

Examining the Relationship Between Resilience, Caregiving Burden, and Friendship Among Aphasia Caregivers

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Introduction

- The importance of resilience (Hunting Pompon & Mach, 2022) and friendship (Azios et al., 2022) in aphasia recovery is emerging; however, there is little research in these areas focused on those caregiving for a loved one with aphasia.
- Becoming a caregiver is a major life event involving many new responsibilities, resulting in caregiving burden and limited time or energy for the caregivers’ personal needs and social interactions (Haley et al., 2019; Madden et al., 2023; Shafer et al., 2019).
- For some, resilience can act as a protective factor against social isolation and promote good mental health (Palacio et al., 2020).

Research Questions

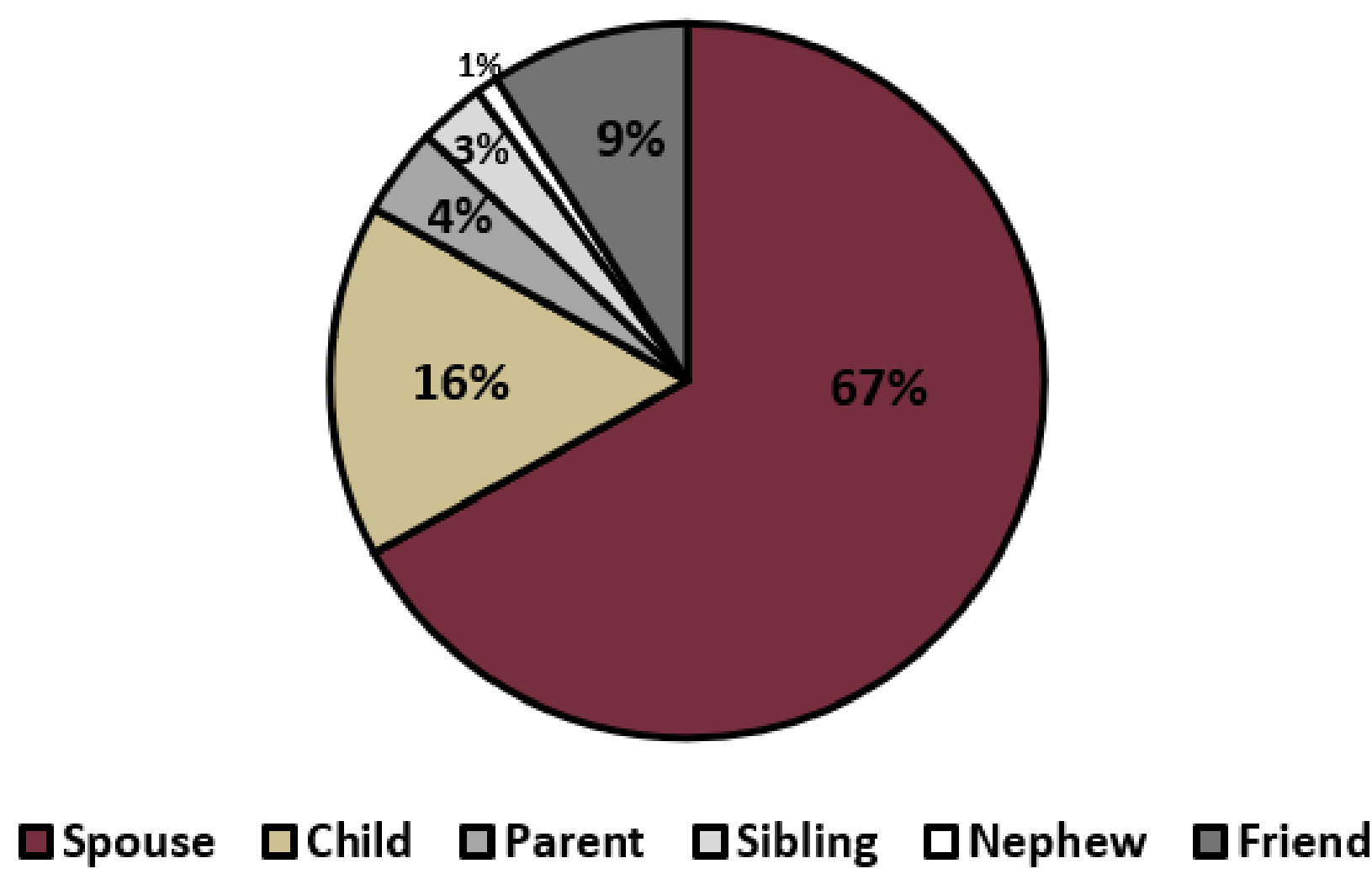
This study aimed to **understand positive and negative influences on aphasia caregivers’ friendship experiences**. We asked how does:

- Perceived **resilience** relate to friendship?
- Perceived **caregiving burden** relate to friendship?
- Age, time, health, and aphasia severity** relate to friendship?

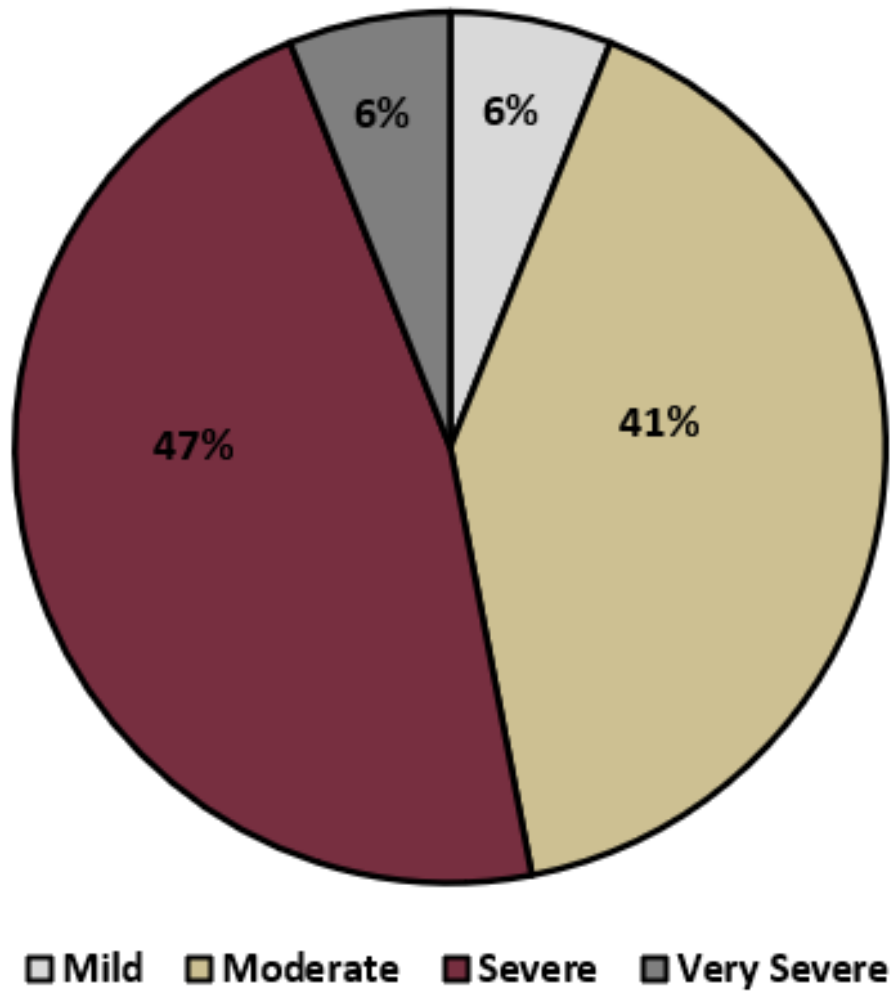
Participants

- 70 caregivers to individuals with stroke-induced aphasia**
- Age: $M = 59.89$ years ($SD = 12.86$, range = 30-85)
- Gender: 57 women, 12 men, 1 non-binary person
- Race and Ethnicity: 61 White, 5 Black, 3 Asian, and 1 Latino
- Employment: 24 full time, 13 part-time, 27 not working
- Years Caregiving: $M = 4.9$ years ($SD = 4.39$, range = 0.5-23)

Caregiver's Relationship to Loved One



Caregiver's Perception of Loved One's Aphasia



Methods

Participants completed a Qualtrics survey composed of 4 sections:

- About You**
- About Your Loved One With Aphasia**
- Caregiving Experiences**
- Friendship Experiences**

This analysis focused on a subset of the survey items, shown below:

UW Resilience Scale (Dagmar et al., 2018)

	Not at all	A little bit	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much
I maintain a positive outlook even in bad circumstances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When something happens that makes me feel stressed, I usually calm down quick	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I experience a set-back, I keep moving forward	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Although I feel bad sometimes, I usually bounce right back	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During stressful times, I am usually calm and relaxed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do what is important to me, even when stressed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When something stressful happens, I keep going	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When things go wrong in my life, I can pick myself up and start again	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Zarit Caregiving Burden Interview (Bedard et al., 2001)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite frequently	Nearly Always
Do you feel that because of the time you spend with your loved one with aphasia that you don't have enough time for yourself?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel stressed between caring for your loved one with aphasia and trying to meet other responsibilities (work/family)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel angry when you are around your loved one with aphasia?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel that your loved one with aphasia currently affects your relationship with family members or friends in a negative way?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel strained when you are around your loved one with aphasia?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel that your health has suffered because of your involvement with your loved one with aphasia?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Hawthorne Friendship Scale (Hawthorne, 2006)

	Not at all	Occasionally	About half the time	Most of the time	Almost always
It has been easy to relate to others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt isolated from other people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had someone to share my feelings with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I found it easy to get in touch with others when I needed to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When with other people, I felt separate from them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt alone and friendless	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (Cohen et al., 1985)

	Definitely true	Probably true	Probably false	Definitely false
If I wanted to go on a trip for a day (e.g., to the mountains, beach, or country), I would have a hard time finding someone to go with me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that there is no one I can share my most private worries and fears with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I were sick, I could easily find someone to help me with my daily chores	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is someone I can turn to for advice about handling problems with my family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I decide one afternoon that I would like to go to a movie that evening, I could easily find someone to go with me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I need suggestions on how to deal with a personal problem, I know someone I can turn to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't often get invited to do things with others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Data Analysis

- Descriptive statistics (e.g., means, SD, ranges, %) were derived.
- Spearman's correlations were calculated for variables of interest.
- Based on statistically significant correlations, a standard multiple regression analysis with aphasia severity and scores on the UW Resilience Scale and Zarit Caregiving Burden Scale entered as predictors of the Hawthorne Friendship Scale score was conducted.

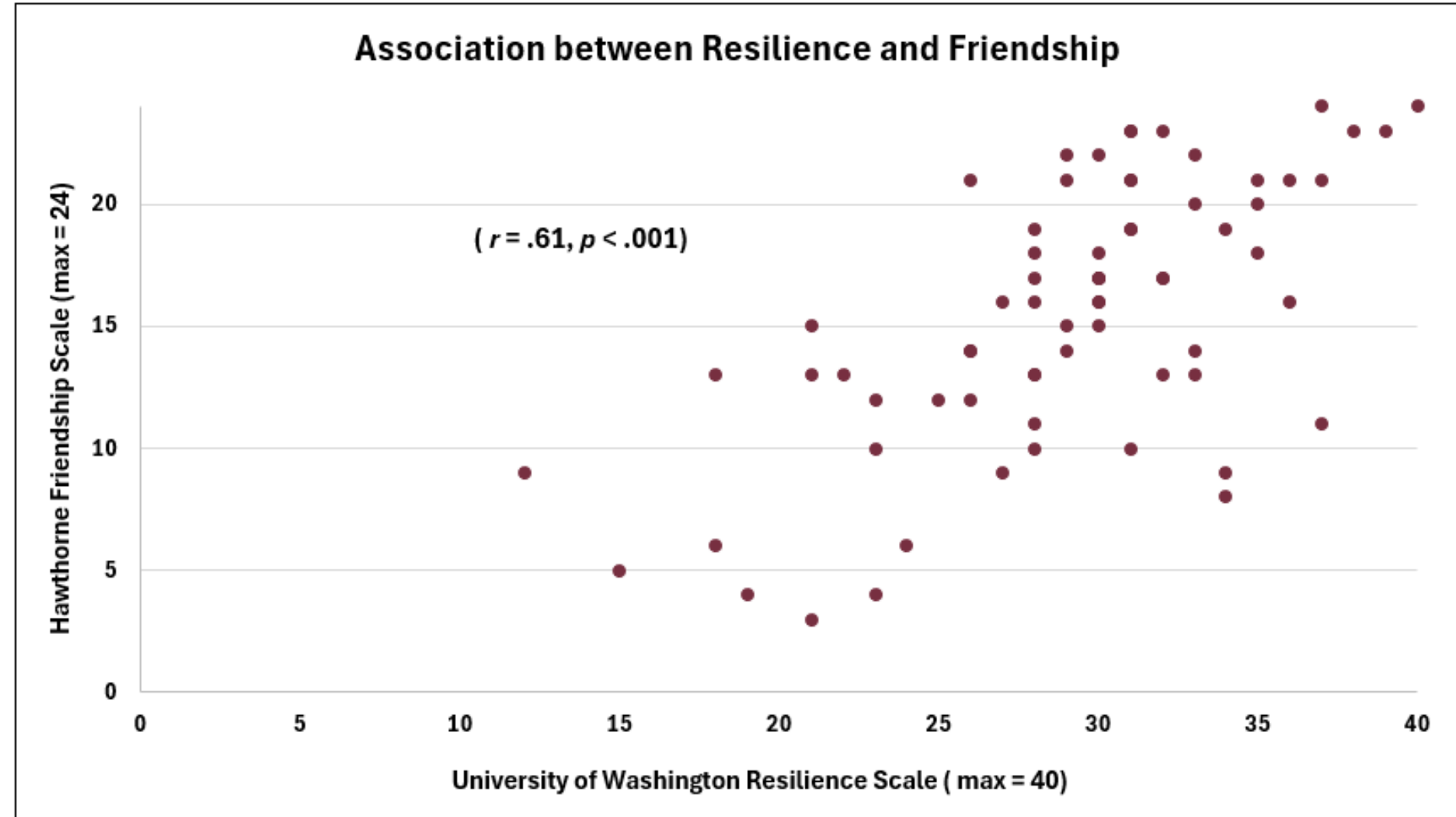
Results

Associations between demographic factors and resilience, caregiving burden, and friendship

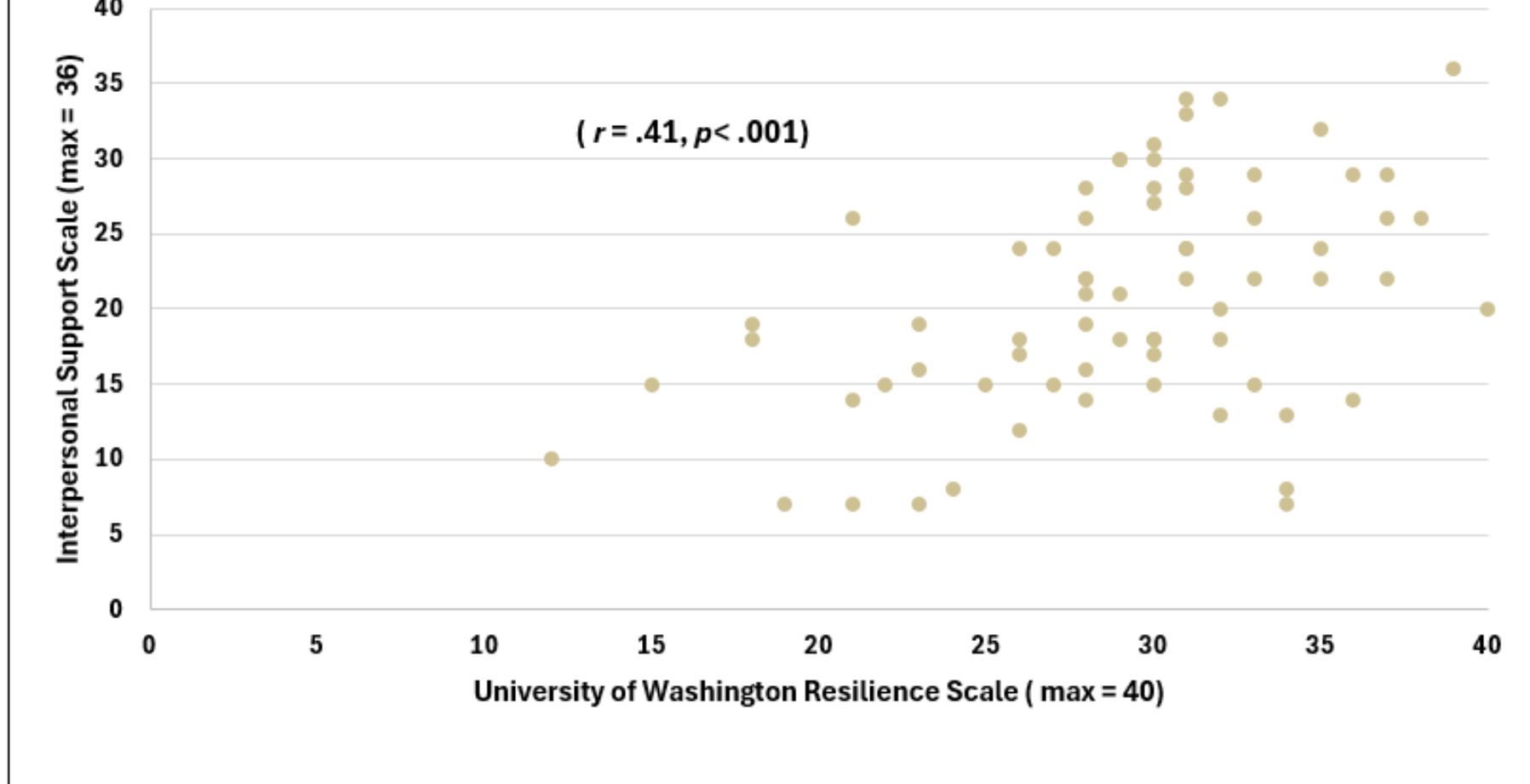
	Resilience Scale	Caregiving Burden	Hawthorne Friendship	Interpersonal Support Evaluation
Caregiver's age	$r = .043, p = .723$	$r = -.081, p = .511$	$r = .114, p = .350$	$r = -.081, p = .511$
Years Caregiving	$r = -.139, p = .262$	$r = -.015, p = .904$	$r = .042, p = .736$	$r = -.153, p = .217$
Caregiver's Perceived Health Status	$r = -.149, p = .220$	$r = .173, p = .162$	$r = -.180, p = .142$	$r = -.235, p = .053$
Loved One's Perceived Health Status	$r = -.200, p = .101$	$r = .331, p = .006$	$r = -.250, p = .040$	$r = -.159, p = .196$
Severity of Loved One's Aphasia	$r = -.093, p = .448$	$r = .365, p = .002$	$r = -.383, p = .001$	$r = -.329, p = .006$

Results

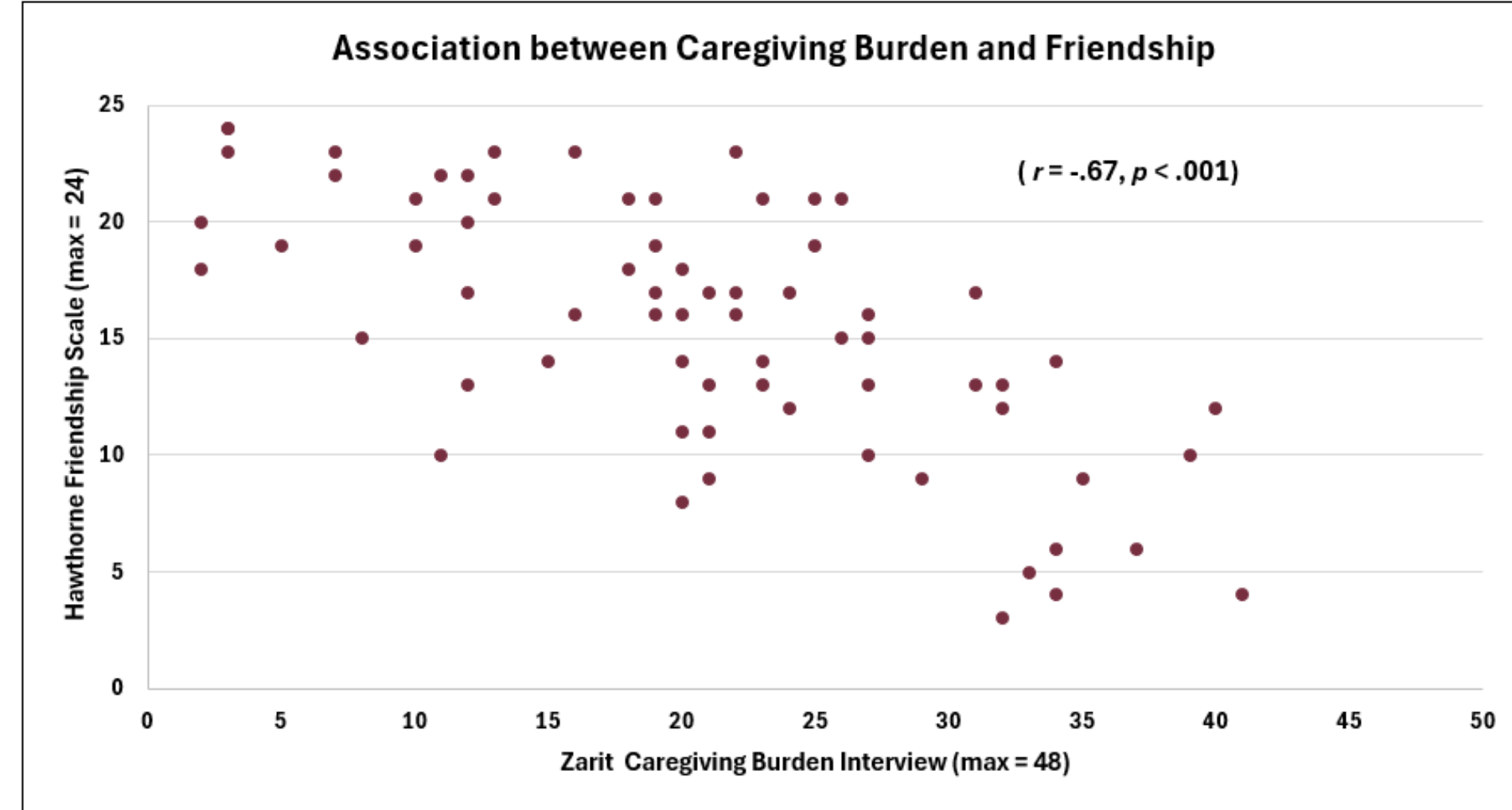
Resilience and Friendship



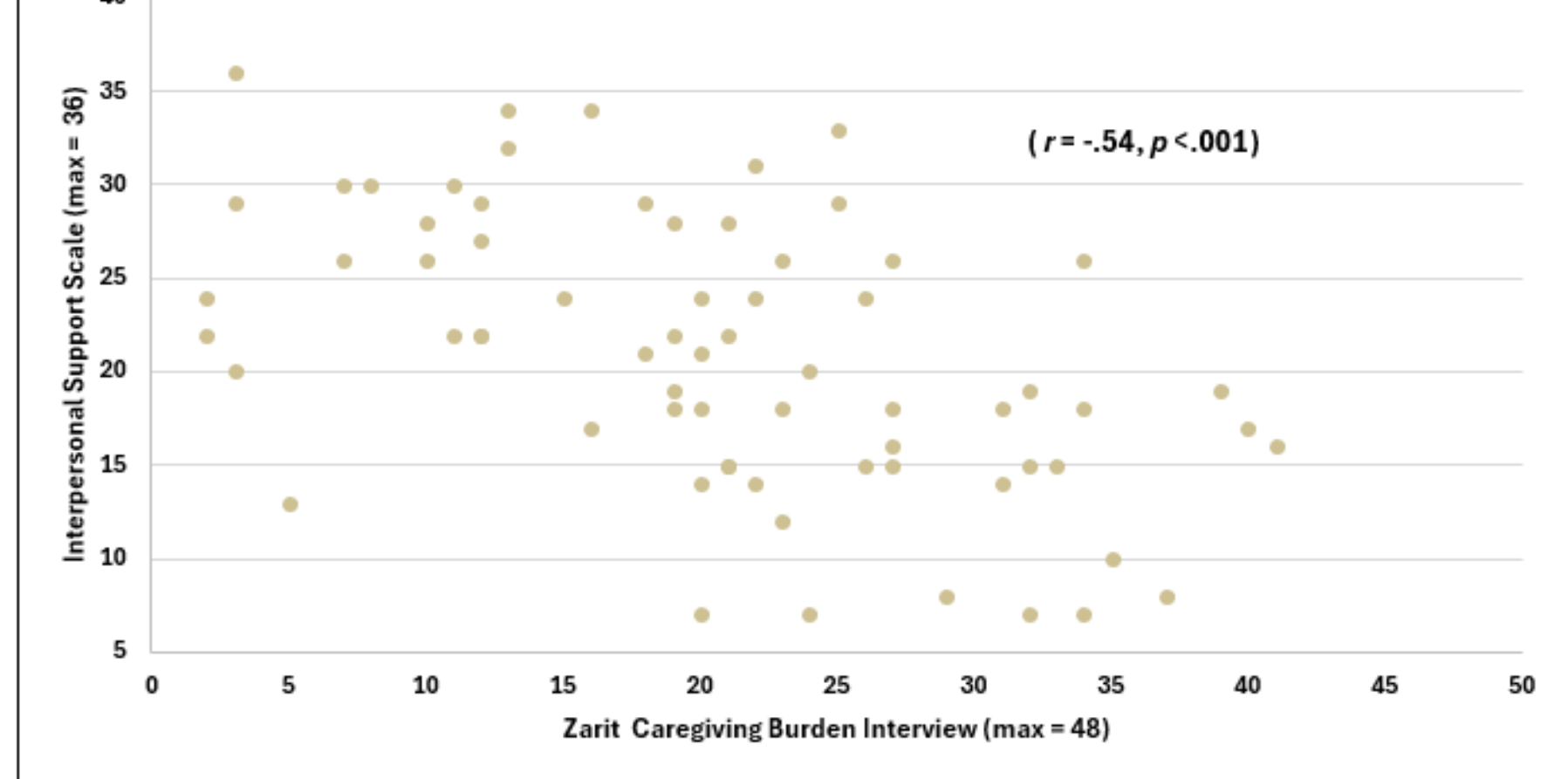
Association between Resilience and Interpersonal Support



Caregiving Burden and Friendship



Association between Caregiving Burden and Interpersonal Support



- Regression: Together, the three predictors (resilience, burden, and aphasia severity) statistically significantly predicted caregiver friendship, $F(3, 67) = 28.23, p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .55$. Resilience and caregiving burden uniquely added to the prediction, $p = .003$ and $p < .001$, respectively.

Discussion

- Our results indicate that aphasia caregivers’ friendships are influenced by their resilience, caregiving burden, and severity of loved one’s aphasia.
- Resilience showed a positive relationship with friendship, while caregiving burden and aphasia severity were negatively related to friendship.
- The relationship between these variables, and related psychosocial factors, warrants further attention.
- In line with Hernandez and colleagues’ (2024) call for aphasia caregiver programs that go beyond communication partner training, our findings support development of interventions aimed at increasing resilience and relieving burden to support caregivers’ social well-being and health, and in turn, the well-being of their loved one with aphasia as well.

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