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"Why Can't We Be Friends?:" Does the Quality of Romantic Relationships Influence Facebook Friendships with Former Romantic Partners

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**“WHY CAN’T WE BE FRIENDS?.” DOES THE QUALITY OF ROMANTIC
RELATIONSHIPS INFLUENCE FACEBOOK FRIENDSHIPS
WITH FORMER ROMANTIC PARTNERS**

“WHY CAN’T WE BE FRIENDS?:” DOES THE QUALITY OF ROMANTIC
RELATIONSHIPS INFLUENCE FACEBOOK FRIENDSHIPS
WITH FORMER ROMANTIC PARTNERS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Communication

By

Dylan Medeiros
Northeastern State University
Bachelor of Arts in Communication, 2011

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University of Arkansas

ABSTRACT

This research attempted to identify relational characteristics of unmarried, romantic partners that ultimately distinguish between former partners who remained Facebook friends versus those who did not. Survey results ($N=323$) revealed no significant differences between former partners who remained Facebook friends versus those who did not remain Facebook friends based on quantity of relational investments, preference for de-escalatory disengagement strategy, and relational satisfaction.

This thesis is approved for recommendation
to the Graduate Council.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my former romantic relationship partners whose Facebook behaviors sparked the curiosity that inspired this research and my mentor, Dr. Amy Aldridge-Sanford, who taught me that students should be at the heart of every decision made in academia and to never forget where I come from. I would not be here today without your words of wisdom, and I will forever be indebted to you for your guidance and friendship

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“Can we go back to using Facebook for what it was originally for - looking up exes to see how fat they got?” – Bill Maher, Comedian

In February 2011, Facebook released its “Break up Notifier App.” The application allows a user to track the relationship status of their “friends” and receive instant notification when that friend’s relationship status changes. The application was an instant success and received over 40,000 downloads within the first 36 hours of operation (Huessner, 2011). What the “Break up Notifier App” does not provide however, is insight into the relational factors that influence the decision to “defriend” former romantic partners post-dissolution. With the emergence of social centered websites like Facebook and Twitter, more human interaction is taking place on the internet. Such interactions might replace much of the richness of face-to-face communication with emoticons and abbreviations for verbal and nonverbal behaviors such as laughter and winking approximating face-to-face interactions. Facebook proudly boasts that approximately eight percent (500 million users) of the world’s population has a Facebook account (Facebook, 2012). Additionally, 75 % of adults in the United States are now social media users (Bernoff, 2008). With this shift in the location of human interaction, Facebook is perhaps the most widely used social media and thus an excellent venue for communication researchers to examine online communication behavior.

Since its emergence, communication researchers have examined Facebook behaviors focusing on the uses of Facebook among specific demographics including female debaters (Schwartz-DuPre, 2006), college teachers (Mazer et al., 2007), and college students (Ellison et al., 2007; Sheldon, 2008). Other research explores distinctions between those who use the social network and those who do not (Hargittai, 2007) as well as methods for examining Facebook users self-reported behaviors (Junco, 2013).

Recently researchers have examined the social connectedness provided by social media such as Facebook and how it facilitates that connectedness in contrast to face-to-face interaction (Grieve et al., 2013). Studies on how users interact on Facebook have examined adult attachment styles (Oldmeadow, 2013) and emotional factors such as loneliness, anxiousness, and substance use (Clayton et al., 2013) as well as Facebook infidelity (Cravens & Whiting, 2013) and the development of romantic relationships via Facebook among young adults (Fox & Warber, 2013).

Dating websites such as E-Harmony and Match.com also provide social connections, expanding the ways romantic relationships are initiated. Although E-Harmony and Match.com are aimed at adults desiring romantic dating partners, resourceful college students have found Facebook particularly useful for romantic relationship development and maintenance (Gershon, 2010). College students utilize Facebook across the relationship lifespan from initiation to termination as well as post-breakup recovery (Marshall, 2012).

With so much daily interaction occurring online, it is inevitable that some of the same communication pitfalls and nuances of face-to-face interaction also occur in online interactions. Communication researchers too must move online to examine the crossovers between mediated versus face-to-face interactions in the age of social media, asking questions such as: What happens when the problems of our interpersonal lives become the problems of our online lives? Do face-to-face interactions influence online behaviors? How do theories about face-to-face romantic relationships pertain to online romantic relationships?

The research offered here seeks to explore the relationship between offline breakups and their influence on online friendships as enacted on Facebook. This research applies romantic relationship measures previously used to examine face-to-face relationships. These measures are

applied to former romantic partners to evaluate their online relational outcomes, specifically post-breakup Facebook friendships among former romantic partners.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature and Research Questions

Review of Facebook Literature

In 2004 Facebook began as a small initiative to connect students with one another on the Harvard University campus. This social media quickly gained popularity and in 2006 opened to the public. Although originally intended to connect college students at one U. S. university, Facebook now serves more than 500 million users worldwide (Facebook, 2010). Of the 500 million users, 70 percent come from countries other than the United States. Globally, Facebook is a tool for connecting with familiar friends and family as well as previously unknown people.

Explanation of motivations for using the social network have centered on Facebook's utility in networking (Stern & Taylor, 2007), the personalities of the users (Ross et al., 2009), and Facebook as a means of attaining "social capital" (Valenzuela et al., 2009; Ellison et al., 2007). These concepts will be discussed in greater detail below. Research also has explored the quality and quantity of relationships among Facebook users reporting on associations between Facebook friends and perceptions of users (Walther et al., 2008; Tong, 2008) as well as strong and weak connections among users and their impact (Livingstone, 2008; Baker & Oswald, 2010), and the numerous privacy issues that have surfaced since Facebook began (Raynes-Goldie, 2010; Debatin et al., 2009; Boyd, 2008).

Building on this research, scholars have focused most recently on Facebook in three areas that are discussed in greater detail below: 1) privacy and self-disclosure (Bazarova, 2012; Kanter et al., 2012; Palmieri et al., 2012; Trottier, 2012; Fisher, 2012); 2) social networking (Crosier et al., 2012; Craig & Wright, 2012); and 3) emotional support (Wright, 2012; Dizon et al., 2012; Mccracken, 2012; Marwick & Ellison, 2012).

Privacy and Self-Disclosure

Facebook and other social networking sites (i.e., MySpace, Pinterest) allow users to view personal details about users both known and unknown. The Facebook software allows the construction of an online identity (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Sheldon, 2008). Shaped by events that are broadcast via the social networking sites; users employ photos, wall posts, and check-ins to display this identity. Facebook, for example, provides a timeline feature that allows users to trace their online activity on the website from the day they joined the social network to the present.

When creating a Facebook profile, users are prompted to enter personal details about themselves including preferences in music, books, and movies as well as their physical address and date of birth. With little to no effort on behalf of Facebook, millions of users have provided personal details in exchange for the use of the network. Researchers have labeled this process of providing information as “self-disclosure.” Providing such information can help to reduce uncertainty with others and allows individuals to gauge the responses, attitudes, and behaviors of others in future interactions (Sheldon, 2009). Additionally, Palmieri et al. (2012) reported that individuals are more likely to self-disclose to those with whom they experience a social attraction and that is when self-disclosure occurs via Facebook; users tend to overestimate the level of intimacy of the information being shared. Thus, by self-disclosing via Facebook, users inadvertently reduce privacy and increase sharing on a much larger scale because of the potentially large audience. Although self-disclosure might enable the discloser to understand more about him or herself and others in face-to-face interactions (Palmieri et al., 2012), similar information sharing can pose more serious risks to privacy online, given the number of potential unknown viewers.

A great deal of controversy surrounds Facebook's privacy policies; many commentators warn of the potential exploitation occurring with users' information and advertisers (Byron, 2012). Previous research focuses on the distribution of personal information to advertisers and stresses the role that Facebook's vague, early privacy settings played in enabling distribution of user's information (Butler, McCann, & Thomas, 2011).

"The intricate and constantly changing privacy policies on the site require users to be extremely attentive to its updates in order to retain a true awareness of personal privacy settings. When users are unaware of these settings, the content and personal information they post could potentially be accessible to larger audiences than initially intended" (Butler et al., 2011, p. 40).

Facebook's default settings make all posted user information available to all other Facebook users. This default information sharing is convenient for users to discover desired connections with other members to gain "social capital." However, these same settings are criticized for exposing too much information and violating rights to privacy. Specifically, the addition of the "newsfeed" feature sparked hostility. Until "newsfeed," users had to visit the personal profiles of "friends" to see the recent activity within the network. Now, "newsfeed" provides instant access and moment-by-moment updates on friends' activity. Moreover, updates to the "newsfeed" enabled users to allow the window to remain open and watch events as they unfold via the automatic scroll feature.

In addition to the "newsfeed," Facebook has recently released a "Timeline" feature that tracks the users every move from the moment the account is activated. Previously, users had to scroll through countless pages to recall posts, invitations, friendships, status updates, and photos added across the lifespan of the account. Now, all of these items have been filed by date in reverse chronological order. Through the features of both the "newsfeed" and the "timeline,"

users can track every interaction with the social networking site from the moment of activation. “Likes,” status updates, photo tags, “check-ins,” and group memberships accrued over several years of use can quickly be scanned for any information desired. The “check-in” modification in particular creates concerns about privacy by providing both the location and time of post. This feature allows users to view the geographical position of users at the time of the post. Such information can be particularly harmful to managing privacy by allowing online predators to track behavior and potentially stalk users, especially if the geographic movements follow discernible patterns.

Users can be lulled into a false sense of security regarding their personal information by believing that they can avoid privacy risks simply by allowing only certain people to become Facebook friends; however, users might be unaware of exactly who is able to view their information. Examples of this phenomenon are illustrated in the brief narratives of employees losing their jobs over status updates, a marriage breaking up because of a tagged photo of a cheating spouse, or a child being cyber-bullied on a network that was once thought secure (Butler et al., 2011). These Facebook users could potentially be exposing details of their personal lives and explicit contact information to many people, unknowingly putting themselves at risk for information violation.

Even though Facebook and other social network sites offer gratifying returns for personal information, information sharing involves risks and can have adverse consequences. Selectivity in the “friending” process provides only limited security, as personal information can still be accessed in a number of ways including via “mutual friends.” If users share “mutual friends”, they might navigate through the profiles of these friends and view information and posts other

users share. In addition, users who post information on the profiles of “friends” grant access to that information to the “friends” of the other user.

Trottier (2012) found that the information sharing processes inherent in the structure of Facebook creates a false sense of security over private information and allows for “unanticipated visibility.” This visibility alters the ways users interact within the social network and enables an environment of surveillance. Surveillance, meaning the “covert, sustained, and targeted” (Lyon, 1994) processes of collecting information about a person or persons (Trottier, 2012) is a prevalent practice on Facebook and is often anticipated by friends, family, and peers. Regardless of risk, information sharing and surveillance have become normative expectations for social media usage. Fisher (2012) describes the relationship of information sharing on social networks as a tension between “exploitation and alienation.” Exploitation occurs as a seemingly natural result of information sharing and alienation appears as consequence for lack of information sharing. Therefore, users are inclined to continually share information to fulfill the desire to connect and avoid the risk of being alienated. The more a user shares, the more connections can be found to others, thus broadening the social network.

Social Networking

Crosier et al. (2012) argues that humans have a genetic predisposition to desire connection and that the availability of online social networks has made this desire more attainable. Facebook in particular has created an environment where sharing and connecting with others is easier in many ways than traditional forms of face-to face interaction. Ellison et al. (2007) describes the pay off for the individual in the exchange of information as a potential gain in “social capital.” This term refers to the resources attained from forming relationships with others. Facebook creates a perform/reward function for the user in that, the more information the

user provides, the more information Facebook provides about other users with similar characteristics as possible “friends.” This exchange process offers one potential explanation for the desire to share personal information online.

Social media users offer intimate details with little reservation to connect (Gross and Acquisti, 2005). By providing Facebook with these details, networking for “friends” can be attained via Facebook’s “People You Might Know” sidebar. The sidebar provides instant access to a variety of people who might or might not be directly associated with the user, but have some distant affiliation through friends of friends. Individuals who are suggested by Facebook come from similar networks such as high school, college, or Facebook groups such as student organizations and the user may or may not have any affiliation with this person face-to-face. Instead of requiring users to perform the more rigorous task of using the provided search bar, Facebook allows users to filter through the numerous “friend” prospects and remove unwanted requests with ease.

Names that appear in the sidebar are often recommended through association with similar Facebook groups and friends. Although some networks associated with groups like local high school fundraisers or youth groups might serve only a small number of members, other groups such as Greek organizations, academic memberships, and places of employment can serve a vastly larger population. Using affiliations with network data, Facebook assesses potential members with whom the user has commonalities by exploring the personal details provided. In exchange for personal details, the user is given access to other users that have similarities thereby providing the potential for forming “friendships.”

Craig and Wright (2012) argue that, in addition to creating connections, Facebook also plays a vital role in the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Perceptions

of similarity and attraction might be heightened in online interactions because of the lack of nonverbal feedback thereby creating an atmosphere conducive to more sharing. In addition, prevalence of social media intensifies the quantity of information being shared, resulting in greater access to personal information--meaning the sheer number of Facebook users creates an environment in which massive amounts of information can be shared. Recently, social networking has evolved from making connections based on “likes” and “networks” to connecting users on deeper emotional issues such as death, religion, and illness.

Emotional Support

McCracken (2012) explores how social media are being used more and more for medical purposes. Although sites such as *Web MD*, *Healthline*, and *Rxlist* have provided users with medical information for several years, individuals are more likely to consult with peers on these issues rather than gathering medical information by traditional means (i.e., going to the doctor; McCracken, 2012). Moreover, individuals who seek medical information via social media are more likely to listen to the suggestions of peers in instances of both isolated and chronic illness (Dizon et al., 2012). This shift in medical information seeking provides new opportunities for interaction between healthcare providers and patients.

Healthcare providers and patients have increased opportunities to interact online with one another. In addition, many websites offer forums where patients can discuss health issues and share information and tips with one another. Such forums might be especially useful in cases involving chronic illness. Dizon et al., (2012) explore this notion by examining how oncologists use social media to their advantage in assisting patients with information and helping them to connect to others with similar conditions. Even though the legal ramifications and privacy concerns regarding medical information sharing pose risks, the communal feeling of support

stemming from these interactions often overcomes reservations about information sharing. In his study of college students' perceptions of support from their Facebook affiliates, Wright (2012) found that positive perceptions of support online resulted in lower levels of stress offline. However, the notion of emotional support is not limited to issues of illness and stress; in some instances, it can extend to mourning the death of a loved one via social media.

This notion is the focus of Marwick and Ellison's (2012) study of the visibility of Facebook memorial pages commemorating the deceased. Their research documents that the participatory nature and inherent visibility of Facebook encourages users to display their grief and provides opportunities for unanticipated audiences to view those displays. As previous research has suggested, the risks in this scenario are once again overshadowed by the perceived benefits of participation including social capital, emotional support, and connectedness within the social network. Although recent research has provided insight into issues of privacy, self disclosure, emotional support, and the effects of social networking, little information is known about the transitive characteristics of romantic relationships and how they influence online behaviors within the realm of Facebook relationships both romantic and non-romantic.

Facebook Romance Literature

The term "break up" means to "cease to exist as a unified whole" as per Merriam Webster's Dictionary (Webster, 2011) and is used here to refer to Gottman's (1993) model of relational dissolution. The term "defriend" comes from Facebook's friend-managing features that allows users to "delete" a target/friend, preventing them from viewing each other's profiles or information in their newsfeed. This decision cannot be undone once the "defriend" button is pressed without resending a "friend request" to the "defriended" target.

“Mutual friend” refers to any friends that a user and another Facebook user have in common. In addition to a small box in the upper right corner of user profiles that displays mutual interests and friends, Facebook also provides a link beneath user profile photos to access a list of mutual friends. This list can include classmates, family members, former relationship partners, friends, coworkers, church members and others. Often, individuals become mutual friends through acquaintanceships.

In 2010, 43,869,800 people changed their Facebook relationship status from “In a Relationship” to “Single” (Wasserman, 2010). With social media (e.g., Facebook) allowing individuals to post every minute of every day, many users encounter a former relational partner in the online world. In a recent documentary, CNN reported that 22% of those asked reported they would be likely to “defriend” a romantic partner after a break up (Bartz & Ehrlich, 2010). Although the decision to “defriend” relational partners post dissolution has been extensively researched in face-to-face relationships (Emery & Dillon, 1994; Rhoades et al., 2011; Bullock, 2011), this study explores the factors that relate directly to the decision to “defriend” former relational partners on Facebook. This research examines the factors related to former romantic relationship partners’ friendships and how the decision to break up is manifest in the online world of Facebook.

Previous Research and Defining Relational Investments

Previous research indicates that shared lifestyles and the quantity of “relational investments” influence the decision to remain friends after a break up (Emery & Dillon, 1994; Rhoades, Atkins, Dush, Stanley, & Markman, 2011). Face-to-face, a break up can often mean a complete separation in physical space, allowing individuals to eliminate future contact. However, the extent to which former partners can remain separate is inhibited by factors such as

previously shared lifestyles and elements such as children, friends, and physical possessions (Emery & Dillon, 1994; Rhoades et al., 2011).

In a study of cohabitating couples, Stanley, Rhoades, and Markman (2006) refer to the shared aspects of relationships as “relational investments,” and add that staying friends with former partners proves particularly difficult in relationships with large quantities of “relational investments.” Quantity of investments directly correlates with duration of relationship, meaning, the longer the individuals were together, the more relational investments they are likely to share. In addition, the number of “relational investments” present pre-break up correlates directly with the difficulty former partners experience as a result of renegotiating relationship roles as “friends” in the post-break up period meaning larger quantities of investments complicate the possibility of friendship (Stanley et al., 2006). This study investigated the importance of children, number of mutual friends, shared physical possessions, and duration of the relationship as influential factors in former relational partners’ decisions to “defriend.” Based on this information, it is important to examine relational investments and their influence on Facebook friendship decisions.

RQ1: What differences exist in quantity of investments prior to the breakup between former romantic partners who elect to remain Facebook friends post-dissolution versus those who do not?

Previous Research and Disengagement Strategies

The decision to maintain friendships post-dissolution can be directly influenced by the disengagement strategies employed during the break up process (Cody, Altendorf, Greene, & Banks, 1987). These strategies range from full explanation of reasons for dissolving the romantic relationship to total neglect of partner and avoidance of all future contact. Individuals

who engaged in tactics viewed as “de-escalating” (i.e., explaining the reason for the disengagement) were more likely to maintain some level of contact post-break up than those who did not. Behaviors seen as “de-escalating” included expressing interest in and emphasizing the benefits of changing the relationship status while maintaining the possibility of a modified future relationship of some sort as opposed to complete termination of the relationship on any level, including friendship. In their study of non-marital relationship dissolution, Lambert and Hughes (2010) found that positively toned de-escalating behaviors that express goodwill are more likely to generate friendships between former romantic partners. Based on this information, it is important to examine the use of disengagement strategies and the decision to remain friends with former romantic relationship partners online.

RQ2: What differences exist in disengagement strategies used during the breakup between former romantic partners who elect to remain Facebook friends post-dissolution versus those who do not elect to remain Facebook friends?

Previous Research and Relational Satisfaction

Although the tactics employed during the break up process provide some insight into the viability of friendship post-break up, the quality of the relationship prior to the decision to end provides additional insight. Rhoades, Markman, Stanley, Atkins and Kamp Dush (2011) found that a relational break up can cause psychological distress and a reduction in life satisfaction; however, a relational break up can bring relief under certain circumstances such as where both relational partners experience mutual dissatisfaction during the relationship. Additionally, the more satisfied individuals are with their partners during the relationship, the more likely they are to engage in friendship maintenance after the romantic aspect of the relationship has ended (Bullock, 2011; Rhoades et al., 2011). These findings illustrate the notion that a satisfying

romantic relationship is more likely to produce a satisfying friendship after the romantic relationship ends. If the romantic relationship proves unsatisfying, however, a relational transformation to being “just friends” is unlikely to occur.

Based on this information it is important to examine the extent to which relational partners were satisfied with the relationship prior to the break up as it relates to the decision to remain friends with former romantic partners online.

RQ3: What differences exist in relational satisfaction prior to the breakup between former romantic partners who elect to remain Facebook friends post dissolution versus those who do not elect to remain Facebook friends?

Although some research has examined maintaining friendships –post romance in face-to-face relationships, little research has examined maintaining friendships with former partners via social media forms (i.e., Facebook) following a break up, or the factors influencing the break up that contribute to this decision. Given the prevalence of social media in everyday activities, this study seeks to identify the factors that influence college students’ decision to “defriend” a former partner on Facebook. Existing literature suggests that quantity of investments (Stanley, Rhoades & Markman, 2006), disengagement behaviors used in the break-up process (Banks, Altendorf, Greene & Cody, 1987), and relational quality prior to the break up (Rhoades, Markman, Stanley, Atkins, Kamp Dush, 2011) might influence the decision to defriend former romantic relationship partners.

RQ4: What are the relative differences in the three investigated factors (quantity of relational investments, disengagement strategies, and relational satisfaction) between former romantic partners who remain Facebook friends versus those who do not elect to remain Facebook friends?

Chapter 3

Methodology

Participants

Participants were 300 undergraduate students recruited from the basic Public Speaking course at the University of Arkansas who met the following criteria: 1) they maintain an active Facebook account; 2) experienced a romantic relationship breakup that involved Facebook in some way; 3) A six month time frame since the break up to allow for better recollection of relational characteristics than a longer time frame could provide. These two factors allowed for a diverse range of qualified participants. Students were offered extra credit for participation in the study. Students who did not qualify but wished to participate in the study were offered an alternative opportunity for extra credit. Additionally, a snow-balling method of recruitment was used to help increase participation; participants were given contact information and encouraged to recruit others who meet the requirements of the study. Recruitment continued across four weeks until more than 300 participants had completed the survey.

The sample consisted of approximately 114 males and 219 females ($N= 323$) between the ages of 18 and 24 ($M=19.71$; $SD= 2.87$). Participants self-reported year in school indicated the sample consists primarily of freshmen (148) with 116 sophomores, 39 juniors, 19 seniors and one graduate student. The sample included primarily Caucasian students (273) but additional ethnicities were reported as well including 17 African American, 9 Native American, 8 Asian or Pacific Islander, and 17 Hispanic.

Participants in this study reported a variety of lengths since the dissolution of the target romantic relationship ($M= 16.84$ months, $SD= 17.29$ months). Proximal relationship measures indicated that 75 participants (23.22%) were involved in long distance relationships with their former romantic relationship partners, contrasting the 248 (76.78%) that reported close distance with daily face-to-face interaction.

Instruments

Appendix C contains the instruments used in testing this research.

Relational Investments. Relational investment quantities were assessed using a scale designed for this purpose and developed from Rusbult's (1980) investment model. Vanderdrift et al. (2012) offer evidence of this instrument's reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$). Additionally, this instrument was successfully employed in previous communication research (i.e., Barry & Okun, 2012; Wieselquist, 2009; Ferrara & Levine, 2009). Its 10 survey questions were organized in a Likert-type scale ranging from 1) strongly disagrees to 5) strongly agrees. Questions pertain directly to the sharing of possessions, quantity of mutual friends, club and organizational memberships, and sharing of resources (i.e., money, transportation).

Disengagement Strategies. Disengagement strategies utilized during the breakup process were assessed using Cody's (1982) Relational Disengagement Strategies. Its 15 questions pertain directly to the perception of behaviors exhibited during the break up. Disengagement strategies assessed include: 1) Behavioral de-escalation-contact avoidance without explanation, 2) Negative identity management- ending relationship without explanation and typically citing the other as the source of the breakup, 3) Justification- explanation of reasons for break up, 4) De-escalation- stress the benefits of changing the relationship dynamic with possibility of resuming in the future and 5) Positive tone- attending to the feelings of the partner to avoid an unpleasant end. These strategies have previously been linked to relational outcomes (Halley & Daly, 1984; Cupach & Metts, 1986; Starks, 2007). Cody (1982) reported a Cronbach's α of .72 for the instrument. Reliability was rechecked for this instrument.

Relational Satisfaction. Relational satisfaction was assessed using a modified, four-item version of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) which has been successfully employed

to assess relational satisfaction in previous studies (Kurdek 1992; Fitzpatrick & Best, 1979; Claxton et al., 2012). The four item version of the scale developed by Sabourin et al. (2005) measures attitudes about the relationship with questions pertaining to thoughts about breaking up, frequency of intimate conversation and confiding, as well as general attitudes about the relationship overall; this instrument is a reliable substitute for the original 32-item scale (Sabourin et al., 2005) and is comprised of 10 survey questions. Sabourin et al. (2005) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .84 for this instrument. Participants answered each question on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This scale previously correlated with increases in desire to maintain relationships post-break up indicating its predictive validity (Rhoades, Markman, Stanley, Atkins, Kamp Dush, 2011).

Design

The three instruments described above were counterbalanced. Data were collected via SurveyMonkey.com, a web-based survey data collection software website. Students were emailed a message explaining the project and requesting participation. The message included a link that directed them (based on the first letter of their last name) to one of three versions of the survey available online where they were prompted to answer the questionnaires. To maintain confidentiality, the survey was available to participants both on and off campus via the link. The three websites offered the same instruments in multiple orders thus counter-balancing the instrument to ameliorate order effects.

Appendix A contains the informed consent form that began each version of the survey; it served as the cover page for the survey and was approved by the university's institutional review board. The form indicated that 1) the study concerns attitudes about Facebook and romantic relationships; 2) the participant was not required to participate; and 3) if they choose to

participate, they could elect to end the survey at any point in time without repercussion. Next, participants provided answers to the three test instruments described above. Following the surveys, participants encountered a brief demographics questionnaire shown in Appendix B that collected information necessary to award extra credit. This portion of the questionnaire also requested information such as age, sex, ethnicity, state of residence, and current relationship status on- and off-line. In addition, proximity to former romantic partners during the romantic relationship was assessed using definitions of geographically-close and long-distance relationships developed by Johnson et al. (2009) and Morell (2010). Demographic information was placed last to ameliorate test-fatigue as the answers to this portion of the data collection require little to no thought. After the surveys were completed, the basic communication course instructors were provided a list of students who participated from their classes to enable them to award extra credit.

Pre-test

Prior to submitting the primary data-collection instrument, a group of 55 participants who met the criterion for inclusion in the study participated in a pre-test version of the survey. The pre-test version included the above described questionnaires and multiple comment boxes for feedback. Pre-testing provided valuable feedback on questions and structure of the instrument. Appendix F contains the Institutional Review Board-approved series of minor changes based on feedback to the instruments.

Chapter 4

Results

Preliminary Analysis

Scores for items across all instruments assessing the variables of interest (quantity of relational investments, preference for de-escalatory disengagement strategies and relational satisfaction) were factor analyzed to identify patterns of response. A principle axis factor analysis with Varimax rotation for 100 iterations revealed three factors across the three instruments. The emergent factors appeared to be quantity of relational investments, preference for de-escalatory disengagement strategies, and relational satisfaction (the items degree of happiness during the relationship and the frequency of discussion of termination). Preference for de-escalatory disengagement strategies and frequency of discussion of termination might appear similar, however, preference for de-escalatory disengagement strategies specifically addresses communicative characteristics of the dissolution (the extent to which partners discuss termination while catering to emotional needs and expressing the possibility of a modified future relationship), whereas frequency simply measures how often dissolution was discussed during the romantic relationship. Only one (preference for use of de-escalatory disengagement strategies) of the five disengagement strategies (negative identity management, positive tone, justification, behavioral de-escalation, and de-escalation) loaded appropriately and yielded a Cronbach's alpha greater than .70. Two items (thoughts of relationship going well and confiding in one's partner) from the relational satisfaction instrument did not load with any other items and thus were abandoned.

Relational Investments

Eight of the ten items from the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult, 1980) loaded on the same factor. These items assessed quantity of investments. Previous studies have employed all 10 items to assess quantities of investments; however, in this sample only eight factored together

so scores on only eight items were used to calculate quantity of relational investments. The Cronbach's alpha across these eight items was .88.

Disengagement Strategies

Items from Cody's (1982) disengagement strategies instrument (based on the Relational Disengagement Strategies model) loaded together into one factor. Originally comprised of 15 items, in this sample, only six items loaded together on the one factor of preference for de-escalatory disengagement strategies. Items from each of the five dimensions of disengagement (negative identity management, de-escalation, justification, behavioral de-escalation, and positive tone) loaded cleanly and separately, but only preference for de-escalatory disengagement strategies yielded a Cronbach's alpha greater than .70. Its Cronbach's alpha score was .79.

Relational Satisfaction

Items assessing relational satisfaction were adapted from Spanier's (1976) Dyadic Adjustment Scale and loaded together onto one factor. Originally comprised of 4 items, only two items (degree of happiness during the relationship and frequency of discussion of termination) loaded on the factor of relational satisfaction. The remaining items were abandoned. The Cronbach's alpha for this factor was .067. Given this low Cronbach's alpha each item was treated as a separate indicator of relational satisfaction in subsequent analyses: Degree of happiness ($M=3.28$, $SD= 1.40$) and frequency of discussion of termination ($M=4.59$, $SD= 1.15$).

Concern for Normalcy

Next, descriptive statistics and histograms of each variable of interest were examined to determine skewness. Two variables appeared normally distributed (i.e., quantity of investments and preference for de-escalatory disengagement strategies), whereas the other two variables

appeared non-normal (i.e. degree of happiness and amount of discussion of termination). Thus, non-parametric analyses were employed in all subsequent analyses.

Preliminary Analysis Assessing Sex Differences

The sample contained an unequal ratio of male ($N=114$) and female ($N=219$) participants. Previous studies involving college students also reported this unequal distribution perhaps indicating that such a distribution frequently occurs in research when sampling college students (Junco, 2013; Clayton, 2013; Tazghini, & Siedlecki, 2013). The ratio of male to female responses was unexpectedly unequal and not a focus of this study. However, given its emergence it seemed reasonable to assess differences between sexes across the variables of interest. A series of Mann-Whitney U tests indicated no significant differences between sexes across the variables of interest. See Table 1 for results. Therefore, all data were combined for subsequent analyses and treated as one sample.

Table 1

Differences by Sex

Relational Characteristics	Sex	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Z	2-tailed alpha
Relational Investments	Male	156.01	17317.50	10543.50	-.37	.87
	Female	152.07	29653.50			
Disengagement Strategies	Male	145.65	15876.00	9881.00	-1.62	.10
	Female	163.06	33265.00			
Degree	Male	160.61	17988.50	11411.50	-.16	.87

of Happiness	Female	158.90	32732.50			
Discussion of	Male	159.60	18035.00	11594.50	-.05	.95
Termination	Female	160.22	33005.00			

Preliminary Analysis Assessing Geographical Distance

Participants reported being involved in long distance relationships 23% ($N=74$), as well as in proximal relationships 77% ($N=248$). A series of Mann-Whitney U tests revealed no significant differences between the scores of participants who reported proximal and long distant relationships across the variables of interest (See Table 2). Therefore, all data were combined for subsequent analyses and treated as one sample.

Table 2

Differences by Geographical Distance

Relational Characteristics	Relational Proximity	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Z	2-tailed alpha
Relational	Geographically Close	154.71	36356.00	8059.00	-.43	.66
Investments	Long Distance Relationship	149.51	10615.00			
Disengagement	Geographically Close	154.46	37226.00	8065.00	-.38	.70
Strategies	Long Distance Relationship	159.12	10979.00			

Differences by Geographical Distance

Degree of Happiness	Geographically Close	159.76	39300.50	8792.50	-.09	.92
	Long Distance Relationship	158.62	11420.50			
Discussion of Termination	Geographically Close	160.73	39540.00	8553.00	-.45	.64
	Long Distance Relationship	155.29	11181.00			

Primary Analysis

Research Questions One, Two, and Three

RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 sought to identify the differences between former romantic partners who elect to remain Facebook friends versus those who do not remain Facebook friends across the variables of interest (quantity of investments, preference for de-escalatory disengagement strategies, relational satisfaction). A series of Mann-Whitney *U* tests were conducted to answer the research questions. The results are discussed in detail below and displayed in Table 3. The Mann-Whitney *U* test is “one of the most powerful of the nonparametric tests and it is a useful alternative to the parametric *t*” (Spiegel, 1956, p. 116). The analyses yielded no significant difference across the variables of interest.

Differences by Friendship Maintenance

Relational Characteristics	Facebook Friends With Former Partner	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Z	2-tailed alpha
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Relational	Yes	149.62	34411.50	7846.50	-1.655	.09
Investments	No	168.90	13174.50			
Disengagement	Yes	160.10	37144.00	8444.00	-1.20	.22
Strategies	No	146.05	11684.00			
Degree	Yes	160.38	38330.00	9470.00	-.129	.89
of Happiness	No	158.88	12710.00			
Discussion of	Yes	163.95	39183.00	8856.00	-1.184	.23
Termination	No	150.33	12177.00			

RQ1

RQ1: What differences exist in quantity of investments prior to the breakup between former romantic partners who elect to remain Facebook friends post-dissolution versus those who do not? A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted yielding a U of 7846.50 and an alpha of .09. The Mann-Whitney U analysis revealed no significant differences in the quantity of investments between former romantic partners who elect to remain Facebook friends post-dissolution versus those who do not elect to remain Facebook friends. However, the results yielded a trend toward significance. That is, participants who remained Facebook friends tended to report a lower quantity of investments in the relationship ($M=28.30$; $SD=6.18$) versus those who elected to terminate Facebook friendships post-dissolution ($M=29.20$; $SD=6.86$).

RQ2

RQ2: What differences exist in disengagement strategies used during the breakup between former romantic partners who elect to remain Facebook friends post-dissolution versus those who do not elect to remain Facebook friends? A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted yielding $U = 8444.0$, $\alpha = .22$. The Mann-Whitney U analysis revealed no significant differences in preference for de-escalatory disengagement strategies between former romantic partners who elect to remain Facebook friends post-dissolution versus those who do not elect to remain Facebook friends.

RQ3

RQ3: What differences exist in relational satisfaction prior to the breakup between former romantic partners who elect to remain Facebook friends post-dissolution versus those who do not elect to remain Facebook friends? Two Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted, first for frequency of discussion of termination ($U = 8856.00$, $\alpha = .23$) and then for degree of happiness ($U = 9470.00$, $\alpha = .89$). The Mann-Whitney U analyses revealed no significant differences in either measure of relational satisfaction between former romantic partners who elected to remain Facebook friends post-dissolution versus those who do not elect to remain Facebook friends.

RQ4

RQ4: What are the relative differences in the three investigated factors (quantity of relational investments, preference for de-escalatory disengagement strategies, and relational satisfaction) between former romantic partners who remain Facebook friends versus those who do not elect to remain Facebook friends? None of the variables of interest (quantity of relational investments, preference for de-escalatory disengagement strategies, and relational satisfaction) were significantly different for former romantic partners who remained Facebook friends versus those who did not. Only one variable (quantity of relational investments) displayed a trend

toward significance. Therefore, a question of relative influence among the variables of interest was moot.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Summary of Findings

The results of the present study provide interpersonal communication researchers and scholars with a new perspective on the differences in post-romantic relationship friendships between those involving computer-mediated communication (i.e., Facebook) and those occurring face-to-face. This study illustrates that the variables that impact post-dissolution friendship decisions (quantity of relational investments, relational satisfaction, and relational disengagement strategies) between former romantic partners in the face-to-face context do not impact former romantic partners' decisions to maintain or dissolve Facebook friendships.

Interpretation of Findings

RQ1: What differences exist in quantity of investments prior to the breakup between former romantic partners who elect to remain Facebook friends post-dissolution versus those who do not? RQ1 provides evidence that the quantity of investments did not differentiate between those who decide to dissolve or maintain Facebook friendships post relational dissolution. The results indicate that the quantity of investments made during a romantic relationship do not influence decisions regarding Facebook friendships after the romantic relationship was terminated. In contrast Stanley et al. (2006) found that quantity of relational investments directly influenced face-to-face friendship outcomes post-romantic relationship dissolution. Thus, it appears investments might impact face-to face versus Facebook friendships differently.

However, a trend toward significance emerged in the analyses relevant to quantity of relational investments. Consistent with Stanley et al. (2006), participants who reported fewer investments tended to remain Facebook friends in the post-dissolution period. One potential explanation for this finding is that individuals who make fewer investments have less to lose

from a change in the relationship status than those with larger quantities of investments; therefore, lowering the quantity of relational investments makes the relationship less costly to both partners. Individuals who reported larger quantities of investments might suffer a greater loss when relationship dynamics change and therefore have more difficulty adjusting to the modified relationship making Facebook friendships challenging.

RQ2: What differences exist in disengagement strategies used during the breakup between former romantic partners who elect to remain Facebook friends post-dissolution versus those who do not elect to remain Facebook friends? The results indicate no significant difference in relational disengagement strategies between individuals who chose to terminate Facebook friendships versus those who chose to remain Facebook friends. Cody et al.'s (1987) findings suggest that engaging in de-escalatory disengagement strategies (i.e., fully explaining feelings and attitudes about the relationship to the partner, tending to the emotional needs of the partner and indicating a desire for modified relationship in the future) results in more positive friendship outcomes than any of the other four relational disengagement strategies (negative identity management, positive tone, behavioral de-escalation, justification). However, results of the present study indicate that the disengagement strategies used during the dissolution phase of the romantic relationship have no impact on the decision for former romantic partners to dissolve or maintain Facebook friendships. This finding might be explained in two ways: First, Facebook friendships are publicly displayed via the social network and the individual who is being defriended as well as the social networks in which both partners are involved might notice when the defriending occurs. Defriending is apparent when Facebook members attempt to tag others in notifications and Facebook doesn't allow it as well as when viewing information that is displayed in the "newsfeed." Once defriended, members can no longer view the profile page or

any updates of the former friend. Though not as public as a change in Facebook relationship status, the effects of defriending can be experienced by the former partner as well as in shared Facebook networks. Another way users might be made aware they have been defriended is through the “Suggested Friends” feature Facebook offers. Receiving a friend suggestion through Facebook of a friend the user thought they already had is a strong indicator of being defriended. Although separation of physical space in face-to-face relationships can be a subtle sign of change in relationship status, Facebook broadcasts users’ actions to a vast array of friends and networks, thereby making personal information (relationship status, friendships, and shared social networks) community property. Regardless of the disengagement strategy employed prior to the relationship dissolution, former romantic partners might avoid terminating Facebook friendships in effort to save face in front of their social networks. Second, the decision about their Facebook friendship might not be of significance to either partner and therefore requires no action either in terminating or maintaining the Facebook friendship.

RQ3: What differences exist in relational satisfaction prior to the breakup between former romantic partners who elect to remain Facebook friends post dissolution versus those who do not elect to remain Facebook friends? RQ3 queried the potential impact of relational satisfaction during the romantic phase of the relationship on friendship outcomes in the post-dissolution phase of the relationship. The findings indicate no significant differences in relational satisfaction between former romantic partners who decide to terminate Facebook friendships versus those who do not. This result is inconsistent with the findings of Rhoads et al. (2011) who reported that relational satisfaction during a relationship has significant impact on the decision to remain or terminate friendships in face-to-face relationships. The inconsistencies between the results of this study and the findings of Rhoads et al. (2011) might be because of the fact that

despite the expressed happiness, the romantic phase of the relationship has ended. Therefore, previous happiness in the relationship might appear irrelevant to the decision to remain or terminate Facebook friendships in the present. Happiness of an ended romantic relationship does not necessitate unhappiness in modified forms of the relationship such as friendships. It might be that the complications of a romantic relationship can be resolved by taking a step back and focusing on aspects of the relationship that both partners enjoy and developing relationships like friendships that exert less strain on those involved. Second, the results indicate that the frequency with which couples discuss terminating the relationship did not distinguish between individuals who elect to remain Facebook friends post-dissolution versus those who do not. Potential explanation for this finding could stem from a nonchalant attitude about Facebook friends; some individuals give little credence to who they do and do not have as Facebook friends. Such a nonchalant attitude would render Facebook friendships with former romantic partners as trivial.

RQ4: What are the relative differences that exist in the three investigated factors (quantity of relational investments, disengagement strategies, and relational satisfaction) between former romantic partners who remain Facebook friends versus those who do not elect to remain Facebook friends? Taken as a whole, the results of this study indicate that there are no significant differences in quantity of relational investments, relational disengagement strategies, or relational satisfaction between individuals who chose to terminate Facebook friendships versus those who chose to remain Facebook friends. Alternative factors not investigated in the present study might influence the decision to remain or to terminate Facebook friendships with former romantic partners. Such potential factors may include the following:

- Perhaps friendships occurring face-to-face have different meanings than those occurring on Facebook. For example, perhaps Facebook friendships are viewed as more inconsequential than face-to-face relationships with former romantic partners.
- Another potential reason for this phenomenon might be the preservation of “public face” on Facebook. Former romantic partners might be reluctant to drop Facebook friendships because doing so might be viewed negatively by members of the partners’ joint networks.
- Length of the romantic relationship may influence the decision to remain or not remain Facebook friends. Shorter relationships may be viewed as trial romantic attachments, so remaining friends after the trial is comfortable for both partners.
- Former partners may remain Facebook friends to “keep tabs” on former romantic partners (Facebook stalking). Some former partners want to observe changes in physical appearances or relational aspects of the former partners’ life such as who they are currently involved with romantically, marriages, and their children. Motives may differ by gender.
- Finally, despite breaking up, former romantic partners might desire to remain a part of their former partner’s life and view Facebook as an innocuous means for achieving this goal.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Suggestions for future research include replicating the study with a national and more diverse sample. Motivation for this suggestion comes from the trend toward significance that emerged in analyses; quantity of investments might be a distinguishing factor. Perhaps replicating the study with a larger sample size would yield significant differences.

This study examined relational characteristics specifically in young adult relationships; however, a more varied sample that includes middle-aged adults and divorced couples could yield different results. These groups could be solicited via facebook and by snow-balling. As relational skills develop, partners' actions and cognitive capabilities expand and therefore could influence relationship outcomes.

This research could be replicated for different types of relationships (friendships, family members, etc.) as well as with older adults and married couples to explore the impact of relational factors on the decision to remain or not remain Facebook friends across diverse contexts. In addition, future research could examine the individual reasons relational partners provide for remaining Facebook friends after a romantic relationship breakup (i.e., observing the changes in physical appearance of a former partner, or relational aspects such as who their former partner is currently involved with). Rationale might include surveillance of the former partner, social support from Facebook friends and the maintenance of the shared networks of friends and family that often accompany romantic relationships. Potential interview questions might include:

- How do you decide who you will and will not add as a Facebook friend?
- What determines whether or not you will defriend a Facebook friend?
- If you were to remain friends with a former romantic, what would be your reason for that decision?
- If you were to defriend a former romantic partner, what would influence that decision?

Reliability of test instruments employed here was limited perhaps because of the breadth of time since the breakup reflected in the sample (from “last week” to “60 months ago”) and the one-sidedness of the observations reported about the relationship as only one partner provided

answers to the instruments. Future research could recruit both former relational partners to participate in surveys and thus gauge perceptions of both self and other's behavior during the romantic phase of the relationship as well as the dissolution process. Given that this study sought to apply face-to-face interpersonal communication theories to computer-mediated relationships and that the reliability of the survey instruments was limited, it might be necessary to construct instruments that better address the idiosyncrasies of online behaviors to more accurately account for the communication among Facebook friends.

Conclusion

Despite these limitations, this research adds to our knowledge about interpersonal communication in romantic relationships and social media use in several important ways: This study provides evidence that theory and instruments examining romantic relationships and friendships in face-to-face interaction are applicable to computer mediated interactions but only to a limited extent. The study identified one trend: Participants who reported fewer relational investments tended to remain Facebook friends more than those who reported higher quantities of relational investments. Such a finding expands our understanding of online relational behaviors. This study is the first to link face-to-face romantic relationship behaviors to Facebook friendship outcomes. Finally, this research offers meaningful suggestions for future research.

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Appendix A

Confidentiality Sheet

INVESTIGATOR: Dylan Medeiros, Department of Communication, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR, 72701, Phone: (XXX)XXX-XXXX

DESCRIPTION: This study is designed to investigate behaviors concerning Facebook and friendships. You will be asked to answer a series of questions regarding romantic relationships and Facebook use. If you agree to participate in this study you may be asked to provide some basic information about yourself, including information about previous romantic relationships.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION: Individuals may find some of the questions or topics under discussion difficult to talk about because of the personal nature of the questions. If you feel distressed by a question please know that answering any question is optional. You also have the option to leave if the program becomes too distressing. If you have any questions or feel upset by the program or have questions during or after the completion of the survey, please feel free to discuss the issue with Dylan Medeiros, (University of Arkansas, (XXX) XXX-XXXX) or contact the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (Pat Walker Health Center, 575-5276).

BENEFITS: One benefit you may receive from participation in this study is an increased awareness of your Facebook use as well as increased understanding of relational behaviors and motivations. The results of this study will provide important information for future computer mediated and interpersonal communication. Additionally, participants will be given extra credit for their participation in the research. Students who do not wish to participate will be provided multiple opportunities to earn the same extra credit within their Public Speaking course.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: You are free to refuse to participate in this study or to withdraw from this study at any time. Your decision to withdraw will bring no negative consequences. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. Participants who do not wish to complete the survey will have additional opportunities to earn the same extra credit in their Public Speaking course.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All surveys and consent forms will be kept in secure locations. All information collected will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy. SurveyMonkey.com will store data related to extra credit in a file separate from the survey data so that I will never know who provided which answers to what survey questions.

INFORMED CONSENT: I have read the description, including the nature and purposes of this study, the procedures to be used, the risks and benefits, as well as the option to refuse participation at any time. My participation in the study indicates that I agree for my responses to be used in this research study.

If you have questions or concerns about this study, you may contact (Dylan Medeiros) <dmedeiro@uark.edu> or (Dr. Lynne Webb) at (479) 575-5956 or <lmwebb@uark.edu>. For questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact Ro Windwalker, the University's IRB Coordinator, at (479) 575-2208 or by e-mail at irb@uark.edu.

Please Provide your name, ID number, and instructors name in the box below. (Example: John Doe, 123456789, Mr. Smith)

Appendix B

Demographics questionnaire

1. Age: ____ (for example 21)

2. Sex: ____Male ____Female (check one)

3. My State of Residence is ____ (Please use two letter abbreviation: AR, TX, OK, MO)

4. Current Classification (check one):
____ Freshman ____ Junior ____ Sophomore ____ Senior ____ Graduate ____
Other

6. Sexual Orientation (check all that apply):

____ Bisexual ____ Homosexual ____ Heterosexual ____ Transsexual

7. Ethnicity (check all that apply):

____ African American ____ Caucasian ____ Native American ____ Asian American/Pacific
Islander ____ Arab American ____ Other

8. Type of *current* residence (check all that applies):

____ Home ____ Apartment ____ Dormitory ____ Greek housing

9. Romantic Relationship status (check one):

____ single, never married
____ not married, but living with romantic partner
____ married, living with spouse
____ married, but living separately
____ divorced

_____ widowed

_____ other. Please describe: _____

10. Current Facebook Relationship Status

_____ Single

_____ In a relationship

_____ Engaged

_____ Married

_____ It's Complicated

_____ Nothing

_____ other. Please describe: _____

11. Please think about the last romantic relationship you were involved in that ended. In other words, if you are currently in a relationship – **not** that relationship, but instead the **PREVIOUS** relationship. Please estimate when your previous romantic relationship ended? (Example: 6 months ago)

12. While you were together, would you describe the relationship as geographically close or long distance?

_____ Geographically close (daily, face-to-face interaction)

_____ Long distance (separated by geographical space, preventing daily, face-to-face interaction)

13. Are you currently Facebook friends with the person with whom you had the romantic relationship referred to in questions 11 and 12?

_____ Yes _____ No

14. The following questionnaire asks you to reflect on a recently ended romantic relationship and partner to answer the following questions. Do you have a former romantic partner in mind?

Yes _____No

Appendix C

Survey Questionnaire

Relational Satisfaction

For the following questions, please think of your **most recently ended romantic relationship**. These questions pertain to thoughts and feelings about the relationship *prior to the breakup*.

15. In general, while you were involved with your romantic partner, how often did you think that things between you and your partner were going well?

All of the time	Most of the time	Not often	Occasionally	Rarely
Never				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. Did you confide in your partner while you maintained your romantic relationship?

All of the time	Most of the time	Not often	Occasionally	Rarely
Never				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. While you and your romantic partner were in a romantic relationship, how often did you discuss or consider terminating your relationship?

All of the time	Most of the time	Not often	Occasionally	Rarely
Never				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. The circles on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, “happy,” represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please fill in the circle which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship while you were involved with your former romantic partner.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extremely Perfect Happy	Fairly happy	A Little happy	Happy	Very happy	Extremely happy	

Appendix D

Investments

For the following questions, *please think of your most recently ended romantic relationship* and answer as honestly as possible. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each of the following statements regarding **your recently ended relationship** (circle an answer for each item). These questions pertain to behaviors you and your partner engaged in during your romantic relationship.

19. When we were in a romantic relationship, I invested a great deal of time in our relationship.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

20. When we were in a romantic relationship, I told my partner many private things about myself (I disclosed secrets to him/her).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

21. When we were in a romantic relationship, my partner and I had an intellectual life together that I felt would be difficult to replace if the relationship ended.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

22. When we were in a romantic relationship, my sense of personal identity (who I am) was linked to my partner and our relationship.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

23. When we were in a romantic relationship, my partner and I shared memories (created new memories together and shared remembrances of past events when your partner may or may not have been present).

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

24. When we were in a romantic relationship, I invested a great deal into our relationship that I thought I would lose if the relationship were to end.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

25. When we were in a romantic relationship, many aspects of my life were linked to my partner (recreational activities, etc.), and I lost all of this when we broke up.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

26. When we were in a romantic relationship I felt very involved in our relationship - like I put a great deal into it.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

27. My relationship with friends and family members was complicated when my partner and I broke up (e.g., partner is friends with people I care about).

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

28. Compared to other people I know, I invested a great deal in my relationship with my partner when we were in a romantic relationship.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

Appendix E

Disengagement Strategies

The following questions ask you to reflect upon the communication behaviors you and your former romantic partner engaged in *during the break up process*. Please answer as honestly as you can.

29. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner told me that he/she was very, very sorry about breaking off the relationship.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

30. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner told me that he/she was going to date other people and that I should date others also.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

31. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner fully explained why he/she felt unsatisfied with the relationship, that it hasn't been growing and that he/she believed we would both be happier if we didn't date anymore.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

32. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner told me that there should be mutual love and understanding in a relationship and that at the moment, he/she didn't feel as close as he/she should. He/she then said that he/she thought we should lay off awhile and see if we wanted to get back together, and if we wanted to get back together, we will.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

33. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner didn't say much of anything, he/she avoided contact with me as much as possible.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

34. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner told me that he/she regretted very much having to break off the relationship.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

35. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner told me that life was too short and that we should date other people in order to enjoy life.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

36. When we were breaking up, without explaining the intentions to break off the relationship, my romantic partner avoided scheduling future meetings with me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

37. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner told me that he/she cared very, very much for me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

38. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner fully explained how he/she felt and that he/she wanted to break things off. He/she explained that a relationship was no good unless it makes both people happy and he/she wasn't happy, and he/she didn't want to date anymore.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

39. When we were breaking up I said that I was really changing inside and I didn't quite feel good about our relationship anymore. I said that we'd better stop seeing each other.

(Appendix F)

Demographics questionnaire

1. Age: ____ (for example 21)

2. Sex: ____Male ____Female (check one)

3. My State of Residence is ____ (Please use two letter abbreviation: AR, TX, OK, MO)

4. Current Classification (check one):
____ Freshman ____ Junior ____ Sophomore ____ Senior ____ Graduate ____
Other

6. Sexual Orientation (check all that apply):

____ Bisexual ____ Homosexual ____ Heterosexual ____ Transsexual

7. Ethnicity (check all that apply):

____ African American ____ Caucasian ____ Native American ____ Asian American/Pacific
Islander ____ Arab American ____ Other

8. Type of *current* residence (check all that apply):

____ Home ____ Apartment ____ Dormitory ____ Greek housing

9. Romantic Relationship status (check one):

____ single, never married
____ not married, but living with romantic partner
____ married, living with spouse
____ married, but living separately
____ divorced

_____ widowed

_____ other. Please describe: _____

10. Current Facebook Relationship Status

_____ Single

_____ In a relationship

_____ Engaged

_____ Married

_____ It's Complicated

_____ Nothing

_____ other. Please describe: _____

11. Please think about the last romantic relationship you were involved in that ended. In other words, if you are currently in a relationship – **not** that relationship, but instead the **PREVIOUS** relationship. Please estimate when your previous romantic relationship ended? (Example: 6 months ago)

12. While you were together, would you describe the relationship as geographically close or long distance?

_____ Geographically close (daily, face-to-face interaction)

_____ Long distance (separated by geographical space, preventing daily, face-to-face interaction)

13. Are you currently Facebook friends with the person with whom you had the romantic relationship referred to in questions 11 and 12?

_____ Yes _____ No

14. The following questionnaire asks you to reflect on a recently ended romantic relationship and partner to answer the following questions. Do you have a former romantic partner in mind?

Yes _____ No

Survey Questionnaire

Relational Satisfaction

For the following questions, please think of your **most recently ended romantic relationship**. These questions pertain to thoughts and feelings about the relationship ***prior to the breakup***.

13. In general, while you were involved with your romantic partner, how often did you think that things between you and your partner were going well?

All of the time	Most of the time	Not often	Occasionally	Rarely
Never				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Did you confide in your partner while you maintained your romantic relationship?

All of the time	Most of the time	Not often	Occasionally	Rarely
Never				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. While you and your romantic partner were **in a romantic relationship**, how often did you discuss or consider terminating your relationship?

All of the time	Most of the time	Not often	Occasionally	Rarely
Never				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. The circles on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, “happy,” represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please fill in the circle which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship while you were involved with your former romantic partner.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extremely Perfect Happy	Fairly happy	A Little happy	Happy	Very happy	Extremely happy	<input type="radio"/>

Investments

For the following questions, ***please think of your most recently ended romantic relationship*** and answer as honestly as possible. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each of the following statements regarding **your recently ended relationship** (circle an answer for each

item). These questions pertain to behaviors you and your partner engaged in during your romantic relationship.

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1	2	3	4	5

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1	2	3	4	5

19. When we were in a romantic relationship, my partner and I had an intellectual life together that I felt would be difficult to replace if the relationship ended.

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1	2	3	4	5

20. When we were in a romantic relationship, my sense of personal identity (who I am) was linked to my partner and our relationship.

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1	2	3	4	5

21. When we were in a romantic relationship, my partner and I shared memories (created new memories together and shared remembrances of past events when your partner may or may not have been present).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

22. When we were in a romantic relationship, I invested a great deal into our relationship that I thought I would lose if the relationship were to end.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

23. When we were in a romantic relationship, many aspects of my life were linked to my partner (recreational activities, etc.), and I lost all of this when we broke up.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

24. When we were in a romantic relationship I felt very involved in our relationship-like I put a great deal into it.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

25. My relationship with friends and family members was complicated when my partner and I broke up (e.g., partner is friends with people I care about).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

26. Compared to other people I know, I invested a great deal in my relationship with my partner when we were in a romantic relationship.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Disengagement Strategies

The following questions ask you to reflect upon the communication behaviors you and your former romantic partner engaged in *during the break up process*. Please answer as honestly as you can.

27. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner told me that he/she was very, very sorry about breaking off the relationship.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

28. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner told me that he/she was going to date other people and that I should date others also.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

29. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner fully explained why he/she felt unsatisfied with the relationship, that it hasn't been growing and that he/she believed we would both be happier if we didn't date anymore.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

30. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner told me that there should be mutual love and understanding in a relationship and that at the moment, he/she didn't feel as close as he/she should. He/she then said that he/she thought we should lay off awhile and see if we wanted to get back together, and if we wanted to get back together, we will.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

31. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner didn't say much of anything, he/she avoided contact with me as much as possible.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

32. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner told me that he/she regretted very much having to break off the relationship.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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1 2 3 4 5

33. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner told me that life was too short and that we should date other people in order to enjoy life.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

34. When we were breaking up, without explaining the intentions to break off the relationship, my romantic partner avoided scheduling future meetings with me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

35. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner told me that he/she cared very, very much for me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

36. When we were breaking up, my romantic partner fully explained how he/she felt and that he/she wanted to break things off. He/she explained that a relationship was no good unless it makes both people happy and he/she wasn't happy, and he/she didn't want to date anymore.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

37. When we were breaking up I said that I was really changing inside and I didn't quite feel good about our relationship anymore. I said that we'd better stop seeing each other.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

38. When we were breaking up I told my romantic partner that I needed to be honest with him/her and suggested that we break it off for awhile and see what happens.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

39. When we were breaking up I never verbally said anything to my romantic partner, but I discouraged our seeing each other again.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

40. When we were breaking up I told my romantic partner that I wanted to be happy and that we should date other people.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

41. When we were breaking up I told my romantic partner that while I was happy most of the time I sometimes felt that I can't do all the things I wanted to. I then said that we should call it quits for now and if we wanted to get back together we will.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

42. Did you have one former romantic partner in mind while answering this survey?

 Yes No

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

February 6, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dylan Medeiros
Lynne Webb

FROM: Ro Windwalker
IRB Coordinator

RE: PROJECT MODIFICATION

IRB Protocol #: 12-11-270

Protocol Title: *"Why Can't We Be Friends?": Does the Quality of Romantic Relationships Influence Facebook Friendships with Former Romantic Partners?*

Review Type: EXEMPT EXPEDITED FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 02/06/2013 Expiration Date: 12/12/2013

Your request to modify the referenced protocol has been approved by the IRB. **This protocol is currently approved for 500 total participants.** If you wish to make any further modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

Please note that this approval does not extend the Approved Project Period. Should you wish to extend your project beyond the current expiration date, you must submit a request for continuation using the UAF IRB form "Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects." The request should be sent to the IRB Coordinator, 210 Administration.

For protocols requiring FULL IRB review, please submit your request at least one month prior to the current expiration date. (High-risk protocols may require even more time for approval.) For protocols requiring an EXPEDITED or EXEMPT review, submit your request at least two weeks prior to the current expiration date. Failure to obtain approval for a continuation *on or prior to* the currently approved expiration date will result in termination of the protocol and you will be required to submit a new protocol to the IRB before continuing the project. Data collected past the protocol expiration date may need to be eliminated from the dataset should you wish to publish. Only data collected under a currently approved protocol can be certified by the IRB for any purpose.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 210 Administration Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

