

Parental engagement positively associated with safer driving among young people, UGR study finds

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Research news

The results show that while close supervision may be linked to increased anxiety when driving, it is also associated with a more cautious attitude behind the wheel

Researchers from the Mind, Brain and Behaviour Research Centre (CIMCYC) at the University of Granada (UGR) have adapted the Family Climate for Road Safety Scale (FCRSS) for young drivers and their parents to the Spanish context in order to assess the validity and reliability of FCRSS measures, based on seven dimensions: modelling, feedback, communication, monitoring, commitment to road safety, messages and limits.



The results of applying this scale to the Spanish sample showed significant associations between several of these dimensions and the driving styles of young drivers.

Specifically, young people who perceived their parents as positive role models for safe driving who enabled more open communication, shared explicit messages about safe driving, provided more feedback, supervised their driving more closely and set clear limits, reported more careful driving and less reckless, aggressive and anxious driving. The study showed a similar pattern of results between parents' scores and children's scores, except in monitoring and anxious driving styles.

Greater parental monitoring leads to more anxiety, but also more caution

Although this may seem contradictory, the researchers point out that young novice drivers may perceive high levels of supervision negatively, leading them to experience negative emotions while driving, such as anxiety. Another argument

supporting this idea is the negative association between monitoring and stress-reducing driving styles, meaning that young drivers who perceive more parental monitoring may find it more difficult to relax and engage in stress-reducing activities while driving.

However, the results of the study show that parental supervision is also positively associated with more careful driving. For the researchers, while this double-edged effect of supervised driving is an issue that deserves further attention in future studies, their findings are generally consistent with previous studies based on the Family Climate for Road Safety Scale, as well as more extensive work showing a positive impact of parental engagement on safer driving styles among their children.

Lastly, analysis of the results by gender revealed significant differences between parents, with mothers perceiving themselves to be more positive role models for their children, supporting safer driving, encouraging feedback, engaging in more open discussions, and monitoring their driving more closely, compared to fathers.

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