

Is CMC the new FTF: a study exploring the nature of computer mediated communication on
Facebook

A Senior Project Presented to The Faculty of the Communication Studies Department California
Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

In Partial Fulfillment Of the Requirements for the Degree Bachelor of Arts

By

Suzanne S. Wu

Dr. Julia Woolley

Senior Project Advisor

Signature

Date

Dr. Bernard Duffy

Department Chair

Signature

Date

Living in the digital age, online communication has become an increasingly popular method of keeping up with those around us, especially since the rise of social networking sites such as Facebook. From the moment we wake up, we are bombarded by phone calls, text messages, emails, online messages, and—while many of us are used to media bombardment—it is not often that we consider the implications that it has on our communication. Most recently, the use of social media has become widespread and plays a large role in our current communication practices. Founded in 2004, a visit to the Facebook key facts page reveals that Facebook has 1.11 billion monthly active users as of March 2013 (“Facebook Newsroom”). With such an abundant user base, Facebook has become the people’s choice in social networking sites. In an article by Kanter, Afifi, and Robinson, they wrote about how Facebook has become the most popular social networking site among college-aged students and people of all ages worldwide. While the majority of Facebook users are between 18 and 25, the Facebook demographic of users 35 and over are growing rapidly (Kanter, Afifi, and Robbins 901). With an increase in users and the popularity of Facebook to consider, it has truly become a social phenomenon that is worth studying.

Social media has become a social meeting ground for the younger generation filled with photos and posts that document the lives of users and their friends. As a way to keep track of relationships built offline, online social media has allowed individuals to connect regardless of space and time making it a vital tool in relationship maintenance. The increased reliance on Facebook as a tool for developing and maintaining relationships is the basis of my research project, which attempts to answer how face-to-face (FTF) friendship maintenance is affected by computer-mediated communication (CMC) on Facebook. As social media makes it easier for people to connect with one another, it is important to consider what it is that makes CMC so

appealing, and find out its strengths and weaknesses to discover what impacts it has on communication. Questions such as the availability of emotional support on CMC, quality of communication compared to FTF communication, engaging interfaces and their relationship to behavioral intention, as well as friendship maintenance on a digital platform are all things to consider when evaluating friendship maintenance via CMC versus FTF. The current study uses a survey methodology to attempt to measure the relationships between these aspects of CMC and FTF communication.

Literature Review

Facebook and Interpersonal Communication

The online presence of individuals is no longer an anomaly as more and more individuals go online to satisfy their needs for social connections. Serving as an online documentation of friendships past and present, Facebook has become an online community that is more than simply a way to see what your friends have been up to. Facebook can now connect people beyond physical and temporal boundaries, making it a key player in relationship building. In his paper, Wright describes how the use of social networking sites—such as Facebook—have the ability to fulfill social needs (Wright 176). Looking into the extent to which Facebook has essentially taken the place of Face-to-Face (FTF) interactions, the importance of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) becomes apparent. There is a need to explore the implications of CMC taking over some of FTF interaction's functions since the change will only become more defined as time goes on. With more communication taking place online in the form of chatting, messaging, or commenting, the implications of CMC interactions on communication is important to consider. As Facebook has become the web community for individuals to develop interpersonal relationships, an exploration into Facebook's interpersonal communication

tendencies is called for. The use of Facebook to facilitate interpersonal communication has seemed to extend one's social network and for that reason, exploring the difference between FTF and CMC is essential (Wright 175).

While Wright's study looked primarily at college students and their perceived emotional support based on who they conversed with via Facebook, the insight that his research provides for interpersonal relationships on Facebook is an important one. Emotional support is thought to buffer against stress, especially for those situations that are perceived to be beyond an individual's control (Wright 177). These situations, common among recent high school graduates transitioning into college, are typically dealt with through FTF interactions. However, with the introduction of CMC, the methods to cope with separation anxiety, stress, and other psychological and emotional problems have now shifted to CMC in order to alleviate the stress. Based on his research, we can understand that the communication on Facebook—while it may vary from individual to individual—has the potential to be highly interpersonal. This increased reliance on Facebook for the development and maintenance of relationships is why my research project focuses on how face-to-face FTF friendship maintenance is affected by computer-mediated CMC on Facebook.

More than just a method of communication, CMC could have positive implications on the quality of communication for shy individuals. As explained in an article by Baker, CMC could increase how comfortable shy individuals are communicating with people and allow them to pursue the interpersonal communication that they are not able to fulfill offline in a FTF setting. The anxiety they feel in FTF communication often leads shy individuals to avoid social situations and report feeling less close to their peers (Baker and Oswald 873). CMC has the ability to ease the fears of FTF communication by filtering out the need for nonverbal cues, and,

in turn, can lead those shy individuals to make those interpersonal connections possible. In essence, through the use of CMC, those who have a fear of FTF communication may be able to experience higher-quality relationships based on being able to communicate more effectively and freely online (Baker and Oswald 875). The potential to create quality interactions and relationships online through CMC is a reason that there needs to be more work studying the effects that CMC has on relationships—specifically the maintenance of relationships via CMC. By allowing shy individuals to chat unhindered by social fears and the press of nonverbal communication, they will be able to form deeper connections and maintain relationships better than if they had to communicate FTF. These online relationships enrich relationships for those who may have a fear of FTF communication and, perhaps the communication that goes on online, has the capacity to rival or match offline communication.

Different aspects of communication play into CMC on Facebook. Interactivity, engagement, behavioral intention, emotional support, and attitudes towards using are all aspects seen in FTF communication that must be evaluated in a CMC setting as well. Interactivity is key in communication since communication is an interactive process where information is shared and goes hand-in-hand with engagement. In order to see how CMC compares to FTF, these aspects of communication—interactivity and engagement—must also be seen in the online interaction. By evaluating emotional support on Facebook, the depth of the communication can be analyzed and compared to behavioral intention (the likelihood of using Facebook) and attitudes towards using (how much they enjoy using Facebook). Finding correlations between these various aspects of communication by measuring them through scales, a better idea of CMC communication and its impacts can be seen.

Cues-Filtered-Out Theory and Hyperpersonal Communication

The effects of CMC on interpersonal communication are addressed by two popular theories—hyperpersonal and cues-filtered-out theory. Important in understanding the impact on all types of online communication, hyperpersonal and cues-filtered-out theories have to be examined when reflecting on the maintenance of relationships on Facebook. Cues-filtered-out theory predicts that when communicating online, users experience commonality, are self-aware, physically separated, and communicate despite the limited cues that the medium allows for (Walther). While users are still able to communicate, sharing a common experience while physically separated, the limited cues place limitations on CMC. In addition, the senders are able to craft the message, and selectively present and edit the content before sending it to the receiver. Tonkin describes the cues-filtered-out theory as a perspective that views CMC as inherently worse than FTF due to the cues—such as non-verbals—that are filtered out due to CMC. The lack of FTF cues such as facial expressions and movement can cause the communication to be inherently less effective and worse than FTF communication (Tonkin 3). Cues that could communicate sarcasm, joking behavior, humor, sadness, and other emotions go missing when communicating via CMC. In this way, the same cues that make shy individuals anxious of social situations are removed, essentially dulling communication experienced online compared to FTF.

In contrast, the hyperpersonal communication viewpoint expresses that CMC is more desirable than FTF communication (Tonkin 1). Having the ability to plan out the exact words that will be seen by the receiver, hyperpersonal communication argues that each word will carry more meaning due to the lack of context and other cues such as non-verbals. I will be using hyperpersonal and cues-filtered out theory in an attempt to explain the results of this survey investigating the role Facebook plays in maintaining relationships.

These theories of communication serve as the basis for one of my hypotheses that concerns the actual depth of communication that can take place in a CMC setting. Measured by questions on the emotional support scale by Weber and Patterson, the value of interactions will be based off of the depth of interaction and satisfaction with that interaction (Weber and Patterson 74). While evidence has shown that online communication does have the potential to be comparable to FTF communication, this study seeks to address whether interpersonal relationships can be maintained solely in a CMC setting. My first hypothesis comes from a hyperpersonal view where online interactions will benefit from FTF interactions. Measures of interactivity and emotional support serve as indicators of aspects of CMC, such as interactivity and emotional support, and depth of communication, respectively.

H1: Interactivity will be positively related to emotional support.

The core difference between FTF and CMC communication highlighted in Tonkin's article is that the lack of physical presence, chronemics, and proxemics of CMC. Chronemics and proxemics, or time and space, govern the ability to communicate in FTF interactions, compared to CMC interactions, where being in a different time and space do not hinder the ability to communicate (Tonkin 4). The lack of non-verbals and other cues that are missing from CMC do not necessarily put users at a disadvantage since chronemics and proxemics give CMC an advantage over CMC. Given the advantage of CMC in chronemics and proxemics, by pairing online interactions with FTF communication, relationships have the potential to become more likely to be developed and enriched. By providing an engaging environment in CMC through Facebook, more individuals will be likely to use it as a method of relationship maintenance. Supplementing their offline interactions with engaging online interactions will increase

behavioral intention. Subjects that feel like their online communication is engaging will increase their intention of using Facebook in the future as a method of CMC.

H2: Engagement will be positively related to increases in behavioral intention.

Friendship Maintenance on Facebook

The combination of online and offline communication has redefined the way people maintain their interpersonal relationships. In order to determine the similarity the words friend and friendship have online and offline, Copeland's defines friendship using Aristotle's definition of friendship. The most important factor of friendship as identified by Copeland is the idea of conscious reciprocity highlighted by Aristotle (Copeland 105). Conscious reciprocity, or knowingly partaking in reciprocation, is what makes friendship different from simply being an acquaintance. In an attempt to give friendship a concrete definition, Copeland analyzes the definitions of friendship as Aristotle describes it in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Providing an operational definition of friendship, friendship is broken down into pleasure/advantage friendship, and character friendship. In this study, I will focus on the idea of conscious reciprocity, in terms of the ability of Facebook to enable conscious reciprocity to occur. Facebook's role in friendship maintenance will be evaluated with a survey, and the survey will address the relational aspects of the reciprocity effect on the perception of Facebook as a means of communication.

The maintenance of friendship is often accomplished through Facebook by online communication. Since Facebook offers many modes of communication such as video chatting, commenting, liking, and messaging, my study focuses on just the commenting and messaging aspect in order to provide a more detailed view into the use of Facebook for the maintenance of relationships. Craig and Wright examine the development and maintenance of relationships

among college students through their use of Facebook. Seen as an aid for individuals to maintain relationships and form new relationships, the suggestion that people spend more time maintaining relationships versus developing them is a reason why CMC relationship maintenance is an important issue to study (Craig and Wright 120). This piece of the puzzle brings me to my last hypothesis—positive feelings towards using Facebook such as commenting and messaging will increase feelings of closeness measured by an emotional support scale.

H3: Positive attitudes towards using will be positively related to increases in emotional support.

Through communication on Facebook, the maintenance of offline relationships will be adequately maintained leading to an increase in feelings of closeness.

Methods

Procedure

In order to gather data, I chose to use a self-report survey to obtain information about Facebook use. The survey is a 36-item questionnaire that contains questions from scales that evaluate emotional support, interactivity and real time conversation, engagement, attitude towards using Facebook, behavioral intention, as well as general questions about Facebook usage. Since many of the scales contained many questions and were worded for general information and not Facebook specifically, the scales were adapted from existing scales to fit this study more closely. Questions of general Facebook usage were added in order to obtain information about the type of Facebook use that takes place online. Participants answered most survey questions on a scale of one to five, with one being almost never true and five being almost always true. The research was conducted by means of an online survey using Google forms and distributed through Facebook. Most of the participants were Cal Poly students that

were obtained through word of mouth, online Facebook groups, the snowball effect, and Facebook notifications.

After creating the survey by merging the general questions with the emotional support, interactivity and real time conversation, engagement, attitudes towards using, and behavioral intention scales, the survey was shared as wall posts on Facebook. This snowball method of surveying was a convenience sample. After sharing the survey on Facebook and encouraging others to share the survey, data was collected after two weeks of being online. This data was then analyzed using IBM's SPSS statistical analysis program. A total of 96 participants were recruited through Facebook for the online survey.

The analysis of the collected data was done by IBM's SPSS program and bivariate correlation tests were run in order to determine the correlation between two continuous variables. In order to make the tests more valid and efficient, items measuring the same variable were combined together and tested for reliability by running a Cronbach's Alpha test. Reliability statistics were run for the emotional support scale, interactivity and real time conversation scale, engagement scale, attitude towards using scale, and behavioral intention scale.

Participants

The mean age of the participants was 23.64 and a standard deviation of 8.89. 70.8% of participants were female and 27.1% were males. Participants were asked to think about someone they communicated most with on Facebook and these answers were also recorded in the survey. When asked who they communicated with most on Facebook, 0% reported communicating with their father on Facebook, 1% communicated with their aunt, 2.1% communicated with their mothers, 5.2% communicated with a sister or brother, 11.5% reported they communicated with a boyfriend or girlfriend, and 79.2% communicated with a friend. Participants were also asked to

disclose what school they attended, since it was assumed that a majority of people who would participate in the survey would be college-aged students. 59.4% reported being a student at California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo while 39.6% were not students at Cal Poly SLO or choose not respond.

Measures

Multiple measures were used to ascertain information about users and Facebook usage. General questions about Facebook use were used to evaluate the type of communication that is seen on Facebook. Questions about gender, whether they attended Cal Poly, and age were all asked in the survey in order to see if any of these variables have an impact on the type of communication individuals partake in CMC on Facebook.

General Facebook Use

In order to gather enough information about participants in order to make accurate observations about their answers, participants were asked a total of seven general questions about themselves and their Facebook use. Since the study was shared on Facebook pages that were associated with Cal Poly, it was important to figure out how many of the participants were Cal Poly San Luis Obispo students. Out of a total of 96 participants, 57 of them reported that they attended Cal Poly while 38 of them reported that they did not. The average age of the participants was 23.6 with a standard deviation of 8.9.

Before beginning the survey, participants were asked to think of a person they communicated with the most on Facebook. When asked if they talked to the person they were thinking of on a daily basis from a scale of one to five (one being almost never true and five almost always true) the average answer was a 3.53 with a standard deviation of 1.26. Under the same instructions to think of the person they communicate with most on Facebook, participants

were asked from a scale of one to five (one being almost never true and five almost always true), “We both tend to initiate conversation equally” and the average answer was a 3.83 with a standard deviation of 1.05. In order to test for consistency, a reverse scored question, “I am rarely the one that initiates conversation” was asked where participants were told to answer using the same scale and the average answer as a 3.67 with a standard deviation of .94.

Emotional Support Scale

In order to measure the depth of friendship and emotions tied to the online interactions, I used the Emotional Support Scale by Weber and Patterson (Weber and Patterson 74). Evaluating the depth of connection with the receiver, the senders’ answers to the survey help gauge the depth of connection able to be achieved through CMC. Six questions such as, “He/She is a good listener when I am upset” and “He/She patiently and sensitively listens to me “let off steam” about a problem that I am having” were included in the emotional support scale to gauge the level of emotional support felt by participants. Out of a scale of one to five, from least likely to be true to most likely to be true, the mean answer was a 3.99 with a standard deviation of .85. The emotional support scale produced a Cronbach's Alpha of .78, which demonstrates that this scale is reliable.

Real Time Conversation and Interactivity

In order to be similar to FTF communication, CMC had to exhibit real time conversation and interactivity. Six questions about real time conversation and interactivity such as, “Facebook enables two-way communication” and “Communication on Facebook is like communication in real-life, face-to-face situations” provided insight on the participant’s perception of real time conversation and interactivity on Facebook. The level of real time conversation and interactivity was measured using Chang and Wang’s Interactivity and Real Time Conversation Scale (Chang

and Wang 2348). Out of a scale of one to five, from least likely to be true to most likely to be true, the mean was a 2.86 with a standard deviation of .58. The Cronbach's Alpha for the Interactivity and Real Time Conversation Scale was a .546, which demonstrated that aspects of this scale made it not reliable. Identifying the part of the scale that was bringing the Cronbach's Alpha down, and deleting the variable “ It is difficult for me to chat with multiple people on Facebook” that was bringing the reliability down, the Cronbach's Alpha went up to .61, which is reliable.

Engagement

The engagement scale was a series of six questions formulated to measure engagement such as “Facebook keeps my attention” and “Facebook has a good variety of content”. Adapted from scales provided by Chang and Wang, these questions were used to evaluate how engaging participants saw Facebook to be (Chang and Wang 2348). These scales were adapted for the use in this study and were written to relate specifically to Facebook. Making the scales specific to Facebook was mandatory for cohesion of the survey. Out of a scale of one to five, from least likely to be true to most likely to be true, the mean score was a 3.37 with a standard deviation of .69. After calculating the engagement scale, the Cronbach's Alpha was .66, which is also reliable.

Attitudes Towards Using Facebook

Attitudes towards using Facebook measured how participants felt about using Facebook as a means to communicate via CMC. Taken and edited to fit the purpose of the study, the attitudes towards using was a modified version of a survey done by Chang and Wang to evaluate attitudes towards using. Five questions were formatted to find out how much the participants enjoyed using Facebook. Examples of questions are “I like to use Facebook to keep up with my friends and family” and “I enjoy using Facebook”. From a scale of one to five, least likely to be

true to most likely to be true, the mean score was a 2.36 with a standard deviation of .76.

Running a Cronbach's Alpha on the combined attitudes towards using scale produced a value of .76, which is reliable.

Use of Facebook in the Future

Seven questions about the use of Facebook in the future such as “I will use Facebook frequently in the future to communicate with friends and family” and “I plan on using Facebook to chat with family and friends often” were used to measure the participants’ intentions to use Facebook in the future or their behavioral intention. Also taken and modified from Chang and Wang's behavioral intention scale, this scale was meant to see if Facebook would become the tool of choice in CMC. Out of a scale of one to five, from least likely to be true to most likely to be true, the mean score was a 2.81 with a standard deviation of .88. The Cronbach's Alpha for the Behavioral intention scale was a strong .868 meaning that the scales were very reliable.

Results

In order to test the relationships between the different scales, bivariate correlation tests were used in order to test the correlation between two continuous variables.

In the first hypothesis, the correlation between interactivity and emotional support was predicted. Results of the bivariate correlation were not significant ($r=.17$ $p=.11$). Since the low Cronbach's Alpha for interactivity was possibly to blame for the insignificance, each item in interactivity was run against the emotional support scale. Despite this additional precaution, the results were still insignificant while two items—“Facebook enables concurrent communication and “Facebook enables interpersonal communication”—approached significance (see table 1).

Table 1 Individual measures of interactivity in correlation to the emotional support scale

		Correlations						
		EmotionalSupportScale	ItisdifficultformetochatwithmultiplepeopleonFB.r	Facebookenablesleewaycommunication	Facebookenablesconcurrentcommunication	CommunicationonFacebookislikecommunicationinreallifefac	Facebookdoesapoorjoboffollowingmetochat.r	Facebookenablesinterpersonalinteraction
EmotionalSupportScale	Pearson Correlation	1	-.117	-.063	-.183	.066	-.061	-.186
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.261	.540	.075	.524	.553	.072
	N	96	94	96	96	96	96	95
ItisdifficultformetochatwithmultiplepeopleonFB.r	Pearson Correlation	-.117	1	.084	-.031	-.042	.154	.101
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.261		.421	.764	.684	.138	.334
	N	94	94	94	94	94	94	93
Facebookenablesleewaycommunication	Pearson Correlation	-.063	.084	1	.613 ^{**}	.021	.346 ^{**}	.401 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.540	.421		.000	.837	.001	.000
	N	96	94	96	96	96	96	95
Facebookenablesconcurrentcommunication	Pearson Correlation	-.183	-.031	.613 ^{**}	1	-.072	.295 ^{**}	.264 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.075	.764	.000		.485	.004	.010
	N	96	94	96	96	96	96	95
CommunicationonFacebookislikecommunicationinreallifefac	Pearson Correlation	.066	-.042	.021	-.072	1	-.079	.211 [*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.524	.684	.837	.485		.445	.040
	N	96	94	96	96	96	96	95
Facebookdoesapoorjoboffollowingmetochat.r	Pearson Correlation	-.061	.154	.346 ^{**}	.295 ^{**}	-.079	1	.146
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.553	.138	.001	.004	.445		.157
	N	96	94	96	96	96	96	95
Facebookenablesinterpersonalinteraction	Pearson Correlation	-.186	.101	.401 ^{**}	.264 ^{**}	.211 [*]	.146	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.072	.334	.000	.010	.040	.157	
	N	95	93	95	95	95	95	95

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The second hypothesis predicted a positive relationship between attitudes toward using and emotional support. A bivariate correlation test was run to test the correlation between emotional support and attitudes towards using. The results were insignificant, ($r=-.13, p=.21$).

The third hypothesis predicted a positive relationship between engagement and behavioral intention. After running the bivariate correlation test, results were significant and there was shown to be a positive correlation between engagement and behavioral intention ($r=.46, p<.001$).

Exploratory Findings

In order to get a more comprehensive view on what else could encourage an increase in using Facebook for CMC, interactivity was also compared against attitudes towards using. The

results of this test were significant, meaning that the more interactive Facebook was perceived to be, the more likely individuals enjoyed using it ($r=.55, p<.001$).

In addition to examining the relationship between attitudes towards using and interactivity, the correlation between interactivity and behavioral intention was tested as well in order to see if interactivity would encourage future use. The results of this test were also significant ($r=.43, p<.001$), showing that if the interface is perceived to be interactive, the participants were more likely to use it in the future as a method of CMC.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into the interpersonal communication that takes place online on Facebook through different measures that indicated the depth of interpersonal communication taking place online. After conducting the study and analyzing the data, the results show that Facebook is seen as an interactive site in which participants in the study would use the interface as a method of maintaining interpersonal relationships. In regards to Facebook as a method of CMC and the depth of interpersonal communication that takes place on the site, the results were not significant enough to make a definitive conclusion about the state of relationship maintenance on Facebook. Despite the findings on the depth of interpersonal communication on Facebook to be non-definitive, the exploratory findings on the correlations between attitudes towards using and interactivity as well as interactivity and behavioral intention are consistent with previous research done in the subject.

Going into this study, research had shown that the more interactive and real-time conversation that took place on Facebook would suggest that participants would gather the same satisfaction from online relationships as offline relationships in the form of emotional support. The more interactive the online experience, the more emotional support participants should

theoretically feel in their communication on the CMC of Facebook. However, a moderating factor to this interaction could simply be the topics that were discussed. While some people may feel comfortable discussing things such as goals and hopes, others may reserve those topics for when they meet with people in a FTF setting. This mediating factor could explain the insignificance found when testing the correlation between interactivity and emotional support in the first hypothesis.

The basis of the second hypothesis came from the idea that when one felt more emotional support, their attitudes towards using would also increase. Similar to the first hypothesis, moderating factors such as topic choices and communication norms that exist on Facebook may be why the results were found to be insignificant.

The third hypothesis exploring the correlation between engagement and behavioral intention was found to be significant. Reasons why this might be the case may be explained through the mentality of engaging content increases the intention to use Facebook. With captivating content and conversation, participants found themselves to be more likely to use Facebook as a method of CMC in the future and would recommend it to their friends as a means of CMC.

Limitations and Future Research

Since the survey was a convenience sample that focused mostly on Cal Poly students, this study has low external validity and cannot be readily generalized to the population.

Also, since the survey was an online survey, one barrier to taking the survey in the first place would be computer literacy. Those who are computer literate are more likely to be on Facebook as well, so this could be a mediating variable that explains their Facebook use. Seeing as though this survey was distributed on Facebook groups, pages, and walls, this study couldn't be

generalized outside of the typical college student who uses Facebook. In the future, increasing the sample size, and increasing the reach of this survey would allow for a more accurate representation of the population of people who use Facebook.

Future research would do well to conduct research on FTF communication as well as CMC communication in order to do a more in-depth comparison exploring the types of communication that goes on online and offline. Through conducting research on both FTF and CMC, the results can be compared more accurately since scales can be used to ensure both FTF and CMC are being measured for the same characteristics.

In addition, it would be very helpful to actually test the actual depth of friendship by organizing scenarios where people communicate with specified others solely on a CMC basis while others meet in FTF settings. Liking could be measured in a survey that evaluates how much the individuals would want to communicate outside of the experiment or other variables such as feelings of closeness. Disguised as a discussion group that takes place only online or only in FTF settings, a third variable could be added on as a FTF and CMC setting. This third variable would most accurately test the hypothesis that online interactions would benefit from FTF interactions. Evaluating the different types of scenarios in an experiment would allow for more than correlational evidence of the FTF and CMC effects on communication from initial meeting to friendship.

Having time to incorporate interviews into the study would have also been a good way to evaluate the effects of CMC and FTF communication in the maintenance of relationships. Getting personal insight into how people use CMC would provide even more information than a survey alone. Personal experiences would highlight issues that the survey did not account for and would produce a more wholesome view of the use of CMC for communication purposes.

The gender inequality in the study could have effects on the results. With more females than males participating in the study, the results could have been different if there had been a more equal representation of males and females. One possible reason why there were more females in the study than males could be that females have a tendency to stereotypically communicate more than males do. In relation to this fact, the statistic that showed none of the participants talked with their fathers most often on Facebook is a somewhat interesting fact. Considering both parents were listed as options for selection in the survey, mothers were the parent that 2.1% of participants communicated with.

This study served to reinforce the findings of previous researchers who tested interactivity against behavioral intention and attitudes towards using while providing insight into the interpersonal communication had on Facebook as a source of CMC. While limited in its generalizability, this study serves as a start to understanding the full potential of Facebook as a method of CMC that facilitates interpersonal connections. As the world becomes more reliant on CMC as a method to maintain relationships, it will be studies like this one that will help us understand the potential of CMC to keep the world close despite proxemics and temporal boundaries.

Works Cited

- Baker, Levi R., and Debra L. Oswald. "Shyness and Online Social Networking Services." *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships* 27.7 (2010): 873–889. Print.
- Chang, Hsin Hsin, and I. Chen Wang. "An Investigation of User Communication Behavior in Computer Mediated Environments." *Computers in Human Behavior* 24.5 (2008): 2336–2356. *ScienceDirect*. Web. 19 Apr. 2013.
- Copeland, Jordan J. "Too Faced? Reconsidering Friendship in the Digital Age." *At the Interface / Probing the Boundaries* 85 (2012): 101–123. Print.
- Craig, Elizabeth, and Kevin B. Wright. "Computer-Mediated Relational Development and Maintenance on Facebook®." *Communication Research Reports* 29.2 (2012): 119–129. Print.
- "Facebook Newsroom." Web. 11 June 2013.
- Kanter, Maggie, Tamara Afifi, and Stephanie Robbins. "The Impact of Parents 'Friending' Their Young Adult Child on Facebook on Perceptions of Parental Privacy Invasions and Parent-Child Relationship Quality." *Journal of Communication* 62.5 (2012): 900–917. Print.
- Tonkin, Sarah. "Getting Hyper-personal." *Global Media Journal: Australian Edition* 4.1 (2010): 1–9. Print.
- Walther, Joseph B. "Computer-mediated Communication: Impersonal, Interpersonal, and Hyperpersonal Interaction." *Communication Research* 23.1 (1996): 3. Print.
- Weber, Keith D., and Brian R. Patterson. "Construction and Validation of a Communication Based Emotional Support Scale." *Communication Research Reports* 13.1 (1996): 68–76. Print.

Wright, Kevin B. "Emotional Support and Perceived Stress Among College Students Using Facebook.com: An Exploration of the Relationship Between Source Perceptions and Emotional Support." *Communication Research Reports* 29.3 (2012): 175–184. Print.