

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Abstract Approved

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As a young adult, I have been able to witness first hand just how drastically social media is changing our culture and the way that we look at things. As social media continues to become more vastly used by its members who are in many different phases of life and age ranges, I developed an interest in further learning how the specific social media site known as Facebook has an impact on its users in how they develop relationships with others. The overall goal of my research was to examine how employees use Facebook during the process of developing and maintaining relationships with co-workers. Social media is continuing to gain popularity and is a form of communication relevant to the workplace in U.S. culture today; consequently, I was curious as to how specifically Facebook was changing communication, in the work environment with regard to relationships among co-workers. My research covers the topics of how Facebook is used as a tool to reduce uncertainty in the workplace, how Facebook is used as a tool to maintain relationships in the workplace, and how employees establish their individual credibility online through ethos construction.

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Facebook in the Work Environment: A Look At How Facebook Has An Impact on the
Developing Relationships in the Workplace

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Jessica L. Martin, Author

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Social media sites have gradually become a more popular phenomenon for a variety of people throughout our culture today. Reaching the milestone figure of 500 million members in July 2010, the growth of the social networking site Facebook has rapidly accelerated (Kramer & Haferkamp, 2011). “Services such as Facebook and Twitter have evolved into massive streams of information that is generated and distributed by participants as they communicate with one another” (Potts & Jones, 2011, p. 339). Since sites such as Facebook contain such an immense amount of information and are also becoming more commonly used, it is important to take into consideration how these networks function to impact social interaction and identity formation, particularly in the workplace because this is still an understudied area. According to Suchman (1994), “we constrain and direct our actions according to the significance that we assign to particular contexts” (pg. 45).

Currently today, Facebook membership figures would make it the third largest country in the world (Kramer, Haferkamp, 2011). In February of 2004 Facebook was launched by then 19-year old Mark Zuckerberg, a student at Harvard University (Foregger, 2008). There are two important aspects of Facebook, which are the home page and the profile page. The profile page, also often called “the wall,” is where users present themselves to their audience. A small profile picture adds to a large cover photo at the top of the profile page, below which the name of the user is presented along with some basic information and a few buttons referring to friends, photos, and “likes”. Below that area is where the “status updates” appear, which is where users can post anything they want, and their friends can also respond toward whatever they write through text comments or by

“liking” it (Caers, De Feyter, De Couck, Stough, Vigna, & Du Bois, 2013). On the Facebook home page, there is also a “news feed,” where users are informed on the status updates and other activities going on in their “friends” day-to-day lives. Once a profile is created, the new user can start looking for friends and send friend requests. When accepted (by their new friend), Facebook connects the two individuals by allowing them to see each other’s profile page and by adding activities to one another’s news feed. (Caers, De Feyter, De Couck, Stough, Vigna, & Du Bois, 2013, pg. 984).

According to Teboul (1994), there is substantial agreement among scholars that people often face situations in which they do not know how to act, either because they have no familiar response to enact, or because they derive multiple meanings and interpretations from these circumstances. Uncertainty Reduction Theory suggests that when individuals, groups, or organizations experience uncertainty, they are motivated or driven to seek information to reduce uncertainty (Kramer, 1999). There are many situations within the workplace that can create uncertainty, such as organizational change and hiring new employees into the work environment. Employees are proactive in their information seeking strategies about new employees (Gallagher & Sias, 2009), and use a variety of information seeking strategies to develop and maintain relationships with coworkers. “Individuals may also create certainty with minimal information seeking and without overt communication” (Kramer, 1999, p. 308).

Facebook is potentially an easy tool for veteran employees to use as a way to reduce uncertainty about others without having to directly communicate with them face-to-face. In the context of this research, the term *veteran* employee refers to any member of an organization that has spent enough time in his or her role as to be a “fully functioning

member” of the organization (Gallagher & Sias, 2009; Jablin, 2001). A veteran is considered to be fully trained and understands the tasks associated with the job as well the communication norms within the [organization]. Researchers (e.g. Gallagher & Sias, 2009; Jablin, 2001; Miller & Jablin, 1991) have established that veteran employees experience uncertainty when new employees join the organization. Additionally, Kramer (1999) argued that employees experience many situations in which they must manage uncertainty. Interpersonal relationships must be maintained over time; particularly in the workplace when having good working relationships with coworkers can determine one’s level of job satisfaction and commitment to the organization (Sias, Gallagher, Kopaneva, and Pederson, 2012). However, research has yet to examine how Facebook is used in the work environment as a way to seek information to reduce uncertainty about a newcomer entering the work environment, or develop and maintain relationships with coworkers. This is a highly relevant and important gap to fill because of the increasing prevalence of social media as a form of communication relevant to work organizations. The goal of my research is to address this gap in our understanding about how Facebook contributes to communication practices relevant to uncertainty and information seeking in the workplace. I will also examine the different ways in which employers practice maintaining their credibility online through ethos construction within their Facebook profiles. A lot of research has been conducted on how credibility is practiced and measured face-to-face with other people in the work environment, but little has been discovered about how ethos is constructed online in the work environment. I also examined the impact that technical communication has had within the work environment, through understanding how the components of Facebook are effectively used to maintain

relationships between co-workers.

In order to research this topic, I conducted 26 interviews with participants in different work organizations to answer questions about how employees communicate via Facebook. I also further looked into how participants develop and maintain relationships via Facebook, as well as how they engage in ethos construction via Facebook. This manuscript first addresses the relevant literature that informed my study. The next chapter presents the methods, followed by the findings, discussion, recommendations for further research, and finally the conclusion.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Sias, Gallagher, Kopaneva, and Pederson (2012) and Kram and Isabella (1985), there are 3 different types of peer relationships (information, collegial, and special) that are perceived differently by individuals at different career stages.

Information peer is characterized by low levels of trust and self-disclosure, *collegial peer* is characterized as a moderate level of friendship, and *special peer* is characterized by friends [at work] who are very close, trust each other greatly, and discuss a virtually limitless breadth of work and non-work topics (Sias et al., 2012). According to Kram & Isabella (1985), individuals at the information peer relationship benefit most from exchanging information about their work and the organization, thus allowing them to receive little confirmation or emotional support from a peer of this kind. Individuals at the collegial peer join the information sharing function with emotional support, feedback, and confirmation, participating in more intimate discussions about friends and family. The farthest point on the continuum, special peer, represents the most intimate form of peer relationship. Becoming a special peer involves revealing ambivalences and dilemmas in both work and family realms (Kram & Isabella, 1985). As Facebook gradually becomes a greater part of employees' interactions with their co-workers, it is important to reflect on how Facebook plays a developing role into the intimacy of peer relationships.

According to Gallagher and Sias (2009), because organizations bring together people with common occupational experiences and engage them in shared activities, the workplace is somewhat of a natural 'incubator' for personal relationships that extend

communication strategies that will maintain the work relationship at a desirable level.

There are a variety of tactics employees may choose to use if they perceive a work relationship has become too close or too distant for comfort (Sias et al., 2012).

Consequently, within the work environment, people who attempt to maintain a relationship are clearly concerned about damaging the relationship and those concerns will likely influence tactic choice (Sias et al., 2012). Facebook is increasingly becoming a way for employees to reduce uncertainty about new coworkers and to establish a sense of closeness with their coworkers and work to maintain coworker relationships.

Employee Uncertainty

According to Miller and Jablin (1991), information seeking is particularly important and somewhat unique during organizational entry. Entry may represent the most important time of a new employees' role learning. At the same time however, new hires are likely to experience considerably higher levels of role-related and career uncertainty when entering a new environment than at any other time during their organizational tenure (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Newcomers leave membership in one work organization to join another organization, set aside portions of their old identities for new identities, and abandon an accustomed role to learn a new role and a new set of expectations (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Individuals vary in the way that they approach and deal with uncertainty (Clampitt & Williams, 2005). Although some individuals embrace it, others are uncomfortable with uncertainty, and find it emotionally and cognitively challenging (Clampitt, Williams, 2005). Uncertainty can create a feeling of vulnerability or anxiety that may lead to actively distorting perceptions and information. According to Clampitt & Williams (2005), the way that members of each organization manage uncertainty varies.

Some organizations embrace it through openly discussing change in their customer base and competitors, and others tend to avoid uncertainty by following inflexible control procedures or policies.

According to Gallagher and Sias (2009), veteran employees within the workplace often experience uncertainty when a newcomer enters their work environment, and will use a variety of tactics to reduce this uncertainty. Gallagher and Sias explain how veteran employees often experience five specific kinds of uncertainty when a newcomer enters their work environment. These types of uncertainty are newcomer appraisal, newcomer referent, newcomer relational, transformation, and newcomer initiative (Gallagher & Sias, 2009). In *newcomer appraisal uncertainty*, veteran employees are unsure about the newcomer's past work experience skills, or ability to perform a job. In *newcomer referent uncertainty*, veteran employees experience uncertainty when they were unsure about the tasks the newcomer would be doing or the position the new person would fill. In *newcomer relational uncertainty*, veterans experience uncertainty when they are unsure about how the newcomer will interact with and fit in with co-workers, supervisors, and customers. In *transformation uncertainty*, veterans experience uncertainty with how the new employee might change the normal work routine or affect the veterans daily work habits. Finally, in *newcomer initiative uncertainty*, veterans experience uncertainty when they are uncertain about the newcomer's motivation and work ethic, and specifically, the newcomer's motivation to learn the new job and willingness (Gallagher & Sias, 2009). Overall, uncertainty within the workplace is a relevant issue for all employees, but the source of that uncertainty varies depending on newcomer or veteran status. According to Morrison (2002), employees within the work environment will often cope with ambiguity

and uncertainty by seeking information.

Information Seeking

According to Berger & Bradac (1982) uncertainty reduction is defined as how communication functions to help us attain knowledge and understanding of ourselves and others. Berger's research further suggests that although communication is vital to the process of relationship development, the role played by communication in the development of relationships is mediated by uncertainty reduction. Information seeking occurs within many different organizational contexts: employment interviewing, team interactions, performance appraisals, managerial scanning of the external environment, and following any type of organizational change (Morrison, 2002). Furthermore, veteran employees traditionally have sought information about newcomers. According to Gallagher & Sias (2009) veteran employees use a variety of indirect tactics to seek out information about newcomers in the work environment. Social media is a worthwhile context to study because it represents a new form of information seeking that hasn't been researched before.

Furthermore, according to Black & Johnson (2012), organizations are increasingly turning to social networking websites for insight into prospective employees. While existing research addresses many of the facets of human resource selection, the context of social networking sites (SNS) is unique. Issues such as privacy, appearance, stigmas, and discrimination require study in the context of social networking to bridge past research with evolving practice. Although a range of selection laws protect individuals, there are a few specific legal restrictions on use of information obtained from SNS. Thus, organizations are using SNS to retrieve additional information about applicants. Use of

the information found on these SNS may further drive the decision to screen out individuals who appear to be heavy drinkers, drug users, practice a lifestyle inconsistent with organizational expectations, or other factors that the organization may deem undesirable in their employees. These characteristics that an individual may display on their social media pages can negatively affect how others view them, which is why it is important for members in the work environment to be considerate of how they construct their ethos online.

Ethos

According to Smith (2003), while character is centered on the speaker, it must appeal to the virtues a specific audience values. While speakers create appeals to reason and emotion, they must do so with a specific audience in mind, or their rhetoric will fall onto deaf ears (Smith, 2003, pg. 78). Aristotle's conception of ethos was audience based, and he believed that the speaker could use specific artistic strategies such as sagacity (wisdom), goodwill, and character (Smith, 2003, pg. 79). Aristotle believed that if the speaker could be trusted, audiences were much more likely to be persuaded by what the speaker had to say (Smith, 2003). If the speaker were neither believable nor trustworthy, it didn't matter what they had to say, because the audience was very unlikely to believe them (Smith, 2003). Furthermore, Aristotle believed that the speaker (or the writer) must understand ethos in order to create in his audience a strong and favorable impression of his own character (Halloran, 1982, pg. 60). He [The speaker or the writer] does this in part by bringing to the rhetorical occasion a good reputation, but he also must manifest the proper character through the choices made in his speech (Halloran, 1982, pg. 60).

Ethos Construction Online

As social media continues to become more widespread and used by people in a variety of different contexts, more and more people are using it as a tool to determine the character of the different people that they encounter online and in person. These SNS encourage people who share a friend to share a social space, and these social spaces typically lack boundaries and segmentations that are characteristics of offline networks (Binder, Howes, & Smart, 2011). More recently than ever, social media has become a pervasive tool for personal and professional networking (Knight et al., 2013). Interviews, applicants, friends, colleagues, and others are using forums, e-mail discussion lists, and social networking sites such as Twitter, Flickr, and Facebook to communicate (Knight, et al. 2013). As social networking tools rise and fade, users need to understand the importance of, and methods for, establishing credibility across platforms (Knight et al., 2013)

Online ethos can be defined as how your audience sees you, or your organization, based on their observation and interpretation of the way you present yourself in online media (Knight et al., 2013). Those participating in building an online presence must be concerned with impression creation and management. Rather than an overt or purposeful approach to building ethos, individuals creating online identities may passively allow others to build their ethos for them. These individuals are often unaware of the impressions that are formed about them since such a variety of people have access to their personal lives via their Facebook profiles. Because identification of types of users can be immediately presumed based on the location of the user profile, users must be

aware of the connotations of different online communities (such as Facebook) and the potential benefits or detriments of that affiliation (Knight et al., 2013).

According to Holt, “The Internet has fundamentally changed the way human beings interact and communicate. Where once an audience was incapable of making character judgments of rhetors they did not know personally or who had not developed a public reputation, today we find a different case entirely” (Holt, 2012, p. 75). Holt suggests that the invention of the Internet (more specifically social media platforms) has created a new way for people to virtually display every detail of their lives—such as their thoughts, memories, values, achievements, and embarrassments (Holt, 2012). Holt also discusses how the shift of new technologies mark dramatic changes in the ways that people communicate, interact, and engage rhetorically with the world around them (Holt, 2012). People now have the opportunity to fashion desirable or even misleading impressions of themselves online, yet most people maintain an accurate presentation of themselves through these websites (Hall, Pennington, & Lueders, 2013). Holt suggests that the invention of the Internet requires for rhetoricians and rhetorical critics to reassess their construction of ethos as a “perpetual project,” or one that is, as an appeal which is not limited to a particular artifact but constructed over the course of a rhetor’s lifetime (Holt, 2012).

Holt (2012) looks into the question of how ethos can be applied to the modern world today, especially since the practice of rhetoric is so different than it was during Aristotle’s lifetime. Holt explains four crucial aspects of social media in their relation to ethos which are: their richness as texts which speak to character, their co-authored nature, their exceptional availability, and their virtual indestructibility (Holt, 2012). For *richness*,

the texts on users' profiles are considered very rich through the fact that they allow users to clearly state their values, opinions, and beliefs. For *co-authored*, although the users' of these social media sites can be understood as the ultimate authors of the text, the purpose of the sites is to allow other users to view, respond, and sometimes modify elements of an individual's profile (Holt, 2012). For *availability*, the texts produced by people on their social media profiles are widely, publicly, and near constantly accessible, which means any type of audience wanting to know more about a person's character can do so by looking into a user's social media profile (Holt, 2012). The accessibility of these online profiles is significant when considering their potential impact on the construction of ethos (Holt, 2012). Finally, for *virtual indestructibility*, the information that a user uploads to a social media site is archived and can be stored digitally in several locations. This means that even if the author decides to edit, retract, or delete elements of a profile, item can still exist in several different locations (Holt, 2012).

Those participating in building an online presence must be concerned with impression creation and management (Knight et al., 2013). The merging of audiences throughout social media and the variety of participation structures that these online networks present (such as different audience sizes and interaction targets) pose questions about how people respond to these new communication situations (Bazarova, Taft, Choi, & Cosley, 2012). Self-presentation management online can be a complicated process because as people strive to control others' impressions, they have to adapt their verbal and non-verbal behaviors to varying audiences (Bazarova, et. al 2012). According to Leary and Kowalski (1990), impression management, otherwise known as self-presentation, refers to the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others form of

them. Because the impressions people make on others have implications for how others perceive, evaluate, and treat them, as well as for their own view of themselves, people sometimes behave in certain ways to create certain impressions on other people (Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

Sites such as Facebook make it easier for users to create and maintain such online presence more than ever before (Lee, Ahn, & Kim, 2014). According to research completed by Bazarova (2012), “it has been proposed that people adopt simple strategies such as sharing information according to a lowest common denominator principle, making posts that are acceptable for all members of the network, from bosses to strangers” (p. 124). According to Goodmon, Smith, Ivancevich and Lundberg (2014), employer screening of Facebook content will continue to influence decisions about the type of information that one discloses. As online networks grow and become more diverse, members from a variety of social spheres become a part of it. This is why users tend to use more caution since technology makes everything available within the whole network (Binder, Howes, & Smart, 2011). Self-presentation and image maintenance becomes difficult online because users’ audiences are becoming more diverse (Rui & Stefanone, 2013). Employers take the way that their co-workers portray themselves online very seriously, as it provides a way for them to learn more about their co-worker's character. According to Eftekhari, Fullwood, and Morris (2014), online behaviors tend to mimic what would be expected of an individual’s offline personality characteristics. “Public behaviors increase commitment because they offer evidence of personal character to others and thus are more relevant to self-identity and esteem maintenance goals than private behaviors” (Bazarova et al., 2012, p.126). Therefore, Facebook provides an easy

platform for employers to discover more about the character of those that they work with. Another way in which Facebook contributes to the work environment is through its ability to provide a platform for individuals to maintain and establish relationships with one another in the work place. The concept of technical communication further elaborates on how social media works in this specific way.

Technical communication

As a profession, technical communication encompasses written, oral, and visual communication within a workplace setting, traditionally in the context of engineering, though the technical communication profession has in recent years experienced a shift to information technology (Hart-Davidson, 2001). With the shift to information technology, there has arguably been a corresponding rise in the status of technical communicators in the workplace, as, more and more, the exchange value of an information product is associated with aspects of quality that technical communicators have the expertise to look after: customization for specialized or niche audiences, ease of use, and scalability. According to Lipson and Day (2005), the boom of the Internet provided important opportunities for technical communication. As many cultures have moved from industrial to information ages, they rely ever more heavily on the skills of technical communicators. Technologies are no longer tools to users; they are environments, spaces, worlds, and conversations. Furthermore, the advancement of the web has created conditions that change the nature of writing. The web has spawned conditions that call for new types of skills, particularly those that can help users synthesize, locate, and evaluate information (Lipson & Day, 2005). Technology in general impacts the workplace, since employees in the work environment use technical communication often to get in touch with their co-

workers.

According to Pigg (2014), social media frequently make social and opposite gender connections visible and immediate, and indicate where relationships might exist. Furthermore, “popular social networking and microblogging sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook display lists of friends or followers such that observers can see relationships concretized (Pigg, 2014). One of the main reasons why social media sites [such as Facebook] are gaining popularity is because of their ability to provide a way for users to maintain relationships with other members of their social group, and also offers a means through which individuals can aggregate people and knowledge, or, at the least, learn how existing webs of participation are held together (Pigg, 2014). Pigg further explains how networked writing environments help knowledge writers gain access to existing communities of practice, maintain a presence within them, and leverage community norms to circulate texts through them. In order to maintain this presence online, Pigg (2014) explains how we must constantly monitor and participate in social exchange, as we typically do on these SNS.

According to Lipson and Day (2005), online media such as web pages can contain both visual and verbal components, but it is often the verbal aspects, or written text, that contain the bulk of information. As a piece of written text, these web pages are subject to the same kinds of problems inherent to any form of written communication designed for an international audience. Thus, the ethos expectations members of a culture apply to a traditional written text will also probably be used to evaluate online presentations that use text to convey information. Technical communicators, therefore, need to understand the major cultural factors that could cause their text-based work to appear less credible in the

eyes of a given cultural audience. Furthermore, people should be aware of cultural differences and the varying technological acumen of users on these sites (Knight et al., 2013).

Additionally, social media is changing the way we present ourselves to others, which contributes to a shift in how we interpret the credibility and trustworthiness of people we meet. However, this topic has yet to be examined through academic research. The way that individuals portray themselves online can significantly impact the relationships that they develop with one another in the workplace. Furthermore, employees will resort to using specific strategies to reduce the uncertainty that they may experience amongst their co-workers in the work environment. Thus, the following research questions were posed based the different areas of research covered in my review of literature:

RQ1: How does communication via Facebook impact employees' perceptions of each other?

RQ2: How do employees use Facebook to reduce uncertainty about new coworkers?

RQ3: How is Facebook used to develop relationships in the workplace?

CHAPTER III: MATERIALS AND METHOD

I interviewed employees from different work organizations across the Pacific Northwest, who had been at their current job for at least 4 months. Only a couple of my participants had been employed for this long, as the majority of participants had been employed 6 months or more. These methods were chosen because the goal of the research was to analyze how Facebook had an effect on the developing relationships in the work place, thus producing a variety of responses from interviewees based on their personal experiences and descriptions of the use of Facebook within their day-to-day life.

Participants

The participant population was restricted to current employees within different work organizations that were at least 18 years old, currently had a Facebook profile that they were active on, and who worked at least 20 hours a week at their current job. The average age of participants was 27 years old at the time of the interviews, with a range from 20-35. Each one of my participants had been at their current job position for at least 4 months. I chose this time frame for my participants because I felt that this would be enough time for them to have likely developed relationships with employees within their work environment and become friends with some of their co-workers on Facebook. My participants worked at different industries such as Nike, Waggener Edstrom, Hewlett Packard, different hospitals within the area, small coffee shops and eateries, and more. Participants represented a variety of hierarchical levels in their organizations, such as entry-level and mid-level positions, as well as managers.

Data was collected from 26 participants at specific work organizations across the Pacific Northwest. In order to increase the variety of my data and gain unique feedback

from different individuals, I did not interview any more than two participants from the same work organization.

Procedure

Participants for the interviews were recruited by myself to conduct a 30-40 minute interview about their experiences with using Facebook in their work environment to form relationships with those that they worked with. In order to recruit participants for the interviews, I contacted around 10 interviewees through email, text message, and telephone, and then was referred to other friends of these participants through these original contacts. Before deciding to use certain employees for the interviews, I gave an overview of the study, and also screened participants to make sure the employee met the specific qualifications to participate in the study (i.e. that they had been employed by their current work organization for at least 4 months and had an active Facebook account).

In addition to personally recruiting participants, I also used snowball sampling to identify potential participants. According to Emerson (2015), snowball sampling is defined as where the researchers ask the participants they have identified to tell their friends and acquaintances about the study. These methods might help researchers obtain the number of participants they desire, but the way the participants are gathered can easily influence the results by introducing unexpected or uncontrolled factors. In snowball sampling, all of the participants will generally be from the same geographical area. They may also have similar socioeconomic statuses or ethnic backgrounds. Any of these factors might have an impact on what the study is investigating, since if all the participants are similar on one or more factor, it might skew the results of the study. Despite these disadvantages, snowball sampling was necessary to identify participants

that fit the criteria of the study. The use of snowball sampling throughout my research helped me to gain a variety of participants and also helped with gathering the correct amount of people for my research study. Additionally, snowball sampling is a common method for participant recruitment in organizational communication studies (e.g. Gallagher & Sias, 2009) and tends to work well in terms of locating appropriate and available participants.

After each interview was complete, participants were asked to think of any other members that they felt might be a legitimate candidate to participate in the interview, and to provide contact information. I then made direct contact with each potential participant to explain the study and ask if he or she would be interested in participating. By personally contacting and screening each potential participant, I mitigated the risk of including participants that did not fit the criteria for my study, and was able to interview employees that represented a wide variety of industries and organizations.

During each interview, I referred to a protocol of questions that were used to provide structure and consistency among the interviews. The interview protocol and structure also allowed for participants to provide additional feedback or insight on the different ways Facebook had impacted their relationships in the work environment. Each different research question inspired the questions listed in the protocol, along with some additional questions at the end for participants to elaborate. See Appendix A for the complete interview protocol.

Each interview was conducted at a public location of the participant's choice, such as a local coffee shop or a private office, or by telephone. Consent was clearly established before the interview began and the interviewee was given the opportunity to ask any

questions regarding consent. After the consent form had been read and consent had been obtained, the interview and the recording began. Once the interview began, rapport was established with each participant through the use of multiple icebreaker questions. After rapport was established, the interview followed with the interview protocol and concluded with thanking them for doing the interview and asking them if they had anything else to add. Once the participant was finished talking and did not have anything else to say, the recording was stopped and the interview was over. The interviews ranged in length from 15 minutes (shortest) to 30 minutes (longest) and lasted an average of about twenty minutes. All interviews were transcribed for further analysis.

The 26 interviews generated over 125 pages of single spaced text. The data was analyzed using the constant comparative analysis method, created by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). According to Glaser & Strauss (1967), the purpose of the constant comparison method of joint coding and analysis is to generate theory more systematically by using explicit coding and analytic procedures. To begin my analysis, I first read through all of my transcriptions in order to become more familiar with the text. Once I had finished reading through all of my transcripts, I began coding all of my transcripts. In order to do this, I created three different categories based off of my research questions (ethos construction/public image, relational maintenance, and uncertainty reduction) and then coded for responses to my interview protocol that I felt belonged in one of these three categories. I only coded for responses that my research participants continuously brought up again and again throughout their interviews. See Appendix B for the complete codebook.

Once I had finished coding through all of my interview transcripts, I began the next

step of “integrating categories and their properties” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pg. 106) by placing words and phrases that came up repeatedly into the categories created by my different research questions. For example, I labeled the phrase “expected public image” as a theme for responses participants had about how employers explained that public image online was expected of them by their supervisors, and then placed it into the category of ethos construction/public image online. This process resulted in four different key words or themes for that specific research question. Each different theme was reviewed by my thesis advisor against a set of randomly selected interview transcripts.

Furthermore, to be clear, the categories for my codebook are not mutually exclusive. By this I mean that a comment cannot necessarily be coded as belonging in just one specific category. Instead, the different comments identified throughout my research could possibly fit into multiple categories. For example, one of my themes “insight” that was used to explain how employees used Facebook to gain further insight on others within their work environment was originally placed in the category of reducing uncertainty. It could be argued that this theme also fits in the category of relational maintenance, as an employee might use the tools of Facebook to further gain insight about their co-workers and to allow their relationship with them to grow. The overlap between categories is due to the interdependence of the three research questions that drove the research. The overlaps will be discussed in the following section with regard to the results.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Based on the data collected, I identified specific themes throughout my transcripts, and each theme was then placed into a different category based upon my research questions. My first research question asked: How does communication via Facebook impact employee's perceptions' of each other? The themes identified surrounding this category surrounded topics of ethos construction and public image that my interviewees discussed regarding their fellow employees use of Facebook in the work environment. The specific categories identified for this specific research question were *boundaries, expected public image, association, and impression.*

Boundaries

My first theme within the category of ethos construction/public image was identified as boundaries. For this theme, participants described how they believed that it was important for employees on Facebook to have clear boundaries with their managers in the work environment. If the participant was in a management position, they often did not think that it was wise to add their employees on Facebook. If the participant was just a normal employee, they often did not feel comfortable adding their subordinates on Facebook. Furthermore, participants in the management position who were friends with their employees on Facebook explained that it was hard for them to remain objective to their fellow employees if they were in communication with them via Facebook and thus more aware of what their subordinates personal lives entailed. As participant # 21, a marketing consultant explained:

In the past we have really struggled with boundaries [via Facebook], to where, like maybe not in an unethical way or in a moral way, but just I think leadership has gotten really close to where employees will talk to them about their personal circumstances, and then all of a sudden it makes it difficult to manage them. You know, set

expectations, and when they don't meet expectations to have a disciplinary process. Because then all of a sudden when that person cries, becomes emotional, it's really difficult once you've gotten that personal bond to really remain objective.

Many participants who had a management position within an organization admitted that they all together avoided adding their subordinates on Facebook, since they did not want to deal with learning how to remain objective in that context with their employees.

As participant #2, a cardiologist explained:

As I've grown in the organization I've had to remain more professional. So that's kind of been a transition for me. But the higher that you kind of rise into management and administrative level, I think I've been working to kind of eliminate that personal contact [via Facebook] and just kind of focus on the professional relationships.

As participant # 2 explained, not becoming friends with their fellow employees on Facebook and maintaining these personal boundaries with employees in the work environment was extremely important and helped with them doing a better job overall for their position. One participant also discussed how her current boss typically has avoided requesting any of her employees on Facebook, since she does not want to make anyone feel uncomfortable within the work environment or put certain expectations on her employees. As participant number 3, a team member at a beverage shop explained:

Like I know our manager, she won't request people on Facebook, but she will accept them if they request her. But [she does this] because she doesn't want to make people feel awkward where they have to accept her because she's the manager, but at the same time she wants to keep that professionalism up.

Overall, it seemed that many employees in the management position typically felt that clear boundaries needed to be kept in regards to becoming friends with their employees on Facebook. They felt that by becoming friends with their subordinates on Facebook through adding them meant that they were putting their employers in an

uncomfortable position that was not necessary. Employees who were not in the management position also admitted as to how they typically did not go out of their way to add their managers or their supervisors, as the idea of doing this made them uncomfortable and they did not believe that it was appropriate behavior to practice within the work environment. As participant #13, an executive assistant explained:

There are boundaries that I have with, you know, the CEO, the VP of operations, and the director of co-manufacturing. There's definitely a professionalism aspect there. Whereas the people that I share an office with, we are friends first and co-workers second type of thing. But when it comes to [specific] people, like I'm not going to have my boss on Facebook, and I have told her that we will never be friends on Facebook just because I'd like to keep that kind of separated even though I absolutely love my boss and we get along very very well. But I feel like there should be kind of a boundary there.

Participants also admitted that not being friends with their managers on Facebook had nothing to do with whether or not they had established a close bond or had formed a relationship with their supervisors. Participant #15, a senior communication specialist explained:

Yeah I would say for my manager and my VP, it is a professional line. I don't think they would be incredibly comfortable or myself would be incredibly comfortable with having that professional line be crossed, and that's just a little less stressful on everybody in that you don't have to watch what you say in quite the same way. You know it's not that I don't have a good personal relationship with either of them, they just make an effort to make sure that I have that still as a privacy thing.

Instead, participants explained that they just felt that simply that this was an issue of privacy in regards to their relationships with their supervisors, and a personal aspect of their lives that they felt was not necessary for them to bring into their relationships with their supervisors in the work environment.

Expected Public Image

Another theme that was identified throughout my data among my participants was labeled as expected public image. I was curious throughout my research as to whether or not different organizations required their employees to partake in some specific kind of workshop surrounding public image online in order to ensure that their organization was promoted professionally toward the public sphere. As I dug deeper into this area of research through my interviews, participants explained how maintaining an appropriate image of themselves online to the public was expected of them by their supervisors and fellow employees. When I asked my participants if they had been required to complete any specific workshops within their organization on public image online, nearly all my participants responded that they had not been required to do so. Instead, participants explained that this was a behavior that was expected of them online and not something that their supervisors felt needed to be explicitly stated or even placed within their employee handbook. Participant # 8, a senior director of development explained:

Yeah, you know again I'm in a senior position at the University of Oregon, and so that [public image online] was never explicitly defined. But it's kind of an unstated expectation that you will conduct yourself always in a manner that reflects positively of the University of Oregon.

Furthermore, participants explained how along with the fact that maintaining a professional public image online was expected of them by their supervisors, they also could prohibit themselves from moving forward within their organization if they displayed inappropriate behavior online.

So its not a written rule, there's nothing I could pull up in policy or procedure anywhere regarding my public image, but I do believe that if I had a questionable public image [online] I would probably not be able to be promoted, and I would be talked to by my supervisor. So definitely were expected to maintain a public image

that would support what were doing Monday through Friday here at work.
(Participant 2, cardiologist)

It seemed that employees were very aware that how they represented themselves online through their social media could negatively affect their progression in the work environment. Other employees admitted that their supervisors were fairly strict regarding how their employers presented themselves online.

It was never said specifically about social networking, but anything that we do in public, basically our managers do take seriously how we present ourselves. So if we were posting pictures of ourselves doing a bunch of drugs, or doing something illegal or something like that, they would be like “uh, no.” (Participant #1, maintenance manager)

Association

Another theme that was identified was labeled as association. For this theme, employees explained how they felt it was always important for them to remember that whatever they choose to post on Facebook directly represents their company in a lot of different ways. Employees believed that they could potentially make their company look very bad if they posted something online in relation to their company that had a negative connotation.

I mean the concept is that anything that we do that represents our company outside of work, make sure, it's basically according to the company. I don't attach my name to the company outside of work in any way. And if I did and that was the case, it would have to obviously be in a professional manner since then I am representing the company. (Participant 25, accountant)

If employees posted something online in which they were directly representing the company such as wearing a t-shirt or posting an article, it was important that they did not put down the company in any way. Employees admitted that they were very careful about posting anything online that revealed their association with their work organization, as they did not want to put their job at risk or make their organization look

bad.

They definitely make that known to us, to just be contentious of your image anytime you're directly associating yourself with the company. So if I was like wearing Dutch Brother shirt, I shouldn't be going out doing a bunch of illegal things. Or like breaking the law, I shouldn't post about it because they can see that and if people know I work for them that might come off as being inappropriate. So they definitely say just like protect your personal image, things like that. They hope that we make beneficial decisions for ourselves. But if I were to ever post a picture of myself doing something highly illegal, my employer would probably be very unhappy with me. (Participant 1, maintenance manager)

Participants also admitted that if employees were public about the fact that they worked for an organization online through their Facebook profiles, then this basically meant that were choosing to be a direct representation of their company no matter where they were or what they were doing, at any given time.

If you're posting messages, like Microsoft is our biggest client, if you're posting things about Microsoft, you have to disclose that you work for an agency where Microsoft is a client; otherwise both you and the agency could get in trouble. But there is also this expectation of you that if you're public about the fact that you work for Waggener, you should not be disparaging the agency publicly. (Participant 15, senior communication specialist)

Those in the management position for certain organizations admitted that it could easily become a liability if specific people within their work environment were affiliated with things that could possibly make their company look bad. For managers who were friends with their employees on Facebook (this was very few among my participants), Facebook thus provided away for these managers to further look into employee's lives and affirm whether or not their employees were associating the company in a negative way. As participant #6, a staffing manager explained:

Like If I can get on Facebook and know that you are out partying multiple days a week when those things are not the best for professionalism. Not that we have any say about what people do in their personal lives, but all their information is public information, and there becomes a time where we have to protect our company's image

and having someone affiliated with our company who is affiliated doing these other things, it becomes a liability.

Participants were fully aware that it could take one simple mistake or false association of their company online to put their company's image in danger. Participants knew that it was their responsibility as employees to always associate themselves with their work organization in a way that was deemed appropriate. Whether they were at work wearing their work clothes or off the job associating themselves with their company in a different way, it was crucial that it was important for employees to always strive to make their organization look good in every way possible.

And I know when I go out to dinner with friends, or you know, what I do on social media sites or how I conduct myself anywhere, you know again 24 hours a day, affects the way I'm evaluated in my job because I'm in a public setting constantly, and it only takes one slip up. You do something stupid in front of one donor; you make the University look bad. (Participant 8, senior director of development)

Impression

Themes discovered in the category of impression involved discussion among participants about how their impressions of co-workers could change based on the images of them that they came across online through Facebook and the different things that their co-workers posted on their individual Facebook pages. I was curious as to whether or not employee's impressions of others would change if they saw images or posts by their employees that they didn't expect to see involving things like drinking, going out, etc. Many participants admitted that if their co-workers posted pictures of themselves online drinking or participating in in-appropriate behavior, this could significantly alter their impressions of them and how they thought of these specific co-workers in general.

If I you know had been co-workers with them for 10 years and I know them on a very

personal level, I probably wouldn't think as much about a Facebook post, either positive or negative. I would base it more on my own experience and my own personal interactions with that person. But if it's a new colleague, with somebody that I maybe haven't worked with as much, then absolutely. You're on there, and you're just, posting things at 12 o'clock noon on a Tuesday and you're out at the bar drinking beer and stuff when you probably should be working, absolutely, I'm going to make assumptions. (Participant 8, senior director of development)

Furthermore, other participants explained that sometimes in the work environment situations came up where co-workers would call in sick, and then fellow employees would see pictures of them going out with their friends that same night. Participants admitted that this negatively affected the way that they saw these individuals who partook in these types of activities online and who deceived them through Facebook in this way. This negative judgment overall primarily was due to the fact the employees were being honest and also displaying images of themselves online that made their co-workers look at them negatively.

We just had a situation where [a co-worker] called in sick and then my friend who's friends with her on Facebook was like of she wasn't sick because she went out that night and posted pictures and was doing all this stuff on Facebook. And so that kind of made my relationship with her deteriorate a little bit because I was the one who was the manager in charge when she called in sick, so it's kind of like you threw us under the bus, and then went on Facebook, and you obviously weren't sick. So I mean, I think it definitely affects the relationships at work, depending on how you represent yourself on Facebook. (Participant 3, team member)

Participants also admitted that they although they didn't think it was always necessarily wise to judge people by their Facebook images and posts, they felt that since technology was now so accessible and employees' Facebook pages were fairly easy to get to, that it only made sense to take this route.

I mean perception is everything. Even though you shouldn't always stage things at Facebook value, you can't help it. I mean if I see someone doing something, I mean first off if they're dumb enough to post something (laughs), I question what career they're in given what we do. It would raise something because especially I am in that management kind of level, of okay, how is this going to reflect on the team eventually,

are clients going to see this? (Participant 14, senior account executive)

Aside from my participants using Facebook to determine the individual character of their co-workers, they also used it to reduce any type of uncertainty that they may have felt toward their co-workers. My second research question asked: How do employees use Facebook to reduce uncertainty about new coworkers? The themes identified in this category surrounded topics of uncertainty and reducing uncertainty, such as how employees would use Facebook to discover information about their co-workers that they may have not initially found out in person. I was curious as to whether or not employees felt that Facebook was a viable tool for them to use to discover unique information about their fellow co-workers in the work environment. Many participants admitted that they enjoyed how Facebook made it easy for them to discover so much information about their co-workers. The specific themes that I discovered for this research question were labeled as *insight* and *hiring*.

Insight

For my first category of insight, many employees admitted that they would often use Facebook to gain further information about new employees that they had questions about or just their fellow employees in general. Facebook bridged the gap for them in this way to discover more information about their co-workers that they may not have known before about them or that maybe would have only been able to discover through Facebook itself. Participants explained that looking at employee's Facebook pages could either positively or negatively affect their relationship with that individual.

I look at everybody's [Facebook] pages. I'm a total snooper. So if I'm meeting with anybody, I'm pretty much checking out Facebook, checking linked-in, but mostly Facebook and Linked-In. And so at either one it's totally neutral, or it gives me more interest and confidence and trust in that person, or it raises red flags. And I've

probably had equal amounts of that. (Participant 21, marketing consultant)

Other participants further admitted how they enjoyed how Facebook allowed for them to really get to know who their current employees were, since many employees would use Facebook to post personal things about their day-to-day lives, that they may not discuss within their work environments.

It gives us broader pictures of who people are, and who they may be in their personal lives, because most people will post things on Facebook uncensored. If they're having issues and taking part of inappropriate behavior in their personal lives, even though it may not be disclosed to us immediately, that's still something that we have access too, and like I said we deal with life and death, and the smallest mistake can mean someone's life, so that's not something that our company takes lightly. (Participant 6, staffing manager)

Furthermore, participants admitted that they also enjoyed how Facebook revealed sides of their employees that they may not have found out about otherwise in person.

Yeah exactly, and understand what that person likes to do outside of work, and you know it can really give you a fuller picture of who they are. Because you know people only bring so much into their work life, and you can get to see the other chunk of that person [through Facebook]. (Participant 15, senior account executive)

Hiring

The next theme that I identified throughout the interviews was labeled as hiring. I was curious as to whether or not participants ever used Facebook during the hiring process within their organizations. My data revealed that members in the work environment consistently use Facebook to determine whether or not they want to hire certain individuals. Participants who were in management positions indicated that they often used Facebook to screen potential employees and to determine more about who they were as an individual. It was interesting to see how Facebook played a role into the screening process of prospective employees. As participant 19, an attorney explained:

Oh yeah. Definitely, I will look up people up on Facebook definitely. We just hired

(the department that I advise) just hired a new manager. So I definitely did some research and looked at his Facebook page just to get a feel for their personality or what kinds of stuff they have on there.

Other participants in management positions admitted that they liked looking at potential employees' Facebook pages because it allowed for them to see whether or not the individual maintained a professional public image online.

Yeah, totally. I mean like whenever we get anybody new in here, we always look at their Facebook, just to try and kind of get a feel of what kind of person they are, like professionally, and in their personal life. Yeah, we do that. I think I have done that to like everybody that has been hired here since I've been here. (Participant 10, hair stylist)

Certain Participants who were not in a management position explained that once they had been hired, they were told by fellow employees that their Facebook pages had been looked at in order to determine whether or not they maintain a professional public image of themselves online.

I know my co-workers told me when they were interviewing for my position, that they looked everyone up on Facebook and googled them just to see. And so now whenever they're hiring for other positions or anything, well sit back there and see if we can try and find people just to see kind of what their public image is. Like what they're putting out there, how they're representing themselves. If they have a linked in, if their Facebook is public, and just kind of see what we can find. (Participant 22, sales coordinator)

Finally, the use of Facebook in the work environment played a role into the relationships that co-workers developed with one another. My final research question asked: How is Facebook used to develop relationships in the workplace? The themes identified for this category surrounded topics of how the specific components and tools of Facebook had an effect on the developing relationships with members in the workplace. The specific themes in this category were identified as *personal* and *maintenance*.

Personal

The first theme that I identified for my final category was labeled as personal. For this theme, participants explained how they felt that they wanted to personally get to know their fellow co-workers before making the decision to add them on Facebook or to approve any friend requests sent from a co-worker that they didn't know that well yet. Participants explained that it took time for them to get to know other co-workers and establish a personal connection with them.

It's not necessarily a set amount of time [waiting to add a co-worker on Facebook]. I would say just after I've known them somewhat on a more personal level, not just like "Oh hi, nice to meet you, oh I see you occasionally." If I can ask about what they did this weekend and kind of some more personal questions, then I definitely am like, "yep, I'll add them on Facebook." (Participant 22, sales coordinator)

It seemed that employees felt that it was necessary to reach a level in their relationships with other co-workers that they were comfortable around them, which definitely took some time to happen was not something that happened right away. This was also not something that happened with every individual in the workplace.

I mean in general, I would say, like, you know my friend who sent me one? We had been good friends for quite a while, you know, months at least. I definitely think that there is a period of time like, you know, where you establish you're close enough that it's reasonable. It's not just oh I said hi to you one day and boom send you a friend request. (Participant 19, attorney)

Other participants explained that they felt it was important to acknowledge (prior to approving a friend request from a co-worker or adding them) that once they became friends with them on Facebook, they were letting them into a very personal part of their lives. This was one of the main reasons participants were selective on those that they became friends with at work on Facebook.

Yeah because they're kind of representing you in a way. Because [if] you approve their friend request, that's kind of you saying, "alright, welcome to my personal life."

So you would say you would rather get to know them or think about them before you add them type of thing. (Participant 2, cardiologist)

Other participants explained that aside from feeling that it was important to establish a connection with their co-workers prior toward adding them, many of them admitted that they felt that it made the most sense to be friends on Facebook with the people that they actually considered close friends, since it was these co-workers who already knew so much about their personal lives outside of Facebook.

I think that I am just closer with some of my co-workers, and I am okay with opening my personal life to them, via talking [through] the Facebook world. And so if I'm close enough to them and they know me and my story, then I am okay with them being on Facebook. (Participant 25, accountant)

Maintenance

The next theme that I identified was maintenance. For this theme, many of my participants agreed that Facebook was a great tool for them to use to maintain the relationships that they had with their co-workers. Whether this maintenance was done through simply liking their photos, writing on their co-workers wall, or scrolling through their individual news feeds, participants agreed that Facebook did help them maintain that level of relationship with their co-workers.

Because the ones that did friend initially when I started the job, you know, things come up in your news feed and it's an easy way to kind of see things. You know, you're curious enough about what's going on, but you're not curious enough to pick up the phone, you know? To like write a letter. You can go on and like photos. I'm not digging into their profile, but if it comes up in my news feed like "Oh those are cute flowers their boyfriend bought them," it just helps you know, maintain that level of relationship. (Participant 14, senior account executive)

Other participants explained that they liked how Facebook allowed for them to maintain the relationships with co-workers that they didn't see everyday, especially with those that they were in close contact with and who they considered to be one of their

close friends.

Yeah it definitely plays a role, because I work regionally. My office is in Portland, and I go to Eugene about twice a week. I think it plays a very active role in kind of fostering relationships with co-workers, because you're constantly aware of what people are doing via their Facebook posts. We've also done various things like a few co-workers and I had a challenge with the Nike Plus running deal last summer where we kind of teamed up made a fun deal out of it and had like a dinner bet on it. But you know, that's what we would constantly see. In the morning I would run and post to Facebook and my colleagues were kind of like oh my gosh I got to get it and get after it because Johnny's already got his done today. That was all via Facebook and social media. So yeah I think we use it very much to kind of keep in the know about what our professional colleagues are doing. (Participant 8, senior director of development)

Other participants admitted that Facebook allowed for them to establish small talk with fellow employees once they were at work, through establishing conversation based on the different things they saw that their co-workers posted about through Facebook.

Yeah I would say it helps maintain the relationship. Like I said before too If I see something [on Facebook] well talk about it at work, like "Oh I didn't know you did that this week, you went and saw that movie, how was it?" stuff like that. Or I'll comment there on it. So yeah, it becomes a little bit more personal, so you just get to know them more [through Facebook]. (Participant 25)

Participants also explained that Facebook further allowed them to simply get to know their co-workers, through finding out information about them that they may have not known otherwise or had not had the chance to talk about in person yet.

I feel like there's a lot of my co-workers who I haven't met their families or their husbands, and I feel like I've gotten to know them just through Facebook. There are a lot of things out there for nurses, like data online people will post on Facebook and tag us online, like "nursing needs" and stuff like that. So I mean I do think it definitely does play a role. Were kind of always keeping each other in the loop with Facebook. (Participant 5, accountant)

When I asked my participants if they believed that overall Facebook strengthened their relationships with their co-workers, nearly all of my participants agreed that Facebook did overall strengthen their relationships with their co-workers. As participant # 16, a server explained:

I think it does [strengthen the relationship], because it kind of gives me an insight into their life outside of work. Sometimes it's hard to see what they do outside of work. You can only see them as a server at Applebee's. And so, kind of getting to know what else happens in their life helps you to get to know them better and strengthen the relationship.

Other participants further explained that they enjoyed how the components of Facebook, such as how it notifies its members of their friend's birthdays, really helped in building their relationships with their co-workers and keeping them strong in that specific way.

So just because it helps maintain knowing what people are doing, or maybe you realize that somebody had a hard day, or you know when someone's birthday is coming up and you want to surprise them or bring them something fun to work. Like the girls all the time, the guys will all go out and get them bouquets of flowers because they know that their birthday is coming up. (Participant 1, maintenance manager)

Other participants explained that they felt Facebook kept their relationships with their co-workers strong because it adds another dimension to the relationship.

It almost makes it a little bit more personal. Because you're continuing to keep up with them. You know a lot of the stuff there is doing depending on how frequently they post and that type of thing and what they're posting. But you know its like, Oh I know you took your family to go do whatever and I saw you posted pictures of your kids, you did this and that." So it definitely I think adds another dimension, because there is a lot of things we may forget to talk about or whatever. (Participant 19, attorney)

The final aspect of the *maintenance* category was labeled as distance. Participants explained how beneficial it was for them to maintain relationships through Facebook with co-workers who eventually moved on to different jobs with different organizations. Facebook played a role for the employees who sought to maintain relationships with past co-workers who had moved away from their previous jobs and began working in other areas throughout the nation. Participants explained how they appreciated that

Facebook allowed for them to maintain their relationships with co-workers in this way.

In our specific office there tends to be a lot of turnover for whatever reason, I use Facebook to maintain those relationships with people who have worked with us previously, to still stay in touch with them. They may have moved on to other companies or to other things. (Participant 6, staffing manager)

Other participants who were about to leave certain work environments to move on to new positions explained that they really appreciated that they still had Facebook as a means to keep in touch with co-workers whom they had established a close connection with. As participant #7, a sales associate explained:

At least for me right now, knowing that I'm going to be leaving in like a month or two, like I still, its actually funny were doing this interview because it makes me value that we are friends on Facebook because I feel like I get to see what they're up to on Facebook and everything afterwards. And so, I mean it's even, you know, the same thing with friends in college, at one point you see them all the time and you don't really value that connection. But that's part of Facebook is maintaining those relationships. And so I mean we probably would have been on like our level of friendship without it, but like I said, afterwards when we are all dispersed in different places it [Facebook] will definitely be valuable and important.

Overall, my results clearly further proved how Facebook plays a role into public image online, uncertainty reduction, and relationship maintenance. It was clear that participants each were aware of how important it was for them to manage an image of themselves online that their fellow co-workers viewed as appropriate. It was also clear that participants enjoyed how they could use Facebook to learn more about their co-workers and reduce any type of uncertainty, and also strengthen and maintain their relationships with one another.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Since there are many situations in the workplace that create uncertainty, and employees are proactive in their information seeking strategies about new employees (Gallagher & Sias, 2009), my research was beneficial in revealing how employees use Facebook to seek information about their co-workers to reduce uncertainty in the work environment. It was clear throughout my results that Facebook is beginning to play a role in reducing uncertainty that employees commonly experience in workplace relationships.

Holt explains four crucial aspects of social media, which are their richness of text that speak to character, their co-authored nature, their exceptional availability, and their virtual indestructibility (Holt, 2012). In relation to the results within my first category of *ethos construction*, it was easy to identify these different aspects of social media that my participants explained in conversation. In the case of the first theme, *boundaries*, employees were well aware that their managers in the workplace had full access to their Facebook pages. Holt (2012) explains availability, as the texts produced by people on their social media profiles are widely, publicly, and near constantly accessible. However my participants explained that just because their individual Facebook pages were so easily accessible, they did not believe that it was necessary for them to allow for their managers to have full access to these pages, since they did not feel comfortable revealing this aspect of their personal lives to them, since this could potentially alter the way they were perceived by them as individuals.

It also seemed that participants were aware of how their Facebook profiles could speak to their own individual character in regard to boundaries. Holt (2012) explains the concept of richness of text as how users' profiles are considered very rich through the

fact that they allow users to clearly state their values, opinions, and beliefs (Holt, 2012). Participants explained how they wanted to keep their personal lives [in reference to Facebook] private. As Facebook continues to develop and many more people begin to use it in their daily lives, those in the work environment strive to maintain personal boundaries with their fellow employees to protect the richness of text surrounding their Facebook profiles. Participants seemed to be well aware of how their individual Facebook profiles were a rich source of text for those whom they were friends with via Facebook that could see into their personal lives in this way.

My second theme of *expected public image* within the category of ethos construction revealed how important public image online was to my participants. Holt (2012) explains that social media sites can be considered ‘co-authored’ in that the purpose of the sites is to allow other users to view, respond, and sometimes modify elements of an individual’s original posts to his or her profile. It was clear that my participants were aware of the co-authored nature of their individual Facebook profiles, since they recognized that they were continuously able to view and respond to the different things that they saw their co-workers posted about on their individual profiles. This further motivated participants to maintain a public image online that was deemed as both professional and appropriate toward their co-workers. Furthermore, this once again highlights the fact that employees are aware of the richness of text that surrounds their Facebook profiles. Employees clearly recognized the power that their individual Facebook profiles had to either highlight their personal credibility or harm it.

My third theme of *association* within the category of ethos construction revealed a lot about how participants were aware of the accessibility of their online Facebook profiles,

to a variety of different audiences. Holt (2012) explains “availability” as how the texts produced by people on their social media profiles are widely, publicly, and near constantly accessible. Participants explained that they believed if they chose to be public on Facebook that they worked for a certain company, this meant that whatever they posted online could potentially make their organization look bad if they posted anything that was deemed inappropriate by their Facebook friends who had access to their profiles. This revealed how participants had to continuously take into account the accessibility of their online profiles, since whatever they posted online was seen as a direct representation of the organization that they specifically worked for. More importantly, if participants posted something online in which they were directly representing their company (through wearing a t-shirt, holding up a flyer, etc) this could negatively alter their viewers overall impression of them and of their organization.

Finally, my last theme of *impression* within the category of ethos construction revealed how participants sought to manage themselves professionally through different online self-presentation strategies. According to Eftekhari, Fullwood, & Morris (2014), online behaviors tend to mimic what would be expected of an individual’s offline personality characteristics. Since participants admitted that their impressions of their co-workers could significantly change if they found inappropriate photos displayed of them online, this further revealed the importance for co-workers to maintain an image of themselves online that was viewed both professional and appropriate amongst their fellow co-workers. Binder and Howes (2011) also explain how users tend to use more caution online [through the things that they post through their social media pages] since technology makes everything available within the whole network. This was evident

amongst my participants as they clearly reflected on how they used more caution on their profiles to maintain an image online that their co-workers viewed as appropriate.

Finally, *virtual indestructibility* was evident amongst my participants for my final theme of *impression* within ethos construction. Holt (2012) further explains virtual indestructibility as the information that a user uploads to a social media site is archived and can be stored digitally in several locations. This means that even if the author decides to edit, retract, or delete elements of a profile, item can still exist in several different locations (Holt, 2012). It seemed that participants were aware that once they posted something online it could potentially harm how they were viewed by those in their workplace for a long period of time. This further motivated participants to maintain a presentation of themselves online toward their fellow employees that would be viewed as both professional and appropriate. Participants were well aware of the virtual indestructibility of things that they chose to post on their Facebook profiles and sought to only post things that only made themselves look good as an individual. These results indicate that ethos construction is a relevant aspect of how employees use social media for impression management. Employees in the study also used Facebook as a method for reducing uncertainty about co-workers.

According to Gallagher and Sias (2009) employees are proactive in their information seeking strategies about new employees and use a variety of information seeking strategies to develop and maintain relationships with coworkers. The results of my study indicate that Facebook is one of the main information seeking strategies that employees used to discover information about their co-workers and to gain a better overall picture of each individual. Participants continuously admitted how they often would use Facebook

to look up information about their co-workers.

Participants indicated that Facebook provided insight about their co-workers that they may never have found out otherwise. Veteran employees in particular tended to use Facebook to overcome their uncertainty about new co-workers. According to Gallagher and Sias (2009) veteran employees within the workplace often experience uncertainty when a newcomer enters their organization, and will use a variety of tactics to reduce this uncertainty. As new co-workers came into the work environment, veteran employee participants admitted that they would often look up the newcomers on Facebook to further discover more information about them and to get a broader picture of these new employees as an individual. These findings suggest that researchers need to consider how social media serve as information seeking tools for employees. Previous research (e.g. Gallagher & Sias, 2009; Miller & Jablin, 1991) has only considered the traditional methods of reducing uncertainty, such as observing co-workers and asking direct questions; however the popularity of Facebook and its prevalence in the workplace makes it a necessary and relevant communication channel to consider.

Gallagher and Sias (2009) further define different kinds of veteran uncertainty that often show up in the work environment. Based on my results, it was clear that newcomer initiative uncertainty was the most common kind of veteran uncertainty that participants experienced when somebody new was hired into their organization. According to Gallagher and Sias (2009) veterans experience newcomer initiative uncertainty when they are uncertain about the newcomer's motivation and work ethic, and specifically, the newcomer's motivation to learn the new job. It was clear that my veteran employee participants relied on Facebook to further look into the type of person the individual was,

as well as to determine whether or not the individual seemed to be the right fit for the job that they were hiring in general.

According to Morrison (2002) information seeking occurs within many different organizational contexts: employment interviewing, team interactions, performance appraisals, managerial scanning of the external environment, and following any type of organizational change. It was clear that veteran employees in my study relied on Facebook as a means to seek out information about potential employees throughout the interview and screening process. Since Facebook is a newer form of technology, it is important to consider how it is beginning to play a role in the screening process for hiring individuals. Veteran employees admitted that Facebook provided a way for them to see the larger picture of who an employee was and whether or not they maintain a professional image online, which thus made the screening process for them go more smoothly.

Overall, it seemed that newcomer appraisal uncertainty and newcomer initiative uncertainty were the most common forms of uncertainty that veteran employees experienced during the hiring process. According to Gallagher and Sias (2009) newcomer appraisal uncertainty is defined as how veteran employees are unsure about the newcomer's past work experience skills, or ability to perform a job. It was clear that many of my veteran employee participants used Facebook as a way to further determine whether or not they felt that the person they were interviewing would be a good candidate for the position. Furthermore, veteran participants demonstrated newcomer initiative uncertainty through admitting that if they were concerned about a person's work ethic [professional versus personal life] they could further use Facebook to look into that

candidate specifically and to gain more information about the potential employee in general. In addition to providing information during the hiring process, Facebook also served as a useful relational maintenance strategy.

According to Pigg (2014), one of the main reasons why social media sites [such as Facebook] are gaining popularity is because of their ability to provide a way for users to maintain relationships with other members of their social group. It was clear based on my results that Facebook established a way for participants to develop and maintain relationships with different members of their organization, through its unique platform as a social media site.

My first theme within the category of relational maintenance was *personal*.

Participants explained that they wanted to get to know their co-workers personally and establish a connection with them before adding them on Facebook or accepting a friend request from them. It seemed that the information stage of a peer relationship (as defined by Kram and Isabella, (1985) was not deemed a comfortable enough type of relationship for participants to add their co-workers on Facebook. This finding makes sense since an information peer relationship is characterized by low levels of trust and self-disclosure (Sias, et.al, 2012). Furthermore, employees preferred to be at the collegial peer stage (moderate level of friendship), or the special peer stage (friends at work who are very close and trust each other greatly) in their relationship with a specific co-worker in order to feel comfortable enough to become friends with them on Facebook. This was primarily because participants continuously explained that in order for them to become Facebook friends with their co-workers, their relationships with them needed to more in-depth. A more in-depth relationship is characterized by talking about non-work topics such as

family and weekend plans. Participants were well aware that once they became friends with their co-workers on Facebook they were letting them into personal lives, and this was not something that they took lightly. The collegial and special peer stage in their relationships with co-workers was ideally where they wanted to be in order to let their co-workers into this aspect of their personal lives.

Pigg (2014) explains that one of the main reasons why social media sites [such as Facebook] are gaining popularity is because of their ability to provide a way for users to maintain relationships with other members of their social group. It was evident among the results from my participants that Facebook bridged the gap for them to maintain relationships with their different co-workers, because it provides a way for them to keep up with their co-workers' day-to-day lives via the photos they posted and the different things they wrote about on their statuses. Pigg (2014) explains that in order to maintain our social presence online through these social pages, we must constantly participate in social exchange. It seemed that the process of social exchange via Facebook was a necessary way for co-workers to keep in contact with one another and maintain relationships. Participants explained how they enjoyed communicating with their co-workers via Facebook on different topics, and this ultimately allowed for them to maintain their relationships with their co-workers.

The results of this study enhance what scholars already know about maintaining workplace friendships. Sias et al. (2012) found that employees used a variety of communication strategies to maintain friendships at a level that were desirable for the workplace. Their research, however, focused exclusively on face-to-face interactions between co-workers. In contrast, my study specifically examined how Facebook (an

online form of communication through technology) enabled employees to develop and maintain relationships with co-workers. For participants who were at the collegial level (moderate level of friendship) in their relationship with a co-worker, Facebook provided a way for them to discuss and bring up certain topics with them that they may not have otherwise known about. Participants explained that this further allowed for them to get to know more about who their co-worker was as an individual, and to also provide a way for them to initiate a conversation with them if they could not think of another way to do so. For participants who were at the special peer stage (close level of friendship) in their relationship with a co-worker, Facebook provided a way for them to amplify their close relationships with these co-workers, since participants indicated that they enjoyed how they could often see what their close friends at work were doing through Facebook or keep up with some on going conversation that they were having with them on Facebook itself.

Facebook was a relevant communication channel for employees that were currently working together, as well as employees who wanted to maintain relationships with past co-workers. Pigg (2014) explains that technologies online [such as Facebook] are no longer tools to users; they are environments, spaces, worlds, and conversations. This further elaborates on how employees are able to use Facebook to their advantage by creating an environment online that enables them to keep in close contact with past employees who are no longer in their work environment or who are absent for a time. For example, if the employee is unable to see the specific employee who is absent, Facebook provided a way for them to keep in touch with the employee through direct communication. Participants explained that they enjoyed how they were able to maintain

that relationship with a co-worker who was absent whether or not they had seen them recently. This further allowed for my participants to develop a greater appreciation for Facebook in general, as it bridged the gap for their relationships with these past or currently absent co-workers in these unique ways. It also seemed that the use of Facebook for maintaining relationships over distance was the most useful for participants who were in the special peer stage of a relationship with a co-worker. Participants explained that Facebook was the most beneficial for keeping in contact with those that they had established a close connection with at work.

Facebook further provided a way for participants to maintain relationships with their co-workers via written communication (status posts, writing on each others walls, etc). Lipson & Day (2005) explain that although social media sites such as Facebook contain both visual and written components, it is mainly the written portion of information that contains the most information. It was evident amongst my results that participants relied on the written components of Facebook to establish small talk with their co-workers and also to simply maintain relationships with them in this way. It seemed that participants were aware how much they could learn about their co-workers via the different things that they wrote about on social media. Through viewing their co-workers statuses and news feed updates, they were able to see into their co-workers personal lives in a way that allowed to them to grasp a better idea of the type of person that they were and thus give them a better idea of what types of things to bring up in conversation with their co-workers.

The final aspect of the *maintenance* category was identified as *strengthen*. Nearly all of my participants admitted that Facebook strengthened their relationships with their co-

workers in specific and unique ways. Participants explained that Facebook initially strengthened their relationships with their co-workers through allowing them to see and observe a more personal side of their co-workers lives that they otherwise may not have found out about outside of Facebook. Furthermore, Pigg explains in his text that social media feeds offer a means through which individuals can aggregate people and knowledge. Throughout my research, participants explained that Facebook aided in building their relationships with others through notifying them of when a co-worker had a birthday or was in a new relationship. This allowed for participants to gain further knowledge about their co-workers and overall strengthen their relationship with them since they were able to discover information about their co-workers that allowed them to build their relationship with them in unique ways.

It seemed that once again the types of relationships that co-workers would need to be at either the collegial or special peer level (as defined by Kram and Isabella, 1985) in order for co-workers relationships to be strengthened with one another. Since it was determined throughout my research that participants admitted they would not be comfortable becoming friends with a co-worker on Facebook who was considered to be an informational peer (characterized as low levels of trust and self-disclosure), this further illustrated that participants relationships with co-workers would only be strengthened if they had already established a closer bond with these specific co-workers (through becoming friends with them on Facebook primarily) and thus relationships with them were either at the special or collegial peer level.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

In the end, when employees become friends with their co-workers on Facebook, it can affect their relationships with them in unique ways. Becoming Facebook friends with them may positively or negatively impact the relationship, depending on the information that one learns. Furthermore, as Facebook continues to become more widespread and is used by a variety of people, it is becoming a common information-seeking tool that veteran employees can use to reduce uncertainty about new or prospective members of the organization. This also is important to consider in terms of how it was determined throughout my research that within the work organization employees are often a direct representation of their organization based on what they post about themselves on their social media profiles. This information is important to consider since Facebook is becoming one of the most common tools for veteran employees in the work environment to use when looking to further discover more information about a potential hire and thus overall reduce any uncertainty that they may have about a potential employee.

Theoretical Implications

This research will add to the growing number of studies in organizational communication in the workplace involving uncertainty reduction, as well as peer relationships. Professional scholars in both the fields of interpersonal communication as well as rhetorical communication will greatly benefit from the results of this study, in that they will further gain information surrounding online ethos construction and how relationships are developed and maintained in the workplace via popular social media sites such as Facebook. Scholars studying organizational communication would benefit from this study in a variety of ways. First, scholars would be more aware that veteran

employees within organizations are now commonly using Facebook during the screening process of hiring potential employees. Although previous research on organizational communication in the workplace determined that veteran employees use different information seeking strategies to reduce uncertainty in the workplace (Gallagher & Sias, 2009), up until the completion of this study no research had determined how Facebook was involved in that process. My research proves Facebook plays a strong role into process of reducing uncertainty in the workplace for veteran employees, since it is a practical and common information-seeking medium that allows for employees to gain insight and further understanding about prospective employees online.

This study also further provided valuable research for scholars in the field of rhetorical communication. Prior to the completion of this study, very little research had been conducted in the area of online ethos construction in the work environment. My results indicate that employees have the ability to either positively or negatively affect their online character based on the different things that they post about online. Also, it is important to note that professional public image online has become a behavior that employees expect for their co-workers to act upon. This further motivated employees to maintain a professional public image online and thus allowed for employees to be more concerned with their online ethos construction. Employees were well aware that they were a direct representation of their company and that whatever they posted online could significantly impact both their online credibility as well as the image of the organization that they work for.

Previous research in the area of technical communication determined that online social spheres provide a space for users to maintain relationships with one another. This

research further proved how technical communicators in the work environment use social sphere such as Facebook to form and maintain relationships with one another. This research also further expanded how strongly employees considered who they wanted to become Facebook friends with. This was not a relationship tool that employees took lightly and thus overall proved how Facebook has the capability to either positively or negatively affect relationships in the workplace. This research is beneficial for scholars in the technical communication field since it allows for them to further understand the potential that Facebook has to either positively or negatively improve relationships in the workplace.

Another potential area of research that this study brought to light that is important to consider is the study between the public and private self. Due to the increase of other means of communication through the use of SNS, the users of these sites now have to learn how to balance these two areas of their lives that seem to often intercede with one another. This can be hard for people to do, as these two areas tend to be blurred amongst one another and people aren't aware of how to keep these two areas separate from one another. My research further proved how this is an area worth studying since Facebook users in the work environment struggle with separating these two areas of their lives.

Practical Implications

In terms of reducing uncertainty, this study would greatly benefit veteran employees in organizations. Prior to the establishment of Facebook, employees did not have the option of using this social sphere as a tool to reduce uncertainty. Veterans now will be able to further understand the benefits of using Facebook as a screening tool to gain more

insight about prospective employees, which thus may motivate them to incorporate Facebook into their own individual screening process within their organization. Furthermore, veterans could develop specific strategies that could be built into their hiring/screening process for examining Facebook. For example, veterans could determine specific things to look for in employees Facebook statuses, as well as the different images that prospective employees post.

Since public image online was explained as an expected act for my participants within their work environments, veterans within different organizations should consider incorporating specific discussions on public image online into their new employee training programs. This would further allow for new employees to understand what behavior is deemed appropriate for them to act upon online, and would also remind them that they are a direct representation of the organization they work for based on the things that they post online. It is important for employees to understand that the different things they post online can often be correlated to the organization that they work for. This could potentially put employee's positions in harm if anything they post puts their organization in a bad light, which is why these online image workshops would be beneficial.

Finally, members of an organization would see how if used appropriately and intentionally, Facebook could strengthen their relationships with their co-workers and also help them to retrieve unique information from them that they may not have found out otherwise except via Facebook. This study would further allow employees to understand that there is a certain kind of etiquette involved with becoming Facebook friends with co-workers. Employees should take into consideration that since Facebook is considered to be a very personal social media platform, their relationships with their co-

workers should be at a level in which they feel that their employees would be comfortable in becoming their Facebook friend. Also, employees might be motivated to use Facebook to their advantage in developing relationships with co-workers once they understand how it can aid their relationships with them in this way (viewing pictures, posting on each others walls, keeping in touch via Facebook once they move on to a different job, gaining insight via Facebook to establish small talk, etc).

Limitations and Future Research

Although this study provided an initial look into how relationships are developed in the workplace through Facebook, it is important to note the limitations of this study. Limitations of this study provide opportunities for researchers in the future. The interviews were done with only 26 participants among various work organizations. A future study surrounding more people within different organizations may produce different findings in regards to how Facebook impacts work relationships. Also, many of the participants had only been at their current job for 4 to 6 months. In order for more concrete examples as to how relationships were impacted and established via Facebook in the workplace, it might help to interview those who have worked at their specific organizations for at least three or more years. This would make a difference because participants would be more established in their work organizations and would likely have developed personal relationships with some of their co-workers. Next, there were also limitations in terms of the age range of my participants. Since my oldest participant was the age of 35 years old, I cannot make any interpretations about the use of Facebook by older/middle aged adults in the work environment because I did not interview within this age range.

There were also other limitations to my research based on discovering information on how newcomers in the work environment deal with and experience uncertainty via Facebook. My participants rarely explained situations in which they experienced uncertainty as a newcomer in the work environment and thus used Facebook to reduce that uncertainty and discover new information about their co-workers before adding them. Most of my results involved my participants explaining their experiences as veteran employees in the work environment using Facebook. In the future, I think that it would be beneficial to develop a more concrete study on how newcomers in the work environment seek out information about their co-workers in order to gain more knowledge about the type of work environment they are about to become a part of.

It should be noted that future research should also encompass specific studies on how the components of Facebook affect relationships in the workplace. Many of my participants explained how the act of being ‘de-friended’ by an employee was basically a slap in the face to them as an individual, since participants were aware that you could simply ‘un-follow’ a friend if you didn’t want to see any of their Facebook posts. This topic was not prevalent enough among my discussion with my participants for me to place it into my results, but I do feel that future studies should further look how the use of the different components of Facebook affects relationships in the workplace.

Overall, studies surrounding social media in the work environment represent a relatively new field of research that further needs to be expanded. I hope that future scholars continue to develop research in the area of social media, specifically through looking at its impact on relationships in general. Many of my participants explained that other social media sites other than Facebook had an impact on their relationships in the

workplace. I think it would be interesting for future scholars to conduct studies on how other social media sites such as Linked-In, Twitter, and Instagram have an impact on relationships with one another in the workplace. I think that this study will greatly benefit the younger generation who are about to graduate college and join the corporate work force. This study would allow for them to see how public image online can directly affect them and alter veteran employees impressions of them before they are hired into the work environment.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

Gallagher & Martin

Facebook in the Work Environment—Interview Instrument

Establish Consent & answer any questions about the upcoming interview.

Begin Recording.

Icebreaker Questions to Establish Rapport:

How is your day going so far?

What is your current job position?

How long have you worked at your organization for?

After establishing rapport, go through the following questions:

1. How would you describe the social circle within your work environment, is there one at all?
2. Do you know each one of your co-workers on a personal level or do your relationships with them tend to remain more professional?
3. Do any of your co-workers use Facebook?
 - a. How many of them do?
4. Are you and your co-workers friends with each other on Facebook?
 - a. How many of them are you friends with?
 - b. Why or why not are you friends with them?
5. Do you think that it is important and/or necessary to be friends with your co-workers on Facebook?
 - a. Why or why not?
6. How long do you typically wait to add a co-worker on Facebook?
7. Do you believe there is an appropriate amount of time to wait and add a co-worker on Facebook?
 - a. Why or why not?
8. Does social media play a huge role into the developing relationships that you have with your co-workers?
 - a. How?

- b. Can you provide an example?
9. At your organization, is it expected of you to maintain a public image of yourself online that meets a certain criteria given to you by your supervisors?
- a. Can you explain?
10. Was public image online addressed to you when you were a newcomer within your work environment?
- a. Can you explain?
11. Has your organization experienced issues in the past with newcomers entering the work environment who have displayed inappropriate information on their Facebook pages?
- a. Can you give an example?
12. Have you ever used Facebook as a way to decrease uncertainty about a new co-worker within your environment?
- a. Can you give an example?
13. If you add a co-worker on Facebook and see images of them that you didn't expect to see, is your uncertainty increased or decreased?
- a. Why or why not?
14. Do you believe that you use Facebook as a way to maintain the relationships that you have with each of your different co-workers?
- a. Why or why not?
 - b. Can you give an example?
15. Do you believe that overall Facebook strengthens the relationships that you have with each of your different co-workers?
- a. Why or why not?

APPENDIX B

Code Book

RQ 1: Ethos Construction/Public Image: How does communication via Facebook impact employees' perceptions of each other?

Code	Description
Boundaries	Employees believed that on Facebook there needed to be obvious boundaries toward superiors (managers, supervisors, etc). If employees were in a management position, they often didn't think it was wise to add their subordinates on Facebook. Subordinates also did not feel comfortable adding their work superiors on Facebook.
Expected Public Image	Employers confirmed that there was an expected way for them to portray themselves online that usually was not explicitly talked about within their work organizations. Thus, appropriate public image online was expected amongst their co-workers.
Association	Employers confirmed that you are a direct representation of the company based on what you choose to post about online. Whatever you choose to post on your Facebook page could potentially alter your work organizations public image.
Impression	If an employee displayed inappropriate pictures on their Facebook pages, this altered employer's initial impressions about co-workers. (Drinking photos, in appropriate photos, etc).

RQ 2: Uncertainty/Reducing Uncertainty: How do employees use Facebook to reduce uncertainty about new coworkers?

Code	Description
Insight	Facebook was often used by employees to provide further insight on certain co-workers that employees initially had questions about.
Hiring	Many employees admitted to using Facebook during the hiring process of potentially employees. Facebook played a crucial role in determining whether or not they wanted to hire certain individuals.

RQ 3: Relational Maintenance: How is Facebook used to develop relationships in the workplace?

Code	Description
Personal	Employers' wanted to get to know their co-workers personally before adding them on Facebook. They felt that it was necessary to make a connection with them before adding them; such as through hanging out with them more, doing something fun, etc.
Maintain	Employers admitted that Facebook helped them to maintain relationships with their co-workers. Facebook played a role in creating small talk conversations through seeing what photos their co-workers posted or the statuses that they shared. Participants also admitted that Facebook helped them to maintain their relationships with past employees who moved away, and also helped strengthened their relationships with their co-workers in general.

