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Text Me You Love Me. Mediated Communication in Dating Relationships

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"TEXT ME YOU LOVE ME." MEDIATED COMMUNICATION IN DATING

RELATIONSHIPS

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THESIS APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

To my husband Jerry whose support and love has been beyond measure. Thank you for being there for me and always believing in me. I love you!

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"TEXT ME YOU LOVE ME." MEDIATED COMMUNICATION IN DATING

RELATIONSHIPS

ANNA CARUSO

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine how text message communication creates a feeling of social presence, and how it affects self-disclosure, intimacy, and uncertainty. A total of 171 participants were surveyed who at the time were engaged in a dating relationship and used text messages.

The findings indicated that a feeling of social presence can be achieved through text message communication. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between the amount of text messages sent to a dating partner and the feeling of social presence. Specifically, a relationship was found between the amount of text messages sent daily from a dating partner and received daily from a dating partner and relational uncertainty. The analysis revealed a negative relationship between the amount of text messages sent to a dating partner and relational uncertainty. Furthermore, this study suggested there is a positive relationship between relationship stage and self-disclosure through text messages, but there isn't one between the length of a relationship and self disclosure via text messages. Lastly, it was found that the amount of text messages sent to a dating partner and received from one's dating partner facilitate intimacy.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Text messaging is a popular avenue for communicating with friends, family and significant others. Skog (2002) found that young people are more likely to engage in text messaging than talking on the telephone. The use of this form of mediated communication is clearly becoming an integral part of how we establish and maintain relationships. As a relationship develops, partners share increasing amounts of information about themselves in the form of self-disclosure. Communicating positive self-disclosure messages enhances the level of intimacy one feels in a relationship, especially in dating relationships which are uniquely characterized by their high levels of self-disclosure.

During dating periods couples often feel a great degree of uncertainty. The research suggests that this uncertainty is reduced through self-disclosure messages and often results in a higher level of intimacy (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Knobloch, 2005; Knobloch & Solomon, 2002; VanLear & Trujillo, 1986). The role of communication through text messaging may produce a unique outcome for the self-disclosure message interactions and the relationship between self-disclosure and the use of text messages is unclear. It has been argued that new technologies have positive and negative

consequences. E-mail has been shown to support and maintain meaningful relationships, and internet use is associated with increased communication in friendships and families. Additionally, technology allows for a boundary-free communication (Baym, Zhang, Kunkel, Ledbetter, & Lin, 2007; Perry & Lee, 2007). In contrast, technology use can easily become an addiction (Pool, 1983). On one hand, mediated relationships are perceived as shallow and impersonal (Beniger, 1987; Berry, 1993), and on the other hand there is an argument that mediated communication allows interpersonal relationships to grow without the constraints of physical space (Baym et al., 2007; Pool, 1983). Thus, the question of text messaging influence on interpersonal communication should be given consideration.

Rationale

Text Messaging

With the increase in numbers of the internet and cellular phones users, interpersonal communication becomes progressively more mediated by the available technology. Hence, a question rises about whether that kind of mediated communication enhances or decreases the quality of interpersonal communication, and what advantages or disadvantages it brings.

Originally, cellular phones were intended for voice-based communication, however they now commonly include text messaging capabilities facilitating new forms of social interaction. Text messaging also called Short Messaging Service (SMS) is one of the world's most popular mobile applications. An SMS allows users to transmit alphanumeric messages bounded by an upper limit in the number of characters a message can contain, which in the U.S. is 160 (Kim, Park, & Oh, 2008). Text messaging is a

convenient nonvoice way to interpersonal communication on a worldwide scale (Mahatanakoon & O'Sullivan, 2008). As of June 2007, there were at least 243 million subscribers. According to CTIA-The Wireless Association, annual SMS usage exceeded 241 billion messages. In August 2007, the most frequent nonvoice cell phone users were sending and receiving text messages (43.2%), followed by picture messaging at 19.2% (M:METRICS, 2007). These numbers indicate that text messaging is becoming a popular avenue for everyday communication. Recent analyses have emphasized the central role of cell phones and text messages in developing, maintaining, and changing social relations due to the cell phone pervasiveness and the simplicity of getting in touch with others (Boneva, Quinn, Kraut, Kiesler, & Shklovski, 2006; Licoppe & Smoreda, 2005).

Sometimes described as "thumb race", SMS is quickly becoming a necessity for the younger members of our generation, who tend to use text messaging more often than telephone service in an attempt to maintain their social relationships by exchanging messages using the mobile platform (Rheingold, 2003). In less than a decade, the use of text messages became prevalent among teenagers and young adults (Gera & Chen, 2003). Skog (2002) notes that young people are more likely to send text messages than talk on the phone. They prefer using SMS because of the low cost, it gives them an opportunity to communicate information intended only for one person to hear, and allows for an interpersonal communication exchange when a telephone conversation is impossible or the time is inappropriate (Grinter & Eldridge, 2001). The content of text messages sent among teenagers involves gossip, plans for an upcoming weekend, details of their activities from the previous evening, and making plans for getting together in the

immediate future (Eldridge & Grinter, 2001; Ling & Yttri, 2002). Nakamura (2001) classified the content of SMS into three categories: self-sufficient messages ('I'm on the train'); personal information ('Today I have a lot of homework to do'); and current state of feelings ('I'm bored'). These messages are used to reinforce a relationship and have a self-contained meaning (Ling & Yttri, 2002). Text messages are mainly used for dyadic remote communication among already existing interpersonal relationships (Eldridge & Grinter, 2001). Most people choose to send SMS to friends and significant others rather than use text messages for meeting new friends. Adolescents seem to use electronic media to reinforce romantic relationships. According to Subrahmanyam and Greenfield (2008), nearly 25% of teens in romantic relationships have communicated with their significant other hourly between midnight and 5 a.m. using text messages.

Text messaging also allows people to be released from the spatial constraints of face to face communication or even computer mediated communication. Cellular phones offer their users unlimited mobility while engaging in acts of communication. People can send or receive text messages virtually anywhere. This kind of convenience has increased the frequency of SMS use, as confirmed by 37% of young adults sending text messages more than five times a day (Nakamura, 2001). Sending and receiving text messages has become ever-present.

Furthermore, text messaging offers an additional feature that differentiates it from face to face communication or a telephone conversation. Text messaging is asynchronous, therefore it removes the necessity for a spontaneous response. The recipient of the message is not obligated to respond instantly (Igarashi, Takai, & Yoshida, 2005). However, SMS users tend to respond instantly to close friends (Nakamura, 2001).

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Regardless of the asynchronicity, interactions over text messages allow sharing one's life with others in real time (Mäenpää, 2001). In addition, Igarashi et al. (2005) found that intimacy of friends who communicate through text messages and face to face is higher than those who communicate only via face to face. Dating couples use text messaging as a common form of communicating and it is growing in popularity.

Dating Relationships

Dating relationships are a form of romantic relationships that involve emotional, motivational, and cognitive characteristics. Sternberg (1986) framed these characteristics as intimacy, passion, and commitment. He defines intimacy as psychological closeness, passion with elements of lust, and a commitment that is a decision to remain committed to a partner. According to Sternberg (1986) dating relationships differ from friendships. He states that while friendships may involve the dimensions of closeness and commitment, it does not involve passion (Sternberg, 1986). Dating refers to couples engaging in mutually rewarding activities that may lead to future interaction, emotional commitment, or sexual intimacy or all three (Stets, 1993). Dating relationships can be heterosexual or homosexual. Furthermore, Wiseman (1986) concludes romantic relationships have a level of exclusivity and commitment that are not found in non-romantic relationships. Dating relationships are also distinguished from marriages in that dating relationships enable participants to leave the pairing with minimal cost, whereas, marriages are characterized as more costly emotionally, financially, and legally. Stets (1993) proposed a four-stage dating model: casual, somewhat serious, serious, and engaged relationships. Conducting such a classification is helpful when it comes to understanding communication patterns and the level of comfort with self-disclosure.

According to Stets (1993), the first stage is considered to be the casual stage. Casual relationships involve persons seeing each other intermittently, sharing superficial information, feeling tentative and uncertain about the future of the relationship, and assessing whether interactions with the other one are satisfying and rewarding (VanLear & Trujillo, 1986). Behavior in casual relationships is guided by norms, for example gender scripts. They are characterized by low levels of conflict and love (Emmers & Dindia, 2005; Braiker & Kelley, 1979).

The second stage of dating is considered to be the somewhat serious stage (Stets, 1993). Somewhat serious relationships involve increased interaction, affection, and dependence on each other. Conversations move into the realm of one's values and attitudes, and uncertainty about the other is reduced, and there is potential for conflict in this stage (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Solomon, Huanani,& Theiss, 2008). Negotiation is critical to the maintenance of the relationship, and perspective taking increases in this stage as individuals get to know each other (Stets, 1993).

The third stage is the serious stage (Stets, 1993). In this stage there are increased feelings of trust, attraction, love, and interdependence (Braiker & Kelley, 1979; Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004). Greater perspective taking occurs because of increased self-disclosure, which results in increased emotional intimacy. Stets (1993) claims that "greater perspective taking occurs during the serious stage because of increased self-disclosure, a better understanding of the other's thoughts and feelings, and increasing interdependence which requires understanding of viewpoint of the other" (p.676).

The last stage of dating relationships is the engaged stage. It includes the mix of intense feelings of love, high interdependence, and serious plans for the future. It is the

last stage of the typical progression of the evolution of dating relationships, which

theoretically leads to another category of romantic relationships – marriage (Stets, 1993).

The high level of perspective taking should act to stabilize conflict. At this stage

individuals know one another well, and as a result of that, they are able to prevent

conflict from happening (Cloven & Roloff, 1994; Stets, 1993).

In addition to examining the relationship stage model, one may also consider the

length of time couples have been dating. Previous research (Bradford, Feeney, &

Campbell, 2002; Filsinger & Thoma, 1988) examines the relationship length and couples

communication patterns. Filsinger and Thoma (1988) found that behavioral

characteristics of couples' interaction may predate later relationship solidity and

adjustment. They also found that later trouble in the relationship is likely to be linked to a

tit-for-tat kind of behavior (Filsinger & Thoma, 1988). Bradford et al. (2002) found that

length of a relationship is not a significant factor in disclosing less information to their

partners during everyday interactions when the source is considered an avoider. On the

other hand, those who are high in relationship anxiety engage in excessive and

indiscriminant self-disclosure in the early relationship stage (Bradford et al., 2002).

According to Knapp (1978), the length of a relationship is not necessarily indicative of

the stage the individuals consider themselves to be in. Each person goes through the

stages at his or her own rate, and the amount of self-disclosing statements may be

dependent on the degree of intimacy one feels toward the other rather than the

relationship's length (Knapp, 1978). For example, Wheeless, Wheeless, and Baus (1984)

categorized relationships as short-term relationships (0-6 months), moderate relationships

(7-24 months), long-term relationships (25-60 months), and concretely established (61-

456 months). Thus, the length and stage of dating relationships are important

considerations in understanding couples communication.

Purpose

This study examined the use of text message communication in facilitating

intimacy in dating relationships. In addition, the relationship between self-disclosure and

stage of the relationship as well as length of the relationship are investigated.

Furthermore, the role of text messages and social presence facilitating positive self-

disclosure resulting in intimacy is examined. The study also examined the role of text

messages in the feeling of relational uncertainty.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Multi-Theoretical Perspective

In order to study the effects (if any) of text messaging and creating intimacy in dating relationships, it is necessary to take a multi-theoretical orientation. Uncertainty Reduction Theory offers guidance in understanding self-disclosure and intimacy in romantic relationships. Social Presence Theory may produce valuable insight for understanding the use of mediated communication and its impact on relationships. This study explored how dating couples use text messages to communicate self-disclosure messages. Furthermore, an explanation of how self-disclosure in dating relationships impacts the level of intimacy was investigated. By bridging theoretical areas a deeper understanding of how mediated communication (text messaging) influences intimacy in dating relationships may be possible. Therefore, the following is a discussion of Social Presence Theory and Uncertainty Reduction Theory.

Social Presence Theory

Social Presence Theory (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976) was developed to explain how media forms function in relationship to interpersonal interaction. Biocca,

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Harms, and Burgoon (2003) define social presence as a "sense of being with another" (p. 456). The theory classifies the manner in which media forms convey information according to verbal and nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, vocal cues, attire, and posture (Short, et al., 1976). These cues help connect people to interactions (Parks & Floyd, 1996). Media users can be inspired to use them in various ways to create the feeling of social presence including getting to know another person, exchanging information, problem solving, or maintaining relationships (Biocca, Harms, &Burgoon, 2003). Mobile systems progressively offer a promise of uninterrupted social connection across space and time through various message systems (Brown, Green, & Harper, 2001).

Rice underlines the aspect of psychological involvement by referring to Short et al.'s (1976) classic claim that social presence is deeply related to two concepts: intimacy and immediacy which describe the cognitive state of feeling a particular closeness to another person (Rice, 1993). Immediacy is perceived as "directness and intensity of interaction between two entities" (Mehrabian, 1967, p.325) or "psychological distance" (Weiner & Mehrabian, 1968). Intimacy is defined as a function of "proximity, eye contact, smiling, and personal topics of conversation" (Argyle & Dean, 1965). These terms describe a feeling of being less or more directly present in the interaction and in the process by which relationships are created (Palmer, 1995). Gunawardena (1995) argues that increasing the intensity of immediacy can enhance social presence, and Walther (1992) adds that those who communicate with one another using only a text-based communication medium try to reach desired levels of immediacy by manipulating verbal immediacy in the text-based environment.

Williams and Rice (1983) claim that the medium used to convey the message creates a sense of social presence, and motivation to take part in interpersonal communication helps decide which particular medium is chosen. Lack of verbal and nonverbal cues diminishes the intimacy of the interaction and decreases social presence (Williams, 1985). Since face-to-face and telephone communication are considered to be synchronous in nature, it would be expected they result in greater social presence than e-mail or text messages (SMS).

Channels with more personal cues are perceived as warmer and more personal, where the lack of social cues results in impersonality of communication. Hence, when message receivers feel that a person not the medium is in fact delivering the message, the channel has social presence (Williams & Rice, 1983).

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) researchers have interest in social presence because it has an impact on the use of e-mail (Steinfield, 1986), online interaction (Tu & McIsaac, 2002), and interpersonal relationships (Walther, 1992). Social presence is important in understanding interpersonal relationships in a CMC environment. Hwang (2005) found that college students who used IM (Instant Messaging) experience the feeling of social presence when using IM for social and interpersonal motives, as well as entertainment/relaxation needs. Her findings suggest that social and interpersonal motives for using IM are related to the sense of social presence (Hwang, 2005).

Tu (2002) studied the relationship between social presence and a variety of CMC types such as e-mail, bulletin board, and real time discussion. The results revealed that e-

mail is perceived to have the highest level of social presence, followed by real-time discussion and bulletin board (Tu, 2002).

According to Media Richness Theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986), media that have the capacity for instant feedback, more cues are available, and are of a personal nature are richer and therefore preferred. There has been an argument that rich media were more appropriate for tasks that involved equivocal or ambiguous messages, while lean media, such as written documents, were fitting only for very straightforward communication (Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987) and for reducing uncertainty (El-Shinnawy & Markus, 1997).

There are conflicting views on the role of social presence in text messaging. Short et al. (1976) claims that social presence is deeply related to intimacy and immediacy. Williams and Rice (1983) make a claim that the medium chosen to communicate the message creates a sense of social presence. According to Williams (1985), lack of verbal and nonverbal cues diminishes intimacy of the interaction and decreases the feeling of social presence.

Building upon the social presence research, the use of text messages in dating relationships may influence the nature of the relationship. Specifically, the choice of message selection in texting may affect how intimate one feels about his or her partner. Therefore, the following research question asks:

RQ 1: Is there a relationship between the amount of text messages sent daily to one's dating partner and the feeling of social presence?

Uncertainty Reduction Theory

Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) provides insight into the role of communication in interpersonal relationships. URT argues that individuals seek to predict and explain communication, and use this information to help predict and explain others (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Berger & Kellerman, 1994). Uncertainty affects the quality of statements such as question asking (Berger & Kellerman, 1983; Douglas, 1991), linguistic diversity (Sherblom & Van Rheenen, 1984), and the intimacy of topics discussed (Gudykunst, 1985). Generally, URT suggests that communication can be either the cause or the effect of uncertainty.

Originally, URT focused on communication with strangers and was limited to the behavior during the initial interaction (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). However, URT is studied in a variety of contexts. For example, researchers have looked at communication in intercultural interactions (Gudykunst, 1995), organizational communication (Kramer, 2004), health communication (Albrecht & Adelman, 1984), and communication in romantic relationships (Knobloch, 2006; Knobloch & Solomon, 1999). The level of uncertainty influences the relationship development process, including the occurrence of conflict (Siegert & Stamp, 1994), the negotiation of jealousy (Afifi & Reichert, 1996), and also the use of information seeking behavior (Afifi & Burgoon, 1998, Knobloch & Solomon, 2002).

Some, even minimal levels of ambiguity are always present in social interaction. Individuals have to find ways to be able to produce messages when they find themselves in uncertain situations. Three strategies have been clearly identified to deal with uncertainty: seeking information, planning, and hedging.

Information-seeking behavior has been divided into three categories according to URT framework: passive strategies, active strategies, and interactive strategies (Berger & Bradac, 1982; Berger & Kellerman, 1994). Passive strategies are those in which observers gain knowledge of other persons by observing the target from a distance without them knowing it. They include reactivity search and disinhibition search. Reactivity search is when people watch how the target reacts to others in social situations. Disinhibition search is observing the target in informal settings. Active strategies are described as obtaining information, which require the observer to do something to affect the response of the target, but do not involve direct contact between the observer and the target. They may involve asking others about the target person and environmental structuring. Lastly, interactive strategies are those in which the observer comes in contact with the target. They may be interrogation and self-disclosure (Berger & Bradac, 1982).

Planning is another strategy used to cope with uncertainty either before or during social interaction (Berger & diBattista, 1993). Individuals must come up with a plan at the appropriate level of complexity, not too simplistic, but also not too complicated. Plans need to be at the suitable depth and breadth in order to be effective and easily adjustable (Berger & Bell, 1988).

Hedging is the third and last strategy used when negative outcomes may occur if producing messages in uncertain situations. Messages can be framed to minimize a threat, redirect a message in case backtracking is needed, or use ambiguous messages to deceive the other party (Berger & Bell, 1988). Three lines of research have utilized the theoretical

framework that URT proposes. It has been used in reference to initial interactions, cross-cultural interactions, and finally in established relationships.

URT assumes that people are motivated to take the necessary steps to reduce uncertainty, and argues that individuals seek to explain their surroundings. Their fundamental goal in an interaction is to gain interpersonal understanding (Berger & Bradac, 1982; Berger & Calabrese, 1975). URT borrows from information technology (Shannon & Weaver, 1949) to define uncertainty as a function of a number and likelihood of alternatives that can occur. Uncertainty constitutes a lack of confidence about how an interpersonal encounter will happen. It involves the inability to describe, explain, and predict behavior within an interaction (Berger & Bradac, 1982; Berger & Calabrese, 1975, Berger & Gudykunst, 1991; Knobloch & Solomon, 2002; Knobloch & Solomon, 2005).

URT distinguishes between behavioral and cognitive uncertainty in dyadic interactions. Behavioral uncertainty refers to not knowing what to say or do during an interaction, and cognitive uncertainty derives from not knowing particular content and doubts about own and others' beliefs. Behavioral uncertainty may be exemplified in doubt about normative conduct within intimate associations, and cognitive uncertainty may be manifested in questions about the value of the relationship (Berger & Bradac, 1982; Knobloch & Solomon, 1999).

This theory outlines three parameters that influence people's desire to reduce uncertainty. The first of them is deviation, which refers to the curiosity taking over when our expectations are violated. The second has to do with an anticipation of future

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interaction. We are going to put particular efforts into reducing uncertainty when we expect to interact with someone again. A third parameter is control over resources. We are forced to minimize the level of uncertainty when an individual has the power to determine the rewards and costs we will receive (Berger, 1979; Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Kellerman & Reynolds, 2006; Sunnafrank, 1986).

There has been a lot of attention given to how uncertainty influences message production (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Brashers, 2001). However, not much is known about how uncertainty influences message processing, including research on how uncertainty influences people's ability to make sense of conversations. Knobloch and Solomon (2008) discovered that relational uncertainty was negatively associated with people's perception of relationship talk after controlling for the perceptions of a third party observer meaning that "people experiencing relational uncertainty do not perceive what they consider to be relationship talk" (p. 372). People who need clarification on the status of their relationship are least likely to recognize relationship talk. Relational uncertainty was also negatively associated with the extremity of people's judgment about relational messages. "Individuals who need most insight into the definition of their relationship find relational messages about intimacy least informative, and those who are already certain about relationship dynamics derive most information from relational messages about intimacy" (Knobloch & Solomon, 2005, p. 374). Additionally, it was positively associates with people's perceptions of the difficulty of interaction. It implies that experiencing relational uncertainty may complicate communication (Knobloch & Solomon, 2005).

A line of URT research is concerned with uncertainty in established relationships. A link has been found between uncertainty and social network (Parks & Adelman, 1983) in which the events that increase uncertainty in friendships and dating relationships have been studied. In both cases results provide enticing evidence of the prominence of uncertainty within relationships that are considered to be established (Parks & Adelman, 1983; Planalp & Honeycutt, 1985). Knobloch and Solomon (2002) conclude when relational uncertainty presents a threat to individuals or relationship, less direct information- seeking takes place, which allows for greater scope for coping with new information Knobloch and Solomon (1999) built on the original theory by adding that there is a need to continually update their knowledge about relational partners and the relationship. They defined three different sources of uncertainty within relationships: the self, the partner, and the relationship. These three sources of relational uncertainty are interrelated but distinct constructs (Knobloch, 2007).

The self uncertainty takes place when people are not able to describe, predict, or explain their own behavior or attitudes (Berger & Bradac, 1982; Berger & Calabrese, 1975). It involves the doubts people have about how involved they want to be in the relationship. Self and partner uncertainty are present at a lower order of abstraction than relationship uncertainty which makes them rather simplistic in nature (Berger & Bradac, 1982). Knobloch and Solomon (2005), suggest that "self and partner uncertainty address three content areas: (a) people's desire for the relationship, (b) their evaluation of its worth, and (c) their goals for its development" (p. 351). In situations of feeling self uncertainty, individuals may ask themselves why they did or said certain things (Berger & Bradac, 1982). Individuals may experience uncertainty in adopting attitudes or

selecting appropriate behaviors that are necessary for accomplishing their goals (Berger, 1979; Berger & Bradac, 1982). Overall, this focus of uncertainty reflects a lack of knowledge about the self (Berger & Bradac, 1982).

The partner uncertainty comes from an inability to predict the other's person behavior and attitudes within the interaction (Berger & Bradac, 1982; Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Specifically, partner uncertainty entails the lack of knowledge about the partner as an individual and his or her participation in the relationship (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

Relationship uncertainty constitutes occurrences when people may experience doubts about the status of the relationship, aside form either self or partner uncertainty (Berger & Bradac, 1982). It is a kind of uncertainty that focuses specifically on the dyad as a unit, and it may be more difficult to reduce (Berger & Bell, 1988).

Relational uncertainty is defined as the degree of confidence that people have in their perceptions of involvement in close relationships (Knobloch & Solomon, 1999; Knobloch, Solomon, & Cruz, 2001; Solomon & Knobloch, 2001) and is thought to increase the challenges of relating. Knobloch and Solomon (2002) proposed that the process of uncertainty reduction gives individuals opportunities to confirm their loyalty to each other.

Knobloch and Solomon (2005) in their study of conversations between romantic partners found that relational uncertainty hinders people's ability to identify and interpret information about their relationship, and it makes conversing more difficult. Theiss and Solomon (2008) examined the amount of uncertainty, openness of communication about uncertainty, and the uncertainty reduction process. These three competing means account

for increased intimacy in romantic relationships. When all three predictors were considered simultaneously, the decrease in uncertainty was the only significant predictor of intimacy (Theiss & Solomon, 2008). Knobloch, Miller, Bond, and Mannone (2007) studied relational uncertainty and message processing in marriage. They concluded that partners who experience relational uncertainty may have strong negative reactions to messages that seem ordinary to outside observers (Knobloch et al., 2007).

Past research provides support for further investigation of explaining how uncertainty is reduced in dating relationships. However, one may consider the medium of the message as an important factor in understanding intimacy in dating relationships. This present study was concerned only with relational uncertainty which treats the degree of confidence that people have in their perceptions of involvement (Knobloch & Solomon, 1999). Therefore, the following research question is posited:

RQ 2: Is there a relationship between relational uncertainty and the amount of text messages sent daily to a dating partner and received daily from one's dating partner?

Intimacy

There has been an effort to conceptualize intimacy across various disciplines. Since Altman and Taylor's (1973) attempts to focus on self-disclosure as a major passageway to intimacy, there has been an increase in literature on intimacy, as well as the attempts to conceptualize it. Altman and Taylor (1973) note that intimacy exerts a substantial influence over message production and message processing.

Burgoon and Hale (1984) built upon Altman and Taylor's original work (1973) in order to conceptualize and later operationalize the concept of intimacy. They draw a

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strong connection between intimacy and breadth and depth of interactions. They elaborate on the process of expanding one's knowledge about another individual through the layers of periphery information resulting in better understanding and feeling closer to each other (Burgoon & Hale, 1984). Through this process, "interactants may wish to signal their desired level of mutual familiarity or to impose on the relationship their own definition of the degree of superficiality or commitment that exists" (Burgoon & Hale, 1984, p.203). According to Burgoon and Hale (1984), relational messages and their exchange is what represents the level of intimacy within an interaction. The act of verbal self-disclosure is a relational expression of commitment to move the relationship to a more intimate level (Burgoon & Hale, 1984). Intimacy encompasses affective responses, development of attachments as well as a certain degree of self-confirmation that is available in the relationship (Burgoon & Hale, 1984). Burgoon and Hale in their later study (1987) sought to validate their instrument intended to measure relational communication that in fact is a measure of intimacy since their sole argument lies in the assumption that one is an integral part of the other. They were able to distinguish particular dimensions of relational communication, however they pointed out the importance of the nature of relationship when the scale is used meaning that a highly intimate interaction that is established in close relationships as friendships or dating relationships may cause all the factors to collapse into one overall measure of intimacy (Burgoon & Hale, 1987).

Intimacy is based upon the exchange of private, subjective experiences, and therefore involves the innermost aspects of oneself. It is viewed as transactional in that importance is given to the process of sharing. It is valued as a positive relational process

that includes mutuality and self-differentiation. Prior experiences influence current perceptions of intimacy (Waring, Tillman, Frelick, Russell, & Weisz, 1980).

It has been also described as people's perceptions of connectedness, closeness, and bondedness and the emotional tone within a relationship (Parks & Floyd, 1996; Sternberg, 1986). Intimacy is a process of escalating reciprocity of self-disclosure in which each individual feels his or hers innermost self validated, understood, and cared for by the other (Reis & Shaver, 1988; Clark & Reis, 1988). There are also risks associated with self-disclosure. Premature self-disclosure may put a developing relationship at jeopardy. According to Altman and Taylor (1973), optimal self-disclosure should be appropriate for each stage of a developing relationship. Very early in a relationship, it should be kept to a minimum and progress as the relationship matures. Self-disclosure is a necessary element in initial interactions. It serves as a tool to reduce uncertainty and to foster intimacy (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Baxter and Montgomery (1996) identified four risks associated with self-disclosure: rejection, reduction of personal autonomy and integrity, loss of control or self-efficacy and hurting, or embarrassing the listener.

Additionally, scholars have conceptualized intimacy as a personal, subjective, and sometimes momentary sense of connectedness that is the outcome of an interpersonal and transactional process consisting of self-disclosure and partner responsiveness (Laurenceau, Rivera, Schaffer, and Pietromonaco, 2004).

Whereas, Argyle and Dean (1965) posited that intimacy is exhibited by partners engaging in certain types of behaviors in interactions. The behaviors reflecting intimacy may be increasing or decreasing interpersonal distance, making eye contact, or smiling (Argyle & Dean, 1965).

Communication scholars have focused their research on intimacy by exploring self-disclosing messages and relationship quality. Schaefer and Olson (1981) concluded an intimate relationship to be one in which a couple shares experiences across a variety of areas and in which the experiences and relationship will continue over time. The shared areas may include social, emotional, intellectual, sexual, and recreational. Researchers have determined three factors that establish intimacy: self-disclosure described as the most prevalent; responsiveness defined as the process in which understanding, validation, and caring are communicated; and perceived partner responsiveness that is necessary in developing and sustaining intimate relationships (Miller & Berg, 1984; Reis & Shaver, 1988).

Self-disclosure

Self-disclosure is a critical component of intimacy. Communicating self-disclosive messages often results in a feeling of closeness between partners (Pearlman & Fehr, 1987). Self-disclosure is defined as the verbal and nonverbal communication of personal information, thoughts, and feelings that can influence the development of intimacy in a relationship (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Waring & Chelune, 1983). According to Altman and Taylor's Social Penetration Theory (1973), "people assess the possible rewards, costs, satisfaction and dissatisfaction of a relationship before entering it" (pp. 6-7). In their discussion of Social Penetration Theory, Altman and Taylor (1973) describe self-disclosure as fundamental in the development of intimacy. They conclude individuals can influence the growth of a relationship by adjusting the breadth and depth of their self-disclosure.

Self-disclosure is associated with a number of benefits that are essential to the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. It has been associated with a need for fulfillment and maintaining harmony in close relationships (Prager, 1995). Other benefits include increased attraction, liking, and loving (Egan, 1970). Researchers find a positive relationship between self-disclosure and liking. As liking increases, self-disclosure is apt to increase (Altman & Taylor, 1973). In addition, Byers and Demmons (1999) found that self-disclosure is positively related to relationship satisfaction in dating relationships. It is an interactive behavior upon which subjective appraisals and relational expectations for intimacy are based (Waring & Chelune, 1983).

Researchers have argued for studying five dimensions of self-disclosure: the amount of self-disclosure; the intentionality (or openness) of the person to self-disclose the information; the honesty or accuracy of the message being self-disclosed; the intimacy of the message being self-disclosed; and the possessiveness of the message being self-disclosed (Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006; Wheeless, 1978; Wheeless & Grotz, 1976). Results supported the importance of studying self-disclosure beyond the amount of self-disclosure in a relationship (Rubin, Rubin, & Martin, 1993; Wheeless & Grotz, 1976). Wheeless (1978) established that the amount, depth, and honesty factors were positively related to the perceived trustworthiness of the partner. Changing degrees of self-disclosure are associated with varying degrees of trustworthiness perceptions. The way disclosure messages are enacted plays an important role in self-disclosure in personal relationships. Disclosure messages contain features such as disclosure mode, context, and content.

The mode of disclosure (channel) can be face-to-face, non-face-to-face, or third party. Face-to-face communication may be most common, but unpredictable and also difficult to manage. Non-face-to-face disclosure (i.e. texting) tends to restrict how much the other person learns about the one who is disclosing, but in some cases it may promote a more open information exchange. However, fewer nonverbal cues are available for interpretation. A third party disclosure deals with having another person relaying one's personal information. The downfall of this particular way of disclosing may be the misinterpretation of facts or even a privacy violation (McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002).

Along with the channel, disclosure messages are set within specific contexts such as place and time. The environment where people interact may play a role in how much people are willing to disclose. A person may choose to disclose at home to increase intimacy or in public to limit the receiver's reaction to the content of the message (Werner, Altman, & Brown, 1992).

Message features are another important part of self-disclosure in personal relationships. The same topic can be discussed in direct or indirect way. They may vary in length, but the length is not necessarily associated with the depth of disclosure. Sometimes, people want to give out the impression of intimate disclosure by increasing the amount of time talking, but not increasing the intimate content of the conversation (Derlega, Sherburne, & Lewis, 1998).

Additionally, there is a relationship between intimacy and uncertainty reduction. Berger and Calabrese (1975) found that less uncertainty corresponds with greater intimacy, and that high levels of intimacy diminish uncertainty and attraction.

Uncertainty promotes information seeking and open communication fosters closeness, as well as it cultivates intimacy (Baxter & Wilmot, 1984; Knobloch & Solomon, 2002). Also, intimacy is negatively associated with people's endorsement of avoidance strategies to manage hypothetical events (Knobloch & Solomon, 2002).

Therefore, previous research suggests self-disclosure is an important component in understanding intimacy. Thus one may consider the influence of text messaging technology as a means for self-disclosing and creating intimacy in dating couples. Therefore, the following research questions are investigated:

RQ 3: Is there a relationship between relationship stage and self-disclosure through text messages?

RQ 4: Is there a relationship between relationship length and self-disclosure through text messages?

RQ 5: Does the amount of text messages sent daily to a dating partner and received daily from one's dating partner facilitate intimacy?

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Participants

The present study utilized a convenience sample that consisted of college students enrolled in various undergraduate communication courses at a mid-western university. The total sample consisted of 171 participants. The primary reason for using this sampling technique was to acquire participants who are currently in a dating relationship and use text message technology.

The participants ages ranged from 18 to 58 ($M = 22.47$, $SD = 5.27$). Within the sample 55.6% were female (n = 95) and 44.4% were male (n = 76).

The amount of completed education was reported as .6% completed high some high school (n = 1), 7% completed high school (n = 12), 61.4% attended some college (n = 105), 14.6% completed two years of college (n = 25), 15.2% completed four years of college (n = 26), .6% held a master's degree (n = 1), and .6% did not report their educational level obtained (n = 1).

Relationship lengths ranged from one month to 100 months ($M = 16.62$, $SD = 17.24$). Among the participants in the sample, 19.3% reported to be in the casual stage of a dating relationship (n = 33), 33.3% reported to be in the somewhat serious

stage (n = 57), 21.6% reported to be in the serious stage (n = 37), and 25.7% reported to be in the committed stage of the dating relationship (n = 44).

The participants were asked how long they have been using text messages. Among the sample, the responses ranged from one month to 115 months ($M = 52.29$, $SD = 24.47$). When asked about the average number of text messages sent a day, 97.1% reported a range from 2 to 538 ($M = 55.36$, $SD = 73.91$), and 2.9% did not disclose this information. When asked about the percentage of time spent text messaging with friends, dating partner, family and others in a typical day, the participants reported to text message with friends anywhere from 1 to 98 percent of the time ($M = 31.8$, $SD = 22.75$), text message with a dating partner from 0 to 98 percent of the time ($M = 46.61$, $SD = 26.84$), text message with family from 0 to 80 percent of the time ($M = 11.05$, $SD = 12.89$), and text message with others from 0 to 40 percent of the time ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 7.28$). The participants were also asked what percentage of their day they spend interacting with their partner face-to-face, texting, phoning, e-mail, and social networking. Among the sample, the responses ranged from 0 to 98 percent regarding face-to-face interaction ($M = 39.60$, $SD = 28.02$), texting ranged from 0 to 98 percent ($M = 26.60$, $SD = 21.96$), phoning ranged from 0 to 90 percent ($M = 18.63$, $SD = 18.79$), e-mail ranged from 0 to 50 percent ($M = 2.26$, $SD = 6.25$), and social networking ranged from 0 to 99 percent ($M = 6.30$, $SD = 13.41$). (See Table I). Among the participants, 99.4% reported the number of text messages sent daily to a dating partner ranged from 1 to 110 ($M = 26.81$, $SD = 27.84$), with .6% who did not report this information. When asked about the number of text messages received from a dating partner, 99.4% reported a range from 0 to 234 ($M = 28.36$, $SD = 34.78$), with .6% who did not report this

information. In terms of the text message plan they carried, their responses were as follows: .6% carried a pay-per-message plan (n = 1), 18.2% paid a monthly fee for a certain number of messages (n = 31), 80.7% had an unlimited text message plan (n = 138), and .6% did not report this information (n = 1). (See Table II).

Table I

Descriptive Statistics for Research Participants Communication with Dating Partner

Daily Percentage	N	M	Mdn	SD
Face-to-Face	171	39.60	35.00	28.02
Texting	171	26.60	20.00	21.96
Phoning	171	18.63	10.00	18.79
E-mail	171	2.26	.00	6.25
Social Networking	171	6.30	.00	13.41

Table II

Descriptive Statistics for Research Participants

Participant	N	M	Mdn	SD
Age	171	22.47	21.00	5.27
Relationship Length (months)	171	16.62	10.00	17.24
Length of Time Texting (months)	171	52.29	55.00	24.47
Text Messages Sent (daily)	166	55.36	30.00	22.75
Text Messages Sent to Dating Partner (daily)	170	26.81	20.00	27.84
Text Messages Received from Dating Partner (daily)	170	28.36	20.00	34.78

Procedures

Upon receiving written IRB approval and oral consent from professors, the researcher entered various undergraduate communication courses and asked students if they wanted to volunteer to participate in the study. Some professors made research participation a part of their curriculum, but some offered extra credit. The students were told that in order to participate, they had to be currently 18 years or older, they had to be currently involved in a dating relationship, and they had to be using text messages.

The students who met the above criteria and agreed to participate in the study were then given informed consent forms and surveys. The informed consent forms were reviewed and signed by the participants, who were told they could discontinue completing the surveys at anytime. Participants were informed that their identity would remain confidential, and to ensure confidentiality, informed consent forms were detached from the surveys and are kept in the researchers locked file. The participants were told that completing the survey would take about 20-30 minutes. Four versions of the survey were distributed in an attempt to avoid the response set effect.

Instruments

Revised Self-Disclosure Scale (RSDS)

In order to measure self-disclosure, Wheeless and Grotz (1976) developed the Revised Self-Disclosure Scale (RSDS) to improve on earlier measures of self-disclosure that originated in the field of psychology. The measure consists of 31 items across 5 "dimensions," which reflects the multidimensionality of self-disclosure (Wheeless & Grotz, 1976). These dimensions include Honesty-Accuracy, Positive-Negative, Amount, Intended Disclosure, and Control of Depth. Self-disclosure was conceptualized as "any

message about the self that a person communicates to another" (Wheeless & Grotz, 1978, p. 322). The responses within the survey range from 1 "strongly disagree" to 7 "strongly agree." Previous reliabilities have been reported on the RSDS to range from $\alpha = .81$ to $\alpha = .91$ (Wheeless & Grotz, 1978, p. 323). For the present study, internal consistency was reported at $\alpha = .82$ for the entire scale. Reliabilities for the subscales were as follows: intended disclosure $\alpha = .71$, amount $\alpha = .72$, positive – negative $\alpha = .71$, control of depth $\alpha = .69$, and honesty - accuracy $\alpha = .83$. (See Table III).

Table III

Descriptive Statistics for Revised Self-Disclosure Scale (RSDS)

Subscales	Number of items in scale	*M*	*SD*	*(α)*
Intended Disclosure	4	19.99	4.00	.71
Amount	7	27.41	6.53	.72
Positive-Negative	7	34.23	5.87	.71
Control of Depth	5	18.74	5.38	.69
Honesty-Accuracy	8	40.26	7.78	.83
Total RSDS	31	140.75	17.98	.82

Relational Communication Scale

Burgoon and Hale's Relational Communication Scale (1984) has been frequently used to measure intimacy. Based on the analysis of literature, 12 relational communication dimensions were derived, then condensed into eight factors: Immediacy/Affection ("Person A was highly involved in the conversation");

Similarity/Depth ("A didn't care what B thinks"); Receptivity/ Trust ("A wanted B to trust her/him"); Composure (" A was calm and poised with B"); Formality ("A made the interaction very formal"); Dominance ("A was dominating the conversation"); Equality ("A didn't treat B as an equal"); and Task Orientation ("A wanted to stick to the main purpose of the interaction"). Relational communication has been conceptualized by Burgoon and Hale (1984) as verbal and nonverbal themes that are present in people's communication that define an interpersonal relationship. Primarily designed as a self-report measure, the RCS can be also used as other-report (Burgoon, Olney, & Cooker, 1987). The entire scale consists of 41 items that respondents rate using a Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). Reliability of the scale has been reported as a range of α from .42 to .88 (Buller, LePoire, Aune, & Eloy, 1992; Burgoon & Hale, 1987; Kelley & Burgoon, 1991). For the present study, reliability of the entire scale was reported at α = .88. The reliabilities of the subscales were reported at α = .85 for Immediacy/Affection, α = .64 for Similarity/ Depth, α = .88 for Receptivity/ Trust, α = .75 for Composure, α = .36 for Formality, α = .42 for Dominance, α = .71 for Equality, and α = .54 for Task Orientation. (See Table IV).

Table IV

Descriptive Statistics for Relational Communication Scale (RCS)

	Number of items in scale	*M*	*SD*	*(α)*
Subscales				
Immediacy/Affection	9	48.89	8.95	.85
Similarity/Depth	5	25.78	4.80	.64
Receptivity/Trust	6	33.16	6.58	.88
Composure	5	27.41	5.15	.75

		M	SD	(α)
Formality	3	10.07	3.15	.36
Dominance	6	23.53	5.04	.42
Equality	3	16.26	3.64	.71
Task Orientation	4	15.72	4.09	.54
Total RCS scale	41	200.89	26.09	.88

Social Presence Scale

Social presence scale was adapted from Hwang (2005). Hwang (2005)
constructed her scale to measure social presence and instant messaging based on previous
studies by Lombard and Ditton (1997) and Towell and Towell (1997), and modified them
for the final list of social presence. Respondents were asked to report their agreement
with eight statements on a 7-point Likert scale. The responses ranged form 1 "strongly
disagree" to 7 "strongly agree". One item was deleted (IM messages are impersonal) to
improve the reliability of the 7-item index resulting in α = .89. For this study all eight
items were kept. The index was reliable at α =.83. (See Table V).

Table V

Descriptive Statistics for Social Presence Scale (SP)

	Number of items in scale	*M*	*SD*	*(α)*
Texts are impersonal	1	3.92	1.51	
Same room feeling	1	3.33	1.72	
Feelings and emotion	1	4.13	1.64	
Make me smile	1	5.66	1.19	

Being together	1	4.08	1.76	
Emotional connection	1	4.49	1.58	
Make sounds	1	4.18	1.96	
Feel present	1	3.61	1.81	
Total SP Scale	8	33.40	8.95	.83

Relational Uncertainty Scale

Knobloch et al. (2007), used abbreviated versions of Knobloch and Solomon's (1999) scales to assess self, partner, and relationship sources of relational uncertainty. Participants respond to twelve items completing the stem "How certain are you about…?" on a 6-point Likert-type scale (1=completely or almost uncertain, 6=completely or almost completely certain). The responses are reverse scored to compute measures of relational uncertainty. Self uncertainty contained four items (α = .84), partner uncertainty also contained four items (α = .90), and relationship uncertainty encompassed the remaining four items (α = .85). For this study the reliabilities were as follows: self uncertainty α = .89, partner uncertainty α = .91, and relationship uncertainty α = .88. Overall relational uncertainty scale reliability that contained all twelve items equaled .94. (See Table VI).

Table VI

Descriptive Statistics for Relational Uncertainty Scale (RU)

Subscales	Number of items in scale	*M*	*SD*	*(α)*
Self Uncertainty	4	9.75	4.60	.89
Partner Uncertainty	4	9.13	4.53	.91

Relationship Uncertainty	4	9.92	4.78	.88
Total RU Scale	12	28.61	12.41	.94

Relationship Length and Stage

The notion that couples' communication patterns change over time is a primary feature of the stage models of relational development (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Knapp, 1984). Relationships can be characterized as systems that develop over time and their inner communication patterns change and are negotiated over time (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967).

Following broad research conducted on length of relationships (Bradford, Feeney, & Campbell, 2002; Filsinger & Thoma, 1988; Hendrick, Dicke, & Hendrick, 1998; Karney and Beadbury, 1995) groups were measured in months and produced consequently: zero to six months, between seven months and two years, between two years and five years, and between five years and 38 years. Parallel to Wheeless et al. (1984), relationship lengths were categorized as short-term relationships (0-6 months), moderate relationships (7-24 months), long-term relationships (25-60 months), and concretely established relationships (61-456 months).

In addition to relationship length, stages of dating relationships was assessed. The four – stage model presented by Stets (1993) was used to create four categories. Participants were asked to check the category (stage) that best described their current dating relationship.

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Other Questions

       Participants were asked a number of questions on their use of text messages, phone plan, and the frequency of text message use. The questionnaire also asked the demographic information: age, ethnicity, level of education, income, sex.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The first research question asked:

RQ 1: Is there a relationship between the amount of text messages sent daily

to one's dating partner and social presence?

A simple regression was conducted to determine the relationship between the

amount of text messages sent daily to one's dating partner and social presence.

The results showed that 4.2% of the total variance of the dependent variable can

explained by the amount of text messages sent daily to a dating partner. The results were

significant at $p = .007$ level. The amount of text messages sent to a dating partner

significantly and uniquely relates to social presence ($\beta = .206^*$) and was also

significantly correlated with the dependent variable ($r = .206^*$), both at the .05 level. (See

Table VII).

Table VII

Relationship between the Amount of Text Messages Sent Daily to a Dating Partner and

Social Presence ___

Variable	r	Final β	R²	Adjusted R²	F
Text Messages Sent Daily to a Dating Partner	.206*	.206*	.042*	.037*	7.414*

* $p < .05$

The second research question asked:

RQ 2: Is there a relationship between relational uncertainty and the amount of

text messages sent daily to a dating partner and received daily from one's dating

partner?

A multiple regression was conducted to determine the relationship between

relational uncertainty and the amount of text messages sent daily to a dating partner and

received daily from one's dating partner.

The results showed that 4.1% of the total variance of the dependent variable can

explained by the amount of text messages sent daily to a dating partner and received daily

from one's dating partner. The results were significant at $p = .032$ level. The amount of

text messages sent to a dating partner significantly and uniquely relates to intimacy (β = -

.356*) and was also significantly correlated with the dependent variable (r = -.155*), both

at the .05 level. The amount of received text messages from one's dating partner was not

significantly related to relational uncertainty. (See Table VIII).

Table VIII

Relationship between the Amount of Text Messages Sent to a Dating Partner and

Received from one's Dating Partner and Relational Uncertainty

Variable	r	Final β	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F
Text Messages Sent Daily to a Dating Partner	-.155*	-.356*	.041*	.030*	3.505*
Text Messages Received Daily from a Dating Partner	-.057	.241			

* $p < .05$

The third research question asked:

> RQ 3: Is there a relationship between relationship stage and self-disclosure
>
> through text messages?

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there is a relationship between relationship stages and self-disclosure through text messages. After extensive research conducted on relationship stages (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Braiker & Kelley, 1979; Solomon et al., 2008; Stets, 1993; VanLear & Trujillo, 1986), groups were categorized using a four-stage dating model proposed by Stets (1993). The first stage is casual described by seeing each other sporadically, sharing superficial information, and uncertainty associated with the future of the relationship. The second stage is somewhat serious that is characterized by increased interaction, affection, and dependence on each other. The third stage is serious distinguished by feelings of trust, attraction, love, and interdependence. The last stage is engaged that includes intense feelings of love and

serious plans for the future (Stets, 1993). For the purpose of this study the engaged stage was named committed not to confuse the participants by a common as well as narrow understanding of the word engaged. Prior to the analysis relationship stages were coded as follows: casual as 1, somewhat serious as 2, serious as 3, committed as 4. (See Table IX).

The results of the ANOVA indicated there is a relationship between relationship stages and self-disclosure through text messages, $F (3, 149) = 3.098$, p = .029, partial η^2 = .059. Mean differences were inspected and it was determined that the more advanced the relationship is the more self-disclosure through text messages happens. The Scheffe's post hoc tests discovered significant differences in self-disclosure via text messages between the casual and committed stage (p = .05). (See Table X).

Table IX

Means, Standard Deviations, and n's for Relationship Stage as a Function of Self-Disclosure (RSDS)

Relationship Stage	n	M	SD
Casual	30	134.97	15.25
Somewhat Serious	53	138.53	20.66
Serious	31	142.16	13.25
Committed	39	147.08	17.85
Total	153	140.75	17.98

Note. Higher means indicate greater self-disclosure.

Table X

Between-Subjects Analysis of Variance for Relationship Stage as a Function of Self-

Disclosure (RSDS)

Variable and Source	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*η²*
Relationship Length				
Self-Disclosure	3	962.64	3.09*	.059
Error	149	310.71		

*p <.05

The fourth research question asked:

    RQ 4: Is there a relationship between relationship length and self-disclosure

        through text messages?

    A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there is a relationship between relationship length and self-disclosure through text messages. Following broad research conducted on length of relationships (Bradford, Feeney, & Campbell, 2002; Filsinger & Thoma, 1988; Hendrick, Dicke, & Hendrick, 1998; Karney and Beadbury, 1995) groups were measured in months and produced consequently: zero to six months, between seven months and two years, between two years and five years, and between five years and 38 years. Parallel to Wheeless et al. (1984), relationship lengths were categorized as short-term relationships (0-6 months), moderate relationships (7-24 months), long-term relationships (25-60 months), and concretely established relationships (61-456 months). (See Table XI).

The results of the ANOVA indicated there is no relationship between relationship length and self-disclosure through text messages, $F(3, 149) = 1.886$, $p = .134$, $\eta^2 = .037$. (See Table XII).

Table XI

Means, Standard Deviations, and n's for Relationship Length as a Function of Self-Disclosure (SRDS)

Relationship Length	N	M	SD
Short-Term	65	142.48	18.84
Moderate	55	137.27	18.03
Long-Term	30	144.63	14.85
Concretely Established	3	128.00	19.32
Total	153	140.75	17.98

Note. Higher means indicate greater self-disclosure.

Table XII

Between-Subjects Analysis of Variance for Relationship Length as a Function of Self-Disclosure (RSDS)

Variable and Source	df	MS	F	η^2
Relationship Length				
Self-Disclosure	3	599.65	1.88	.037
Error	149	318.02		

The fifth research question asked:

RQ 5: Does the amount of text messages sent daily to a dating partner and received daily from a dating partner facilitate intimacy?

A multiple regression was conducted to determine the relationship between the amount of text messages sent daily to a dating partner and received daily from one's dating partner and intimacy.

The results showed that 7.8% of the total variance of the dependent variable can explained by the amount of text messages sent daily to a dating partner and received daily from one's dating partner. The results were significant at p = .001 level. The amount of text messages sent to a dating partner significantly and uniquely relates to intimacy (β = .501*) and was also significantly correlated with the dependent variable (r = .227*), both at the .05 level. The amount of received text messages from one's dating partner was also related significantly and uniquely to intimacy (β = -.318*) at the .05 level. (See Table XIII).

Table XIII

Relationship between the Amount of Text Messages Sent to a Dating Partner and

Received from one's Dating Partner and Intimacy

Variable	r	Final β	R²	Adjusted R²	F
Text Messages Sent Daily to a Dating Partner	.227*	.501*	.078*	.067*	6.789*
Text Messages Received Daily from a Dating Partner	.111	-.318*			

* p < .05

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CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study examined the role of text messages in dating relationship. Specifically, how text message communication relates to intimacy. Five research questions were posed. Overall, it was found that text message communication facilitates intimacy, has an impact on the feeling of uncertainty in a dating relationship, and creates a feeling of social presence. It was also determined that there is a relationship between relationship stage and self-disclosure, but not one between relationship length and self-disclosure. The following is a discussion of these findings.

Research Question One

Research question one investigated the relationship between the amount of text messages sent to one's dating partner and social presence. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between the amount of text messages sent to one's dating partner and the feeling of social presence. The findings suggest that sending text messages to a dating partner creates a feeling of social presence. However, caution must be taken in these findings because of the unusual and higher than the means standard deviations because of the data distribution. The meaning of the findings is difficult to interpret, but there are some possible explanations one might consider.

For example, previous researchers Short et. al. (1976) as well as Rice (1993) claimed that the feeling of social presence is deeply related to intimacy and immediacy. Sending text messages to a dating partner may create an intense feeling of involvement in the interaction to the extent of the sender feeling closeness to the receiver as if they were in near proximity. Walther (1992) spoke of that occurrence as using a text-based environment as a way to manipulate verbal immediacy in a way of either adding a symbol that is capable of transferring emotion or writing out mood by using phrases like LOL (laugh out loud).

Furthermore, this study could be seen as somewhat of a contradiction of Williams and Rice (1983) and Williams' (1985) research which claimed that a medium asynchronous in nature would result in little or no social presence. This study indicates that a medium like a mobile phone text message lacking nonverbal cues can in fact create the feeling of social presence. Those findings support previous research such as Hwang (2005) and Tu (2002,) which found that IM, e-mail, and chat which are similar to SMS communication are capable of creating the feeling of social presence. Similarly to Hwang's study (2005) suggesting that using IM for interpersonal motives creates a feeling of social presence, this study implies that the feeling of social presence can be also achieved by sending text messages to a dating partner. Therefore, these findings although limited in their interpretation, do suggest support for the role of text messages in the feeling of social presence. Further investigation is needed.

Research Question Two

The second research question examined the relationship between relational uncertainty and the amount of text messages sent daily to a dating partner and the amount

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of text messages received daily from a dating partner. The results indicated there is a relationship between relational uncertainty and text messages sent to a dating partner and received from one's dating partner. According to Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975), individuals seek information to decrease uncertainty as well as to help predict others. Axiom 1 of URT (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Berger & Gudykunst, 1991) states that uncertainty is negatively associated with verbal communication. Because the standard deviations were higher than the means, the interpretation of the results is rather complex. Caution should be given in interpreting this study. However, with this caution in mind several possible explanations exist. One possible explanation may be found in Berger and Calabrese's (1975) research as it found a negative relationship between sending text messages to one's dating partner and relational uncertainty. That is, the more certain one feels about the relationship, the less text messages he or she sent because there is no need to seek further information on the status of the relationship (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). As Derlega, Metts, Petronio, and Margulis (1993) stated, when partners get to know each other, their need to disclose information decreases. Partners establish a balance between what can be disclosed and what should be kept private (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996), or they can declare certain topics that shall not be discussed (Baxter & Wilmot, 1985; Roloff & Ifert, 1998).

It is also possible that interpreting this study may be found in Impression Management Theory (Goffman, 1959). Researchers have identified a "thin slice" methodology that posits an idea of requiring some degree of information about another individual in order to form assumptions about his or her behaviors (Ambady, Hallahan, & Conner, 1999; Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993). People need only brief samples of behavior

to form quite strong judgments of others (Ambady et al., 1999; Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993). If a person perceives themselves to be in a state of uncertainty, she or he will choose to take mental shortcuts in impression formation as well as management, which sole purpose is to reduce uncertainty (Burgoon, Berger, & Waldron, 2000). For example, if an individual received a mobile phone number from a dating partner, he or she may assume that sending text messages is a desired form of communication even though the phone number was given out with the intent of increasing verbal communication.

Another potential explanation can be found in the works of Berger and Bradac (1982) and Berger and Kellerman (1994) who studied various information seeking behaviors. Engaging in text messaging to seek information about the relationship can be considered an interactive strategy where one of the dating partners will come in contact with the other in order to decrease uncertainty and also to self-disclose (Berger & Bradac, 1982). Axioms that were initially created in regards to face-to-face communication also can be applied to other communication channels. This is similar to Knobloch and Solomon's (2005) findings that relational uncertainty hinders people's ability to identify and interpret information about the relationship. The more certain an individual is of his or her relationship, the less need he or she has to send text messages to a dating partner.

Perhaps the complexity in interpretation of these findings is a methodological issue. The methods used to collect data for assessing sending and receiving text messages may be problematic and not suitable for interpreting relational uncertainty. The respondents were asked to indicate the number of text messages they sent and received daily. It seems that instead of asking the persons to estimate, it would have been more

appropriate to ask about the number of messages sent and received on the day preceding data collection. Possibly the responses would be more interpretable.

Research Question Three

Research question three investigated a relationship between relationship stage and self-disclosure through text messages in dating relationships. A relationship was found between relationship stages and the amount of self-disclosure text messaging. Although, a significant difference was found only in two (casual and committed) of the four stages in the amount of self-disclosure via text messages, the overall means indicated there is a potential linear relationship between self-disclosure texting and relationship stage. Knapp and Vangelisti (2005) describe the process of relational development as linear and characterized by increased self-disclosure. However, on the other hand, Baxter and Montgomery (1996) claim that relationships change in fluid patterns where intimacy, self-disclosure, and certainty can be assessed as more or less at any given stage of the relationship. There is no formula for that. As Altman and Taylor (1973) explain in their theory of relationship development that as one's relationship develops, the level of intimacy and self-disclosure increases as well. They state that "each facet of personality already made accessible receives an increasing amount of time devoted to mutual exchange" (Altman & Taylor, 1973, p.30). Also, self-disclosure is positively related to relationship satisfaction. The more self-disclosure happens within the dyad, the more satisfied the persons are with their relationship (Byers & Demons, 1999). Support for these findings is also evident in Knapp's work (1978) explaining relationship development through specific stages that are in part identified through partner self-disclosure.

Other researchers also characterized self-disclosing messages as a means for establishing intense feelings of love and relationship development (Braiker & Kelley, 1979; Levine, Aune, & Park, 2006; Stets, 1993; VanLear & Trujilo, 1986). Although, the previous research has examined face-to-face communication, and this study focused on text messages technology, the present study indicates that there is no difference in how self-disclosure messages are interpreted. These results may indicate that text messaging technology can aid relationship development or at least provide additional avenues for developing meaningful relationships.

Research Question Four

No significant relationship was found between the length of a dating relationship and self-disclosure through text messages. There are several possible explanations for this. The results support the premise that length of the relationship does not necessarily indicate a more advanced stage in the relationship. This study found there is a wide range in length of time within relationship stage. For example, within those who described the relationship to be short-term (0-6 months), 27 indicated to be in a casual stage, 37 somewhat serious, 5 serious, and 3 committed. Out of those who are in a moderate length relationship (7-24 months), 6 described the stage as casual, 15 as somewhat serious, 19 as serious, and 18 as committed. Among those participants who consider themselves to be in a long-term relationship (25-60 months), 5 describe the stage as somewhat serious, 13 as serious, and 20 as committed. Lastly, three who report to be in a concretely established relationship (61-456 months) report the stage as committed. The wide range in the length of the relationship suggests it is not necessarily how long dating partners have been together, but rather how much dyadic self-disclosure occurs. Knapp (1978) explains that

both parties involved in a relationship will not go through the stages of development at the same pace and in the same time. It is very common for partners to move through the stages at their own rate (Knapp, 1978; Knapp & Vangelisti, 2005). Thus, perhaps these mixed results are a reflection of this pace difference.

Possibly future researchers should refer to the Altman and Taylor's original work (1973) that suggests that depth and breadth of self-disclosure are critical to understanding relationships. It is noteworthy that maybe the relationship length categories may not be accurate for assessment of dating relationships. It appears that the categories may be simplified, hence they may lack accuracy. Further research is needed to gain a deeper appreciation for self-disclosure in dating couples.

Research Question Five

This research question examined the amount of text messages sent daily to a dating partner and received daily from a dating partner and its role in facilitating intimacy. The analysis indicated that the amount of text messages sent and received facilitate intimacy. Text messages are a way to keep in touch, and share or seek information, which result in the perception of connectedness and closeness (Parks & Floyd, 1996). Interestingly enough, in Parks and Floyd's study (1996) intimacy was rarely seen as physical closeness. The most common understanding of intimacy was self-disclosure, help and support, and shared interests (Parks & Floyd, 1996). This study indicates that the medium chosen to create the feeling of emotional closeness is secondary. Face to face communication and computer mediated communication both have been shown to establish a feeling of closeness and intimacy (Solomon et al., 2008; Berscheid, Snyder, & Omoto, 1989). It appears that also the content related through the

medium may be of value and should be taken into consideration. The results of this study indicated that the more text messages one sends, the higher intimacy one experiences which is similar to relationship development and relationship talk found in the research advanced by Knapp (1984). However, the number of text messages received was negatively associated with intimacy. A possible explanation of that may lie in what Knobloch and Solomon (2002) proposed which is that relational uncertainty may promote feelings of romance and excitement in the relationship, as well as, it may prevent perceptions of boredom that could result in the termination of the relationship. At times, partners in a relationship may perceive that their relationship is viewed similarly by both partners when it is not. As a result, one partner may believe that the level of intimacy is high regardless of how many text messages they received. However, this is only speculation. Less text messages received may indicate that more advanced relationships require a lesser reciprocity rate while still experiencing a high level of intimacy with one's partner. And once again, one should keep in mind that standard deviations were higher than the means, which complicates a fully meaningful data interpretation.

Implications

This study emphasizes the need of redefining dating relationships and how they develop in the light of ever-changing technology. The results indicate that communicating self-disclosure through text messages creates the opportunity for closeness in dating relationships that was once limited to the dynamic of physical closeness. This study suggests text messages can serve as a function of reducing the feeling of relational uncertainty in a similar way as the types of information that is shared during face-to-face interaction. Additionally, text messages may be seen as an interactive

strategy of information-seeking behavior and a tool in reducing relational uncertainty. Furthermore, the stage of the relationship has a similar to face-to-face impact on the amount of self-disclosing text messages. The more advanced the stage, the more information-sharing happens. It is perhaps because text messages are just a common way of communicating within an intimate dyad. Text message communication has the capacity to foster intimacy between dating partners. It is possible that individuals are willing to share more information through text messages because safe-disclosure with the use of a medium provides them with a shield for loosing face as well as it makes them less vulnerable. Perhaps, a larger implication of this study is a need for further integration of the interpersonal and mass media communication theory.

Limitations

This present study has two major limitations. Self report data was collected in this study which limited the interpretation of the results. Specifically, those questions regarding the amounts of text messages sent and received, as well as others that required a broad estimate from the participants are better studied using couples data.

Additionally, the researcher assumed that all of the dating partners are in the positive and growing phases of the relationship and did not account for the possibility of partners who are together, but are exhibiting some relationship disengaging behaviors. This assumption is what might have caused a large range of scores between relationship length and relationship stage.

The researcher also collected data only from individuals who are engaged in a dating relationship. Not having dyadic data limited the interpretation of the results. As a

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consequence of this, the data obtained from the participants is not a complete

representation of the nature and structure of the relationship.

Directions for Future Study

Understanding intimacy in couples needs further investigation. Past researchers

have looked at intimacy in various ways. For example, it has been studied as

connectedness, closeness, and bondedness (Parks & Floyd, 1996) and as what occurs in

an interaction between individuals (Argyle & Dean, 1965). However, more attention

should be given to how intimacy is perceived and behaviorally represented while the

individuals are in a particular relationship stage.

Furthermore, a detailed analysis of uncertainty ought to be considered. The

present study took into account only relational uncertainty, but there is more information

to be extracted from the analyses of self, partner, and relationship uncertainty. Those

three dimensions are different from one another. Sending and receiving text messages

may have various implications on the types of uncertainty. For example, sending text

messages to a dating partner may reduce self uncertainty, but at the same time it may

increase partner uncertainty if the dating partner does not reply to a text message or sends

a lesser amount of them than the other party involved. As previous research has shown,

when uncertainty levels are high, reciprocity is sought by the interacting individuals

(Berger & Kellerman, 1983).

Additional research efforts are needed to gain a deeper understanding of how

various stages of a relationship relate to the five components of self-disclosure. This

study noted a significant difference in self-disclosure between the casual and committed

stage. It would be of interest to the researcher to conduct additional analysis focusing on

the honesty of self-disclosing messages, whether the self-disclosure is positive or negative, how much the partners are disclosing and if they do it on purpose, as well as the depth of the self-disclosure statements. As previous research indicates, it is of value to study self-disclosure beyond just the amount of it (Rubin et al., 1993; Wheeless & Grotz, 1976).

Also, consideration should be given to positive and negative self-disclosure. This study assumed that all self-disclosure was positive and at any point didn't ask the participants to indicate the kind of self-disclosure that one is exhibiting or experiencing from the other. Positive self-disclosure can increase intimacy and reduce uncertainty whereas negative self-disclosure can be destructive to the relationship (Knobloch & Solomon, 2005; Wheeless & Grotz, 1976).

Conclusion

This present study demonstrated how text message communication affects self-disclosure, intimacy, relational uncertainty, and how it creates a feeling of social presence. Also, questions regarding self-disclosure and relationship stage and relationship length have been answered. The results, even though sometimes difficult to interpret, shed light on the necessity for researchers to recognize that the boundaries between interpersonal, mass, and mediated communication are permeable and should be seen as such. Past interpersonal communication theories have focused on face-to-face communication and have been slow to respond to the technological changes and the role they play in personal relationships. The ongoing transformation of communication channels and the people who are the communicators should be a high priority for

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interpretation among scholars. The influence of technology, especially text messages, is a

growing factor in how individuals in meaningful dating relationships communicate.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Texting and Intimacy Questionnaire

Please consider only your text message communication when answering the questions

Section I.
Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible.

1. When did you start text messaging? (Please indicate the month and the year; i.e. May 2003)

_____

2. How many text messages on an average do you send a day?   _____

3. In a typical day, what percentage of your time do you usually spend texting with each of the following:

Friends	_____ %	
Dating Partner	_____ %	
Family	_____ %	
Others	_____ %	
	100 % (it doesn't have to add up exactly)	

4. How long have you and your partner been dating? _____ months

5. Which stage best describes your current dating relationship
_____ Casual (seeing each other sporadically, sharing superficial information, uncertain about the future of
        the relationship)
_____ Somewhat Serious (increased interaction, affection, dependence on each other)
_____ Serious (feeling of trust, attraction, love, interdependence)
_____ Committed (intense feeling of love, serious plans for the future

Section II.
Please indicate the degree to which the following statements reflect how you communicate through **text messages** with your dating partner by circling whether you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) moderately disagree, (4) are undecided, (5) moderately agree, (6) agree, or (7) strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. I do not always feel completely sincere when I reveal my own feelings, emotions, behaviors or experiences.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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2. Once I get started, I intimately and fully reveal myself in my self-disclosures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. On the whole, my disclosures about myself are more positive than negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I don't often talk about myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. When I wish, my self-disclosures are always accurate reflections of who I really am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I usually disclose positive things about myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I usually talk about myself for fairly long periods at a time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I am always honest in my self-disclosures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. My self-disclosures are completely accurate reflections of who I really am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I often disclose intimate, personal things about myself without hesitation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I usually disclose negative things about myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I normally reveal "bad" feelings I have about myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Only infrequently do I express my personal beliefs and opinions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I often talk about myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

15. When I am self-disclosing,   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
I am consciously aware of what
I am revealing

16. I am not always honest   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
in my self-disclosures

17. My statements about my   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
feelings, emotions, and experiences
are always accurate self-perceptions

18. I feel that I sometimes do *not*   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
control my self-disclosure of
personal or intimate things I tell
about myself

19. I always feel completely sincere   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
when I reveal my own feelings
and experiences

20. Once I get started, my   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
self-disclosures last a long time

21. On the whole, my disclosures   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
about myself are more negative
than positive

22. When I express my personal   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
feelings, I am always aware of
what I am doing and saying

23. My statements of my feelings   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
are usually brief

24. I normally "express" my good   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
feelings about myself

25. When I reveal feelings about   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
myself, I consciously intend to do so

26. My conversation lasts the   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
least time when I am discussing
myself

27. I am often not confident that my expressions of my own feelings, emotions, and experiences are true reflections of myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. I intimately disclose who I really am, openly and fully in my conversation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. I cannot reveal myself when I want to because I do not know myself thoroughly enough	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. I often reveal more undesirable things about myself than desirable things	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. I often discuss my feelings about myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section III.
Below is a series of statements about the conversations you completed through text messages with your dating partner. For each one, please circle a number from 1 to 7, depending on the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) moderately disagree, (4) are undecided, (5) moderately agree, (6) agree, or (7) strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
1. He/she was intensely involved in our conversation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. He/she did not want a deeper relationship between us	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. He/she was very work oriented	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. He/she was more interested in working on the task at hand than having social conversation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. He/she seemed to desire further communication with me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. He/she seemed to care if I liked him/her	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. He/she wanted the discussion to be informal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. He/she was not attracted to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. He/she found the conversation stimulating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. He/she was more interested in social conversation than the task at hand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. He/she was sincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. He/she was interested in talking with me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. He/she attempted to persuade me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. He/she communicated coldness rather than warmth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. He/she created a sense of distance between us	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. He/she wanted me to trust him/her	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. He/she wanted to cooperate with me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. He/she wanted to stick to the main purpose of the interaction	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

19. He/she acted bored by our conversation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. He/she acted interested in talking with me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. He/she was open to my ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. He/she was honest in communicating with me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. He/she made the interaction very formal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. He/she wanted the discussion to be casual	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. He/she showed enthusiasm while talking to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. He/she made me feel he/she was similar to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. He/she considered us equals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. He/she did not treat me as an equal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. He/she felt very tense talking to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. He/she was calm and poised with me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. He/she didn't try to win my favor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. He/she had the upper hand in the conversation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. He/she tried to move the conversation to a deeper lever	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

34. He/she acted like we were good friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. He/she seemed very relaxed talking with me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. He/she seemed nervous in my presence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. He/she tried to control the interaction	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. He/she tried to 7 gain my approval	1	2		3	4	5	6
39. He/she was comfortable interacting with me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. He/she didn't attempt to influence me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. He/she was willing to listen to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section IV.
This section is concerned with how certain you are about the degree of involvement that you have in your relationship. Please rate how certain you are about whatever degree of involvement you perceive. Please respond to the questions accordingly (1) completely or almost completely uncertain, (2) mostly uncertain, (3) slightly more uncertain than certain, (4) slightly more certain than uncertain, (6) completely or almost completely certain.

	Completely or Almost Completely Uncertain				Completely or Almost Completely Certain	
How certain are you about…….						
1. how you feel about your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. your view of your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. how important this relationship is to you?	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. your goals for the future of your relationship?   1   2   3   4   5   6

5. how your partner feels about your relationship? 1   2   3   4   5   6

6. your partner's view of your relationship?   1   2   3   4   5   6

7. how important your relationship is   1   2   3   4   5   6
to your partner?

8. your partner's goals for the future of your   1   2   3   4   5   6
relationship?

9.how you can or cannot behave   1   2   3   4   5   6
around your partner?

10. the current status of your relationship?   1   2   3   4   5   6

11. the definition of your relationship?   1   2   3   4   5   6

12. the future of your relationship?   1   2   3   4   5   6

Section V.
Please answer the following questions. For each one, please circle a number form 1 to 7, depending on the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) moderately disagree, (4) are undecided, (5) moderately agree, (6) agree, or (7) strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. Text messages are impersonal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. During text message use I feel as if I and my dating partner are located in the same room	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Text messages express feeling and emotion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I often smile in response to the text messages that my dating partner sends in a text message interaction	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. I feel a sense of actually being together with my dating partner when I am text messaging with him/her	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I feel emotionally connected with my dating partner when I am text messaging with him/her	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I often make a sound out loud in response to a text message my dating partner sends me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I feel that I am present with My dating partner and that my dating partner is present with me during text messaging	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section VI.
Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible. Please do not leave any questions blank.

1. What percentage of your day do you spend interacting with your dating partner:
Face-to-face _____%
Texting _____ %
Phoning _____ %
E-mail _____ %
Social networking _____ %
(i.e. Facebook, MySpace)
                       100   % (it doesn't have to add up exactly)

2. How many text messages do you send daily to your dating partner? _____

3. How many text messages do you receive daily from your dating partner? _____

4. What text message plan do you carry?

Pay-per-message   Monthly fee for a certain number of messages
        Unlimited text message

Section VII.
Please answer the following questions. Do not leave any questions blank.

1. What ethnic group (groups), if any, do you identify with?
_____

2. What religious group (groups), if any, do you identify with?
_____

3. Indicate the highest level of education (circle only one)
Some high school _____
High school _____
Some college _____
2-year college degree (Associates) _____
4-year college degree _____
Masters degree _____
Other _____

4. How old are you? _____

5. Are you   Male _____   Female _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!!!!!!!