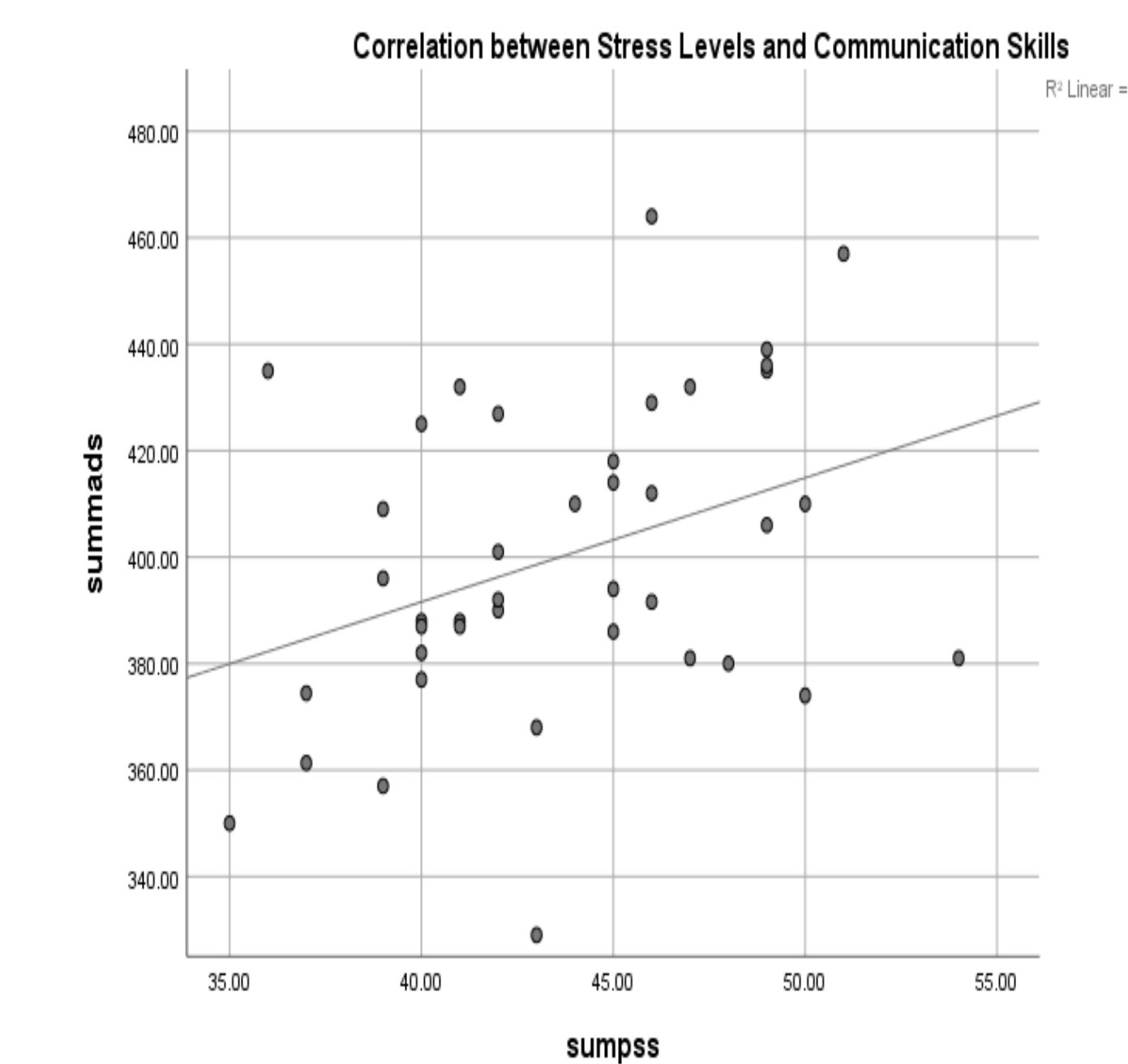
### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
sumpss	41	35.00	54.00	43.6585	4.50893
summads	41	329.00	464.00	400.1280	29.22113
sumrscm	41	17.00	40.00	29.6829	4.98718
Valid N (listwise)	41				

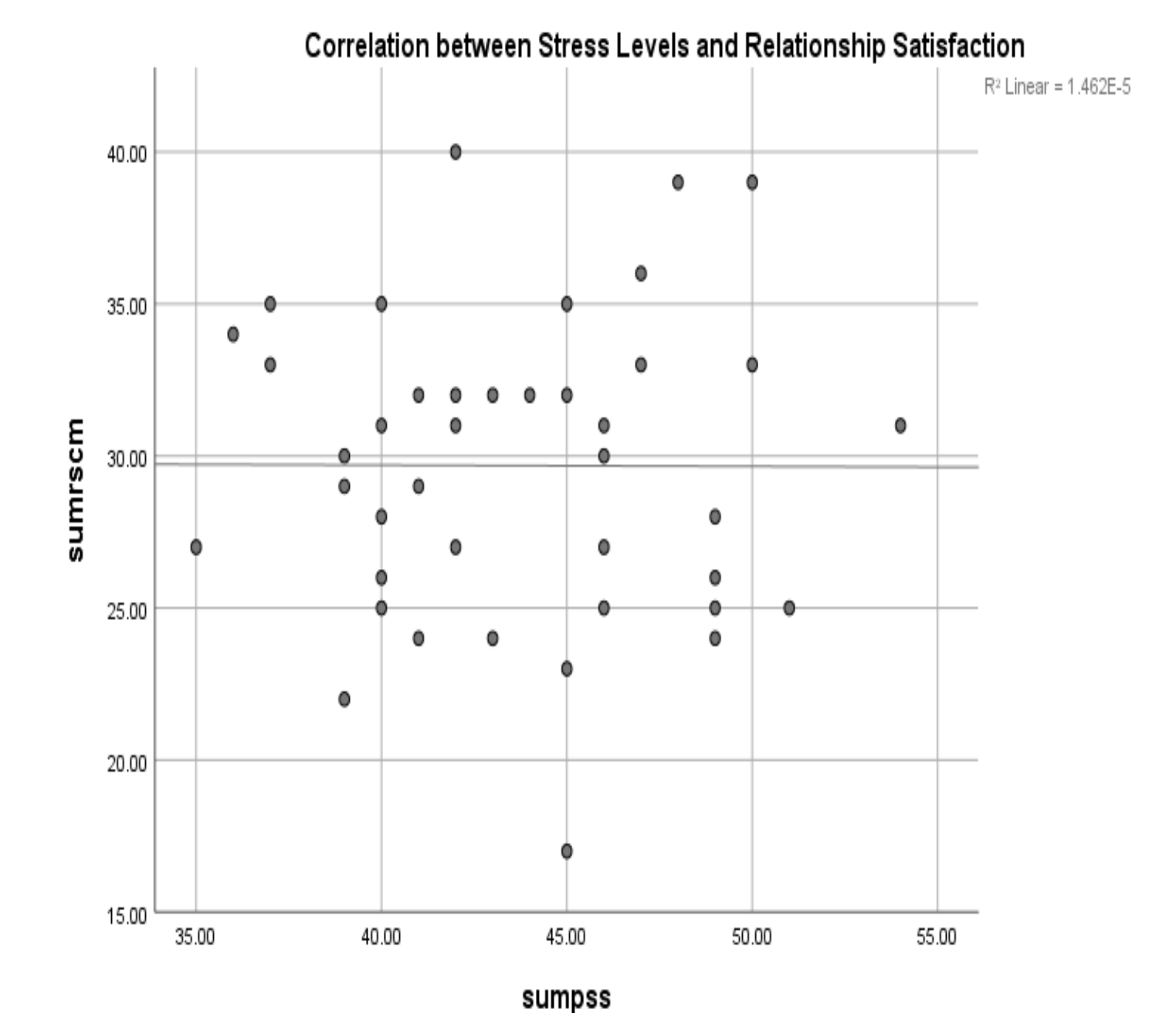
Internal Reliability:  
 -Perceived Stress (PSS):  $\alpha = .51$   
 -Communication Skills (MADS):  $\alpha = .82$   
 -Relationship Satisfaction (RSCM):  $\alpha = .39$



- Relationship satisfaction was not significantly related to communication skills,  $r(39) = -.00, p = .986$ .



- There was a significant positive correlation between stress levels and communications skills  $r(39) = .360, p = .02$



- Relationship satisfaction was not significantly related to stress levels,  $r(39) = .00, p = .981$

## Discussion

- It was hypothesized that there would be a negative relationship between communication skills and stress levels. However, the results indicated a significant positive relationship between the two variables.
- The other two hypotheses were not supported.
  - There was no relationship between relationship satisfaction and communication skills.
  - There was no relationship between relationship satisfaction and stress levels.

### Limitations

- External Validity:
  - The results do not fairly represent individuals outside of the sample.
  - A lack of external validity was also present because most of these participants in the study were women (90.24%), and Caucasian (73.2%)
  - This implies that this sample was biased towards only one gender/race and the lack of representation of males in this sample will cause the results to provide a skewed interpretation of data.
- Internal Reliability:
  - Internal reliability was too low in this study for the PSS ( $\alpha = .51$ ) and for the RSCM ( $\alpha = .39$ ).

### Future Research

- Go beyond college student demographics.
  - Perhaps, include married couples in the sample in the form of a longitudinal study.
- It is also strongly encouraged that males and females should be represented equally in the sample.
  - This will prevent gender bias and provide a more accurate interpretation of the data.
- Assess relationship satisfaction over the whole span of the relationship.
  - This will allow researchers to examine how the relationship between the variables fluctuate throughout the course of life.

### Implications

- intervention programs
  - May help couples understand and process other difficulties within the relationship (outside of stress and communication skills) and teach them how to address these problems more effectively.