Affinity Through Instant Messaging: An Exploration Of Initial Interactions

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Dedicated to Edgar and Ruth Grebe

Abstract

This thesis sought to extend work on relationship initiation in an online setting by examining the initial interaction of cross-sex dyads. Sixty male-female dyads interacted for 20 minutes with instructions to find out enough information to determine if they would interact with their partner again. Results indicated that individuals who are more accurate at determining when their partner showed liking had partners that reported more liking towards those individuals and perceived more liking by those individuals. Liking is also increased when trust is established. Moreover, liking is increased when there is little disliking shown and partners share more intimate disclosures. Future interactions are desired when more flirting and greater appropriateness are perceived. Implications for seeking, testing, and signaling affinity are presented.

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INTRODUCTION

Liking is an essential part of any voluntary relationship. Whether it is a friendship or a romantic interest, liking provides a reason to initiate and maintain relationships. Affinity is the feeling of liking and the positive perception we have of others. When meeting someone new we form impressions of others in terms of breadth and intensity, even through CMC (Hancock & Dunham, 2001). We decide whether or not we like them (Dindia & Timmerman, 2003), try to learn information about them to reduce uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975), and may identify commonalities or shared interests (Fehr, 2008). When interacting face-to-face (FtF) there are many sources of information. People can take the message verbally communicated at face value, search for implicit messages, interpret nonverbal behavior, or request more information through nonverbal feedback. However, not all of these characteristics are necessary to establish liking or quality relationships (Chan & Cheng, 2004; Mesch & Talmud, 2006). It is still possible to initiate and maintain relationships with limited available cues.

The prevalence of interactions through CMC provides communication scholars a relatively new phenomenon to explore. Concepts and theories that have been examined during FtF interactions play out differently through mediated channels. Walther (1996) and others who have examined online and offline relationships (e.g., Parks & Roberts, 1998; Chan & Cheng, 2004; Mesch & Talmud, 2006) have found that online relationships can have higher levels of intimacy or

personal connection than FtF interactions. The limitations of certain media can provide appealing reasons to engage a person of interest. For example, during an instant messaging conversation, a female could express sexual interest to an acquaintance without fear of awkwardness if rejected. Partly due to the benefits of these limited cues, many people are turning to internet to search for romantic partners (Sprecher, Schwartz, Harvey, & Hatfield, 2008). Although not all online attempts are successful, some individuals are able to initiate and advance a relationship to high levels of intimacy solely through online interaction, despite not being co-present (Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006; McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2006). In these circumstances, the first interaction between two people occurs through a messaging system, such as email or instant messaging. Internet daters are not the only people to use computer-mediated communication (CMC) for relational purposes. Social networking sites (Baker, 2008), interest-based message boards (Baym, 2000), instant messaging (Westerman, Van Der Heide, Klein, & Walther, 2008), and video interactions (Lange, 2007) allow strangers, acquaintances, and relational intimates to communicate despite temporal and spatial limitations. Despite the increasing pervasiveness of first encounters being computer mediated, there are few studies exploring how affinity is sought, tested, and signaled during CMC.

This thesis will explore how people perceive and signal liking during initial interactions through instant messaging. It is not meant to provide an overview of everything that happens during an initial interaction online; rather, it will focus on one important aspect-- affinity. Because affinity is crucial for forming and advancing

relationships, it is important to examine it in an increasingly popular context of technology-aided interaction. In order to learn more information about perceptions regarding affinity online, two people of opposite sex will interact via instant messaging (IM) and variables of perceived disclosure, conversational appropriateness, trust, liking, and desire for a future interaction will be measured. The purpose of this thesis is to determine to what extent people identify their own and others' attempts to show affinity through instant messaging. If a person successfully shows affinity there should be outcomes that serve as feedback regarding success. This is not to say that all successful attempts will be recognized, but the fact that a person does not recognize when another person is showing interest can provide information about the types of messages are considered normative messages of liking. In addition, the study will investigate what outcomes are associated with the ability to accurately detect liking shown by another person. By requiring both participants in an interaction to report when they showed liking and when they perceived liking, a measure of accuracy will be obtained. Findings from this thesis will provide information about how accurately people perceive liking, what factors foster liking, what factors foster a desire for future interaction, including going on a date.

People who use textual communication must put their thoughts into words because of the lack of nonverbal cues. The primary means of gaining information during an online interaction is through typed messages. While the advantages and disadvantages of online interaction have many interesting implications, the focus of this paper is on how people perceive liking during initial interactions and what factors

allow or make conditions favorable for people to develop feelings of liking. This thesis will extend the theoretical frameworks of relationship initiation (Givens 1978; Cunningham & Barbee, 2008).

This study will also incorporate self-report data from both partners in an interaction to study affinity. Those who are successful at initiating relationships rely on self-disclosure to develop affinity (Douglas, 1990). To confirm Douglas' findings, this thesis will take into account how much each partner discloses to the other and the intimacy level of the information. This will be measured in two ways, self-report and by perceptions of the disclosure. In addition, features of the text and conversation will be measured as they are related to levels of disclosure, such as the number of messages sent, questions asked, topics covered, and, to measure rate, the time between messages sent. Second, success or failure might depend on if a person was acting in an appropriate manner. Even if a person has the ability to show liking it might not be appropriate for the situation, meaning the attempts will be unsuccessful. Third, trust serves as a gate keeper to disclosure and will likely affect feelings of affinity. Finally, we would expect that attempts to show liking would result in being liked by the other person because the synchronous nature of the medium provides an immediate reward (cf. Altman & Taylor, 1973). These variables (i.e., self-disclosure, trust, appropriateness, and liking) will help illuminate initial interactions online with concepts traditionally researched during face-to-face interactions.

To proceed, a discussion of CMC focusing on the context of relationship initiation, theories of CMC, and text features will be presented. Second, a review of

the courtship literature will help situate this study in the field of relationship initiation and verbal messages. Next, I will distinguish between online and offline courtship and discuss important aspects that affect online interactions. Then affinity-seeking, affinity-testing, and affinity-signaling will be defined, compared, and contrasted in order to address overlaps in the concepts. Finally, I will examine the importance of the three predictor variables for this study and their relevance: disclosure, appropriateness, and trust.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Computer-Mediated Communication

The media we use to interact with others provide many benefits as well as limitations. Even though there are fewer cues through most computer-mediated channels than FtF, positive regard can still be created and maintained. For example, if a person who was browsing posts on a basketball team's fan site saw a post that resonated with that person's opinions about the team, that person might be inspired to try to get into contact with the mystery poster either by sending an e-mail to the associated address, posting a reply to the other's post, or, if the site has an IM system in place (as many social networking sites do), the interested party could send a quick note, thereby initiating a relationship. Face-to-face relationship initiation models and strategies differ from models applicable to CMC. Many of the relationship development models associated with CMC do not address the process of initiating relationships online. One exception is Ramirez and Burgoon's (2004) interactivity model for initial interactions online. However, the model focuses on the inclusion of

visual and aural features to enhance the interactivity effects during an initial interaction. Findings from the study suggested that there is a significant difference between text-based media and FtF interaction regarding mutuality (i.e., characteristics of the exchange including connectedness, receptivity, and understanding) and general uncertainty level, where text-based media had lower levels of mutuality and higher levels of general uncertainty. Most of the theories associated with CMC and relationships focus either on the limitations of the media (e.g., Media Richness Theory; Daft & Lengel, 1986), or focus on the development of the relationship, but not how it begins (e.g., Social Information Processing Theory, Walther & Burgoon, 1992; the hyperpersonal perspective, Walther, 1996). It is true that many channels via CMC have comparatively fewer cues to observe than FtF interactions. However, CMC can also have advantages that allow for a carefully thought-out plan (an important part of the hyperpersonal model), which may increase the changes of success compared to a FtF interaction. For example, a person might be able to retrieve past postings on a web forum to learn more about a potential partner's interests. It is likely that the interests that are posted on these types of postings accurately reflect their attitudes as recordability mitigates tendencies to lie (Hancock, Thom-Santelli, & Ritchie, 2004). In a FtF situation a person must get the other to disclose that sort of information. This may require particular strategies and more time in comparison to a quick online search. No matter which context the relationship begins, the process of initiating a relationship is a time of ambiguity.

Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT; Berger & Calabrese, 1975) helps to explain behaviors of people interacting when they are uncertain about their own behavior, their partner's behavior, and the relationship. Uncertainty exists when there are multiple possible outcomes of a situation. For example, initiating a relationship is a highly uncertain time. One must properly engage the other to adhere to social and contextual norms, gauge the interest of the person they are attempting to start a relationship with, and continually gauge their own interest in pursuing a relationship. Media Richness Theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) helps to explain why certain media are used based on the equivocality of the situation. This theory "suggests that media vary in levels of richness according to the number of cues they are able to convey, the timeliness of feedback, and the capacity for natural expression" (Schiller & Mandviwalla, 2007, p. 47). This theory would suggest that people would choose the medium with the most cues available for highly equivocal situations, such as starting a new relationship. MRT might lead one to believe that CMC is not ideal for initiating relationships. However, many people turn to online dating websites because CMC has the potential to dull potential negative feedback because the people are not co-present. This can mitigate the feelings associated with rejection. In addition, CMC, in particular online communication, allows users to have more control over their self presentation, which is important when attempting to find a date online (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006). However, some strategies will not be performed due to limitations of the medium. For example, when talking on the telephone only nonverbal behaviors associated with the voice (i.e., tone, volume, and accents) can be

relayed, the feedback is instantaneous, and natural expression is maintained. Compared to instant messaging, which has very limited nonverbal behaviors (i.e., silence, emoticons, and chronemics), feedback is not instantaneous, and natural language is slightly altered (Baron, 2007). MRT claim that media with limited cues would be ineffective for relationships has been challenged by other theories, such as Social Information Processing Theory (SIP) (Walther, 1992).

SIP posits that relationships can develop to be as intimate as a face-to-face relationship, it just takes longer. The theory focuses on the rate of communication rather than the characteristics of the medium (Walther, 1995). CMC interactions can be just as meaningful and even can be regarded more positively than FtF (McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002; Walther, 1995). Despite the obstacles inherent with CMC, intimate relationships can form as long as there is sufficient time dedicated to building and maintaining the relationships. Interacting through CMC can also cause inflated levels of liking or positive perceptions because the sender presents what is believed to be desirable information about his or herself and the receiver will bolster that image, possibly overestimating the intensity or breadth of the information (Whitty, 2008). For example, if a male sent a message to a female he was interested in stating he enjoyed kayaking to impress her, she might think to herself that he kayaks all of the time and is athletic in build, when no such information was explicitly revealed.

The greater amount of positive regard and better control over self-presentation are also the main tenets of the hyperpersonal perspective (Walther,

1996). The hyperpersonal perspective also recognizes the limited cues available through CMC:

> Although information and expression in CMC may matter more than looks, gender, race, and the like, this is not to say that these and other traits are never apparent. However, such traits are often revealed through performance rather than appearance (Walther, 1996, p. 20).

MRT would suggest that the interested person would select the medium based on task equivocality to contact the other, in this case a rich medium, and the hyperpersonal framework would compliment this perspective by suggesting that online communication will lead to greater positive regard because of the strategic message creation and the tendency to attribute a more positive interpretation to what the other says. Taken together, these theories suggest that initiating the initial interaction requires the selection of a medium, a planned presentation of the self, and time to develop the relationship. But, these theories do not account for initial interactions online; rather their focus is on relationship development (Ramirez & Burgoon, 2004). Selecting a medium might be limited by availability rather than the one that can offer the level of richness required by the equivocality level of the situation. As with FtF, there is a great deal of pressure during the initial interaction if one wants to develop a relationship. When interacting via a text-based medium, the pressure is on the messages rather than an oral and nonverbal performance.

Limited cues may also cause difficulties when communicating online. For example, when conversing with a potential date a person could type “great weather

we're having," when in fact it is a cold, stormy day. If the recipient of that message lives in a more tropical climate on a warm, breezy day, he or she might think it is an observation of the nice weather, but in reality it was intended as a sarcastic comment. In order to circumvent these limitations, other textual devices or styles are used. If we altered the previous example to include textual alterations mentioned the message might look more like this: "*greeeaat* weather we're having ☹." Elongating words, altering the style (i.e., italics, bold, etc.), or "emoticons" can all indicate some level of connotative meaning behind the denotative message.

Instant Messaging

Instant messaging provides an ideal interaction setting for examining affinity-seeking, testing, and signaling strategies. IM is a synchronous internet application that allows users to have conversations with other users who are online. Typically, IM is a one-on-one interaction between users who are not co-present. There is prevalent use of IM and it is continually growing (Schneider & Hemmer, 2006). The increasing integration of internet technology into everyday life (Bakardijieva & Smith, 2001) suggests that romantic relationships are initiated online in increasing numbers. In a study of college student interpersonal interaction, Baym, Zhang, and Lin (2004) found that only two methods of online communication were mentioned—email and instant messaging. The responses of the students indicate that the two are the primary means of interacting with others online when undoubtedly students used other communication media while online. The findings also showed that email was cited as the medium used in 71.1% of the responses for online media, whereas IM was cited

in 28.9% of the responses. While email was used in more than twice the cases, IM has been show to be used more than email for personal messages, contacting those far away, sharing information, communicating with those you have close relationships with, sharing ideas and opinions, using it for fun, seeking and getting advice, resolving conflict, coordinating social activities, and passing time (Ramirez, Dimmick, Feaster, & Lin, 2008). It is important to note that the growing popularity of Facebook has diminished the use of some IM programs, for example MSN messenger, Yahoo! messenger, and AOL instant messenger (AIM). However, Facebook has integrated an IM feature into the website allowing users to IM their friends. The varied uses of IM suggest that the limited cues of the medium do not interfere with maintaining a relationship. In fact, it seems quite the opposite; IM appears to be a convenient tool for tending to relationships, near and far.

IM has also been found to rank highly as an information-seeking channel for potential romantic partners, chosen over email, text messaging, letters, social network sites, and blogs (Westerman, Van Der Heide, Klein, & Walther, 2008). IM was outranked by the options to seek information from another person, a phone call, and FtF. Westerman and colleagues (2008) had tested the hypothesis that channels that allowed the user to be anonymous were more likely to be used when the user was seeking information about a relatively unknown target (e.g., classmate, potential romantic partner, or stranger). Results confirm the use of IM as a means of seeking information (e.g., affinity related information) during initial interactions. If a person selects IM because of the ability to remain anonymous when attempting to initiate a

relationship, they have less inhibition to use affinity-seeking strategies that are more direct than they would during a FtF interaction. Moreover, if the affinity-seeking strategies fail (e.g., being too direct), they could try again with a different screen name and try other strategies. IM might be chosen for a first encounter situation not only because of anonymity, but also because of the nature of IM, that is, the feeling of having a one-on-one conversation. IM allows an interested user to pursue a potential partner in a relatively private manner out of the public eye, unlike wall posts or message board posts. Reasons for doing so could include avoiding public rejection, avoiding interruptions, or ensuring the message was viewed. To explore other models of relationship initiation, an investigation of previous work regarding relationships in general is needed.

Courtship Models of Relationship Initiation

No matter what current level of intimacy in a relationship, at one point it was nascent, and if the partners wanted the relationship to continue they needed to put forth effort. Relationships are not haphazard acts, especially when we choose to attempt to initiate one. Cunningham and Barbee (2008) derived a model of relationship initiation from past literature which consists of five stages. First, our choice to initiate a relationship is based on *prioritized desires* "which focus on how salient motives and expectations affect the courtship sequence" (Cunningham & Barbee, 2008, p. 97). Second, a person tries to *attract attention* to convey interest. Next, the interest must be recognized and knowing that it was recognized will determine if it is alright to approach, termed *notice and approach*. Fourth, the

partners interact and determine whether or not they should continue to interact, in other words they *talk and reevaluate*. Finally, participants *touch and synchronize*, "[e]ye contact becomes more intense and prolonged, self-disclosure become deeper and broader, and physical contact may occur" (Cunningham & Barbee, 2008, p. 112). Two major assumptions of this model are important to point out in that they are both potentially limit application to this present study. First, this model assumes that the two involved are strangers. If the two knew each other previously, the first four stages would have been completed during the initial interaction. Second, this model assumes that there is close physical proximity (at least in the same room) and visibility. For example, if the two were interacting online it would be impossible for the two to physically touch unless they were using computers in close vicinity. It is clear that this model describes a co-present situation where multiple sources of information are available. Another model that depicts the beginnings of a relationship is Davis's (1973) model of initial romantic encounters (as described in Bredow, Cate, and Huston 2008). The model consists of four stages, appraisal of initial interaction, decision to make an overture, strategic self-presentation, and build-up of rapport. The model suggests that the initiator must first assess the congruency between the level of attraction for the other and the motives of the initiator. During the second stage, an assessment of the other's openness to an advance and attraction to the initiator is made. If there is confidence of acceptance an overture will be made. Depending on the level of confidence, the third stage will either be a strategic self-presentation (moderate confidence of acceptance) or a self-expression (high confidence). The

fourth stage merely suggests that rapport is either built or not built. When considering relationship initiation online, the models mentioned above lack the ability to account for limitations present in most online communication media and typical interaction patterns online. Simple nonverbal behaviors that could potentially enhance a relationship, such as a smile, wink, or blush, can be imitated through textual replications, but are not accompanied by other telling nonverbal such as body position, duration, or simultaneous nonverbal messages (e.g., smile and a nod) unless there is a visual component to the medium. Previous models place a heavy emphasis on nonverbal communication to attract interest and elicit an approach. However, it is equally important to examine verbal messages during relationship initiation because the primary means of communicating online is textual.

Givens (1978) suggests that nonverbal communication is "more powerful than the verbal for expressing such fundamental contingencies in social relationships as liking, disliking, superiority, timidity, fear and so on" (p. 346). However, verbal messages play an important role during relationship initiation. For instance, pick-up lines are a common way for strangers to initiate a conversation with a person of interest. In an article examining strategies used during relationship initiation, two studies were conducted "to identify behaviors used in romantic relationship initiation and to evaluate perceptions of those behaviors" (Clark, Shaver, & Abrahams, 1999, p. 710). The first study used strategies from the literature and gauged reactions to those strategies. Emotional disclosure (revealing personal information) was rated as the most proficient and agreeable strategy and was rated as the least phony or fake. This

suggests that verbal messages, particularly self-disclosure, are one of the best ways to initiate a relationship. In Clark et al.'s second study, participants described the strategies and goals associated with the last two relationships they initiated. Biological sex was a strong predictor of strategies used and goals pursued. For instance, men and women both said that men take "a very active role in relationship initiation, directly asking the partner to go out on dates and to escalate romantic commitment" (Clark et al., 1999, p. 720). This would lead us to believe that in a CMC situation that involved a synchronous, text-only interaction that males would send a greater amount of messages than females. However, females have been found to solicit male verbal behavior by using nonverbal cues (Grammer, Kruck, Juette, & Fink, 2000). These nonverbal cues may be modified depending on the context or communication medium. For example, rather than flashing a coy smile, a female might type a colon followed by a closed parenthesis to indicate a smile and follow up with a typed message during an instant messaging conversation. This suggests that both men and women will use textual features in order to communicate attraction using IM.

Other studies have also examined verbal communication during the initial stages of relationships (Bale, Morrison, & Caryl, 2006; Cooper, O'Donnell, Caryl, Morrison, & Bale, 2007). In a recent study, Bale and colleagues (2006) found verbal messages that were evaluated high by both males and females in terms of effectiveness gave information on the topics of character, wealth, and cultural (e.g., knowledge of fine arts). Participants rated opening gambits by a pursuing male

directed at a female target. Gambits with topics of humor, sex, or compliments were rated low in effectiveness by both males and females. This difference could be explained by the type of information gained through the verbal interactions. Specifically, the effective topics give information about the male (his knowledge of fine art) rather than observations by the male (finding the female attractive). These findings were replicated and expanded on showing that the female's personality would have an effect on what gambits were effective. However, the "good mate" factor (i.e., the combined character, wealth and cultural factors) was still rated as most effective (Cooper et al., 2007). These verbal strategies provide a good starting point, but take place during a hypothetical FtF interaction. This thesis had people actually interacting through a text-based medium that closely approximates verbal interaction. In order to progress the relationship people will likely attempt to build positive regard with their partners.

Affinity-Seeking Strategies

Affinity-seeking, a behavior used to create liking and positive regard in romantic relationships (Bell & Daly, 1984), has had sufficient coverage during FtF interactions (e.g., Bachman & Zakahi, 2000; Bell & Daly, 1984; Bell, Tremblay, & Buerkel-Rothfuss, 1987; Martin & Rubin, 1998; Richmond, Gorham, & Furio, 1987; Rubin, Rubin, & Martin, 1993; Tolhuizen, 1989). Affinity-seeking plays a vital role in the initiation of relationships, and not just romantic relationships (Bell & Daly, 1984; Martin & Rubin, 1998). The ability to generate liking by others is the basis of voluntary relationship formation (Bell & Daly, 1984). Affinity-seeking was defined

as “the active social-communicative process by which individuals attempt to get others to like and to feel positive toward them” (Bell & Daly, 1984, p. 91). The affinity-seeking model consisted of four parts:

> "Antecedent factors" are characteristics of the interaction in which affinity-seeking occurs. "Constraints" reference individual and situational influences on affinity-seeking choices. "Strategic activities" refer to the selection, integration, sequencing, and enactment of strategies. "Target responses" encompass the effects of affinity-seeking, including changes in another's attraction to the affinity-seeker, reciprocity, and attributions of a motive for seeking affinity (Bell, Tremblay, & Buerkel-Rothfuss, 1987, p. 2).

To identify these strategies, Bell and Daly (1984) took four steps. First, twenty-five affinity-seeking strategies were identified using 22 small groups engaged in brainstorming sessions. Second, these strategies were compared to interpersonal attraction. Findings suggested that the more a person uses affinity-seeking strategies, the more likely that person will be liked. The third part of the article found that the strategies employed depend on whether the person is in a social-context (e.g., party) or a task-context and whether the other person is of equal or higher status. Finally, a multivariate structure was investigated to place the 25 strategies in related dimensions.

Despite generating a list of 25 strategies to build affinity with another person, there is little utility in making such a list for the purposes of the present study. These strategies may be used to generate liking, but they may also be used for a number of

other goals, such as fulfilling obligations, being a good citizen, or following normative practices in our society. Moreover, enacting one of the strategies described by Bell and Daly (1984) does not cause another person to have affinity toward the performer. Thus, the reason for employing these strategies and the outcomes due to the enactment are vague. Affinity-seeking strategies are *intended* to build liking, but for outside observers to correctly label them as affinity-seeking is nearly impossible. That is, outside observers attempting to infer intent would most likely lead to errors. Participants in this study will be asked when they showed affinity and when they perceived affinity being shown by their partners. Comparing a self report of what messages were intended to show liking to the perceptions of the interaction partner will provide a more true-to-life situation than a list of strategies that a person could use. Beyond attempts to build affinity, during an initial interaction participants want to know if they are liked or disliked by their partners. To uncover this information people test affinity using various strategies that elicit a behavior or message that conveys liking or disliking.

Affinity-Testing Strategies

Another important concept regarding relationship initiation and development is affinity-testing (Douglas, 1987). Affinity-testing strategies are used "to gain affinity-related information from opposite-sex others" (Afifi & Lucas, 2008, p. 137). Afifi and Lucas (2008) also point out that affinity testing has had very little attention in the literature. Douglas (1987) sought to generate a list of affinity-testing strategies. Fifty undergraduate students were interviewed by a confederate of the same sex.

Responses were sorted into eight categories: confronting (directly asking about feelings toward confronter), withdrawing (require partner to sustain interaction), sustaining (maintain interaction through questions), hazing (partner must provide resources), diminishing self (lower value of self directly or by identifying alternatives), approaching (move closer to solicit response), offering (increase likelihood of being approached usually by proximity or getting alone with target), and networking (third parties used to gain or transmit information). The eight strategies were then examined in relation to efficiency and social appropriateness. Sustaining, offering, approaching, and networking were deemed socially appropriate in descending order, and confronting, approaching, sustaining, networking, and offering were considered efficient in descending order. Douglas (1987) notes that multiple strategies are typically used: "affinity-testing may frequently be a stepwise process in which more socially appropriate (indirect) strategies give way to more efficient (direct) routines on a contingency basis" (p. 14). Most importantly, the strategy used to test affinity can have an influence on the "probability of relationship development, definition of those relationships, and therefore, partners' immediate expectations of each other" (Douglas, 1987, p. 13).

The affinity-testing strategies described by Douglas (1987) have a similar problem to the affinity-seeking strategies described by Bell and Daly (1984) because of the limited use beyond a list of strategies. They are all strategies that *could* be used to test affinity, but they could also be used to build affinity, that is, affinity-seeking. For example, sustaining a conversation may garner information about whether the

target person likes the sustainer, but the act of asking questions to keep a conversation going could also serve as an affinity-seeking strategy used to create positive regard by showing interest in sustaining the conversation. There are testing strategies that can provide information about affinity, but there are a few problems with the strategies beyond utility. This thesis will rely on self-report and perceptions to determine accuracy of perceptions and relate frequencies and accuracy to other outcome variables. The next section describes how seeking, testing, and signaling affinity are overlapping concepts.

Affinity-testing strategies differ from affinity-seeking strategies regarding what deems the strategy successful. A successful testing strategy would mean that the tester would be able to *accurately* determine whether the person tested liked him or her. For this thesis, testing strategies will be able to be accounted for by determining how accurate participants' perceptions are. Because a successful affinity-testing strategy means accurately determining when the other person likes them, a measure of accuracy can provide a general picture of a person's affinity-testing behaviors. One might think that merely being accurate does not necessarily mean that person was testing affinity. However, by being able to label a message as liking shown by the partner there must be information leading to that conclusion. Prompting responses, withdrawing and waiting for the other person to send a message, and asking questions all constitute affinity-testing. During an IM interaction those are also the primary means of carrying on a conversation. Therefore, measures of accuracy can also be considered a better measure of successful affinity-testing than alternative measures.

On the other hand, a successful seeking attempt does not necessarily mean the seeker has knowledge of success or failure, just that the seeker attempted to create or increase affinity. That is not to say that an affinity-seeking strategy cannot elicit a response regarding liking, it is just not the criterion that gauges success.

Affinity-Signaling and Conceptual Overlap

Affinity-signaling, also referred to as target response (Bell & Daly, 1984), is the actual conveyance of liking. Without affinity-signaling a person could not know if affinity-seeking was successful nor could they recognize any meaningful response to affinity-tests. Affinity-signaling strategies have the potential to be identical to affinity-seeking and testing strategies. If a person seeks to build affinity because that person likes another, that strategy has a dual role of attempting to build affinity and also signals liking to the other person. The fact that a person seeks affinity with another can show some level of liking either in an implicit or explicit manner. By having participants label instances where they showed liking, this thesis will make the implicit, explicit. Similarly, testing for affinity can imply liking, but is not always the case (e.g., hazing can signal dislike while at the same time test the other's affinity).

The real difficulty comes when trying to determine which behaviors are seeking affinity, testing affinity, and signaling affinity. For example, the affinity-seeking strategy of conceding control is similar to the affinity-testing strategy of withdrawing. Although the intentions driving the behavior may differ, they would appear very similar to an observer. Other strategies tend to overlap or be similar concepts (see Table 1). Difficulty determining what strategy is being used is most

easily remedied by using a coding scheme. However, it is not the purpose of this study to code specific strategies. Instead, participants will identify when they showed liking and when their partner showed liking. This method is in line with the purpose of this study because it is not important what strategies as identified by past research are being used, only that messages either do or do not show liking. Perceptions offer a way to measure accuracy and provide information about what constitutes liking from both partners' perspectives. If a person does not perceive liking and it happens to be an affinity-signaling strategy, it is hard to say the strategy is important just because it is there. For example, if a person types the message "I love the Beatles! How about you?" it is difficult to say that they were seeking affinity by naming a band that is liked by many people, testing affinity by hoping for agreement, and signaling affinity by enthusiastically answering the question and soliciting disclosure. By having participants highlight when they showed liking the intent to build affinity (affinity-seeking) is manifested through a behavior (affinity-signaling). Essentially, affinity-seeking intent is translated into an affinity-signaling behavior. Affinity-testing will be accounted for by the accuracy of a participant's perception of when liking was shown by his/her partner. The ability to be accurate should be predictive of liking by the other since the ability of gauge the other's liking will likely lead to behavior confirmation during the online interaction. In other words, by accurately obtaining information that a person likes another, that person can emulate the same behavior as the hyperpersonal frame work suggests. The frequency of liking shown by the self (i.e., affinity-signaling) and the accuracy of perceptions of liking shown by the

partner (i.e., affinity-testing) will be predictive of reported and perceived liking by the self and the partner. Frequency of liking shown can also play an important role regarding feelings of liking.

Liking and Affinity

Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT; Berger & Calabrese, 1975) put forth seven axioms of uncertainty during interactions. Relative to this thesis at this point are three axioms. First, high levels of uncertainty during initial interactions means an increase in verbal communication will decrease uncertainty, and as uncertainty is reduced verbal communication will increase (Axiom 1). Second, high levels of uncertainty will lead to increased rates of reciprocity (Axiom 5). Third, increases in the level of uncertainty will decrease liking, while a decrease in uncertainty will increase liking (Axiom 7). These axioms taken together suggest that during a time of uncertainty, such as a zero-acquaintance situation, an increase in verbal communication can decrease uncertainty which, in turn, will increase liking. Similarly, a single person's increase in verbal communication can reduce the uncertainty perceived by a partner about the individual. This will cause the partner to reciprocate the verbal communication rate further reducing uncertainty, and therefore, increase liking. In addition to determining liking, this thesis will also explore whether participants are interested in interacting with their partners again. Because this thesis is interested in predictors of courtship, desire for future interaction and to go on a date with their partner will also be explored in relation to affinity behaviors.

H1: The frequency of liking, disliking, and flirting reported and perceived by the self will predict (a) self-reported liking for the other, (b) perceived liking by the other, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with the other, (d) perceived other's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date, and (f) perceived other's desire to go on a date.

H2: The frequency of liking, disliking, and flirting reported and perceived by the self will predict the other's report of (a) self-reported liking for the other, (b) perceived liking by the other, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with the other, (d) perceived other's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date, and (f) perceived other's desire to go on a date.

H3: A participant's accuracy in determining when liking, disliking, and flirting occurred will predict (a) self-reported liking for the other, (b) perceived liking by the other, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with the other, (d) perceived other's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date, and (f) perceived other's desire to go on a date.

H4: A participant's accuracy in determining when liking, disliking, and flirting occurred will predict partners' self-report of (a) self-reported liking for the other, (b) perceived liking by the other, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with the other, (d) perceived other's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date, and (f) perceived other's desire to go on a date.

Self-Disclosure

Disclosure of information allows for people to reduce uncertainty and generate liking (Douglas, 1990). In regards to initial interactions Douglas (1990) stated:

> during initial interaction, self-disclosure (or, more generally, information provision) is likely to occur to the extent that persons anticipate reciprocation by a partner; projected violation of appropriate disclosure levels (rate and/or intimacy) by a partner should induce uncertainty and low self-disclosure, while expected conformity should be associated with low (or reduced) uncertainty and ongoing conversation development (p. 77).

As long as partners can remain appropriate about their disclosure, there should be an increase in information presented. Research has also shown that people self-disclose more through CMC than during a FtF interaction (Schouten, Valkenburg, Peter, & Antheunis, 2007; Tidwell & Walther, 2002). Schouten and colleagues (2007) found that direct questioning was the primary reason for increased self-disclosure through CMC. The direct questioning usually centered on intimate topics, for example, relational status. The zero-acquaintance situation that participants will be in for the current investigation should have high levels of uncertainty. Participants should want to reduce this uncertainty by direct questioning of their partner. This increase in questioning and disclosure will most likely lead to an increase in liking as well because the reduction of uncertainty, if viewed as rewarding, is "associated with greater interpersonal attraction" (Worthy, Gary, & Kahn, 1969, p. 59).

However, self-disclosure may not actually increase liking, but the reason for disclosing might. For example, a person may think a partner's disclosure is due to the fact that the partner likes him/her and therefore the person being disclosed to would like his/her partner more. Similarly, by disclosing intimate information, a sender may actually be trying to convey liking (McAllister, 1980). Disclosure can then be considered a sign of liking. Stated simply, liking of a person causes disclosure to that person, which causes liking by that person. There are a few caveats to this system of relationships. First, the reason for disclosure must be perceived as liking. Any other reason may not increase liking by the recipient of the disclosure. Second, the content of the disclosure matters. Liking may be increased by common interests or decreased by inappropriate disclosure. A meta-analytic review conducted by Collins and Miller (1994) examining disclosure and liking revealed three relevant findings for this thesis. First, people tend to like those who disclose to them. Furthermore, the intimacy of the disclosure seems to have a greater effect. Collins and Miller (1994) stated, "it is likely that the mechanisms thought to enhance liking are more strongly communicated by the quality of one's disclosure than by the quantity of information revealed" (p. 465). Second, people disclose more to those they like. The meta-analysis suggested that this is true even in the initial stages of a relationship between strangers, and although the findings were significant they were weaker than those in ongoing relationships. Third, there is an intrapersonal affect of disclosing to a person. People tend to increase their liking to whom they disclose; "[m]ore intimate disclosures lead the discloser to have greater liking for the recipient of that disclosure" (Collins & Miller, 1994, p. 470).

Although participants will not be able to choose with whom they interact, they will be able to choose the breadth and intimacy of the information disclosed. To clarify the expected relationships between self-disclosure and liking and desire for future interaction, I offer the following hypothesis:

> H5: Reported breadth of self-disclosure, reported intimacy of self-disclosure, perceived breadth of partner disclosure, and perceived intimacy of partner disclosure will predict (a) self-reported liking for the other, (b) perceived liking by the other, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with the other, (d) perceived other's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date, and (f) perceived other's desire to go on a date.
>
> H6: Reported breadth of self-disclosure, reported intimacy of self-disclosure, perceived breadth of partner disclosure, and perceived intimacy of partner disclosure will predict partner's report of (a) self-reported liking for the other, (b) perceived liking by the other, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with the other, (d) perceived other's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date, and (f) perceived other's desire to go on a date.

In addition to the typical disclosure dimensions, it is important to note that soliciting disclosure and the rate of disclosure can potentially have an effect on liking. As suggested by URT, "high levels of uncertainty cause increases in information-seeking behavior. As uncertainty levels decline, information-seeking behavior decreases" (Axiom 3; Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p. 104). This places importance on the number of questions participants ask their partners. As mentioned above, axioms

one, five, and seven will also play an important role regarding disclosure and liking. If participants increase their verbal communication, which decreases uncertainty and increases liking, it is expected that the number of messages sent will influence levels of liking. In addition, the rate of reciprocity will be high when uncertainty is high suggesting that the time between messages sent might also play a role in levels of reported liking. To clarify the expected relationships between text-based features and liking and desire for future interaction, I offer the following hypothesis:

> H7: The number of messages sent, the time between messages, the number of topics covered, and the number of questions asked will predict (a) self-reported liking for the other, (b) perceived liking by the other, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with the other, (d) perceived other's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date, and (f) perceived other's desire to go on a date.
>
> H8: The number of messages sent, the time between messages, the number of topics covered, and the number of questions asked will predict partners' (a) self-reported liking for the other, (b) perceived liking by the other, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with the other, (d) perceived other's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date, and (f) perceived other's desire to go on a date.

Appropriateness

In an IM setting, there is limited perceptual information about whether or not a person has the knowledge of what is or is not appropriate, or if he or she has the

skills to behave in an effective and appropriate manner. In a study investigating gender differences in perceptions of women's sexual interest, it was concluded that "men also perceived pursuit of sexual interaction to be more appropriate than did women in the present study… men and women differ in their assessments of appropriateness" (Henningsen, Henningsen, & Valde, 2006, p. 827). Perceptions of what is appropriate have the potential of influence feelings of liking and desire to interact in the future. For example, if a female constantly uses profanity in an attempt to appear similar to an unknown male whom she believes uses profanity when he actually does not, he would likely deem the conversation inappropriate and would report very little affinity for her. In addition, disclosing too much intimate information in a short period of time can be considered inappropriate and affect liking (Douglas, 1990). However, during an initial interaction there is an expectation to share information to reduce uncertainty. It is unlikely that overly intimate information would be shared during these initial interactions. Moreover, if the hyperpersonal framework suggests that there is an increase in information sharing and that relationships develop faster online sharing intimate information online may be deemed appropriate. In support of the hyperpersonal framework the following hypotheses are offered:

> H9: Appropriateness will be positively related to (a) self-reported liking for the other, (b) perceived liking by the other, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with the other, (d) perceived other's desire for a future interaction,

(e) self-reported desire to go on a date, and (f) perceived other's desire to go on a date.

H10: Appropriateness will be positively related to the partner's report of (a) self-reported liking for the other, (b) perceived liking by the other, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with the other, (d) perceived other's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date, and (f) perceived other's desire to go on a date.

Trust

In order to perceive information as accurate a person must accept that the source is trustworthy. Beaudoin's (2008) study of interpersonal trust and internet use found support for two relevant hypotheses. First, results indicated that there was a weak positive relationship between interpersonal trust and internet use. Since participants will be interacting online it is expected that participants should have no dispositions to not trust their partners. Second, perceived information overload was inversely related to interpersonal trust. While this hypothesis may be true, it is expected during initial interactions that there is a greater amount of information being shared. It is expected that the disclosure will actually increase liking and not have an adverse affect on liking. Moreover, willingness to share information might actually increase trust and, therefore, liking.

H11: Trust will be positively related to (a) self-reported liking for the other, (b) perceived liking by the other, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction

with the other, (d) perceived other's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date, and (f) perceived other's desire to go on a date.

H12: Trust will be positively related to the partner's report of (a) self-reported liking for the other, (b) perceived liking by the other, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with the other, (d) perceived other's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date, and (f) perceived other's desire to go on a date.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were undergraduate students at a large Midwestern university enrolled in courses in communication studies (N = 120). Students were offered partial course credit or extra credit depending on the course. The sample included sixty males and sixty females with a mean age of 19.83 years (SD = 3.3) and ranged from 18 to 50. Seventy-five participants (62.5%) considered themselves single, 41 were in a relationship (34.2%), two reported it was "it's complicated" (1.7%) and two did not report relationship status (1.7%). Ninety-five participants reported being "definitely heterosexual" (79.2%), ten reported being "heterosexual" (8.3%), three reported being "bisexual" (2.5%), ten reported being "definitely homosexual" (8.3%), and two did not report sexual orientation (1.7%). Five participants reported using IM many times per day (4.2%), ten reported using it more than once a day (8.3%), ten reported using it daily (8.3%), 23 reported using it many times per week (19.2%), 24 reported

using it once a week (20%), and 48 said they currently never use it (40%). IM use was not a requirement to participate in this study.

Procedure

Participants signed up for one hour blocks of time through an online wiki-page on the education software BlackBoard. Males and females signed up on different wiki-pages to ensure one male and one female were signed up for each time slot and to conceal the identities of whom participants would be interacting. Once a participant arrived, they were led to a particular room depending on if they were male or female. The male would be seated at a computer in one room and the female would be brought to a waiting room. Given the close proximity of the computers in adjacent rooms, this was done to reduce the chance of the participants seeing one another and hearing one another. Participants were given a written consent form followed by a user profile sheet to simulate an online profile with information commonly found on MySpace or Facebook. Once finished, the female was led to a computer where the two participants would chat for 20 minutes. They were instructed to "get to know one another and find out if you would interact with this person again." Since participants were in an arrangement that required one person to walk through the area the other was seated, participants could not leave at any time for confidentiality reasons. After the 20 minutes the female was taken back to the original room to answer an additional questionnaire and evaluate the IM transcript based on liking and flirting. After completing the questionnaire participants were thanked and allowed to leave.

Instruments

Breadth and intimacy of self and perceived partner disclosure was measured using a modified version of Wheeless' (1978) revised self-disclosure scale. Four subscales were utilized: two-item self-disclosure breadth (Cronbach's $\alpha = .57$), three-item self-disclosure intimacy (Cronbach's $\alpha = .51$), two-item perceived disclosure breadth (Cronbach's $\alpha = .37$), and three-item perceived disclosure intimacy (Cronbach's $\alpha = .64$).

Perceived appropriateness was measured using Canary and Spitzberg's (1987) conversational appropriateness scale, which was shortened to 12 items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$).

Perceived trust of partner was measured using Wheeless and Grotz's (1977) nine-item individualized trust scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$).

Liking toward the partner, perceived liking by the partner was measured using a six item scale. Items of the liking toward the partner included, "I like him/her," "I really enjoyed talking to this person," and "I do not have positive feelings towards him/her" (reverse-coded; Cronbach's $\alpha = .66$). Items for perceived liking by the partner included "I felt he/she likes me," "I do not think he/she feels positive towards me" (reverse-coded), and "I believe he/she really enjoyed talking to me" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .71$).

Desire for a future interaction with the partner and perceived partner's desire for a future interaction was measured using eight-item scale. Desire for future interaction included items, "I would give my phone number to my partner if I were asked for it," "I would like to chat with this person online again," "I would like to

meet this person face-to-face," and "I would go on a date with him/her" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .78$). Finally, perceived desire for future interaction included items such as, "I think he/she would like to chat online again," "My partner would give me his/her phone number if I asked for it," "I think he/she would like to meet me face-to-face," and "I believe he/she would go on a date with me" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .76$).

For all measures, participants rated their agreement to the questions on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), except the trust scale which was measuring using a 9-item semantic-differential scale.

Liking and disliking shown and perceived

After their 20 minute interaction, participants received a copy of the transcript to go through and determine when they showed liking, disliking, and flirted and when their partner showed liking, disliking, and flirted. Five highlighters of different colors were provided. Yellow indicated where "I showed liking," green indicated "They showed liking," orange indicated "I showed disliking," blue indicated "They showed disliking," and pink indicated flirting by either participant. Since flirting was assumed to only happen infrequently during the conversations only one highlighter was designated.

Text Measures

Characteristics of the text and conversation were also measured. The number of messages was measured by counting the number of messages a participant sent. All messages, including when participants were correcting previous messages, were counted to remain consistent among participants. The number of questions asked was

measured by counting the number of questions a participant asked. The number of topics covered was measured by counting the number of topics covered. Topics that were left and returned to were not counted twice. Only general topics were covered, for example talking about two different bands was considered a single topic (music listened to). Finally, time between messages sent was measured by taking the time between a message sent and the previous message sent by the same participant. These times were then averaged to get a general sense of the rate of communication by a participant.

Data Analysis

Since this thesis is concerned with initial interactions and courtship of cross-sex dyads, homosexual participants were excluded from all analyses below. However, participants in a relationship were kept in the analyses because it is a circumstantial characteristic, whereas sexual preference is considered a trait. In other words, it is more likely that a relationship would end than a person change their sexual preference.

RESULTS

Testing Gender Difference and Frequency and Accuracy of Liking, Disliking, and Flirting

Participants were asked to highlight messages that they had sent that were intended to show liking. The average frequency of liking shown was just over six times in twenty minutes as was the average frequency of perceived liking was also just over six times in twenty minutes (see Table 2). Disliking shown and disliking

perceived were relatively low in frequency, as was flirting shown and perceived (see Table 2). No significant differences were found between participant sex. The results of six independent samples t-tests demonstrated that there were no difference between males and females. There was no difference in frequency of liking shown between males and females (M = 6.53, SD = 5.37, M = 5.57, SD = 4.49 respectively), $t(106)$ = .87, p = .39, *n.s*. There was no significant difference between males and females in perceived liking frequency (M = 6.35, SD = 4.87, M = 6.05, SD = 4.81 respectively), $t(106)$ = .32, p = .75, *n.s*. There was no significant difference between males and females regarding disliking frequency (M = .37, SD = .85; M = .61, SD = 1.93 respectively), $t(106)$ = -.82, p = .41, *n.s*. There was no significant difference between males and females perceived disliking frequency (M = .63, SD = 1.08; M = .81, SD = 1.63 respectively), $t(106)$ = -.67, p = .51, *n.s*. There was no significant difference between males and females reported flirting frequency (M = 2.06, SD = 6.00; M = 1.23, SD = 2.61 respectively), $t(106)$ = .95, p = .34, *n.s*. Finally, there was no significant difference between males and females perceived flirting frequency (M = 1.73, SD = 3.93; M = 1.47, SD = 2.52 respectively), $t(106)$ = .40, p = .69, *n.s*.

After highlighting instances when they showed liking, participants were also asked to highlight when they believed their partner showed liking. These reports were compared to the self-report of liking shown. Accuracy for a participant was calculated so that person A's accuracy would be the number of messages correctly perceived as liking (determined by person B's self report) divided by the number of total messages A perceived as liking plus total messages B reported as liking ($A_c / (A_t + B_t)$.

Therefore participate were inaccurate for both false-positive and false-negative perceptions. The mean accuracy of participants suggested that they were correct in their assessments 18.2% of the time (*SD* = .15) detecting messages regarding liking. The mean accuracy of participants for disliking was 6.9% (*SD* = .20). The mean accuracy of flirting was 6.3% (*SD* = .17). Males were accurate 18.8% (*SD* = .15) of the time in their assessments of liking shown by their partner, and females 17.6% (*SD* = .15), but this difference was not significant, $t(106) = .44$, $p = .66$, *n.s.* Males were accurate regarding disliking 10.3% (*SD* = .23) of the time, and females 3.9% (*SD* = .14), but this difference was not significant, $t(51) = 1.14$, $p = .26$, *n.s.* Finally, males were accurate 6.3% (*SD* = .19) and females 6.2% (*SD* = .13) regarding flirting, but this difference was not significant, $t(63) = .03$, $p = .97$, *n.s.*

Another measure of accuracy was calculated by examining the difference between a person's report of liking and the other's perception of liking by that person. This accuracy could be considered a global measure of accuracy since it is not based on a specific message but rather the accuracy of perceptions regarding the overall feeling of liking by another. The sum score of the three items for measuring liking had the sum score of the three items for measuring perceived liking from the other's perspective subtracted from it. The absolute value was calculated. Three levels of accuracy were examined: 74.2% of participants were accurate within one point, 60% were accurate within .75 points, and 35% were accurate within .5 points.

Testing Hypotheses

The tendency for confusion when writing about perceptions and reports during a dyadic interaction requires a standard of reporting data. For clarity sake, the terms "Person A" refers to participants' self-reports and behaviors and "Person B" will be used to designate partner self-reports and behaviors. Person A and Person B are not actual designations of participants; they merely help clarify who is reporting and who is perceiving when describing relationships below.

Hypothesis 1 suggested the frequency of liking, disliking, and flirting reported and perceived by Person A would predict Person A's (a) self-reported liking for Person B, (b) perceived liking by Person B, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B, (d) perceived Person B's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date with Person B, and (f) perceived Person B's desire to go on a date with Person A. The only significant predictor for liking for the partner was perceived dislike, $\beta = -.36$, $p < .01$, and the entire model was found to be significant, $R^2 = .14$, $F(6,101) = 2.64$, $p < .05$. Perceived disliking shown by Person B, $\beta = -.39$, $p < .01$, and perceived liking shown by Person B, $\beta = .37$, $p < .05$, were predictive of Person A's perceived liking by Person B. The model for reported and perceived liking, disliking, and flirting predicting perceived liking by Person B was significant, $R^2 = .22$, $F(6,101) = 4.79$, $p < .01$. Finally, there were no significant predictors of Person A's desire for future interaction, perceived desire for future interaction, desire to go on a date, or perceived desire to go on a date (see Tables 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 for complete results).

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the frequency of liking, disliking, and flirting reported and perceived by Person B would predict Person A's (a) self-reported liking for Person B, (b) perceived liking by Person B, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B, (d) perceived Person B's desire for a future interaction with Person A, (e) desire to go on a date with Person B, and (f) perceived Person B's desire to go on a date with Person A. There were no significant predictors for Person A's liking for Person B. Person A's perceived liking by Person B was predicted by Person B's frequency of flirting reported, $\beta = -.40$, $p < .05$, and perceived flirting by Person A, $\beta = .39$, $p < .05$. There were no significant predictors for Person A's desire for future interaction. Person B's reported flirting frequency, $\beta = -.46$, $p < .05$, and perceived flirting frequency, $\beta = .52$, $p < .01$, were predictive of the Person A's perception of Person B's desire for a future interaction. Person B's perceived flirting frequency of Person A was also predictive of Person A's perception of Person B's desire to go on a date, $\beta = .44$, $p < .05$. None of the hypothesized models were found to be significant (see Tables 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 for complete results).

Hypothesis 3 predicted that Person A's accuracy in determining when liking, disliking, and flirting occurred would predict Person A' (a) self-reported liking for Person B, (b) perceived liking by Person B, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B, (d) perceived Person B's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date with Person B, and (f) perceived Person B's desire to go on a date with Person A. Person A's perceived liking by Person B was significantly predicted by Person A's accuracy of liking shown by Person B, $\beta = .41$,

$p < .05$. There were no other significant predictors for the dependent variables (see Tables 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 for complete results).

Hypothesis 4 predicted that Person B's accuracy in determining when liking, disliking, and flirting occurred would predict Person A's (a) self-reported liking for Person B, (b) perceived liking by Person B, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B, (d) perceived Person B's desire for a future interaction with Person A, (e) desire to go on a date with Person B, and (f) perceived Person B's desire to go on a date with Person A. Person A's reported liking for Person B was significantly predicted by Person B's accuracy of liking shown by Person A, $\beta = .52$, $p < .01$, and the model of Person B's accuracy regarding Person A's liking, disliking, and flirting predicting Person A's liking for Person B was found to be significant, $R^2 = .27$, F (3,29) = 3.58, $p < .05$. Person B's accuracy of Person A's liking shown was also predictive of Person A's perceived liking by Person B, $\beta = .45$, $p < .01$. There were other no significant predictors for the dependent variables (see Tables 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 for complete results).

Hypothesis 5 predicted that Person A's reported breadth of self-disclosure, reported intimacy of self-disclosure, perceived breadth of partner disclosure, and perceived intimacy of partner disclosure would predict Person A's (a) self-reported liking for Person B, (b) perceived liking by Person B, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B, (d) perceived Person B's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date with Person B, and (f) perceived Person B's desire to go on a date with Person A. There were no significant predictors

for Person A's reported liking for Person B, perceived liking by Person B, or self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B. Perceived breadth of the Person B's disclosure was found to be predictive of perceptions of Person B's desire for a future interaction, $\beta = .26$, $p < .01$. The model of reported breadth of self-disclosure, reported intimacy of self-disclosure, perceived breadth of partner disclosure, and perceived intimacy of partner disclosure predicting perceived desire for future interaction was found to be significant, $R^2 = .12$, $F(4,103) = 3.36$, $p < .01$ (see Tables 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 for complete results).

Hypothesis 6 predicted that Person B's reported breadth of self-disclosure, reported intimacy of self-disclosure, perceived breadth of partner disclosure, and perceived intimacy of partner disclosure would predict Person A's (a) self-reported liking for Person B, (b) perceived liking by Person B, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B, (d) perceived Person B's desire for a future interaction with Person A, (e) desire to go on a date with Person B, and (f) perceived Person B's desire to go on a date with Person A. There were no significant predictors for the dependent variables, demonstrating no support for Hypothesis 6 (see Tables 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 for complete results).

Hypothesis 7 predicted that the number of messages sent, the time between messages, the number of topics covered, and the number of questions asked by Person A would predict Person A's (a) self-reported liking for Person B, (b) perceived liking by Person B, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B, (d) perceived Person B's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported

desire to go on a date with Person B, and (f) perceived Person B's desire to go on a date with Person A. There were no significant predictors for the dependent variables, demonstrating no support for Hypothesis 7 (see Tables 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 for complete results).

Hypothesis 8 predicted that the number of messages sent, the time between messages, the number of topics covered, and the number of questions asked by Person B will predict Person A's (a) self-reported liking for Person B, (b) perceived liking by Person B, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B, (d) perceived Person B's desire for a future interaction with Person A, (e) desire to go on a date with Person B, and (f) perceived Person B's desire to go on a date with Person A. There were no significant predictors for the dependent variables, demonstrating no support for Hypothesis 8 (see Tables 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 for complete results).

Hypothesis 9 predicted that Person A's perception of Person B's appropriateness would be positively related to Person A' (a) self-reported liking for Person B, (b) perceived liking by Person B, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B, (d) perceived Person B's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date with Person B, and (f) perceived Person B's desire to go on a date with Person A. Perceived partner appropriateness was positively related to Person A's liking for Person B ($r = .50$, $p < .01$), perceived liking by Person B ($r = .30$, $p < .01$), self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B ($r = .32$, $p < .01$), and self-reported desire for a date with Person B ($r = .26$, $p < .01$). There was no relationship between perceived appropriateness and perceptions of Person B's

desire for future interaction or to go on a date (see Tables 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 for complete results).

Hypothesis 10 predicted that Person B's perception of Person A's appropriateness would be positively related to Person A's (a) self-reported liking for Person B, (b) perceived liking by Person B, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B, (d) perceived Person B's desire for a future interaction with Person A, (e) desire to go on a date with Person B, and (f) perceived Person B's desire to go on a date with Person A. There were no significant correlations in support of the predicted relationships (see Tables 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 for complete results).

Hypothesis 11 predicted that Person A's trust of Person B would be positively related to Person A's (a) self-reported liking for Person B, (b) perceived liking by Person B, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B, (d) perceived Person B's desire for a future interaction, (e) self-reported desire to go on a date with Person B, and (f) perceived Person B's desire to go on a date with Person A. There were significant relationships between trust and Person A's self-reported liking for Person B ($r = .60$, $p < .01$), perceived liking by Person B ($r = .42$, $p < .01$), self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B ($r = .40$, $p < .01$), perceptions of Person B's desire for future interaction with Person A ($r = .24$, $p < .05$), and self-reported desire to go on a date with Person B ($r = .28$, $p < .01$). There was no significant relationship between Person A's trust for Person B and Person A's

perceptions of Person B's desire to go on a date with Person A (see Tables 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 for complete results).

Hypothesis 12 predicted that Person B's trust of Person A would be positively related to the Person A's (a) self-reported liking for Person B, (b) perceived liking by Person B, (c) self-reported desire for future interaction with Person B, (d) perceived Person B's desire for a future interaction with Person A, (e) desire to go on a date with Person B, and (f) perceived Person B's desire to go on a date with Person A. There were no significant correlations in support of the predicted relationships (see Tables 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 for complete results).

Post-Hoc Analysis

A final analysis was done to find the best predictors of the 12 dependent variables. A stepwise regression revealed at least one significant predictor for 9 of the 12 dependent variables, but the majority of the predictors were similar to findings for the hypothesized models. The first set of stepwise analyses gauged how Person A's reports and perceptions influence Person A's liking and desire for interaction with Person B. Person A's liking of Person B was predicted by Person A's trust for Person B, $\beta = .62$, $p < 0.01$. Person A's perceptions of liking by Person B was predicted by perceived liking shown by Person B ($\beta = .37$, $p < .05$) and perceived disliking shown by Person B ($\beta = -.39$, $p < .01$; $R^2 = .29$, $F\ (2,30) = 7.63$, $p < .01$). Person A's self-reported desire for a future interaction with Person B was predicted by perceived partner appropriateness ($\beta = .65$, $p < .01$) and perceived frequency of flirting by Person B ($\beta = .47$, $p < .01$; $R^2 = .30$, $F\ (2,30) = 7.81$, $p < .01$). Person A's perceptions

of Person B's desire for a future interaction was predicted by the number of messages sent by Person A, $\beta = .38$, $p < .05$. Self-reported desire to go on a date was predicted by accuracy of perceived dislike ($\beta = -.39$, $p < .05$). Perceived desire to go on a date was predicted by self disclosure intimacy, $\beta = .50$, $p < .01$.

Stepwise regression analyses were also conducted to see how the actions and perceptions of Person B affected the report of Person A. Essentially, what did people do to affect their partner's outcome variables? Reported liking by Person A was predicted by the accuracy of Person B regarding when liking was shown by Person A, $\beta = .51$, $p < .01$, Person B's report of self-disclosure intimacy, $\beta = .45$, $p < .01$, Person B's perceptions of Person B's disclosure intimacy, $\beta = -.57$, $p < .01$, and Person B's perception of disliking shown by Person A, $\beta = -.29$, $p < .05$; $R^2 = .55$, $F(4,28) = 8.57$, $p < .01$. Person A's perception of liking by Person B was also predicted by the accuracy of Person B regarding when liking was shown by Person A, $\beta = .42$, $p < .01$. Person A's report of desire for a future interaction was predicted by Person B's perceived intimacy of Person A's disclosure, $\beta = -0.41$, $p < .05$. Person A's perception of Person B's desire for a future interaction, self-reported desire to go on a date, and Person A's perception of Person B's desire to go on a date had no significant predictors provided by Person B.

DISCUSSION

This thesis was able to measure what behaviors, perceptions, and abilities were related to liking, desire for a future interaction, and desire to go on a date. This provides an extension of research on affinity-testing and signaling. The ability to

perceive what behaviors are happening and to accurately do so allows for stronger feelings of liking and greater desire for future interaction to develop. During initial interactions it seems that there are similar behaviors that will influence feelings of liking. However, there are fewer and relatively weaker variables that influence desires for future interactions, especially when that future interaction is a date. Over half the participants (55%) reported they would like to interact again, while 8.3% neither agreed nor disagreed they wanted to interact again and 36.7% reported they would not like to interact again. Only 11.7% of the participants reported that they wanted to go on a date with their partner, while 34.2% neither agreed nor disagreed and 54.2% reported they did not want to go on a date.

Relationship Initiation and Affinity Online

When interacting in a dyad, perceptions and behaviors by both involved have important roles when it comes to liking. Results suggest that when a person perceives disliking shown by another person ratings of liking decrease (H1a). Person A's perception of Person B's like for Person A was predicted by perceived frequency of liking shown by Person B and perceived frequency of disliking shown by Person B (H1b). These results require little interpretation. When messages are perceived as showing liking, people perceive that the person sending the message likes them. When messages are perceived as showing disliking, people perceive that the person sending the messages does not like them. According to the analyses, frequencies of liking, disliking, and flirting reported and perceived by Person A were not found to be significant predictors of Person A's desire for future interaction, perceived desire for

future interaction, desire to go on a date, or perceived desire to go on a date. It is likely that these affinity signaling behaviors only provide a way to develop and perceive feelings, but are not enough to motivate people to seek a second encounter. Hypothesis 1 (all parts) only considered how the perceptions and behaviors of the self affected the self's ratings of liking and desire for future interactions. However, liking is also influence by what the other person does and perceives.

Person B's self-reported flirting frequency and perceived frequency of flirting were predictive of both Person A's perception of Person B's liking for Person A (H2b) and desire for a future interaction with Person A (H2d). In addition, Person B's perceived flirting frequency was predictive of Person A's perception of Person B's desire to go on a date (H2f). This suggests that a perception of behaviors that demonstrate feelings stronger than liking are needed to determine liking by other person and the other person's desire for a future interaction, including a date. Interestingly, reported flirting frequency was negatively related to both perceived liking and perceived desire for a future interaction. Why would a person perceive less liking and less desire for a future interaction when the other reported they were flirting? This could be explained if one person believed the interaction was going well and was flirting with a person who was not interested. The correlation between reported and perceived liking suggests that if people do not like the other person they are interacting with they also perceive that the other person does not like them. Moreover, people who would like to interact again may demonstrate this desire by displaying a behavior that is perceived as flirting. This suggests that the best way for

people to let another person know they are interested in a future interaction or a date is to use strong affinity-signaling behaviors that would be interpreted as flirting.

To communicate liking it is most important that a person avoids communicating a message that could be interpreted as dislike. In order for another person to perceive liking messages need to clearly demonstrate feelings of liking. It seems that flirting and showing dislike are the easiest ways to communicate the level liking and to communicate the level of desire for a future interaction.

Person A's ability to perceive messages of liking accurately had a positive relationship with Person A's perception of Person B's liking for Person A (H3b). That is, if Person B likes Person A and shows it, Person A needs to be able to accurately perceive that liking in order to know that Person B likes Person A. Person A's liking for Person B was also found to be predicted by Person B's accuracy of when Person A showed liking (H4a). This could be interpreted as those who are able to accurately detect when another person is showing liking increases the accurate person's ability to respond in a way that intentionally confirms or rejects the other person's liking. For example, if a person sends the message "Do your best Jagger!" as a sign of liking and the other is able to accurately assess that message as showing liking, the other can then respond in a way that either reciprocates liking (e.g., "The Rolling Stones are great!") or rejects the liking (e.g., "how about not…"). On the other hand, the ability to be accurate could be a consequence of being engaged and interested in the other person. Those who are actively looking for signs of liking will likely be able to detect liking correctly more often as opposed to someone who is not looking for signs of

liking. This leads to an important conclusion about affinity in initial online interactions. Affinity-signaling, as measured by the frequency of reported and perceived liking, disliking, and flirting shown, did not have an influence on ratings of liking. However, affinity-testing success (i.e., being able to accurately tell when liking is shown) was predictive of liking. Therefore, people who are skilled at testing affinity successfully are able to perceive other's affinity and respond accordingly, either explicitly or implicitly. The ability to test affinity is a greater asset when attempting to build positive regard than merely showing affinity.

Findings regarding accuracy above pertain to being able to accurately detect messages. However, the global perceptions of the general feelings of liking by another person occurred more frequently. This finding suggests that people are not very accurate at the message level. It is likely that during initial interactions people are more concerned with their own presentation. By being more concerned with putting their best foot forward they do not pay much attention to the specific messages and the intent that may be behind them. In addition, the balance between being appropriate and being direct may limit how accurate people are regarding specific messages. People were much more accurate when considering the overall feelings of liking by their partner versus when specifically their partner showed liking.

Disclosure During Initial IM Interactions

Perceived breadth of Person B's disclosure was found to be predictive of Person A's perceptions of Person B's desire for a future interaction (H5d). This

finding suggests that the more people talk, the more likely they will be perceived as wanting to interact again in the future. Surprisingly, there were no other relationships found among reported and perceived intimacy and breadth of disclosure and the dependent variables for the hypothesized models. These findings suggest that it is not how the disclosure is perceived that makes a difference, rather it is likely the content and if it is reciprocated that affects liking and desire for future interactions. The lack of results could be due to the low reliabilities of the disclosure scales. However, the stepwise analyses did reveal that disclose intimacy does, in fact, play a role for the other's report of liking and desire for a future interaction (see below).

Appropriateness During Initial IM Interactions

Appropriateness was a significant factor in this study. Person A's perception of Person B's appropriateness had positive relationships with Person A's liking for Person B (H9a), perceived liking by Person B (H9b), desire for future interaction with Person B (H9c), and desire to go on a date with Person B (H9e). Participants who perceived disliking shown by their partners also perceived them as being less appropriate. It is likely that inappropriate behavior, including disclosure, would reduce partner disclosure (Douglas, 1990), and in turn, make people experience ambivalence or dislike toward their inappropriate partners. Henningsen, Henningsen, and Valde (2006) claimed that appropriateness is important for decisions regarding sexual interest. Results of this thesis support that claim perceived appropriateness was a significant predictor of self-reported desire for future interaction and going on a date. As noted above, it may be the absence of inappropriate behavior that informs

decisions regarding liking rather than the presence of appropriate behavior, or in other words, inappropriate behavior influences perceptions not appropriate behavior. It is likely that behaving appropriately will not diminish having a chance to interact with a person of interest again, but it will not increase the chance. Moreover, behaving inappropriately will decrease the chance of establishing liking and a desire to interact again. There were no significant relationships between Person B's perception of Person A's appropriateness and any of the dependent variables. If a person views another person as appropriate, it does not seem to influence that other person's perceptions or behavior. This could be because appropriateness is determined after the fact, or it simply is not communicated in a clear way.

Trust During Initial IM Interactions

Similar to the findings regarding appropriateness, trust appears to play a significant role for many feelings and desires people have regarding others. Person A's trust for Person B was predictive of Person A's liking for Person B (H11a), Person A's perception of Person B's liking (H11b), Person A's desire for a future interaction (H11c), Person A's perception of Person B's desire for a future interaction (H11d), and Person A's desire to go on a date (H11e). Liking and trust seem to develop together during initial interactions. The difficulty comes when trying to determine if people like those they trust, or trust those they like. This thesis only revealed that the two concepts appear to be congruent and most likely form from the same behaviors seeing as participants only interacted for 20 minutes. Also, similar to appropriateness, Person B's trust for Person A had no significant relationships with

any of the dependent variables. If a person trusts another person, it does not seem to influence the other person's perceptions or behaviors. Either trust is determined after the interaction or is not communicated during the interaction.

Predictor Selection Using Person A's Account to Predict Person A's Liking and Desires

The stepwise regression for predicting Person A's liking for Person B using variables provided by Person A revealed trust for a person as the single significant predictor of liking for that person (Table 4). This finding should be interpreted with caution because liking and trust are *outcomes* of the interaction. In other words, they are not specific behaviors that happen, but they are impressions that are formed by interacting. The strong relationship revealed by the stepwise regression suggests that the behaviors that increase trust will also increase liking. During initial interactions it is likely that by acting appropriately both liking and trust will increase as suggested by the strong correlations.

The stepwise regression for predicting Person A's perception of Person B's liking for Person A suggested that the two most important factors are frequency of liking perceived and frequency of disliking perceived (Table 5). This result did not differ much from the original analysis. The primary differences were that Person A's accuracy of liking, perception of Person B's appropriateness, and trust for Person B were not significant. This result suggests that affinity signaling has the potential to influence perceptions of liking. However, although the behaviors are perceived does not mean they were intended. In order for people to perceive that they are liked by

another person they need to perceive messages that demonstrate that liking. In addition, messages that communicate disliking are also influential on perceptions of liking. The idea that accuracy does not actually matter when forming perceptions of being liked by another person suggests that a person only needs to believe that a message is intended to show liking but does not need to be correct in that assessment.

Significant predictors of Person A's desire for a future interaction with Person B included Person A's perception of flirting frequency by Person B and perceived appropriateness of Person B (Table 6). These findings point out those factors influencing a desire for future interaction are not the same as the factors influencing liking. In order for people to want to interact with another person again, there needs to be more than a few messages intended to show liking. Perceived flirting provides a stronger indicator of the other's desire for a future interaction than signals that show liking, which may lead to a greater desire for a future interaction. These predictors suggest that people want to interact with flirtatious, yet appropriate others, meaning flirting must be done with care because perceived flirting was negatively correlated with perceived appropriateness. Another interpretation might suggest that flirting during an initial interaction may be inappropriate, but it clearly communicates liking and desire to interact again which is reciprocated by the person perceiving the flirting. But, by being able to flirt in an appropriate manner, the other will likely want to interact again.

There was only one significant predictor of Person A's perception of Person B's desire to interact again in the future, messages Person A sent (Table 7). If a

person is sending a lot of messages to another person they may feel as though the conversation is going well and perceive that the other wants to continue the interaction in the future. Similarly, person A's perception of Person B's desire to go on a date was predicted by Person A's reported disclosure intimacy (Table 9). People share intimate information with those who they believe would want to go on a date or start a relationship with them. Although it is most likely the former that accounts for this relationship, people may also feel that by sharing intimate information the other would want to then go on a date with them.

Finally, person A's desire to go on a date with Person B was predicted by Person A's accuracy of perceiving disliking shown (Table 8). The more accurate Person A was, the less desire Person A had to go on a date. This would be explained by the fact that Person A could not be accurate unless Person B was showing dislike. Although the frequency was not related, being able to tell when a single instance of disliking was shown is influential enough to hinder desire to go on a date. Being able to accurately perceive negative affect allows an individual to adjust his or her behavior to either attempt to build positive regard or to save face. For example, if a person sent the message, "you're strange" to show dislike and the recipient was able to accurately detect it was a message of dislike the recipient would be able to change his or her behavior or explain his or her behavior.

Predictor Selection Using Person B's Account to Predict Person A's Liking and Desires

The stepwise regression for predicting Person A's liking for Person B using variables provided by Person B revealed four significant predictors (Table 10). Accuracy remained a significant predictor and was joined by reported self-disclosure intimacy, which confirms past research (Clark et al., 1999; Collins & Miller, 1994).Person B's accuracy regarding when Person A showed liking and Person B's self-disclosure intimacy were both positively related to Person A's liking for Person B. Person B's perception of Person A's frequency of showing dislike and Person B's perception of Person A's self-disclosure intimacy were negatively related to Person A's liking for Person B. Sharing what is considered intimate disclosure can be rewarding for both involved. Sharing intimate information can influence recipients to feel more liking for the discloser. Accuracy of when liking is shown could serve as a means of knowing when the sharing of intimate information is solicited and, in turn, the intimate information shared increases feelings of liking for the discloser. Person B's perceptions of when disliking was shown by Person A and its negative relationship with Person A's liking suggests that if Person A did not like Person B, Person A would probably show it in a way that let Person B know. The fact that Person B's perception of Person A's disclosure intimacy had a negative relationship with Person A's liking seems counterintuitive. It would be expected that intimate disclosure would be a sign of liking. However, the results indicate that the perceived sharing of intimate information is negatively related to liking by the discloser. One possible explanation is that the information being disclosed is only being perceived as intimate but is not considered intimate by the discloser. On the other hand, if Person

B perceived the disclosure as intimate when Person A actually does not like Person B the content of the disclosure may be what is causing the inverse relationship. Considered together, these data suggest that a person's feelings of liking are influenced by perceptions of both people involved. In addition, a person's feelings of liking for another person are influenced by the other person's behaviors (i.e., sharing intimate information) and abilities (i.e., accuracy of detecting liking).

Person A's perception of Person B's liking for Person A is predicted by a single predictor: Person B's accuracy regarding when Person A showed liking (Table 11). A person's ability to acknowledge when the another person shows liking may demonstrate that they like them in return. It is the ability to reciprocate displays of liking that may influence perceptions of liking.

The stepwise selection revealed a single predictor for Person A's desire for a future interaction based on Person B's reported behaviors and perceptions (Table 12). Person B's perception of Person A's disclosure intimacy was negatively related to A's desire for a future interaction. In other words, Person A reported a stronger desire for a future interaction when Person B did not perceive any intimate information being shared by Person A. This negative relationship might be explained by the intercorrelations among the variables. Perceived partner intimacy was found to be negatively correlated with perceived appropriateness. Perceived appropriateness was positively correlated with desire for a future interaction. It is possible that the information being disclosed is only being perceived as intimate but is not considered intimate by the discloser. Similar to the findings of Person A's liking for Person B, if

Person B perceived the disclosure as intimate when Person A actually does not like Person B, if Person B reciprocated the intimate disclosure, which is likely as suggested by the correlation between reported and perceived intimate disclosure, Person A may see that disclosure as unwarranted and have lower perceptions of appropriateness and therefore desire for a future interaction.

Surprisingly, the last three stepwise analyses did not find any significant predictors (Tables 13, 14, and 15). Getting another person to perceive that a person wants to have a future interaction or go on a date may be difficult to do. Moreover, getting another person to want to go on a date seems even more daunting especially during an initial interaction in a 20 minute timeframe. The descriptive statistics (Table 2) for desire to go on a date suggest that not many people even wanted to go on a date after their interactions.

Implications

Findings from this thesis suggest that disclosure, trust, and appropriateness work in tandem to influence the outcomes measured in this thesis. Theories of CMC have been supported in that despite the short time period, feelings of affinity were able to be achieved that were significantly different from a neutral feeling. The most important implication derived this thesis is the idea that an individual instance of an affinity-signaling strategy does not have a significant effect on overall ratings of liking. People are able to gauge the general "feel" of the conversation, or the culmination of messages that show liking, that leads to feelings of liking or disliking. More importantly, being able to accurately tell when liking is shown can significantly

improve the chances of building affinity with another person. This supports the argument made above that affinity-testing would be predictive of liking. However, showing affinity, while it was reciprocated, will not have much bearing on ratings of liking. This leads to the idea that recognition and reciprocity of liking behaviors have a large role in determining who people like.

The ability to successfully test when another person likes an individual provides an opportunity to build affinity. It is when a person can show interest after accurately detecting a message of liking that mutual liking can exist and prosper. Although affinity-testing is a great asset when attempting to build affinity (i.e., seek affinity), the context may also play a role.

This thesis was able to provide support for CMC theories which suggest that relationships can develop through mediated channels, such as Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT, Walther & Burgoon, 1992) and the hyperpersonal framework (Walther, 1996). While these theories primarily compare CMC to FtF interactions, the implications of these theories suggest that people will be able to form relationships online and they have the potential to exceed FtF relationships in terms of relational goals and impression formation. There was no comparison between IM and FtF in this thesis, but there were findings that suggest that even in a 20 minute conversation feelings of liking and desire for future interaction can be formed. However, people rarely reported that they would go on a date with their partner. Significant correlations were found between Person A's liking for Person B and Person B's liking for Person A, and another significant correlation between liking and

self-reported desire to go on a date. This suggests that people like those that like them, and people are more likely to date those that they like. However, there was no relationship between the self and partner's report of wanting to go on a date. Logically, we might conclude people would want to date those that want to date them, but this conclusion was not supported. It is typical that one person may desire to go on a date but the other person would rather not despite similar levels of liking. This finding suggests that the hyperpersonal tenant of receiver idealization may take place over time, but not within a 20 minute IM interaction.

Limitations

Limitations of this thesis provide many directions for future research. First, participants were in a zero-acquaintance laboratory environment that made the interaction awkward for some. In addition, participants were not told about possible future interactions with the other person, an important aspect of SIP theory. By providing some motivation to get to know one another and truly find out if they would want to interact again may change the amount and depth of the disclosure and in turn affect levels of liking. Second, participants interacted on one occasion for 20 minutes. It is possible that multiple interactions could reveal what variables predict liking and desire for a future interaction with greater certainty than this thesis could provide. However, this quick initial interaction did provide a great deal of information about the complexities of how decisions regarding liking and desire for future interaction may form. Third, while it was controlled for in this thesis, getting participants that are heterosexual and single, or homosexual and single might provide

greater insight into affinity during romantically motivated initial interactions. Fourth, self-disclosure and perceived disclosure intimacy and breadth had poor reliabilities. This may explain why disclosure had less of an influence than suggested by past literature. Fifth, the sample size was small, especially when using the stepwise regression. This is because accuracy of dislike required a person to show dislike and accuracy of flirting required a person to show flirting it order to calculate both accuracies. Only 53 people out of 120 showed dislike and 65 flirted. The listwise analysis then was only able to use those 33 people that it could calculate accuracy for dislike and accuracy for all of the stepwise analyses, which may explain the difference between the hypothesized regression analyses and the stepwise regressions.

Directions for Future Research

Future studies may want to observe multiple interactions between the same participants to yield longitudinal results that approximate events as they might actually take place outside of a research setting. Other avenues that may be explored include relationship initiation models of interactions online, specifically, text-based media. While this study was able to provide a starting point there are many possibilities along this line of research. For instance, what types of messages show liking? What types of messages are perceived as liking? What variables will predict desire to go on a date? What qualities separate messages of liking and messages of flirting? In addition, having alternative conditions that utilize different type of media might add utility to current theories of CMC. Data could also be analyzed using a dyadic approach. Finally, states of participants might provide additional useful

information about liking during initial interactions. For example relationship status, sexual preference of participants, whether they are actively seeking a romantic partner or new friendships, etc. could provide interesting information regarding what messages are perceived as liking and what types of messages are used to show liking in relation to motives.

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Table 1

Affinity-Seeking, -Testing, and –Signaling Strategies Available via IM

Seeking	**Testing**	**Signaling**
Altruism (provide assistance)	Confronting (require immediate usually public response)	Altruism (provide assistance)
Assume control (seems to have control of the situation)	Withdrawing (require partner to sustain interaction) **a**	Assume equality (creates social equality)
Assume equality (creates social equality)	Sustaining (maintain interaction) **b**	Comfortable self (appears comfortable and relaxed)
Comfortable self (appears comfortable and relaxed)	Hazing (partner must provide resources)	Concede control (gives other control) **a**
Concede control (gives other control) **a**	Diminishing self (lower value of self directly or by identifying alternatives)	Conversational rule-keeping (abides by cultural rules for appropriate interaction)
Conversational rule-keeping (abides by cultural rules for appropriate interaction)	Offering (increase likelihood of being approached making self available) **c**	Dynamism (active enthusiastic)
Dynamism (active enthusiastic)		Elicit other's disclosures (encourage talking) **a,b**
Elicit other's disclosures (encourage talking) **a,b**		Facilitate enjoyment (generate positive encounter)
Facilitate enjoyment (generate positive encounter)		Inclusion of other (invite other to interact) **b**
Inclusion of other (invite other to interact) **b**		Influence perceptions of closeness (make relationship appear more intimate than it actually is)
Influence perceptions of closeness (make relationship appear more intimate than it actually is)		Nonverbal immediacy (signal interest nonverbally)
Nonverbal immediacy (signal interest nonverbally)		Openness (disclose personal information) **b**
Openness (disclose personal information) **b**		Optimism (present self as positive person)
Optimism (present self as positive person)		Present interesting self (be someone worth knowing)
Personal autonomy (independent and free-thinking)		Reward association (resource access)
Present interesting self (be someone worth knowing)		Self-concept confirmation (respect for target)
Reward association (resource access)		Self-inclusion (arrange environment to increase contact) **c**
Self-concept confirmation (respect for target)		Sensitivity (empathetic warm)
Self-inclusion (arrange environment to increase contact) **c**		Similarity (convince likeness)
Sensitivity (empathetic warm)		Supportiveness (backing the target)
Similarity (convince likeness)		Trustworthiness (honest reliable)
Supportiveness (backing the target)		Confronting (require immediate usually public response)
Trustworthiness (honest reliable)		Withdrawing (require partner to sustain interaction)
		Sustaining (maintain interaction)
		Hazing (partner must provide resources)
		Offering (increase likelihood of being approached making self available)

Note: Letters next to strategies indicate an association with other strategies with matching letter.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

		N	Mean	Deviation
1.	Liking for Partner	108	5.23	0.83
2.	Perceived Liking by Partner	108	5.05	0.81
3.	Desire for Future Interaction	108	4.16	1.09
4.	Perceived Desire for Future Interaction	108	4.10	0.88
5.	Self-Reported Desire to go on a Date	108	3.03	1.47
6.	Perceived Desire to go on a Date	108	3.37	1.32
7.	Partner's Liking Toward Partner	108	5.24	0.81
8.	Partner's Perceived Liking by Partner	108	5.08	0.78
9.	Partner's Desire for Future Interaction	108	4.19	1.13
10.	Partner's Perceived Desire for Future Interaction	108	4.11	0.90
11.	Partner's Self-Reported Desire to go on a Date	108	3.03	1.48
12.	Partner's Perceived Desire to go on a Date	108	3.36	1.36
13.	I Showed Liking Freq	108	6.06	5.12
14.	Perceived Liking Freq	108	6.19	4.82
15.	I Showed DisL Freq	108	0.50	1.52
16.	Perceived DisL Freq	108	0.72	1.39
17.	I Flirted Freq	108	1.62	4.53
18.	Perceived Flirt Freq	108	1.59	3.25
19.	Accuracy of Perceived Like	108	0.18	0.15
20.	Accuracy of Perceived DisL	53	0.07	0.20
21.	Accuracy of Flirting	65	0.06	0.17
22.	Self-Disclosure Breadth	108	4.36	1.18
23.	Self-Disclosure Intimacy	108	3.19	1.12
24.	Perceived Partner Disclosure Breadth	108	3.84	0.99
25.	Perceived Partner Disclosure Intimacy	108	3.09	1.11
26.	Perceived Partner Appropriateness	108	43.38	20.95
27.	Trust for Partner	108	9.20	5.02
28.	Messages I Sent	108	8.56	2.80
29.	Questions I Asked	108	38.13	19.19
30.	Number of Topics Covered	108	6.19	0.70
31.	Average Time Between My Messages	108	5.95	0.72

Table 3

Correlations Between All Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Liking for Partner	-	.68**	.57**	.37**	.33**	.12
2. Perceived Liking by Partner		-	.39**	.49**	.11	.18*
3. Desire for Future Interaction			-	.64**	.74**	.41**
4. Perceived Desire for Future Interaction				-	.46**	.75**
5. Self-Reported Desire to go on a Date					-	.59**
6. Perceived Desire to go on a Date						-
7. Partner's Liking Toward Partner						
8. Partner's Perceived Liking by Partner						
9. Partner's Desire for Future Interaction						
10. Partner's Perceived Desire for Future Interaction						
11. Partner's Self-Reported Desire to go on a Date						
12. Partner's Perceived Desire to go on a Date						
13. I Showed Liking Freq						
14. Perceived Liking Freq						
15. I Showed DisL Freq						
16. Perceived DisL Freq						
17. I Flirted Freq						
18. Perceived Flirt Freq						
19. Accuracy of Perceived Like						
20. Accuracy of Perceived DisL						
21. Accuracy of Flirting						
22. Self-Disclosure Breadth						
23. Self-Disclosure Intimacy						
24. Perceived Partner Disclosure Breadth						
25. Perceived Partner Disclosure Intimacy						
26. Perceived Partner Appropriateness						
27. Trust for Partner						
28. Messages I Sent						
29. Questions I Asked						
30. Number of Topics Covered						
31. Average Time Between My Messages						
32. Sex						
33. Sexual Preference						
34. Age						
35. Frequency of IM Use						
36. Year in College						
37. Relationship Status						

** $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$*

Table 3 cont.

Correlations Between All Variables

	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Liking for Partner	.26**	.23*	.06	.06	- .02	- .03
2. Perceived Liking by Partner	.23*	.27**	.11	.10	- .02	- .01
3. Desire for Future Interaction	.06	.11	- .19*	.05	- .16	.03
4. Perceived Desire for Future Interaction	.06	.10	.05	.15	.01	.13
5. Self-Reported Desire to go on a Date	- .02	- .02	- .16	.01	- .14	.02
6. Perceived Desire to go on a Date	- .03	- .01	.03	.13	.02	.12
7. Partner's Liking Toward Partner	-	.68**	.57**	.37**	.33**	.12
8. Partner's Perceived Liking by Partner		-	.39**	.49**	.11	.18*
9. Partner's Desire for Future Interaction			-	.64**	.74**	.41**
10. Partner's Perceived Desire for Future Interaction				-	.46**	.75**
11. Partner's Self-Reported Desire to go on a Date					-	.59**
12. Partner's Perceived Desire to go on a Date						-
13. I Showed Liking Freq						
14. Perceived Liking Freq						
15. I Showed DisL Freq						
16. Perceived DisL Freq						
17. I Flirted Freq						
18. Perceived Flirt Freq						
19. Accuracy of Perceived Like						
20. Accuracy of Perceived DisL						
21. Accuracy of Flirting						
22. Self-Disclosure Breadth						
23. Self-Disclosure Intimacy						
24. Perceived Partner Disclosure Breadth						
25. Perceived Partner Disclosure Intimacy						
26. Perceived Partner Appropriateness						
27. Trust for Partner						
28. Messages I Sent						
29. Questions I Asked						
30. Number of Topics Covered						
31. Average Time Between My Messages						
32. Sex						
33. Sexual Preference						
34. Age						
35. Frequency of IM Use						
36. Year in College						
37. Relationship Status						

** $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$*

Table 3 cont.

Correlations Between All Variables

	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Liking for Partner	.10	.12	- .16	- .28**	- .02	- .07
2. Perceived Liking by Partner	.21*	.26**	- .16	- .27**	- .04	.00
3. Desire for Future Interaction	.17	.16	- .02	- .11	.17	.13
4. Perceived Desire for Future Interaction	.16	.20*	.02	- .04	.11	.19*
5. Self-Reported Desire to go on a Date	.09	.03	.01	- .06	.18*	.12
6. Perceived Desire to go on a Date	.08	.09	.12	.08	.10	.18*
7. Partner's Liking Toward Partner	- .01	- .02	- .18*	- .23*	.02	- .03
8. Partner's Perceived Liking by Partner	.00	.04	- .02	- .12	- .05	.04
9. Partner's Desire for Future Interaction	- .05	.01	- .06	- .02	.00	.04
10. Partner's Perceived Desire for Future Interaction	.05	.06	.12	.12	.00	.15
11. Partner's Self-Reported Desire to go on a Date	- .01	.08	- .06	- .05	.06	.08
12. Partner's Perceived Desire to go on a Date	.09	.11	.16	.11	.05	.17
13. I Showed Liking Freq	-	.78**	.11	.00	.47**	.43**
14. Perceived Liking Freq		-	.15	.09	.27**	.34**
15. I Showed DisL Freq			-	.69**	.06	.32**
16. Perceived DisL Freq				-	- .01	.21*
17. I Flirted Freq					-	.81**
18. Perceived Flirt Freq						-
19. Accuracy of Perceived Like						
20. Accuracy of Perceived DisL						
21. Accuracy of Flirting						
22. Self-Disclosure Breadth						
23. Self-Disclosure Intimacy						
24. Perceived Partner Disclosure Breadth						
25. Perceived Partner Disclosure Intimacy						
26. Perceived Partner Appropriateness						
27. Trust for Partner						
28. Messages I Sent						
29. Questions I Asked						
30. Number of Topics Covered						
31. Average Time Between My Messages						
32. Sex						
33. Sexual Preference						
34. Age						
35. Frequency of IM Use						
36. Year in College						
37. Relationship Status						

** $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$*

Table 3 cont.

Correlations Between All Variables

	19	20	21	22	23	24
1. Liking for Partner	.12	- .23	- .10	- .05	.02	.05
2. Perceived Liking by Partner	.27**	- .05	.02	- .03	.05	.20*
3. Desire for Future Interaction	- .15	- .31*	.00	.04	.08	.17
4. Perceived Desire for Future Interaction	.01	- .02	.01	.07	.22*	.29**
5. Self-Reported Desire to go on a Date	- .20*	- .28*	.00	.04	.12	.11
6. Perceived Desire to go on a Date	- .06	.11	.03	.08	.31**	.13
7. Partner's Liking Toward Partner	.14	.05	- .10	.04	- .02	.03
8. Partner's Perceived Liking by Partner	.10	.06	- .06	.07	- .01	.10
9. Partner's Desire for Future Interaction	.03	.01	.01	.01	.07	.01
10. Partner's Perceived Desire for Future Interaction	- .08	.03	.03	.12	.11	.07
11. Partner's Self-Reported Desire to go on a Date	.04	.16	.10	- .10	.06	- .05
12. Partner's Perceived Desire to go on a Date	- .05	.14	.19	- .03	.02	.02
13. I Showed Liking Freq	- .05	- .15	- .09	- .03	.07	.03
14. Perceived Liking Freq	.01	- .03	- .03	.05	.14	.10
15. I Showed DisL Freq	- .08	.02	.12	.15	.15	.07
16. Perceived DisL Freq	- .23*	.23	.11	.11	.15	- .04
17. I Flirted Freq	- .12	- .05	- .09	- .01	- .05	.08
18. Perceived Flirt Freq	- .10	.15	.02	.05	.08	.16
19. Accuracy of Perceived Like	-	.07	.08	.03	- .18*	.01
20. Accuracy of Perceived DisL		-	.00	.06	.14	- .24
21. Accuracy of Flirting			-	- .04	- .05	- .06
22. Self-Disclosure Breadth				-	.22*	.27**
23. Self-Disclosure Intimacy					-	.20*
24. Perceived Partner Disclosure Breadth						-
25. Perceived Partner Disclosure Intimacy						
26. Perceived Partner Appropriateness						
27. Trust for Partner						
28. Messages I Sent						
29. Questions I Asked						
30. Number of Topics Covered						
31. Average Time Between My Messages						
32. Sex						
33. Sexual Preference						
34. Age						
35. Frequency of IM Use						
36. Year in College						
37. Relationship Status						

** $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$*

Table 3 cont.

Correlations Between All Variables

	25	26	27	28	29	30
1. Liking for Partner	.11	.49**	.54**	- .07	- .14	- .04
2. Perceived Liking by Partner	.14	.31**	.42**	.09	- .04	.12
3. Desire for Future Interaction	.14	.32**	.36**	.05	- .09	.04
4. Perceived Desire for Future Interaction	.22*	.06	.21*	.15	- .03	.15
5. Self-Reported Desire to go on a Date	.14	.26**	.24**	.01	- .05	- .07
6. Perceived Desire to go on a Date	.21*	- .04	.05	.15	.08	.05
7. Partner's Liking Toward Partner	- .02	.11	.18*	- .03	- .03	- .04
8. Partner's Perceived Liking by Partner	.09	.08	.19*	.06	.00	.12
9. Partner's Desire for Future Interaction	.03	- .01	.03	.08	.06	.04
10. Partner's Perceived Desire for Future Interaction	.18	- .03	.05	.10	.09	.15
11. Partner's Self-Reported Desire to go on a Date	.01	- .08	.08	.02	.04	- .07
12. Partner's Perceived Desire to go on a Date	.12	- .10	- .02	.05	.11	.05
13. I Showed Liking Freq	- .02	- .02	.13	.28**	.17	.13
14. Perceived Liking Freq	.00	- .03	.08	.32**	.08	.18*
15. I Showed DisL Freq	.10	- .43**	- .17	.30**	.10	.16
16. Perceived DisL Freq	- .01	- .39**	- .26**	.24**	.17	.17
17. I Flirted Freq	.00	- .11	.09	.17	.16	.15
18. Perceived Flirt Freq	.08	- .33**	- .10	.35**	.22*	.32**
19. Accuracy of Perceived Like	- .08	.01	.06	- .16	- .01	- .06
20. Accuracy of Perceived DisL	.01	- .39**	- .39**	.27*	.08	.21
21. Accuracy of Flirting	- .11	- .12	- .15	.02	- .13	- .08
22. Self-Disclosure Breadth	.21*	.00	.02	.14	- .04	.06
23. Self-Disclosure Intimacy	.58**	- .30**	- .10	.15	.01	.09
24. Perceived Partner Disclosure Breadth	.36**	- .02	- .01	.14	- .05	.21*
25. Perceived Partner Disclosure Intimacy	-	- .22*	- .02	.11	.06	.21*
26. Perceived Partner Appropriateness		-	.70**	- .20*	- .02	- .09
27. Trust for Partner			-	- .12	.01	- .07
28. Messages I Sent				-	.27**	.69**
29. Questions I Asked					-	.29**
30. Number of Topics Covered						-
31. Average Time Between My Messages						
32. Sex						
33. Sexual Preference						
34. Age						
35. Frequency of IM Use						
36. Year in College						
37. Relationship Status						

** $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$*

Table 3 cont.

Correlations Between All Variables

	31	32	33	34	35	36	37
1. Liking for Partner	-.01	-.05	-.03	-.09	.12	.01	.04
2. Perceived Liking by Partner	-.04	-.07	-.11	-.09	.10	.05	-.05
3. Desire for Future Interaction	-.07	-.28**	-.05	-.01	.26**	.07	-.10
4. Perceived Desire for Future Interaction	-.09	.02	-.04	-.16	.12	.01	-.17
5. Self-Reported Desire to go on a Date	-.02	-.11	.08	-.07	.10	.04	-.23*
6. Perceived Desire to go on a Date	-.05	.12	.07	-.15	.05	-.01	-.24*
7. Partner's Liking Toward Partner	-.02	.05	-.04	-.16	-.08	-.15	.02
8. Partner's Perceived Liking by Partner	.00	.07	.02	-.22*	-.03	-.16	.12
9. Partner's Desire for Future Interaction	-.09	.28**	.05	-.22*	-.08	-.27**	-.04
10. Partner's Perceived Desire for Future Interaction	.00	-.02	.04	-.13	.07	-.15	-.17
11. Partner's Self-Reported Desire to go on a Date	-.05	.11	.07	-.14	-.04	-.12	-.12
12. Partner's Perceived Desire to go on a Date	.02	-.12	.05	-.07	.00	-.03	-.28**
13. I Showed Liking Freq	-.23*	-.10	-.08	-.03	.07	.17	-.17
14. Perceived Liking Freq	-.28**	-.04	-.06	.05	.00	.11	-.05
15. I Showed DisL Freq	-.21*	.07	-.01	-.02	.10	-.06	-.09
16. Perceived DisL Freq	-.18	.04	.00	-.04	.12	-.08	-.13
17. I Flirted Freq	-.15	-.07	.02	.05	.13	.13	-.11
18. Perceived Flirt Freq	-.27**	-.02	.02	.03	.12	.06	-.06
19. Accuracy of Perceived Like	.21*	-.06	-.22*	-.05	-.19*	.05	.05
20. Accuracy of Perceived DisL	-.19	-.13	.05	.07	.16	.03	.04
21. Accuracy of Flirting	.01	.01	.10	-.04	.01	.10	-.10
22. Self-Disclosure Breadth	.00	.07	-.05	-.12	-.02	-.02	-.06
23. Self-Disclosure Intimacy	-.12	.08	-.02	.13	.03	.09	-.06
24. Perceived Partner Disclosure Breadth	-.02	.15	-.12	-.01	-.09	.05	-.07
25. Perceived Partner Disclosure Intimacy	-.07	.06	-.05	.10	.01	.10	-.05
26. Perceived Partner Appropriateness	.11	-.04	.02	-.02	-.02	.10	.04
27. Trust for Partner	.05	-.02	.09	.04	-.03	.12	.09
28. Messages I Sent	-.82**	.03	-.09	.03	.10	.02	.00
29. Questions I Asked	-.21*	.06	-.11	-.03	-.02	.09	.02
30. Number of Topics Covered	-.51**	.00	-.11	.05	.14	-.05	.00
31. Average Time Between My Messages	-	-.03	.05	-.01	-.13	-.01	-.08
32. Sex		-	.20*	-.25**	-.03	-.25**	.06
33. Sexual Preference			-	.00	-.02	-.09	.03
34. Age				-	-.03	.40**	.06
35. Frequency of IM Use					-	-.19*	-.14
36. Year in College						-	-.03
37. Relationship Status							-

** $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$*

Table 4

Multiple Regression Beta-weights and B-weights for Liking Toward Partner

		Hypothesized Models				Stepwise Selection of All Variables (N = 33)			
	Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	B	SE B	β	R^2
									.38**
H1a	N = 108				.14*				
	I Showed Liking Freq	- 0.01	0.03	- .09					
	Perceived Liking Freq	0.05	0.03	.27					
	I Showed DisL Freq	0.05	0.07	.10					
	Perceived DisL Freq	- 0.21	0.08	- .36*					
	I Flirted Freq	0.01	0.03	.07					
	Perceived Flirt Freq	- 0.04	0.05	- .16					
H3a	N = 33				.12				
	Accuracy of Percv Like	1.60	1.01	.29					
	Accuracy of Percv DisL	- 0.86	0.61	- .25					
	Accuracy of Percv Flirt	- 0.25	0.69	- .07					
H5a	N = 108				.03				
	Self-Disclosure Breadth	- 0.08	0.07	- .11					
	Self-Disclosure Intimacy	- 0.08	0.09	- .10					
	Perceived Partner Breadth	0.03	0.09	.03					
	Perceived Partner Intimacy	0.14	0.09	.18					
H7a	N = 108				.02				
	Messages Sent	- 0.01	0.01	- .20					
	Questions Asked	- 0.02	0.02	- .11					
	Topics Covered	0.01	0.04	.04					
	Time Between Messages	- 0.01	0.01	- .18					
H9a	N = 108				.25**				
	Perceived Appropriateness	0.59	0.1	.50**					
H11a	N = 108				.36**				
	Trust for Partner	0.69	0.09	.60**		.65	.15	.62**	

** p < .05, ** p < .01*

Table 5

Multiple Regression Beta-weights and B-weights for Perceived Liking by Partner

		Hypothesized Models				Stepwise Selection of All Variables (N = 33)			
	Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	B	SE B	β	R^2
									.29**
H1b	N = 108				.22**				
	I Showed Liking Freq	- 0.01	.03	- .07					
	Perceived Liking Freq	0.06	.03	.37*		.06	.02	.37*	
	I Showed DisL Freq	0.01	.07	.01					
	Perceived DisL Freq	- 0.23	.07	- .39**		- .16	.06	- .39*	
	I Flirted Freq	- 0.05	.03	- .26					
	Perceived Flirt Freq	0.04	.04	.17					
H3b	N = 33				.20				
	Accuracy of Percv Like	2.11	.89	.41*					
	Accuracy of Percv DisL	- 0.08	.54	- .03					
	Accuracy of Percv Flirt	- 0.43	.61	.12					
H5b	N = 108				.08				
	Self-Disclosure Breadth	- 0.09	.07	- .14					
	Self-Disclosure Intimacy	- 0.05	.08	- .07					
	Perceived Partner Breadth	0.17	.09	.21					
	Perceived Partner Intimacy	0.13	.09	.18					
H7b	N = 108				.02				
	Messages Sent	0.00	.01	.11					
	Questions Asked	- 0.01	.02	- .09					
	Topics Covered	0.03	.04	.10					
	Time Between Messages	0.00	.01	.08					
H9b	N = 108				.09**				
	Perceived Appropriateness	0.35	.11	.30**					
H11b	N = 108				.18**				
	Trust for Partner	0.48	.10	.42**					

** $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$*

Table 6

Multiple Regression Beta-weights and B-weights for Self-Reported Desire for Future Interaction

		Hypothesized Models				Stepwise Selection of All Variables (N = 33)			
	Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	B	SE B	β	R^2
									.30**
H1c	N = 108				.08				
	I Showed Liking Freq	- 0.02	0.04	- .09					
	Perceived Liking Freq	0.06	0.04	.25					
	I Showed DisL Freq	0.09	0.10	.12					
	Perceived DisL Freq	- 0.16	0.11	- .20					
	I Flirted Freq	0.06	0.05	.24					
	Perceived Flirt Freq	- 0.04	0.07	- .13		.17	.06	.47*	
H3c	N = 33				.13				
	Accuracy of Percv Like	- 0.34	1.11	- .05					
	Accuracy of Percv DisL	- 1.32	0.68	- .35					
	Accuracy of Percv Flirt	0.33	0.76	.08					
H5c	N = 108				.05				
	Self-Disclosure Breadth	- 0.04	0.10	- .04					
	Self-Disclosure Intimacy	- 0.06	0.12	- .06					
	Perceived Partner Breadth	0.20	0.12	.18					
	Perceived Partner Intimacy	0.12	0.12	.12					
H7c	N = 108				.02				
	Messages Sent	0.00	0.01	.00					
	Questions Asked	- 0.02	0.02	- .10					
	Topics Covered	0.01	0.06	.02					
	Time Between Messages	- 0.01	0.01	- .08					
H9c	N = 108				.10**				
	Perceived Appropriateness	0.49	0.14	.32**		.67	.18	.65**	
H11c	N = 108				.16**				
	Trust for Partner	0.60	0.14	.40**					

** p < .05, ** p < .01*

Table 7

Multiple Regression Beta-weights and B-weights for Perceived Desire for Future Interaction

		Hypothesized Models				Stepwise Selection of All Variables (N = 33)			
	Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	B	SE B	β	R^2
									.15*
H1d	N = 108				.10				
	I Showed Liking Freq	- .02	.03	- .11					
	Perceived Liking Freq	.05	.03	.28					
	I Showed DisL Freq	.00	.08	- .01					
	Perceived DisL Freq	- .08	.08	- .12					
	I Flirted Freq	- .03	.04	- .15					
	Perceived Flirt Freq	.08	.05	.30					
H3d	N = 33				.02				
	Accuracy of Percv Like	- .14	.89	- .03					
	Accuracy of Percv DisL	.36	.55	.12					
	Accuracy of Percv Flirt	.13	.61	.04					
H5d	N = 108				.12*				
	Self-Disclosure Breadth	- .05	0.07	- .06					
	Self-Disclosure Intimacy	.07	0.09	.09					
	Perceived Partner Breadth	.24	0.09	.26*					
	Perceived Partner Intimacy	.08	0.09	.10					
H7d	N = 108				.04				
	Messages Sent	.01	0.01	.18		.10	.01	.38*	
	Questions Asked	- .01	0.02	- .05					
	Topics Covered	.03	0.04	.11					
	Time Between Messages	.01	0.01	.11					
H9d	N = 108				.00				
	Perceived Appropriateness	.06	.12	.05					
H11d	N = 108				.06*				
	Trust for Partner	.29	.12	.24*					

** p < .05, ** p < .01*

Table 8

Multiple Regression Beta-weights and B-weights for Desire to Go on a Date

		Hypothesized Models				Stepwise Selection of All Variables (N = 33)			
	Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	B	SE B	β	R^2
									.15*
H1e	N = 108				.05				
	I Showed Liking Freq	0.04	0.05	.13					
	Perceived Liking Freq	- 0.03	0.05	- .08					
	I Showed DisL Freq	0.09	0.14	.10					
	Perceived DisL Freq	- 0.06	0.14	- .06					
	I Flirted Freq	0.09	0.06	.26					
	Perceived Flirt Freq	- 0.07	0.09	- .16					
H3e	N = 33				.12				
	Accuracy of Percv Like	- 1.58	1.72	- .16					
	Accuracy of Percv DisL	- 2.14	1.27	- .30		- 2.10	.90	- .39**	
	Accuracy of Percv Flirt	0.06	1.53	.01					
H5e	N = 108				.02				
	Self-Disclosure Breadth	- 0.02	0.13	- .01					
	Self-Disclosure Intimacy	0.00	0.16	.00					
	Perceived Partner Breadth	0.08	0.16	.06					
	Perceived Partner Intimacy	0.13	0.17	.10					
H7e	N = 108				.01				
	Messages Sent	0.01	0.02	.07					
	Questions Asked	0.00	0.03	- .01					
	Topics Covered	- 0.07	0.07	- .12					
	Time Between Messages	0.00	0.01	- .04					
H9e	N = 108				.07**				
	Perceived Appropriateness	0.50	0.20	.26**					
H11e	N = 108				.08**				
	Trust for Partner	0.58	0.19	.28**					

** p < .05, ** p < .01*

Table 9

Multiple Regression Beta-weights and B-weights for Perceived Desire to Go on a Date

		Hypothesized Models				Stepwise Selection of All Variables (N = 33)			
	Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	B	SE B	β	R^2
									.25**
H1f	N = 108				.06				
	I Showed Liking Freq	.02	0.05	.07					
	Perceived Liking Freq	.01	0.05	.04					
	I Showed DisL Freq	.02	0.12	.02					
	Perceived DisL Freq	.06	0.13	.06					
	I Flirted Freq	- .04	0.06	- .13					
	Perceived Flirt Freq	.10	0.08	.24					
H3f	N = 33				.01				
	Accuracy of Percv Like	- .20	1.63	- .02					
	Accuracy of Percv DisL	.68	1.21	.10					
	Accuracy of Percv Flirt	.30	1.45	.04					
H5f	N = 108				.08				
	Self-Disclosure Breadth	.00	0.11	.00					
	Self-Disclosure Intimacy	.26	0.14	.22		.46	.14	.50**	
	Perceived Partner Breadth	.07	0.14	.05					
	Perceived Partner Intimacy	.07	0.14	.06					
H7f	N = 108				.06				
	Messages Sent	.02	0.01	.02					
	Questions Asked	.04	0.03	.04					
	Topics Covered	- .04	0.07	- .04					
	Time Between Messages	.02	0.01	.02					
H9f	N = 108				.00				
	Perceived Appropriateness	- .08	0.18	- .04					
H11f	N = 108				.01				
	Trust for Partner	.17	0.18	.09					

** p < .05, ** p < .01*

Table 10

Hypothesized and Stepwise selection Multiple Regression R^2, Beta-weights, and B-weights for Other's Report of Liking Toward Partner

		Hypothesized Models				Stepwise Selection of All Variables (N = 33)			
	Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	B	SE B	β	R^2
									.55**
H2a	N = 108				.07				
	I Showed Liking Freq	0.00	.03	- .02					
	Perceived Liking Freq	0.00	.03	.00					
	I Showed DisL Freq	- 0.04	.08	- .07					
	Perceived DisL Freq	- 0.12	.08	- .21		- .13	.06	- .29*	
	I Flirted Freq	0.00	.03	.01					
	Perceived Flirt Freq	0.01	.05	.06					
H4a	N = 33				.27*				
	Accuracy of Percv Like	2.88	.91	.52**		2.60	.72	.47**	
	Accuracy of Percv DisL	- 0.07	.55	- .02					
	Accuracy of Percv Flirt	- 0.70	.62	- .18					
H6a	N = 108				.01				
	Self-Disclosure Breadth	0.00	.07	.00					
	Self-Disclosure Intimacy	- 0.04	.09	- .05		.28	.10	.45**	
	Perceived Partner Breadth	0.05	.09	.06					
	Perceived Partner Intimacy	- 0.04	.09	- .06		- .40	.11	- .57**	
H8a	N = 108				.00				
	Messages Sent	0.00	.01	- .05					
	Questions Asked	0.00	.02	- .02					
	Topics Covered	- 0.01	.04	- .02					
	Time Between Messages	0.00	.01	- .07					
H10a	N = 108				.00				
	Perceived Appropriateness	.07	.11	.06					
H12a	N = 108				.02				
	Trust for Partner	.16	.11	.14					

** p < .05, ** p < .01*

Table 11

Multiple Regression Beta-weights and B-weights for Other's Perceived Liking by Partner

		Hypothesized Models				Stepwise Selection of All Variables (N = 33)			
	Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	B	SE B	β	R^2
									.18*
H2b	N = 108				.07				
	I Showed Liking Freq	0.01	.03	.06					
	Perceived Liking Freq	- 0.01	.03	- .05					
	I Showed DisL Freq	0.02	.07	.04					
	Perceived DisL Freq	- 0.14	.08	- .24					
	I Flirted Freq	- 0.07	.03	- .40*					
	Perceived Flirt Freq	0.09	.05	.39*					
H4b	N = 33				.20				
	Accuracy of Percv Like	2.18	.84	.45*		2.08	.80	.42*	
	Accuracy of Percv DisL	0.04	.51	.02					
	Accuracy of Percv Flirt	- 0.52	.57	- .15					
H6b	N = 108				.03				
	Self-Disclosure Breadth	0.00	.07	- .01					
	Self-Disclosure Intimacy	- 0.10	.08	- .15					
	Perceived Partner Breadth	0.08	.09	.11					
	Perceived Partner Intimacy	0.10	.09	.14					
H8b	N = 108				.03				
	Messages Sent	0.01	.01	.20					
	Questions Asked	- 0.01	.02	- .08					
	Topics Covered	0.03	.04	.10					
	Time Between Messages	0.01	.01	.19					
H10b	N = 108				.01				
	Perceived Appropriateness	- .02	.11	- .02					
H12b	N = 108				.00				
	Trust for Partner	.07	.11	.07					

** p < .05, ** p < .01*

Table 12

Multiple Regression Beta-weights and B-weights for Other's Desire for Future Interaction

		Hypothesized Models				Stepwise Selection of All Variables (N = 33)			
	Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	B	SE B	β	R^2
									.17*
H2c	N = 108				.03				
	I Showed Liking Freq	- 0.01	0.04	- .05					
	Perceived Liking Freq	0.00	0.04	.00					
	I Showed DisL Freq	- 0.13	0.11	- .17					
	Perceived DisL Freq	0.02	0.11	.03					
	I Flirted Freq	- 0.05	0.05	- .18					
	Perceived Flirt Freq	0.10	0.07	.27					
H4c	N = 33				.04				
	Accuracy of Percv Like	1.38	1.20	.22					
	Accuracy of Percv DisL	- 0.06	0.73	- .02					
	Accuracy of Percv Flirt	- 0.15	0.82	- .03					
H6c	N = 108				.00				
	Self-Disclosure Breadth	- 0.01	0.10	- .01					
	Self-Disclosure Intimacy	0.07	0.12	.07					
	Perceived Partner Breadth	0.00	0.13	.00					
	Perceived Partner Intimacy	- 0.03	0.13	- .03		- .34	.13	- .41*	
H8c	N = 108				.01				
	Messages Sent	0.00	0.01	.03					
	Questions Asked	0.01	0.02	.02					
	Topics Covered	- 0.01	0.06	- .02					
	Time Between Messages	- 0.01	0.01	- .09					
H10c	N = 108				.00				
	Perceived Appropriateness	- .04	0.16	- .02					
H12c	N = 108				.00				
	Trust for Partner	.02	0.15	.10					

** p < .05, ** p < .01*

Table 13

Multiple Regression Beta-weights and B-weights for Other's Perceived Desire for Future Interaction

		Hypothesized Models				Stepwise Selection of All Variables (N = 33)			
	Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	B	SE B	β	R^2
H2d	N = 108				.08				
	I Showed Liking Freq	.03	.03	.17					
	Perceived Liking Freq	- .03	.03	- .16					
	I Showed DisL Freq	- .04	.08	- .07					
	Perceived DisL Freq	.04	.09	.07					
	I Flirted Freq	- .09	.04	- .46*					
	Perceived Flirt Freq	.15	.05	.52**					
H4d	N = 33				.03				
	Accuracy of Percv Like	- .37	.85	- .08					
	Accuracy of Percv DisL	.14	.52	.05					
	Accuracy of Percv Flirt	.48	.58	.15					
H6d	N = 108				.04				
	Self-Disclosure Breadth	.07	.08	.09					
	Self-Disclosure Intimacy	- .01	.10	- .01					
	Perceived Partner Breadth	.00	.10	.00					
	Perceived Partner Intimacy	.12	.10	.15					
H8d	N = 108				.04				
	Messages Sent	.01	.01	.18					
	Questions Asked	.00	.02	.01					
	Topics Covered	.04	.05	.13					
	Time Between Messages	.01	.01	.21					
H10d	N = 108				.00				
	Perceived Appropriateness	- .06	.13	- .05					
H12d	N = 108				.00				
	Trust for Partner	.03	.12	.02					

** p < .05, ** p < .01*

Table 14

Multiple Regression Beta-weights and B-weights for Other's Desire to Go on a Date

		Hypothesized Models				Stepwise Selection of All Variables (N = 33)			
	Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	B	SE B	β	R^2
H2e	N = 108				.04				
	I Showed Liking Freq	- 0.05	.05	- .17					
	Perceived Liking Freq	0.04	.05	.14					
	I Showed DisL Freq	- 0.13	.14	- .13					
	Perceived DisL Freq	- 0.03	.15	- .03					
	I Flirted Freq	- 0.03	.06	- .08					
	Perceived Flirt Freq	0.11	.09	.23					
H4e	N = 33				.04				
	Accuracy of Percv Like	0.16	1.81	.02					
	Accuracy of Percv DisL	1.18	1.34	.16					
	Accuracy of Percv Flirt	0.94	1.61	.11					
H6e	N = 108				.02				
	Self-Disclosure Breadth	- 0.13	.13	- .10					
	Self-Disclosure Intimacy	0.16	.16	.12					
	Perceived Partner Breadth	- 0.01	.16	.00					
	Perceived Partner Intimacy	- 0.07	.17	- .05					
H8e	N = 108				.02				
	Messages Sent	0.00	.02	- .02					
	Questions Asked	0.01	.03	.04					
	Topics Covered	- 0.07	.07	- .12					
	Time Between Messages	- 0.01	.01	- .15					
H10e	N = 108				.01				
	Perceived Appropriateness	- 0.15	.21	- .07					
H12e	N = 108				.00				
	Trust for Partner	- 0.12	.20	- .06					

** $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$*

Table 15

Multiple Regression Beta-weights and B-weights for Other's Perceived Desire to Go on a Date

		Hypothesized Models				Stepwise Selection of All Variables (N = 33)			
	Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	B	SE B	β	R^2
H2f	N = 108				.08				
	I Showed Liking Freq	0.02	0.05	.07					
	Perceived Liking Freq	- 0.02	0.05	- .06					
	I Showed DisL Freq	0.05	0.13	.05					
	Perceived DisL Freq	- 0.02	0.13	- .02					
	I Flirted Freq	- 0.10	0.06	- .33					
	Perceived Flirt Freq	0.18	0.08	.44*					
H4f	N = 33				.08				
	Accuracy of Percv Like	- 1.10	1.63	- .12					
	Accuracy of Percv DisL	1.09	1.21	.16					
	Accuracy of Percv Flirt	1.78	1.45	.22					
H6f	N = 108				.02				
	Self-Disclosure Breadth	- 0.05	0.12	- .04					
	Self-Disclosure Intimacy	- 0.05	0.15	- .04					
	Perceived Partner Breadth	0.02	0.15	.01					
	Perceived Partner Intimacy	0.20	0.15	.16					
H8f	N = 108				.01				
	Messages Sent	0.01	0.01	.13					
	Questions Asked	0.02	0.03	.07					
	Topics Covered	0.01	0.07	.02					
	Time Between Messages	0.01	0.01	.13					
H10f	N = 108				.01				
	Perceived Appropriateness	- 0.17	0.19	- .09					
H12f	N = 108				.00				
	Trust for Partner	- 0.01	0.18	- .01					

** p < .05, ** p < .01*

Table 16

Examples of Message Types as Coded by Participants

	Reported	Perceived
Liking	"I know a lot of girls that work at the daycare and love it, you should definitely look into that" "so I see you like photography. what type?"	"haha I love dave matthews!! How was that?! I heard they are amazing live" "that's badass. my dad is a chevy guy, so we've only done novas"
Disliking	"Good job a-hole." "Nope. I hate them with a passion"	"life. You're not gonna talk shit are ya?" "fair enough :p"
Flirting	"so why did you put a question mark next to 'in a relationship' ??" "if you are a com major why are you single?"	"I wonder if we ever find out who the other person is…" "Be jealous of THAT"