Evolution of Dating from 20th to 21st Century: the Introduction of Technology and Its Impact on Modern Dating Relationships

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Abstract

The researcher studied the changes in dating practices from the 20th to the 21st century. The researcher discovered the increasingly casual nature of dating due to the introduction of technology and its effects on romantic relationships. The Researcher examined scholarly sources to answer the questions: *How has dating changed in the 21st century: in particular; how has technology influenced the emotional detachment of communication between the sexes, and what are the social impacts of technology on dating relationships?* After examining other research the scholar conducted studies on the acceptance of online dating and the perceived negative impact of technology on personal relationships. The scholar also conducted a case study on the technological habits of a grandparent and grandchild to examine the impact of technology on familial relationships. After conducting this research the scholar examined the social psychology of dress and its impact in the workplace. The scholar particularly looked at the introduction of business casual and the perception of women based on dress.

**Introduction**

 There was a time when men would call upon women at their homes, and parents would monitor a couple’s every move during courtship; however, modern-day relationships lack this previous, supervised element of courtship. The changes are due largely to the expansion of technology into personal lives. Studies show 38% of people, ages twenty-one to twenty-six, admit the use of texting to schedule and plan dates (Jayson, 2013). Since the early 1800s, America has changed its standards in romantic relationship requirements. In the Victorian era, traditional courtship relied on face-to-face interaction and parental supervision; marriage was regarded as a business transaction, in which the men would acquire a woman’s land and property, thus a woman’s family could choose whom she married (Burlingame, 2013). However, the early 20th century shifted to a romantic outlook on dating. Instead of looking for partners based on the ability to bear children and acquire property, men and women began to look for partners based on love (“Finding true,” 2013).

 The strict rules of courtship in the Victorian era were developed to protect a woman’s reputation. Men were able to call upon women at their home only with permission; calls would only last ten to fifteen minutes, and men and women were allowed to be together only under supervision. When the couple was engaged, only then could they visit without a chaperone; however, the couple would always be separated as night fell to avoid destroying a woman’s virtue so as not to have any semblance of impropriety. A separation between public and private life, which became an important part of society, characterized the Victorian Era. Men and women rarely ever touched in public, but courtship changed in the 1920s with the introduction of new technology, such as the automobile and telephone (Burlingame, 2013). The telephone allowed couples to speak to one another more often and with more privacy. The couple could now speak more freely without the presence of chaperones. By the 20s, 1 in 5 Americans owned cars, and young people spent increasing amounts of time away from home. There were more activities for men and women to enjoy together outside of the family parlor (“From Courting to Dating,” 2014). Chaperones were no longer required, and dating continued to change throughout the 20th century in response to cultural and societal events, like the 60s social revolution (“History of Dating,” 2014). Along with changes in society came changes in the expansion of technology in America.

The introduction of technology altered the formal courtship and removed any remnants of the personal element found in the Victorian era. Estimates show young people today spend seven hours and thirty-eight minutes a day using a variety of technology formats, including television, computers, video games, cell phones, and social networking sites. This increased reliance on technology not only causes disconnection between couples but also allows a connection across long distances (Solis, 2005).

 Americans’ increased reliance on technology as a way of connecting with others comes as no surprise. Because development of healthy relationships is an important part of the emerging adult life, technology’s role in relationships must be considered (Long, 2010). Through this paper, the connection between technology use and relationships will be examined within the framework of the level of attachment in romantic relationships. The evolution of dating in response to technology will also be considered.

**Background and History**

*Dating in the 20th Century*

During the 20th century, men courted women in order to further a family lineage and acquire property and land. Marriage was largely based on bearing children rather than romanticism (Long, 2010). Dating changed in the 20s when chaperones were no longer required, as previously stated. The institution of dating now relied less on family values and more on peer values. Therefore, men and women of upper class society became unhappy with the former practice of “calling” and began to date like the “lower class” of society by dancing, going to movies or amusement parks, and smoking and drinking together in public (“History of Dating,” 2014). Couples now went on “dates” rather than paying calls. Dates were based on entertainment rather than talking in front of a parent or family members in the home setting. Thus, sexual interactions and experimentation increased as a result of the casual air “dating” held (“From Courting to Dating,” 2012).

With the creation of the automobile, men and women went on dates in public just to have fun rather than conduct formal conversations under supervision. With the elimination of chaperones and the transformation of “calls” for entertainment, men and women were able to spend increasing amounts of time alone (“History of Dating,” 2014). Instead of being closely watched by parents, couples were now able to spend time together behind closed doors, leading to an increase in premarital sex from 10% in the 20s to over 40% in the 50s (“From Courting to Dating,” 2012). The increase in premarital sex and the evolution of “dating” contributed to social changes throughout the 60s.

*Social Revolution*

The 60s saw the infamous revolution that changed America and its values. Many young people during this time began to disagree with the strict Christian family values in the home. Dissatisfaction was expressed through music like Rock and Roll, which conveyed sex and drugs, a shock to society at the time. The publicized idea of sex, drugs, and Rock and Roll introduced in the 60s contrasted the privacy exercised in the century earlier (Burlingame, 2013). The social revolution focused on civil rights, and the “hippies” of the era advocated for free love and personal freedom. This largely contrasted the focus on marriage and children the old state of courtship once held. These newly found ideas of freedom and civil rights contributed to the beginning of a women’s liberation movement (Watson, 2014).

One of the contributors to the female liberation movement was the creation of a new drug to prevent unwanted pregnancy, which was easy for women to obtain. The first birth control pill was marketed in 1960, allowing women to take control of their own sexuality. It eliminated some of the previous stigma around premarital sex and the fear of pregnancy and contributed to feminism and the idea women were no longer controlled by men. Women began making choices previously dominated by males (Cohen, 2012). The idea females could control dating choices was further exhibited by the creation of “The Dating Game” in 1965 which took dating to another impersonal level through the use of television, allowing women contestants to choose their partners. With this new movement and societal change, women now had power and control over their choices in men, which was foreign to dating at the time because men usually held all the power in a relationship. Women were now able to ask men for a date, rather than waiting for men to ask them. The idea of women taking control was a major difference in society, contributing to this new idea of female independence. The casualness of dating created by the new “Dating Game” began to remove the need for male dominance and charm, and it was one of the first examples of the expansion of technology into personal life, which continued into the 20th and 21st centuries (Long, 2010).

*Technology*

Studies show technology has increasingly expanded into personal communication. A study by the Wall Street Journal shows teens spend three hours and thirty-eight minutes a day browsing the Internet. Millennials also spend three hours and twelve minutes on social networking sites (McCarthy, 2014). Another study by Portland State University shows 75% of students say technology has a negative impact on their relationships, and 82% of teens cite texting as the top two ways relationships end today (Gowen, 2014). This information displays the widespread increase of media use across multiple media outlets. The increasing amount of technology available to the youth alters the forms of communication. Both romantic and interpersonal relationships can be maintained without the need for face-to-face (FtF) interactions (Long, 2010). A study on how men and women use technology showed one third of men and women see technology as a less-intimidating way to communicate (Jayson, 2013). These new forms of communication can both enhance and destroy relationships.

Communication has changed as a result of the advancements in technology. In the 60s, most people owned only one telephone landline, now people walk around with their own phone in their hands and telephone hardlines are declining. The constant connection to technology leads to the inability to read emotions, which the researcher will address further in this paper (Thomas, 2014). Couples can meet and correspond across long distances, create dates over text, and end relationships over a phone call. Texting and phone calls eliminate the previous need to set up dates by visiting a woman’s house and family and maintain face-to-face interaction through public activities (“History of Dating,” 2014). Men once had control of all aspects of dating, but technology has leveled the dating field by allowing women to instigate conversation with men. Instead of sending a traditional love letter, “romance” is maintained by the click of a button, or the tapping of a screen, as seen in the 1998 film “You’ve Got Mail” where two people meet and fall in love unbeknownst to the fact they are business rivals in real life, showing the removal of the personal element of dating through the introduction of technology (Loudon, 2013). Technology also impacts economy, politics, and education, but for the purpose of this paper only the impact of technology on social interactions will be considered (Long, 2010).

Social media continues its expansion worldwide. Multiple new platforms have been created to improve social interactions. New forms of social media include e-mail, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. These forms of communications eliminate the awkwardness of the stereotypical first date because one already knows everything encompassing “small talk.” Therefore, people are inclined to skip the phase of “getting to know” one another. Learning information about a partner through a screen removes the intimacy of opening up and falling in love (Long, 2010).

Dating has continued to evolve in response to these new technological developments. The new term for dating is now social networking. There are 1,000 dating sites in America alone (Zwilling, 2013). The rise in these new technologies affects many aspects of life. The economy stands to benefit largely from the increase in online dating, also discussed further in the paper (Hamm, 2014). Lastly, technology largely affects personal life, family, and intimate relationships. People can communicate without having to see one another, and families keep in touch across countries through Skype. Couples can maintain a long-distance relationship, or meet online from different geographical locations (Long, 2010).

*Dating in the 21st Century*

Present forms of dating show the “most significant shift in dating yet” (Long, 2010). In the beginning of the 90s, e-mail became increasingly popular as a way of communicating across long distances. These e-mails are likened to modern-day love letters, and women can contact men without backlash from society. These are more personal forms of communication; however, they are very different from the actual handwritten letters themselves because the effort of writing a personal letter and mailing it is not seen in the same way as typing an e-mail and pressing send (Long, 2010). Today choosing someone to spend a lifetime with does not have to involve anything, “more than two people and two computers” (Ambrose, 2013). Expressions of love can be exchanged through the typing of words, and people can choose their spouses through a screen showing the progression from Ftf supervised interactions to completely computer mediated relationships.

Now there are fewer opportunities for human interaction; modern dating lacks the commitment that comes from getting to know someone FtF (Ambrose, 2013). Now in the 21st century, women refer to “hooking up” as a “score”, and they are just as aggressive as men in advancing sexual relations. Before, men and women would go on a few dates, then decide if they wanted to proceed into sexual relations. Now, men and women engage in sexual relations and then decide if they want to proceed to an emotionally invested relationship (Ambrose, 2013). Practices before the 21st century led to the idea of commitment-free one-night stands and romantic flings, known as “the hook-up culture” also to be discussed further in this paper. This culture has proven to be detrimental to the creation of functional relationships and communication in general (Williams, 2013). These changes from formal courtship to a casual dating process through the medium of technology are important to consider. The impact of technology in relationships and marriage will also be considered through the Biblical connection to Genesis 2:24 and Hebrews 13:4. Dating has evolved and shed its previous boundaries of courtship and emotional commitments, begging the question: *How has dating changed in the 21st century: in particular; how has technology influenced the emotional detachment of communication between the sexes, and what are the social impacts of technology on dating relationships?*

**Review of Related Literature**

As previously stated, face-to-face communication and commitment previously constrained courtship in the Victorian era. Throughout the 20th century, dating changed from a formal and elaborate courtship under parental supervision to a romantic driven process. Men and women were able to pursue dating relationships equally as a result of the 60s Social Revolution. Today, dating has taken an increasingly casual nature of “hanging out” causing many to get caught in the “hook-up culture” in which there is no emotional commitment attached to sexual interactions. The increased use of technology as a way of communicating in romantic relationships can lead to these new casual hookups. New technology such as texting, emailing, chatting, and social networking change the nature of communication, causing many to question whether these modes of communication are better than FtF interactions. When these forms of technology are used to connect in romantic relationships, they can both benefit and harm the relationships developed (Long, 2010).

**Communication**

*Physical*

 Physical, FtF interaction varies from the Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) that has become prominent in today’s society. Physical communication does not allow a person to control how others perceive said person, otherwise known as self-presentation. A person is perceived based on height, weight, clothes, hair, and personality/interests upon the first impression. This is common on first dates, which allow men and women to decipher whether it is desirable to pursue the relationship (Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006). Ftf self-presentation is dynamic and embodied. It does not allow one to embellish one’s appearance deceptively. Essentially, “what people see is what they get.” Those who are physically attractive are considered to be more desirable, sociable, kind, outgoing, and interesting. Physical attractiveness in FtF relations influences choices in romantic partners (Kusschua, 2008). People decide whether or not to pursue a permanent relationship based on the first impressions developed. A person’s attractiveness often influences how others view one’s personality with more attractive people having better personalities (Kusschua, 2008). Attractiveness cannot be manipulated in Ftf interactions, thus the relationship is founded on the true presentation of self. Couples are able to establish intimacy based on the real chemistry experienced in person (Toma & Hancock, 2010).

FtF communication embodies synchronous communication— two people pursuing a conversation in real time. FtF also contains non-verbal cues, which are essential to the meaning of the conversation (Hultgren, 2013). People present a “true self” through FtF communication regardless of disapproval faced by family or friends, but in CMC, only the positive version of one’s self is presented. A study by California University found 74% of 10 million single Internet users are using it to find a partner— instead of FtF interaction (Gibbs et al., 2006). FtF relationships are developed through the immediate impressions of appearance and non-verbal cues; however, CMC is developed with the absence of non-verbal cues and appearance but instead through a heightened amount of information exchanged (Rosen et al., 2008).

*Computer Mediated Communication*

 CMC allows the control of other’s perceptions and the control of self-presentation. The genuine element of FtF interaction is removed when men and women are allowed excessive amounts of time to manipulate presented photos and information to their liking. Manipulations can come in forms of editing photos, using photos from younger years, or inaccurately describing oneself either in appearance or personality. In FtF interaction, it is more difficult to change the impression of appearance (Toma & Hancock, 2010). The verbal descriptions and photographs posted online allow a multitude of embellishments because of the unlimited amount of time available to edit. Online dating profiles are manipulated based on whether the man or woman anticipates short-term, long-term, or no face-to-face relationships. If one wants to pursue a long-term relationship, one will generally disclose more information (Toma & Hancock, 2010). Limited cues in CMC allow one to present the best form of oneself, often inaccurately. The more information one gives, the greater the intimacy in the relationship. In romantic relationships, self-presentation can harm this intimacy through misguided information leading to mistrust and destroyed intimacy (Gibbs et al., 2006).

 Internet communication often follows two hypotheses or beliefs in regards to its impact on communication. The first belief states technology fosters isolation and a disconnection with surroundings. The second hypothesis states technology allows more connectivity and widens the realm of social interaction. Studies by Occidental College have shown CMC causes misrepresentation of self and isolation from immediate surroundings. This research also presents the idea of communication through technology allows a richer social life and helps multiple relationships prosper at once allowing partners to stay connected constantly and maintain a relationship across long distances (Long, 2010). In dating relationships, CMC allows a closer intimacy because of the anonymity it allows users to exercise. Men and women are able to ask more intimate questions and achieve deeper levels of self-disclosure through the Internet. The greater the amount of information disclosed, the greater the amount of intimacy, leading to a better relationship quality. Because there is a screen between the users, individuals do not fear what others will think (Gibbs et al., 2006).

*CMC Impact on Relationships*

For people with weak social skills, the Internet will help the development of relationships and allow a greater self-confidence. The ability to express oneself through a screen allows those with little to no social skills to connect with others. In dating, this can help the creation of romantic relationships and the ability to express intimacy (Long, 2010). The barriers to disclosing information are eliminated through CMC because the user does not face disapproval from friends or family. Relationships can be created easily through the use of Internet communications (Gibbs et al., 2006). Extroverts receive greater benefits from CMC because of their greater social support and status. For this reason, extroverts become involved in many different relationships and maintain greater communication and psychological wellbeing. Extroverts and introverts benefit psychologically from Internet and technological communication as it allows them to create new relationships through low-risk communications, as found in a study by Occidental College (Long, 2010).

 Today, there are many ways people use technology to communicate. Phone calls are used to communicate more personally. The ability to hear a person’s voice through the telephone makes this form of communication more personal than typing or posting photos. Phone calls are usually reserved for personal communications with family or close friends and preferred when face-to-face communication is not possible. Phone calls are more likely to accelerate intimacy rather than texting. Texting is less personal because it removes the personal element further by eliminating the face-to-face elements of appearance and voice. Another study by Occidental College on how people use technology to communicate showed fewer than 50% of twenty people use FtF interaction to stay connected, eliminating the ability to create a relationship based on appearance (Long, 2010). Physical attraction is less important in the creation of relationships online as these relationships are developed in relation to personality and similar interests rather than beauty (Toma & Hancock, 2010).

Professors at both Stanford and the Free University of Berlin have conducted studies on the increased use of technology resulting in the negative impact of technology on relationships. These studies give evidence to support Internet use decreases sociability and negatively affects a person’s ability to be present in interactions with friends and family. Time spent on the Internet deteriorates the ability to socialize. Research has found ten hours spent on the Internet will increase detachment from social surroundings. Teens may begin to lack social skills and interaction due to the decreased amount of time spent FtF (Long, 2010). Technology, and its almost immediate response time, leads teens to be increasingly dependent on CMC. Constant connection through technology can be beneficial for romantic relationships; however, long intervals of time without a response can leave a partner feeling anxious about the relationship. The man or woman then becomes detached from the environment surrounding them, solely focusing on the response of the significant other, negatively affecting both romantic and other interpersonal relationships (Klein, 2013).

**Online Dating**

*Easy Communication*

Couples who use online communication to interact prefer online communication because it allows greater self-confidence and limits fear of rejection. Users can control the amount of information exposed to others (Rosen, Cheever, Cummings & Felt, 2008). Online dating participants appraise online ability and ease at finding a life long partner with which to be intimate, create a family, and enjoy life (Henry-Waring & Barraket, 2008). Online relationships usually begin with multiple exchanged emails and early self-disclosure. After getting to know one another through e-mailing or instant messaging, communication may carry over into phone calls and video chats depending on the desire to pursue the relationship. The amount of information shared and the personality shown will help one to determine whether to further communicate with another. The relationship will eventually progress via FtF if the partners desire to do so (Rosen et al., 2008). Since people may be busy with work or other life commitments, online dating allows the quick, and relatively inexpensive, way to find a partner. Some argue this is an impersonal way to find a partner for life and stigmatize online dating. However, online dating users appraise it for its quick ability to find a person who shares similar interests and life goals (Henry-Waring & Barraket, 2008).

 Whether the user wants to disclose more or less personal information is mediated and can be controlled with an unlimited amount of time. The ability to remain detached is beneficial to some. Others prefer to disclose more information in order to further a long-term relationship. California University conducted a study which found 45% of users of online dating services are looking to pursue a long-term relationship. An almost equal amount shows the population of users who remain detached from their online dating endeavors— not wishing to pursue a long-term relationship (Rosen et al., 2008).

*Self-Presentation & Intimacy*

Once regarded as a way for desperate people to find partners, the stigma of online dating has decreased due to the increasing population meeting and marrying life partners with online dating sites (Long, 2010). However, the general inclination to be open to online dating amongst older citizens (50 and up) and the younger population (16-49) will be discussed in a case study further in this paper. Online dating relationships accelerate faster than traditional dating relationships. Traditional dating relationships may take months to develop where an online relationship may take weeks. A study by Pew Internet and American Life Project looked at the use of Internet dating amongst a population of 10 million single online dating users. Findings have shown more than 74% have used Internet dating in search of a partner, of the 74% who have used the Internet to find a partner, 72% have married a partner within the first year, and 15% of adults have a connection to someone who has used online dating to find a partner (Rosen et al., 2008).

California University found personality and emotions can be revealed through online dating by the means of capital letters and the style of writing. Most people using online dating were able to accurately identify a person’s extraversion through the words in an e-mail (Rosen et al., 2008). While it is possible to distinguish a personality through these modes of communication, it can be difficult to distinguish a person’s personality online due to the lack of non-verbal cues. Non-verbal cues such as appearance, facial expressions, and body language are known as paralanguage (Rosen et al., 2008). A person’s voice, non-verbal cues, and eyes contribute to paralanguage as well. The way a person speaks helps others determine their attitude and personality. Variations in pitch, pronunciation, and volume help determine a person’s attitude and the meaning of the message being conveyed. The way one moves one’s body during a conversation also helps determine mood when speaking. Facial characteristics and eye contact are also important aspects of paralanguage. If a person is not making eye contact, but rather looking outside or dazing off, the speaker will then believe the person is not interested in the conversation (Mishra, 2009). The lack of paralanguage in FtF communication can lead to difficulty in determining personalities through the computer.

*Impact of Online Dating*

Online dating lacks the paralanguage found in FtF communication, resulting in, “overattribution and exaggerated or idealized perceptions of others,” which is optimal for presenting the best form of oneself (Rosen et al., 2008). Some may present a different version of themselves, or others might disclose more of themselves allowing users to control how emotionally invested one becomes in the relationship. The more information one shares, the more the relationship is likely to take a long-term route (Gibbs et al., 2006). Dating services require the upload of a photo, a self-description paragraph, age, ethnicity, weight, height and other personal information. A survey by iMatchup found the most important information after the photo was religion and age. The information presented allows the matching of partners based on their compatibility and also allows users to decide the pursuit of a relationship (Rosen et al., 2008).

Online dating is easier to maintain due to the amount of confidence it allows users to exercise. In FtF dating, men and women are careful about revealing too much information on the first date; however, in online dating, men and women exchange a multitude of personal information. Fear of rejection leads many people with low self-esteem to gravitate toward online dating and communication. Cyberspace allows many to feel safer because the anonymity lessens the fear of shame. Those with high-self esteem preferred positive FtF communication. Online dating harms the low-self esteem population by limiting their ability to present themselves with confidence in person (Rosen et al., 2008).

**Emotional Attachment**

*Elimination of Barriers*

 CMC, such as online dating, is a phenomenon in the world of communication. It has recently become possible to communicate across large physical distances with almost no cost due to new innovations such as Skype and instant messaging. CMC extends the barriers of time by allowing an unlimited amount of response time; whereas, letters would take days, weeks, or months to deliver. In a verbal phone conversation, the greatest amount of response time is 2 seconds, similar to a normal, FtF interaction. However, CMC via instant messaging and texting offers an unlimited response time because users can receive a message and wait an unlimited amount of time to send a reply (Klein, 2013). With the recent introduction of the mobile phone, relationships have increased in number, variety, and the amount of time spent in constant connection, fostering a greater level of intimacy and attachment (Solis, 2005).

*Constant Connection*

 *Boston Globe* journalist Laura Pappano (2001), in her book *The Connection Gap,* emphasizes the false “image” of connectivity becoming a false representation of real, FtF interaction, allowing couples and families to value technological communication the same as FtF communication. The false image of connectivity is harmful to romantic relationships. The constant need for connection and speed of response often overshadows real communication, creating shallow contacts (Solis, 2005). The heavy reliance on communications through Facebook, Instagram, and text creates anxiety in the relationship. Often times, partners will lose emotional security when the opposite partner does not respond to a text or instant message immediately. In these cases, constant connectivity has a negative effect on the emotional security of the relationship. When the relationship is terminated, the ability detach from a break-up is more difficult due to the steady flow of information released by exes on social media (Klein, 2013).

 Many social networking sites, like Facebook, are used to maintain romantic relationships and have positive benefits especially in long-distance relationships (Dainton, 2013). The ability for constant communication can also be beneficial. Couples express romantic feelings and messages instantaneously without waiting to see their significant others in person; constant reminders of love and accelerated intimacy enhance these relationships. CMC often allows a degree of precision where people can send messages with a particular mission in mind; however, on the receiving end, the tone of the message is difficult to understand. Without the verbal cues present in FtF communications, the message can be read in a different context than intended (Solis, 2005). Washington Post journalist Natalie Moore, in her discussion on love in the age of texting, revealed texting dissolves the tone, intention, and mood of the sender (Moore, 2007).

Unlike the difficulty in discerning tone, through texting people are able to choose the amount and depth of content shared. The more openness practiced, the more satisfactory the relationship becomes. The ability to view messages alone in private without distractions from others or the invasion of privacy enhances relationships. By meeting partners through text, the conversation can be controlled in a certain direction, and a couple can discover topics that might be unusual or “unsayable” in person. Texting allows users to explore taboo and controversial topics with a lessened fear of rejection (Solis, 2005).

*Demand of Attention*

Attachment can be both positive and negative related to technology’s role in dating. Positive effects of technology allow the relationship to flourish; however, a negative amount of attachment can create anxiety and stress about the status of the relationship. Although some degree of attachment is needed in order to keep the relationship going, the obsessive need for constant texts or messages leads to a negative dependence on technology. Arguments can ensue over the elapsed time between a sent text and a received response. Arguments over text do not stop in the single world. Married couples engage in arguments through text as well; for example, after an argument a husband may send a sour text to his wife from another room cancelling dinner. This reliance on technology causes many to become stuck in the technological world of communication. In many cases, one may come to view constant technological communication as a substitute for real intimacy (Moore, 2007).

This obsessive need for a response from someone can lead to anxiety. Messages may seem harder to interpret without the verbal and facial cues present in FtF communication causing the user to become even more anxious (Klein, 2013). As mentioned, cell phones foster a sense of detachment from the present. In regards to marriage and romantic relationships in general, technology harms the relationship when one is focused on technology rather than his or her significant other. When one develops obsessive tendencies over technology, one will spend an increasing amount of time in solitude, instead of socializing with friends and family (Tosun & Lajunen, 2009). Because technology frequently demands attention, it deteriorates relationships with family and friends if not treated with care (Khunou, 2012). The impact of technology on familial and romantic relationships will be discussed in a case study further in the paper.

*Relationship Maintenance*

Relationship maintenance is, “ the cognitions, behaviors, and interactions,” couples use in order to keep the connection satisfactory (Dainton, 2013). In a study by the Department of Communication at La Salle University, it was found more people are using technology as a way to stay connected to loved ones and romantic partners (Dainton, 2013). Facebook use has increased widely as a means of staying connected with friends and family. Positive statuses on Facebook are also related to the satisfaction of the relationship. Those in romantic relationships are more likely to use Facebook as a mean of expressing openness and assurances through CMC than other types of relationships (Dainton, 2013).

The use of cell phones and instant messaging has increased widely in the past years as a way of both creating and maintaining relationships. Many regard texting as a relatively inexpensive way to communicate and relay basic information or end misunderstandings, only paying fees for telephone bills. Texting creates a safer environment where levels of intimacy may increase due to the immediacy, accessibility, and privacy men and women are able to exercise (Solis, 2005). However, the social implications of the reliance on technological communications must also be considered (Moore, 2007).

**Emotional Detachment**

*Low Levels of Intimacy*

Technology allows greater attachment avoidance due to the lack of physical presence. One is allowed more time to decide whether the relationship should be pursued FtF. The autonomous and anonymous nature of texting allows users to create relationships with high or low levels of intimacy. Texting and technological relationships make it easier for couples to avoid commitment. Some of these relationships developed through technology may escalate into a physical relationship with no emotional ties (Solis, 2005). Commitment is more likely to occur in FtF interactions rather than texting relationships. Individuals who are not looking to maintain a long-term relationship typically use texting or technology to develop connections (Solis, 2005). Those who use technology as a primary source for communication generally have high levels of introversion and difficulty expressing emotions, often leading to shallow ties, allowing users to dissolve relationships more easily due to less emotional investment (Klein, 2013;Weisskirch & Delevi, 2012).

*Arguments/Terminated Relationships*

 Cell phones contribute to greater intimacy in a relationship but also contribute to arguments and misunderstandings, which can occur over the duration of response time or the use of technology when one should be physically and mentally present (Khunou, 2012). The anxiety over the response rate of instant messages can often times create a hostile, obsessive relationship. The shorter response time is associated with a satisfactory relationship, while a longer response time is associated with an unsatisfactory relationship (Klein, 2013). Because many relationships today are developed through texting, Facebook or online dating, these relationships may be virtually shallow with no intimate, real foundation. For this reason, conflicts are more likely to occur based on the lack of physical presence and, in some cases, intimacy (Solis, 2005).

 There are many patterns of ending relationships in today’s society. The most common forms are subtle hints and a gradual disconnection from a romantic partner; however, technology now aids the discontinuing of a relationship. One may now end a relationship through text, e-mail, or a more personal phone call. One of the most common reasons relationships end is attachment avoidance. Attachment avoidance is unwillingness to emotionally invest in a relationship. This avoidance can stem from early childhood into adulthood causing many to lack the ability to form emotional ties to a romantic partner. Attachment anxiety is also one of the most common reasons relationships end through the use of technology (Weisskirch & Delevi, 2012). The emotional detachment from technology can lead to separations and an inability to feel sympathetic toward a partner leading to emotional violence and abuse (Drauker & Martsolf, 2010). A study by California State University found 29% of 105 students sampled experienced a terminated relationship through technology and 15% admitted to the use of technology as a way of ending relationships. This widespread increase in the use of technology to end relationships causes psychological effects of attachment anxiety and increased impersonal relationships (Weisskirch & Delevi, 2012).

*Impacts*

The ability to break up using technology causes many implications in romantic relationships. Because technology has become strongly involved in relationship maintenance, it is easier to engage in arguments on a regular basis (Weisskirch & Delevi, 2012). Many people regard breaking up through texting as impersonal and harsh. Because one cannot see the face of the significant other, ending a relationship through text or e-mail seems easier than breaking up in person. There is a limit to the information one can provide when breaking up through text. To many, texting to end a relationship shows cowardice and makes the relationship seem less personal and more like a friendship because the relationship is able to end without seeing one another face to face ever again (Gershon, 2010).

It is harder for couples to recover from relationship loss due to the many technological pathways of communication. Many are not able to resist the urge to search a previous partner’s recent Facebook posts or send a spontaneous text to him/her. The inability to detach oneself from a partner has become increasingly common (Klein, 2013). The obsessive need to monitor a current or past significant other has increased the amount of infidelity and emotional violence occurring in online relationships (Drauker & Martsolf, 2010).

**Privacy**

*Invasion*

 The recent inclusion of the mobile phone and social networking sites in personal life can cause many problems within a romantic relationship. For many, a distrust of a partner results in the invasion of social networking sites (SNS) and cell phones. The cell phone has been introduced as a personal and private part of one’s life (Khunou, 2012). If infidelity is experienced in the relationship, the couple is more likely to experience difficulty with the privacy of the information on the cell phone and SNS accounts. Minimizing the privacy between partners by turning over passwords can create more trust in the relationship. Many people’s opinions differ on the degree of privacy the cell phone holds. Some believe passwords should not be shared with a partner due to information that might cause emotional pain, and others believe it is fully acceptable to share all passwords with their significant other (Khunou, 2012). Recent technology has made it easier for many to engage in infidelity and the sharing of explicit photos leading to mistrust and conflict. Instances of infidelity may occur online and eventually escalate to meetings in person (Wysocki & Childers, 2011).

*Infidelity*

 Infidelity occurs in relationships for multiple reasons, which are widely discussed. Modern technology has increased the variety and amount of sexual information available through Internet use leading many who are dissatisfied in their normal relationships to search for sexual encounters online. These sexual encounters include video chat, photos, and sexting explicit content or images. It is easier to engage in these interactions online due to the lack of emotional commitment (Wysocki & Childers, 2011). Whether through cyberspace, text message, or other social networking sites, infidelity creates mistrust in romantic relationships leading partners to become disconnected and less involved (Khunou, 2012).

A survey by the University of Nebraska and Washburn University found 66% of 8,678 respondents find people for purely sex-related hook-ups, both online and FtF. These “hook-ups” involve no emotional ties and are common among the younger population. The ability to easily access sexual relationships with no emotional involvement has increased the amount of affairs occurring both in non-marital and marital relationships. The increase in the frequency of infidelity in relationships leads to mistrust and decreased emotional ties resulting in the increased invasion of privacy (Wysocki & Childers, 2011). Thus, technology is a main cause of relationship mistrust and the ending of relationships (Khunou, 2012). Arguments are more likely to occur in a relationship when infidelity has been discovered, which may lead to violence and distrust in the relationship (Khunou, 2012).

**Emotional Violence**

*Online Harassment*

 As previously stated, technology has made monitoring and surveying significant others much easier in the recent decades. The obsessive need to be aware of a significant other’s whereabouts and interactions often leads to problems in the relationship (Hultgren, 2013). Through monitoring of texts and Facebook posts of the significant other, one may stumble upon evidence of infidelity or dishonesty leading to aggression and in some cases abuse (Drauker & Martsolf, 2010).

 A study by Kent State University estimated 93% of teens in the U.S. ages 12-17 are Internet users. The increased use of technology to communicate has depersonalized communication, broadened social groups, and led to increased racist and sexist behavior because of the lack of FtF, voice-to-voice communication (Drauker & Martsolf, 2010). Because many people are becoming reliant on technology, they are losing the ability to sympathize with and read the emotions of a partner. It is easier to express aggression online because there are no barriers to what a person can say or do. Electronic aggression (EA) has become increasingly prominent in adolescent life. Previously the scope of abuse was in a residence or in public; however, EA creates a broader area where abuse can occur (Drauker & Martsolf, 2010). Electronics are used to express aggression against both friends and romantic partners. Experiences with electronic dating violence vary from one situation to multiple instances of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Technology allows abusers to hide their true selves when initiating relationships, making it easier to access their victims. Due to this, online dating allows predators easier access to unsuspecting users (Drauker & Martsolf, 2010).

*Role of Technology in Dating Violence*

 It is easier for abusive relationships to form online because users are unable to easily pick up on abusive tendencies of a partner. As a result, many relationships involving dating violence begin when two people meet through CMC, making it easier for predators to find vulnerable victims online (Drauker & Martsolf, 2010). The partner may begin to abuse the significant other verbally and emotionally through angry voicemails and texts; however, it can escalate to physical violence. Infidelity is a main cause of emotional abuse among partners (Drauker & Martsolf, 2010).

 Abuse can be expressed through different modes of technology, like the cell phone. A study by Kent University found in most cases, the verbal abuse expressed over the cell phone was severe, such as one male partner leaving a voicemail threatening to hurt his girlfriend if she did not respond to his texts and calls. This is an example of the use of technology to physically or emotionally abuse a partner (Drauker & Martsolf, 2010).

Because technology has made it easier to seek partners outside of marriage or monogamous relationships, it has become a permanent danger to romantic relationships. Some argue the Internet is a way to prevent adultery; others argue the Internet is the vehicle of adultery through which most affairs occur. Instances of infidelity can lead to an invasion of privacy and lead to emotional and physical abuse. Finally, the Internet is a way for people to connect and benefit from intimate relationships, but it can be taken advantage of by lonely or bored married partners and may disguise abusive partners (Wysocki & Childers, 2011).

**Case Study**

The Scholar researched studies, which concluded technology has a negative effect on relationships and causes isolation from the present moment (Long, 2010). Because of these studies, the Scholar will conduct a case study of her own. The Scholar will study a specific grandparent and grandchild through their use of technology and their interaction with each other. The Scholar will look at how often the participants are on their phone and how often they are interacting with each other and compare the two variables in order to determine the impact of technology on familial relationships.

**Conclusion**

 In conclusion, the Researcher looked at the beginnings of courtship and the evolution from courtship to casual dating. The Researcher also examined the effects technology has on dating relationships. Relationships created through technology lessen the fear of shame and rejection, often allowing a greater level of intimacy between partners (Long, 2010). The Scholar found the stigma of online-dating has reduced due to the increased population who participate in online dating services as an easy and inexpensive way to find partners with similar interests (Long, 2010). The Researcher found the removal of barriers led to accelerated intimacy and constant connection (Klein, 2013;Solis, 2005), and on the opposite side of the spectrum, technology can allow users to remain emotionally detached from romantic endeavors and create relationships solely based on physical interaction (Solis, 2005).

 The Researcher concluded technology allows some to create romantic relationships with high levels of intimacy, but it also fosters disconnection from the present surroundings (Long, 2010; Klein, 2013). The Researcher found technology can both benefit and harm romantic relationships by allowing a greater level of intimacy or increasing the amount of arguments and infidelity occurring between partners (Solis, 2005; Wysocki & Childers, 2011).

**Methodology**

*Purpose*

The purpose of this research was to discover the perceptions of computer-mediated communication and the prevalence and perception of online dating. The Researcher observed studies conducted by other authors in regards to the topic in order to decide the type of study the Scholar would conduct. Researchers at Michigan State University conducted an online survey in order to observe online daters and the perceptions of the relationships created (Gibbs et al., 2006). Bari-Ilan University conducted an online survey to discover the difference between extrovert’s and introvert’s location of the “real-me” online (Amichai-Hamburger, Wainapel, & Fox, 2002). California State University used interviews and self-reporting to conduct research on the openness of online dating (Rosen et al., 2008).

 Because of the prevalence of online surveys and interviews, the Scholar chose to complete an online survey consisting of structured interview questions. The survey was confidential and voluntary. The survey was sent to individuals throughout the Greater Houston Area. The Researcher chose to create an online survey because of the convenience to interview a larger population. The survey was used to gather evidence against two null hypotheses.

 The Researcher chose to create case study to observe the difference in communication between the older and younger population. Background information was gathered on the older grandparent in order to compare her previous communication with a lack of technology. The Scholar conducted unstructured interviewing and direct observation of the grandparent and grandchild during their visit in order to observe their interaction and technology usage.

 *Null Hypothesis 1*

A majority of young adults in the greater Houston area do not believe computer mediated communication has a negative effect on personal relationships.

*Null Hypothesis 2*

Older adults of the greater Houston area (50 and up) are more inclined to approve of online dating relationships, while the younger population (16-49) is less inclined to approve of online dating relationships.

 *Case Study*

The Scholar compared technological communications (i.e. social media, texting) from a young grandchild (age 16) to that of his grandparent (age 67) in frequency and content.

*Participants and Sampling Procedures*

 Through the quantitative study and the case study, the Researcher observed people living in the Greater Houston Area. In the first null hypothesis, the population was of younger adults of the Greater Houston Area. The population in the second null hypothesis included the older adults (50+) and the younger population (16-49). The population for the case study was chosen from the larger populations of older and younger adults. The Researcher chose an older adult grandparent age 67 and a younger grandchild age 16.

 The Researcher allowed voluntary responses to provide the sampling plan. The survey was posted to the HC Connection, an electronic bulletin sent out to parents, students and faculty of HC, spread through Facebook, and emailed to individuals. The age groups were divided into the younger population and the older population in order to discover the difference in communication associated with age.

The Researcher chose two individuals from these age groups to perform a more in-depth case study. A young adult age 16 was chosen, and an older adult, age 67, was chosen. These individuals were members of the Researcher’s family, specifically the Researcher’s sibling and grandparent. These individuals were chosen from the Scholar’s family due to limited resources and the convenient ability to observe the interaction between the grandparent and grandchild. The age difference between the individuals was important to show the generational gap in communication through technology.

*Research Design*

 The Researcher used a quantitative, descriptive study to test the first null hypothesis on young adults’ perception of the negative impact of computer-mediated communication on their relationships. The Researcher questioned participants through a voluntary electronic survey. The second null hypothesis on the open-ness to online dating through the different age groups was tested through a quantitative, causal-comparative study. The participants were tested through a voluntary electronic survey.

The Researcher used a qualitative case study to research the technological communication differences between a grandparent and a grandchild. The Researcher conducted the case study through unstructured interviewing and participant observation.

*Experimental Instrumentation*

The survey to test the null hypotheses was distributed electronically and contained structured questions to gain evidence against the nulls. Structured interviewing was the most common instrument used by other authors in the Review of Related Literature. The Researcher chose to combine self-reporting and structured interviewing into a survey sent to the population. The Scholar created the survey on a Google Form with specific, original questions. The survey was created to measure the relationship between the impact of computer-mediated communication, the qualitative dependent variable, and the age group membership of the individual, the quantitative independent variable, for the first null. The survey was reliable because it was anonymous and contained clear questions to measure the amount of negativity perceived from individuals. The survey was valid because there were clear questions about the use of technology to communicate in relationships and the perceived impact of technology (negative, neutral, or positive).

 Evidence against the second null hypothesis was measured through the same survey. The openness to online dating, the quantitative dependent variable, and the age group of the individual, the qualitative independent variable, were measured for the second null. Because one comprehensive survey was used, the individual was measured in equal standards for both nulls. The validity of the second null relied on questions about the personal use of online dating, encounters with others who have used online dating, and the approval of these relationships.

 The case study was conducted through participant observation and unstructured interviewing. The Researcher chose to conduct the case study in this way because of the ability to interview the two specific individuals and the ability to measure the direct association between the age and technological communication of the individuals. The Researcher created a chart measuring the volume and content of communication between both the grandparent and grandchild, and their communication with others outside the case study. The case study measured the number of texts sent, the quantitative dependent variable, and the age of the individual, the quantitative independent variable. The unstructured interviewing started with baseline questions and deviated based on answers the individuals gave. The individuals were measured with the same instrument and at the same time, allowing the case study to be valid and reliable.

*Data Collection*

 The Researcher distributed a survey to measure the null hypotheses. The survey was a structured interview distributed electronically on the Researcher’s Facebook on October 20, 2015. The survey was sent in every Newsletter sent out by Houston Christian starting October 22, 2015. The Dean of Students also sent the survey out via email to the student body and faculty on October 28, 2015. The survey was closed on November 12, 2015. The Researcher had 240 responses by November 5, 2015.

 For the case study the Researcher measured the association between the age of the individual and the computer-mediated communication of the individual. The unstructured interviews for the grandparent and grandchild occurred on November 9, 2015. The participant observation occurred over the time of a family gathering from November 24, 2015 to November 27, 2015.

*Data Analysis*

Computer-mediated communication could have a negative effect on relationships. The Researcher used relative frequency of the perceived negativity among the young adults in her sample. The Scholar used a one-proportion z test to test the first null hypothesis. Openness to online dating may or may not be related to the age of the individual. The Researcher studied the relative frequency of approval to online dating relationships in proportion to the age group of the individual. The Scholar conducted a two-proportion z test to test the second null hypothesis.

 The case study measured the mean and standard deviation of the number of texts sent by the grandparent and grandchild. The comparison was made between the mean number of texts the grandparent and grandchild sent and the content of these texts. The variability in daily text volume was compared using the standard deviation.

*Ethical Consideration*

The Researcher included the statement “Responses to this survey are completely voluntary and anonymous,” at the beginning of the survey to ensure the respondent’s identity would be protected. Respondents voluntarily participated in the survey, and the Researcher did not record the identity of any of the respondents.

 For the case study, the Researcher chose two individuals from family who willingly participated with consent. The names and identity of the individuals were not further revealed beyond this point.

*Bias*

For the null hypotheses, the Researcher excluded the population below the age of 16 and the population outside of the Greater Houston area. For this reason, the population was not representative of a global standpoint. The responses for those in the entire United States and the world were not analyzed in this study.

 The instrument was an electronic survey written in English. The population excluded by the instrument was those who do not have Internet access, those who were unwilling to respond, and those who did not speak fluent English. The population was limited by these aspects.

 The case study excluded the population outside of one 16 year old grandchild and one 67 year old grandparent. Those in romantic relationships and those outside the Greater Houston area were not considered in this population. The effect was a closed population of two individuals, with the benefit of seeing the specific communication between the two individuals.

*Assumptions*

When collecting information for the null hypotheses, the Researcher assumed the respondents were participating completely and truthfully. The Researcher expected a representative sample of the Greater Houston area, and a sufficient participation rate across both age groups. For the case study, the Researcher assumed the individuals being observed were acting normally and responded truthfully during the unstructured interviewing. The Researcher also assumed the population was being represented equally by having one individual from the younger age group and one individual from the older age group.

*Limitations*

Due to the limited amount of time, money and resources, the Researcher did not specifically study those involved in long-distance relationships, instances of emotional violence through technology, and instances of infidelity through technology. If given an unlimited amount of time, the Researcher would conduct an in-depth study of long-distance relationships using technology and interviews on the use of technology to engage in arguments and conflict.

The Researcher was not able to study the impact of social media on relationships and the complete progression of online dating relationships. If given an unlimited amount of time and resources, the Researcher would gather information about the emotional impact of social media on relationships. The Researcher would also conduct in person interviews with online daters covering the origin of the relationship, and the eventual progression to marriage.

**Findings**

*Sample*

 The Researcher analyzed the survey of 248 responses. The sample included 192 people from the Greater Houston Area, and the other responses were eliminated from the sample. Of the sampled population, 30% was male and 70% was female (*Fig. 1*).

*Figure 1*

The sample was comprised of 89% of individuals age 16-49 and 11% of individuals age 50 and older (*Fig. 2)*.

*Figure 2*

Participants in the sample were made up of 38% of people in committed relationships and 62% single individuals (*Fig. 3*).

*Figure 3*

The population was made up of individuals from different family sizes measured from 1 member to 5 or more members (*Fig. 4*).

*Figure 4*

 For the case study, the Researcher chose to study a grandparent and grandchild from her family. The grandparent was 67 years old and resided in Houston, Texas. The grandparent was raised in the Greater Houston Area. The Scholar studied the communication trends of the grandparent through CMC and FtF communications. The grandchild was 15 years old and resided in Houston, Texas. The grandchild was raised in Texas as well. The Researcher chose these two individuals within her family to keep as much consistency among all other variables as possible. The Scholar studied the grandchild’s CMC and FtF communication in comparison to the grandparent.

*Survey Findings*

 The Scholar sent out a 15-question survey to the sample in order to test the null hypotheses. The Scholar found the majority of the population had more than five cell phones in their household, totaling to 73% of the sample. The amount of computers in the household was more divided with people reporting higher percentages of three, four, and five or more computers in the household (*Fig. 5*).

*Figure 5*

The survey contained questions about contact with online daters and acceptance of online dating relationships. The Scholar found a majority of people, 57% of the sample, has come in contact with someone who has dated/married someone he or she met online.

The Scholar proceeded to ask how many of those who have come in contact with online daters are accepting of the online origin of the relationship on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 completely unaccepting, 4 completely accepting) (*Fig. 6*).

*Figure 6*

The acceptance of online dating relationships was used to test the null hypothesis older adults are more accepting of online dating relationships than younger adults.

The Scholar found 88 percent of the sample had never dated or married someone they met online. The Scholar asked the 12% who had dated/married someone they met online about the progression of the relationship to FtF (*Fig. 7*).

*Figure 7*

The Scholar asked about the likelihood of respondents to establish an online dating relationship (*Fig. 8*). Interestingly, the Researcher found most people were completely unlikely to create an online relationship, despite the previous stated acceptance of online dating relationships found in Figure 6.

*Figure 8*

The Researcher found 89% of the sample regularly communicated with their families through technology. The Scholar asked respondents to measure the positive, negative, and neutral effects of their technological communication (*Fig. 9*). The Researcher found most respondents reported technology to have a neutral effect. These responses were used to test the null hypothesis young adults do not believe computer mediated communication has a negative effect on their relationship. Based on this information it seems likely young adults do not find technology to have a negative effect on their relationship.

*Figure 9*

The Scholar also questioned the amount of ended relationships the respondents had via technology (*Fig. 10*).

*Figure 10*

The Researcher found 57% of the population had not experienced terminated relationships through technology; however, those who did have breakups through technology were asked to select the mode of technology used.

The Scholar found many interesting responses to the survey. As previously stated, most respondents considered themselves accepting of online dating relationships they observed. When asked if respondents would be open to being in an online dating relationship themselves, only a very small amount was completely open to the idea. The Researcher also found most online dating relationships progress FtF in weeks, rather than months or days. The Researcher found this was an interesting middle ground relationship timeline. The Scholar found it interesting 41% of respondents reported technology had a positive effect on their lives.

 For the case study, the Researcher found the grandparent had a family landline phone at age 11, and her first cell phone came at age 47. In contrast, the grandchild’s first cell phone came at age 9. Both the grandparent and the grandchild declared they rely heavily on technology to communicate with family; however, the grandparent distinguished only using technology to communicate with family when she could not see them FtF. Both found technology hindered their relationships, but the reasons for the hindrance differed. The grandchild found technology hindered his relationships because it allowed him to fight with others without seeing consequences. The grandparent found technology hindered relationships because it made her more lazy and unwilling to go the extra distance if she could talk to someone at the click of a button.

The grandchild texted more often than the grandparent did, especially with his friends. He declared he was more likely to call or text before seeing someone in person. The grandparent talked on the phone more frequently than texting. Interestingly, the grandparent was only found texting once to a very close life long friend. The grandchild self reported he was usually on his phone all day everyday, while the grandparent self reported she was on her phone 2-3 hours a day. Both claimed CMC was worse than communicating FtF.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Measurement: 7.5 hours total | Time spent on cell phone: social media, texting, phone calls etc. | Time spent interacting with one another | Amount of texts exchanged between the two | Most frequent texting time | Content of texts: love, happy, sad, angry |
| Grandparent | 1.5 hours | 1.3 hours | 0 | Night | Normal, happy phone calls |
| Grandchild | 4.5 hours | 1.3 hours | 0 | Afternoon | Range: normal, upset and angry |

*Figure 11 chart of technological communication of grandparent and grandchild*

*Analysis*

 To test the negativity of technology on young adult’s personal relationships, the Researcher used a one-proportion z test. The result was a P-value of 1, providing statistical evidence consistent with the null hypothesis, providing evidence that young adults do not believe technology has a negative effect on their relationships.

 To test the relative approval of online dating relationships by the younger and older adults, the Researcher conducted a two-proportion z test. The result was a P value of 0.908, not allowing the Researcher to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, it was not found younger adults were more accepting of online dating relationships than older adults.

 The case study showed the grandparent called more frequently than she texts. Throughout the day, her technological communication was focused on browsing Facebook or calling family members. The grandparent and grandchild were measured in a 7.5 hour period. Because of technology, the grandparent has less frequent communication with her grandchild than when not on the technology. However, the grandparent was less likely to be upset or get in an argument through technology than her younger counterpart. The grandchild was found to text more often than he calls. The Researcher found the grandchild had almost 3 hours more time on his cell phone than his grandparent. Technology also hindered his ability to communicate with his grandparent. The grandchild was more likely to be upset and get in arguments through technology. Based on these findings, the Researcher concluded technology hinders the ability to communicate in a family setting.

**Discussion**

 The Researcher’s results were similar to the studies found in the Review of Related Literature. The Scholar found 34% of people were completely accepting of the online origin of relationships (4), and 35% of people were almost completely accepting of online dating relationships (3). When added together, these values are about 69% of the population, agreeing with the findings in the RORL. The RORL suggests online dating was once regarded as a way for desperate people to find partners; however, the stigma is decreasing due to its increasing popularity (Long, 2010). The Scholar also found 57% of people have come in contact with someone who dated or married someone they met online. The Scholar’s findings are consistent with the study done by California University, which found 74% of 10 million single Internet users are using it to find a partner— instead of FtF interaction (Gibbs et al., 2006). In the Review of Related Literature, the Scholar found 15% of adults have a connection to someone who has used online dating to find a partner (Rosen et al., 2008). This statistic could be less than the 57% the Researcher found in her study due to the fact it was done in 2008, a time period with less internet communication than today. As shown in the RORL and in the Findings, the Researcher found online dating was constantly on the rise due to the increasing amount of online dating sites and social media outlets. This increase in online dating could be used to show the benefits of meeting a partner through technology, and it could continue to lower the stigma surrounding online dating.

 The Researcher found only 12% of the population perceived technology to have a negative effect, while the combined 88% found technology to have either a neutral or positive effect. The 41% who found technology to have a positive effect corresponds to the study by Occidental College, which discovered technology allowed people to create more relationships across greater distances (Long, 2010). A study done by Portland University found 75% of teens found technology to have a negative effect, while only 18% said technology had a positive effect (Gowen, 2014). The 75% was significantly higher than the 12% of the Researcher’s population. The Portland University study included the larger state population of Oregon youth, from urban, rural and suburban areas (Gowen, 2014). Because the population covered a wider demographic of teens from an entire state, rather than just teens of Houston, the statistics could represent the wider beliefs of teens in general. However, the positive/negative effects of technology are entirely open to perspective and personal experiences. The low percentage of negativity could be used to show how technology can have a positive impact on connecting younger members of society and fostering connections across distance and culture.
 The Scholar found 45% of people who dated/married someone they met online progressed to FtF interaction within days, while 55% progressed to FtF within weeks. These statistics are consistent with the RORL, which stated online relationships tend to progress faster than traditional FtF relationships (Rosen et al., 2008). The study by Pew Internet and American Life Project found 72% of their population married a partner within the first year, corresponding to the Researcher’s statistics. This information suggests online dating relationships progress faster than traditional relationships because couples are able to discuss topics faster and more openly due to the unlimited amount of time and the ability to hide oneself from scrutiny (Rosen et al., 2008). The fast progression could also have been due to the ease of finding a partner with similar or desirable traits, made possible by detailed profiles discussing interests and hobbies.

The Researcher found 27% of her population had experienced an ended relationship through text message. This is similar to the study done by California State University, which found 29% of the sampled population experienced a break up through technology (Weisskirch & Delevi, 2012). Overall, the Researcher found 43% of her population had experienced an ended relationship by means of technology. The higher percentage could have been due to the easier ability for teens to engage in arguments through technology. The 27% of the population broken up with through text could show the theory texting is easier because it does not require the person to see who he or she is hurting. As a result, many of these teens most likely saw breaking up through text as cowardly (Gershon, 2010). The Researcher did not ask how many of the respondents actually broke up with a significant other through technology; however, the percentage would most likely be similar to the amount of people who had been broken up with.

 In the case study, the Researcher tested the technological tendencies of a grandparent and grandchild and found the grandchild was on the phone 3 more hours than the grandparent. The higher cell phone dependency could have been because the grandchild was raised with technology and had a cell phone at age 9. The grandparent was on the phone for 1.5 hours in a 7.5-hour measuring period, which could be seen as a large amount relative to other grandparents. However, this grandparent did not spend more time on technology than the grandchild, possibly due to the way she was raised and the fact the grandparent did not have a cell phone until age 47. The Scholar also found technology fostered isolation between the grandparent and grandchild. Throughout the 7.5-hour measuring period, the grandparent and grandchild only spent 1.3 hours interacting with one another. While this could be due to a number of other reasons, the grandchild did spend 4.5 of the 7.5 hours on his phone. This suggested technology took away from the interaction and the present moment as found in the RORL (Long, 2010). Both the grandparent and the grandchild expressed dependency on technology, but both claimed FtF communication was better than CMC. These mixed beliefs mirrored the hypotheses from the RORL, which stated: technology is beneficial because it allows the maintenance of relationships across long distances and technology is harmful because it causes isolation from the present moment (Klein, 2013). The Researcher also found the grandchild was more likely to engage in arguments over text message, while the grandparent used technology to keep in touch with friends and family. The grandchild’s tendency to argue through the cell phone could be due to the comfort the grandchild feels with technology. Because the grandchild has had technology for the majority of his life, he has never needed to settle an argument FtF. The grandparent expressed worry about engaging in arguments through technology. The grandchild may be more likely to engage in arguments online because most of his relationships have a technological foundation allowing a person to say whatever he or she thinks without perceiving the consequences (Solis, 2005).

The Scholar did not ask the respondents about experiences with emotional violence through technology. However, the Scholar can presume they would be low corresponding to the 12% of the population who reported technology to have a negative effect. This could be due to the increased stigma of cyber bullying and violence online.

 In the future, relationship counselors should consider technological involvement in romantic relationships. Due to the perceived negativity in relationships, counselors should encourage couples to lessen the effect of technology on their romantic lives. Online dating websites will likely increase in number due to the rising Internet generation, and these websites should begin to cater towards the younger generations who are more likely than previous generations to meet their partners online. Due to the increasing population using dating websites, these websites need to update privacy policies and protection in order to protect users against violence and predators. App developers should take into account the percentage of people who find technology to have a positive effect, and the percentage of people who own a cellular device. These developers should cater more towards the younger generation and the growing use of technology to share and connect with people across the world.

 The Scholar found the research corresponded with what was found in the RORL. Some statistics such as the perceived negativity of online relationships varied due to the amount of people surveyed and the limited population of Houston. However, the Scholar found the research was consistent with most of the research studied. Future research could study more in-depth the positive aspects of technology and the continued evolution of technological interaction.

**Conclusion**

 The Researcher observed the evolution of dating from the Victorian Era to the 21st Century. The Scholar found couples began to go on dates rather than the elaborate process of courtship under parental supervision. The Researcher found the introduction of new technology like texting, e-mail and video chat introduced their own risks and benefits for familial and romantic relationships (Long, 2010).

The Researcher discovered the introduction of CMC creates two belief systems: technology creates isolation and a disconnection from society, or technology can allow greater intimacy because it lessens the fear of shame (Long, 2010). The Researcher found evidence supporting both hypotheses in the Review of Related Literature. Many issues arise with the use of technology including privacy and emotional commitment (Weisskirch & Delevi, 2012; Khunou, 2012).

Because of the research by other scholars, the Researcher decided to conduct studies on the use of technology in the home and its impact on romantic and familial relationships. The Researcher created a voluntary online survey sent out to the population of the Greater Houston area in order to test her null hypotheses. The first null tested the perceived negativity of technology in personal lives. The second null tested the likelihood of approving of online dating relationships relative to the age of the individual. The Scholar also did a case study on a particular grandparent and grandchild and observed their technological communications and their FtF communications with each other over a 7.5 hour observation period.

 The Scholar found technology to have both a positive and negative impact on relationships: familial and romantic. The Researcher was able to find evidence to support findings in the RORL. As a result of this research, the Scholar was led to question the psychological impact of dress.

**Remaining Questions**

The Researcher’s study on courtship and the recent inclusion of technology and its impact on dating relationships has lead the Scholar to further question: *What are the psychological affects of dress? How have manners changed in society as a result of changes in dress?*

*Dress*

Many scholars have researched the first impressions and psychology behind outward appearance. Dress has been defined as, “the total arrangement of outwardly detectable body modifications and all material objects added to it” (Johnson & Lennon, 2016). Body modifications are changes in shape, texture or color; body supplements are changes like jewelry or clothing. Dress can affect both communication and body processes. Dress can be used to protect against harm (gloves, hats) or to act as a medium to communicate in society (Johnson & Lennon, 2016). For the purpose of these remaining questions, the Researcher will focus on the affects of dress on first impression and perceptions of others in society.

*First Impression*

Dress is important to study as it is a non-verbal medium of information about oneself, including: sex, personality, socioeconomic status, and age (Angerosa, 2014). Studies by *Psychology Today* have proven people make judgements on a person within 3-seconds of first seeing him or her (Fletcher, 2013). First impressions involve the target, the person being viewed, and the perceiver, the person viewing the target. Researchers studied the first few seconds of exposure to a target because after the limited time of exposure an impression can be made from other non-verbal and verbal cues of the target (Angerosa, 2014).

In a study by *Psychology Today*, 300 adults (men and women) were shown pictures of men wearing a high street tailored suit and a very similar suit with minor changes in color and fabric. The face of the models was blanked out because they can give expressive non-verbal cues altering the first impression (Angerosa, 2014). After these 3-seconds, participants judged the man in the tailored suit to be more confident and successful than the suit with changes, linking the importance of clothing in determining the first impression (Fletcher, 2013).

 In regards to women, dress can be the immediate downfall if it is deemed too provocative or revealing. Another study by Edmonds and Cahoon (1987) found the more provocative a woman dresses, the more likely she is to be perceived as flirtatious, promiscuous, seductive and less sincere (Johnson et al., 2014). More studies have proven how these perceptions of provocative dress have led to a declining view and objectification in the media. A study by Gurung and Chrouser (2007) found college women rated women who participated in the Olympics dressed in provocative clothing as more attractive, feminine, and confident; however, the women were also rated as less strong, intelligent, and having less self-respect. As can be shown, the first impression of a woman is greatly determined by the revealing nature of her clothing, which is especially true in the workplace (Johnson et al., 2007). Even the slightest changes in skirt length and one button on a blouse can earn a woman in the workplace the title of “provocative” and less competent, even if the woman is a senior manager in the company. As shown, the dress of a woman strongly affects people’s impressions of her personality and competence outside and inside the workplace (Fletcher, 2013).

 Researchers looked at the impression of intelligence conveyed by students to teachers. Photos were shown of students wearing cut-off jeans and t-shirts half of the time and a suit the other half of the time. Students wearing the cut-off jeans and t-shirt were reported as less intelligent and having lower scholastic ability (Johnson & Lennon, 2016).

 A study by Rochester University found a girl was perceived as more confident, successful and intelligent when wearing professional dress. The study also found the same girl was perceived as less confident, successful and intelligent in the casual clothing. Interestingly, in casual dress the girl was perceived as more friendly, approachable and more likely to lead an exciting life. These studies by various researchers have proven clothing has a significant effect on the first impression of a target. People are perceived as more intelligent, confident and higher earning based on the more professional and conservative he or she dresses; however, the more casual or provocative one dresses, the less intelligent and competent that person is perceived (Angerosa, 2014).

*Business Casual*

Prior to the 1990s, one would walk into the workplace to see every level of employees of a company dressed in a crisp white shirt and slacks. This was an important part of American culture categorizing what was appropriate to wear in a certain profession. The “casual dress” trend can be traced to the Western U.S. where computer companies, such as Google and Apple, allowed programmers to dress in comfortable attire to promote creativity. Similar to the Internet, this trend spread rapidly across the rest of the United States. Casual dress can have both a positive and negative effect on a person’s first impression and the attitude in the workplace (Hughes, 2016).

Benefits of casual dress on the self include comfort and confidence. Casual dress was originally implemented as a way to boost team morale and blur the distinctions of social class and salary. Many people are skeptical about whether the change from professional suits to slightly more casual dress has created subsequent changes. Those who argue for the benefits of casual dress say being more comfortable urges one to be more productive. Among other positive effects listed are the lack of cost for the employer and the employees, more open communication, and improved work quality (Hughes, 2016).

The downfalls of casual dress on the self include the loss of motivation and professional self-perception. Studies have validated the idea casual dress creates an environment that does not encourage productivity. Researchers concluded relaxed dress leads to relaxed manners, morals and productivity, leading to a decline in the effectiveness of the workplace. Others argue the perception of a company in the public eye is more important than the company morale. These believers consider casual dress to weaken the public image of a company, such as a law firm (Hughes, 2016).

As a result, there are both negative and positive effects of casual dress on company morale, the self, and the perceptions of the company. Most notably, the negative effects of casual dress are the weakened public image and the tendency towards “slacking off” among employees. The most recognizable positive effects are the boost in company morale and the lack of cost for the employer and the spender. The effects of casual dress are continuing to be observed today as many more companies are adopting such practices. The long-term effects of casual dress are yet to be discovered (Hughes, 2016).

*Dress Impact on Self*

The way a person dresses directly affects the way he or she thinks and acts— “if a person dresses down, a person sits down,” (Hughes, 2016). The way one dresses reveals the way one perceives his or her self. Research has shown the attributes given to a person affect the modifications undertaken on the body, for example: if a person thinks he is overweight, then he will begin dieting. All of these beliefs led to a line of study on the affects of dress on the wearer (Johnson & Lennon, 2016).

Researchers specifically studied how dress impacts the behavior and self-perceptions of the wearer. Self-objectification was one of the key discoveries in this line of research. A study conducted by the University of Michigan, Colorado University, and Duke University asked women to try on a one-piece swimsuit and a sweater and evaluate themselves as if they were going to purchase the item. After the evaluation, the women were asked to take a math performance test. The study concluded women wearing the one-piece swimsuit scored lower than the women wearing the sweaters. This is one among many studies proving “scandalous” dress can affect the self-objectification of women (Johnson et al., 2007). Another study by Cornell University found male football and ice hockey players played more aggressively wearing black jerseys than those wearing white jerseys. Men who wore black jerseys were also more likely to select an aggressive sport to play than the men in white jerseys (Lennon & Johnson, 2007).

Each of these studies has shown dress significantly impacts the behavior of the wearer, regardless of the gender or the activity. The Scholar found evidence for the impact of dress on the perception of an individual and that individual’s self-perception and behavior. If given more time, the Researcher would study what influences a person’s dress and how dress impacts society as a whole. The Researcher found the social psychology of dress has many different branches of further research to be discovered.

**Biblical Connection**

 The Researcher studied the impact technology has on dating relationships. The Scholar found many relationships are weakened by the use of technology in cases such as abuse and infidelity (Drauker & Martsolf, 2010). Through these findings, the Scholar was led to question what the Bible says about relationships and, in particular, marriage. The Bible states relationships should be built upon a strong foundation in which people rely on each other and leave families in order to be unified as one. Marriage is only successful when the couple is strongly rooted in faith. Genesis 2:18 states, “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’” Relationships are made stronger when God is in the center. Genesis emphasizes the importance of the reliance of men and women on each other.

 Genesis 2:24 also states, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” Men and women should be devoted to one another completely. Their attention should not stray from each other, especially in times of need. As discussed by the Researcher, men and women often divert their attention to technology when they should be present and focused on each other. The outline of relationships in Genesis provides a basis for a healthy relationship.

 This topic also connects to the verse Hebrews 13:4, which says, “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.” Hebrews condemns sexual immorality and infidelity in marriage connecting to the use of technology to commit both stated transgressions. Couples should hold fast to one another instead of the fleeting affairs available through technological communication. This also connects to the Biblical idea of the body as a temple. Through sexual interactions online and sexual interacts FtF, couples are defiling the body God built to worship Him. Because technology allows greater opportunities to engage in sexual interactions, the Biblical connection to worshipping the body instead of sexual immorality is made.

 These verses show the importance the Bible places on marriage, relationships and sexual purity. Couples should be devoted to one another and stray from spending increasing amounts of time online or in technological communications.

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