Communication Habits and Relationship Satisfaction within College Students' Romantic Relationships

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Nina Lucido
University of Michigan

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Dr. Sarah A. Burgard
Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of Graduate Studies
Honors Faculty Professor

Dr. Elizabeth E. Bruch
Assistant Professor of Sociology
Honors Faculty Advisor

Abstract

This study uses a mixed methods approach to examine the frequency of use for four modes of cell phone-based communication (texting, phone calls, Snapchat and Facebook Messaging) within young adults' romantic relationships and assess whether user satisfaction with frequency of these forms of communication is associated with overall romantic relationship satisfaction. I distributed 2,000 online surveys and conducted 20 interviews at a large Midwestern university with men and women between the ages of 18 and 22 who are currently in or were previously in committed romantic relationships. The quantitative analyses show that satisfaction with overall communication frequency is related to satisfaction with one's overall relationship but satisfaction with the frequency of each of the specific modes examined here is not related to overall relationship satisfaction. The qualitative analyses provide a more nuanced and gendered look at communication dynamics in romantic relationships. My interview data reveal that young adults in relationships feel pressure to be in constant communication. This pressure leads to behaviors that have not been extensively explored in past research, including using alternate modes of communication when the preferred mode is not available and implementation of "the silent treatment" as a form of punishment. Overall, the research indicates that there is not a simple relationship between communication mode frequency and overall relationship satisfaction, and there are unique nuances at play within these interactions.

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INTRODUCTION

      While riding in the car with my mother during my sophomore year of college, she pointed out my undivided attention to my cell phone. Every time it buzzed, I would pick it up, quickly maneuver my thumbs to produce a few words, then hit send. When she asked whom I needed to continue texting at that frequency, I smiled and replied that it was the boy I had recently gone on a few dates with. I was confident that this constant stream of communication was necessary because it was "normal," in the sense that it was what everyone else was doing. I understood this as the expected behavior of college students in some sort of romantic relationship. Laughing, my mom pointed out that when they were dating years ago, my dad would only be able to call her two or three times a week and to her, that was "normal." She didn't expect anything different and she was satisfied with this. How could a few decades of time and advancements of technology completely reconstruct what were "normal" expectations for communication between individuals who are romantically involved? Moreover, is there agreement about what the expectations are for communication for young adults today?

      Communication is a fundamental interaction in relationships. Not only is communication important, but there are also many ways individuals can choose to communicate with one another. Because there are various ways individuals can choose to communicate, people expect different things. I am fascinated by the expectations that individuals have in their personal relationships. For example, expectations, including both how you're expected to act and the actions you expect from others, come from your understanding of how being in a relationship works. The actions of people in a romantic couple are shaped by the influence of their culture and are understood to

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be "learned" actions of their socialization (Buehler & Well 1981). Communication is a specific learned action that is very important in maintaining a relationship (Canary, Hause, Stafford & Wallace 1993), and is a component used to reinforce relationship bonds (Spears, Postomes, Lea & Wolbert 2002).

Expectations for communicating evolve over time as new technologies become available. Back in 1975, while developing a theory of interpersonal communication, Berger and Calabrese predicted that general amount of communication is increasing because people are becoming more mobile. People have become exponentially more mobile since these researchers asserted this prediction. Moreover, today, people have mobile phones that can move around with them, facilitating increased communication. With advancements in communication technology, text messaging has become the main form of communication between young adults today (Skierkowski & Wood 2012), and it is important to understand the implications of this now widely available form of communication. Young adults who do not participate in texting feel odd or left out because texting is a very important way their peers maintain relationships with those that they feel close to (Skierkowski & Wood 2012). The ability to have instantaneous and direct access to an individual via cell phone (as opposed to landlines which, by design, limit you to a specific location), gives us the ability to constantly be in contact with one another (Lanigan 2009). Cell phones travel with an individual to almost any location, without the necessity of being connected to an outlet or a landline. In addition, because cell phone technology gives individuals the ability to directly contact one another at nearly any time or place, it is often expected that they will utilize this capability and communicate more frequently (Hertlein 2012).

As an important part of maintaining relationships, communication has also been found to influence overall relationship satisfaction. Overall relationship satisfaction is lowered when a particular aspect of the relationship, such as communication, does not meet expectation (Sabatelli 1988). Sabatelli's research is based on the Exchange Model, which proposes that individuals choose to be in a relationship based on the cost/reward balance of how much they have to put forth in comparison to how much they will receive in return. This calculation is based on qualities of their potential partner and expectations about interactions with their partner. In this study, I build on the Exchange Model by examining communication discrepancies: a condition when some aspect of communication does not meet an individual's expectation. By not meeting an individual's expectations, I believe this aspect would also be considered dissatisfactory to the individual. I will examine levels of discrepancy between preferred and actual communication experiences, hereafter referred to as "mismatch", and assess whether mismatch is associated with overall relationship satisfaction.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My research is motivated by the following theoretical questions: what are communication expectations within romantic relationships in the current environment of constant availability? How do discrepancies between desired and actual communication frequencies affect relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships? I operationalize these questions through the following empirical questions: what communication mediums are frequently used within romantic relationships and how frequently are they used? Is there any discrepancy between desired frequency and actual frequency of

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communication and how common are these mismatches within relationships? When there is mismatch, is relationship satisfaction lower than when desired frequency matches actual frequency of communication? In what ways, if any, do males and females differ in their communication preferences and levels of satisfaction?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Romantic Relationships

Generally, when romantic relationships of unmarried, young adults are studied, they often are either looked at within the context of "family relationships" where interactions within parents and siblings are also investigated (Lanigan 2009, Hertlein 2012, Canary et al 1993) or within the realm of young adults as a whole, where friendships are also included (Ling 2008, Laursen 2005, Baym et al 2007). Romantic relationships differ greatly from other relationships between friends and family members and it is important that they are examined in their own right to discover the specific details of how people in these relationships interact.

In the evolving world of young adult romantic relationships, words such as "boyfriend" or "girlfriend" mean different things to different people thus, producing a specific definition for my study was very important. I looked to previous literature to help formulate what type of relationship I intended to study. Three defining features of romantic relationships described by Sternberg (1986) are passion (attraction, desire and love), intimacy (affiliation, trust, feelings of closeness) and commitment. All three of these attributes occur to varying degrees in romantic relationships (Connolly & McIsaac 2011). I used these features to help clarify the meaning of the type of romantic

relationship that I intended to study. I focused on romantic relationships that incorporate feelings of passion, intimacy and some form of commitment and I refer to this type of relationship as a "committed romantic relationship."

Current Communication Frequencies in Romantic Relationships

Given the importance of understanding romantic relationships distinctly from other types of interpersonal relationships as discussed above, it is then also crucial to acknowledge how communication is understood within these specific relationships. Recent research has repeatedly concluded that text messaging is the most prevalent form of communication for young adults and within young adult romantic relationships (Coyne et al. 2011, Pettigrew 2009, Skierkowski & Wood 2012). Other than this conclusion, little is known about how young adult couples choose to communicate. Skierkowski and Wood's study (2012) acknowledged that young adults use Facebook as a form of communication, but did not comment specifically on the messenger function of the site, despite the fact that it has over 200 million users (Isaac 2014). Facebook Messenger (hereafter also referred to as FM) is a feature of the social networking site, Facebook, to exchange text based communication with one's "Facebook Friends" via one's cell phone or computer. No other current literature investigates how frequently romantic couples are using FM to interact with one another.

Moreover, little is known about how young adult couples communicate across other communication modes or how they mix their use of modes. Thus, one important and novel contribution of this study is my analysis of frequency and satisfaction for multiple modes, including more understudied modes like Snapchat. Snapchat is an

application for smart phones on which users can send photos with text captions to contacts in their phone that exist for a designated period of time (between 1 and 10 seconds) and then will disappear. Although the young adult population commonly uses this mode of communication – it was one of the most popular applications for cell phones in 2013 and is most popular with people under the age of 25 (Poltash 2013) – very little research has considered the use of Snapchat as a form of communication. In addition, I have not found empirical evidence that examines its use in romantic relationships, the general patterns of frequency of use, or users' satisfaction with frequency. I am particularly curious about the frequency of use of this mode within romantic relationships because it has been neglected in current literature and it is a very unique mode of communication. Sending picture messages is distinctly different from sending text-based information such as in texting or Facebook Messenger or the audio content of phone calls.

Previous literature that compares frequency of use of different communication modes is outdated; this research is from a time period before texting, Snapchat or FM were available and only includes modes such as phone calls or letter writing (Canary 1993). In addition to this, frequency of phone calls is not often assessed in relation to text message frequency because most literature simply acknowledges that text messages are the dominant form of communication for young adults. Thus, it is very challenging to assess how young adults are communicating, particularly within romantic relationships, if we do not take in to consideration all of the modes they might be frequently using and choosing amongst in any given instance of communication.

<u>Young Adults' use of Text Messages in Romantic Relationships</u>

While Facebook Messenger and Snapchat have largely been ignored in the scholarly literature, there is a large body of work on texting. Texting is cited by most researchers as the most commonly used mode of communication by young people today (Coyne, Stockdale, Busby, Iverson & Grant 2011, Pettigrew 2009, Skierkowski & Wood 2012). One study concluded that text messages were sent between most couples more than once a week (Coyne et al. 2011). Other research cites that teens using text messaging send about 3,000 texts per month, averaging 100 per day (Lenhart et al. 2010). In Pettigrew's study, (2009) interviewees discussed how texting allowed for regular "perpetual contact" throughout the day between partners. All of these studies provide different totals for how frequently young adults or romantic partners use texting, but the overarching conclusion is that this communication mode is used very frequently.

Skierkowski and Wood (2012) found text messages to be frequent, but also very important to young adult culture. Their study examined the consequences of a lack of texting measured by the behavioral responses of anxiety in 18-23 year olds. For five days, these researchers conducted three surveys per day, asking participants about their usage of Facebook, instant messaging, email, texting, phone calls and in-person interaction. They assessed whom the participants communicated with, and via what mode. Students were then placed in groups of high or low texting and then restricted from texting during a designated period of time, to measure the anxiety associated with not being able to use their cell phones. Skierkowski and Wood concluded that the broad acceptance of the use of cell phones creates both a pressure and desire to communicate through text messages. This form of communication is considered to be

normal and people who don't regularly text with others feel lonely and disconnected from their social network because they understand texting as a way of maintaining a relationship. This study concluded that regular communication over text messages makes individuals feel a sense of belonging to people they have close relationships with. Moreover, those who do not participate in regular texting feel excluded and have lowered self-esteem. These results indicate a socially constructed sense of pressure encouraging the regular use of text messaging among young adults.

Mandel and Muncer's (2007) study explored why young adults choose text messaging for social communication. They concluded young adults choose to communicate via texting because it gives them more power in their interactions with their peers. This control exists because they have the ability to take time to think of a response before having to reply. Along with this, one has the ability to keep record of conversation through stored text messages. This power serves as an additional potential factor as to why texting is particularly prevalent in romantic relationships.

According to Pettigrew, romantic couples feel a unique connectedness through texting in ways nonromantic pairs do not (2009). The attachment to cell phones, and particularly the frequent use of texting, is described as a ritual by Richard Ling (2008). Ling discusses how "ritual interaction" increases cohesion between individuals and facilitates bonding within a relationship. The collective effervescence that occurs within rituals in groups, as discussed by Durkheim, can now occur with people who are not physically co-present, but are connected through mobile communication. Ling (2008) explains how further enhancement of social cohesion, through collective effervescence, can be experienced by physically separated members of a group due to the ritual of

texting. He defines a ritual as at least two people experiencing the same effervescence through sharing an action or focusing on a particular object. In this case, the shared experience is the action of texting while focusing on their cell phones. Simply, the "ritual" of texting and the special language style developed between couples over texting (Pettigrew 2009) can strengthen their connection and improve partners' relationship. This may also explain texting's importance and frequent use in romantic relationships.

Expectations for Communication

Understanding how important texting is to young adults is helpful in conceptualizing how young adults view this, as well as other modes of communication, and what they expect when using them. Regarding text messages, Pettigrew (2009) found that his interviewees discussed how texting allowed for "perpetual contact" because individuals generally always have their cell phones with them and you can continue a private conversation from anywhere. Additionally, he found that there is a particularly salient expectation to reply to text messages.

In 2005, Laursen found a similar expectation about text message replies. Not only is there an expectation to respond to text messages, but Laursen also found that there is a social norm within adolescent culture to respond to text messages and it is actually seen as rude to not reply. Often, when text messages aren't responded to, adolescents assume there was a technical problem and send the message again, send content clarification or send a follow up message in anticipation of a response (Laursen 2005).

More broadly, Hertlein (2012) looked at how members of family relationships make use of communication technology, and subsequently draw conclusions about personal expectations of communication (in this study, as in others, romantic relationships are characterized as one form of family relationships). Mobile phones allow us to connect with anyone at any time (Campbell & Park 2008, Hertlein 2012). Because of this constant access to one another, Hertlein (2012) argued that this creates an expectation to regularly communicate. In other words, having more ways of communicating changes the way people expect to keep in touch with family members. Newly formed expectations for how to communicate with family and friends can prompt emotional responses within individuals when these expectations are not met. The important missing data from Hertlein's results are details on what mode or frequency is expected for this communication and what does mismatch lead to in terms of satisfaction of people in the relationship?

Aoki and Downes (2003) produced an important finding about what might be included in individuals' expectations. These researchers concluded that teenagers have become attached to their cell phones and keep them readily available to connect to others. Moreover, most individuals check their phones regularly because of this attachment. Aoki and Downes discuss a newfound difficulty for individuals to avoid their partner because there is a widespread expectation that everyone regularly checks their cell phones. Therefore, seeing someone's attempts at communication is unavoidable when checking one's phone. One can't just avoid their partner's attempt at contact because the partner knows that the cell phone number is a direct route of contact to a particular individual as opposed to a landline, which connects you to a specific location

(Campbell & Park 2008). I think expanding upon this finding to learn how people feel about a lack of response and how the individual choosing to "ignore" his or her partner understands his or her actions is crucial to learning more about violations of the norm to respond.

Current literature indicates that it is generally understood that individuals are perpetually connected to their cell phones and there is a salient expectation to receive a reply when reaching out to one's partner. Technology connects us at all hours of the day in multiple ways and with all of this availability, boundaries have changed and partners have reported feeling "smothered" (Hertlein 2012). This notion of feeling "smothered" would, presumably, be due to an instance of mismatch where the partner feeling smothered desires less frequent communication than his or her partner. This constant availability makes for an interesting tension: some people are going to like the constant communication, others are going to feel it is too much, and individuals may have each of these reactions at different times.

The Relationship Between Satisfaction with Communication and Relationship Satisfaction

Once communication expectations are established, the next important question seems to be what happens when these expectations aren't met? No current literature establishes exactly how relationship satisfaction is affected when mismatch occurs, however, previous research has discovered how variations in use of communication within a romantic relationship can affect the relationship satisfaction.

One study shows that *how* texting is used can be correlated with relationship

satisfaction. Coyne, Stockdale, Busby Iverson, and Grant (2011) examined types of communication couples used, how often they communicated, and the association between their communication through texting and "the couple's positive or negative communication." They found that the most powerful communication influence on a partner's relationship satisfaction was the positive or negative use of text messages. Using texting for positive communication, such as expressing affection, was associated with boosted relationship satisfaction and when it was used for negative communication, such as confrontations, was associated with lower relationship satisfaction. Quick, kind messages between partners were used as relationship reinforcement and were linked with a more positive assessment of the relationship. These findings are limited because they only focus on one aspect of how a mode is used – the positive or negative content – and how this is related to relationship satisfaction. My study builds on these findings by measuring how frequently individuals desire to use texting (and other modes) and how this is linked to relationship satisfaction.

Other work explores how the use of a particular communication mode is related to relationship satisfaction. Stafford and Reske (1990) looked at communication patterns within long-distance relationships and focused on the importance of communication modes and frequencies leading to variation in relationship satisfaction. Perhaps surprisingly, they found that limited in-person communication was linked with positive relationship outlook and regular face-to-face contact was linked with failure in relationships. They concluded that this was due to conflicts within the relationship being postponed when there was less in-person interaction. The perpetuation of "idealization" within couples that see each other in person less frequently than others can lead to a

more positive outlook on the relationship. Idealization can occur when partners don't see each other – or each other's flaws – regularly, and don't have to deal with day-to-day issues in person. More specifically, couples in long-distance relationships were more satisfied with their relationships because they made use of communication technologies more frequently and face-to-face interaction less frequently than non-long-distance couples that used communication technologies less frequently and face-to-face interactions more frequently.

Although limited to the comparison of couples in long-distance situations versus closer proximity relationships, this study proved that what modes couples communicate through, more than just how frequently they communicate, can be related to romantic relationship satisfaction. Currently, individuals in both long-distance and close-proximity relationships have the options of an abundance of technologies to connect them. Given the choice of a variety of modes, it is important to study if the phenomenon of using a particular communication mode as correlated to relationship satisfaction operates more generally within all romantic couples, which is what my study aimed to do.

Baym, Zhang, Kunkel, Ledbetter & Lin (2007) questioned if frequency of use of communication mode correlates with the level of understood relational quality. They defined relational quality as both relational satisfaction and relational closeness. They found that frequency of media use did not predict relational closeness or satisfaction within friendships, romantic partners or family members.

It is important to note that although these studies were finding correlations between aspects of communication habits and relationship satisfaction, they do not prove that the content or mode of communication caused a change in relationship

satisfaction, or causation at all. This literature has found relationships between these variables but it cannot be concluded that one causes the other. It is also plausible that if a causation relationship is in effect, it could be occurring with relationship satisfaction as the independent or dependent variable.

Overall, previous literature indicates that changes in content of communication (Coyne et al 2001) and frequency of in-person communication (Stafford and Reske 1990) co-occur with fluctuations relationship satisfaction, but frequency of communication alone does not (Baym et al 2007). Research has not established what technology-based modes of communication are associated with higher satisfaction, if a particular mode is most preferred, or if mismatch impacts relationship satisfaction.

However, one important factor does mediate how communication is perceived in a relationship: expectations. A study by Meeks, Hendrick & Hendrick (1998) showed that satisfaction in communication within relationships is influenced both by an individual's own understanding of what communication should be is influenced by the world around them, as well as their perspective on their partner's communication styles. According to Meeks and colleagues, expectation will mediate communication's effects on relationship satisfaction. In sum, previous literature tells us that personal opinions and desires impact how individuals form communication expectations and expectations mediate communication satisfaction. In this study, I plan to build upon these findings by first establishing how individuals communicate with their partners and then discover if this is related to individuals' relationship satisfaction, acknowledging that expectations mediate this relationship.

<u>Relationship Satisfaction</u>

Relationship satisfaction is the outcome variable for this study. Understanding how it is theoretically established is crucial for understanding why I predict that it will be associated with communication satisfaction. Sabatelli (1988) produced an important theory about relationship satisfaction. Sabatelli's Exchange Theory suggests that people choose to be in a relationship based on the cost/reward balance of how much they must put forth in comparison to how much they will receive in return. The outcomes an individual predicts for the partnership are gauged based on the qualities of the other individual and the anticipated kind of interactions between the partners. These two measurements are then used in contrast to a person's "comparison level," expectation; the "comparison level" is prompted by the understood norms for relationships in society. His social exchange perspective on relationship satisfaction finds that relationship expectations play into the evaluation of relationships.

Along with this, individuals utilize personal expectations from individual experience and what the individual believes to be a realistic anticipation for the relationship to form their comparison level. Satisfaction, as defined by Sabatelli's research, can be measured by: "rewards minus cost... weighed against what individuals feel is realistically attainable." When the fulfillment of the relationship is greater than expectation, partners in a relationship are highly likely to be satisfied. When couples feel that one aspect of their relationship does not meet expectation - for example, as I predict will be the case if communication levels are inadequate - and this aspect is understood to be of importance, overall satisfaction with the relationship is lower. People have different standards for what they expect of their partners and of their

relationship, so people are satisfied with different types of relationships. This suggests that if mismatch occurs, it will lower communication satisfaction, and therefore will lower overall relationship satisfaction. However, there is not an abundance of existing literature about how discrepancies in preferred versus actual aspects of communication (mode, frequency, etc.) affect overall relationship satisfaction.

Gendered Differences in Communication

Very little research examines if there are gender specific differences in communication expectations. Baym, Zhang, Kunkel, Ledbetter and Lin (2007) assessed whether the sex of an individual affects the frequency of use of media communication. Although these researchers found that media use was not affected by sex of participants, it remains unknown whether desired communication frequency or desired mode of communication differs among men and women. In this study, I explicitly search for gendered differences by comparing both the men and women's survey responses as well as doing the same for interview content, curious to see if consistent responses emerge as gender-specific patterns for men or women.

HYPOTHESES

My first hypothesis is that the most frequently used mode of communication within romantic relationships will be texting, as found by other research. In addition, I suspect that phone calls will be the communication mode that individuals use least, and the mode with which they are most dissatisfied in terms of frequency – I expect that they would like to use it more. Current literature has overwhelmingly indicated that texting is

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the most commonly used mode of communication by young people today, and that phone calls are much less prevalent in young adult communication culture. Nonetheless, the discussion of phone calls within current literature has indicated that phone calls are most similar to in-person communication (Madell & Muncer 2007) due to the demand for immediate responses and the ability to hear one another's voice. I believe its similarities to in-person communication makes phone calls a mode individuals will desire to use more frequently. Moreover, this in-person-like quality of phone calls leads me to believe that phone calls will be the mode with the most mismatch because it is currently used less than the more convenient and dominant communication mode: texting (Skierkowski and Wood 2012.)

A third hypothesis is that, given emerging technology makes it possible to have nearly constant contact with a romantic partner, individuals will report that they communicate daily. Additionally, I believe individuals will view daily communication with their partner as a requirement. However, coinciding with previous research, I do not believe that more frequent communication over any mode will be correlated with a higher relationship satisfaction.

My fourth hypothesis is that mismatches will exist across the various communication modes. There are so many ways to communicate and it is highly unlikely that both individuals in the relationship want the exact same type and frequency of contact; thus, somebody will not be getting the exact communication they want. I predict that being dissatisfied with communication habits is common and most participants will express being dissatisfied with at least one mode of communication.

A fifth hypothesis is that if individuals are dissatisfied with the frequency of communication within their relationship overall, beyond the satisfaction with the particular modes individually, overall relationship satisfaction will be lower than those who have a higher communication frequency satisfaction.

My sixth hypothesis is that if an individual reports a mismatch for one communication mode, this will have a smaller impact on their relationship satisfaction than if they have mismatches for multiple communication modes. In other words, dissatisfaction with the frequency of multiple communication modes will be associated with lower overall relationship satisfaction than dissatisfaction with few or no modes of communication.

My final hypothesis is that there will be differences in satisfaction with communication modes and desired frequency of communication modes, as well as in overall communication satisfaction, between males and females.

SOCIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The primary reason my project is sociologically significant is because researchers have not studied how type of communication mode used, desired and actual frequency of communication, and relationship satisfaction are associated with one another. I have brought together topics that have not been researched together before, which I believe to underlie an important sociological phenomenon. My project is also sociologically significant because committed romantic relationships often are the building blocks for the family unit in society. These dyadic units can evolve into cohabiting or married couples, parents and families and in time, initiate future generations. Therefore,

understanding their early interactions is important for the discipline of sociology, whose focus is the study of humans' social behavior and relations.

The phenomenon of technology taking hold of young adults today has created a new understanding of how communication works, and communication is one of the major social exchanges that occur in the world today. Not only am I interested in how communication "works" today, but I am also trying to learn how communication is *expected* to work. Developing a better empirical understanding of these two concepts as well as well as the disconnect between them may provide a greater understanding of how the exchange within romantic relationships has changed historically, as well as a clearer understanding of some key factors that may underlie relationship satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

<u>Overview</u>

For my research, I chose to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. I conducted 20 semi-structured interviews with 18-22 year-olds at a large, Midwestern research university. I also sent out about 2,000 surveys at the same university to the same age group. The goal in this mixed method research was to use the qualitative data to help explain the motive and personal thoughts related to the broader and more representative patterns visible in the quantitative data. The larger quantitative dataset was used to identify more representative trends and patterns for this group. Doing so was crucial to this specific topic of research because the goal was not only to understand what modes and frequency of communication young adults use today, but also to understand how this connects to overall relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction, frequency and modes used can all be quantified and their association can

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be tested with my quantitative data. However, to help me to understand individuals'

expectations, how people are actually communicating and the more personal aspects of

how satisfied they are, I looked to qualitative interview data for a deeper and more

nuanced understanding.

Interview and Survey Sample

The samples for both my interview and survey data were collected at a large

Midwestern university. Because I called for participants for both the survey and the

interview to be between the ages of 18-22 to participate, all of my participants ended up

being undergraduate students at the university where I conducted the research.

The sample I acquired for the survey was all students in the literature, science

and arts college at the university due to the recruitment process of email contact

through the Office of the Registrar. The interview sample, however, was not restricted

to a particular college at the university because they were recruited through snowball

sampling and fliers posted around campus. All participants of the interview also

indicated that they were undergraduate students at the university.

Interview Recruitment

I began collecting qualitative data first. I hung interview recruitment flyers

[APPENDIX A2] around campus in August of 2014 and noted on the flyers that I would

offer a $5 incentive for participating in a 30-minute interview. I recruited men and

women between the ages of 18 and 22 who were currently or previously in committed

relationships. Because I hung flyers in what would generally be considered academic

buildings, I expected to receive a majority of responses from current university students, and this expectation was met. I hung flyers in the university union, a few coffee places around campus, the undergraduate library and finally one of the larger academic buildings on campus. The flyer told individuals who were interested in participating to contact me via email to schedule a time for an interview.

The fliers were more successful for acquiring female participants and less successful for recruiting male participants. Within a few weeks of the flyers being posted, I received an onslaught of female participants to the point where I began turning some away. I originally planned to interview 15 men and 15 women, but when I finished my tenth female interview, I felt I was hearing very similar (and sometimes identical) answers to the questions I posed to these women. I felt that I had reached "saturation," and this is considered to be grounds for ceasing to recruit more participants by some qualitative researchers (Samure & Given 2008). I then decided that 10 of each gender would be a practical goal. Around the same time, I began snowball sampling male respondents. I asked my friends if they would share my contact information, study objectives and topic with their male friends who were previously or currently in committed romantic relationships. This was significantly more successful and turned out to be the way I recruited the majority of my male participants. I completed 10 male interviews and, again, felt that I had reached saturation of information, regularly hearing the same answers to the majority of my questions by the tenth interview.

My interview recruitment flyers [APPENDIX A2] indicated that I was looking for "18-22 year olds," purposefully leaving out "men and women" anywhere on the flyer in order to be inclusive of recruiting individuals who do not identify as male or female.

However, no interview volunteers identified as a gender identity other than male or female. Moreover, my flyer also indicated that I was looking for individuals currently or previously in "committed romantic relationships" in hopes that I would have individuals of varying sexual orientations volunteer, but only heterosexual individuals volunteered for interviews.

Interview Process

Before conducting interviews, I had participants read and sign the consent form [APPENDIX A1]. Following this, I had them fill out a background information sheet [APPENDIX A3] consisting of questions about age, gender, race, sexual orientation and if they would be discussing a previous or current relationship. I, then, informed them of their participation ID number. I instructed them to say their ID number aloud at the beginning of the interview recording so that no personal information would be linked to the recorded data, but I would be able to connect it back to their background information on the sheet.

I conducted all interviews with a structured interview guide [APPENDIX A4] and I chose to conduct most of my interviews in semi-private study rooms in the undergraduate library and conducted one in a small, empty lobby of an academic building on campus. I relied mostly on structured questions that directed my conversations with the participants to reflect the questions I would be asking in the survey; this was done so the interviews could shed more light on responses in the survey and perhaps provide qualitative explanations to responses found in the survey data. I began by recording all interviews on digital audio recording devices rented from

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the instructional support service on campus. However, once I learned how to record interviews directly to my computer through an application called GarageBand, I switched to using this method out of convenience.

At the end of the interviews, I had each participant complete Hendrick's Relationship Satisfaction Survey [APPENDIX B] composed of 7 Likert scale items. Through her research on relationship satisfaction, Hendrick (1988) developed a reliable standard measurement of relationship satisfaction that has been shown to correlate with measures of "love, sexual attitudes, self-disclosure, commitment and investment in a relationship." The Likert scale items were based on questionnaire items used in previous research. The original scales were distributed to an undergraduate college population. Hendrick then compared these survey outcomes to additional data collected from the same participants to check for accuracy. Her scale has successfully discriminated between couples that stay together or end their relationship based on relationship satisfaction; thus, I chose it for its proven accuracy of the specific topic of relationship satisfaction. I also chose to use this particular method to measure relationship satisfaction because during my literature review of measurements of relationship satisfaction, I continuously read of this specific scale's accuracy and precision. I also use this same relationship satisfaction survey at the end of my online survey instrument.

Throughout the period when I was conducting interviews, I transcribed the recorded interviews into a Microsoft Word document for later analysis. I also took detailed notes following each interview, collecting my initial thoughts from the

interviews, any interesting methodological findings about my process or unique details of the data collected.

Survey Recruitment

For the survey portion of the data, I began by sending my survey via email to 1,001 students through the office of the registrar's service for student researchers. Emails were sent out with a small background informational paragraph on the research [APPENDIX B2] along with the link to the survey site. These went to undergraduate students within the literature, science and arts college at the same large, Midwestern university at which I conducted my interviews. I chose to have it sent to this specific college because it has the greatest variety of majors and academic interests out of all of the colleges at the university and I hoped to recruit a diverse population. My response rate was only about 4%. However, demographically, my sample was generally representative for the population it was taken from. For example, both the sample and population are overwhelmingly white, and mostly female. Additionally the second most represented race for my sample, as well as for the college population at large, is Asian [literature, science and arts college student demographics found in APPENDIX D].

Following this, two professors sent the survey out to large undergraduate sociology classes at the university (one class of 300 and the other of 70). This was significantly more successful as the response rate from this population was 11%, at which point I had collected 80 responses. A colleague of mine posted my survey on her Facebook page, for all of her (approximately) 500 Facebook friends to see. From this, I received another 20 respondents, bringing my total up to 100. After sending out the

survey through the office of the registrar to the same literature, science and arts college, but to a completely new sample of 1,001 undergraduate students, 161 was my grand total of participants. All of these recruitment methods together yielded an overall response rate of about 6%. This was one of the more frustrating aspects of my research process, as I originally had hoped to collect about 300 survey responses. After eliminating incomplete responses, I analyzed a final total of 134 survey responses.

Survey Process

My survey [APPENDIX C3] was created using the software Qualtrics and all surveys were distributed via email with a link to the survey's site. Following the consent form, I included two screening questions to ensure that the participant owned a smart phone and would be discussing a previous or current committed relationship. If the respondent did not answer both questions in the affirmative, they were immediately directed to the end of the survey, because experience with both of these aspects were necessary to respond to survey items. Based on their answer to the current/previous relationship question, participants would be directed to a current tense or past tense version of questions about their communication habits, frequencies and preferences, followed by Hendrick's Relationship Satisfaction questionnaire. Responses were logged by the system and later downloaded for review and analysis.

Variables

The key concepts investigated in both the interviews and surveys were of communication style of the couple, communication preferences, and relationship

satisfaction. Survey and interview participants were asked about their most preferred mode of communication (Snapchat, FM, texting or phone calls), whether daily communication was a requirement, and frequency of use of each mode. Interview respondents were also asked what topics were discussed when using each of the four communication modes and about their motivation for using the modes [see Interview Guide APPENDIX A4]. I measured frequency of use for each communication mode and satisfaction with each frequency of use was assessed using multiple sub-variables that provided a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of communication and satisfaction within romantic relationships.

The variables in the interview and survey were divided into 4 main domains: specific communication mode frequency, individual communication mode satisfaction, communication preferences and overall satisfactions. Variable domains more specifically are as follows: I inquired about participants' communication frequency over Snapchat, texting, phone calls and FM. Each communication mode satisfaction measured whether the individual was satisfied with the frequency of the specific communication mode or if they would like to use it more or less frequently. Communication preferences were assessed with questions about preferences for who initiates conversation, preferred mode of communication and whether daily communication is a necessity. I then asked respondents how satisfied they were with the overall frequency of communication within the relationship on a scale from 1 to 10. Finally, I assessed their satisfaction with the overall relationship with the Hendrick's Relationship Satisfaction survey. The final set of satisfaction variables was designed to

illuminate whether the ways couples communicate or mismatches are associated with overall relationship satisfaction.

Communication Modes

Both my interviews and surveys focused on four particular communication modes that I believed to be commonly used within young adult romantic relationships based on previous literature review as well as personal experience. I chose to focus on text messaging, phone calls, Snapchat and Facebook Messaging. I have operationalized definitions of how these modes are understood within this study:

- Text messaging: An electronic form of communication that includes words, emoticons or images sent and received from cell phones.

- Phone calls: A spoken conversation with two or more individuals, where participants can hear one another's voices and surrounding sounds.

- Snapchat: Created in 2011, Snapchat is defined by Poltash (2013) as, "a mobile phone application that sends self-destructing messages." Snapchat serves as a platform to send pictures or videos to one or more contacts of your choosing that can last from 1-10 seconds and then disappear forever. They can only be viewed in this application and the sender of these images can add colored filters, a text line or doodles over top of the photo. Snapchat was being used 50 million times a day in December 2012, mostly by users under 25 years old (Poltash 2013).

- Facebook Messenger: The description for Facebook Messenger app for iPhone in The Apple Store states, "Instantly reach the people in your life—for

free. Messenger is just like texting, but you don't have to pay for every message (it works with your data plan)" (Apple 2015). FM is an instant messaging feature that is linked with an individual's Facebook account and can be used on either a smart phone (on the application, or the Facebook Mobile site) or through the Facebook website on a computer.

Interview Coding

I began this process by transcribing interviews into Microsoft Word along with notes I had about interview content or thoughts on how responses linked to my hypothesis or current literature. When interviews were complete, I printed and read through the transcribed interviews to identify overarching patterns and major similarities or differences from my survey data, which I had already began coding and analyzing.

I proceeded to organize the numeric data gathered within my interview discussions, including many of the same variables that are found on my survey instrument. I added up the Likert scale items from the Hendricks's relationship satisfaction instrument to get a comparable numeric value of overall relationship satisfaction for each interviewee. I began with this because I was hoping I would be able to find an association between participant's comments about other topics in the interview and their level of relationship satisfaction. I also entered additional quantifiable data for each interviewee into an excel spreadsheet to get a better understanding of numeric trends occurring within the interview data. Table 1 displays some of these characteristics stratified by gender. I chose to stratify this data by gender because one of my major hypotheses is that I would find differences in responses based on gender.

Next, I began creating memos on the three topics I found to be most salient throughout the interview process – these were topics or views that I found interviewees expressed most frequently. I identified quotes from the interviews that supported each theme and synthesized responses into the following results section. First, I focused on topics discussing most preferred mode and why, which varied by gender. I identified moments where interviewees discussed how they believed one mode was "better" than another or why they valued their most preferred mode. The second commonality among respondents was how they believed Facebook Messenger and texting to be interchangeable and how they were often used, and frequently expected to be used, as backup for situations when one mode was more convenient than another. I use this as evidence to argue that respondents had the expectation of continuous conversation. I identified a number of quotes where texting and FM were identified as interchangeable or similar throughout the interview. Finally, I found that people perceived a lack of response to contact as punishment, or "the silent treatment." I identified quotes from interviewees discussing times where they felt they could punish their partner with the silent treatment, or when they felt their partner was angry and punishing them, signified by a lack of response. All of these topics were also in support of the previous research indicating a need for continuous contact, and I focused on framing these findings as such.

An overarching theme that spanned each of these main findings was the concept of "content versus contact" in communication over digital communication modes. I felt that this distinction between these two goals of "content" or "contact" within communications was seen throughout interviews and was discussed in response to

various questions as enlightened the ways respondents understood their own communication habits. I coded instances of communication as "content-focused" whee the interviewee discussed coordinating future plans with their partner or sharing functional information such as an address or phone number. I coded instances of communication between individuals as "contact-focused" when the interviewee discussed simple daily updates, or "how our days are going," substance which I understood to be directed at checking in with one another or small talk and not seen as discussion of logistic information with a concrete, imminent purpose. This could also include conversations that just consisted of, "I'm thinking of you," or, "I love you." Communication of this "contact" nature reaffirms bonds between individuals but does not intend to motivate specific action or inform an individual of essential information. This theme of distinguishing between these two forms of communication (content versus contact focused) over various modes, as well as instances of conversation that were not so clearly defined, is a topic that recurs throughout my findings and suggest avenues for future research.

Survey Coding

While running my preliminary analysis on my survey data, I recoded some of my variables for more effective evaluation of the data. I recoded the frequency of communication over various mediums to be representative of how frequently each participant used each mode over the time period of one day. Regardless of how they answered the question (over days, weeks, months or years), recoding each mode in terms of the times per day made understanding frequency much easier. For example,

this would mean that a participant would be recorded as using texting 1/30 (0.033) times per day if they were to say they use it once a month or as 0.233 times per day if they reported using it once per week (1/7).

Additionally, I recoded the responses to the question "Is it a requirement to communicate with your significant other every single day?" I recoded the responses "yes, no matter what" and "yes, unless otherwise specified" to be one collective answer of "yes." Both of these responses indicated a desire for communication to occur every day. Grouping them together seemed like an efficient way to understand this data because – regardless of the presence of a stipulation being specified ("unless otherwise specified") or not – these individuals saw daily communication as a requirement overall.

Data Analysis

Survey data were analyzed using STATA software. Comparisons of the main variables were first made between the male and female participants to look for any major gender differences. I also explored the bivariate associations between key predictor variables (communication styles and preferences) and my outcome variable (relationship satisfaction scale). I used T-Tests and Chi-Square Tests to assess whether associations were statistically significant, with a conventional cut off of $p<.05$. I ran T-Test and Chi-Square Tests to understand if differences in demographic characteristics, communication style, communication preferences or satisfaction were statistically significant (Table 2).

Given the small and somewhat non-random sample of respondents to the quantitative survey, my aim is to explore associations in the data rather than try to infer

a broader set of patterns in the undergraduate population. To assess these patterns, I began by operationalizing my hypotheses by revisiting the relationships I wanted to test in order to choose which associations within the data to look for. I used the results from my survey in ways to answer my research questions and conclude whether my results supported my hypotheses or not.

First, I ran a LOWESS, or a local regression test, to look for relationships between the Hendrick's Score variable and satisfaction with overall communication frequency (Figure 1) to test if these two types of satisfaction were correlated. Then, I ran a LOWESS for the Hendrick's score variable and satisfaction and communication satisfaction over the four modes discussed (Figure 2) to see if satisfaction among individual communication modes was related to overall relationship satisfaction. Next, I tested the relationship between the Hendrick's score variable and frequency of use of each mode individually (Figure 3) to learn if using a particular mode of communication more or less was correlated with overall relationship satisfaction. I ran all of these regression tests using STATA. I also created a table to display the average Hendrick's score variable for individuals who desired either more or less or were satisfied with the frequency of use of each mode and how frequently they are using it (Table 2). I did this to further explore how being dissatisfied with a communication mode was related to overall relationship satisfaction while breaking down dissatisfaction as wanting more or less to look for a relationship within these. I also included the average frequency of use of mode for each desired frequency option (more, satisfied or less) to better understand expectations of what my sample deemed as "too much" (wanting less) or "too little"

(wanting more) based on how frequently they were currently using the communication mode. Discussion of these findings will follow in the quantitative results section.

STANDPOINT

Being a member of the population I was studying gave me a unique access and position during my research. As a student at the university where I conducted research, I had unique access to the student body and the common settings where these students are found. I was able to access the office of the registrar to send out surveys via email because I was a student researcher. Additionally, I was permitted to hold interviews in the undergraduate library, a frequently visited location by many students, which I believe added to the comfort during the interview process. I had access to reserving these rooms and had access to these buildings because I am a student at the university. Through my snowball sampling for the interview process, I also used personal relationships with other students; I asked my friends to contact their friends for an interview helped me to recruit participants because of a trustworthy connection.

Moreover, I believe that the students who responded to my flyers were more inclined to do so because of the mutual understanding of a fellow student completing a research project along with a more comfortable atmosphere of a peer interviewing a peer. My recruitment flyers indicated that I was an undergraduate student conducting these interviews for my honors thesis. Being a fellow student and having a greater likelihood of sharing similar experiences or points of view might make students more comfortable being interviewed by another student as opposed to a professional researcher-type individual who might be out of their age group.

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY RESULTS
TABLE 1: Survey Descriptive Statistics Stratified by Gender

Demographics	Women	Men	P < .05
Age (average in years)	19.6	19.2	
Race			
White	82.52%	89.29%	
Black	1.96%	0.00%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.86%	3.57%	
Hispanic	6.80%	3.57%	
Multiracial	4.85%	3.57%	
Sexual Orientation			
Heterosexual	84%	89%	
Homosexual	4%	4%	
Bisexual	10%	7%	
Poly/Pansexual	3%	0%	
Current Relationship	64%	68%	
Mode Frequency (in times per day)			
Texting Frequency	9.19	10.51	
Phone Call Frequency	0.73	0.95	
Snapchat Frequency*	2.28	4.35	*
Facebook Frequency	1.3	1.73	
Mode Satisfaction +			
Texting Satisfaction	0.09	-0.92	
Phone Call Satisfaction	0.36	0.24	
Snapchat Satisfaction	0.09	0.08	
Facebook Satisfaction	-0.96	-0.79	
Communication Preference			
Prefer Partner Initiates	30%	46%	
Prefer Self Initiates	2%	0%	
No Preference in Initiation	66%	54%	
Daily Communication as Requirement	76%	57%	
Preferred Mode of Communication			
In-Person	83%	89%	
Texting	9%	4%	
Phone Calls	5%	4%	
Snapchat	1%	0%	
Facebook Messenger	1%	4%	
Other	2%	0%	
Satisfaction			
Overall (Hendrick's)	27.21	28.61	
Frequency of Communication (scale from 1-10)	7.45	7.89	
N	105	28	

Note: + Satisfaction is measured on a scale from -1 to 1.

        * Indicates variation is statistically significant by p value of 0.05 or less

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for the survey sample respondents stratified by gender. The first column shows the list of demographic characteristics for the survey respondents. These include age, race, sexual orientation, whether the respondent was discussing a current relationship (versus a previous relationship), frequency of use of communication modes, satisfaction with these communication modes, communication preferences, most preferred mode of communication and relationship satisfaction. A discussion of results of each of these variables follows. Tests for differences by gender were conducted by running Chi-Square Tests (for categorical variables) or a T-Test (for continuous variables).

The satisfaction with each communication mode is indicated by the average of the individual responses for each gender: a score of -1 indicates that the individual wanted to use the particular mode less, a score of 0 indicates that the individual was satisfied with the frequency used of the mode and a score of 1 indicates that the individual wanted a higher frequency of use of the mode. For example, the phone call satisfaction of women (0.36) indicates that overall within my sample of women participants, there is a slight desire to communicate more by phone, but most respondents were satisfied.

The frequency noted for each of the modes indicates the average number of times per day the mode is used by women and men. For example, the males who participated in my survey use texting, on average, 10.51 times a day. As predicted, texting was the most frequently used mode of communication (at 9.19 times per day for females and 10.51 times per day for males). Additionally, as predicted there are statistically significant differences between men and women in terms of reported

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frequency of use of different modes. Men reported using Snapchat almost twice as much as women (2.07 times more per day) and, although not statistically significant, women were notably more satisfied with the frequency of use of Facebook Messenger than men were. However, both men and women, according to their responses, would like to use FM less. Also, although it wasn't statistically significant, a majority of men reported they were unsatisfied because they would like to use texting less (-.92) while women were almost perfectly satisfied with the frequency (.09).

With regard to communication preferences, "Prefer Partner Initiates" describes the percent of my sample that expressed that they prefer when their partner initiates contact with them, rather than doing it themselves (Prefer Self Initiates), or have no preference (No Preference in Initiation). Interestingly, only 2% of women preferred to personally initiate communication with their partner, and no men expressed that they preferred to initiate communication with their partners.

"Daily Communication Requirement" describes what percent of the sample believes communicating with their partner daily is a requirement. The items under "Preferred Mode" describe the percent of the sample that indicated that their most preferred mode was each of the listed options. Seventy-six percent of women indicated that communicating with their partner daily is a requirement while only 57% of men expressed this sentiment. Although not statistically significant, this is another example of the variation between men and women's preferences, as predicted in my hypotheses. However, for both genders, in-person communication was overwhelmingly the most preferred mode of communication. The second most preferred communication mode for

women was texting, while texting, phone calls and FM tied at second most preferred mode for men.

Finally, under the heading of "Satisfaction" in Table 1, I present the overall Hendricks's Relationship Satisfaction score, which can range from 7 as the lowest score to 35 as the highest score. Comparing the average scores shows that male survey participants were slightly more satisfied than female participants with their relationship. The "Frequency of Communication Satisfaction" values are the average for the 1-10 scale that individuals used to rank their personal satisfaction with the overall frequency of communication with their significant other (1 being least satisfied, 10 being most satisfied). This measure also indicates that men were slightly more satisfied with the frequency of communication with their partners compared to women.

FIGURE 1: Relationship between Hendrick's Relationship Satisfaction Score and Communication Frequency Satisfaction Overall
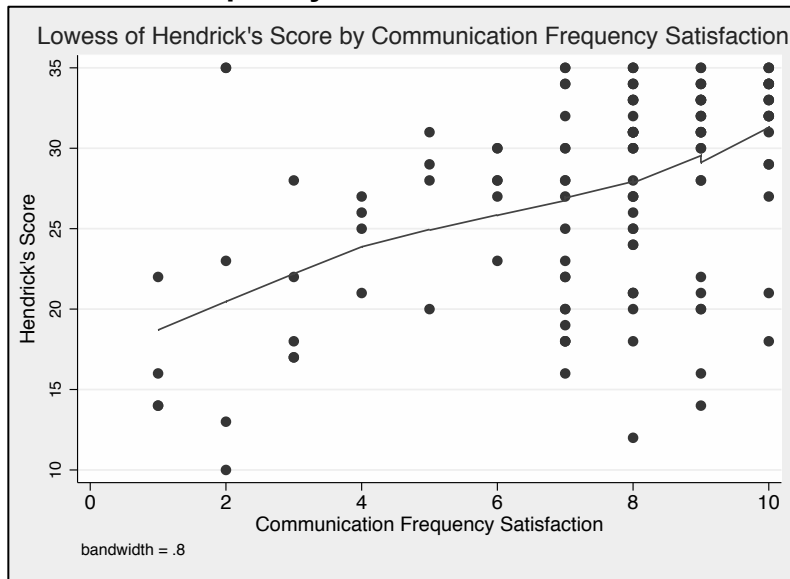
Figure 1 shows the relationship between how participants assessed their satisfaction with their overall communication frequency when an individual is apart from his or her partner (ranked on a scale from 1-10, 1 being least satisfied and 10 being most satisfied) on the x-axis and their Hendrick's Relationship Satisfaction score on the y-axis. Each dot is an observation in the data; the line is a non-parametric line summarizing the overall association between communication frequency satisfaction and relationship satisfaction. This figure was used to assess if there is an association between satisfaction with overall communication frequency and overall relationship satisfaction. There is a strong positive correlation between how satisfied individuals are with their overall relationship and how satisfied they are with the overall frequency of communication. Meaning, according to my survey respondents, that individuals who are more satisfied with the frequency of overall communication in their relationship are also more satisfied with their relationship overall. This supports my hypothesis that a higher communication frequency satisfaction is related to a higher overall relationship satisfaction.

The lowest communication frequency satisfaction was 1 and the highest was 10 and the lowest Hendrick's score was 8 and the highest was 35. Overall, the majority of communication frequency satisfaction scores were on the higher side, above 5. There are definitely some outliers to the trend that communication frequency satisfaction is positively correlated with Hendrick's score given that one participant who indicated a 35 out of 35 Hendrick's score, the highest satisfaction, also said he or she was one point away from saying he or she was the lowest possible score for communication frequency satisfaction. However, the general trend illustrated by this figure is a positive correlation.

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FIGURE 2: Relationship between Hendrick's Relationship Satisfaction Score and Communication Satisfaction for 4 Modes Discussed

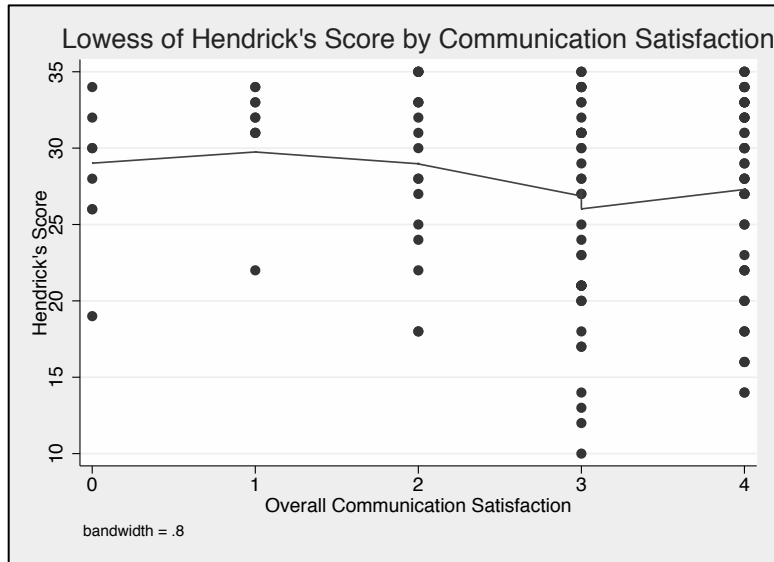Lowess of Hendrick's Score by Communication Satisfaction

Figure 2 shows the relationship between the number of communication modes for which a respondent was satisfied (on the x axis) and their overall relationship satisfaction, based on the Hendrick's Score (on the y axis). Although the variables in this figure seem similar to those in Figure 1, the relationship shown in Figure 2 is notably different. Survey participants indicated that they were satisfied with the frequency of a particular communication mode when questioned about if they would like to use the communication mode more, less or were satisfied with the frequency of use of this mode. Contrary to my hypothesis, there is not a distinct positive correlation between number of modes an individual is satisfied with and overall relationship satisfaction. This is particularly fascinating because the relationship between overall relationship satisfaction and overall communication frequency satisfaction yielded a much stronger positive association.

Overall, the majority of survey participants had a fairly high Hendrick's Score (mean of 27.5, median of 30) but the greatest variation in relationship satisfaction occurred when an individual was satisfied with 3 of the 4 modes of communication discussed. The average Hendrick's Score for individuals who were satisfied with 3 of the 4 modes is, in fact, lower than individuals who were dissatisfied with all four of the discussed communication modes. Interestingly, the individuals who were most satisfied with their relationship, on average, were the participants who disclosed that they were satisfied with one of the four modes discussed in the survey. Individuals who indicated that they were satisfied with none of the modes of communication were only slightly less satisfied than participants who indicated that they were satisfied with one mode.

Interpreting this finding involves trying to understand why the differences in how the presentation of survey items of a similar topic elicited different responses from the same participants. Specifically, it would seem reasonable that individuals who indicated that they were dissatisfied with all 4 of the communication modes discussed would also indicate that they were less satisfied with their overall frequency of communication with their partner, such that Figures 1 and 2 were expected to be more similar in terms of the pattern found, but this is not the case. When participants were asked about their satisfaction in frequency of use of the four modes of communication, this did not generate a strong positive or negative correlation with their overall satisfaction in their relationship. This led me to believe there would not be a distinct relationship between overall communication frequency satisfaction and overall relationship satisfaction. However, when participants were asked about how satisfied they were overall with the communication frequency within their relationship, *unrelated to a particular mode of*

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communication, participants who were more satisfied in this aspect were also more satisfied with their relationship overall (as shown in Figure 1).

In other words, how individuals understand their satisfaction with overall communication frequency is different than how they assess their satisfaction with a particular mode of communication's frequency. The way individuals evaluate their contentment with the overall communication frequency is related to how they evaluate their contentment with their relationship overall, while appraisal of the culmination of particular modes does not have the same effect. This could also mean that when asked about satisfaction with overall communication frequency, participants were assessing their satisfaction with modes other than the four I focused on in the survey. For example, if an individual is unsatisfied with FM, texting, phone calls and Snapchat, but is very satisfied with the frequency of use of video chatting with his or her partner, they might indicate unsatisfactory frequencies with the 4 modes, but higher satisfaction with overall frequency of communication and also a higher Hendrick's Relationship Satisfaction Score.

The key finding from this figure is that there is no clear relationship between overall relationship satisfaction and the number of communication modes (among those included in this study) that the individual is satisfied with. This does not support my hypothesis that individuals who were satisfied with the frequency of more modes of communication would have a higher relationship satisfaction and those who were satisfied with fewer modes of communication, would have a lower overall relationship satisfaction score. Nonetheless, there is logic to this finding. If individuals are relying on just one or two modes of communication, their assessment of modes they do not feel

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are as "important" to their relationship might have less of an impact on an individual's overall relationship satisfaction; however, assessing their satisfaction with overall communication frequency might be more directly related with their satisfaction with frequency of modes they feel are more "important" based on their personal understanding of communication.

I chose to place this figure after Figure 1 because I think understanding how these two figures present very similar variables but yield very different results is important. Moreover, I chose to place this figure before Figure 3, which presents the associations between frequency of each discussed communication mode and overall relationship satisfaction, because I initially wanted to see if satisfaction with number of modes was linked with relationship satisfaction and then take a closer look at each mode individually. Originally, I hypothesized that I would find a more distinct positive correlation between satisfaction with more modes and a higher relationship satisfaction. However, this turned out not to be the case, as evidenced by Figure 2, so I then disaggregated this table into individual communication modes to look for patterns that might exist for frequency of particular modes.

FIGURE 3: Relationship Between Frequency of Each Discussed Communication Mode and Hendrick's Relationship Satisfaction Scores
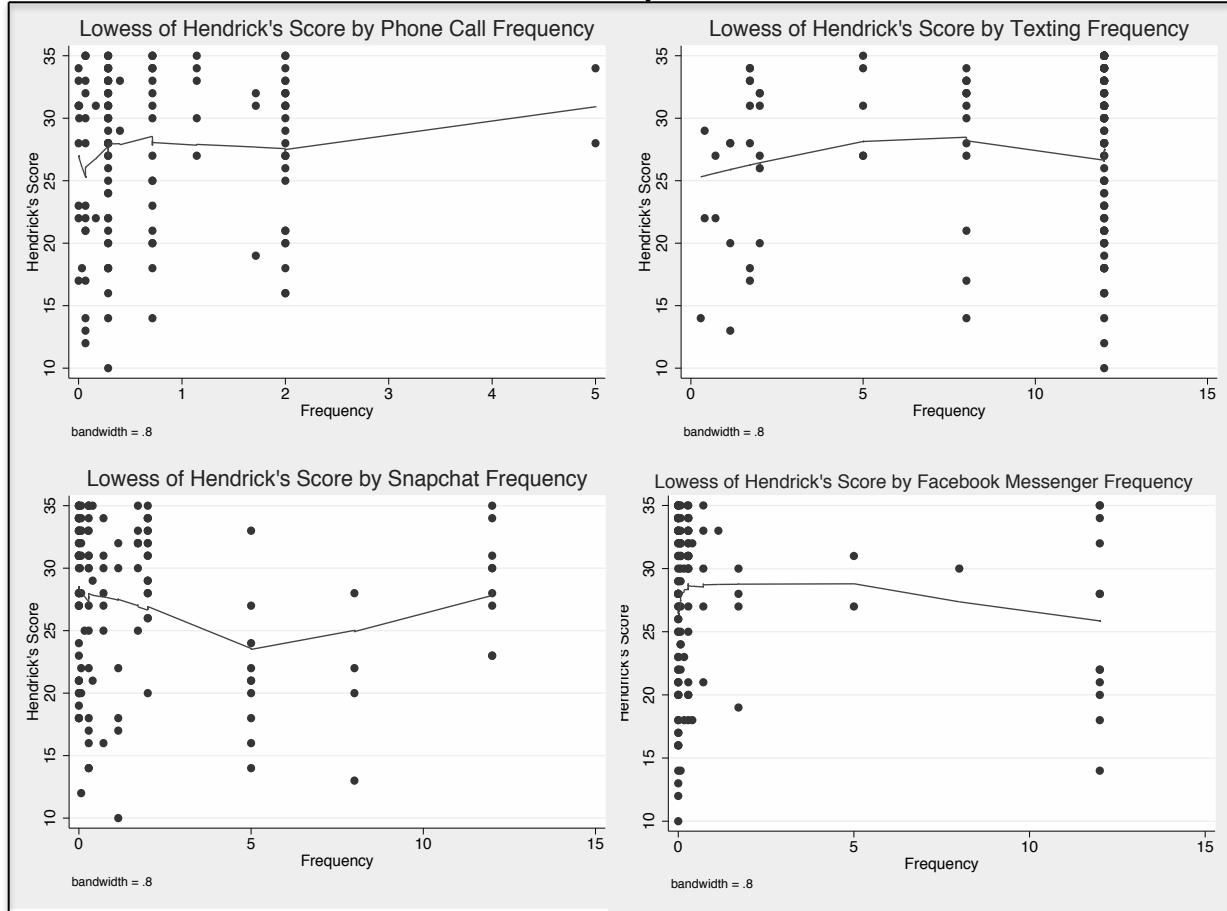
The four panels in Figure 3 reveal the association between overall relationship satisfaction and the frequency of use of each of the four communication modes. Plotting these figures was a way to assess whether there was a correlation between using a particular communication more or less and overall relationship satisfaction. I hypothesized that these two variables would not be correlated. As the upper left panel of Figure 3 shows, using phone calls more frequently only slightly increased overall relationship satisfaction. Overall, my respondents used phone calls relatively infrequently as the majority of respondents indicated they use phone calls two times per day or less with only two respondents using phone calls five times per day. According to

this figure, the least satisfied individuals were those who were receiving less than one phone call per day.

In regards to texting, we see an inverted-U shaped relationship. Specifically, individuals who had the highest relationship satisfaction on average were those who did not text either the most or the least. Men and women who texted between 5 and 7 times per day were most satisfied with their overall relationship and Hendrick's Scores began to decrease for those who were texting more than 7 times per day. In this figure, people who were least satisfied with their relationship were those who were texting less than once a day. The distribution of frequency of use of texting within my sample seems to be heavily weighted on either side where most people use text messaging between 0 and 5 times per day or 10 or more times per day.

The relationship between overall relationship satisfaction and frequency of use of Snapchat displays a bimodal relationship: the most satisfied individuals were those using this mode less than once a day, on the one hand, and those using it about 12 times a day, on the other. The satisfaction levels for those frequencies of use are roughly equal. The individuals with the lowest Hendrick's Scores were those who were using it about 5 times per day. It appears that the majority of respondents are using Snapchat 5 times a day or less.

Finally, the panel displaying frequency of use for Facebook Messenger and overall relationship satisfaction indicates that individuals who are using it less frequently have a higher Hendrick's Score, and then as the frequency of use increases to more than 5 times per day, the overall relationship satisfaction continues to decrease. This

panel indicates that the majority of respondents are using FM very infrequently, most

using it less than 3 times per day.

Thus, in support of previous research (Baym et al 2007) and my hypothesis, my

findings suggests that there is not a simple correlation between increase in frequency of

communication over a given mode and increase in overall relationship satisfaction,

according to the modes I evaluated. This is a substantial result because the finding for

each mode is consistent with the previous literature (Baym et al 2007) that an increase

in frequency does not lead to an increase in satisfaction. Indeed, whether frequency is a

positive or negative thing likely depends on the content of communication. This idea is

also supported by prior research (Coyne et al 2011).

TABLE 2: Average Hendrick's Score and Frequency of Use of Each Mode For Desired Frequency of Modes Discussed

		Desired Frequency		
		Less	Satisfied	More
Phone Calls				
	Hendrick's Score	33.00	27.68	26.93
	Frequency	0.07	0.94	0.36
Texting				
	Hendrick's Score	29.00	27.12	28.61
	Frequency	11.06	9.67	6.54
Facebook Messaging				
	Hendrick's Score	28.90	26.93	29.00
	Frequency	1.59	1.37	5.67
Snapchat				
	Hendrick's Score	31.60	26.98	29.13
	Frequency	0.06	2.01	1.83

Table 2 illustrates the overall relationship satisfaction score and average frequency of use for each mode, broken out by individuals' desired frequency of use of the designated communication mode. This was done to further explore what was presented in Figure 2 to see if what type of dissatisfaction for a particular mode (desiring more or desiring less) is correlated with overall relationship satisfaction. Moreover, actual frequency of use of individual mode was included for each desired frequency category to better understand what my sample determined to be too much or too little based on their personal preferences. For example, in the top right portion of the table under "More," the value 26.93 indicates the average Hendrick's Score for participants who indicated that they desired more phone calls from their significant other. The value 0.36 is the average number of phone calls indicated by those participants who indicated that they desired more phone calls from their significant other.

The results in Table 2 suggest that individuals who disclosed that they desire fewer phone calls in their relationship have both higher overall relationship satisfaction and, on average, less frequent phone calls than those who indicated that they are satisfied with the frequency of phone calls or desire more phone calls. Those who wanted to experience less frequent texting also had the highest Hendrick's Relationship Satisfaction score out of the three desired frequency responses for texting. Also, those who were satisfied with the frequency of texting in their romantic relationship had the lowest overall relationship satisfaction score.

Similarly, when discussing Facebook Messaging, those who are satisfied with the frequency of this mode have lower overall relationship satisfaction than both those who

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desire less and those who desire more communication over this mode. Also, those who are using it most, on average, (5.67 times per day) are the respondents who also desire to use it more. In contrast, those who want to use it less and those who are satisfied, both use Facebook Messaging between once and twice per day. This is likely due to the fact that many participants are using Facebook Messenger little to not at all (as seen in Figure 3), and these individuals have no desire to use it. Additionally, as I have learned in my qualitative interviews, FM is often used as a supplemental form of communication when one or both partners do not have sufficient cell phone service to allow texting. In these cases, many individuals are not using this mode of communication by choice, but rather as a "backup" and therefore do not desire to use it more (this will be discussed in more detail in the qualitative results section). In contrast, while the ones who are using this mode of communication more frequently are not using FM as a backup mode, but enjoy using it as a distinct communication mode (perhaps due to its convenience of use, also discussed in my interviews) and therefore would like to use it more.

Finally, the group of individuals who are satisfied with their frequency of use of Snapchat are those who use it the most, on average 2 times a day, and those who desire to use it more, on average use it only slightly less often. However, those who are satisfied with the frequency of use of this mode have a lower Hendrick's Score than those who are dissatisfied with the frequency of use.

Overall, this table reaffirms what Figure 2 summarized, but in greater detail: being satisfied with a mode of communication is *not* associated in any simple way with more satisfaction with the quality of one's relationship overall.

What is also noteworthy is that individuals who want more or less use of a particular mode do not necessarily use it more or less than the individuals who are satisfied with the frequency. For example, individuals who would like to use phone calls less are already using this mode less frequently (0.067 times/day) than those who want to use it more (0.36 times/day) or are satisfied (0.94 times/day). Similarly, individuals who want to use FM more are using it 5.67 times per day while those who are satisfied (1.37 times/day) and want to use it less (1.59 times/day) are using this mode noticeably less. These results display that there is not necessarily a generally shared desire for a particular frequency of modes of communication, such that young adults share desire for the exact same frequency of communication, but that it is a matter of preference on how much is really too little, too much, or just right for an individual.

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW RESULTS

<u>Introduction and Summary of Major Findings</u>

Overall, my interviews served as a source of insight into the dynamics of communication within romantic relationships. Three major dynamics were discussed to some extent in most interviews and these are the three I chose to report on in the following sections. All three of these findings are discussed throughout the qualitative results section in relation to previous findings about the pressure to be in constant communication with one's partner (Skierkowski & Wood 2012, Pettigrew 2009).

These main findings are also more fully understood when a distinction is made between the goals of content versus contact. My analysis revealed that, frequently, individuals form their communication expectations based on what goals they are trying

to fulfill with the act of communicating: content or contact. Relaying content is working towards the goal of exchanging practical information between partners, for example, with the goal of seeing each other during the day. Practical information in this situation might include when an individual will be at a particular place, or what time someone is free. Contrastingly, when the goal is contact, the important function of the communication is to stay in touch, often with simple status updates of the mundane day-to-day happenings of one or both partners. This is similar to the "grooming calls" discussed by Lanigan (2009) as a means to affirm bonds between individuals. Moreover, I understand this goal of contact as directly related to the desire for constant communication. While it is very possible that within a single instance of communication both content and contact can be achieved, it was overwhelmingly apparent throughout the interviews that one or the other is commonly the main goal in communicating in a given instance. Moreover my interviews established that any of the four modes of communication might be used for either "goal" of content or contact.

Differentiating between goals of content and contact in communication proved to be very important in understanding how my interviewees discuss their most preferred mode of communication. There was a notable difference between the most preferred mode of male and female respondents, highlighted by the explanations they gave for their favorite mode choice. Males focused on the convenience of use of the particular mode, or the ease of contact function through their communication (often related to facilitating constant communication). This differs from the females, who explained their preference for the value of the features of a communication mode, which enhanced the quality of the experience they shared with their partner.

The distinction between content and contact places my next finding about the equivalency of FM and text messaging within the context of individual's communication *expectations* for their partner within their relationship. These modes are used interchangeably for the continuation of either the goal of content or contact when the preferred mode is not available or less convenient. In other words, when texting can't be used to communicate, partners often still work to carry on the continuous conversation and achieve goals (either content or contact) by changing modes and staying connected. What people expect from these modes of communication is contingent upon whether their goal in using a given mode is content or contact.

The last major finding from the interviews is the behavior of purposefully not responding to one's partner as punishment – often referred to as the "silent treatment." This form of punishment relies on the assumption that when an individual does not receive a reply, they feel as though they are being ignored because constant replies are the norm. Understanding this finding while considering the separation of goals of content versus contact within communication helps to make clear why unresponsiveness can be used as punishment; individuals expect contact from their partner. This furthers my understanding of expectations within relationships because in all cases where interview participants discussed their method of punishing with the "silent treatment," they did not discuss the act of withholding content from their partner. The focus was on how they did not reciprocate the contact from their partner and worked as resistance to the continual communication norm. This was how the unresponsiveness was oriented: specifically to not acknowledge the connection their partner was attempting to make with them. This is not to say that the partner doing the

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contacting did not seek content from his or her partner, but that the punishment was about denial of contact. I believe this distinction between content and contact is important to note in order to best understand how the phenomenon of "the silent treatment" is understood.

Further explanation within this paper will help to enlighten these occurrences, but beginning by placing each unique finding within the frame of reference between content or contact and as a result, part of the larger picture of the need for constant communication helps to make the most of the findings within my qualitative interview data.

An important note about the major findings in this section is that my results indicated that the relationship communication dynamics that persistently appeared within participants' responses were not associated with particularly higher or lower Hendrick's Score variables. Meaning, the major findings from the interview portion of the study were details drawn from relationships of varying degrees of satisfaction and were not related to particularly high or low overall relationship satisfaction. I believe this also indicates that the nuances detailed by many participants occur within different types of relationships, regardless of overall satisfaction levels.

Interviewee information including participation number, pseudonym used throughout results section, age, race, relationship discussed (previous or current) and Hendrick's Relationship Satisfaction score can be found in APPENDIX A5.

TABLE 3: Interview Sample Descriptive Statistics

Demographic Characteristics	Women	Men
Average Age (years)	19.9	20.8
Race (percentage of total of each gender)		
White	70%	90%
Black	0%	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	10%	10%
Hispanic	20%	0%
Multiracial	0%	0%
Relationship Discussed (percentage of total of each gender)		
Previous Relationship	40%	30%
Current Relationship	60%	70%
Mode Frequency (in times per day)		
Texting Frequency	10+	10+
Phone Call Frequency	0.59	0.51
Snapchat Frequency	3.09	4.96
Facebook Frequency	1.09	2.88
Mode Satisfaction[1]		
Texting Satisfaction	-0.1	-0.2
Phone Call Satisfaction	0.3	0
Snapchat Satisfaction	0.2	0
Facebook Satisfaction	0	-0.2
Communication Preference (percentage of total of each gender)		
Prefer Partner Initiates	70%	40%
Prefer Self Initiates	0%	0%
No Preference in Initiation	30%	60%
Daily Communication as Requirement	90%	50%
Preferred Mode of Communication (percentage of total of each gender)		
Texting	0%	60%
Phone Calls	60%	20%
Snapchat	10%	20%
Facebook Messenger	10%	0%
Other	20%	0%
Relationship Satisfaction		
Overall (Hendrick's Score)	27.9	27.09
Frequency of Communication (% satisfied)	70%	80%
N	10	10

Note: [1] Satisfaction is measured on a scale from -1 to 1.

Table 3 shows descriptive statistics for the interview sample respondents, stratified by gender. The table displays the quantifiable data in this form for the purpose of comparing the responses of men to women. The variables discussed within the chart are the same variables discussed for the survey population in Table 1 above. When comparing initial findings of descriptive statistics for the survey and interview population, based on Table 1 and Table 3 respectively, I found the responses from the two populations to be similar. Demographically, both populations were overwhelmingly white individuals in comparison to other races, the majority of individuals were heterosexual, used texting more than any other mode and on average, used it about ten times per day. Additionally, for both genders across both samples, the average Hendrick's Score was between 27.21 (survey female average) and 28.61 (survey male average) out of a total of 35 with the female and male average scores in the qualitative sample falling in between this range (27.9 and 27.09 respectively.) In other words, there was not much variation between populations in their average overall relationship satisfaction.

Most Preferred Mode: What is highly valued?

An important topic discussed in the interviews was what individuals preferred in their communication with their partner. Understanding how people want to communicate within their relationship was one of my main goals within each interview. One of the most fascinating recurrences within the interview process was respondents' answers to the question "What is your favorite way to communicate with your partner?" 15 of the 20 interviewees responded to this question with a hesitation to say that their favorite was communicating in person (assumedly because they knew the focus of this study was to

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understand how individuals communicate with their cell phones). I would believe that if the participants knew they could say in-person communication was their most preferred and were not limited to the four modes we discussed more in depth, even more would have given this response. This established within my population, for both males and females, that the overwhelming majority of interviewees valued in-person communication and preferred face-to-face interaction to communicating over a different medium.

When in-person communication was not an option, a very interesting pattern occurred with responses: males and females distinctly differ in what they would prefer. Six out of the ten male interviewees in my sample explained how texting was the mode of communication they favored most while none of the females expressed this. Six of the ten females said they preferred phone calls most and only 2 of the 10 males expressed this. One female and 2 males discussed how their most preferred mode was Snapchat. One female said she prefers FM most to communicate with her significant other and the two remaining females both indicated that they preferred to use a mode other than one we discussed in the interview process: Skype. Skype is a video calling application that can be used for video and audio communication on one's computer or cell phone. Table 3 displays the preferred modes of interviewees by gender. This suggests the differences in gender preferences that I hypothesized. This clear difference, with women generally preferring phone calls and men more often preferring texting is important for understanding expectations within romantic relationships particularly because of the explanations respondents gave for *why* these communication modes are preferred: convenience or personal interaction value.

When they discussed preferring texting over other forms of communication, male respondents often said that this was due to the ease of holding a continuous conversation throughout the day, as explained by 20-year-old Peter discussing his previous relationship. He explained that he would text with his girlfriend intermittently throughout the day, every day, "most of the time [discussing] how the day was going and we'd just have random conversations other than that." This mode was his most preferred because he thought it was, "easier…more convenient" and would allow him to text while he was at work or in a boring class. Similarly, Paul, a 21-year-old, explained that while face-to-face was his most preferred mode it was followed by texting. When asked why texting was his second favorite, he simply responded, "Because it's easy."

Contrastingly, 21-year-old Nino gave a very different reply when asked why texting was his most preferred communication mode following in-person communication. He explained:

> You can see all of the information there and even though there's a lot of room for interpretation. On the other hand, if something is said, it's really easy to go back and say look this was said. There's no disputing what the exact words were.

Nino was the only individual who brought up this specific benefit of texting, but nonetheless, his preferences did align with the majority of the other male participants. Both explanations of why individuals prefer texting express an underlying value of convenience for use of that particular mode: convenience of easy use or convenience of seeing and retrieving the information that arose in the conversation. Six of the ten males interviewed made note of convenience when discussing their most preferred mode when only one female did.

Males also discussed convenience as valuable when using phone calls. Nino explained how he and his girlfriend, "only [use phone calls] when things need to be like instant communication so like not very often but usually when something lengthy needs to be said." In this way, phone calls serve a practical function – saving time transmitting information to one another. The primary purpose discussed here is to rapidly and efficiently exchange substantive information and phone calls provide a convenient platform for this goal. Additionally, 21-year-old Tom, one of the two males who indicated that phone calls were his most preferred mode of communication, explained that this was because "it was easiest and it was immediate like you didn't have to wait for a text message." Again, communication mode is preferred because of its convenience. This is not to make the generalization that the males interviewed saw no value in any other aspect of choosing a communication mode. Since the value was placed on the ease of connecting with one another, I would say that the goal when using the most preferred mode, for males, is contact. The majority of males' reasons for choosing their most preferred mode of communication was due to the greater ability to contact one another and not attributed to the actual connection the couples had over the particular mode.

This is also not to say that female interviewees did not appreciate the convenience of various modes. But the difference that 18-year-old Briana exemplifies is that not only did the female participants value the easiness of various modes, but they also more frequently discussed how they preferred communication modes for more personal reasons too. Briana explained that her favorite mode of communication is phone calls because, "I can hear his voice and tell how he's actually feeling and it's just faster than texting." Briana notes an added values of phone calls because not only are

they easier, but they allow her to have a better instant understanding of what he's saying to her because she can hear how he expresses what he says.

Nineteen-year-old Natalie discussed her previous relationship. Her favorite form of communication was phone calls because she said they were "more personal." She and her partner used them once a week and their relationship was "through phone calls mostly." Although Natalie was in a long distance relationship and she expressed that being apart was often difficult, she believed that the "immediate I hear your voice, you hear mine" concept is what kept their relationship going.

In other words, phone calls were discussed as "best" for many females because it is closest to most interviewees' ideal communication mode: in-person communication. In support of this, previous research by Madell & Muncer (2007) concluded that phone calls and face-to-face communications share the factor of a need for an immediate response during communication as opposed to text messaging or instant messaging, which does not. For example, Sabrina, a 21-year-old woman discussing her previous relationship, explained how her most preferred mode was "phone calls other than in-person…because it's more personal you can have more serious conversations." Phone calls were also often pointed to as "better" because you can hear the tone of someone's voice and the nuances that make hearing a specific person's voice unique, similar to in-person conversation.

Twenty-one-year-old Rachelle made an interesting comment about the convenience of texting, but still a preference for phone calls. She explained that her most preferred mode is, "in-person is best but otherwise phone calls are nice but they're not most convenient so I'm happy with texting because I can hear from him multiple

times a day." In this case she prefers phone calls (second to being in-person with her partner) but understands that texting is more convenient for use throughout the day. This directly contrasts the comments made by the males who prefer texting due to the ease of use; Rachelle also assesses that texting is easier, but still prefers voice communication with her partner more. Since the majority of female interviewees noted that the personal experience they have with a particular mode is what leads them to prefer it, I would argue that their goal overall in using their favorite mode is more grounded in the content of the interaction, rather than simple contact. Most of the women interviewed expressed that their most preferred mode includes experiences that they value more, whether it be because it is most similar to being in person with their partner, being able to hear their voice and understand their feelings or see them, the value is placed on the shared experience, rather than the ease of the connection.

For example, Ann, 20 years old and Sarah, 19 years old, both replied that Skyping, a form of audio and visual calls, was their most preferred mode of communication. Ann explained that for her, Skype is, "the next closest thing to actually being there physically with him," and that's why it is her favorite, second to communicating in person. Additionally, Sarah expressed that Skyping would be her second most preferred mode to in-person communication, but Snapchat shared similar benefits, "because then you get to see them. For me it's really about seeing them it's a visual thing and you don't get the same thing at all with texting." She indicated because to her, the highest priority in communicating is visually seeing her significant other while they communicate. She never discusses what is easiest for them to do, but that communication is "really about seeing them."

Although 60% of the men interviewed expressed that texting was their most preferred mode of communication and not even one woman expressed this, 75% of the total interviewees indicated that texting was the mode of communication that they use most frequently. Interestingly, frequent use of texting seemed to be a point of agreement between men and women interviewed although it was significantly favored by one gender over another.

Interchangeability of texting and Facebook Messaging

A second important finding about expectations for communication involves the two modes of communication that are seen by my sample to be equivalent in many ways: text messages and Facebook Messaging (as described by most participants who regularly use Facebook Messenger, given that all interviewees indicated they use texting to some extent). Not only are these two modes seen as equivalent by both genders, but they are also used interchangeably, contingent upon whether cell phone service is available and whether other activities are co-occurring. FM is used as a "backup" form of communication by respondents who are completing other tasks on their computers or when they were in locations with insufficient cell service to text, but when Wi-Fi was available for continued communication. As Elizabeth described, "there might be a situation with no cell phone service and with Internet, [FM is] reliable to send messages." FM serves as a volleying platform for units of language, as does texting, and users can send messages through the use of the Internet alone. Because no cell service needs to be accessed to send these messages, in some ways they are easier to

use, and a plausible alternative to texting. In most cases, respondents discuss the

same topics when using FM as when texting.

Anthony, a 21-year-old, explained to me that he would use FM with his girlfriend:

If we're in a situation where somebody's texting isn't working…That would be like
our version of texting if texting wasn't available like if my phone doesn't get
reception like that happens often in [the library] like if my phone can't send a text,
I'll be on the computer sending her stuff via Wi-Fi.

Anthony discussed that he will occasionally send his girlfriend articles or funny videos

he found online but otherwise content is similar to texting, including, "what we did during

the day or sometimes we'll talk about politics…family things, romantic things as well,

sometimes making plans." In these instances, a mixture of content and contact seemed

to be shared. They discuss current events, share media and make future plans as

content, yet also share "romantic things," and discuss what they're doing throughout the

day, fortifying their relationship and serving as contact.

This view that FM essentially serves as a "backup" mode of communication to

texting is important to the broader story about expectations because I found that there is

an expectation that when one method won't work, the couple feels they must transfer to

using a different mode of communication to maintain the continual communication. This

finding was especially salient for individuals who text their partner daily, throughout the

day, whenever they are physically separated. Many interviewees expressed something

similar about their texting frequency along the lines of, "everyday, of course, but if we're

not in class or work, we're probably texting," as Ann did. The overwhelming majority of

my sample described their texting habits as intermittent throughout the day on most

days, if not every day. Similarly, they turn to Facebook Messaging each other, "basically

whenever we don't have good cell phone service,' as explained by 18-year-old Briana.

20-year-old Ann explained how she uses FM daily with her current boyfriend:

> It's easier if you're doing homework to type to talk to someone than to text. I don't know, I'm faster at typing than texting so sometimes I just tell him to get on Facebook so I can get more done… we usually [use FM] whenever I'm doing homework.

What I found to be particularly intriguing about this comment was that, in instances like these, her focus is not solely on the communication. Ann is, to some extent, also preoccupied with homework, and opts to carry on a conversation in a more convenient way. This is a situation in which I would consider her goal to be contact. She explained that they discuss the same topics that they would if they were texting including what they are currently doing, what they're doing throughout the day or when they might see each other next. However, instead of texting this information, they transmit it through FM, which they deem to be a more convenient option while completing other tasks. This also reaffirms the finding of pressure for constant communication.

In his 2009 study, Pettigrew found that couples felt more connected through texting, given the ability to communicate at any time, anywhere throughout the day and felt a positive response to their ability to communicate more frequently. Perhaps, when this feeling that individuals have relied on (derived from frequent texting communication), cannot be fulfilled, they turn to FM to achieve their connectedness.

Using both texting and FM at the same time is viewed as redundant according to my interviewees, such as when I asked Emily if she used Facebook to message her partner. She replied, "very rarely because we have texting." Utilizing both does not feel necessary, but because of the similarities, they are also viewed as functionally interchangeable. This is also the case when it comes to the content of both FM and

texting. Andrew, a 21 year old, told me that he and his girlfriend interchange between FM and texting, "all the time throughout the day depending on where she was or where I was," discussing, "content similar to texting," when they switch to FM. Most interviewees also expressed that the content of both of these modes were similar, if not identical.

Many participants discussed how they would turn to FM for the concrete purpose of setting up plans and figuring out when they would see one another, such as Tom, a 21-year-old, discussing how he used FM with his girlfriend, "when we don't have service to meet up later." Others used it for carrying on a discussion of how their day was going and what was happening such as Joe, a 21 year old, saying that he too would contact his girlfriend, "whenever I don't have cell phone service" to discuss, "how our day is going, same as texting." These two quotes bring us back to the distinction between content and contact as goals in a given instance of communication. Although they occur over the same "replacement" mode of FM, these are two very distinct types of communication. For some couples, the continued communication when one mode does not work functions to continue transmission of designated information for pragmatic purposes (content). Contrastingly, for others it helps to carry on the goal of contact with each other in the form of updates on day-to-day activities. This goal serves as more of a continued connection to make the partners feel linked even when they aren't in a shared physical space. The latter goal appears to be intertwined with the idea of constant communication within a relationship because when one mode fails, partners feel that they must turn to another, even just for small talk.

The most important conclusion from this part of my interview results is that both men and women shared an expectation to maintain a source of continual

communication. Whether it is to make plans with one another or to continue discussing updates of one's day, couples that used FM overwhelmingly used it for the purpose of continuing conversation when they couldn't text. It seems that the option of "being unavailable" for communication was much less preferred to figuring out another way to communicate and thus, interviewees expected to use another mode to stay in touch.

Lack of Response as Punishment

In this era of constant availability, there is a pressure to constantly communicate, as found by Skierkowski & Wood (2012), and as indicated by my interviews. There is a feeling of normalcy in the inclination to constantly connect with one another over cell phones. Young adults' connectedness to cell phones allows instantaneous, regular conversation through their phones and text messaging (Lanigan 2009). An abundance of previous research has concluded that attempts at communication – specifically text messages – require a reply (Laursen 2005, Aoki & Downes 2003.) I have learned that when a response is not received, it has negative associations. Many of the interview participants expressed that when they don't receive a response from their partner, they are concerned that their partner is upset with them. At the same time, individuals will withhold a response from their significant other if they are upset or angry at something they did – also referred to as "the silent treatment."

Michelle, a 21-year-old, discussed how she feels when asked if she ever avoids her partner's attempts at communication. She explains:

> Yeah, of course like when you're mad at the person or when like you want the person to understand what he or she did was incorrect or like really affected you or like your time is just as valuable as their time you're not gonna respond to what they say…giving him a learning lesson.

Almost every individual in my sample responded to this question in the same manner: that the only reason they choose to purposefully not reply to contact from their significant other was due to being angry or upset with them, using lack of reply as punishment. Otherwise, participants said they do not purposefully ignore their partners' attempts at communication for any other reason. Ann discussed how she: "hurts [her boyfriend] by ignoring him like the silent treatment." When I asked if not replying to him was challenging for her she said, "when I'm mad at him it's not really hard at all."

Twenty-one-year-old Rachelle explained how she would feel if her boyfriend didn't respond to her attempts at communication for 12 hours. She would assume, "something bad happened because even when we're mad at each other, he's never passive aggressive about like not responding. That would be more my thing. If I'm mad I won't respond." This was a very interesting response because in this case, she wouldn't assume that her partner's lack of reply would mean he was purposefully ignoring her because he's angry, yet she does admit that it would be something she would do to him.

Sabrina, a 21-year-old, told me about a time when she avoided responding to her partner's texts saying, "because I was mad at him." One evening, when she was already angry with him, he tried to come to see her and initiated this by sending her multiple text messages. She did not respond to him, so he continued to text her and she discussed how, "as the text messages were coming in and I wasn't responding I could tell he was getting mad." She also explained that, "it was satisfying…because I was mad at him and I knew I was making him mad." Because it seems to be expected that we're on our phones all the time, when her partner wasn't receiving a reply from her, it not only made him angry, but her initial purpose for not responding was due to the fact that she was

upset with him and wanted to upset him with the silent treatment. Furthermore, Sabrina said if she wasn't receiving a reply from her significant other for a week, she would be, "mad because at this point, you're either dead or ignoring me." Therefore, unsurprisingly, if she were to receive the silent treatment that she was giving to her partner, she would also be upset.

Twenty-one-year-old Elizabeth gave more insight to how her method of the silent treatment works. She explained that she will ignore her boyfriend's attempts at communication, "if I'm really upset… if he's texting and not bothering to call I'll wait [to respond] longer, maybe a few hours at a time if I'm really upset." When asked to clarify if she would be sad upset or mad upset, she said it would be in the situation when she was "mad at him." In her explanation, her preference in modes of communication plays a role in how quickly she would respond. Phone calls are her most preferred mode of communication because she appreciates the conversational effort they both make when they communicate over phone calls. Therefore, if he texted her and "not bothering" to call her, she would wait longer to reply, thus intensifying the punishment. However, if he made the extra effort to give her a phone call, she would not give him the silent treatment for as long.

The other side of this observation is how individuals perceive a lack of response when they are the ones reaching out to their partner. When an individual feels as though their partner is consciously choosing to not respond to their communication attempts, some immediately begin questioning, "Did I do something wrong?" as 18-year-old Emily explained when asked how she feels when her boyfriend doesn't

respond to her. This comment indicated her worry that he would purposefully ignore her if he were upset with her, in other words, give her the silent treatment.

When Andrew, a 21-year-old, was asked how he would feel if his significant other didn't respond for 24 hours he said he would be, "probably angry that she's mad." Following this, when he was asked about what would be happening if she didn't reply for a week he quickly replied, "then she's real mad." I followed up by asking if he would assume from her unresponsiveness that she was mad and he said yes. From this particular response, we learn even more about how negative emotional responses to this situation are interrelated. Interview responses lead us to see people choosing not to respond because they are mad, people becoming frustrated and angry when they don't receive a response and assuming that it is because their partner is upset with them, which exacerbates the frustration of the partner attempting to communicate.

Overall, these three findings contribute interesting details into aspects of the social pressure to communicate with the additional insight of goals of content versus contact. Within this pressure, there are still gendered preferences for most preferred mode based on either convenience of mode, or quality of communication through mode. This indicates a difference in value of content of communication versus use of communication for contact. Next, when the most preferred mode (texting) is not available, an alternative mode (FM) must be accessed in order to continue either content or contact, still fulfilling the desire and expectation for perpetual communication. Finally, the resistance to this pressure to communicate is used as punishment, or the "silent treatment" by withholding contact from one's partner, not content. In culmination,

all three findings build upon previous literatures' findings about the need for continuous communication in different ways.

DISCUSSION

In this study, I set out to determine the communication frequencies and satisfaction of four communication modes in young adult romantic relationships and to assess if there is a relationship between these trends and overall romantic relationship satisfaction. My goal was to fill a gap in the literature about how communication satisfaction affects overall romantic relationship satisfaction, as well as examine the frequency of use of particular modes common to young adults today including Snapchat, Facebook Messenger, texting and phone calls. Prior literature focused overwhelmingly on the frequency of texting within this age group. My research makes a contribution because it also assesses not only how frequently young adults are using modes other than texting within their romantic relationships, but also how satisfied they are with the frequency of these modes and how mismatches along with overall communication satisfaction is related to their overall relationship satisfaction. Additionally, this study uniquely interviewed college-aged individuals about their communication expectations, frequency and overall relationship satisfaction together, bringing about new findings on these topics.

My quantitative survey results showed that there is not a simple, obvious relationship between the frequency of use of specific communication modes and relationship satisfaction. However, the qualitative interview data helps to break down the

nature of communication within romantic relationships, giving clear examples of the complicated phenomena mediating these interactions.

My study, like much of the previous literature, concluded that, for young adults, text messaging is the most frequently used mode of communication (among my four discussed communication modes) within their romantic relationships. This finding supported my first hypothesis. Both my survey and interview participants overwhelmingly indicated it is the only mode they are likely to use about 10 or more times per day.

I examined the frequency and satisfaction with frequency of use of phone calls. In support of my hypothesis, I found that phone calls were the mode of communication used least out of the modes discussed by both survey and interview participants. Contrary to my hypothesis, however, phone calls were not found to be the mode that participants were least satisfied with overall. Male survey participants desired less texting and less FM use more strongly than they desired an increase in phone call frequency. Female survey participants indicated that they wanted a slight increase in the frequency of phone calls, but this was their second least satisfied mode of communication (they indicated they would more strongly desire less use of FM). Lastly, male interview participants were satisfied with phone call frequency. The one group that supported my hypothesis were female interview participants in that they were most dissatisfied with phone call frequency, desiring a slight increase. I did, however, predict that men and women would desire more, and not less of this mode and in both groups of women participants and the male survey participants, the average response was a desire for a slight increase in phone call frequency. Since not much previous research

had been done on use of phone calls, I do not have literature to compare my findings of this frequency or satisfaction to.

I also explored whether individuals communicated daily with their significant other and if they understood daily communication to be a requirement within their relationship. Most interviewees indicated that they communicate with their partners every day and according to average text, Snapchat and FM frequencies of survey participants, these modes are used daily. Survey data also showed that 76% of females and 57% of males indicated that they saw daily communication with their partner as a requirement. Both of my hypotheses were supported by these data. Similarly, my findings corroborate Hertlein's finding (2012) that there is an expectation to use technology to communicate, Pettigrew's (2009) finding that there is a sense of need for "perpetual contact" with young adults and their partners and Aoki and Downes's assessment (2003) that indicated that individuals are expected to be connected and check their phones regularly for communication. Moreover, as predicted and as supported by previous research (Baym et al 2007) there is no connection between higher frequencies of communication via the specific modes that I asked about and higher overall relationship satisfaction (as shown in Figure 3).

A main goal of my study was to establish if people are dissatisfied with frequencies of particular modes of communication within their relationship, or mismatch, and I hypothesized that every participant would have mismatch and thus, dissatisfaction with at least one mode of communication. Although mismatches do exist, 6 of my 133 survey participants indicated that they were satisfied with all 4 modes of communication focused on in this study. Originally I was somewhat surprised that not all participants

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indicated occurrences of mismatch, but again, I had no previous literature regarding comparing satisfaction of frequency of communication modes to compare these findings to. Moreover, although not every participant indicated some mismatch, 95% of survey participants responded with various degrees of its existence in their relationship.

Next, I examined the key relationship between satisfaction with overall communication frequency (when partners are not together) and overall relationship satisfaction. In support of my hypothesis, I found that there is a positive correlation between communication frequency satisfaction and overall relationship satisfaction. This builds on Sabatelli's research (1988) that indicated that if a particular aspect of the relationship does not meet expectation, and this aspect is considered to be of importance to the relationship, this will lower overall relationship satisfaction. Although Sabatelli's study discussed communication, he explored communication quality in relation to overall romantic relationship satisfaction; contrastingly, I investigated communication frequency satisfaction in relation to overall relationship satisfaction.

However, when I examined if people were dissatisfied with more modes of communication, there was no clear relationship between this and an individual's relationship satisfaction overall. I had predicted that if individuals had mismatch for more modes, they would have a lower Hendrick's score but my results did not support this. I found this to be particularly surprising because when assessing overall satisfaction with communication frequency, there was a positive correlation with overall romantic relationship satisfaction. This lack of correlation finding stands in stark contrast to a key feature of Sabatelli's Exchange Model (1986), which indicates that as more aspects of one's relationship do not meet expectation (in this case more communication modes),

global assessment of the relationship should be lower, but is not. This could be because satisfaction with individual modes is not a criterion by which people evaluate their relationship, but overall satisfaction with communication frequency is, as suggested by the association I found between it and overall relationship satisfaction.

Finally, I examined whether there were gendered differences in, overall communication satisfaction, most preferred communication mode, communication mode satisfaction or frequency. I predicted I would find differences between men and women in all of these categories. Almost all of these hypotheses were unsupported by my survey data. With regard to mode satisfaction, men wanted much less use of texting while women wanted to use it slightly. Otherwise, men and women had very similar satisfactions per mode as well as very similar satisfaction with overall communication on average. Moreover, survey men and women both most strongly preferred texting to other modes of communication in contrast to interview results, where men strongly preferred texting but women preferred phone calls; the interview preference results support my hypothesis. Surprisingly, men claimed to use Snapchat almost twice as frequently per day as women. This result directly contradicts previous findings that sex of an individual or sex of the individual one is contacting does not affect frequency of use of communication modes (Baym et al 2007). This could be due to the fact that either one or both of the sexes misjudged how frequently they use this mode with their partner, or one or both sexes responded to this question with how frequently they send Snapchats, which may differ from how frequently they receive Snapchats or vice versa. Otherwise, previous literature does not suggest their should or should not be gendered differences in these communication aspects.

While my survey results did much of the work answering my research questions about relationships between variables within this topic, my interview results were more exploratory in addressing phenomena that occur within communication interactions. They enlightened the dynamics of communication within romantic relationships and implications for how individuals understand communication in their relationship. These results also coincided with previous literature citing pressure for constant communication (Skierkowski & Wood 2012, Pettigrew 2009). What was particularly interesting about these communication dynamics is that they regularly occurred within relationships of individuals with varying levels of relationship satisfaction. I understand this to mean that the habits and understanding of communication within my participants' relationships is representative of how many people understand communication within their own relationships, regardless of satisfaction, thus making these findings more generalizable to young adult romantic relationships.

The three major findings from the interviews all seemed to be implications prompted by the need to be in constant communication with one's partner and each of the findings are more fully understood with the distinction between goals of content versus contact within communication. Firstly, how an individual chooses their most preferred communication mode seems to be contingent upon whether their highest priority is content or contact with their partner. When the priority is contact, this is often in order to fill the need to be in continual contact with one's partner. For males, preferential mode was often linked with what is most convenient to use for constant communication. Females' most preferred mode was most often attributed to a mode associated with the highest quality of interaction with their partner. Secondly, when

texting, a frequently preferred mode is not available, in order to maintain the continuous contact with one's partner, individuals transfer to using a mode that is available, FM. This occurs in situations when the goal of communication is either contact or content or a mix of the two. Finally, because this standard of constant communication is so salient, straying from this norm can be used as a form of punishment or "the silent treatment" by ignoring one's partner. The punishment is effective because contact is withheld and this clearly violates current practice of cell phone use.

While this study made novel contributions on this topic, like all research, there were limitations. One particular limitation was my lack of inclusion of video calls as one of the discussed communication modes. Skype and FaceTime came up repeatedly in both surveys and the interviews. When designing the study, I chose to limit the number of focal modes to four, aiming not to overwhelm participants. Video calling, however, appears to be an important mode worthy of inclusion for future research. Another possible extension for research on this topic would be to collect longitudinal data on communication patterns and relationship satisfaction. It would be beneficial to learn how peoples' communication frequencies change over the course of the relationship, and potentially, how satisfaction fluctuates throughout the relationship.

Second, by design, my interviews were very structured and didn't allow for very open-ended conversations. Due to this, I was less likely to have gotten full explanation of unexpected responses within the interviews and may have missed out on further intriguing findings. Finally, my study did not investigate other elements of a relationship that can affect relationship satisfaction, for example, trust or compatibility. These would have helped me situate the discussion of communication within a broader set of factors

that shape relationship quality. In the interest of time they were not included, but would be an intriguing addition for future research on this topic.

Finally, despite my best efforts, the survey had very low response rates. I was hoping to acquire twice as many participants as I had but I believe this low response rate is related to the fact students at this university receive copious emails in a single day and often aren't inclined to participate in research without incentive. Unfortunately, I didn't predict that without incentive, the response rate would be *so* low. In addition to the low response rate, there was non-random response in part due to the strategy for disseminating the survey. Moreover, I received four times as many female participants as male participants, over 80% of participants were white and more than 80% of participants were heterosexual. The fact that the vast majority of respondents were white, heterosexual females makes it more difficult for me to draw larger conclusions about the young adult population, when I really only understand a small portion of the population of one university. Additionally, previous literature has mainly focused on heterosexual couples' relationships and I was hoping to expand upon this to generate findings about non-heteronormative couples. Unfortunately, individuals who responded to my recruitment strategies overwhelmingly reported heterosexual relationships.

Despite these limitations, my study adds a useful discovery to sociological theoretical conversations. I found that satisfaction with overall communication frequency is strongly positively associated with overall relationship satisfaction, but increase in number of communication modes with which my respondents were satisfied does not have the same positive correlation. Additionally, my work sheds new light on the previous findings of a, "pressure to communicate," along with the addition of my

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comparisons of specific communication goals of content or contact. Firstly, within this pressure to communicate, there is a distinct gender difference in mode preference based on convenience or quality of connection. Secondly, this pressure is so great that another mode must be sought out (such as when texting fails, turning to FM) when a preferred mode is not available. Thirdly, counteractions to this "pressure" (the silent treatment) have social implications understood as passive aggression towards and punishment for one's partner. In addition to these findings, the quantification of use of 3, understudied communication modes has been added to the empirical evidence base. A particularly novel addition to empirical evidence is the quantification of frequency of use of Facebook Messenger and Snapchat within young adult romantic relationships.

In sum, these findings help us to better understand how young adults are communicating in their romantic relationships and implications of this for their relationship satisfaction. Further findings on this topic could lead to communication modes more tailored to fit individuals' needs; these could directly contribute to increasing relationship satisfaction or could build on the growing pressure to communicate. Either way, it is salient that communication is a key feature within all relationships and how frequently and over what modes we communicate must always be situated within its current society. When riding in the car with my mother that afternoon, I realized "normal" communication habits of young adults today differ greatly from communication habits when she was college-aged. Perhaps societal influences and technologic advancements always construct what are "normal" communication dynamics, or perhaps "normal" is much less based on external influences and is really formulated by an individual's own personal desires and expectations.

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Consent to Participate in a Research Study
COMMUNICATION MEDIUMS AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION-- INTERVIEW

Principal Investigator: Nina Lucido, B.A. candidate in Sociology, University of Michigan
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Sarah Burgard, Ph.D., University of Michigan

Invitation to participate in a research study

Nina Lucido invites you to participate in a research study about communication mediums in romantic relationships in order to gain a better understanding of how couples communicate and how it affects their relationship satisfaction.

Description of subject involvement

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to answer a series of questions that relate to situations pertaining to communication habits and romantic relationship satisfaction. The interview will be audio recorded and will last 30-60 minutes.

Benefits

Although you may not directly benefit from being in this study, others may benefit because it will give a better understanding of how communication habits within relationship affects overall relationship satisfaction.

Risks and discomforts

The researchers have taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. Even so, you may still experience some risks related to your participation, even when the researchers are careful to avoid them. These risks may include the following: discomfort from talking about relationship and communication experiences. The risk involved in this study is minimal.

Confidentiality

We plan to publish the results of this study, but will not include any information that would identify you. There are some reasons why people other than the researchers may need to see information you provided as part of the study. This includes organizations responsible for making sure the research is done safely and properly, including the University of Michigan, government offices or the study sponsor.

To keep your information safe, the researchers will keep all data on a password-locked device, as well as through services secured by firewall.

Also, if you tell us something that makes us believe that you or others have been or may be physically harmed, we may report that information to the appropriate agencies.

Storage and future use of data
The data you provide will be stored on a voice recorder and later transferred to a computer device.
The researcher will retain the data for no more than 5 years.
The researcher will dispose of your data by 1/2020.
The data will not be made available to other researchers for other studies following the completion of this research study and will not contain information that could identify you. All data will be kept confidential and will not be distributed to third parties.

Voluntary nature of the study
Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to withdraw early, only the portion in which you participated will be kept.

Contact information
If you have questions about this research, including questions about scheduling or your compensation for participating, you may contact Nina Lucido, (586) 747-7922, nlucido@umich.edu or Dr. Sarah Burgard, burgards@umich.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, 540 E Liberty St., Ste. 202, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210, (734) 936-0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

Consent
By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in the study and to be audiotaped. You will be given a copy of this document for your records and one copy will be kept with the study records. Be sure that questions you have about the study have been answered and that you understand what you are being asked to do. You may contact the researcher if you think of a question later.

I agree to participate in the study.

_____
Printed Name

_____   _____
Signature   Date

Study ID: HUM00090398 IRB: Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Date Approved: 7/31/2014

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR RESEARCH

University of Michigan
Honors Sociology Program

Study interested in looking at how communication habits affect romantic relationship satisfaction.

Looking for 18-22 year olds currently or previously in committed romantic relationships & who own and use a cell phone to participate in a 30 minute interview and a 5 minute survey.

This research is conducted under the direction of Dr. Burgard, Sociology Department

$5 Gift Card awarded for participation in short survey and interview. Interviews will take place on the U of M Campus.

Contact Nina Lucido for more information.

⟶ SIGN UP TODAY ⟵

Communication Habits & Relationship Satisfaction Research Contact Nina Lucido nlucido@umich.edu

Communication Habits & Relationship Satisfaction Research Contact Nina Lucido nlucido@umich.edu

Communication Habits & Relationship Satisfaction Research Contact Nina Lucido nlucido@umich.edu

Communication Habits & Relationship Satisfaction Research Contact Nina Lucido nlucido@umich.edu

Communication Habits & Relationship Satisfaction Research Contact Nina Lucido nlucido@umich.edu

Communication Habits & Relationship Satisfaction Research Contact Nina Lucido nlucido@umich.edu

APPENDIX A3
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- **Age:_____**

- **What gender do you identify with?**

  - Male

  - Female

  - Other (please describe):_____

- **What race do you identify with?**

  - White

  - Black

  - Asian/Pacific Islander

  - Hispanic

  - Native American

  - Other (please describe):_____

- **How would you describe your sexual orientation?**

  - Heterosexual

  - Homosexual

  - Other (please describe):_____

- **Are you currently in a relationship or will you be discussing a previous relationship?**

    - Current relationship

    - Previous relationship

Background
- o What's your participation ID
- o Are you currently in a relationship or will you be discussing a previous relationship?
- o Is this the only relationship you're in that is like this/ was this the only relationship you were in like this at the time?

Partner
- o *Relationships mean a lot of different things to different people, and I'm trying to understand what your relationship is like. Would you please describe your relationship*
- o Please explain what a committed relationship means to you.
  - ▪ What do you do together?
    - o Dates?
    - o Sleep overs?
    - o Hang with friends?
    - o Go out?
  - ▪ Exclusive?
  - ▪ How long?
  - ▪ How many times do you see your significant other in a week?
  - ▪ Would you consider your relationship to be serious?
- o Describe your partner as an individual
  - ▪ What gender does your partner identify with?
  - ▪ How would you describe the sexual orientation of your partner?

Communication
- o Do you own a cell phone?
  - ▪ Is it a smart phone?
- o What do you use to communicate with your partner when you're not together?
  - ▪ Snap chat?
    - ▪ How often do you use it?
    - ▪ How often would you like to use it? More/less
  - ▪ Phone calls?
    - ▪ How often do you use it?
    - ▪ How often would you like to use it? More/less
  - ▪ Texting?
    - ▪ How often do you use it?
    - ▪ How often would you like to use it? More/less

- Facebook messaging?
    - How often do you use it?
    - How often would you like to use it? More/less
- What do you use most to communicate with your partner?
    - About how many times a day do you _____ (that form of communication) with your partner
- Are you satisfied with the overall frequency of your communication when you're not together? Would you like more or less
    - How much would you like it to be?
    - (If applicable) How does it make you feel if the frequency does not meet your expectation?
- How do you feel about the frequency of communication in your relationship in comparison to other couples today? Do you feel that it is comparable?
- If you were to check your phone right now how many texts did you send your partner yesterday
    - How many calls?
    - How many snap chats?
    - How many Facebook messages?
- What kinds of things do you talk about usually when you use
    - Texting
    - Phone calls
    - Snap chats
    - Facebook messages
- Are there any major limitations to your communication habits?
    - Things that keep you from talking to your partner at any times during the day?
- Do you ever avoid your partner's attempts at communication?
    - (If yes) Why?
    - Is this difficult?
        - Why?
- What is your favorite way to communicate with your significant other?
    - Why?

APPENDIX A5
INTERVIEWEE INFORMATION

Participant	Pseudonym	Age	Race	Current / Previous Relationship	Hendrick's Score
101 Female	Alex	21	White	Previous	26
102 Female	Sabrina	21	White	Previous	20
103 Male	Mike	20	Asian/Pacific Islander	Current	27
104 Female	Michelle	21	Hispanic	Previous	16
105 Female	Sarah	19	White	Current	25
106 Male	Anthony	21	White	Current	31
107 Male	Peter	20	White	Previous	22
108 Female	Emily	18	White	Current	35
109 Female	Briana	18	White	Current	33
110 Female	Ann	20	White	Current	33
111 Female	Natalie	19	Asian/Pacific Islander	Previous	24
112 Male	Dominic	21	White	Current	34
113 Male	Joe	21	White	Current	29
114 Female	Rachelle	21	White	Current	33
115 Male	Tom	21	White	Previous	27
116 Male	Paul	21	White	Current	25
117 Female	Elizabeth	21	White	Current	34
118 Male	Nino	21	White	Current	28
119 Male	Ryan	21	White	Current	22
120 Male	Andrew	21	White	Previous	17

APPENDIX B
HENDRICK'S RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION SCALE

Please mark on the answer sheet the letter for each item that best answers that item for you.

How well does your partner meet your needs?

A   B   C   D   E

Poorly   Average   Extremely well

In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

A   B   C   D   E

Unsatisfied   Average   Extremely satisfied

How good is your relationship compared to most?

A   B   C   D   E

Poor   Average   Excellent

How often do you wish you hadn't gotten in this relationship?

A   B   C   D   E

Never   Average   Very often

To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations:

A   B   C   D   E

Hardly at all   Average   Completely

How much do you love your partner?

A   B   C   D   E

Not much   Average   Very much

How many problems are there in your relationship?

A   B   C   D   E

Very few   Average   Very many

APPENDIX C1
SURVEY EMAIL RECRUITMENT

Please participate in survey research!

This study for the University of Michigan Honors Sociology Program is interested in looking at how communication habits affect romantic relationship satisfaction. We are looking for 18-22 year olds currently/previously in committed romantic relationships & who own and use a smart phone to participate in a 5-10 minute online survey!

All data collection will occur online and all data received by the researcher will be in anonymous form.

Link to participate in survey: https://qtrial2014az1.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cxc0xqouIOqjjdb

Contact Nina Lucido at communication.satisfaction@gmail.com for more information or any questions.

This research is conducted under the direction of Dr. Burgard, Sociology Department.

SURVEY CONSENT FORM

Study ID: HUM00090398 IRB: Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Date Approved: 7/31/2014

Consent to Participate in a Research Study COMMUNICATION MEDIUMS AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION-- SURVEY

Principal Investigator: Nina Lucido, B.A. candidate in Sociology, University of Michigan **Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Sarah Burgard, Ph.D., University of Michigan

Invitation to participate in a research study

Nina Lucido invites you to participate in a research study about communication mediums in romantic relationships in order to gain a better understanding of how couples communicate and how it affects their relationship satisfaction.

Description of subject involvement

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to complete a brief online survey. The purpose of this survey is to gather information pertaining to communication habits and romantic relationship satisfaction. The survey will take place online and take about 15 minutes of your time.

Benefits

Although you may not directly benefit from being in this study, others may benefit because it will give a better understanding of how communication habits within relationship affects overall relationship satisfaction.

Risks and discomforts

Some individuals may feel uncomfortable with certain questions asked by the survey. Participation is completely voluntary and you may skip questions throughout the survey for any reason.

Confidentiality

I plan to use the responses and information gained from these surveys in my Honors Thesis, but I will not include any personal or identifying information that could potentially connect you to my research. No names or email addresses will be collected through the survey, participation is anonymous and I will not be provided with identifiers. All data will be stored on a password- protected computer. Any correspondence through email will be deleted after all questions or comments have been addressed, as to eliminate any personal or identifying information of participants.

Voluntary nature of the study

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to withdraw early, your responses will not be saved.

Contact information

If you have questions about this research, including questions about how the data collected will be used, you may contact Nina Lucido, nlucido@umich.edu or Dr. Sarah Burgard, burgards@umich.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral

Sciences Institutional Review Board, 540 E Liberty St., Ste. 202, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210, (734) 936-0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

Consent

By clicking to continue, you voluntarily wish to participate and you will be directly lead to the survey. Be sure that questions you have about the study have been answered and that you understand what you are being asked to do. You may contact the researcher if you think of a question later.

Click to begin survey.

- Age
- Gender you identify with:
    - Male
    - Female
    - Other (fill in)
- What Race do you identify with:
    - White,
    - Asian/Pacific Islander,
    - Hispanic,
    - Native American,
    - Black,
    - Other (fill in)
- How would you describe your sexual orientation:
    - Heterosexual,
    - Homosexual
    - Bisexual
    - Other (fill in)
- Are you currently in a relationship or are you discussing a previous relationship?
    - Current relationship,
    - Previous relationship
- What do you use to communicate with your partner when you're not physically together in the same space? (To express frequency, please choose a numerical frequency along with a specific time frame [i.e. day, week, month]).
    - Texting
        - Number of times used
        - Per specific time frame
        - Would you like to use it more, less or are you satisfied with the frequency?
    - Phone calls
        - Number of times used
        - Per specific time frame
        - Would you like to use it more, less or are you satisfied with the frequency?
    - Snap chats
        - Number of times used
        - Per specific time frame
        - Would you like to use it more, less or are you satisfied with the frequency?
    - Facebook messages
        - Number of times used
        - Per specific time frame
        - Would you like to use it more, less or are you satisfied with the frequency?

- Other (fill in & maybe find items from survey):
  - Number of times used
  - Per specific time frame
  - Would you like to use it more, less or are you satisfied with the frequency?
- Do you prefer initiating conversation (texting, phone calls, Facebook Messaging or Snapchat) with your partner, or when they would initiate conversation with you?
  - I prefer initiating it myself
  - I prefer when my partner initiates conversation
  - I have no preference who initiates conversation
- Are you satisfied with the frequency of communication with your significant other when you're not together?
  - On a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being least satisfied, 10 being most satisfied?
- Is it a requirement that you communicated with your significant other every single day, in some way (phone, email, in-person, etc.)?
  - Yes, no matter what
  - Yes, unless otherwise specified
  - No, it is not necessary
  - No, I prefer not to communicate daily
- How *upset* would you feel if you were to initiate conversation over any given medium (texting, phone call Facebook message or Snapchat) and your significant other didn't respond for the following given periods of time? (Scale from 0 to 10, 0 being not upset, 10 being most upset.)
  - 1 hour
  - 12 hours
  - 24 hours
  - 1 week
- How *concerned* would you feel if you were to initiate conversation over any given medium (texting, phone call Facebook message or Snapchat) and your significant other didn't respond for the following given periods of time? (Scale from 0 to 10, 0 being not concerned, 10 being most concerned.)
  - 1 hour
  - 12 hours
  - 24 hours
  - 1 week
- How *annoyed* would you feel if you were to initiate conversation over any given medium (texting, phone call Facebook message or Snapchat) and your significant other didn't respond for the following given periods of time? (Scale from 0 to 10, 0 being not annoyed, 10 being most annoyed.)
  - 1 hour
  - 12 hours
  - 24 hours
  - 1 week
- Do you think your partner is satisfied with the overall frequency of communication when you are not physically spending time with one another?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- What is your MOST favorite way to communicate with your significant other? (Please check one)
  - Texting
  - Phone calls
  - Snapchats
  - Facebook messages
  - In-person communication
  - Other (fill in):

Please mark on the answer sheet the letter for each item that best answers that item for you.

How well does your partner meet your needs?

A	B	C	D	E
Poorly		Average		Extremely well

In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Unsatisfied		Average		Extremely satisfied

How good is your relationship compared to most?

A	B	C	D	E
Poor		Average		Excellent

How often do you wish you hadn't gotten in this relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Never		Average		Very often

To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?

A	B	C	D	E
Hardly at all		Average		Completely

How much do you love your partner?

A	B	C	D	E
Not much		Average		Very much

How many problems are there in your relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Very few		Average		Very many

APPENDIX D
Literature, Science and Arts College Undergraduate Student Demographics 2014

Race	Percentage of Population
Asian/Pacific Islander	12.93
Black	5.18
Hispanic	4.62
Native American	0.18
White	66.31
Multiracial	3.38

Gender	Percentage of Population
Female	53.52
Male	44.64

Total Population: 16254