



# Student-parent facilitated communication: The effects of technological communication on parent-child relationships



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## Introduction

- Emerging adults is the developmental period that includes 18-25 year olds and it is also a time of relationship shifts (Arnett, 2000). However, less is known about how emerging adults sustain their relationships with people in their lives.
- During the emerging adulthood period, it has been found that communication (face-to-face, telephone, e-mail, letters) between the emerging adult and their family members had decreased significantly (Sneed et al., 2006).
- Research found that information and communications technologies (ICTs) are very important for maintaining communication between siblings, especially when one of those siblings has already left for college (Lindell, Campione-Barr, & Killoren, 2015).
- Emerging adults are more likely to be in close proximity to friends and romantic partners during this period, but emerging adults may also use a variety of methods to keep in touch with them.
- The present study explores how emerging adults' communication with mothers, fathers, siblings, friends, and romantic partners differed from each other and how they changed over the course of 1-4 years in college.

## Hypotheses

- Hypothesis 1:** We predicted that communication between emerging adults and their family members will be less frequent overall.
- Hypothesis 1A:** Emerging adults will communicate using face-to-face communication methods with friends/romantic partners more frequently than with family members.
  - Hypothesis 1B:** Female emerging adults will communicate more with close others' than males will.
  - Hypothesis 1C:** Emerging adults' communication with their friends and romantic partners will increase over the course of three years.
- Hypothesis 2:** Females will communicate more frequently with close others' than males will.
- Hypothesis 2A:** Female emerging adults will communicate more frequently using face-to-face interactions than male emerging adults will.
  - Hypothesis 2B:** Female emerging adults will communicate more with family members than male emerging adults will.
  - Hypothesis 2C:** Male emerging adults will communicate with close others' less frequently than female emerging adults over the course of three years.
- Hypothesis 3:** Emerging adults will communicate more frequently over the course of 3 years.
- Hypothesis 3A:** Emerging adults will have an increase in texting and phone calls to communicate over the course of three years.
  - Hypothesis 3B:** Emerging adults will communicate less frequently with family members over the course of three years.
  - Hypothesis 3C:** Female emerging adults will communicate more frequently over the course of three years than male emerging adults.

## Method

|                      |                                  |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Participants         | 250 participants                 |
| Mean age             | 18.49 (SD=0.49)                  |
| Ethnicity            | EA: 87.6% AA: 6.0% Other: 1.2%   |
| Marital Status       | Married: 72.8%                   |
| Mean Family Income   | 84,000-\$99,999                  |
| Distance from family | More than 30 minutes away: 84.4% |

**Communication Methods:** Participants rated how often they communicated with their mothers, fathers, siblings, best friends and romantic partners via 8 methods on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Less often than once per month, and 5 = Multiple times per day (Lindell, Campione-Barr, & Killoren, 2015).

### Eight Methods of Communication:

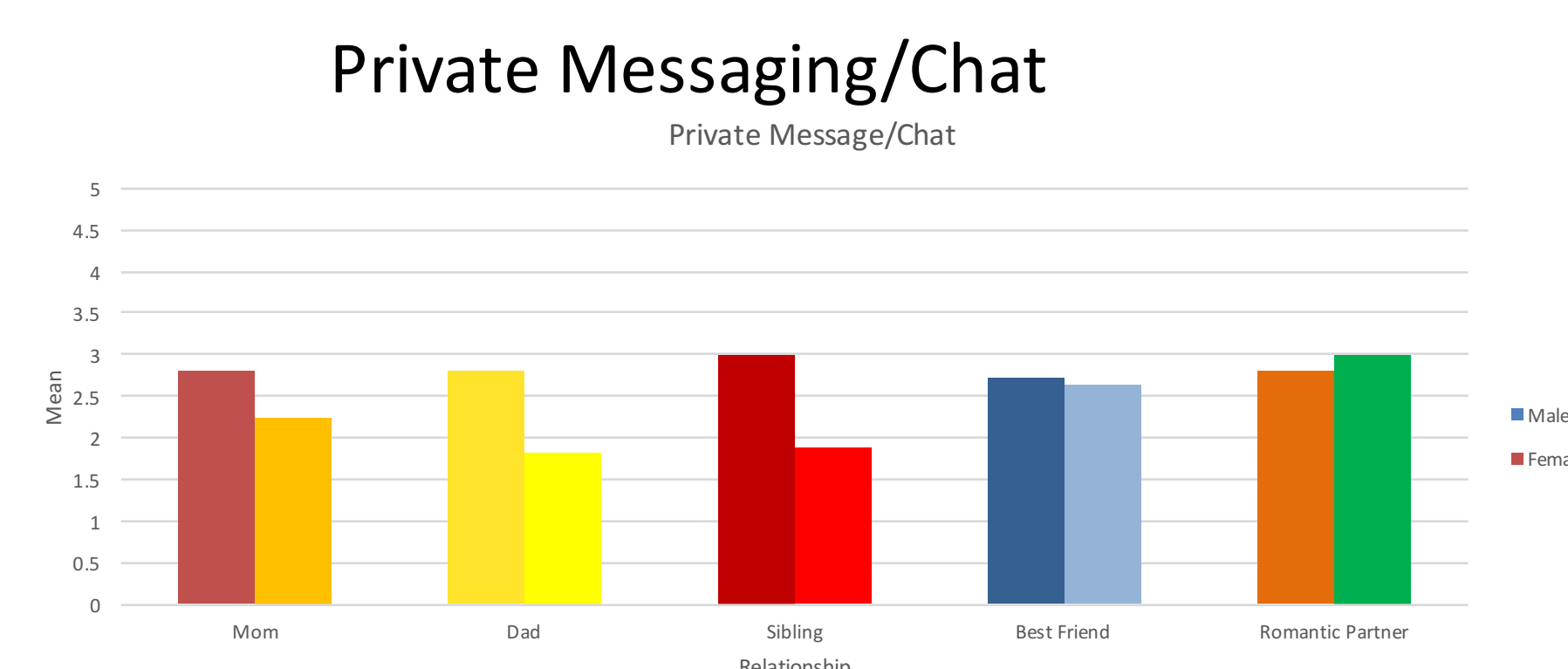
- Checking their family members'/friend's/romantic partner's Facebook or Twitter page
- Actively posting on their family member's/friend's/romantic partner's Facebook wall
- Sending a private message on Facebook
- Email
- Texting
- Calling on a cellphone or with a landline telephone
- Video chatting (Skype, FaceTime)
- Talking to each other in person

**Procedure:** The data in this study was collected through an online questionnaire that the participants received through an email and could complete on their own time. The data was also examined at two different points in time, the second time being after 3 years (Time 1 and Time 2).

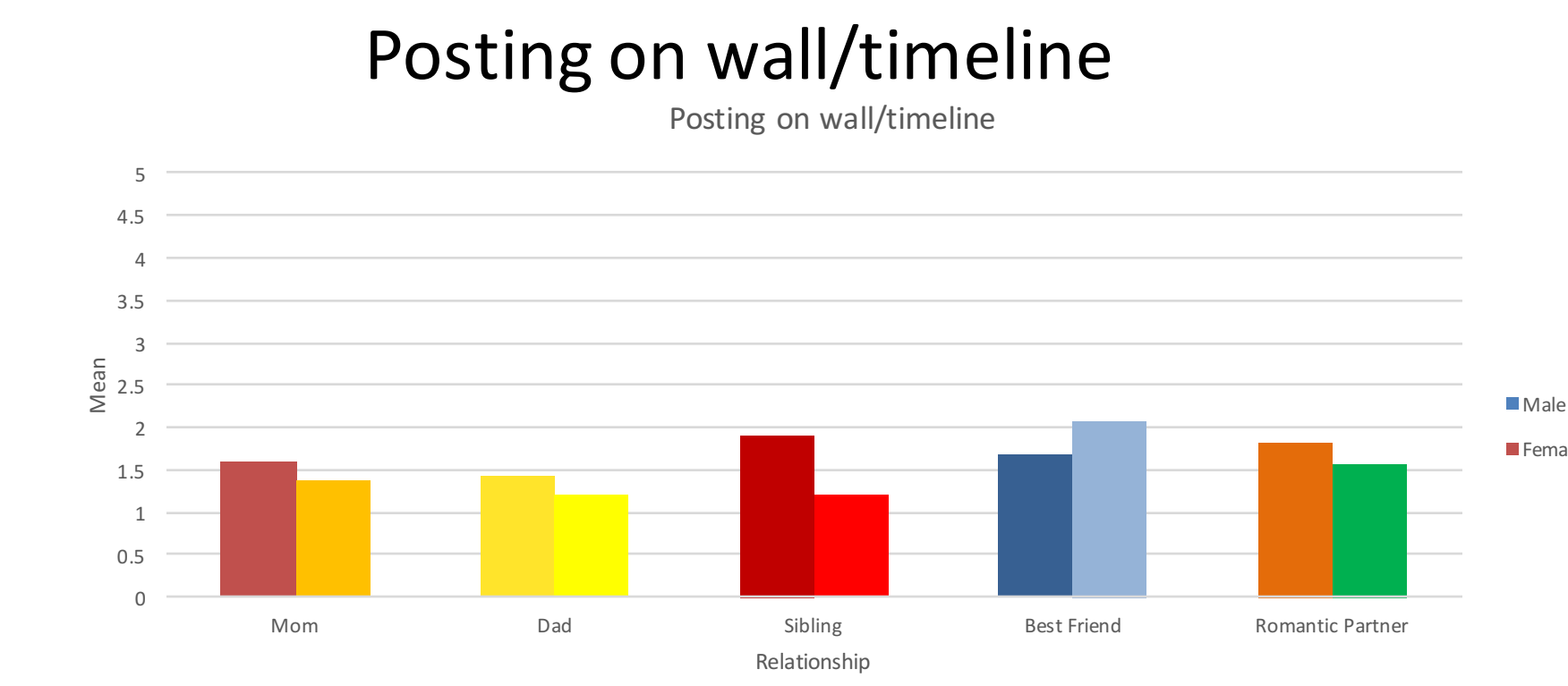
## Discussion

- Hypothesis 1 – Partially Supported:** Emerging adults communicated more frequently with friends and romantic partners in person, but there was no significance in difference of gender or time.
- Hypothesis 2 – Not Supported:** Male emerging adults communicate with close others' more frequently than females do.
- Hypothesis 3 – Partially Supported:** Emerging adults communicate less frequently with family members from Time 1 to Time 2.
- Conclusion:** Overall, results indicate that emerging adults communicate less frequently with family members than friends or romantic partners over the course of three years, but this is not affected by gender.
- Limitations/ Future Directions:** The present study examined predominantly White, middle class sample. Future studies should examine more diverse populations to increase generalizability of these findings.

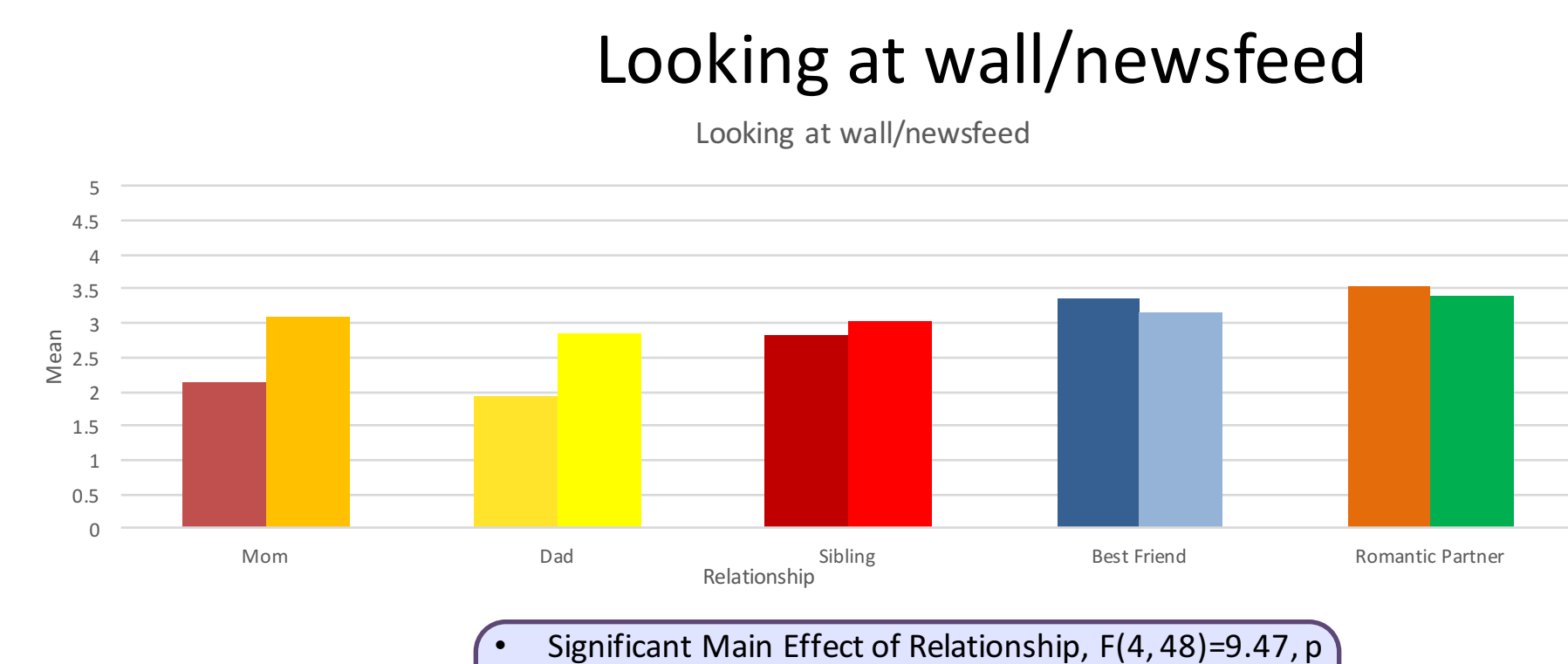
## Results



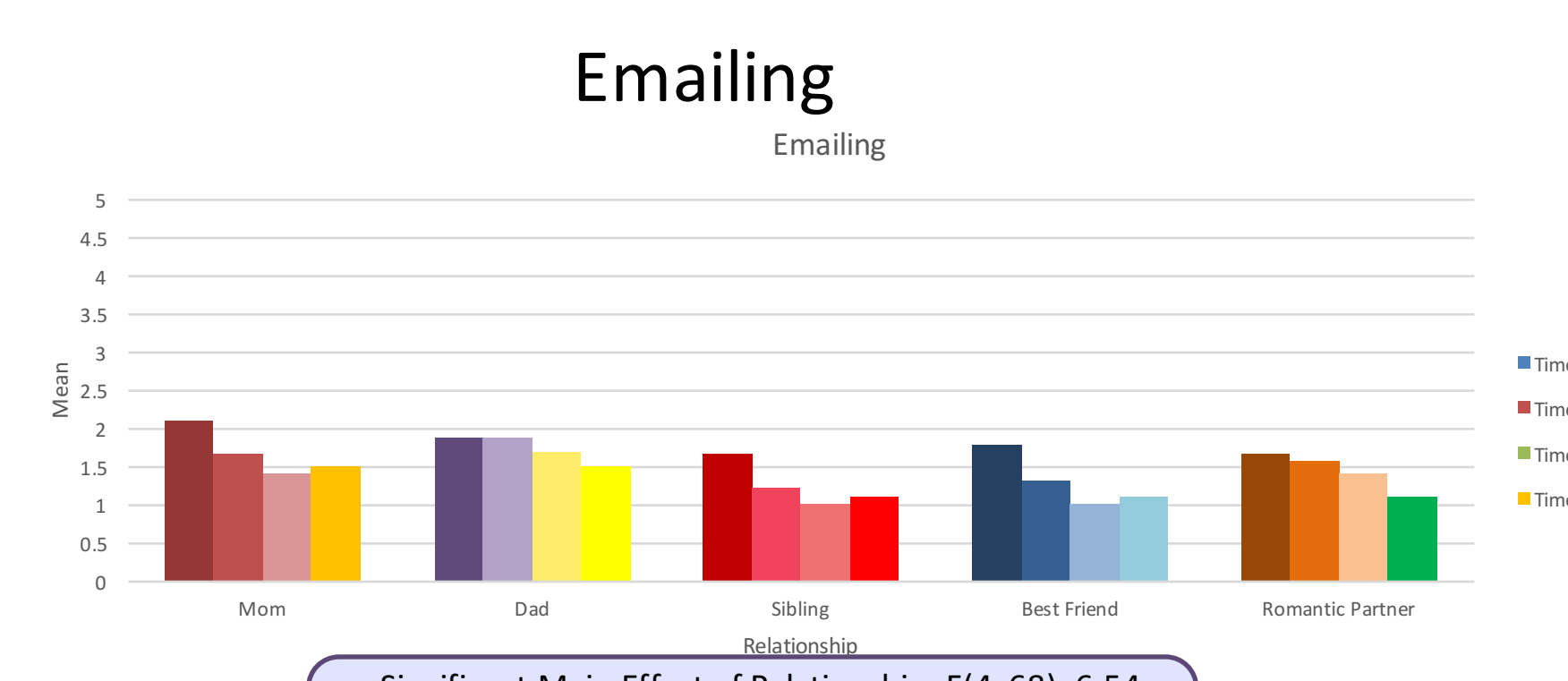
- Significant Main Effect of Relationship,  $F(4, 68) = 2.98, p < .05$
- Qualified by significant Relationship X Gender Interaction,  $F(4, 68) = 4.69, p < .01$



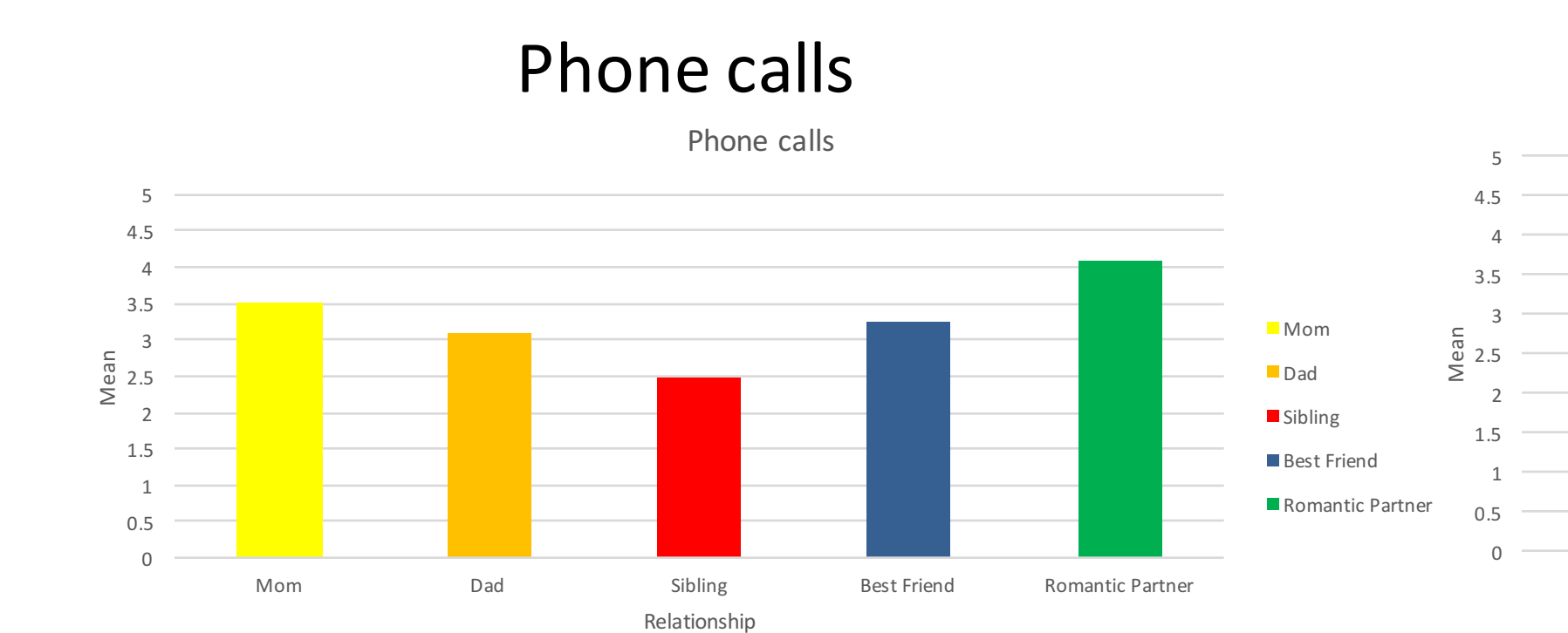
- Significant Main Effect of Relationship,  $F(4, 48) = 4.00, p < .05$
- Qualified by significant Relationship X Gender Interaction,  $F(4, 48) = 3.50, p < .05$



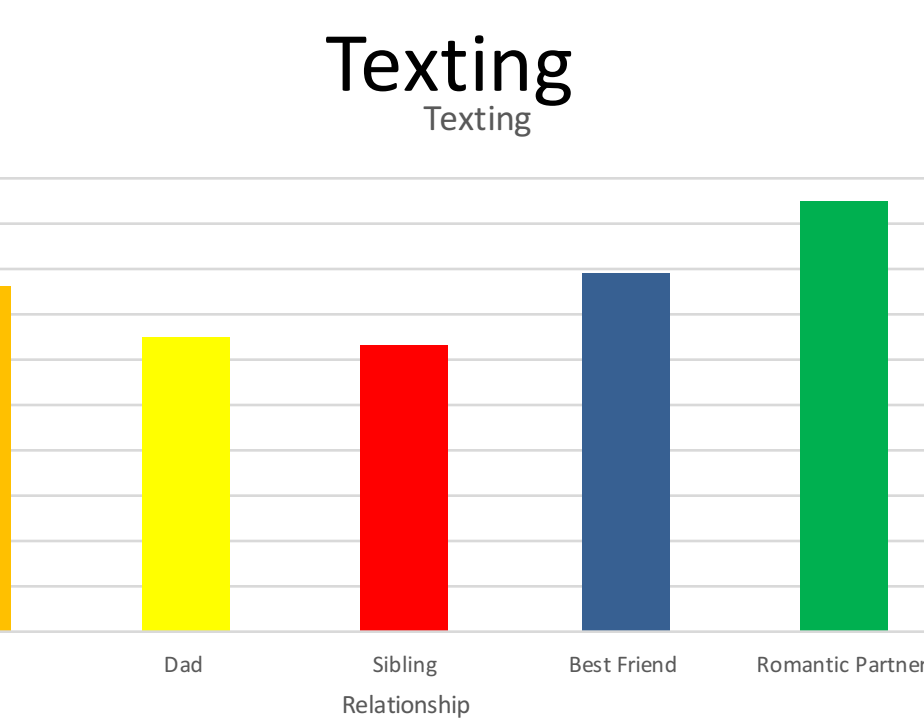
- Significant Main Effect of Relationship,  $F(4, 48) = 9.47, p < .000$
- Qualified by significant Relationship X Time Interaction,  $F(4, 48) = 6.22, p < .001$



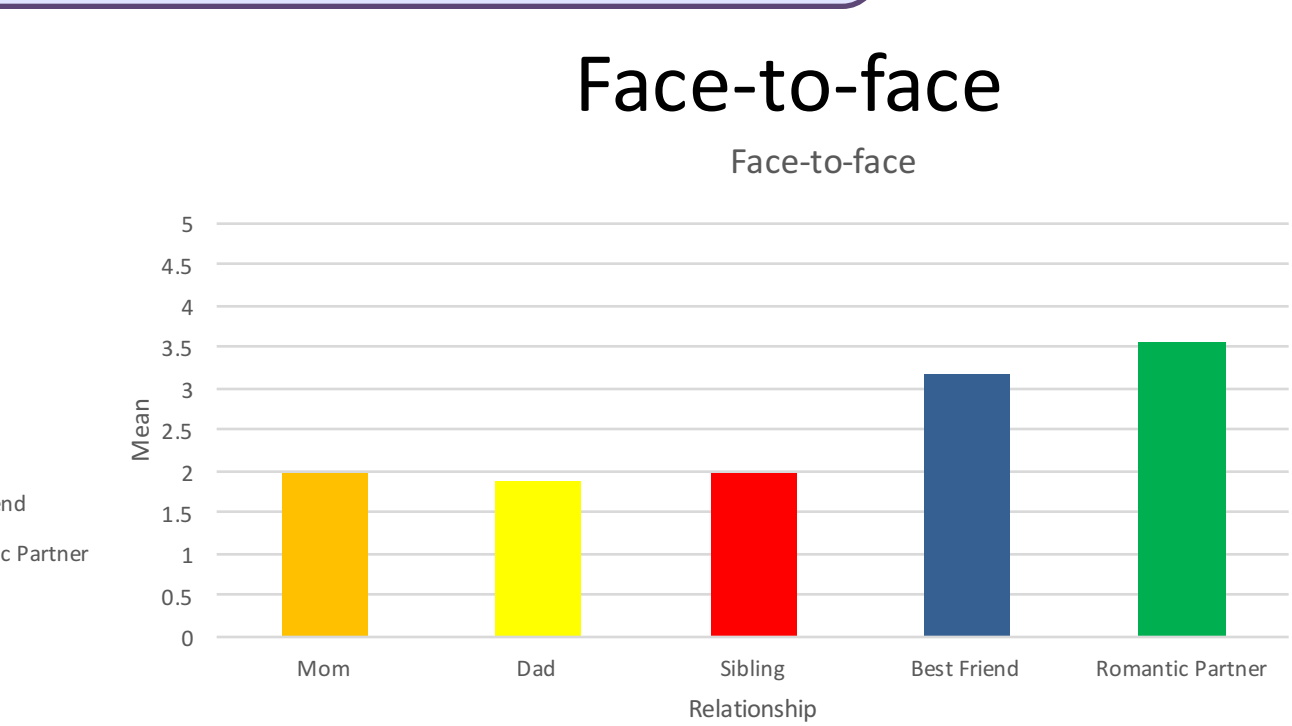
- Significant Main Effect of Relationship,  $F(4, 68) = 6.54, p < .000$
- Qualified by significant Relationship X Time X Gender Interaction,  $F(8, 68) = 2.87, p < .05$



- Significant Main Effect of Relationship,  $F(4, 128) = 25.38, p < .000$



- Significant Main Effect of Relationship,  $F(4, 128) = 22.33, p < .000$



- Significant Main Effect of Relationship,  $F(4, 124) = 23.65, p < .000$

## References

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