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# Unfriend?: An analysis of friendship comparing subjects' perceptions of face-to-face versus Internet-mediated relationships

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**Unfriend?: An analysis of friendship comparing subjects' perceptions of face-to-face versus Internet-mediated relationships**

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Honors Research Project

Submitted to

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**Unfriend?: An analysis of friendship comparing subjects' perceptions of face-to-face versus  
Internet-mediated relationships**

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to find out how similar or different peoples' perceptions are of friendships which are primarily face-to-face and those which are primarily internet mediated. It was hypothesized that, based on qualities which are shared by each respective medium, individuals would not find perceptions of face-to-face and Internet-mediated friendships to be significantly different. One hundred fifty-one undergraduate students at The University of Akron were given a survey developed from a literature review to test how important certain general friendship qualities were to their concept of each type of friendship. It was found that, while all of the qualities were found to be of some degree of importance for each type of friendship, every quality was found to be more important in face-to-face friendships. From the results of this study, it was theorized that individuals have a lower expectation of the degree to which each of the considered qualities would be fulfilled in a primarily Internet-mediated friendship than one which is primarily engaged face-to-face.

## Introduction

Over the years, communication scholars, philosophers, and others have given many answers to the question, “What is friendship?” Of these, a great many assert that it is a particular kind of relationship between two people that fulfills certain needs of those who engage in that relationship — to abate loneliness, to share activities with, to feel known by another person, and so on. For most, friendships are characterized by certain qualities, as well; these include trustworthiness, sharing similar values, respect, and many more. Though the criteria in particular almost always differ in some way from person to person, for a relationship to truly be a friendship, one would say, that relationship would have to satisfy such criteria.

However, what of the medium through which that relationship is engaged? Must two people meet face-to-face, occupying the same physical space, in order to be considered “friends?” It seems that advances in technology have come to challenge this once nearly irrelevant question. In the modern world, many people profess to have friends all over the globe, including those they may have never even met. But, is this due to social networking terminology (Facebook calls networked individuals “friends”), or that individual’s perception of this kind of entirely Internet-mediated relationship? Moreover, what of “friends” who have met face-to-face, but engage in that relationship primarily through online interaction? Does the term “friendship” accurately describe this sort of relationship, too?

These are questions that the present study will attempt to answer through an analysis of individuals’ perceptions of and experiences with friendships which are engaged primarily face-to-face and those which are engaged primarily in a digital arena — over social media sites, video chats, texting, and the like. Do these two types of friendship satisfy the same set of criteria, or do

they differ? At its heart, the study at hand is an inquiry into linguistics into the nature about friendship, explored using concepts from communication theory and philosophy; it is a study of symbols (i.e., words), and how people use those symbols to convey meaning. Perhaps if Internet-mediated friendships do not satisfy the same criteria as face-to-face friendships (that is to say, they do not operate to fulfill the same needs or necessitate the same characteristics to a similar degree), it may be determined that “friendship” is not an accurate description of such a relationship. On the other hand, if these two modes of friendship do satisfy the same criteria in definition, it might pose the question as to whether or not those characteristics and satisfaction of needs available exclusively through face-to-face communication characterize what is currently understood to constitute “friendship.”

## **Literature Review**

### Defining definitions and the “what it is” of friendship

In Book II, Chapter III of his *Physics*, Aristotle takes up the daunting task of defining what it means to define a thing. While this writing of meta-definition may have taken place in ancient Greece, the way in which we understand the “what it is” (i.e., the essence) of a thing today, physical or conceptual, is quite similar. While Aristotle writes that there are four different “causes” of a thing, the one most pertinent to understanding the thing’s essence — which is to say, how we understand the thing in its entirety, or the definition of the thing — is the formal cause. Concerning formal causes, he writes, “The form is the account (and the genera of the account) of [the thing’s] essence...and the parts that are in the account” (Reeve, C.D.C., trans.

Irwin, T., 2006, p. 269). Following this, he explains further that “the whole, the composition, and the form — is cause as essence.” This is to say that, to understand what any thing is, one must first understand what it is that makes the thing truly something; put simply, one must understand what sets it apart from other, similar things. While this process might be fairly straightforward for some things which are similar to one another (i.e., a finger is not a toe because of its placement on the body), for conceptual things, formal definitions can become much more convoluted. Yet, one can see that the use of language to describe things is, in many cases, not so concrete. This is why a simple word or phrase used to describe an abstract thing can often affect our definition for or understanding of the thing; the word that is used may add to or subtract from what it is that is actually present in the thing in reality.

A man of many curiosities, in Book VIII, Chapter I of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle describes friendship as being “a virtue or [a thing which] implies virtue, and is besides most necessary with a view to living. For without friends no one would choose to live” (trans. Ross, W. D., 1994, para. 1). From ancient Judaic wisdom literature to modern studies in the various fields of communication studies, across times and cultures for nearly all of recorded history, humankind has shown great interest in this business of friendship — defining it, understanding it, managing it, and even being able to understand drives and motivations behind creating these invisible, yet somehow inwardly perceptible, interlocking ties between individuals. Despite the many modern advancements in our understanding of the world, human beings still tend to strive to understand concepts through categorization, just as Aristotle did over two millennia ago. In so many cases, to ask the question “what is it?” is truly to seek what “it” is not in relation to a higher genus; that is to say, in defining an abstract idea (most pertinently here, friendship), one might argue that the best course is to pull away what is not included in the idea, but included in a

higher genus (in this case, relationships in general) in order to isolate the essence of that idea, thereby separating “it” for the purpose of understanding “it” in itself.

Of course, regarding the concept of friendship, this process has already been explicated by many previous to the study at hand. Varying yet similar definitions and explanations of what is meant by the word “friendship” exist in the fields of communication and philosophy alike, and include the descriptions which follow. Joseph A. Devito (1992) defines friendship as “an interpersonal relationship between two people that is mutually productive and characterized by mutual positive regard” (p. 363). Spanning an entire career of study on the topic, William K. Rawlins (1992) has set parameters for what constitutes friendship by explaining that it is voluntary, mutual, personal, affectionate, and equal, in his book, *Friendship Matters*. Further, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy elucidates that friendship is “a distinctively personal relationship that is grounded in a concern on the part of each friend for the welfare of the other, for the other’s sake, and that involves some degree of intimacy” (Helm, B., 2005, para. 1). Demir and Davidson (2012) showed that “mattering” to a friend and basic needs satisfaction by the friendship are key to friendships, as these are the primary motivation for pursuing such relationships. In their study on cross-category friendships, communication scholars Galupo and Gonzalez (2012) characterize friendship as possessing three general values (trust and honesty, respect for the friend as a person, being there when needed) and three cross-identity salient friendship values (similar lives and experiences, similar values, and nonjudgmental attitude toward the friend). While less concise, philosopher David B. Annis (1987) has his own laundry list of qualities that constitute friendship, which includes, but is not limited to, mutual liking over time, opportunity to develop friendship, sharing of experiences, caring for a friend, altruistic

concern for a friend, interpersonal trust, honesty, integrity, respect, creation of a sense of value or worth as a result of the friendship, and revelation of self.

Most would agree that many individuals perceive friendships to possess not only these qualities listed above, but many more; and, in some cases, some of these qualities may not be important to or present in an individual's idea of what friendship is. This becomes an important distinction, and theoretical limitation, when dealing with individuals' perceptions of friendship, with which the present study is concerned. However, while it is acknowledged that no definition, explanation, or list could capture the complete essence of friendship for all individual perceptions of friendship, one can agree that a synthesis of the aforementioned explications of friendship can be a satisfactory working understanding of the "what it is" of the abstract concept of friendship between human individuals. Moreover, one can understand how other types of relationships (e.g., marriages, acquaintanceships, employer-worker relationships, etc.) differ from friendship in the possible negation of the previously mentioned qualities (i.e., an understanding of a relationship in general might not include mutual positive regard).

In the paragraphs above, many qualities of what is and what is not friendship have been discussed. Most of these qualities which are present in friendship can be understood to satisfy emotional or social needs of individuals. For example, experiencing honesty in a relationship might fulfill the need of social or emotional security for some individual or another; similarly, sharing values within a friendship may fulfill the desire of validation in one's beliefs. Furthermore, none of these qualities relate to the satisfaction of physical needs (such as one would expect to find in a sexual relationship), nor do they relate to the completion of tasks (such as one would expect to find in a work relationship). While these ends may exist at certain points within a friendship, or come to exist within a friendship, it seems that they are not pertinent to a



general concept of friendship. Thus, concerning the study at hand, it seems appropriate to define friendship as an interpersonal relationship between two people which to some degree mutually satisfies some of the emotional and social needs of each individual, yet does not necessarily operate to accomplish any specific task or satisfy physical needs.

#### Perspectives on computer-mediated communication and Internet-mediated relationships

Long before the days of Aristotle, there was a time when human beings communicated solely through face-to-face interactions. Eventually, the written word revolutionized the way that ideas could be recorded and shared, and as time has progressed, technology has further reshaped this process. Of all innovations that have altered the way humans communicate, it seems that one could easily argue that many of the most radical changes have taken place over the last few decades as the Internet has become more easily available to the general public. Indeed, now many carry the Web in their palms and in their pockets, with constant access to some form of communication (both one-way and dyadic, in many cases) with friends, family, acquaintances, and even complete strangers, all around the world. These changes in the way people communicate have more than piqued the interest of a great many communication scholars, and as computer-mediated communication (hereafter referred to as CMC) continues to remain in a state of constant flux with regards to both use and channels, new questions continue to arise. Of course, the most general, overarching question is this: does the Internet affect the way we communicate, and, if so, how?

Early on, some scholars began to doubt the depth of communication that could occur in the binary void. The “reduced social cues perspective” began to emerge, theorizing that, since CMC provides fewer cues than face-to-face and other forms of communication (e.g.,

paralanguage, artifactual communication, etc.), communication via the Internet would be less suited for emotional exchanges, passing on complex ideas, and the creation of a true social presence. In studying this phenomenon, Rice and Love (1987) found that CMC was indeed more appropriate for supporting weaker ties, as fewer cues led to reduced risks in contacting strangers. More recently, some research has come to focus more on individuals than relationships, directly. Moody (2001) found that, while both face-to-face and CMC led to lower social loneliness, only face-to-face communication contributed to lower emotional loneliness, whereas high levels of CMC use was positively correlated with higher emotional loneliness in subjects. Similarly, a study conducted by Helliwell and Huang (2013) concluded that, for most demographic groups, an online network of greater size was negatively associated with happiness and satisfaction, while a large real life network was almost always positive. In a slightly different vein, Gross et al. (2002) found that middle school students who experienced higher levels of social anxiety or loneliness were more likely to communicate with others on the Internet with whom they were not well acquainted.

Implicitly or explicitly, in some way or another all of these studies seem to be in support of the idea that the underlying nature (i.e., the essence) of CMC is different than face-to-face communication in ways beyond the limitations posed by the medium, itself; in all of these cases, CMC satisfies different needs, has different risks, and is engaged for different reasons than face-to-face communication, even though those who participate in CMC might not be constantly aware of some or all of these differences. Moreover, the findings in the above studies are important to an understanding of more immediate relationships that originate and/or exist primarily through online interaction. One of these types of more immediate relationships which seems to be becoming more popular in online environments is friendship. An earlier inquiry into

this phenomenon can be found in a study by Parks and Floyd (1996), which reported that over 60% of respondents indicated that they had formed personal (platonic and non-platonic) relationships in online newsgroups. Having noted this, and considering a more contemporary digital environment, one might ask the following question: how similar are these Internet-mediated “friendships” perceived to be to face-to-face friendships?

Of course, communication scholars are not the only ones who have been discussing these trends in computer (or, more relevantly today, Internet) use and how CMC affects relationships. The social networking platform Facebook was released to the general public in 2006, and began using the term “friend” to denote a mutually-approved connection between users within the platform. Users can become “friends” with any other publicly searchable user (some users can only be viewed by users with “mutual friends”) by request, regardless of level of previous knowledge of or interaction between users. Facebook “friends” can, among other things, view content (e.g., pictures, statuses, links, etc.) posted or shared to the site by one another, send private messages, create events, play online games together, and view mutual “friends” and information about other users’ lives.

This explicit repurposing of the word “friend” is only one concrete example of a more implicit movement of Internet relationships to become more and more like face-to-face relationships; in turn, this trend has garnered a lot of attention in the public forum. In very recent years, public conversation regarding this topic can be effectively embodied by two articles of polar viewpoints. Steve Baarendse (2012), an English and Humanities professor at Columbia International University, states several reasons for choosing to stay off of the extremely popular social networking site Facebook. Regarding the topic of friendship, specifically, he writes, “Facebook has inflated the meaning of friendship and thus devalued it. . . . In Facebook’s world,

friend has come to mean casual acquaintance” (pp. 44, 45) He discusses the idea of “unfriending,” which he deems “bizarre Orwellian Newspeak” (p. 45). Further, he argues that interactions within the platform are overwhelmingly “hasty and superficial” (p. 45), and that such interactions lead to, most glaringly, a false sense of immediacy, voyeurism, narcissism, and an overall decline in the pursuit of other, more rewarding hobbies. On the other hand, prominent hardware analyst Brian Westover (2014) condemns this view, arguing that not only merely friendship, but even romantic relationships, can be cultivated online in perfectly healthy ways. He writes, “Technology ... is an augmentation: letting us do what we already do, but do it faster, with greater precision and broader reach” (p. 3). Westover compares online interaction to a tool, fashioned to complete an end, which, in this case, is the formation of a relationship. He concludes the article in a similar vein: “If the Internet has done anything, it has made the world more intimately connected ... those connections — both digital and emotional — are worth celebrating” (p. 5). Of course, with two so opposing views, there is a middle ground to stand upon. In his own article regarding the topic at hand, Michael Bond (2014) points out that there is a large, conflicting body of empirical evidence that points to both the position that the option to pursue online relationships rather face-to-face relationships, and the difference between the two classes of friendship hinders friendship and individuals alike, versus the position that states that CMC does not have an impact on the social well being of individuals or the relationships in which they participate.

Indeed, it appears that the issues present in Internet-mediated friendships (hereafter denoted IMFs) are much more complicated than the surface of the issue suggests; as the nature of communication on the Internet has evolved over time, so has the body of theory surrounding the topic become more developed — and, in some cases, disparate. For instance, a study by Mesch

and Talmud (2006) found that, while relationships which were primarily online were perceived as being less close than face-to-face friends, online relationships play a “reduced and...more specialized role” in individuals’ lives; online friends spent less time together and talked about fewer topics than those in friendships which were face-to-face. However, an important qualification at the end of this study is that, at the time of the study, online activities were deemed “less integrated in everyday life” (p. 147). If this were true in 2004, the time of data collection for this study, for many people this statement is not even remotely relevant today. One can imagine, then, that the findings in this study could be outdated in a smart-phone saturated world. Further, changing technology is beginning to present users with an experience of IMFs that might seem increasingly similar to face-to-face communication in many respects. Internet communication is becoming more dyadic, which seems to significantly alter CMC and the way that people engage with it. For example, IM (i.e., instant messaging) and text or SMS messaging allows individuals to communicate using Internet-enabled devices in real time, if one should desire to do so. Also, another significant advance which allows Internet-mediated communication to be more dyadic uses video to allow both individuals to hear and see the other person as they communicate in real-time. Baek et al. (2013) have shown that, due to technology which has boosted the possibility for real-time reciprocity in CMC (e.g., SMS, instant messaging, and video chat), Internet relationships which rely on this reciprocity were negatively correlated with loneliness and distrust, while the opposite was true for IMR which were less reciprocal, such as parasocial Internet relationships. Contrastingly, a study by Anthenunis et al. (2012) creates an opposing view concerning IMFs, as their research showed that this face-to-face similarity might not be as important; in fact, the study concludes that the quality of friendship is not determined by whether it begins online or offline, but whether or not the friendship migrates

to an offline setting, since the quality of offline and mixed-mode friendships (those that begin online but progress to include face-to-face interaction) were not found to be significantly different.

Having considered all of the aforementioned works and studies, some important questions concerning friendship arise. One would most likely agree that CMC and IMFs are not only rapidly expanding and changing forms of communication and relationships, but also contentious topics for research. Has research conducted less than a decade really become irrelevant to the discussion concerning these topics today? It seems that the answer is, partially, yes. While early research suggested that users engage in CMC for different reasons than face-to-face communication, some general relationship trends suggest otherwise; where CMC was once more task-oriented, developing technologies have created a digital dyadic forum that is becoming increasingly like face-to-face interaction. Moreover, research conducted in the early to mid-2000s found significant differences between the use and benefits of using the Internet to foster interpersonal relationships; yet, it seems that these studies did not have the foresight to postulate that the Internet would become truly integrated into the lives of the population at large. Lastly, this topic has people scratching their heads or up in arms at the state of the matter of friendship — what it can be, what it should be, and what it is not. In the wake of the research, philosophical reasoning, opinions, and arguments, it might seem to some that the “what it is” of friendship may be more illusory than popularly imagined.

The present study: The hypothesis

This study is an attempt to test the similarity between these two modes of friendship quantifiably by inquiring into individuals’ perceptions of primarily face-to-face friendships and

primarily Internet-mediated friendships. Since online interaction has become more integrated into many individuals' everyday lives and increasingly similar to face-to-face interaction in many ways through technological advances, considering only qualities and characteristics which are important to concepts of friendship in general and can be shared between both face-to-face and Internet-mediated friendships, it is predicted that,

H: Individuals will not perceive friendships which are primarily engaged online to be significantly different from friendships which are primarily engaged face-to-face with regards to importance of identified characteristics.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

To test the hypothesis, a scale was developed based on common values of friendship identified in a literature review. A sample of 151 undergraduate college students filled out the scale; however, some subjects chose to not indicate an answer for some friendship values, which led to the sample size for each particular item on the scale being slightly varied ( $146 < n < 150$  for all items). The sample size for each item can be found in Table 1, on page 17.

This sample was chosen for a few different reasons, the first being the diversity that college classrooms tend to offer. It is desired that sampling error will be decreased by surveying students from potentially varying backgrounds, ages, etc., which is the case for the populations of college classrooms, in general. Second, this sample was chosen because it is likely that this population is more engaged with Internet-mediated communication than some other populations, which is important to the validity of the results of the study at hand. Finally, this sample offers

convenience to the Principal Investigator, a fellow undergraduate student at the University of Akron. These students were selected from intact undergraduate classes in the School of Communication at the University of Akron by permission from the instructor.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Students were given a consent form, which explained that participants would indicate consent by returning the completed scale to the instructor. Following this, students were asked to read and complete the scale. The consent form also defined face-to-face and mediated friendships as applicable to the study at hand. Face-to-face friendships were defined as friendships “in which individuals interact primarily within a shared physical space and communicate primarily without use of electronic devices,” and mediated friendships were defined as those “in which individuals interact and communicate primarily through digital media, such as through sending of text and voice messages, over social media platforms, or through video-chats.” Lastly, the consent form explained that the word “primarily” is meant to denote “more than half of the time.”

The scale was developed based on 20 qualities identified in the literature as being important to general concepts of friendship in order to test the above hypothesis. The scale asks individuals to indicate how important these qualities are to them in their own primarily face-to-face and mediated friendships, respectively, using a 5-space format with “1” being “Extremely Unimportant,” and “5” being “Extremely Important.” Lastly, the scale requests demographic information from the participant. The data were analyzed using a series of T-tests to see if participants indicated significant differences between how important they perceived each quality



to be to their experience with face-to-face and mediated friendships. (See Appendix B for a copy of the instrument.)

## **Results**

The initial hypothesis for this study states the following: individuals will not perceive friendships which are primarily engaged online to be significantly different from friendships which are primarily engaged face-to-face with regards to importance of identified characteristics. This hypothesis functions as the null hypothesis for the study at hand.

One hundred fifty-one undergraduate students at the University of Akron completed the survey regarding friendship characteristic-importance, which was created using information gathered during the literature review. Following data collection, means and standard deviations were generated for subjects' indications of how important each characteristic of friendship was perceived for both face-to-face and Internet-mediated friendships, respectively (see Table 1). Dependent t-tests were conducted on each pair of means regarding their particular friendship characteristics to determine if there were significant differences in how individuals perceived these characteristics' importance to each category of friendship studied.

For each pair of means, there was a significant difference observed between how important characteristics were perceived for each category of friendship. Also, for each pair, the characteristic was indicated to be perceived as significantly more important for face-to-face friendships than for Internet-mediated friendships (see Table 2).

Frequencies for each response can also be found in Appendix A. The consent form and scale used in this study can be found in Appendix B.

Table 1 — Means and Standard Deviations for Importance of Friendship Characteristics

<b>Pair</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Concern for Friend's Well-Being, Face to Face	4.5302	149	0.64260
Concern for Friend's Well-Being, Mediated	3.4497	149	1.00294
Respect Between Friends, Face to Face	4.6667	150	0.57541
Respect Between Friends, Mediated	3.7267	150	1.09236
Sharing Similar Values/Morals, Face to Face	3.7667	150	0.80616
Sharing Similar Values/Morals, Mediated	3.0067	150	0.96584
Sharing of Personal Problems, Face to Face	3.8792	149	0.97892
Sharing of Personal Problems, Mediated	2.6443	149	1.09096
Supportiveness Between Friends, Face to Face	4.5067	150	0.66299
Supportiveness Between Friends, Mediated	3.5067	150	1.09757
Equality Between Friends, Face to Face	4.1141	149	0.89692
Equality Between Friends, Mediated	3.2483	149	1.22973
"Mattering" to a Friend, Face to Face	4.4161	149	0.78929
"Mattering" to a Friend, Mediated	3.2819	149	1.22519
Fulfillment of Social Needs, Face to Face	4.3243	148	0.76680
Fulfillment of Social Needs, Mediated	3.0811	148	1.13996
Creating a Feeling of Belonging, Face to Face	4.2857	147	0.77636
Creating a Feeling of Belonging, Mediated	2.9388	147	1.15405
Engaging in Activities Together, Face to Face	4.2517	147	0.85883
Engaging in Activities Together, Mediated	2.4082	147	1.10264
Trust Between Friends, Face to Face	4.6757	148	0.66205
Trust Between Friends, Mediated	3.6892	148	1.21695
Being Nonjudgmental, Face to Face	4.3467	150	0.73262
Being Nonjudgmental, Mediated	3.5133	150	1.29395
Sharing Similar Backgrounds, Face to Face	2.9067	150	1.11335
Sharing Similar Backgrounds, Mediated	2.2067	150	0.99863
Fulfillment of Emotional Needs, Face to Face	3.7823	147	0.96171
Fulfillment of Emotional Needs, Mediated	2.7755	147	1.12746
Getting to Know Friends Personally, Face to Face	4.4797	148	0.68482
Getting to Know Friends Personally, Mediated	3.3108	148	1.14791
Honesty Between Friends, Face to Face	3.6735	147	0.55100
Honesty Between Friends, Mediated	3.8503	147	1.18988
Builds Self-Esteem, Face to Face	4.1429	147	0.79381
Builds Self-Esteem, Mediated	3.2245	147	1.12137
Giving/Receiving Non-Sexual Affection, Face to Face	3.6849	146	1.06838
Giving, Receiving Non-Sexual Affection, Mediated	2.5548	146	1.25962
Mutual Desire for Friendship to Continue, Face to Face	4.5338	148	0.68428
Mutual Desire for Friendship to Continue, Mediated	3.6419	148	1.17230
Having "Quality Time" Together, Face to Face	4.2721	147	0.85654
Having "Quality Time" Together, Mediated	2.6259	147	1.16578

Table 2 — Results of Dependent T-Tests

<b>Pair</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Significance (2-tailed)</b>
Concern for Friend's Well-Being, Face to Face Concern for Friend's Well-Being, Mediated	12.645	148	p < 0.01
Respect Between Friends, Face to Face Respect Between Friends, Mediated	10.579	149	p < 0.01
Sharing Similar Values/Morals, Face to Face Sharing Similar Values/Morals, Mediated	8.171	149	p < 0.01
Sharing of Personal Problems, Face to Face Sharing of Personal Problems, Mediated	10.983	148	p < 0.01
Supportiveness Between Friends, Face to Face Supportiveness Between Friends, Mediated	9.945	149	p < 0.01
Equality Between Friends, Face to Face Equality Between Friends, Mediated	9.061	148	p < 0.01
"Mattering" to a Friend, Face to Face "Mattering" to a Friend, Mediated	10.667	148	p < 0.01
Fulfillment of Social Needs, Face to Face Fulfillment of Social Needs, Mediated	12.111	147	p < 0.01
Creating a Feeling of Belonging, Face to Face Creating a Feeling of Belonging, Mediated	12.599	146	p < 0.01
Engaging in Activities Together, Face to Face Engaging in Activities Together, Mediated	15.876	146	p < 0.01
Trust Between Friends, Face to Face Trust Between Friends, Mediated	9.240	147	p < 0.01
Being Nonjudgmental, Face to Face Being Nonjudgmental, Mediated	8.621	149	p < 0.01
Sharing Similar Backgrounds, Face to Face Sharing Similar Backgrounds, Mediated	8.086	149	p < 0.01
Fulfillment of Emotional Needs, Face to Face Fulfillment of Emotional Needs, Mediated	10.106	146	p < 0.01
Getting to Know Friends Personally, Face to Face Getting to Know Friends Personally, Mediated	11.399	147	p < 0.01
Honesty Between Friends, Face to Face Honesty Between Friends, Mediated	8.455	146	p < 0.01
Builds Self-Esteem, Face to Face Builds Self-Esteem, Mediated	11.172	146	p < 0.01
Giving/Receiving Non-Sexual Affection, Face to Face Giving, Receiving Non-Sexual Affection, Mediated	10.149	145	p < 0.01
Mutual Desire for Friendship to Continue, Face to Face Mutual Desire for Friendship to Continue, Mediated	9.072	147	p < 0.01
Having "Quality Time" Together, Face to Face Having "Quality Time" Together, Mediated	14.911	146	p < 0.01

## Discussion

The results of this study did not support the hypothesis, as it rejected the null hypothesis: individuals will not perceive friendships which are primarily engaged online to be significantly different from friendships which are primarily engaged face-to-face with regards to importance of identified characteristics. Indeed, the results of this study showed that subjects perceived each identified friendship characteristic to be more important in face-to-face friendships than in those which are Internet-mediated.

The findings that individuals perceive all of the characteristics of friendship incorporated in this study to be more important in face-to-face friendships than in Internet-mediated friendships also suggests that individuals do perceive these two categories of friendship to be significantly different from one another. While the friendship characteristics were perceived to be significantly different in importance between the two contexts, it seems that while individuals perceive the characteristics of friendship studied herein to be different in degree between both types of friendships, they are not necessarily different in kind. That is, all of the characteristics were found to be of some importance to both categories of friendships studied. This finding suggests that, considering these qualities of friendship, in general, an Internet-mediated friendship would be most accurately described as different in degree from a face-to-face friendship, rather than different in kind.

Such a finding might lead one to wonder whether the word “friendship” is still applicable to a mutual Internet-mediated relationship, and whether this word accurately describes such a relationship. The results of the present study suggest that, since all of the friendship characteristics included in this study were still found to be important to some degree in Internet-

mediated friendships, that these relationships are not so different from face-to-face friendships that the word “friendship” would not convey the meaning of such a relationship. However, when one considers that there are already existing words and phrases frequently used to describe varying degrees of friendship (e.g., “best friend,” “close friend,” “acquaintance,” etc.), from a linguistic perspective, some modifying term (such as “Facebook friend,” which is used by some individuals, today) would probably most accurately describe such a relationship.

How, then, are these two types of friendship different? One might reason that these results may indicate that individuals have lower standards or expectations for Internet-mediated friendships with regards to the qualities included in this study. Although it may be true that these qualities were not perceived to be as important in relationships which were Internet-mediated, this does not seem to keep individuals from engaging in such relationships. Since subjects were asked to respond concerning their “concept” of an Internet-mediated friendship, in general, this may be indicative that individuals do not enter into such a relationship with the expectation that these qualities will be present to the same degree as they are in face-to-face friendships. Thus, it seems that, while the extent to which these qualities are actually realized in each type of friendship is indeterminable from the nature of the present study, one could reasonably conclude that the standards which individuals perceive Internet-mediated relationships to generally meet are lower than face-to-face friendships with regards to the qualities considered herein.

This also leaves open the possibility that Internet-mediated friendships consist of some qualities that are distinct from face-to-face friendships, but still important to the nature of such a relationship, which perpetuate this medium of friendship. For example, Internet-mediated communication can happen almost any time and anywhere, which makes Internet-mediated relationships easier to engage in based on time and space constraints that occur in the context of

many face-to-face relationships. Furthermore, while the possibility for higher real-time reciprocity may have increased substantially over the past decade, there are many avenues of Internet-mediated communication which still afford the possibility of acceptable reciprocity which is much lower than is acceptable with face-to-face communication; if one receives an SMS message from a friend, the acceptable wait time for a response is much longer than if one is asked a question face-to-face. It is possible that this quality might make certain individuals more comfortable when it comes to communicating, as they have more time to respond and are free from facial and paralinguistic cues. For future study, it would be interesting to examine how qualities which are distinct to Internet-mediated relationships, such as those listed above, are perceived when it comes to the importance of this medium of friendship.

Finally, as was mentioned in the literature review of the present study, it has been observed that many friendships which begin online migrate to be engaged in face-to-face context, if possible. It could also be interesting for future study to examine whether or not friendships which are engaged in both contexts are perceived to have the same expectations as Internet-mediated friendships which occur exclusively in mediated contexts.

Thus, while it has been observed that this particular set of age-old characteristics of friendship still hold true in the epoch of computer-mediated communication, one should not be surprised to find this relational phenomenon adapting as it is shaped and molded by the culture which engages with it. Has the essence, the “what-it-is,” of friendship changed since the days of Aristotle? In important ways, it has; as society changes, and as the avenues in which humans engage with one another changes, those interactions and the way they are perceived seem bound to follow such alterations. Yet, there are a good deal of qualities which have endured the test of time, proving important to conceptions of friendship throughout history and into modernity.

## Limitations of the Study

One notable limitation of this study was a characteristic of the sample size. The vast majority of subjects surveyed were of the youngest age range, being 18-24 years old (see Appendix A for the frequency for age). It is recommended that a more age-varied sample be surveyed with further study. Another improvement that might be made would be to identify more friendship characteristics and include them in the survey. This would broaden the scope of the survey and allow for more similarities and differences to be tested for between face-to-face and Internet-mediated friendships.

A further limitation of this study is that subjects were not asked to indicate how important they perceive each type of friendship to be to them. This information may have been used to examine correlations between the perceived importance each type of friendship, in toto, and its individual characteristics. Lastly, it is also recommended that students be asked to indicate how much time they spend engaging in each type of friendship, as this could also illuminate some interesting correlations.

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## Appendix A — Response Frequencies

**Concern for Friend's Well-Being, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2.00	1	.7	.7	.7
3.00	10	6.6	6.6	7.3
4.00	49	32.5	32.5	39.7
5.00	91	60.3	60.3	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

**Respect Between Friends, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2.00	1	.7	.7	.7
3.00	5	3.3	3.3	4.0
4.00	37	24.5	24.5	28.5
5.00	108	71.5	71.5	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

**Concern for Friend's Well-Being, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	3	2.0	2.0	2.0
2.00	21	13.9	14.1	16.1
3.00	57	37.7	38.3	54.4
4.00	42	27.8	28.2	82.6
5.00	26	17.2	17.4	100.0
Total	149	98.7	100.0	
Missing 9.00	2	1.3		
Total	151	100.0		

**Respect Between Friends, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	4	2.6	2.7	2.7
2.00	17	11.3	11.3	14.0
3.00	40	26.5	26.7	40.7
4.00	44	29.1	29.3	70.0
5.00	45	29.8	30.0	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing 9.00	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

**Sharing Similar Values/Morals, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2.00	7	4.6	4.6	4.6
3.00	50	33.1	33.1	37.7
4.00	66	43.7	43.7	81.5
5.00	28	18.5	18.5	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

**Sharing of Personal Problems, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	3	2.0	2.0	2.0
2.00	10	6.6	6.6	8.6
3.00	34	22.5	22.5	31.1
4.00	59	39.1	39.1	70.2
5.00	45	29.8	29.8	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

**Sharing Similar Values/Morals, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	8	5.3	5.3	5.3
2.00	34	22.5	22.7	28.0
3.00	68	45.0	45.3	73.3
4.00	29	19.2	19.3	92.7
5.00	11	7.3	7.3	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing 9.00	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

**Sharing of Personal Problems, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	22	14.6	14.8	14.8
2.00	50	33.1	33.6	48.3
3.00	44	29.1	29.5	77.9
4.00	25	16.6	16.8	94.6
5.00	8	5.3	5.4	100.0
Total	149	98.7	100.0	
Missing 9.00	2	1.3		
Total	151	100.0		

## Appendix A (cont.)

**Supportiveness Between Friends, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	1	.7	.7	.7
3.00	8	5.3	5.3	6.0
4.00	54	35.8	35.8	41.7
5.00	88	58.3	58.3	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

**Supportiveness Between Friends, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	8	5.3	5.3	5.3
2.00	16	10.6	10.7	16.0
3.00	49	32.5	32.7	48.7
4.00	46	30.5	30.7	79.3
5.00	31	20.5	20.7	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing 9.00	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

**Equality Between Friends, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	1	.7	.7	.7
2.00	6	4.0	4.0	4.7
3.00	28	18.5	18.7	23.3
4.00	54	35.8	36.0	59.3
5.00	61	40.4	40.7	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing System	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

**Equality Between Friends, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	16	10.6	10.7	10.7
2.00	24	15.9	16.0	26.7
3.00	43	28.5	28.7	55.3
4.00	41	27.2	27.3	82.7
5.00	26	17.2	17.3	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing 9.00	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

**"Mattering" to a Friend, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	1	.7	.7	.7
2.00	3	2.0	2.0	2.6
3.00	13	8.6	8.6	11.3
4.00	48	31.8	31.8	43.0
5.00	86	57.0	57.0	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

**Fulfillment of Social Needs, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	1	.7	.7	.7
2.00	3	2.0	2.0	2.7
3.00	13	8.6	8.7	11.3
4.00	64	42.4	42.7	54.0
5.00	69	45.7	46.0	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing 9.00	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

**"Mattering" to a Friend, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	13	8.6	8.7	8.7
2.00	25	16.6	16.8	25.5
3.00	50	33.1	33.6	59.1
4.00	29	19.2	19.5	78.5
5.00	32	21.2	21.5	100.0
Total	149	98.7	100.0	
Missing 9.00	2	1.3		
Total	151	100.0		

**Fulfillment of Social Needs, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	13	8.6	8.8	8.8
2.00	34	22.5	23.0	31.8
3.00	46	30.5	31.1	62.8
4.00	38	25.2	25.7	88.5
5.00	17	11.3	11.5	100.0
Total	148	98.0	100.0	
Missing 9.00	3	2.0		
Total	151	100.0		

## Appendix A (cont.)

**Creating a Feeling of Belonging, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	2	1.3	1.3	1.3
2.00	1	.7	.7	2.0
3.00	14	9.3	9.3	11.3
4.00	67	44.4	44.7	56.0
5.00	66	43.7	44.0	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing 9.00	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

**Engaging in Activities Together, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	1	.7	.7	.7
2.00	4	2.6	2.7	3.3
3.00	22	14.6	14.7	18.0
4.00	51	33.8	34.0	52.0
5.00	72	47.7	48.0	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing System	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

**Creating a Feeling of Belonging, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	18	11.9	12.2	12.2
2.00	32	21.2	21.8	34.0
3.00	54	35.8	36.7	70.7
4.00	27	17.9	18.4	89.1
5.00	16	10.6	10.9	100.0
Total	147	97.4	100.0	
Missing 9.00	4	2.6		
Total	151	100.0		

**Engaging in Activities Together, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	29	19.2	19.6	19.6
2.00	61	40.4	41.2	60.8
3.00	35	23.2	23.6	84.5
4.00	12	7.9	8.1	92.6
5.00	11	7.3	7.4	100.0
Total	148	98.0	100.0	
Missing 9.00	3	2.0		
Total	151	100.0		

**Trust Between Friends, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	1	.7	.7	.7
2.00	2	1.3	1.3	2.0
3.00	4	2.6	2.6	4.6
4.00	30	19.9	19.9	24.5
5.00	114	75.5	75.5	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

**Being Nonjudgmental, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2.00	1	.7	.7	.7
3.00	20	13.2	13.2	13.9
4.00	55	36.4	36.4	50.3
5.00	75	49.7	49.7	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

**Trust Between Friends, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	12	7.9	8.1	8.1
2.00	10	6.6	6.8	14.9
3.00	37	24.5	25.0	39.9
4.00	42	27.8	28.4	68.2
5.00	47	31.1	31.8	100.0
Total	148	98.0	100.0	
Missing 9.00	3	2.0		
Total	151	100.0		

**Being Nonjudgmental, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	16	10.6	10.7	10.7
2.00	16	10.6	10.7	21.3
3.00	35	23.2	23.3	44.7
4.00	41	27.2	27.3	72.0
5.00	42	27.8	28.0	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing 9.00	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

## Appendix A (cont.)

**Sharing Similar Backgrounds, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	15	9.9	9.9	9.9
2.00	40	26.5	26.5	36.4
3.00	54	35.8	35.8	72.2
4.00	26	17.2	17.2	89.4
5.00	16	10.6	10.6	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

**Sharing Similar Backgrounds, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	39	25.8	26.0	26.0
2.00	60	39.7	40.0	66.0
3.00	36	23.8	24.0	90.0
4.00	11	7.3	7.3	97.3
5.00	4	2.6	2.7	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing 9.00	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

**Getting to Know Friends Personally, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 3.00	16	10.6	10.6	10.6
4.00	45	29.8	29.8	40.4
5.00	90	59.6	59.6	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

**Getting to Know Friends Personally, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	12	7.9	8.1	8.1
2.00	21	13.9	14.2	22.3
3.00	48	31.8	32.4	54.7
4.00	43	28.5	29.1	83.8
5.00	24	15.9	16.2	100.0
Total	148	98.0	100.0	
Missing 9.00	3	2.0		
Total	151	100.0		

**Fulfillment of Emotional Needs, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	5	3.3	3.3	3.3
2.00	6	4.0	4.0	7.3
3.00	39	25.8	26.0	33.3
4.00	64	42.4	42.7	76.0
5.00	36	23.8	24.0	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing 9.00	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

**Fulfillment of Emotional Needs, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	22	14.6	15.0	15.0
2.00	36	23.8	24.5	39.5
3.00	53	35.1	36.1	75.5
4.00	25	16.6	17.0	92.5
5.00	11	7.3	7.5	100.0
Total	147	97.4	100.0	
Missing 9.00	4	2.6		
Total	151	100.0		

**Honesty Between Friends, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 3.00	6	4.0	4.0	4.0
4.00	36	23.8	24.0	28.0
5.00	108	71.5	72.0	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing System	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

**Honesty Between Friends, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	6	4.0	4.1	4.1
2.00	16	10.6	10.8	14.9
3.00	32	21.2	21.6	36.5
4.00	34	22.5	23.0	59.5
5.00	60	39.7	40.5	100.0
Total	148	98.0	100.0	
Missing 9.00	3	2.0		
Total	151	100.0		

## Appendix A (cont.)

**Builds Self-Esteem, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	1	.7	.7	.7
2.00	3	2.0	2.0	2.7
3.00	22	14.6	14.7	17.3
4.00	69	45.7	46.0	63.3
5.00	55	36.4	36.7	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing 9.00	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

**Giving/Receiving Non-Sexual Affection, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	4	2.6	2.7	2.7
2.00	15	9.9	10.0	12.7
3.00	44	29.1	29.3	42.0
4.00	43	28.5	28.7	70.7
5.00	44	29.1	29.3	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing 9.00	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

**Builds Self-Esteem, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	10	6.6	6.8	6.8
2.00	29	19.2	19.7	26.5
3.00	46	30.5	31.3	57.8
4.00	42	27.8	28.6	86.4
5.00	20	13.2	13.6	100.0
Total	147	97.4	100.0	
Missing 9.00	4	2.6		
Total	151	100.0		

**Giving/Receiving Non-Sexual Affection, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	37	24.5	25.3	25.3
2.00	38	25.2	26.0	51.4
3.00	37	24.5	25.3	76.7
4.00	21	13.9	14.4	91.1
5.00	13	8.6	8.9	100.0
Total	146	96.7	100.0	
Missing 9.00	5	3.3		
Total	151	100.0		

**Mutual Desire for Friendship to Continue, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2.00	2	1.3	1.3	1.3
3.00	10	6.6	6.7	8.0
4.00	43	28.5	28.7	36.7
5.00	95	62.9	63.3	100.0
Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing 9.00	1	.7		
Total	151	100.0		

**Having "Quality Time" Together, Face to Face**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	2	1.3	1.3	1.3
2.00	3	2.0	2.0	3.3
3.00	18	11.9	11.9	15.2
4.00	54	35.8	35.8	51.0
5.00	74	49.0	49.0	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

**Mutual Desire for Friendship to Continue, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	9	6.0	6.1	6.1
2.00	12	7.9	8.1	14.2
3.00	47	31.1	31.8	45.9
4.00	35	23.2	23.6	69.6
5.00	45	29.8	30.4	100.0
Total	148	98.0	100.0	
Missing 9.00	3	2.0		
Total	151	100.0		

**Having "Quality Time" Together, Mediated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	24	15.9	16.3	16.3
2.00	52	34.4	35.4	51.7
3.00	39	25.8	26.5	78.2
4.00	19	12.6	12.9	91.2
5.00	13	8.6	8.8	100.0
Total	147	97.4	100.0	
Missing 9.00	4	2.6		
Total	151	100.0		

**Appendix A (cont.)**

**Gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	54	35.8	36.0	36.0
	Female	96	63.6	64.0	100.0
	Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing	9.00	1	.7		
Total		151	100.0		

**Age**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24	134	88.7	89.3	89.3
	25-30	10	6.6	6.7	96.0
	31-35	2	1.3	1.3	97.3
	41-45	2	1.3	1.3	98.7
	46-50	2	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing	9.00	1	.7		
Total		151	100.0		

**Class**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Freshman	10	6.6	6.7	6.7
	Sophomore	32	21.2	21.3	28.0
	Junior	56	37.1	37.3	65.3
	Senior	52	34.4	34.7	100.0
	Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing	9.00	1	.7		
Total		151	100.0		

## Appendix B — Cover Letter and Survey

### Informed Consent *for*

Unfriend?: A meta-analysis of friendship comparing subjects' perceptions of face-to-face versus Internet-mediated friendships

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by Matthew Harp, an undergraduate student in the School of Communication at the University of Akron. You must be 18 years or older to participate.

Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for your help in the completion of my senior honors project. On the following pages, you will find a short survey concerning the nature of face-to-face and mediated friendships. I would like to see how similar or different these two types of friendships are perceived.

For this study, we are asking you to differentiate between friendships which are *primarily* engaged in face-to-face contexts and friendships which are *primarily* engaged in mediated contexts. *Face-to-face friendships* are defined as those in which individuals interact primarily within a shared physical space and communicate primarily without use of electronic devices. *Mediated friendships* are defined as those in which individuals interact and communicate primarily through digital media, such as through sending of text and voice messages, over social media platforms, or through video-chats. For those friendships which occur both face-to-face and in mediated contexts, consider which context that friendship occurs in primarily (i.e., more than half of the time). In completing the survey, please consider these definitions when differentiating between face-to-face and mediated friendships.

This survey is entirely voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw now or at any time while you are completing the survey. Failure to participate will not affect your grade in this course. There are no benefits or rewards for completing it (other than the satisfaction of helping me out), and there are no known risks or discomforts associated with the completion of this survey. Responses are entirely anonymous, will be kept confidential, and will be used for scholarly purposes only.

If you have any questions about this study, you may call Matthew S. Harp at (330) 957-8470, or Dr. Kathleen D. Clark at (330) 972-7485. This project has been reviewed and approved by The University of Akron Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call Ms. Sharon McWhorter, Director for the Office of Research Administration, at (330) 972-7666.

Your completion and return of this questionnaire will serve as your consent. Thank you, again, for taking the time to complete this survey.



## Appendix B (cont.)

Below, you will find a list of qualities of friendship, in general. Spaces are given to indicate how important you believe that quality is to your concept of a primarily face-to-face friendship and a primarily mediated friendship, respectively.

5 = Extremely Important; 4 = Important; 3 = Somewhat Important; 2 = Not Very Important; 1 = Extremely Unimportant

For example:

Characteristics	<i>Important in Face-to-Face Friendships</i>	<i>Important in Mediated Friendships</i>
1. Gives me a "warm and fuzzy" feeling	3	2

Characteristics	<i>Important in Face-to-Face Friendships</i>	<i>Important in Mediated Friendships</i>
1. Concern for friend's well-being		
2. Respect between friends		
3. Sharing similar values/morals		
4. Sharing of personal problems		
5. Supportiveness between friends		
6. Equality between friends		
7. "Mattering" to a friend (i.e., feeling like one is important in friends' life)		
8. Fulfillment of social needs (e.g., companionship, feeling appreciated)		
9. Creating a feeling of belonging		
10. Engaging in activities together		
11. Trust between friends		
12. Being nonjudgmental		
13. Sharing similar backgrounds		
14. Fulfillment of emotional needs		
15. Getting to know friends personally		
16. Honesty between friends		
17. Builds self-esteem		
18. Giving/receiving non-sexual affection		
19. Mutual desire for friendship to continue		
20. Having "quality time" together		

## Appendix B (cont.)

What is your gender?

M  F

What is your age? (Please circle one category)

18-24 25-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 56-60 60 +

What is your current class status at the University of Akron? (Please circle one)

Freshman      Sophomore      Junior      Senior

*This completes the survey. Thank you for your help!*  
*- Matt Harp*