

# Intra-sexual competition among females: a scale for the academic members

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The study aims to create a scale to examine whether many of the phenomena attributed from an evolutionary perspective to intra-sexual competition that women are thought to experience are also valid for female academics who work independently.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The participants (482) are Turkish female scholars who were reached by simple random sampling. The survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, was followed in the research, and both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were done to develop the scale.

**Findings** – A highly reliable scale (0.896) was created, and the findings show that the level of competition among female academics is low. However, the level of support and helpfulness and problem-solving is high among women scholars, while the level of lack of cooperation is moderate. In the case of an increase in support, helpfulness, problem-solving and communication, the competition among female academics would decrease. On the other hand, if the lack of cooperation increases, the competition scores of female scholars would increase.

**Research limitations/implications** – The research should be evaluated under certain limitations. First of all, the data gathered throughout the study may be considered subjective since they are based on individuals. In addition, demographic data, such as academic title, institution, department, age, etc., were not included in the study, as they may provide insight into the identification of the participants. For this reason, it was not possible to determine the difference between academic and educational levels. Finally, since the studies on the subject have been conducted predominantly in the field of business administration and among employees with hierarchical ties between them, a field that is relatively more independent but still requires bilateral relationships (such as academia).

**Practical implications** – By the policymakers, higher education institutions, institutes and/or universities, establishing digital platforms for the project teams and motivating academics to have more support and communication within themselves could be fruitful for a common science of the world.

**Social implications** – Creating digital infrastructures that strengthen academic networks and foster cross-institutional collaboration may contribute to building a more unified and accessible global scientific community. Such efforts can help promote shared knowledge production and reduce fragmentation within the academic world.

**Originality/value** – The central goal of the present study is to fill a gap in the extant literature by testing whether many of the phenomena attributed from an evolutionary perspective to intra-sexual competition that women are thought to experience are also valid for female colleagues who work independently. This will add a new dimension to the current literature as the novelty of the research. Because it will be possible to determine, with the finding, if there is a perception and/or form of “competition” among the female academics due to solely being just colleagues (not working with a formal hierarchical bond), a previously unexamined dimension of the subject.

**Keywords** Sociology of work, Women Labour, Gender inequality, Women in academia, Academic profession, Higher education studies

**Paper type** Research paper

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**Availability of data and material (data transparency):** The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to restrictions such as containing information that could compromise the privacy of research participants.

**Authors' contributions:** The author confirms sole responsibility for the following: study conception and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results and manuscript preparation.

The study's ethical approval was obtained by the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Commission of the researcher's university (No: 17/24) on 19.02.2024.

