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Balancing Opinions: The Effects on an Individual's Romantic Relationship When Third Parties' Opinions Collide

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BALANCING OPINIONS: THE EFFECTS ON AN INDIVIDUAL'S ROMANTIC

RELATIONSHIP WHEN THIRD PARTIES' OPINIONS COLLIDE

By

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BALANCING OPINIONS: THE EFFECTS ON AN INDIVIDUAL'S ROMANTIC

RELATIONSHIP WHEN THIRD PARTIES' OPINIONS COLLIDE

By

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Previous researchers have established that social networks can influence an individual's romantic relationship. Two studies examined whether one third party's opinion was more influential than another when multiple parties' opinions conflict or concur. The first study was a 2 (Parent Opinion: approval, disapproval) x 2 (Friend Opinion: approval, disapproval) between-subjects factorial design experimental survey which examined how third party opinions influenced an individual's current romantic relationship state. Analyses revealed that both friend and parent opinion had significant effects on an individual's romantic relationship. The second study incorporated a virtual dating game in which participants received feedback about one of their interaction partners. The study employed a 2 (Parent Opinion: good match, bad match) x 2 (Friend Opinion: good match, bad match) x 2 (Interaction Partner: Target, Control – within-subjects) mixed factorial design. Friend opinion emerged as playing an important role in individuals' perceptions and choices of a potential romantic partner

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to my parents, Richard and Merri Wright, and my boyfriend, Scott Fife, for their continual support and encouragement over the past two years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Social network involvement in a romantic relationship has been a common theme in romantic media throughout the years. With works such as *Romeo and Juliet*, the idea that third parties, such as one's parents or friends, can play a role in one's romantic relationship is not a foreign idea in our society. Researchers have been examining the impact of social networks on romantic relationships for over 30 years; however, over the past decade research in this area has grown exponentially (for review see Sprecher, Felmlee, Orbuch, & Willetts, 2002). Through this research, it has become clear that one's relationship does not exist in a vacuum and various aspects of one's relationship are impacted by third party opinion (see Parks, 2009; Sinclair & Wright, 2009 for review). Unfortunately, the majority of this research has only examined the social network as a unit (ignoring separate sources within the network) or only examined one source at a time, such as only friends or only parents. Therefore, it is still not clear what happens when multiple sources within one's social network disagree on their opinion of a romantic relationship.

In the present studies, I examined what happens to an individual's romantic relationship when friend and parent opinions differ. Examining what occurs when one sources opinion contrasts with another was expected to provide insight into whose -

parents' or friends' - opinion carries more weight. Further, by incorporating Social

Exchange theory (Foa & Foa, 1974; Ridley & Avery, 1979), I expected to be able to

predict why the opinions of some matter more than others. I will begin with a review of

the current literature examining social networks and how they influence romantic

relationships with their opinions. Then, I will discuss limitations in the research on social

network influence. Lastly, I will address how social exchange theory might help to

understand whose opinion within the importance of social network matters.

Social Networks

To begin, it is imperative to understand what constitutes a social network, and

why one's network is important. A social network is typically composed of family

members as well as non-family members, such as friends, neighbors, and coworkers. A

social network plays an integral role in one's life by providing social contact, emotional

support, and companionship. Further, these network relationships profoundly shape our

sense of self worth and can impact our mental and physical health (Parks, 2007). As

previously mentioned, social networks also contribute to one's romantic relationship

formation, state (e.g., the current status of a relationship), and fate (e.g., the outcome of

the relationship such as break-up or marriage).

Three of the most identifiable ways in which networks have an effect on

relationships are through opportunity, information, and support (Sprecher, Felmlee,

Orbuch, & Willets, 2002). Social networks provide opportunities for new relationships to

develop by introducing two individuals, can provide an individual with information about

a potential partner, and offer support through expressing opinions about the relationship

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or romantic partner. However, the majority of research has focused on the support the social network provides. Network members can either support a relationship by actively showing their approval or they can attempt to "thwart" the relationship (Huston & Burgess, 1979). Both reactions have been found to significantly impact the development and quality of one's relationship.

<div align="center">Network Influence on Romantic Relationships</div>

As a relationship develops, an individual's romantic relationship goes through a number of stages. Researchers have made an effort to study social network influence on different aspects of one's relationship in many stages. The *ABCDE model* (Levinger, 1980) can be used to describe the different stages of a romantic relationship: attraction, building, continuation, deterioration, and ending. At each stage, social networks can contribute. For example, network members may influence the attraction stage of a relationship by setting up two individuals on a date. Alternatively, they may play a part in the ending of a relationship by encouraging an individual to leave a relationship.

Indeed, research has shown that social networks play an important role in all the stages of one's relationship, particularly through their approval or support (see Parks, 2009; Sinclair & Wright, 2009). Network approval/support of a romantic relationship includes the actions, feelings, or expressed opinions of third-parties that romantic relationship members perceive as conveying that the network member is validating of the romantic relationship and facilitating of relationship development (Leslie, Huston, & Johnson, 1986). Support from one's social network can be expressed in a variety of ways. They can express their approval directly by doing things like telling the couple that they

are "the perfect couple" or indirectly such as by inviting the two as a couple to an event (Felmlee, 2001). In addition, a social network can provide different types of support to a dating couple. *Emotional support* reassures the couple of the value of their relationship and expresses caring towards the well-being of the couple. Also, network members may serve as a source of guidance or give advice on the relationship, lending *appraisal support*. Or, they may provide *instrumental support* through providing material and financial resources, like a parent allowing their child to drive their car on a date in order to facilitate relationship development. Research has shown that people's perceptions of network support predict relationship stability, satisfaction, feelings of love, and commitment within both courtship and marriage (Bryant & Conger, 1999; Felmlee; Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992). For example, Zak, Coulter, Giglio, Hall, and Pellowski (2002) found that individuals who were in a relationship that was approved of by their social network were less likely to cheat on their partner. Also, Parks (2007) found that network approval was positively correlated with greater understanding, disclosure, attachment, and frequency of interaction.

Across a number of studies, social approval has been a fairly consistent predictor of one's romantic relationship outcomes. Most studies have operationalized approval in a similar manner, and thus the results have been analogous. However, researchers have had a more difficult time operationalizing disapproval from one's network and the results of studies examining disapproval have not been conclusive. Different metrics have been set for what is considered disapproval from one's social network; ranging from a passive lack of support from network members to members actively interfering with the relationship.

Some researchers have examined disapproval by using a single continuum, indicating that if a party doesn't show their support, then they are considered disapproving through their lack of support (Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992; Zak et al., 2002). Other researchers have examined actual disapproving behaviors that individuals experience from individuals they consider critics of their relationship (Klein & Milardo, 2000). Some researchers have explored individuals' perceptions of disapproval from social networks (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2005; Wildermuth 2004), as well as the presence of conflict between the couple and the network members (Bryant, Conger, & Meehan, 2001). Lastly, some researchers have examined the most active form of disapproval, social network interference in an attempt to end the romantic relationship (Bryan, Fitzpatrick, Crawford & Fischer, 2002; Driscoll, Davis & Lipetz, 1972).

Using these varied operationalizations, the majority of research examining network disapproval has found that negative opinions have a detrimental impact on a romantic relationship. For instance, network disapproval has been found to be a significant predictor of a couple breaking up (Felmlee, Sprecher & Bassin, 1990). Also, strong parental disapproval has been linked to weakening of a romantic relationship, including less interaction with partners and lower expectations for the future (Parks, Stan & Eggert, 1983; Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992).

Some researchers, however, have found results indicating that network disapproval can have a positive effect. Felmlee (2001) found that slight opposition can increase the stability of a relationship as long as there was also some support from another source. Driscoll and colleagues (1972) coined the term the "Romeo and Juliet

effect" when they found that parental interference was associated with stronger feelings of romantic love and that perceptions of love increased over time. In summary, research examining disapproval has offered varying conclusions on how third party disapproval can influence an individual's romantic relationship. The present studies incorporated a similar method of assessing disapproval, by presenting individuals with their parent's and friend's negative opinions of their romantic partner. The studies employed the similar method in hopes of revealing a more conclusive idea of how disapproval actually affects one's relationship.

The Influential Power of Different Social Networks

Just as type of opinion has different effects on romantic relationships, so does source of opinion matter. Friend opinion and parent opinion have been found to impact an individual's romantic relationship in different ways. Research has shown that parental support can better predict relationship stability, satisfaction, and commitment within both courtship and marriage (Bryant & Conger, 1999; Felmlee, 2001; Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992). Whereas disapproval from one's parents can lead to instability or weakening of the relationship (Sprecher & Felmlee), including less interaction with partners and lower expectations for the future (Parks et al., 1983). However, not all research has shown parental opinion to have a negative effect on one's relationship. As previously mentioned, Driscoll et al. (1972) found that parental interference can lead to a strengthening of the relationship and Parks et al. found that slight opposition can also have a more positive effect than a neutral opinion. Felmlee (2001) also found that as disapproval from a respondent's family members increases, the likelihood that the respondent remains in the

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relationship increases as well. In addition, some researchers have found parental opinion to have no effect on one's relationship. For instance, Leslie et al. (1986) found that parental reactions did not predict change in one's relationship status four months later.

Generally, friend opinion has been a more consistent indicator of romantic relationship quality than parental opinion. Most research has found that friend approval has a positive effect on one's relationship and disapproval has lead to the weakening of a relationship. For example, Felmlee (2001) found that the perceived approval from an individual's friends has a highly significant negative effect on the rate of a couple's breakup. Similarly, Etcheverry, Le, and Charania (2008) found that friends' positive opinions were linked to higher relationship satisfaction and higher levels of commitment for individuals in romantic relationships.

The effects of parental disapproval are not the only inconsistency in this area of research. Researchers have also reached different conclusions when studying whose opinion is more influential to a couple. Bryan et al. (2002) stated that it is not only the amount support received from a couple that keeps the relationship functioning, it is the source of the support. It is unlikely for an individual to be affected by only one other person because most individuals have many social contacts. In addition, one's third parties are not always going to have the same opinion. For instance, Parks (1983) found that individuals perceived their parents as more approving of their romantic relationship than their friends. Therefore, it is valuable to examine whose opinion is more influential when studying different network opinions as individuals are likely to be influenced by a number of networks and not just one. In previous research, for young adults (e.g., college

students) the opinions of parents and friends were equally as important to relationship development, but for adolescents friend opinion was more influential (Parks, 2007). Friend opinion may be more influential at this age because as individuals enter adolescence, friends begin to play a distinct role and become more important in their developing romantic relationships (Furman & Simon, 1998). Other researchers have also shown that friends and parents can influence an individual's romantic relationship, but friends have a stronger impact on romantic relationship outcomes than family members (Bryant & Conger, 1999; Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992). For instance, when comparing friend, parent, and sibling influence, Etcheverry and Agnew (2004) found that only friend opinions were a consistently significant predictor of commitment in a relationship eight months later.

Why Sources Matter

Although the previous research gives us some insight into who may be more influential to an individual, the picture is still not entirely clear. Examining when opinions within the network differ may provide a better clue as to whose opinion is more influential because it will allow us to see if individuals tend to follow their friend's or parent's opinion more. In recent years, examining social networks and their impact on romantic relationships has become a prevalent topic in social sciences research. However, studies on this subject have either studied social networks in general (e.g., using a "global" index of level of perceived support from the network as a whole) or have only examined one third party's opinion at a time (e.g., parents *or* friends). Even when studies have examined opinions from multiple sources, they have generally not explored whether

network members agree or disagree, but rather just examine the predictive utility of the source opinions separately. Therefore, it is unclear what occurs when multiple third parties approve or disapprove of a relationship and especially what happens when third parties express different opinions towards one's relationship (see Felmlee, 2001 for exception). It is unknown whether an individual will be more persuaded by one network over another and why one network may be more influential.

When trying to determine whose opinion may be more powerful to an individual, social exchange theory (Foa & Foa, 1974) provides a framework which may help us understand this power differential. Ridley and Avery (1979) introduced the idea of examining the social exchange variables and social network opinion 30 years ago. They argued that individuals would be influenced by the amount of resources they received from individuals in their social network and that those who provide more resources would be more important. However, since Ridley and Avery's original suggestion, this hypothesis has not been explored. Accordingly, I explored it here.

Social exchange theory argues that individuals' social behavior is an attempt to maximize the resources received, and minimize the losses or punishments. Therefore, individuals will seek out relationships that are the most rewarding. Turner, Foa, and Foa (1971) have completed extensive work examining the social exchange model and argue that individuals need resources from others in order to maintain a high quality of life. They divided the resources into six categories: love, status, service, information, money, and goods. Foa and Foa (1974) argue that when any of the six resources are limited, one's quality of life declines. Therefore, individuals will seek out interpersonal interactions to

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fulfill their resource needs and the person who gives them the most resources will be the most valuable. In accordance, some individuals will be more valuable than others depending on the amount of resources they provide to a particular person. Therefore, an individual will seek to maintain the highly rewarding relationship that they have with the more "valuable" third party, and be more likely to take their opinion seriously than the opinion of the less "valuable" party. Thus, if the valued third party disapproves of one's relationship, the relationship may be more likely to end.

It may be that friends are the more valued network members, providing more resources to the individual. If friends are the more valued third-party, it may explain why the opinion of friends has proven to be a more consistent predictor of relationship state and fate than parental opinions. There is some evidence to suggest that friends become a greater source of emotional, appraisal, and instrumental support to an individual as s/he progresses through young adulthood. Hartup and Stevens (1999) found that sharing, exchanging of resources, and emotional support with a friend is very important to an individual, especially during a crisis or a tough time. Parks (2007) noted that friendships for young adults often become stronger because these individuals are now able to construct their own time schedules and devote more time to communicating with their friends. More communication time is strongly correlated with commitment and closeness with one's friend. Similarly, the voluntary nature of friendships (people choose who to be friends with) can also allow for friend opinion to be more influential, especially when an individual surrounds themselves with people whose opinions they respect (Etcheverry & Agnew, 2004). Also, Milardo and Helms-Erikson (2000) found that friends are the

primary source of "relationship work" in that individuals often seek out their friends to discuss their romantic relationships. In summary, it appears that individuals rely on their friends for more resources as they grow older and may be why some researchers have found their opinions to be influential.

The Present Research

The present studies attempted to address some of the limitations of the previous research. The two experimental studies examined romantic relationships at the initiation and continuation stage and studied the effects of parental and friend opinion on the relationship. Of particular interest was the effect of conflicting opinions from one's friends and parents. Friends and parents were examined because of all the various social networks they are likely to be the closest to an individual and therefore more influential over one's relationship. In accordance with the social exchange theory, I expected that whomever an individual receives more resources from, that third party will be more influential over the individual's romantic relationship. For both studies, my hypotheses were:

H1: I hypothesized that when the third parties both showed approval of a romantic partner, the relationship quality would be significantly higher than the other conditions when third parties disagreed and when both parties disapproved. Conversely, when both parties disapproved, relationship quality would be significantly lower than the other three conditions.

H2: I also expected that friend opinion would be more influential and therefore when friends approved of a participant's romantic partner, the relationship quality would be higher than when friends disapproved (regardless of the opinion of the parents).

H3: Lastly, I expected that the amount of resources received from friends and parents and the satisfaction level of these resources would play an important role in determining whose opinion was more influential to an individual. I expected that individuals would depend on their friends more for resources and would be more satisfied with their resources from friends and, consistent with Social Exchange theory (Ridley & Avery, 1979), this could explain why friends' opinion was more valued.

Two experimental studies were conducted to further examine social networks and romantic relationships. The first study examined the influence of third party opinions for individuals in committed relationships through an experimental survey. Participants read a scenario in which they introduced their current romantic partner to their friends and parents; and then their parents and friends expressed their approval or disapproval of the partner. Responses to the scenario were gauged by asking participants how they would feel about their partner upon hearing that information.

The second study was conducted in a lab, simulating a virtual "dating game" environment where individuals talked to two bachelor(ette)s online and were given the opinion of their friend and parent on whether they believed one of the interaction partners was a good or bad match for them. In the study, likeability ratings for both interaction partners were examined before and after third party feedback. In addition, I was interested in who the participant chose for their final interaction partner.

For both studies, I examined whether an individual's friend or parent was more influential on his or her romantic relationship and if the number of resources (e.g., quantity of resources) received or the satisfaction level of the resources (e.g., quality of resources) from the friend and parent predicted this effect. I expected that friends would be more important to our college sample, as they may receive more resources from their friends than their parents. The present studies are important to the social network literature as they examined network influences experimentally, unlike the majority of studies in this area of research. In addition, the studies are also the first to manipulate friend and parent opinion at the same time and also study two different stages of romantic relationships, the formation and current state of romantic relationships.

CHAPTER II

STUDY 1

The first study was an experimental survey which investigated the effects of parent and friend opinion on an individual's current romantic relationship state. Participants read a scenario where their friends and parents approved or disapproved of their romantic partner. Participants then answered questionnaires revealing how they would feel about their romantic relationship and partner if they were in the scenario. Further, to test Social Exchange theory, scales were included to assess quantity and quality of resources received from parents and friends. Inclusion of these measures allowed for the exploration of whether resources predicted whether the opinion of one source was more valuable than another.

Methods

Participants

A sample of 132 undergraduate students from Mississippi State University was gathered for the study. Participants were recruited online from undergraduate psychology courses to receive either research credit or extra credit for completing a study titled "Friends, Parents, and Romantic Partner Online Survey." Participants were required to currently be in a romantic relationship in order to participate. There were no other requirements for participation. The mean romantic relationship length was 17.66 months

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($SD = 21.72$). The majority of the sample was exclusively dating one person (78.8%). Of the remaining participants, 12.1% were dating one person (have been on three or more dates, but are not necessarily exclusive) and 9.1% were committed to their partner (e.g., engaged, married). The sample was 75% female and 25% male with an average age of 18.98 years ($SD = 2.39$). Participants in the sample were 79.2% Caucasian and 20.8% African-American. For Study 1, approval to work with human subjects was given from the Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A for approval letter).

Design

The study employed a 2 (Parent Opinion: approval, disapproval) x 2 (Friend Opinion: approval, disapproval) between-subjects factorial design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions through their school ID, which consisted of their initials and 2-3 numbers. The last number of the school ID determined which condition of the experiment the participant could access. Therefore, when participants looked at the current research studies on the website, they could only see one condition and were unaware of the other three conditions. Sample sizes within the conditions ranged from 30-36.

Materials

Descriptives

Participants were questioned about their relationship with their current romantic partner. They were asked how long they had currently been dating their romantic partner,

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the gender of their partner, race of their partner, and if they had ever broken up in the

past. In addition, single item indices were included to assess closeness, frequency of

contact, and relationship status with their current romantic partner.

Stimulus Materials

Scenarios. Depending on the condition to which participants were assigned, they

read a scenario where the opinion of their friend and parent varied as to whether they

approved or disapproved of their romantic partner. A sample scenario of the friends

disapprove/parents approve condition is listed below; all other scenarios can be found in

Appendix C:

> One day, you and your partner decide to meet up with your friends to have dinner and see
> a movie. Dinner seems to go really well. The conversation is friendly, and your
> girl/boyfriend even offers to buy everyone dessert. Once arriving at the theatre, your
> girl/boyfriend excuses themselves to the restroom. While he/she is gone, one of your
> friends comments, "Wow, you guys really seem to be getting close!" You excitedly tell
> him/her "Yes, we are. I really like him/her." You all watch the movie, have a few laughs,
> and then call it a night. Later that next day, you run into your friends on campus. They
> both seem a little nervous, so you ask them what's up. Your first friend says, "We didn't
> want to say anything, but now that we see that you and _____ are getting closer we just
> wanted to tell you that we don't think he/she is the right person for you." Your other
> friend adds, "Yeah, we think you can find someone much better for you." You're a little
> surprised by the news, so you decide to call your mom to see what your parents think.
> You mention to your mom what your friends said, and she tells you, "Well, I just don't
> see that at all. Your father and I think he/she is a great person. He/she is the perfect match
> for you!"

The other scenarios were similar in format; variations included whether parents

approved or disapproved and whether friends approved or disapproved of the individual's

significant other. When the third parties agreed, the second source did not simply repeat

the same statement as the first source. Different approving and disapproving statements

were used. For example, one disapproving party would say, "We didn't want to say

anything, but now that we see that you and _____ are getting closer we just wanted to tell

you that we don't think he/she is the right person for you," while the other disapproving party would say, "To be honest, we don't really like him/her either, I just don't see what you see in him/her." The conditions were also counterbalanced so some participants received their parents' opinions first and other received their friends' opinions first.

Manipulation check. A manipulation check was employed to make sure participants read the scenario and interpreted the opinions as approving or disapproving. In other words, if a participant is in the condition where both parties approve, I wanted to make sure they thought the opinions were positive. Participants were asked "Based on your reading of the scenario provided earlier, how would you interpret the opinion of your parents/friends of your relationship?" They then responded using a 9-point scale ranging from -4 = *very negative* to 4 = *very positive*, and 0 = *neutral*. In order to assure that the participants read the scenario, they were also asked to list five feelings, thoughts, and actions they would have if they were placed in the scenario.

Predictor Variables: Examining Third Party Resources

Resources received. Rettig and Bubolz's (1983) resources questionnaire examines the amount and type of resources that a participant receives from his/her parents and friends. The scale includes 24 items. Participants were asked to complete the scale twice, once indicating the resources they received from their parents and then to respond with regard to the resources they received from their friends. Sample items included "How often do your friends let you know that they enjoy your company?", "How often do your parents make you feel like an important person?", and "How often do your friends do an

errand/favor for you?" Participants responded with a Likert format ranging from 0 (*never*), 4 (*about once a month*) to 8 (*about two to three times a day*). Reliability for the scale in Study 1 was α =.97.

Satisfaction with resources. The same scale to assess the quantity of resources was used again, but was adapted to measure satisfaction with resources. So, rather than asking about the number of resources participants received, participants were asked if they were satisfied with the amount of resources they received. Questions appeared as, "Are you satisfied with how often your friends let you know that they enjoy your company?" and "Are you satisfied with how often you parents do an errand/favor for you?" Participants answered using a 7-point satisfaction scale (1 = *completely dissatisfied* to 7 = *completely satisfied*). Reliability for the satisfaction scale was α = .98.

Dependent Variables: Examining Relationship State

Relationship satisfaction. The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) by Hendrick (1988) was used to examine relationship satisfaction. The scale consisted of 7 items, which were worded to refer back to the scenario the participants read. Sample items included: "In general, how satisfied would you feel with your relationship?", "How much love would you feel towards your partner?", and "To what extent would you feel that your relationship met your original expectations?" Participants answered using a 9-point Likert format, ranging from -4 to 4. The responses reflected the wording of the item and rated how satisfied the participant would be with certain aspects of their relationship. Reliability for this scale was α = .89 in the study.

Commitment to relationship. Commitment was assessed using Lund's (1985) 9-item Commitment Scale. Participants were reminded to keep the scenario in mind, and not to think about their actual current romantic relationship state. A sample item for this scale included "How likely do you think it would be that you and your romantic partner would be together in 6 months?" and a reverse item stated, "How likely do you think it would be that you would avoid making life-long plans for this relationship?" Participants responded with a 9-point Likert format, ranging from -4 (*extremely unlikely*) to 4 (*extremely likely*). The reliability for this scale was α = .85 in the study.

Feelings of love. Sternberg's (1986) Triangular Theory of Love (TTL) scale was used to measure the participants' feelings of love towards their partner. The scale contained 45 items and rather than asking how they currently felt towards their partner, they were asked how they "would feel" after reading the scenario. Questions included, "I would have confidence in the stability of my relationship," "For me, my romantic partner would be the perfect romantic partner," and "I would rather be with my romantic partner than anyone else." Participants responded using a 9-point Likert format, where 1 was *strongly disagree* and 9 was *strongly agree*. For the study, α = .99.

Procedure

Participants were recruited to participate in an online study using the Sona-systems online survey administration program. The survey was listed among other current studies available in the Psychology Department and the participant had to choose to participate. In order to see our study, before participating the participant replied to a

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screening question on which he/she must have stated that he/she was currently in a romantic relationship. After giving consent to participate (see Appendix B for consent form), the participant was directed to a new page where he/she answered a number of questionnaires examining his/her relationship with his/her two closest friends and parents/guardians, including the four resources questionnaires (resources from friends/parents and satisfaction with resources from friends/parents).

After answering the third party questionnaires, participants proceeded to a new page where they read a scenario. They were asked to place themselves in the scenario and to think about their current romantic partner, as well as the friends and parents they previously indicated in the survey when reading the story.

After reading the scenario, a manipulation check was employed to make sure participants read the scenario and interpreted the conditions correctly (e.g., felt their friends were approving if in a friend approval condition). Then, participants were asked to answer a number of questionnaires about their romantic relationship while keeping the scenario in mind and thinking about their reaction of their friends' and parents' opinion. In addition, the conditions were counterbalanced to switch the order of whose opinion is given first. Therefore, half of the participants received the friends' opinion first and the other half received the parents' opinion first.

Results

Study 1 was an experimental survey which manipulated friend opinion and parent opinion of one's current romantic relationship. It was expected that when third parties both approved of the participant's romantic partner, the relationship quality variables

(commitment, relationship satisfaction, and feelings of love) would all be significantly higher than when one or both parties disapproved. However, when both parties disapproved the relationship quality variables were expected to be significantly lower than all other conditions. Also, it was predicted that when a participant's friend approved of his/her romantic partner, the relationship quality would be higher than when both parties disapproved and when parents approved but friends disapproved. Lastly, it was anticipated that resources received and satisfaction with resources would predict whose opinion was more influential when the third parties disagreed, with the expectation that friends would be the more influential.

<div align="center">

Manipulation Check

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Manipulation checks were employed in the study to ensure that participants read the scenario and interpreted the opinion of their parents and friends to be consistent with the condition. Participants were asked to interpret the opinions of their friend and parent based on the scenario and reveal if they believed their approving or disapproving. First, individual responses were examined to see if anyone misinterpreted the condition (e.g., thought their friend was approving when they were disapproving in the scenario). Originally, the sample was composed of 155 participants and after examining the manipulation check responses, 23 participants were eliminated. Thus, the final sample was composed of 132 participants.

For the final sample, a univariate ANOVA revealed a significant difference between the scores on the manipulation check of parent opinion when parents approved and disapproved [$F(1, 130) = 299.23$, $p < .005$, partial $\eta^2 = .70$]. When parents approved,

the mean score on the manipulation check was 3.21 (SD =1.19) and when parents

disapproved the mean score was -1.71 (SD = 2.02). Similarly, there was a significant

difference in the manipulation check measures for friend approval and disapproval, F(1,

130) = 194.77, p < .005, partial η^2 = .60. When friends were approving of the

relationship, the mean score for the manipulation check was 2.83 (SD = 1.52) and when

friends disapproved the mean score was -1.51 (SD = 2.02). Therefore, our manipulation

checks indicated that the participants did understand the condition and interpreted the

opinions of their friends and parents correctly. Further, the positive reactions seemed to

be interpreted as more approving than the negative opinions were seen as disapproving.

When Third Party Members Agree

In order to explore what effects these friend and parent opinions have on one's

romantic relationship, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted.

The three dependent variables (e.g., love, commitment, and satisfaction) were all highly

correlated (p < .0005) with correlations ranging from r = .60 to r = .81, which justified

the use of a MANOVA. For the initial analysis, friend opinion and parent opinion were

entered as independent variables and relationship satisfaction, commitment, and feelings

of love were entered as the dependent variables. The multivariate tests revealed a

significant main effect for both friend opinion [Wilks Λ = .84, F(3, 126) = 8.31, p <

.0005, partial η^2 = .17] and parent opinion [Wilks Λ = .80 F(3, 126) = 10.53, p < .0005,

partial η^2 = .20]. However, there was not a significant interaction between the two

independent variables [Wilks Λ = .98, F(3, 126) = 0.96, p = NS].

Similarly, when examining the univariate effects, relationship satisfaction [$F(1, 128) = 23.20$, $p < .0005$, partial $\eta^2 = .15$] and commitment [$F(1, 128) = 18.02$, $p <. 0005$ partial $\eta^2 = .12$] were significantly influenced by friend opinion. Feelings of love only approached significance [$F(1, 128) = 4.70$, $p = .077$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$]. Parent opinion significantly affected all three relationship variables [relationship satisfaction, $F(1, 128) = 29.51$, $p < .0005$, partial $\eta^2 = .19$; commitment, $F(1, 128) = 23.69$, $p < .0005$, partial $\eta^2 = .16$; feelings of love, $F(1, 128) = 4.67$, $p = .033$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$]. The results of the univariate effects seem to indicate that parent opinion might matter a little more than friend opinion for a participant's feelings of love toward his/her partner and, given effect sizes, parent opinion may also be slightly more influential for commitment and relationship satisfaction.

Post-hoc tests were conducted using the Tukey Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) test to examine differences between the conditions. In order to examine differences between the conditions, the two opinion variables were combined into a single feedback condition (both approve, both disapprove, parents approve/friends disapprove, and friends approve/parents disapprove). Examination of the two conditions in which third parties agreed (both approved or both disapproved of the romantic partner) revealed that when both parties approved, relationship satisfaction ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 0.93$) and commitment ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 0.98$) were significantly higher than in any other condition where a third party member disapproved (i.e., parents disapprove/friends approve, friends disapprove/parents approve, or both disapprove). However, when both parties approved, feelings of love ($M = 7.95$, $SD = 0.81$) were only significantly higher

than when both parties disapproved but not significantly different from the other two

conditions. When both parties disapproved of one's romantic partner, relationship

satisfaction ($M = 0.20$, $SD = 1.53$) and commitment ($M = 0.41$, $SD = 1.02$) were

significantly lower than all other conditions. Feelings of love ($M = 7.11$, $SD = 1.59$) were

only lower than when both parties approved. See Figures 1-3 for summary of the means

and significant differences between conditions for the three dependent variables.

Commitment

Category	Value
Both Disapprove	0.42_a
Friend Disapprove/ Parent Approve	1.49_b
Friend Approve/ Parent Disapprove	1.36_b
Both Approve	2.23_c
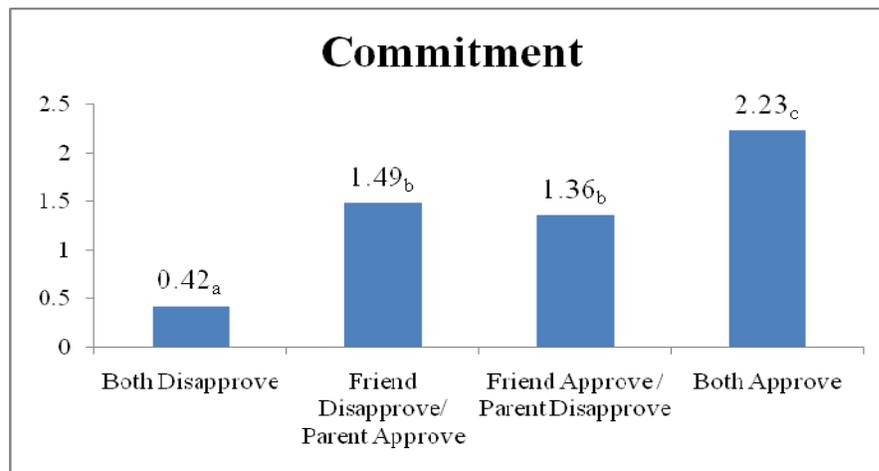
Figure 1. Differences between groups on commitment to romantic partner

Note. Means that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ in the Tukey Honestly Significant Difference

comparison. Scores for commitment to romantic partner ranged from -4.00 to 4.00.
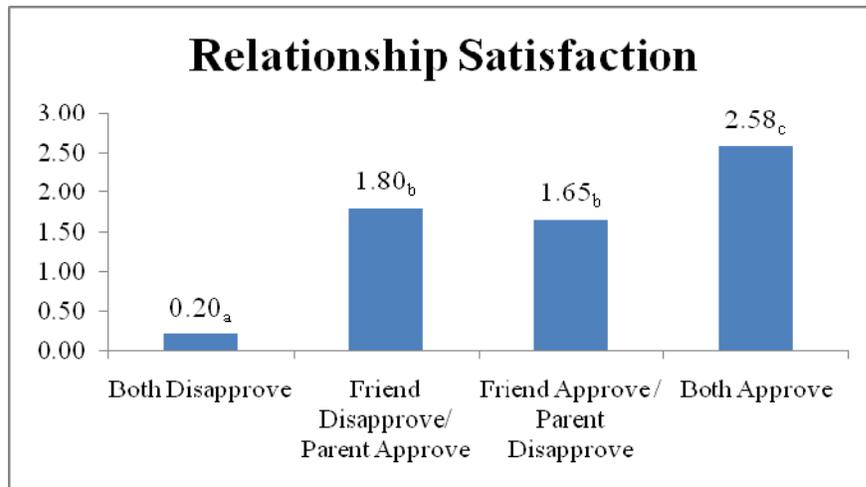
Figure 2. Differences between groups on relationship satisfaction with romantic partner

Note. Means that do not share subscripts differ at p < .05 in the Tukey Honestly Significant Difference comparison. Scores for relationship satisfaction ranged from -4.00 to 4.00.
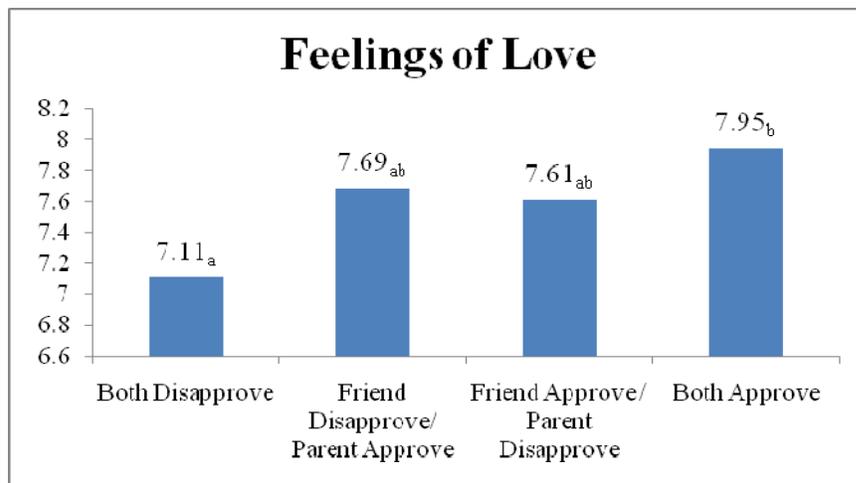
Figure 3. Differences between groups on feelings of love for romantic partner

Note. Means that do not share subscripts differ at p < .05 in the Tukey Honestly Significant Difference comparison. Scores for feelings of love ranged from 1.00 to 9.00.

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The results of the MANOVA largely confirmed the first hypothesis. When parents and friends both approved of one's romantic partner the scores for commitment and relationship satisfaction were significantly higher than when both parties disapproved and when both parties disagreed. The results for feelings of love variable were the only exception to hypothesis 1, as the scores when both parties approved were only significantly higher than the both disapprove condition. The first hypothesis was further supported with the finding that when both parties disapproved of a romantic partner commitment and relationship satisfaction were significantly lower than all the other conditions in which at least one individual was approving of the romantic relationship.

When Third Parties Disagree

In order to examine the effects of parental and friend opinion in the conditions in which the opinions differed, the same Tukey HSD post-hoc tests to evaluate the first hypothesis were studied. For the second hypothesis, it was expected that friend opinion would be more influential and therefore when friends approved, the scores on the relationship variables would be higher than when friends disapproved. However, post-hoc tests revealed no significant differences between the conditions in which parents and friends disagreed among all three dependent variables. As previously mentioned, parental opinion actually emerged as having a more significant effect on the relationship variables than friend opinion in the original MANOVA analysis, but based on the post-hoc analysis

parents' opinion did not seem to carry enough weight to make a difference in the disagreement conditions. Regardless, the results did not support the second hypothesis. Refer to Figures 1-3 for the means and differences between all conditions.

Examination of Resources

Before performing hypothesis testing by examining the influence of the various resources variables, it is important to address the descriptive statistics of these variables. In the survey before reading the scenario, participants were asked to rate how often they received resources from their friends and parents as well as how satisfied they were with these resources. A repeated measures ANOVA revealed a significant difference between the amount of resources participants received from their friends and parents [Wilks Λ = .95, F (1,131) = 6.584, p = .01, partial η^2 =.048]. Consistent with expectations, participants indicated that they received significantly more resources from their friends (M = 4.36, SD = 1.08) than their parents (M = 4.11, SD = 1.09). However, there was not a significant difference between how satisfied participants were with the resources they received [Wilks Λ = 1.00, F (1,131) = 0.613, p = NS] with a mean satisfaction score for parents of 2.07 (SD = 0.94) and a mean score of 2.00 (SD = 0.95) for friends. Although individuals received fewer resources from their parents, they were equally satisfied with the resources they did receive when compared with the friends' resources. Therefore, whose opinion matters more may depend on who the participant relied on more for highly satisfying resources and not necessarily just the quantity of all resources.

Accordingly, after the initial analyses examining how third party opinion affects romantic relationship quality, I wanted to further explore the relationship of third party

opinion and one's romantic relationship by examining whether the number of resources and the satisfaction with these resources from friends and parents determined whose opinion carries more weight. I was particularly interested in examining the conditions in which the third parties disagreed. To examine the resources variables and their influence on the dependent variables, a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used. For the analysis, parent opinion and friend opinion were entered as independent variables and the four resources variables (resources from friends and parents and satisfaction with resources from friends and parents) were entered as covariates. However, the results indicated that all of the potential covariates were non-significant.

Upon further analyses to examine any other potential effects of the resources variables, all four variables were divided into high or low scores using a median split and were treated as categorical independent variables. The new independent variables were then separately run with the two opinion IVs in a MANOVA to examine any potential main effects or interactions on the DVs. Results revealed a significant main effect for high or low satisfaction with the friend's resources [Wilks $\Lambda = .93$, $F(3, 122) = 3.32$, $p = .022$, partial $\eta^2 = .075$]. However, there was no interaction of high/low satisfaction with friend opinion [Wilks $\Lambda = .98$, $F(3, 122) = 0.92$, $p = $ NS] nor with parent opinion [Wilks $\Lambda = .99$, $F(3, 122) = 0.39$, $p = $ NS]. Additionally, there was no three-way interaction between high/low satisfaction with friends' resources and both opinion variables [Wilks $\Lambda = .99$, $F(3, 122) = 0.26$, $p = $ NS]. Therefore, one's satisfaction with the resources from his/her friends did not actually influence how important the friends' or parents' opinions were. It seems that when individuals are more satisfied with their friends' resources then

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they feel better about their romantic relationships as well. It is possible that these individuals just seek out better relationships in general, and therefore they are more satisfied with their friends and their romantic partners than other individuals. Regardless, the results did not confirm my third hypothesis. Although satisfaction with friend's resources does seem to directly influence the romantic relationship variables, all four resources variables did not help explain the relationship between third party opinion and romantic relationship state.[i]

Discussion

In summary, Study 1 provided valuable insight into how third party opinion can influence one's romantic relationship state. The results largely confirmed Hypothesis 1 as it was revealed that when friends and parents both approved of one's current romantic relationship, commitment and relationship satisfaction were significantly higher than when both parties disapproved and when third parties had differing opinions. For feelings of love, when both parties approved, scores were significantly higher than when both disapproved but did not differ from the disagreement conditions. There was no support for Hypothesis 2 or Hypothesis 3 in Study 1. Yet, the results of Study 1 are interesting as they revealed that there are slight differences in the influential power of friend and parent opinion on the different romantic relationship variables. For commitment and relationship satisfaction, friend and parent opinion emerged as being equally influential but for love, parental opinion was more important. Previous researchers have had different beliefs as to whose opinion is more influential; however, no one has experimentally manipulated these third party opinions at the same time. Therefore, until this point researchers have

relied on correlational research or a combination of studies to reach these assumptions which cannot prove a causal link between different opinions and relationship quality. The present study is the first to directly examine the effects of friend and parent opinion and suggests that different relationship factors are influenced more by various third parties.

The present study also found that approval and disapproval were equally influential on one's current relationship state. For all three dependent variables, the disagreement conditions did not differ significantly from one another. If approval or disapproval was more influential, it would be expected that these scores for the disagreement conditions would be more similar to one of the both approve or both disapprove conditions. Instead, the means for the conditions in which one party approved and another disapproved were virtually the average of the two means for the conditions in which third-parties agreed. Lastly, the present study also suggests that third party opinion influences some romantic relationship factors more strongly than others. The difference in influential power may be because two of the relationship quality variables focused on the relationship (i.e., commitment and relationship satisfaction), but the other focused on the romantic partner (i.e., feelings of love). So, factors concerning the relationship may be more susceptible to third party influence but actual feelings towards the romantic partner are not.

The first study does have its limitations, as participants were required to imagine what they would do in the scenario and no actual behaviors were examined. It is common knowledge in social psychology that individuals often believe they would act a certain way in a given situation, although in reality this behavior may or may not actually occur.

This might explain why results in this scenario experiment are somewhat different from longitudinal surveys of individuals in existing relationships where it has been shown that friend opinion is a strong predictor of relationship state and fate, and often a stronger and more consistent predictor than parental opinion (Etcheverry & Agnew, 2004; Felmlee, 2001; Loving, 2006; Sprecher & Femlee, 1992). The next study sought to improve on Study 1 by addressing these limitations and examining both emotional and behavioral measures of relationship formation when faced with third party opinions of a potential romantic partner.

CHAPTER III

STUDY 2

In Study 2, parental and friend approval and disapproval were examined again.

Rather than examining the effects of these variables through a scenario study, participants

participated in a dating game over the internet. Running the virtual dating game allowed

me to observe actual behavior and reactions instead of just what a participant imagined

they would do in a given situation. Also, the study focused on relationship formation as

participants were developing relationships with "bachelors" or "bachelorettes" in this

study, whereas the participants in Study 1 were already in a romantic relationship. During

their interactions with the interaction partners online, the participant was given false

feedback from their friend and parent about who they thought was a good or bad match

for the participant.

Methods

Participants

For Study 2, 228 participants from Mississippi State University were recruited for

a study titled: Impression Formation over the Internet. Participants were undergraduate

students who were participating in the study for research credit in their general

psychology course. Participants in the study had to be single (not currently in a romantic

relationship). In the study, 60.1% of the sample were female, and 39.9% were males with an average age of 18.59 (SD = 1.09). The sample of was also 72.8% Caucasian, 20.2% were African-American, and 7.0% were of another race. For Study 2, approval to work with human subjects was given from the Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A for approval letter).

Design

The study employed a 2 (Parent Opinion: approve, disapprove) x 2 (Friend Opinion: approve, disapprove) x 2 (Interaction Partner: target, control – within subjects) mixed factorial design. Third party opinion was given for one interaction partner only, the "target" interaction partner. There were two conditions in which sources agree (both agreed target was a good match or both agreed target was a bad match) and two conditions in which sources disagreed (friend thought good match/parent thought bad match or friend thought bad match/parent thought good match). The other interaction partner served as a within-subjects control, as the participant was always told that we did not receive any assessment of that partner. There were 51-68 participants in each condition.[ii]

Materials

Overview

I will start with a general overview of this two-part study and then move to a detailed description of the instruments used in both parts. The present study began with a screening survey to obtain basic information about the participant, their friend, parent or

guardian, and their relationship with that friend and parent. A week to a month post-survey, the participant returned for the "Virtual Dating Game" part of our study. During the "dating game," the participant interacted with two bachelors or bachelorettes -- actually trained confederates -- through a series of conversations online. Each participant was given alleged feedback information from the parent and friend they listed during the screening survey. The friend and parent either agreed that one of the bachelor(ettes) was a good or bad match, or they disagreed with one another. The other bachelor(ette) served as a control as no feedback about him/her was given. After every interaction, the participant ranked their liking of each interaction partner using a likeability scale (*Likeability Rating: First Impressions and Second Impressions*). After the second set of conversations, the participant was told we only had time for one more conversation and he/she must choose with whom he/she would like to have his/her final interaction (*Final Choice*).

Screening Survey Materials

In Part 1 of the study, along with filling out the initial survey, the participant was asked to provide contact information for a friend and family member and fill out a profile sheet. Refer to Appendix D for a copy of these materials.

- Specifically, participants completed a "Collateral Contacts Sheet." On the sheet, individuals were asked to fill in contact information for a parent/guardian and a friend. Participants were informed that we may be contacting their friend and parent as part of the experiment. In actuality, the third parties never were contacted, even though we told the participants that we did.

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- Secondly the participant was asked to fill out a "Profile Sheet." Participants were asked to describe themselves and describe what they look for in a romantic partner.
- Lastly the participant was asked to complete the same predictor variable scales used in Study 1: Resources Received and Satisfaction with Resources from the parent and friend the participant had listed on their contact sheet. Refer back to Study 1 for information on the resources variables.

Dating Game Experiment - Stimulus Materials

After completing the screening survey, the participant returned a week to a month later to complete the experimental portion of our study. This portion of the study employed the use of Yahoo Instant Messenger and the following materials:

Confederate profiles. Before any interactions occurred, the participant was given a copy of their interaction partners profile sheets. The same two bachelors or bachelorettes talked to every participant. Depending on whether the participant was a male or female they either received Michael's and James' profile sheets, or Tanya's and Eva's profile sheets. Participants were matched with the interaction partners on race, religion, and political affiliation. Otherwise, the same two profiles were given to each participant.

Interview questions. Participants were given a list of the "Top 40 Getting to Know You Questions." They were told that we provided the list to help the conversations move along smoothly. Questions on the list included a variety of topics from questions about their personality, friends/family, experiences, and interests/hobbies. Some of the

questions included were, "In a general way, how would you describe yourself?", "Where did you grow up and what was it like?" and "What is your ideal romantic relationship/partner?" The questions were generated during pilot sessions wherein we identified the most commonly asked questions.

Confederates were given scripts of which questions from the "Top 40 Getting to Know You Questions" sheet to ask the participant. Confederates were also instructed in what order to ask the questions. The order in which the confederates spoke to the participant determined which set of questions they asked the participant.

Confederate script. Confederates also had a script which presented every answer to the "Top 40 Getting to Know You Questions" list. Depending on which bachelor or bachelorette the confederate was determined which script they used. The scripts had been piloted and balanced to make each confederate equally likeable, interesting, and desirable.[iii] The confederates were told to act friendly and interested in the participant's questions and answers. Once a participant asked a question from the list, confederates either typed out the answer or copied and pasted the answer into the instant messenger window and waited an appropriate time (long enough to where it appeared they actually typed the response) to send the message.

Dependent Variables – Experimental Materials

During the internet interaction, the following dependent variables were measured. For a copy of these materials, refer to Appendix E.

Likeability rating. After every interaction, participants were given an "impressions" sheet. The sheets allowed participants to rate how they felt about each interaction partner. A likeability scale was included on each sheet, allowing the participant to rate how much they liked their interaction partner. Questions on the *Initial Impressions* sheet included "I could see my interaction partner and I becoming friends" and "I am interested in knowing more about him/her." Reversed items were also included, such as "I wouldn't care if I ever interacted with this person again" and "I feel like this was a waste of time." The *Second Impressions* likeability scale contained all of the same items as the *Initial Impressions* scale, but also included the items, "I think this interaction partner would make a good boy/girlfriend" and "I believe this interaction partner is a better match for me." Reversed items were also included in the scale. Participants responded to the likeability scale using an eight-point scale, ranging from 1=*completely disagree* to 8=*completely agree*. The reliability of the *Initial Impressions* scale was α = .86 and for the *Second Impressions* scale α = .92 for the study.

Final choice. Before the final set of interactions, participants were told we were running short on time and must choose their final interaction partner. Participants then told the experimenter who they would like to have their last interaction with and the experimenter made a note of whether they chose the target interaction partner for their final interaction. Binary coding was used to indicate the final choice of the target (0 = *not chosen*, 1 = *chosen*).

Procedure

Participants were recruited online for a study examining how relationships are

formed over the internet. There were two parts for the study. First, participants completed

a screening survey and then returned for the internet interaction part of the experiment.

Screening Survey

Participants signed-up online for a time to complete the screening information.

Upon arrival, they signed a consent form agreeing to participate in the study (see

Appendix B for copy of consent form). Then, they filled out the Collateral Contacts

sheet, the Profile sheet, and the screening survey. Upon completion, they received an

appointment card reminding them when they were to return for Part 2 of the study.

Online Interactions

The participant returned individually within one month to complete the internet

interaction part of the study. When the participant arrived, he/she was placed in a cubicle

with a computer. He/she was told that they were in the mock dating game condition of

our study, and would be talking to two "bachelors" or "bachelorettes" through instant

messaging. The instructions were recited as follows to the participant:

"Okay, looks like today you have been assigned to the dating game condition of our study. So, in this condition we have two bachelors (bachelorettes) for you to talk to today. So what this means is that you are going to have a series of 10-15 minute interactions with two fellow participants. During the first interaction, they will be the interviewer and get to ask you questions to find out more about you. You can also ask questions back to them if you want, but the primary purpose is just an initial getting-to-know each other. During the second interaction, you are the primary interviewer and get to ask the questions. You should get information about them that you think would help

you form an impression of them, and, given the condition, think about your level of interest in them. During the last interaction you have a free talk about whatever you choose."

After reciting the instructions, the experimenter gave the participant a copy of the bachelor(ettes) profile sheets and the "Top 40 Getting to Know You Questions" list. The participant was then left in his/her cubicle to review the information. When the experimenter returned, the participant was asked who he/she initially thought was a better match for them romantically. Then, depending on whom they were set-up to talk to first (which was pre-determined during random condition assignment and by counterbalancing) he/she proceeded to having their first conversations with the bachelors/ bachelorettes. The first set of conversations lasted 10 minutes each. For the first set, the confederates asked the participant questions from the "Top 40 Getting to Know You Questions" list using their scripts.

After the first set of conversations, the participant was given the false feedback from his/her parent and friend they listed on their Collateral Contacts sheet. The friend and parent were never actually contacted; so depending on the condition, the parent and friend either agreed that one participant is a good match, agreed that one is a bad match, or they will had differing opinions as to whether one is a good or bad match. The other bachelor(ette) was always neutral and the participant was told that we did not receive an opinion of him/her. Depending on the condition, the participants were given the following information.

In the experimental conditions participants were told:

> *"Before we proceed to the next series of conversations, we wanted to give you a little more information about one of the individuals you are speaking with today. Before arriving here today, someone in our lab contacted your friend and parent that you listed on your contact sheet. Our research assistant gave them a synopsis of the one of your interaction partners and asked your parent and friend if they thought your interaction partner would be a good or bad match for you…"*

- *Both Approve Condition:* "It says here, that your friend and parent both agreed that _____ was the good match for you. Your parent said there was just something they really liked him/her. And your friend thought you two were compatible."

- *Both Disapprove Condition*: "It says here, that your friend and parent both agreed that _____ was a bad match for you. Your parent said there was just something about him/her that rubbed them the wrong way. Your friend said that he/she didn't think you two were compatible."

- *Parent Approves/ Friend Disapproves Condition*: "Well this is interesting; this is the candidate who your parent thought would be a good match for you. Your parent said there was just something they really liked about him/her. But your friend thought they were a bad match for you. Your friend said there was just something about him/her that rubbed them the wrong way."

- *Parent Disapproves/Friend Approves Condition*: "Well this is interesting; this is the candidate who your friend thought would be a good match for you. Your friend said there was just something they really liked about him/her. But your parent thought they were a bad match for you. Your parent said there was just something about him/her that rubbed them the wrong way."

In the within subjects control condition participants were told:

- "We actually were not able to ask your friend and parent about the other participant because they did not take the survey soon enough for us to write up a profile to share with your parent and friend."

A number of steps were taken to control for ordering effects. First, the participant was randomly assigned to a condition. For individuals in the conditions where third parties disagreed, the order in which the good opinion and bad opinion was given alternated. The scripted interaction partners also alternated in the order that they got to

speak to the participant first. If "Michael" talked to a female participant first, then for the next female participant in the same condition "Michael" spoke to her second. Note, all interaction partners were scripted confederates, trained to given standard answers to the interview questions provided. Answers were piloted and the confederate personas were pre-tested to ensure equal likeability.

Also, the feedback for the interaction partners alternated within the order of the scripted partners. Therefore, when "Michael" was the first interaction partner he alternated between being the good/bad match or the control match. It is also important to note that the confederates were blind to the condition of the experiment and were unaware of whether they were the good/bad match or the control match.

After receiving the feedback from their parent and friend, the participant then chose who they would like to talk to first for their next set of interactions and were asked how long they would like to speak to them. Regardless of how long the participant wanted to speak to each bachelor(ette), both of the conversations with the target and control lasted 12 minutes (this was unbeknownst to the participant).

After the second set of conversations, the participant was told that the experiment had run too long and we were running out of time. Therefore, we were going to let them choose who they would like to talk to last for their "free chat" interaction. They were encouraged to choose who they liked more, and were allowed to choose how long they would like for their final interaction to last.

Debriefing Procedure

After the last interaction, the participant was debriefed using funnel questioning. The questions tested whether or not the participant recalled their friend's and parent's opinions, and whether they agreed or disagreed with their opinions. The experimenter also examined whether or not the participant mistrusted the feedback or otherwise knew study hypotheses by asking them what they thought the study was about. To check for whether the participant had prior knowledge of the experiment, the experimenter asked whether they had heard anything about the experiment or knew anyone who had or will be participating. In addition, a "guessing game" was employed to test whether or not participant correctly guessed how much money was in a jar. The likelihood of someone guessing the correct amount was unlikely, so if someone correctly guessed we would have reason to believe they had some previous knowledge of the experiment. The participant was also told that we did not actually contact their friend and parent for our study, and were given the opportunity to reassert consent or withdraw their data from our study (no participant chose to withdraw their data). The participant was then asked to sign a confidentiality agreement stating that they would not disclose any information about the experiment to others. Edlund, Sagarin, Skowronski, Johnson, and Kutter (2009) found that using the guessing game is a good means of both preventing and testing for potential crosstalk between participants, and when participants are asked to agree not disclose information about the experiment the prevalence cross-talk is reduced. Lastly, the participant was asked if they have any further questions about the study, and upon completion of the study was given research credits.

Results

Study 2 was a mock dating game experiment in which participants interacted with two "bachelors" or "bachelorettes." The same independent variables, friend opinion and parent opinion, were manipulated in this study. However, in the second study I observed the influence of the third party opinions on romantic relationship formation instead of current relationship state. Therefore, two different dependent variables (one emotional and one behavioral) were studied: the likeability ratings of the two interaction partners (for two sets of interactions) and the participant's final choice of interaction partner. During the experiment, the participant received feedback from their parent and friend for one interaction partner, the "target" interaction partner, stating whether or not they thought he/she was a good or bad match for the participant. The other interaction partner was a within-subjects control and the participant received no third-party feedback about the control interaction partner.

The hypotheses for Study 2 were similar to Study 1. I expected that when participants were told that both their friend and parent thought the target interaction partner was a good match for the participant then the second likeability rating for the target would be higher than the control interaction partner. In addition, I expected that the "good match" interaction partner would be chosen for the final chat more often than the control partner. Conversely, when both parties thought the target interaction partner was a bad match I expected the target would have lower second likeability ratings than the control partner and would be less likely to be chosen for the final interaction. For my next hypothesis, I expected friend opinion to be more influential and therefore, regardless of

parent opinion, when a friend thought the interaction partner was a good match, the likeability rating and likelihood of being chosen for the final interaction would be higher than when the friend thought he/she was a bad match. Lastly, I expected the amount of resources received from the third parties and their satisfaction with these resources to interact with the third party opinions and influence the likeability rating scores. I expected that these resources variables would determine when a third party opinion was more powerful, such that when a participant received more resources or was more satisfied with their resources then that third party's opinion would be more powerful. As it was anticipated that individuals might depend on friends more, these resources variables were expected to provide potential insight into why friend opinion might carry more weight.

Analysis Plan

To explore the effects of friend and parent opinion on likeability ratings and final interaction choice in Study 2, a number of different analyses were conducted. First, two repeated-measures ANOVAs were run to explore any potential differences in the likeability scores the target and control confederate before and after third party feedback was given. The participant spoke to each interaction partner twice, once before feedback from the third parties was given and again afterwards. After each conversation, the participant filled out a likeability scale for the interaction partner. For each repeated-measures ANOVA, the likeability scores for the control or target interaction partners were entered as the within-subjects factor and the friend opinion and parent opinion IVs were entered as the between-subject factors. It was expected that there would be no effect

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for the within subjects and between subjects factors on the analysis of the likeability

ratings occurring before the feedback manipulation. However, I did expect there to be

main effects of friend opinion and parent opinion on the post-feedback likeability ratings.

Thus, the first analysis serves as a manipulation check and the second moves onto

hypothesis testing.

Once establishing with the repeated measures ANOVAs that friend opinion and

parent opinion significantly affected the likeability ratings of the target interaction partner

differently than the control, further analyses were conducted to examine where significant

differences existed between all of the different conditions. A univariate ANOVA was

used to conduct post hoc testing, by entering the "Feedback Condition" as the

independent variable and the likeability rating as the dependent variable. The feedback

condition was created by combining the parent and friend opinions into a single variable

with four different levels: both approve, friend approves/parent disapproves, friend

disapproves/parent approves, and both disapprove. With the four different levels of the

Feedback Condition, we were able to run the Tukey HSD post hoc tests to determine

where any differences between the four groups existed.

Then, to test Hypothesis 3, a repeated measures ANCOVA was run to examine

whether the resources variables (friend/parent resources, satisfaction with friend/parent

resources) were potential covariates of friend opinion and parent opinion on the target's

likeability rating. Additional exploratory analyses were also conducted wherein

individuals were divided into categories based upon which source – friend or parent –

they depended on more. The Resource Quantity Category and Resource Satisfaction

Category were each treated as additional IVs. Two univariate ANOVAs were run – one for each additional new IV - with the Feedback Condition variable to explore any effects on the target's likeability score.

Lastly, to examine the second dependent variable of whether the target interaction partner was chosen for the final interaction, a chi-square analysis was conducted to see if the feedback condition had a significant main effect. The second dependent variable was coded as a binary variable which indicated whether the target was chosen for the final interaction (0 = not chosen, 1 = chosen). Then, a logistic regression was conducted to examine whether friend opinion and parent opinion were able to predict the participant's final choice of interaction partner.

Stimulus Checks

Before moving to the results, it is important to ensure that there were no differences in the initial impressions likeability scores of the scripted confederates and that the virtual dating game and the third party feedback were believable. In the study, a participant spoke to two interaction partners (both of whom were actually confederates following scripts) before and after third party feedback was given. A repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to show that there were no differences in the likeability ratings of the target and control interaction partner before the social network opinions were provided. The analysis was conducted with the likeability ratings entered as the within-subjects factor (with two levels: target likeability and control likeability) and parent and friend opinion as the between-subjects factors. The likeability scores before feedback was given revealed there was no significant main effect for the within-subjects variable

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[Wilks Λ = 1.00, F (1,224) = .048, p = NS], meaning there were no differences between the initial likeability of the control and the target interaction partner. Additionally, there was no significant interaction of the likeability scores with parent opinion [Wilks Λ = 1.00, F (1,224) = 0.173, p = NS], nor was there a significant interaction between the likeability scores and friend opinion [Wilks Λ = .98, F (1,224) = 3.807, p = NS]. And lastly, there was no three-way interaction between the opinion variables and the likeability ratings [Wilks Λ = 1.00, F (1,224) = 0.599, p = NS]. Of course, the lack of an effect is not surprising as the feedback manipulation was not given until after the initial likeability ratings. This analysis is further evidence that there are no differences between the interaction partners before feedback from the third parties was given.

Another potential concern about the effectiveness of the study design is the believability of the virtual dating game and the feedback given to the participants. Participants are informed during debriefing that we did not actually contact their friend and parent to obtain feedback on their interaction partners. Although participants then sign a confidentiality agreement stating that they will not reveal to others that we do not contact their friends and parents, the concern is still present that some participants may inform others. Therefore, during debriefing participants are asked a series of questions to assess any prior knowledge of the experiment. Only 14 out of 228 participants stated that they had friends who had previously participated in the study and/or did not seem surprised when the experimenter explained to them that we did not actually contact their friend and parent. However, no one explicitly stated that they had received any information from their friends.

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In addition, a "guessing game" was used to assess any prior knowledge by asking participants to guess how much money was in a large jar. As it is unlikely for someone to guess the amount correctly, there is a possibility that the participant received prior information from someone else about the experiment if they guess the amount. Experimenters were asked to make note of any individuals who guessed within five dollars of the correct amount. Of the participants, only 2 participants guessed within this range. Analyses were run with and without these 16 participants (those who failed the guessing game and those who seemed suspicious); there were no differences in the results of the analyses. Therefore, as there was no proof of prior knowledge and these participants did not affect the results, no participants were eliminated from the sample.

Hypothesis Testing

In the study, participants completed likeability ratings twice for each of the confederates (target and control) after speaking with them. The first impressions likeability scales were completed before receiving any positive or negative feedback from their parent and friend. The second impressions likeability scales were completed after participants knew if their parent or friend thought the interaction partner was a good or bad match for them. Therefore, since no feedback had been given before the first likeability ratings I expected for there to be no differences in likeability for the two interaction partners. For the second likeability ratings however, I expected there to be a difference since participants had learned of their parent's and friend's opinion at this point. The second repeated measures ANOVAs was conducted (for second impression

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likeability scores) with the likeability scores entered as the within subject variable and friend opinion and parent opinion as the between subjects variable.

Results of the second repeated measures ANOVA indicated that there was a significant main effect for likeability rating [Wilks Λ = .92, F (1,224) = 20.69, $p < .005$, partial η^2 = .09], indicating that there was a significant difference in the second impressions of the target interaction partner and the control. In addition, friend opinion and likeability rating had a significant two way interaction [Wilks Λ = .96, F (1,224) = 9.85, $p < .005$, partial η^2 = .04]. There was also a significant three-way interaction between friend opinion, parent opinion, and likeability rating [Wilks Λ = .98, F (1,224) = 4.11, $p < .05$, partial η^2 = .02]. Parent opinion did not have a significant interaction with likeability rating [Wilks Λ = .99, F (1,224) = 1.61, p = NS]. A post hoc analysis using a Tukey HSD test was conducted to examine the significant differences of the likeability ratings for the target and control between the feedback conditions. See Figure 4 for the means and significant differences for the target's and control's likeability scores between the different conditions.

When Third Parties Agree

For the first hypothesis it was expected that when one's parent and friend both approved of the target interaction partner, then the target's likeability rating would be significantly higher than the control interaction partner within the condition and higher than the target's likeability in the other conditions. It was also expected that when both parties disapproved, the likeability ratings for the target would be significantly lower than the control and the other targets. The first hypothesis was largely supported. Results of

the post-hoc analysis revealed that when both parties approved of the target interaction partner, then their likeability score was significantly higher than the control interaction partner. Between all of the targets' ratings, when both parties approved, the target's likeability was significantly higher than when both parties disapproved. Additional support for the first hypothesis was found when both parties disapproved of the target. When the participant received negative feedback from their friend and parent, the likeability rating for the target was significantly lower than the conditions in which at least one positive opinion had been given. Interestingly, when both parties disapproved the likeability of the target was the same as the control indicating that disapproval did not necessarily hurt the target's likeability but did not help it either.
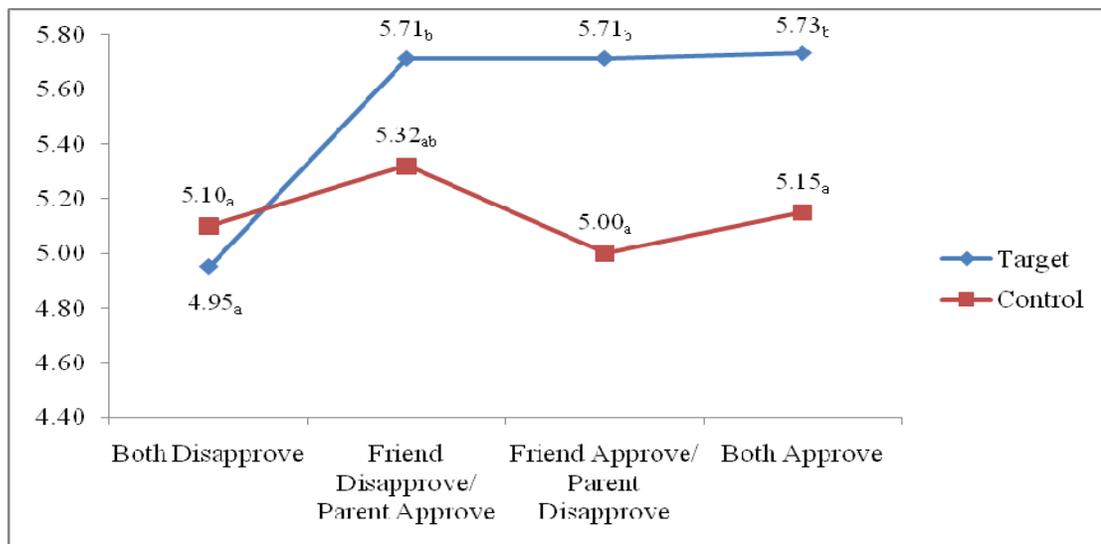
Figure 4.   Means and differences for target and control interaction partners' likeability between the feedback conditions

Note. Means that do not share subscripts differ at p < .05 in the Tukey honestly significant difference comparison. Scores for likeability ratings ranged from 1.00 to 8.00.

In particular, it appears that friend approval is important. Evident in Figure 4 (as well as in the repeated-measures ANOVA where friend opinion, and not parent opinion, had a significant main effect on likeability) is support for Hypothesis 2. Friend opinion was more influential than parental opinion, as when the friend approves of the target confederate then the likeability ratings were significantly higher than the control confederate. Whenever the friend disapproves, the likeability for the target does not differ significantly from the control indicating that the lack of approval from the friend does not necessarily make the participant dislike the target, but makes them equally likeable as the control. Examination of the differences in the likeability ratings for the target interaction partner between the feedback conditions will be further discussed next.

When Third Parties Disagree

The power of friend opinion can also be seen even in conditions in which third parties disagreed. When comparing the likeability scores of the target and the control, whenever the friend approved of the target his/her likeability rating was significantly higher than the control (despite disapproval from the parent). Whereas, when the friend disapproved of the target and the parent approved, the target's likeability rating was high but not significantly different from the control. The lack of differences within the parent approve/friends disapprove condition seems to be due to the likeability for the control being a little higher than in other conditions. It is interesting that when left with the choice of someone the parent likes, but the friend does not like versus someone neither the friend nor parent knows about, then the person neither knows about becomes more attractive/likeable.

Examination of Resources

The last hypothesis focused on the role that amount and quality of resources one received from a parent and friend might influence the weight their opinion carried. In Study 2, participants completed the same resources questionnaires (amount of resources received and satisfaction with resources) as in Study 1 with the exception that in Study 2 participants only completed the measures about one parent (participants listed their mothers 80.4% of the time) and one friend instead of two parents and two friends. Contrary to the results of Study 1, a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that there was no significant difference [Wilks $\Lambda = .99$, $F(1, 227) = 2.82$, $p =$ NS] between the amount of resources individuals received from their parent ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 1.20$) and friend ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.12$). However, there was a significant difference between the satisfaction level of these resources from the friend and parent [Wilks $\Lambda =$ .95, $F(1,226) = 12.21$, $p < .005$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$]. Participants were more satisfied with the resources they received from their parent ($M = 5.53$, $SD = 0.69$) than their friend ($M =$ 5.35, $SD = 0.79$) despite receiving the same amount of resources from each individual. Thus, the results of this analysis did not confirm expectations that individuals might receive more resources, or otherwise be more satisfied with resources received from friends instead of parents.

Nonetheless, I examined whether these resources variables contributed to our understanding of how or why third-party opinion might influence individual dating choices. Similar to the analyses in Study 1, the four resources variables were examined as possible covariates of the effect of third party approval/disapproval on the likeability

scores for the target interaction partner. A repeated measures ANCOVA was conducted examining differences in likeability between the target and control but yielded no significant covariates.

The first ANOVA examined the effects of the feedback condition and who the participant relied on for more resources on the target's post-feedback likeability score. The results indicated significant main effects for who the participant received more resources from [$F(1, 213) = 4.19$, $p = .04$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$] and for the feedback condition [$F(3, 213) = 6.05$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$]. However, there was no interaction between the two independent variables [$F(3, 213) = 1.71$, $p = $ NS]. Individuals who received more resources from their parent rated the target interaction partner higher on average than the individuals who received more resources from their friends.

Further exploration of the resources variables included creating a new variable in which the amount of resources and the satisfaction level of the resources from friends and parents were compared. Participants were broken into groups based on which score – resources from friends or resources from parents – was higher (e.g., if their Resources from Parents score was higher than the Resources from Friends score, they were assigned to the "Parents" category). The same grouping was conducted for the satisfaction variables. The new categorical variables indicated who the participant received more resources from and who he/she was more satisfied with in relation to the amount of resources they receive (individuals who had the same level of satisfaction or number of resources from both parties were excluded from the additional analyses).[iv] Each of the new variables were then entered as a categorical IV with the combined Feedback

condition IV in two univariate ANOVAs to examine any effects on the likeability score of the target.

Results of the second ANOVA test where satisfaction was examined revealed a significant main effect for the feedback condition [$F(3, 163) = 4.63$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$] but there was not a main effect for who the participant was more satisfied with [$F(1, 163) = 0.05$, $p = NS$]. However, who the participant was more satisfied with did have a significant interaction with the feedback condition variable [$F(3, 163) = 2.92$, $p = .036$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$]. Comparisons of the means using Tukey HSD test revealed that when both parties approved or disapproved of the interaction partner, there was no difference in the likeability ratings between the individuals who were more satisfied with their parents than friends. For the disagreement conditions, it appeared that whomever an individual was more satisfied with, their likeability ratings reflected that individual's feedback. For instance, it seemed that when individuals were more satisfied with their parent's resources and their parent approved of the interaction partner (despite the disapproval from the friend) their likeability rating of the target was higher than for the individual who was more satisfied with their friend. However, these differences were actually non-significant in the Tukey HSD test. It should be noted, though, that when using more liberal post hoc tests, differences did emerge between these conditions. Refer to Figure 5 for a graphical depiction of the interaction.
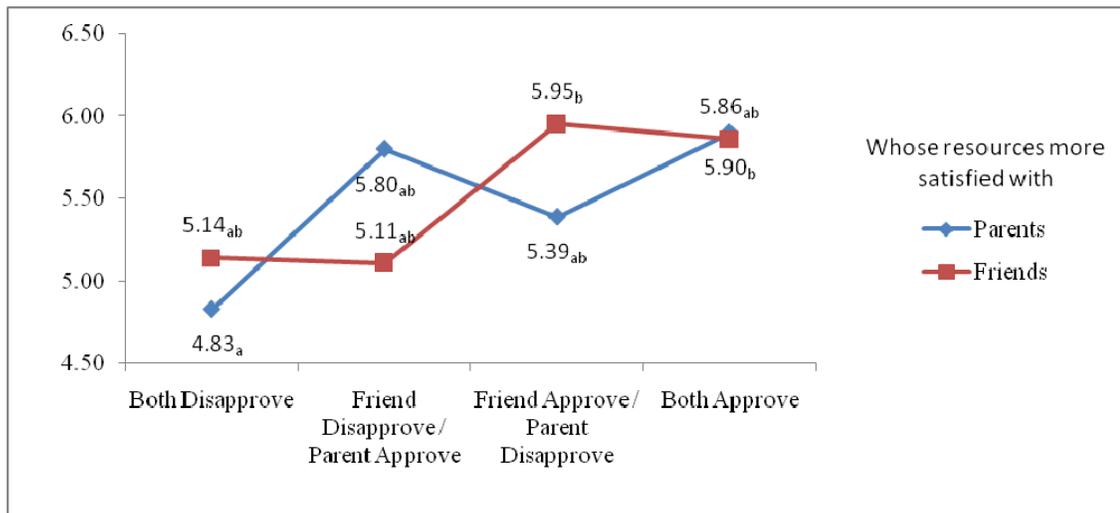
Figure 5. Summary of the mean likeability scores for the target interaction partner across the conditions for individuals who are more satisfied with their parent or friend

Note. Means that do not share subscripts differ at p < .05 in the Tukey Honestly Significant Difference comparison. Scores for likeability ratings ranged from 1.00 to 8.00.

Final Choice

Another dependent variable that I examined was the participant's final choice of interaction partner. Just as third party opinion influenced the likeability rating for the target interaction partner, I also expected the third party opinions to influence the target interaction partner's likelihood of being chosen for the final interaction. As can be seen in Figure 6, when the friend and parent both disapproved of the target interaction partner, only 32.7% of participants chose the target for the final interaction (so 67.3% chose the control interaction partner). When the parent approved but the friend disapproved, the participant chose the target 42.6% of the time. However, when the friend approved and

the parent disapproved, the participant chose the target 61.4% of the time. Interestingly, when both third parties approved the target was only chosen 54.9%. The chi square analysis revealed that there was a main effect of the feedback condition and whether the target was chosen for the final interaction (χ^2 (3, 228) = 10.74, p = .013).
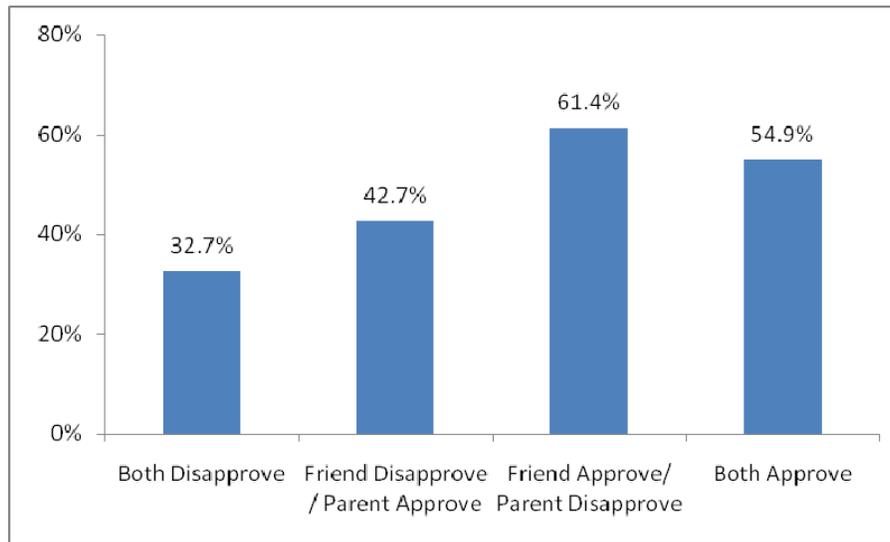
Figure 6.   Percent of time target interaction partner was chosen for final interaction across all conditions

Lastly, a logistic regression was conducted to examine whether friend opinion and parent opinion were able to predict the odds of the target interaction partner being chosen for the final interaction. Regression results indicated that the overall model with the two predictors (friend and parent opinion) versus a model with intercept only was statistically significant, χ^2(2, N = 228) = 9.27, p < .01. The model using friend opinion and parent opinion was able to correctly classify 62.2.% of those who did not choose the target for the final interaction and 57.8% of those who did chose the target, for an overall success

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rate of 60.1%. The results indicated that parent opinion did not help predict the participant's final choice; however, friend opinion was a significant predictor. The odds ratio for friend opinion indicates that when holding all other variables constant, when the friend approves of the target interaction partner the participant is 1.5 times more likely choose the target than when their friend disapproves. Table 1 shows the logistic regression coefficients, Wald tests, odds ratios, and the 95% confidence intervals for both predictors.

Table 1   Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis of Final Choice as a Function of
         Third Party Opinion

	B	*S. E.*	*Wald*	*p*	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
Parent Opinion	.04	.14	0.10	NS	1.05	0.80 – 1.37
Friend Opinion	.41	.14	9.08	.00	1.51	1.15 – 1.97

Discussion

Study 2 makes a unique contribution to the field of social networks literature as not only is it one of the first (second to Study 1) to examine multiple third party opinions experimentally, but it is also one of few studies to observe the effects of third party opinion on romantic relationship formation (as opposed to examining relationships that already exist). The results of the study are interesting because they revealed that third party approval seemed to carry more weight than disapproval for the likeability ratings of the target interaction partner. Additionally, friend opinion emerged as being more influential than parent opinion when comparing the target's rating with the control's

rating as well as when predicting who the participant would choose for their final interaction partner. Who an individual was more satisfied with (in resources) also emerged as having a significant interaction with the third party feedback on the target's likeability score. As such, Study 2 provided more support for the second and third hypotheses than Study 1.

The first hypothesis of Study 2 was largely confirmed as when both parties thought the target interaction partner was a bad match, the likeability ratings were significantly lower than when at least one person thought he/she was a good match for the participant. However, when both parties thought the target was a good match, the likeability ratings did not significantly differ from when only one person thought he/she was a good match. The results suggest that when an individual is trying to determine whether he/she likes someone, they are more influenced by the positive opinions of their third party members. It appears that disapproval actually does not have much of an effect on the target's likeability rating, as when both parties disapproved the likeability rating was the same as the control interaction partner and not less likeable. In summary, as long as the participant has the support of at least one member of their social network (particularly if that member is a friend), then the liking of the potential partner seems to be validated and the feelings towards that individual grow more positive. These results are consistent with literature on positive illusions in romantic relationships (Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996; Murray & Holmes, 1997) as it suggests that individuals selectively "tune out" any negative feedback and focus on the positive feedback they receive to validate their feelings towards a romantic partner. To date, however, positive

illusions have only been established to occur in existing relationships, whereas this study suggests that the focusing on the positive qualities of a partner may start from the very beginning.

The second hypothesis received some support in Study 2, as friend opinion emerged as being able to predict whether the target interaction partner would be chosen for the final interaction, whereas parent opinion was not a significant predictor. Participants were more likely to choose their friend's good match and less likely to choose the friend's bad match for their final interaction partner. Friend opinion was also a deciding factor in whether the likeability rating for the target interaction partner was significantly higher than the control. When the friend thought the target was a good match, the likeability rating was significantly higher for that individual than for the control individual. When the target was thought to be a bad match by the friend, then the likeability ratings did not differ from the control.

The third hypothesis also received some support after restructuring the resources variables, particularly when observing whether individuals were more satisfied with their friend's or parent's resources. The new satisfaction variable interacted with the feedback condition and provided some support for Hypothesis 3. The results of this analysis showed that whomever a participant was more satisfied with, then they were more influenced by that source's opinion. For example, when individuals were more satisfied with the resources they received from their friend and the friend thought the target was a good match then the likeability rating of the good match was significantly higher than

that of a bad match. The same effect occurred for the individuals who were more satisfied

with their parent's resources. The results suggest that there are third party factors that

impact the influential power of opinions from different third party members.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Overview

The present studies add to the growing body of research surrounding social

networks and their influence on romantic relationships. Numerous studies have

established that parent opinion and friend opinion can affect one's romantic relationship

development (e.g., Bryant et al., 2001; Felmlee, 2001; Driscoll et al., 1972; Leslie et al.,

1986). However, none of the previous research has experimentally examined multiple

sources of opinion at the same time to compare whose opinion is more influential. It is

important to examine multiple third parties, as it is a more realistic scenario for what

most individuals would actually experience in the real world. An individual is embedded

in multiple social networks, so when they are in a romantic relationship they are likely to

hear opinions from numerous sources, not just one. The present studies also contribute to

the current research as only a small number of studies have examined the influence of

social networks on romantic relationship initiation (see Parks, 2009). Therefore, not only

did the current studies allow me to examine how multiple third parties can impact a

romantic relationship, I was also able to observe how influential third parties were at

different stages of one's romantic relationship. Thus, the present studies focused on the

gaps in the literature to help create a more complete picture of how influential different

sources within social networks can be and how they can affect an individual's romantic relationship at various stages.

It was expected that when social network members approved of a romantic partner – current or potential – that partner would be perceived better than a partner disapproved of by the social network. Across both studies, support was found for this first hypothesis. These types of opinion differences were most apparent in Study 1 where participants felt that they would be more in love with, more committed to, and more satisfied with their romantic partner if they found out their friends and parents liked him/her than if they found out their social network disapproved. In Study 2, the likeability for a potential partner was also significantly higher when both parties thought he/she was a good match for the participant than when they both thought he/she was a bad match.

It was also expected that friend opinion might outweigh parental opinion in predicting relationship outcomes, such that if friends disapproved (regardless of parent opinion) relationship quality would suffer but if friends approved the relationship would fare well. This hypothesis was not confirmed in Study 1, but was in Study 2. In Study 1, parent opinion seemed to be a little more influential than friend opinion but not enough to outweigh the importance of friend opinion. In the two conditions in which the third parties had different opinions, neither opinion emerged as being more influential. Therefore, in these conditions, feelings of love, commitment, and relationship satisfaction were the same. Study 2 had different results, however, as participants were found to like the target interaction partner more than the control whenever their friend thought the

target was a good match for them. In addition, the participants were more likely to choose the target to be their final interaction partner over the control whenever their friend thought the person was a good match.

Lastly, it was expected that the number of resources received from parents and friends and the satisfaction level with these received resources would help explain why one source of the opinion may be more important for some individuals than another. This hypothesis received no support in Study 1, but received limited support in Study 2. In Study 2, the resources variables were used to create new variables which measured who the participant received more resources from (friends or parents) and with whose resources they were more satisfied. Who the participant received more resources from had a significant main effect on the likeability rating of the target confederate, but had no interaction with the opinion variables. However, whose resources the participant was more satisfied with emerged as having a significant interaction with the feedback condition. Whoever an individual was more satisfied with; they were more influenced by the opinion of that third party of whether the target was a good or bad match for them.

Caveats

Before discussing the interpretations and implications of these findings, it is important to address limitations. For instance, there were differences between the two studies that prevent direct comparisons. The first study involved participants who were already in romantic relationships and asked them to reveal how they would feel about their current relationship after imagining to receive the opinions of both of their parents and two friends about their romantic partner. The second study examined romantic

relationship formation by having single participants take part in a mock virtual dating game where they spoke to two interaction partners and were presented with the opinions of a friend and a parent as to whether they were a good or bad match for the participant. Also, different dependent variables were examined in the two studies. Study 1 focused on the participant's current relationship state by examining their feelings of love, commitment, and relationship satisfaction. Study 2 examined relationship formation variables by examining the likeability ratings of the two dating game interaction partners and who the participant chose to be their final interaction partner. The results of the two studies are still important, however, because they are both experimental studies unlike the majority of research in this area. And although the studies cannot be directly compared, it is still important to experimentally examine the effects of friend and parent opinion on different stages of one's romantic relationship.

Another limitation of the present studies is the use of a college sample. This is a common limitation found in most social networks research. This limitation primarily affects Study 1 as the majority of the participants were in dating relationships and very few participants were either engaged or married. Therefore, it could not be explored how social networks affected relationship quality for individuals in more committed relationships. However, investigating a dating population was beneficial for Study 2 as the exploration of relationship initiation was easier to examine. It is also important to note that although the current sample is primarily dating couples or individuals who were

single, the results of the present studies are similar to other studies in this area of research that have used other samples, such as married couples or interracial couples (Bryant, Conger, & Meehan, 2001; Bryant & Conger, 1999; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006).

The present studies also both have some limitations in their methodologies. Study 1 relied on participants relaying how they believed they would feel after hearing their friends' and parents' opinions of their romantic partner. It may be even harder for some individuals to imagine being in that scenario if they already know the opinions of their parents and friends about their partner. Despite not examining actual thoughts or behaviors, the methodology allowed me to give participants the opinion of their friends and parents and examine their reactions to the opinions. Using this method, I was still establishing a causal link between third party opinions and romantic relationship quality. Future studies could try to more realistically manipulate social network opinion for individuals in existing romantic relationships, but the ethics of initially convincing people that a friend or parent truly dislikes their romantic partner might be questionable, especially as it has been established that network disapproval can have negative outcomes.

Study 2 employed a virtual dating game methodology, which relied on participants talking to confederates over instant messenger and not face to face. The methodology could be seen as a limitation to some, as it may be questionable as to whether this "artificial" setting could generalize to real-world courtships (see Parks, 2007 for a discussion of the limitations of social experiments and their generalizability to real world relationships). Also, people may doubt that a romantic relationship – or any real

social connection - can be formed over the internet. However, over the past ten years many romantic relationships have been formed over the internet. Online dating has become the fourth most popular avenue for finding a romantic partner behind meeting someone at work or school, through friends or family, and at nightclubs or other social gatherings (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007). It should also be noted that many participants tried to set up a meeting with their interaction partners and asked for their phone numbers or other contact information over instant messenger.[v] Additionally, some participants asked the experimenter if they could meet their interaction partners and some participants were actually found waiting outside of the lab hoping for their interaction partners to come out of the lab. I believe this is even further evidence that romantic feelings can be initiated over the internet, and thus further addresses concerns about the realism of the study design.

Interpretation of Results

Despite these potential limitations, the results of the present studies significantly contribute to the current research on social networks. The results of both studies revealed that when third parties approve of an individual's romantic partner (or potential partner), the effects on relationship state and relationship formation are positive. The opinions of third party members help facilitate an individual's feelings towards their partner whenever they express positive opinions of the romantic relationship. Interestingly, during relationship formation disapproval from third parties emerges as not necessarily damaging the perception of a potential partner, but rather individuals feel the same about that potential partner as they would have if they had not received any feedback at all. It is

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possible that when individuals hear negative feedback from friends and parents during the early stage of a romantic relationship, they are able to write off their opinions and not let their feedback affect their feelings. Ignoring the negative opinions from third parties may be even easier in cases similar to the virtual dating game in Study 2, where third parties did not have a prior relationship with the potential partner. Therefore, an individual is able to devalue their social network's negative opinion as they may believe they do not have enough information to judge their potential partner. It is interesting, however, that individuals do not have the same judgments of their third parties' opinions whenever they are approving of a partner.

Upon examination of the second hypothesis, mixed results emerged from Study 1 and Study 2. For individuals currently in romantic relationships, parent opinion seems to be slightly more influential than friend opinion. However, overall friend opinion is still strong enough to where it could be considered equally influential on one's current relationship state. In contrast, during romantic relationship formation friend opinion is more influential on an individual's perceptions of a potential romantic partner. Whenever an individual's friend is approving of a potential partner, then that potential partner is liked more than if no feedback had been given. Additionally, it seems that individuals follow their friend's opinion when it comes to pursuing a relationship with a potential partner as well. For example, if a friend is approving of a potential partner then an individual is more likely to continue communication with that partner than if their friend had a negative opinion. A possible reason why friend opinion emerges as being influential during romantic relationship formation whereas parent opinion does not is

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individuals may be more concerned with their potential partner getting along with their friends. When individuals first begin to date a new partner, they are most likely going to integrate their partner into their network of friends initially; and then after becoming more committed to their partner, they will attempt to integrate their partner into their familial network. Thus, at certain stages of relationship development the approval of different networks comes to matter. Children do not have to worry about their parents' opinion about someone they date until reaching the stage where they are making a decision about commitment, and whether to make this partner a member of the family. As differences between the methodologies in the present two studies prevent direct comparisons, future research should explore whether different stages of relationship do, in fact, predict when parent opinion matters.

In both studies, there was little support for the inclusion of the social exchange theory in an attempt to determine why some opinions are more influential than others. The amount of resources someone receives from their parents and friends does not play a role in the importance of their opinions of one's romantic relationship. The only support found for the importance of resources was during relationship initiation, when examining one's satisfaction level of resources, individuals seem to be more influenced by the opinions of the person with whom they are more satisfied. This finding is significant because when the sample is not separated out with the satisfaction variable, it appears that individuals are equally influenced by their friend's and parent's opinion (whenever opinions are given), but when the sample is separated it becomes more clear that some individuals are more influenced by their friend and others by their parent. However,

given this finding did not replicate in Study 1 and it was only when creating a categorical

variable for satisfaction with resources that the effect emerged, these results should be

interpreted with caution. These results can be tied to the social exchange theory, but may

actually relate more to the quality of (i.e., satisfaction with) the relationship with one's

friends and parents and not to the resources they receive. In fact, when follow-up

correlations between the resources scales and an index of closeness (Closeness to Parent

and Closeness to Friend – included in screening survey for another study) were

conducted, the resource variables significantly correlated with closeness to one's social

network members. Accordingly, other elements that gauge the quality of the social

network relationship might be better predictors of how much the social network's opinion

matters, but this hypothesis warrants further investigation.

Implications

The results of the present studies significantly contribute to the current research

on social networks and their influence on romantic relationships. Not only do the studies

provide further evidence that social networks do impact individuals' romantic

relationships, they also reveal how different sources of opinion might be more influential

at various stages of one's relationship. The overall results of the study found approval to

have positive effects on one's romantic relationship and disapproval to have negative

effects just as many previous researchers have found (Bryant & Conger, 1999; Felmlee,

2001; Parks, 2007; Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992).

What other research has not noted about the power of network approval is that

during relationship initiation, as long as one third party approves of a potential partner

(despite the disapproval of another party) then the potential partner is still liked. These results are consistent with the theory of positive illusions within romantic relationships. Positive illusions involve individuals emphasizing the positive characteristics while downplaying negative ones of existing partners for relationship-enhancement purposes. Research which has examined positive illusions in romantic relationships has found that when individuals idealize their romantic partner (believe their romantic partner is better than others' romantic partners) then they have greater satisfaction, less conflict, and few doubts about their partner (Murray, Holmes & Griffin, 2003). Although Murray's findings have only established the existence of this relationship-enhancement bias in existing relationships, it seems as if this idealization of a partner may also occur with potential partners, not just current ones. In Study 2, it seemed that individuals were able to focus on the positive feedback and ignore the negative feedback whenever the third parties disagreed. By placing the focus on a potential partner's positive qualities, an individual was able to feel better about that interaction partner and validate their feelings of liking for that individual. It is worth noting that although these results are consistent with research on positive illusions, these results run contrary to the positive-asymmetry effect (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer & Vohs, 2001) which states that bad feedback is almost always stronger than good feedback because bad information is processed more thoroughly than good. In both studies, and especially in Study 2, disapproval did not emerge as being more influential than approval.

The present studies established that the source of opinion matters more in different stages of a romantic relationship and that there may be other factors which

impact whose opinion is more influential. Ridley and Avery's (1979) hypothesis of incorporating the social exchange theory into third party opinions stated that whoever an individual depended on for more resources would be more influential. Their hypothesis regarding *quantity* of resources was found to have little support. Amount of resources did not affect how influential parents' and friends' opinions were to an individual. A possible variable that could be studied which would still relate to the social exchange theory would be examining how resources may matter to the extent that one fears that they would lose those resources if they persisted in a disapproved relationship. If an individual risks losing a relationship in which the rewards are far greater than those they receive from their current romantic partner, individuals may be more likely to end their relationship in order to salvage their relationship with their valuable third party.

Another potentially promising avenue of research may be to focus on variables similar to satisfaction with resources that measure the quality of the relationship with friends and parents. Therefore, potential research may want to focus on other third party relationship quality variables as they may better predict when friend opinion is more influential than parent opinion and vice versa. As such, there are other theories which could be integrated into this area of research and may better explain the discrepancy of whose opinion matters more. For instance, in a previous study (Wright & Sinclair, 2008) it was found that when individuals were securely attached to their parents they were more influenced by their parents' opinions of their romantic relationship than individuals who were insecurely attached. Another interesting finding which could be further explored is Etcheverry and Agnew's (2004) finding that when individuals were more dependent on

their romantic relationships they were less influenced by social network opinion. A future study could examine how levels of dependence on friends and parents impact the influence of their opinions. Further exploration of similar third party relationship variables may shed more light on why different opinions vary in importance for certain individuals.

In conclusion, it is important for individuals to realize the influence that social networks can have on their romantic relationship. Many individuals do not think about how their romantic partner will have to fit into their current networks and how the opinions of their network can play such a large role in the formation, state, and even termination of their romantic relationships. The present studies shed more light on these third party influences, but there are still questions that need be answered in order to fully understand the effects of these opinions.

CHAPTER V

NOTES

[i] Analyses similar to those in Study 2 in which variables were created to see who a participant received more resources from and who they were more satisfied were conducted. However, the results of the analyses were insignificant.

[ii] The large variation in sample sizes between the conditions occurred due to participant drop-out between Part 1 and Part 2 of the experiment.

[iii] It is important to note that each of these interaction partners were rated as equally likeable before receiving any feedback from the third party members [univariate ANOVA: $F(3, 259) = 0.37$, $p = $ NS, partial $\eta^2 = .004$]. After the first interaction, James had a mean likeability rating of 5.33 ($SD = 0.98$) and Michael had a mean likeability rating of 5.30 ($SD = 1.06$). Erika's likeability score was 5.37 ($SD = 0.79$) and Tanya's was 5.46 ($SD = 0.89$).

[iv] 56 participants who had the same satisfaction level with friends and parents were eliminated. 7 participants received the same number of resources from friends and parents and were eliminated.

[v] Whenever participants asked to meet their interaction partners they were reminded (by either the confederate or the experimenter) that everyone was to be kept anonymous and all of their contact information was confidential.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Mississippi State
UNIVERSITY

July 2, 2009

H. Colleen Sinclair
Psychology
Mailstop 9514

RE: IRB Study #05-229: The Romeo and Juliet Effect Re-examined: Investigating Social Influences on the Quality of Romantic Relationships

Dear Dr. Sinclair:

This is to confirm that the above referenced project was reviewed and approved via expedited review for a period of October 17, 2005 through October 15, 2006 in accordance with 45 CFR 46.110 #7. Please note the expiration date for approval of this project is October 15, 2006. In addition, this project has been reviewed annually and has received continued IRB approval each year. The project expiration date is October 15, 2009. If additional time is needed to complete the project, you will need to submit a Continuing Review Request form 30 days prior to the date of expiration. Any modifications made to this project must be submitted for approval prior to implementation.

Any failure to adhere to the approved protocol could result in suspension or termination of your project. Please note that the IRB reserves the right, at anytime, to observe you and any associated researchers as they conduct the project and audit research records associated with this project.

Please refer to your docket number (#05-229) when contacting our office regarding this project.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at cwilliams@research.msstate.edu or call 662-325-5220.

Sincerely,

[For use with electronic submissions]

Christine Williams
IRB Compliance Administrator

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORMS

Relationship Obstacles SURVEY Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a study of how relationship obstacles influence relationship quality. In order to be eligible to participate you must be at least 18 years of age and have been in a romantic relationship within the past year.   We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in this study. This study is being conducted by Colleen Sinclair, Department of Psychology.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to gain information on the influences of obstacles faced in a relationship. There is very little research on this topic at the moment, and the research that does exist shows conflicting results so our hope is to find data to support one of the current findings.

Procedures:

If you agree to this study you will be asked to respond honestly to the items in the survey that will be given to you. You are given over an hour to complete the survey, and are encouraged to write as much detail as you choose. Feedback is welcome and your responses will aid in the development of our scale.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are risks associated with participation in this survey. The primary risk of this study is that of personal disclosure. While answering questions you may feel discomfort, recall an unpleasant experience or feel offended. To minimize risk, you will be advised that any time you feel uncomfortable, need to go to the bathroom, or need a drink of water, you should feel free to leave, and it will not affect your extra credit award. If at anytime a question item makes you uncomfortable you do not have to respond. In fact, you will be strongly encouraged to stop so as not to further cause you any unintentional anguish. If any unpleasant memories are raised you are encouraged to contact the University counseling services at 662-325-2091. However, if you'd rather talk to someone outside of school, at the end of the session everyone will be provided with a list of people you can talk to. For completion of the survey you will receive 1and ½ extra credit points.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only researchers will have access to the records. A code number will be used to identify participants. This code number will only be released to investigators in this study. Survey will not be handed directly to a researcher, but rather placed in a cabinet so no code numbers will be linked with names or faces.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Mississippi State University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting this relationship. If at any point during the study you need to withdraw, you will receive the standard 1½ extra credit point for this study.

Contact and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Dr. Colleen Sinclair. You may ask any questions you may have now. If you have questions later, you may contact them at (662) 325-5108.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), contact IRB at (662) 325-3294. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Signature of Investigator _____ **Date** _____

Consent Form for Study 2

Impression and Relationship Formation on the Internet

You are invited to participate in a study of how relationships develop over the internet. In order to be eligible to participate you must be at least 18 years of age and be presently single. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in this study. This study is being conducted by Colleen Sinclair, Department of Psychology.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is gain information about how people form impressions and develop liking for individuals over the internet. The internet is fast becoming a popular means for social networking, meeting people and maintaining close relationships. However, because it is "new," little is known as to how relationship formation might be different on the internet as opposed to the real world. Research is conflicting as to whether the internet is a rewarding environment of rich relationships or a socially isolating context. We hope to begin to understand how relationships develop initially, and thus, how first impressions are formed.

Procedures:

If you agree to this study, in the first half you will be asked to respond honestly to the items in the survey that will be given to you. You are given over an hour to complete the survey, and are encouraged to write as much detail as you choose. In the second half of this study you will be asked to either serve as an interviewer or an interviewee. You will interact with one-three peers either face-to-face or using instant messaging, wherein you may ask or be asked an array of "getting to know you" questions. At the end of these interactions, you will be asked to provide your impressions of the person(s) with whom you interacted.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

This study involves the risk of personal disclosure. The questions and electronic chat are not expected or intended to raise issues too sensitive to discuss. If, however, at any time a question or item makes you uncomfortable you should stop or opt to not respond. Also, there is no guarantee that the interaction will be a "successful" one, in that you and your interaction partner may not like one another. In which case, you should know that you, or your interaction partner, have the option of discontinuing the interaction at any point. If any unpleasant memories are raised you are encouraged to contact the University counseling services at 662-325-2091. For completion of the initial screening survey you will receive 1 point and for completion of the internet interaction you will receive an additional 2 points (Total of 3 points for full study).

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only researchers will have access to the records. A code number will be used to identify participants. This code number will only be released to investigators in this study. Survey will not be handed directly to a researcher, but rather placed in a cabinet so no code numbers will be linked with names or faces.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Mississippi State University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting this relationship. If at any point during the study you need to withdraw, you will still receive your points for this study.

Contact and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Dr. Colleen Sinclair. You may ask any questions you may have now. If you have questions later, you may contact them at (662) 325-5108.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), contact IRB at (662) 325-3294. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Signature of Investigator _____ **Date** _____

APPENDIX C

ONLINE SURVEY

Descriptives

1. What is your gender?
     Male
     Female

2. What is your age? (Enter number of years, e.g. 18, 19, 21..) _____

3. What is your race/ethnicity? (Choose one or more of the following)
     Caucasian / European
     Black or African-American
     Asian-American or Pacific Islander
     Hispanic or Latino
     Native American
     Middle Eastern or Arabic descent
     Bi-Racial or Mixed Race
     Other

4. What is your current relationship status?
     Single
     Dating
     Dating exclusively (have mutually decided to see one person exclusively, e.g. "go steady")
     Committed (have gotten engaged/married or otherwise decided to stay with this person for life)

5. What is the length (IN MONTHS) of your current romantic relationship? (1 week = .25 months, 2 weeks = .5 months, 1 and a half years = 18 months, etc.)
_____

In the next section, we are going to ask you to read a scenario about a hypothetical romantic relationship - wherein you introduce your new partner to your friends and parents. While reading that scenario, we want you to think about your two CLOSEST friends and your parents, how they would respond, and what you would think/feel about how they responded to your boy/girlfriend. In order to help you keep these two friends and your parents in mind, we want you to tell us a little about them first, so that when you read the scenario to come you can really put yourself in the situation and imagine what it would be like when you heard what your friends thought of your new partner.

1. What is your FIRST closest friend's first name? (Please provide only a first name, nickname, or initials, no full names.)
_____

2. How CLOSE are you to your FIRST friend?

      -4 Very Distant
      -3 Somewhat Distant
      -2 Slightly Distant
      -1 Distant
      1 Close
      2 Slightly Close
      3 Moderately Close
      4 Very Close

3. How often do you communicate with your FIRST friend?

      0 Never
      1 Rarely
      2 Once a Month
      3 A couple of times a month
      4 Once a week
      5 More than once a week
      6 Once a day
      7 More than once a day

1. What is your SECOND closest friend's first name? (Please provide only a first name, nickname, or initials, no full names.)

_____

2. How CLOSE are you to your SECOND friend?

      -4 Very Distant
      -3 Somewhat Distant
      -2 Slightly Distant
      -1 Distant
      1 Close
      2 Slightly Close
      3 Moderately Close
      4 Very Close

3. How often do you communicate with your SECOND friend?

      0 Never
      1 Rarely
      2 Once a Month
      3 A couple of times a month
      4 Once a week
      5 More than once a week
      6 Once a day
      7 More than once a day

1. What is your FIRST parent/guardian's first name? (Please provide only a first name, nickname, or initials, no full names.)

_____

2. How CLOSE are you to your FIRST parent/guardian?
       -4 Very Distant
       -3 Somewhat Distant
       -2 Slightly Distant
       -1 Distant
       1 Close
       2 Slightly Close
       3 Moderately Close
       4 Very Close

3. How often do you communicate with your FIRST parent/guardian?
       0 Never
       1 Rarely
       2 Once a Month
       3 A couple of times a month
       4 Once a week
       5 More than once a week
       6 Once a day
       7 More than once a day

1. What is your SECOND parent/guardian's first name? (Please provide only a first name, nickname, or initials, no full names.)

_____

2. How CLOSE are you to your SECOND parent/guardian?
       -4 Very Distant
       -3 Somewhat Distant
       -2 Slightly Distant
       -1 Distant
       1 Close
       2 Slightly Close
       3 Moderately Close
       4 Very Close

3. How often do you communicate with your SECOND parent/guardian?
     0 Never
     1 Rarely
     2 Once a Month
     3 A couple of times a month
     4 Once a week
     5 More than once a week
     6 Once a day
     7 More than once a day

Scenarios

Parents Approve / Friends Disapprove

One day, you and your partner decide to meet up with your friends to have dinner and see a movie. Dinner seems to go really well. The conversation is friendly, and your girl/boyfriend even offers to buy everyone dessert. Once arriving at the theatre, your girl/boyfriend excuses themselves to the restroom. While he/she is gone, one of your friends comments, "Wow, you guys really seem to be getting close!" You excitedly tell him/her "Yes, we are. I really like him/her." You all watch the movie, have a few laughs, and then call it a night. Later that next day, you run into your friends on campus. They both seem a little nervous, so you ask them what's up. Your first friend says, "We didn't want to say anything, but now that we see that you and _____ are getting closer we just wanted to tell you that we don't think he/she is the right person for you." Your other friend adds, "Honestly, we think you can find someone much better for you." You're a little surprised by the news, so you decide to call your mom to see what your parents think. You mention to your mom what your friends said, and she tells you, "Well, I just don't see that at all. Your father and I think he/she is a great person. He/she is the perfect match for you!"

Friends Approve/ Parents Disapprove

One day, you and your partner decide to meet up with your parents to have dinner and see a movie. Dinner seems to go really well. The conversation is friendly, and your girl/boyfriend even offers to buy everyone dessert. Once arriving at the theatre, your girl/boyfriend excuses themselves to the restroom. While he/she is gone, your mom comments, "Wow, you guys really seem to be getting close!" You excitedly tell her "Yes, we are. I really like him/her." You all watch the movie, have a few laughs, and then call it a night. Later that next day, you decide to give your parents a call. Your mom seems a little nervous so you ask her what's up. Your mom says, "We didn't want to say anything, but now that your dad and I see that you and _____ are getting closer we just wanted to tell you that we don't think he/she is the right person for you." Your dad adds, "Honestly, we think you can find someone much better for you." The next day you

see your friends on campus and decide to ask them what they think. You mention to your friends what your parents said, and your first friend tells you, "Well, I just don't see that at all. I personally think he/she is a great person." Your other friend adds, "I think he/she is the perfect match for you!"

Both Disapprove

One day, you and your partner decide to meet up with your parents to have dinner and see a movie. Dinner seems to go really well. The conversation is friendly, and your girl/boyfriend even offers to buy everyone dessert. Once arriving at the theatre, your girl/boyfriend excuses themselves to the restroom. While he/she is gone, your mom comments, "Wow, you guys really seem to be getting close!" You excitedly tell her "Yes, we are. I really like him/her." You all watch the movie, have a few laughs, and then call it a night. Later that next day, you decide to give your parents a call. Your mom seems a little nervous so you ask her what's up. Your mom says, "We didn't want to say anything, but now that your dad and I see that you and _____ are getting closer we just wanted to tell you that we don't think he/she is the right person for you." Your dad adds, "Honestly, we think you can find someone much better for you." The next day you see your friends on campus and decide to ask them what they think. You mention to your friends what your parents said, and your first friend tells you, "To be honest, we don't really like him/her either." Your other friend adds, "I just don't see what you see in him/her."

Both Approve

One day, you and your partner decide to meet up with your friends to have dinner and see a movie. Dinner seems to go really well. The conversation is friendly, and your girl/boyfriend even offers to buy everyone dessert. Once arriving at the theatre, your girl/boyfriend excuses themselves to the restroom. While he/she is gone, one of your friends comments, "Wow, you guys really seem to be getting close!" You excitedly tell him/her "Yes, we are. I really like him/her." You all watch the movie, have a few laughs, and then call it a night. Later that next day, you run into your friends on campus and start talking about the night before. Your first friend says, "Now that I see that you and ____are getting closer, I just wanted to tell you I really like ____. I think you two make a great couple." Your other friend adds, "Yeah, I really think they are the right person for you." Later that day, out of curiosity you decide to call your mom to see what your parents think. You mention to your mom what your friends said, and she tells you, "Your father I totally agree. We think he/she is a great person. He/she is the perfect match for you!"

Manipulation Check

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
Very Negative	Somewhat Negative	Slightly Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Slightly Positive	Somewhat Positive	Very Positive

	Select the appropriate response:							
1. Based on your reading of the scenario provided earlier, how would you interpret the opinion of your FRIENDS of your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2. Based on your reading of the scenario provided earlier, how would you interpret the opinion of your PARENTS of your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Resources Received - Rettig and Bubolz (1983)

SOCIAL NETWORK RESOURCES: This is just a set of questions to gauge the extent to which you turn to friends/family for certain things in life. Use the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Never	About once a year	About six times a year	About once a month	About once a week	About three to four times a week	About once a day	About two to three times a day

	Select the appropriate response:							
1. How often do your FRIENDS tell or show you they care about you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS tell or show you they care about you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3. How often do your FRIENDS let you know they enjoy your company?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS let you know they enjoy your company?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5. How often do you laugh and joke with your FRIENDS?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6. How often do you laugh and joke with your PARENTS/GUARDIANS?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7. How often do your FRIENDS give you a hug, pat on the back, etc.?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS give you a hug, pat on the back, etc.?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9. How often do your FRIENDS make you feel like an important person?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS make you feel like an important person?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
11. How often do your FRIENDS tell or show you that they admire, respect or are otherwise proud of you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS tell or show you that they admire, respect or are otherwise proud of you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13. How often do your FRIENDS let you know they have	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

confidence in you?								
14. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS let you know they have confidence in you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15. How often do your FRIENDS do an errand/favor for you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
16. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS do an errand/favor for you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
17. How often do your FRIENDS make themselves available to help you with a task?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
18. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS make themselves available to help you with a task?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
19. How often do your FRIENDS do something to save you energy, make you comfortable or help you de-stress?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
20. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS do something to save you energy, make you comfortable or help you de-stress?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
21. How often do you seek out your FRIENDS to give you advice?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
22. How often do you seek out your PARENTS/GUARDIANS to give you advice?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
23. How often do you seek out your FRIENDS to help you make sense of your relationships?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
24. How often do you seek out your PARENTS/GUARDIANS to help you make sense of your relationships?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
25. How often do you seek out your FRIENDS to help you choose/find a romantic partner?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
26. How often do you seek out your PARENTS/GUARDIANS to help you choose/find a romantic partner?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
27. How often do your FRIENDS give you their opinion?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
28. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS give you their opinion?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
29. How often do your FRIENDS help you solve a problem or make a decision?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
30. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS help you solve a problem or make a decision?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

31. How often do your FRIENDS give/lend you something you need or want?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
32. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS give/lend you something you need or want?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
33. How often do your FRIENDS give/lend you financial support?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
34. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS give/lend you financial support?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
35. How often do your FRIENDS spend time with you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
36. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS spend time with you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
37. How often do your FRIENDS spend an hour or more with you just to talk?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
38. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS spend an hour or more with you just to talk?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
39. How often do your FRIENDS discuss personal matters with you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
40. How often do your PARENTS/GUARDIANS discuss personal matters with you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
41. How often do you and your FRIENDS work together on a project?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
42. How often do you and your PARENTS/GUARDIANS work together on a project?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
43. How often do you and your FRIENDS take a drive or walk?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
44. How often do you and your PARENTS/GUARDIANS take a drive or walk?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
45. How often do you and your FRIENDS enjoy activities together?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
46. How often do you and your PARENTS/GUARDIANS enjoy activities together?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
47. How often do you and your FRIENDS go out together?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
48. How often do you and your PARENTS/GUARDIANS go out together?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Satisfaction with Resources

Please use the following scale to rate your level of satisfaction with the frequency of the resources you receive from your parents and friends.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely Dissatisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neither	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Completely Satisfied

	Select the appropriate response:						
1. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS tell or show you they care about you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS tell or show you they care about you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS let you know they enjoy your company?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS let you know they enjoy your company?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. How satisfied are you with how often you laugh and joke with your FRIENDS?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. How satisfied are you with how often you laugh and joke with your PARENTS/GUARDIANS?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS give you a hug, pat on the back, etc.?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS give you a hug, pat on the back, etc.?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS make you feel like an important person?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS make you feel like an important person?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS tell or show you that they admire, respect or are otherwise proud of you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS tell or show you that they admire, respect or are otherwise proud of you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS let you know they have confidence in you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS let you know they have confidence in you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS do an errand/favor for you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS do an errand/favor for you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS make themselves available to help you with a task?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS make themselves available to help you with a task?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS something to save you energy, make you comfortable or help you de-stress?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS do something to save you energy, make you comfortable or help you de-stress?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. How satisfied are you with how often you seek out your FRIENDS to give you advice?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. How satisfied are you with how often you seek out your PARENTS/GUARDIANS to give you advice?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. How satisfied are you with how often you seek out your FRIENDS to help you make sense of your relationships?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. How satisfied are you with how often you seek out your PARENTS/GUARDIANS to help you make sense of your relationships?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. How satisfied are you with how often you seek out your FRIENDS to help you choose/find a romantic partner?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. How satisfied are you with how often you seek out your PARENTS/GUARDIANS to help you choose/find a romantic partner?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS give you their opinion?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS give you their opinion?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS help you solve a problem or make a decision?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS help you solve a problem or make a decision?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS give/lend you something you need or want?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS give/lend you something you need or want?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS give/lend you financial support?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS give/lend you financial support?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS spend time with you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS spend time with you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS spend an hour or more with you just to talk?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS spend an hour or more with you just to talk?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS discuss personal matters with you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS/GUARDIANS discuss personal matters with you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. How satisfied are you with how often you and your FRIENDS work together on a project?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. How satisfied are you with how often you and your PARENTS/GUARDIANS work together on a project?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43. How satisfied are you with how often you and your FRIENDS take a drive or walk?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44. How satisfied are you with how often you and your PARENTS/GUARDIANS take a drive or walk?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

45. How satisfied are you with how often you and your FRIENDS enjoy activities together?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46. How satisfied are you with how often you and your PARENTS/GUARDIANS enjoy activities together?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47. How satisfied are you with how often you and your FRIENDS go out together?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48. How satisfied are you with how often you and your PARENTS/GUARDIANS go out together?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Commitment to Relationship – Lund's (1985) Commitment Scale

THINKING OF YOUR ROMANTIC PARTNER AFTER READING THE SCENARIO (Note, should be the SAME person you completed the last set of questions about), please complete the following questions about him/her as if you were in the situation described earlier.

____ 1. Putting yourself in this situation, how likely is it that you would consider your relationship will be permanent?
        -4 – Extremely Unlikely
        -3 – Mostly Unlikely
        -2 – Somewhat Unlikely
        -1 – Slightly Unlikely
         0 – Neither
         1 – Slightly Likely
         2 – Somewhat Likely
         3 – Mostly Likely
         4 – Extremely Likely

____ 2. Putting yourself in this situation: How LIKELY do you think it would be that you would be attracted to other partners?
        -4 – Extremely Unlikely
        -3 – Mostly Unlikely
        -2 – Somewhat Unlikely
        -1 – Slightly Unlikely
         0 – Neither
         1 – Slightly Likely
         2 – Somewhat Likely
         3 – Mostly Likely
         4 – Extremely Likely

_____ 3. Putting yourself in this situation, how likely would it be that you and your partner would be together six months form now?

    -4 – Extremely Unlikely
    -3 – Mostly Unlikely
    -2 – Somewhat Unlikely
    -1 – Slightly Unlikely
     0 – Neither
     1 – Slightly Likely
     2 – Somewhat Likely
     3 – Mostly Likely
     4 – Extremely Likely

_____ 4. Putting yourself in this situation, how likely would it be that you would have trouble ending your relationship personally?

    -4 – Extremely Unlikely
    -3 – Mostly Unlikely
    -2 – Somewhat Unlikely
    -1 – Slightly Unlikely
     0 – Neither
     1 – Slightly Likely
     2 – Somewhat Likely
     3 – Mostly Likely
     4 – Extremely Likely

_____ 5. Putting yourself in this situation, how attractive would a potential partner have to be for you to pursue a new relationship?

    -4 – Extremely Attractive
    -3 – Mostly Attractive
    -2 – Somewhat Attractive
    -1 – Slightly Attractive
     0 – Neither
     1 – Slightly Unattractive
     2 – Somewhat Unattractive
     3 – Mostly Unattractive
     4 – Extremely Unattractive

_____ 6. Putting yourself in this situation, how likely are you to pursue another relationship or single life in the future?

    -4 – Extremely Unlikely
    -3 – Mostly Unlikely
    -2 – Somewhat Unlikely
    -1 – Slightly Unlikely
     0 – Neither
     1 – Slightly Likely
     2 – Somewhat Likely
     3 – Mostly Likely
     4 – Extremely Likely

____ 7. Putting yourself in this situation, how obligated would you feel to continue this relationship?
        -4 – Extremely not obligated
        -3 – Mostly not obligated
        -2 – Somewhat not obligated
        -1 – Slightly not obligated
         0 – Neither
         1 – Slightly obligated
         2 – Somewhat obligated
         3 – Mostly obligated
         4 – Extremely obligated

____ 8. Putting yourself in this situation, how committed do you think your partner would be to this relationship?
        -4 – Extremely Uncommitted
        -3 – Mostly Uncommitted
        -2 – Somewhat Uncommitted
        -1 – Slightly Uncommitted
         0 – Neither
         1 – Slightly Committed
         2 – Somewhat Committed
         3 – Mostly Committed
         4 – Extremely Committed

____ 9. Putting yourself in this situation, how likely do you think your partner is to continue this relationship?
        -4 – Extremely Unlikely
        -3 – Mostly Unlikely
        -2 – Somewhat Unlikely
        -1 – Slightly Unlikely
         0 – Neither
         1 – Slightly Likely
         2 – Somewhat Likely
         3 – Mostly Likely
         4 – Extremely Likely

Relationship Satisfaction - Relationship Assessment Scale Hendrick (1988)

____ 1. Putting yourself in this situation: How well would you feel your partner met your needs?
        1 Definitely does not
        2 Usually not
        3 Mostly not
        4 Slightly not
        5 Slightly does
        6 Mostly does
        7 Usually does
        8 Definitely does

_____ 2. Putting yourself in this situation: In general, how satisfied would you feel with your relationship?
1 Definitely unsatisfied
2 Very unsatisfied
3 Mostly unsatisfied
4 Slightly unsatisfied
5 Slightly satisfied
6 Mostly satisfied
7 Very satisfied
8 Definitely satisfied

_____ 3. Putting yourself in this situation: How good would you consider your relationship when compared to most?
1 Extremely bad
2 Very bad
3 Moderately bad
4 Slightly bad
5 Slightly good
6 Moderately good
7 Very good
8 Extremely good

_____ 4. Putting yourself in this situation: Would you wish that you had NOT gotten into this relationship?
1 Definitely not
2 Highly unlikely
3 Mostly unlikely
4 Unlikely
5 Likely
6 Most likely
7 Highly likely
8 Definitely

_____ 5. Putting yourself in this situation: How well would your relationship meet your original expectations?
1 Definitely does not
2 Largely not
3 Mostly not
4 Slightly not
5 Slightly does
6 Mostly does
7 Largely does
8 Definitely does

_____ 6. Putting yourself in this situation: How much would you love your partner?
1 Not at all
2 Very little
3 Mostly not
4 Slightly not
5 Slightly
6 Mostly
7 Very much
8 Completely

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_____ 7. Putting yourself in this situation: How much would problems plague your relationship?
      1 Never
      2 Very rarely
      3 Mostly not
       4 Somewhat not
      5 Occasionally
      6 Most of the time
      7 Very often
      8 Constantly

Passion, Commitment, and Intimacy Towards Partner - Triangular Theory of Love Scale-Sternberg (1990)

Think of your current romantic partner for the following statements. Read the following statements and fill in the blanks with his or her name. Respond with how you **WOULD** agree or disagree with the following statements **if you were in the scenario before**.

Use the following scale to rate how you feel regarding each statement.

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Mostly Agree	Strongly Agree

_____1.I would be actively supportive of _____'s wellbeing.

_____2.I would have a warm relationship with _____.

_____3.I would be able to count on _____ in times of need.

_____4._____ would be able to count on me in times of need.

_____5.I would be willing to share myself and my possessions with _____.

_____6.I would receive considerable emotional support from _____.

_____7.I would give considerable emotional support to _____.

_____8.I would communicate well with _____.

_____9.I would value _____ greatly in my life.

_____10.I would feel close to _____.

_____11.I would have a comfortable relationship with _____.

_____12.I would feel that I really understand _____.

____13.I would feel that _____ really understands me.

____14.I would feel that I can really trust _____.

____15.I would share deeply personal information about myself with _____.

____16.Just seeing _____ would excite me.

____17.I would find myself thinking about _____ frequently during the day.

____18.My relationship with _____ would be very romantic.

____19.I would find _____ to be very personally attractive.

____20.I would idealize _____.

____21.I could not imagine another person making me as happy as _____ does.

____22.I would rather be with _____ than with anyone else.

____23.There would be nothing more important to me than my relationship with _____.

____24.I would especially like physical contact with _____.

____25.There would be something almost "magical" about my relationship with _____.

____26.I would adore _____.

____27.I could not imagine life without _____.

____28.My relationship with _____ would be passionate.

____29.When I see romantic movies and read romantic books I would think of _____.

____30.I would fantasize about _____.

____31.I would know that I care about _____.

____32.I would be committed to maintaining my relationship with _____.

____33.Because of my commitment to _____, I would not let other people come between us.

____34.I would have confidence in the stability of my relationship with _____.

____35.I could not let anything get in the way of my commitment to _____.

____36.I would expect my love for _____ to last for the rest of my life.

____37.I would always feel a strong responsibility for _____.

____38.I would view my commitment to _____ as a solid one.

____39.I could not imagine ending my relationship with _____.

____40.I would be certain of my love for _____.

____41.I would view my relationship with _____ as permanent.

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____42.I would view my relationship with _____ as a good decision.

____43.I would feel a sense of responsibility toward _____.

____44.I would plan to continue my relationship with _____.

____45.Even when _____ would be hard to deal with, I would remain committed to our relationship.

APPENDIX D

SCREENING SURVEY FOR STUDY 2

Descriptives

INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

In this study, we are interested in the types of impressions people make. The first impressions we make are the stepping stone to forming a relationship with another. In order to study how relationships might develop on the internet, we want to explore how the internet context might make impression formation easier or harder. We are exploring how different people across contexts see the same person. Do friends form similar opinions? Do you see yourself the same as others do? Does the virtual context enable us to see the "real" person? These are but some of the questions we are examining. This initial screening survey will tell us how you perceive yourself, what you think makes yourself compatible with others, and the degree of closeness you have in your existing relationships.

(Please come up with an easy to remember alias for use in the internet interaction portion of our study)
CODE NAME: _____

D1.　　Respondent Gender:　　　　a.)　　Male　　　　b.)　　Female

D2.　　Respondent Age: _____

D3.　　Race/Ethnicity:
a.)　　White　　　　　　　　　　b.)　　Black or African-American
c.)　　Asian or Pacific Islander　　d.)　　Hispanic or Latino
e.)　　American Indian　　　　　　f.)　　Middle Eastern or Arabic
g.)　　Biracial or Mixed Race　　　h.)　　Other

D4.　　City, State & Country in which you were raised: _____

D5.　　Major(s): _____

Friend Information

Please only identify the friend you listed on the Collateral Contacts Sheet, and answer the following questions about your relationship with this person.

FRIEND: Please write this person's first name. _____

1. What was this person's age?_____

2. What was this person's sex?_____

3. Which one of the following best describes your relationship with this person? (Select only one)

Work: Co-worker   Boss/Supervisor   Subordinate

Friend: Close Friend (non-romantic)   Casual Friend

Other: (e.g. Roommate, sibling, ex-boy/girlfriend..) Please Specify_____

HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN THIS FRIEND: _____

Resources Scale- Rettig and Bubolz (1983)

RESOURCES QUESTIONNAIRE - FRIEND: This is just a set of questions to gauge the extent to which you turn to your parent/guardian for certain things in life. Please respond, using the response scale provided, keeping the same FRIEND in mind that you identified earlier.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	About once a year	About 6 times a year	About once a month	About once a week	About 3-4 times a week	About once a day	More than once a day

CIRCLE APPROPRIATE NUMBER:

1.	How often does your FRIEND tell or show you s/he cares about you?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2.	How often does your FRIEND let you know s/he enjoys your company?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3.	How often do you joke and laugh with your FRIEND?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4.	How often does your FRIEND give you a hug, pat on the back, etc.?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5.	How often does your FRIEND make you feel like an	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

important person?

		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	How often does your FRIEND tell or show you that s/he admires, respects or is otherwise proud of you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	How often does your FRIEND let you know s/he has confidence in you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	How often does your FRIEND do an errand/favor for you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	How often does your FRIEND make him/herself available to help you with a task?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	How often does your FRIEND do something to save you energy, make you comfortable or help you de-stress?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	How often do you seek out your FRIEND to give you advice?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	How often do you seek out your FRIEND to help you make sense of your relationships?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	How often do you seek out your FRIEND to help you choose/find a romantic partner?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	How often does your FRIEND give you their opinion?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	How often does your FRIEND help you solve a problem or make a decision?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	How often does your FRIEND give/lend you something you need or want?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	How often does your FRIEND give/lend you financial support?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	How often does your FRIEND spend time with you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	How often does your FRIEND spend an hour or more with you just to talk?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	How often does your FRIEND discuss personal matters with you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	How often do you and your FRIEND work together on a project?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	How often do you and your FRIEND take a drive or walk?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	How often do you and your FRIEND enjoy activities together?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	How often do you and your FRIEND go out together?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Satisfaction with Resources

Please use the following scale to rate your level of satisfaction with the frequency of the resources you receive from your friend that you listed on your collateral contact sheet.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Completely Dissatisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neither	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Completely Satisfied

CIRCLE APPROPRIATE NUMBER:

25.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIENDS tell or show you they care about you?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
26.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIEND lets you know s/he enjoys your company?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
27.	How satisfied are you with how often you joke and laugh with your FRIEND?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
28.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIEND gives you a hug, pat on the back, etc.?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
29.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIEND makes you feel like an important person?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
30.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIEND tell or show you that s/he admires respects or is otherwise proud of you?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
31.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIEND let you know s/he has confidence in you?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
32.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIEND does an errand/favor for you?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
33.	How satisfied are you with how often does your FRIEND make him/herself available to help you with a task?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
34.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIEND do something to save you energy, make you comfortable or help you de-stress?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
35.	How satisfied are you with how often you seek out your FRIEND to give you advice?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6

36.	How satisfied are you with how often you seek out your FRIEND to help you make sense of your relationships?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
37.	How satisfied are you with how often you seek out your FRIEND to help you choose/find a romantic partner?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
38.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIEND gives you their opinion?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
39.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIEND helps you solve a problem or make a decision?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
40.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIEND gives/lends you something you need or want?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
41.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIEND gives/lends you financial support?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
42.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIEND spends time with you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
43.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIEND spends an hour or more with you just to talk?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
44.	How satisfied are you with how often your FRIEND discusses personal matters with you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
45.	How satisfied are you with how often you and your FRIEND work together on a project?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
46.	How satisfied are you with how often you and your FRIEND take a drive or walk?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
47.	How satisfied are you with how often you and your FRIEND enjoy activities together?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
48.	How satisfied are you with how often you and your FRIEND go out together?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Parent/Guardian Information

Please ONLY identify the parent/guardian you listed on the Collateral Contacts sheet, and answer the following questions about your relationship with this person

FAMILY MEMBER: Please write this person's first name. _____

1. What was this person's age?_____

2. What was this person's sex?_____

3. Which one of the following best describes your relationship with this person? (Select only one)

Aunt/Uncle   Mother   Father   Cousin   Grandparent   Brother
Sister

Other: Please Specify_____

Resources Scale- Rettig and Bubolz (1983)

RESOURCES QUESTIONNAIRE - PARENT/GUARDIAN: This is just a set of questions to gauge the extent to which you turn to your parent/guardian for certain things in life. Please respond, using the response scale provided, keeping the same FAMILY MEMBER in mind that you identified earlier.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	About once a year	About 6 times a year	About once a month	About once a week	About 3-4 times a week	About once a day	More than once a day

CIRCLE APPROPRIATE NUMBER:

1.	How often does your GUARDIAN tell or show you s/he cares about you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	How often does your GUARDIAN let you know s/he enjoys your company?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	How often do you joke and laugh with your GUARDIAN?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	How often does your GUARDIAN give you a hug, pat on the back, etc.?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	How often does your GUARDIAN make you feel like an	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

important person?

6.	How often does your GUARDIAN tell or show you that s/he admires, respects or is otherwise proud of you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	How often does your GUARDIAN let you know s/he has confidence in you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	How often does your GUARDIAN do an errand/favor for you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	How often does your GUARDIAN make him/herself available to help you with a task?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	How often does your GUARDIAN do something to save you energy, make you comfortable or help you de-stress?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	How often do you seek out your GUARDIAN to give you advice?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	How often do you seek out your GUARDIAN to help you make sense of your relationships?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	How often do you seek out your GUARDIAN to help you choose/find a romantic partner?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	How often does your GUARDIAN give you their opinion?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	How often does your GUARDIAN help you solve a problem or make a decision?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	How often does your GUARDIAN give/lend you something you need or want?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	How often does your GUARDIAN give/lend you financial support?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	How often does your GUARDIAN spend time with you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	How often does your GUARDIAN spend an hour or more with you just to talk?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	How often does your GUARDIAN discuss personal matters with you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	How often do you and your GUARDIAN work together on a project?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	How often do you and your GUARDIAN take a drive or walk?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	How often do you and your GUARDIAN enjoy activities together?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

24. How often do you and your GUARDIAN go out together?   0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Satisfaction with Resources

Please use the following scale to rate your level of satisfaction with the frequency of the resources you receive from your parent that you listed on your collateral contact sheet.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Completely Dissatisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neither	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Completely Satisfied

CIRCLE APPROPRIATE NUMBER:

25. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENTS tell or show you they care about you?   0   1   2   3   4   5   6

26. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENT lets you know s/he enjoys your company?   0   1   2   3   4   5   6

27. How satisfied are you with how often you joke and laugh with your PARENT?   0   1   2   3   4   5   6

28. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENT gives you a hug, pat on the back, etc.?   0   1   2   3   4   5   6

29. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENT makes you feel like an important person?   0   1   2   3   4   5   6

30. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENT tell or show you that s/he admires respects or is otherwise proud of you?   0   1   2   3   4   5   6

31. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENT let you know s/he has confidence in you?   0   1   2   3   4   5   6

32. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENT does an errand/favor for you?   0   1   2   3   4   5   6

33. How satisfied are you with how often does your PARENT make him/herself available to help you with a task?   0   1   2   3   4   5   6

34. How satisfied are you with how often your PARENT do something to save you energy, make you comfortable or

help you de-stress?

		0	1	2	3	4	5	6
35.	How satisfied are you with how often you seek out your PARENT to give you advice?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
36.	How satisfied are you with how often you seek out your PARENT to help you make sense of your relationships?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
37.	How satisfied are you with how often you seek out your PARENT to help you choose/find a romantic partner?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
38.	How satisfied are you with how often your PARENT gives you their opinion?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
39.	How satisfied are you with how often your PARENT helps you solve a problem or make a decision?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
40.	How satisfied are you with how often your PARENT gives/lends you something you need or want?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
41.	How satisfied are you with how often your PARENT gives/lends you financial support?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
42.	How satisfied are you with how often your PARENT spends time with you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
43.	How satisfied are you with how often your PARENT spends an hour or more with you just to talk?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
44.	How satisfied are you with how often your PARENT discusses personal matters with you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
45.	How satisfied are you with how often you and your PARENT work together on a project?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
46.	How satisfied are you with how often you and your PARENT take a drive or walk?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
47.	How satisfied are you with how often you and your PARENT enjoy activities together?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
48.	How satisfied are you with how often you and your PARENT go out together?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Profile Sheet

YOUR PROFILE
Depending on condition (Interviewer vs. Interviewee) this information will be provided to your interaction partner(s) to facilitate impression formation.

Your Code Name: _____
Your Gender: Male   Female
Your Age:_____
Race/Ethnicity: (Circle all that apply)

African American   Hispanic or Latino
Asian or Pacific Islander   Middle Eastern or Arabic
Caucasian   American Indian
Other – Specify:_____
  Political affiliation (if any): _____   Religion (if applicable): _____

Please list the top five to ten adjectives that you think describe WHO you are (e.g. outgoing, smart, conservative…):

●	●
●	●
●	●
●	●

Tell your interaction partner a little about you, e.g. how you are unique/different, what's/who's important to you, what your hobbies are, what your goals are, what makes you a good date/employee:

What would you be looking for in a romantic partner?:
Gender: Male   Female
Age:_____
Race/Ethnicity: (Circle all that apply)

African American   Hispanic or Latino
Asian or Pacific Islander   Middle Eastern or Arabic
Caucasian   American Indian
Other – Specify:_____

WHAT I LIKE IN A ROMANTIC PARTNER:
WHAT I DISLIKE IN A ROMANTIC PARTNER:

Lower half only to be used in date condition, cut in half for work condition.
Parent and Friend Contact Information – Collateral Contacts Sheet

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COLLATERAL CONTACTS SHEET

Please Keep Separate From Survey

In this study, we are interesting in exploring similarities in social perceptions. We want to study how perceptions (e.g. impressions) of people might be affected by the environment (e.g. the internet) and closeness/similarity of the person being assessed. Accordingly, we ask that you provide us with the contact information of a close friend and a parent/guardian who would be willing to answer some questions about either:

1. Their perceptions of you
2. Their perceptions of other students

Then we may see if there is any match in their perceptions. Do they see strangers the same as you? Do they see you the same as others do?

To contact them, we will need your initials or first name / nickname that they know you by:

_____

We will also need their contact information. As we are interested in the internet environment, we would prefer to contact them via e-mail or instant messaging. Only if they do not have access to electronic communication we will contact them by phone. Please give us the following information:

FRIEND's First Name: _____

Email address: _____

Other means of contact (IM login name, PHONE etc) _____

Best times to reach him/her: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN's First Name: _____

Email address: _____

Other means of contact (IM login name, PHONE etc) _____

Best times to reach him/her: _____

APPENDIX E

EXPERIMENTAL MATERIALS FOR STUDY 2

Likeability Rating – First Impressions Sheet

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: Your Perception of Your Interaction Partner

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about
CHATPARTICIPANT Code Name: _____
ORDER IN WHICH YOU SPOKE TO THEM (Circle):   1st or   2nd

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Completely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Completely Agree

1. _____ I like my interaction partner.
2. _____ I could see my interaction partner and I becoming friends.
3. _____ If out in the real world, I could see us becoming more than friends.
4. _____ I think my interaction partner has a number of desirable characteristics.
5. _____ I don't think my interaction partner has much success with relationships
6. _____ My interaction partner made a good impression.
7. _____ I feel I learned a lot about him/her.
8. _____ I am interested in knowing more about him/her.
9. _____ I wouldn't care if I ever interacted with this person again.
10. _____ I feel like that was a waste of time.

If I had to rate this person OVERALL on a scale of 0-10 with regard to how well they came across (0 - very negatively, 10 - very positively), I would give them a: (CIRCLE YOUR RESPONSE)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Likeability Rating – Second Impressions Sheet

SECOND IMPRESSIONS: Your Perception of Your Interaction Partner

YOUR INTERACTION PARTNER WILL NOT SEE THESE RESULTS, SO FEEL FREE TO BE HONEST.

Their Code Name: _____

Their Gender: Male   Female

Overall summary/impressions (What do you like, what do you dislike?)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Completely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Completely Agree

1. _____ I believe this interaction partner is the better match for me.
2. _____ I think this interaction is probably not a good match for me.
3. _____ I like my interaction partner more now.
4. _____ I could really see my interaction partner as a potential good friend.
5. _____ I think my interaction partner would make a good boy/girlfriend.
6. _____ I think my interaction partner has a number of desirable characteristics.
7. _____ I don't think my interaction partner has much success with relationships
8. _____ My interaction partner made a good impression.
9. _____ I feel I learned a lot more about him/her.
10. _____ I am interested in knowing even more about him/her.
11. _____ I wouldn't care if I ever interacted with this person again.
12. _____ I feel like that was a waste of my time.

If I had to rate this person OVERALL on a scale of 0-10 with regard to how well they came across (0 - very negatively, 10 - very positively), I would give them a:

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**

TOP 40 GETTING TO KNOW YOU QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS ABOUT PERSONALITY
1. In a general way, how would you describe yourself?
2. What do you think are some of your most important aspects?
3. What do you think are important aspects for a person to have?
4. What is your least favorite characteristic (your trait you like least)?
5. Any bad habits? **
6. If you could wake up tomorrow and be a different person, what would be different?
7. What is something about yourself that no one else knows?
8. If you had to identify with the personality of one famous person, who would it be and why?

QUESTIONS ABOUT EXPERIENCES:
9. Where did you grow up and what was it like?
10. What has been your most unique life experience?
11. What were you like in high school? Would you want to go back?
12. What is the best gift you've ever received?
13. Have you ever met anyone famous?
14. What was your scariest experience?

QUESTIONS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS:
15. What's your family like and how do you get along?
16. What are your friends like?
17. Have you ever had a romantic relationship? What were the highlights/lowlights?
18. What is your ideal romantic relationship/partner?
19. What kind of boy/girlfriend are you?

QUESTION ABOUT HOBBIES/INTERESTS/ATTITUDES:
20. What do you like to do socially in your free time?
21. What hobbies do you prefer (why)?
22. What is your number one talent?
23. Do you work outside of school? If so, in what industry?
24. Do you identify yourself politically, and if so, how?
25. Is religion important to you, and if so, elaborate.
26. What kind of music do you prefer?
27. What sports do you like?
28. What are your favorite movies/TV shows?
29. What types of books written media do you enjoy?
30. What's your favorite holiday?

QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL LIFE:
31. Any specific reason that you chose MSU?
32. How do you like MSU and being out on your own?
33. What inspires you to pursue your current major, or (if undecided) what major are you leaning towards?
34. What classes are you taking (and what do you think of them)?
35. If you could make up your "dream" class list - take any classes you want, what would they
36. Do you have any roommates? Do you get along with them?

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE/GOALS:
37. If you could be or do anything, what would it be? Any secret goals or desires?
38. Do you have any desire to travel (or have you)? And if so, where would you like to go?
39. How do you envision your life after college?
40. Do you want a family - in the future?

Debriefing Checklist

1. ☐ Ask if the participant has any questions
2. ☐ Ask about participant's feelings about and reactions to the experiment.
3. ☐ Ask if participants understood all instructions and procedures
4. ☐ Ascertain if participants have heard anything about the experiment or knew anyone who has or will be participating.
5. ☐ Ask the participants what they thought the study was about
   The experimenter depending on participants' responses, says something like this: "Yes, you know, you were on the right track. We were interested in studying some behaviors that we couldn't really discuss with you in advance. I'd like to take a few minutes to tell you in more detail about what we're studying."
6. ☐ Describe variable of interest:
   Have you ever heard of the halo effect?
   The halo effect is this phenomenon in social perception where we tend to find that whenever the first piece of information we learn about someone is positive it tends to cast a HALO over our perception of them. So in this the experimental condition of this study, we wanted to compare what happens when you receive information about someone, and that information comes from a trusted associate – namely a friend or family member..
   What do you think? Do you think this information might influence the impression you make?
7. ☐ **Ask if they recall what their friend/family/experimenter said. What was the feedback received?**
   WAS THE PARTICIPANT ACCURATE IN THEIR RECALL? (Circle: NO YES)
8. ☐ **Ask participant what were their reactions to the feedback. Did they agree/disagree?**
   REACTIONS:
9. ☐ Gauge believability of feedback. DO not ask: Was it believable? Instead ask something like: Was the feedback consistent with what you thought you friend/family might say? And/or Would it surprise you to know that we didn't actually contact your friend/family?
   WAS THE FEEDBACK BELIEVED? (Circle: NO YES MAYBE)
10. ☐ *We didn't actually contact anyone you know but wanted to see whether how close you are to this friend or family member affects your acceptance of their perspective – hence all the questions in the screening survey about the quality of your relationship with your friend or family.*
11. ☐ *We didn't want to tell you all of this at the beginning of the study because we wanted to get your genuine reactions to the interactions as opposed to reactions that might come about due to us telling you what we were interested in establishing.*
   Do you think if I told you all about the halo effect at the beginning that it would have affected your responses? (Hopefully they say yes)
   Do you think if we had just told you to "imagine" that your friend/family said they liked or didn't like someone that your reaction would have been different? (Hopefully they say yes)
12. ☐ *Because we didn't tell you everything at the beginning, we want to give you the opportunity to reassert or withdraw your consent at this time. You can ask to have your data destroyed and we will not be upset and your points will not be affected. Or you can let us keep it, and we'd be happy with that too. So may we keep your data?*
13. ☐ *Second, we need your help.* (HAND THEM CONFIDENTILIATY AGREEMENT) *In order to preserve the confidentiality of all involved we ask that you do not discuss any information about the people you met today on-line. You could be talking about them to a friend in the Bakery and they could be standing right next to you, you never know. And that would be a violation of participant confidentiality.*
   Just as important to maintaining your and your interactions partner's confidentiality is helping us maintain the confidentiality of the project. AS YOU HAVE ALREADY ACKNOWLEDGED, if you knew the purpose of the study coming in, you would have reacted differently. It is important that everyone coming in that door also not know what we are examining, so we can get genuine reactions. So now that you know what's going on, it is important to the integrity of the study that you keep it to yourself. So we need your promise. After all, we go to great lengths go to put this study, and all our

efforts would go out the window if a participant came in knowing what we were examining. We are trusting you to give us your word that you will not discuss anything about this study outside this lab. Can you do that for us?

Thank you. To get your agreement, I ask that you sign this confidentiality agreement as is consistent with the MSU new honor code.

14. ☐   *As an extra bonus for your attending both parts of our study, we have prepared this guessing game. Everyone gets a chance to guess the amount in the jar and the person who guesses it accurately wins the whole.* HAND THEM GUESSING BALLOT. *Would you like to take a chance?* THEY WRITE DOWN THEIR CHOICE. You respond: "I'm sorry the correct amount is $142.28" - or if that is what they guessed: "I'm sorry, the correct amount is $145.18. You were close though."

15. ☐   *Do you have any questions? Thanks again for coming.*

PARTICIPANT CODE NUMBER: _____
DATE: _____
EXPERIMENTER/DEBRIEFER INITIALS: _____

Confidentiality Agreement

MSU HONOR CODE: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I, _____, understand the importance of maintaining the confidence of the Impression Formation study. I understand that I have an important role to play in maintaining the integrity of the project. In accordance with the Mississippi State University honor code, I hereby give my word that I will not to discuss the study with anyone outside the laboratory. I also understand that violation of the confidentiality of the lab constitutes a violation of the University's honor code.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Staple to debriefing sheet

"Guessing Game" Ballot

Guess-the-amount Contest	
Date: _____	Time:_____
NetID: _____	Guess: $_____