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The Self-Reported Reasons for Self-Disclosure and Uncertainty Reduction Strategies Used in Romantic Online Dating Relationships Compared to Face-to-Face Romantic Dating Relationships

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The Self-Reported Reasons for Self-Disclosure and Uncertainty Reduction Strategies Used in

Romantic Online Dating Relationships Compared to Face-to-Face Romantic Dating

Relationships

by

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in Communication & Media Technologies

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Abstract

"One in ten Americans have used an online dating site or mobile dating app themselves, and many people now know someone else who uses online dating or who has found a spouse or long-term partner via online dating" (Pew Research Center 2013). Online dating is now a 2.1 billion dollar industry and growing (Fiscal Times, 2014). The current study examines how interpersonal computer-mediated relationships developed through uncertainty reduction strategies and self-disclosure. Online daters may become educated on courting in a computer-mediated environment by learning from the experiences of those that participate in online relationship seeking. Online daters may desire an understanding and awareness of their environment, and being informed on the etiquette of obtaining and growing in online romantic relationships. The current study adds to the existing body of scholarly research on online dating in a computer-mediated setting.

Keywords: online dating, uncertainty reduction, self-disclosure

The Self-Reported Reasons for Self-Disclosure and Uncertainty Reduction Strategies Used in

Romantic Online Dating Relationships Compared to Face-to-Face Romantic Dating

Relationships

During the early stages of the computer in the late 1970s, the use of the Internet was

primarily affiliated with universities and government agencies that used it to manipulate and

analyze data. After the commercialization of the World Wide Web in the 1990s, the Internet

took on a greater role, evolving into a medium used to build social networks and foster intimate

relationships. In addition to social networks, the fast paced expansion of social media promotes

internet-based connections with the people we know and love, and the people we would like to

grow with. There are over fifty-four million Americans that currently participate in online

dating (statisticsbrain.com, 2015). Online dating will continue to grow as it is currently a $1.2

billion dollar industry (statisticsbrain.com, 2015).

Online dating has changed the process by which interpersonal relationships begin,

advance, and end (Walther, 1994). Walther states that online daters self-disclose information at

a faster rate than face-to-face (FTF) daters due to the reduced levels of nonverbal cues and

limited strategies to reduce uncertainty. The traditional progression of how much, why, and

when information is self-disclosed has changed because of the availability and abundance of

information given prior to the initial online contact (Walther, 1994). The social penetration

theory suggests that in order for interpersonal relationships to go from an impersonal stage to a

more intimate level, increased self-disclosure over time is required (Taylor & Altman, 1987).

Researchers suggest that this theory has partly excluded exclusive online daters as it mostly

applies to those in FTF relationships (Walther, 2002). The amount, depth, and rate of self-

disclosure may depend on the daters' anticipated future FTF meeting and/or information

discovered during the "getting to know you" stage (Ellison, Gibbs, & Heino, 2006). Recent studies suggest that online daters release information about themselves in hopes of receiving similar information in return from those interested in them (Utz, 2000; Walther, 1994). Information is also revealed online as a means to reduce uncertainty.

Today many interpersonal relationships begin on the internet. However, as a communication medium, the internet does not provide full information about the person of interest. As a result, there is more uncertainty about the people we meet. Studies have found that people disclose more information online (Gibbs, Ellison, Nicole, & Lai, 2011; Yurchisin, Watchravesringkan, & McCabe, 2005), which appears to be opposite of the argument that states receiving limited nonverbal cues make it harder to disclose (Sheldon, 2009).

The uncertainty reduction theory (URT) is applied in the current study in attempts to better understand the strategies online daters use to reduce uncertainty, and to also examine how the amount of information revealed about oneself, rate, and type of information self-disclosed reduces uncertainty. The research also determines if the information presented on online profiles reduces uncertainty, in turn influencing the rate of self-disclosure in those seeking online sexual/romantic relationships.

Review of Literature

Creating and nurturing romantic relationships online are now commonplace in today's society. The internet is one of the most popular ways to find a romantic partner. The internet has become a major vehicle for social encounters due to the high levels of internet penetration (Baker, 2002, 2005; St. John, 2002). As the formation of relationships continues to grow online, there has been growing research on computer-mediated communication (CMC), uncertainty reduction, and self-disclosure. CMC is defined as human interaction through

computer technology. Researchers have set out to discover how the uncertainty reduction

theory (Gibbs et al., 2011) applies in computer-mediated settings. The Antheunis, Valkenburg,

and Peter (2007) study found that CMC encourages interpersonal attraction and relationship

development. It has also been hypothesized and tested that through CMC, users become less

concerned about self-disclosing information about themselves (Joinson, 2001; Walther, 1996).

Uncertainty Reduction

Uncertainty reduction is key in developing interpersonal relationships. According to

Berger and Calabrese (1975), low amounts of uncertainty correspond with greater intimacy and

increased self-disclosure. The uncertainty reduction theory explains the relational development

between strangers and the strategies used to reduce unfamiliarity. The developers of this theory

believe strangers go through three stages of relational development, which are the entry,

personal, and exit stages. The entry stage of the relationship consists of gathering basic

demographic information such as the name, age, location, economic status, and marital status

of the individual. During the personal stage, attitudes, beliefs, fears, values, and more personal

information is shared. Finally, in the exit stage, the parties can choose to further the relationship

by self-disclosing additional information, or to terminate it.

In a traditional FTF dating relationship, both parties have to engage in passive, active,

or interactive strategies to obtain information. A passive strategy can be as simple as observing

the person of interest without making contact. The active strategy is proactively setting up

situations to observe the person of interest, or asking others about the individual. An interactive

strategy is speaking directly to the person. In an online setting, it may be harder to conduct such

strategies as it could be difficult to set up instances to observe the person of interest or ask

about the individual from another online site member. In fact, the lack of information can

discourage contact and plans for future relational goals (Solomon & Knobloch, 2001).

In a computer-mediated setting, there are four stages to reduce uncertainty: entry, self-

disclosure, validation, and exit. In the entry stage the online dater will use passive strategies

(observing the person before making contact) to seek information about the person of interest

by viewing online dating profiles, blogs, posts, photos, and additional information provided by

the dating site. The second stage is the self-disclosure stage. Once contact has been made and

communication has started, each person will begin to reveal more information about oneself to

the other by using interactive strategies (direct communication/question asking). Self-disclosure

occurs to build a relationship, gain trust, set a level of comfort, and to obtain additional

information about the person (the more I reveal, the more you will reveal). The third stage is

validation. To further reduce uncertainty, both parties may conduct further research on the

person of interest by searching public records, performing home property value searches, and

searching for the prospect on other websites (Gibbs et al., 2011). This is an attempt to validate

that what the person has revealed about themselves is true. The fourth stage is the exit stage. In

this stage, both parties can then decide if they want to further the relationship, or continue to

communicate, based on the information gathered in stages one to three.

Tidwell and Walther (2002) found passive uncertainty reduction strategies are

frequently used in online settings to form impressions of the person of interest. The information

seeker will view an online profile for similarities, photos, interest, and additional attractions.

Online profiles are considered to be a representation of the person of interest, and based on the

presentation, the seeker then decides to pursue or pass (Ellison, Hancock, & Toma, 2011). The

popular television show *Catfish* is dedicated to telling the good, bad, and ugly of online dating.

Daters express how relationships began by first observing an online profile and the steps taken to build a relationship. According to Tobil Technology and AnswerLab (2012), 39 participants, 18 females and 21 males, participated in an eye-tracking study to observe how daters examine potential partners online. The study revealed that male subjects spend "65 percent more time viewing their potential partner's photo and women spend 50 percent more time than men reading profile information about their prospective partner's background and interests" (para.1). Although the study did not examine relational goals and the reasons why each individual focused on a photo and/or profile, such a study reveals that daters use different methods of choosing and/or getting to know a potential partner.

Individuals seeking relationships often times deploy strategies to reduce uncertainty, therefore increasing predictability (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Reducing uncertainty via online dating websites may be challenging because there isn't a close network of friends, such as on Facebook or Google+, to validate one's identity or to confirm who they project themselves to be.

As online technologies, and the communicative affordances they offer, become central in many individuals' social practices and daily experiences, privacy concerns—what to disclose, to whom, and how to ensure that others are disclosing honestly in return—are increasingly salient. Such concerns are likely to motivate behaviors to reduce uncertainty and verify the credibility of online partners. This is especially true in contexts such as online dating, where individuals often initiate relationships with people they do not know in offline contexts. (Gibbs et al., 2011, p. 71)

Gibbs, Ellison, Nicole, and Lai (2011) investigated online relationships, uncertainty reduction, privacy concerns, and self-disclosure. Reducing uncertainty online may be difficult due to the reduction of nonverbal cues; therefore, daters rely on using different strategies to

reduce uncertainty and form impressions of the person of interest (Ramirez, Walther, Burgoon, & Sunnafrank, 2002). Such strategies include question asking, increased self-disclosure, and increased affection statements to obtain needed information.

Antheunis, Schouten, Valkenburg, and Peter (2011) studied uncertainty reduction strategies and verbal affection in different settings—FTF, text-based instant messenger, and webcam—to observe strategies used to reduce uncertainty. Three of their seven hypotheses are of interest for this research:

Hypothesis 1: Text-based Computer-Mediated-Communication (CMC) yields a greater proportion of verbal statements of affection than visual CMC can, which in turn yields a greater proportion of verbal statements of affection than FTF communication. Hypothesis 3a: Text-based CMC yields a greater proportion of question asking than visual CMC, which in turn yields a greater proportion of question asking than FTF communication. Hypothesis 4a: Text-based CMC results in a higher level of question/disclosure intimacy than visual CMC, which in turn results in a higher level of question/ disclosure intimacy than FTF communication. (Antheunis, Schouten, Valkenburg, & Peter, 2011, p. 762)

They found there was a greater amount of affection statements found in online text-based conversations in comparison to physical FTF conversations used to reduce uncertainty. In addition, when the amount of affection statements was compared in text-based CMC versus visual CMC (webcam), studies revealed the amount of affection statements did not differ between text-based CMC and visual CMC. They also found that question-asking to reduce uncertainty was far greater in text-based CMC in comparison to FTF, and disclosure intimacy was greater in text-based CMC in comparison to FTF. In all, their findings revealed that text and

visual CMC participants "exhibited more intimate self-disclosures and asked more intimate questions than FTF participants did" (Antheunis et al., 2011, p. 772).

 Attempting to reduce uncertainty online is not limited to online daters. Members of social networks involve themselves in uncertainty reduction strategies to gain more information on the person(s) of interest (Antheunis, Valkenburg, & Peter, 2007). Antheunis et al. (2007) hypothesize that similarities found and lower levels of uncertainty promote social attraction. Lower levels of uncertainty may result from conducting a number of passive or active uncertainty reduction strategies to obtain information on the person of interest. They found that almost 99% of respondents reported using passive strategies to learn more information about the person of interest, such as looking through pictures, weblogs, profile information, and messages. Eighty-four percent of respondents reported using active strategies to reduce uncertainty, such as asking questions about their education, work, personal things, and questions about what they do on their spare time.

Self-Disclosure and Relational Goals

In computer-mediated communication, self-disclosure is one of the limited strategies used to get to know each other in an online setting (Tidwell & Walther, 2002). It has been suggested that the reduced nonverbal cues in CMC increase self-disclosure and direct questioning. Due to the decreased inhibition in an online setting, partners will release more information about themselves (Tidwell & Walther, 2002). On the contrary, users can no longer see who is looking at them, limiting or sometimes increasing the amount of information self-disclosed online (Tufekci, 2008).

The self-disclosure of personal information plays an important role in the development of intimacy in romantic relationships (Greene, Derlega, & Mathews, 2006). There is also evidence

that has proven enhanced self-disclosure is prevalent in an online setting (Joinson, 2001; Levine, 2000). Past studies (Henderson & Gilding, 2004; McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002) have found this to be true as researchers have found that the anonymity, shared interest, and lack of physical presence may promote increased self-disclosure. Joinson (2004) conducted a study that compared self-disclosure in FTF versus online conversations. His study found that online discussions led to four times as much self-disclosure in comparison to FTF conversations. Although it has been found that the amount of information disclosed about oneself in an online setting is higher, daters are still trying to reduce uncertainty by confirming one's identity through email, phone call (Whitty, 2004), or by trying to confirm their identity through friends and family (Yurchisin et al., 2005).

Nguyen, Bin, Hons, and Campbell (2012) conducted a systematic review of 15 studies that examined online and offline self-disclosure to determine if disclosures were greater online. According to the review, surveys and experiments that directly examined the frequency of self-disclosure revealed that disclosure is more frequent in an online setting which supports CMC and suggest the social information processing (SIP) theory to be true.

Gibbs et al. (2011) conducted a study that focused on several communicator-related factors that could influence uncertainty reduction strategies in an online setting. The factors were communicator related, situation-context related, goal related, information related, and technology related. They hypothesized that online daters that were concerned about personal security, recognition, and misinterpretation will try to reduce uncertainty at a higher level. They also hypothesized that online daters with greater self-efficacy, online experience, and those that try to reduce uncertainty regularly disclose more. They believed that

online dating participants who engage in greater uncertainty reduction behavior will have

less uncertainty about potential dating partners and will thus open up more in their

interactions with them, assuming they are confident in the veracity of the information

they have received. (p. 77)

Reciprocity norms lead to increased mutual self-disclosure in interpersonal relationships

(Derlega, Winstead, Wong, & Greenspan, 1987), but in the online contexts, concerns about the

veracity of the disclosed information may hinder this process and inhibit reciprocal self-

disclosure. Uncertainty reduction is likely to provide an important middle step that helps

alleviate such concerns and provokes more self-disclosure, as individuals gain confidence in the

information provided by the other person through verification activities that do not reveal

misrepresentation by the target (Gibbs et al., 2011). After the surveys were issued and results

were analyzed, Gibbs et al. (2011) proved all hypotheses to be true except for one. There was no

significant support that those with online experience disclosed more. Results also revealed that

most online daters reduce uncertainty through passive strategies which are comparing photos,

profile descriptions, saving emails and chats. Some respondents reported going as far as to check

public records, white pages, performing home property value searches, and attempting to find the

prospect on other websites. Once validation has occurred, greater self-disclosure occurs.

Ellison, Gibbs, and Heino (2006), tested the amount of self-disclosure based on

relational goals and perceived success in online dating. Meeting people online presents a

challenge in self-disclosure and uncertainty reduction because strategies used to reduce

uncertainty for FTF differ from those online. They concluded that self-disclosure is based on

four predictors, which are honesty, the amount of information self-disclosed, intent, and valence.

The study hypothesized that more information is self-disclosed based upon anticipated future

FTF interaction. Confirming the hypotheses, research subjects' self-disclosed more accurate and greater amounts of information about themselves if they anticipated a future FTF meeting. Altman (1975) also said, "There is an optimal degree of desired access of the self to the others at any moment in time" (p. 18). Therefore, those communicating in an online setting have certain degrees of self-disclosure depending on relational goals, the dating environment, the person of interest, and their levels of reciprocity.

Online self-disclosure and relational goals is a growing subject of interest as the amount of relationships formed online is growing. Self-disclosing information about oneself may lead to obtaining detailed information about the person of interest because they may feel inclined to reciprocate. On the other hand, self-disclosing too much information may discourage others from drawing near and revealing information about themselves. Ledbetter et al. conducted a study in 2010 on "Online Social Connection (OSC) and Self-Disclosure as Predictors of Facebook Communication and Relational Closeness." The study looks into how self-disclosure and social connections foster interpersonal communication. They had a total of nine hypotheses, some of which were:

Hypothesis 1: Online Self-Disclosure (OSD) positively predicts frequency of Facebook communication (with specific Facebook Friends). Hypothesis 2: OSD inversely predicts frequency of offline communication (with specific Facebook Friends). Hypothesis 3: OSC positively predicts frequency of Facebook communication (with specific Facebook Friends). Hypothesis 4: OSC positively predicts frequency of offline communication (with specific Facebook Friends). (Ledbetter et al., 2011, p. 33)

Results revealed that low to moderate levels of self-disclosure and social connections promoted increased levels of communication and relational closeness amongst friends. On the other hand,

too much self-disclosure was seen as insignificant (not exclusive) and may discourage those with social anxiety to shy away from social networks. This study shows that, depending on the online setting, too much self-disclosure may act as a deterrent.

The amount of self-disclosure between daters may depend on the environment to which the CMC occurs. On social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, and Google+, self-disclosure rates are higher because there is a greater connection to the friend base, making it harder to falsify information (Tufekci, 2008). The boundaries for self-disclosure are already set based on the culture of the site (Tufekci, 2008). On dating sites members are usually unfamiliar with each other or, in some cases, have the same friends in common. Online daters are expected to create a dating profile that consists of personal descriptions of oneself (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2008). For some dating sites, self-disclosing specific demographic information is mandatory in order to use the services provided by the dating site. Being mandated to self-disclose a certain amount of demographic and secondary information online is seen as providing ways to reduce uncertainty for site members.

Research Questions

The research questions listed aim to discover the level of self-disclosure and uncertainty reduction strategies used in online dating environments versus face-to-face. The following questions also assist in defining what the current study intends to discover. The answers given by respondents will also add to the existing body of research in the area of computer-mediated communication.

RQ1: What are the differences between why people self-disclose information about themselves in *face-to-face* versus *online* relationships?

RQ2: What are the differences in the *rate* of how long it takes for information to be self-disclosed during online romantic relationships in comparison to face-to-face romantic relationships?

RQ3: To what extent do respondents say *online profile information* reduces uncertainty?

RQ4: What *strategies* are effectively used to reduce uncertainty in online romantic relationships?

RQ5: What *types of information* do online daters feel comfortable disclosing online?

Methods

A survey link was distributed through Facebook to students enrolled in a private institution of higher learning in the northeast. Respondents were encouraged to share the post with others. The survey link was also distributed to the students enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts at this institution. The surveys administered were fully confidential. Personal identifiers such as email addresses were discarded through the secure site. Survey data was password protected and only accessible by the research team. The survey was timed at 10 minutes for completion and remained open for five weeks. There were no incentives offered for participating in the survey. If interested, respondents had the option to request results post completion.

To begin the survey, the respondents had to indicate if they had dated online. A response of "yes" prompted respondents to answer statements regarding their online dating experiences and then transitioned into statements regarding face-to-face relationships. A response of "no" prompted respondents to answer statements regarding their face-to-face dating experiences. Respondents used a Likert scale to answer statements ranging from 1 to 6 (strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, undecided = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5, and not applicable = 6). In questions

regarding rate of self-disclosure, respondents were asked to indicate the length of time passed before information was self-disclosed (never revealed, less than 1 month, 2-4 months, 5-8 months, 9-12 months, 12+ months). From ninety-two completed surveys, fifty-six were analyzed. Thirty-six surveys were not used due to incomplete data.

   To test the self-reported reasons for self-disclosure and uncertainty reduction strategies used in romantic online dating relationships compared to face-to-face romantic dating relationships, five research questions were created. The survey instrument addressed each research question in sections. The goal was to detect the differences and similarities in relational development in both environments. The variables tested in the current research were why daters self-disclose, extent to which online profile information reduces uncertainty, rate of how long it takes to self-disclose information, strategies used to reduce uncertainty, and types of information respondents feel comfortable self-disclosing.

   Reasons why people self-disclose information about themselves in face-to-face versus online relationships were measured using a Likert scale. Each statement highlighted various motives such as self-disclosing information in order to increase interest, information reciprocity, volunteering information, and information sharing based upon the plans of interacting in the future. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a number of statements. The scale response format used was strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, undecided = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5, and not applicable = 6. Examples of statements used to measure why daters self-disclose were, "I self-disclose detailed information about myself in an online romantic relationship because the individual will become more interested," "I self-disclose information about myself online in hopes of getting the person of interest to disclose

more information," and "I self-disclose more information about myself in-depth in an online

romantic relationship if I plan on meeting the individual face-to-face."

The extent to which respondents say online profile information reduces uncertainty in

an online relationship was measured using a Likert scale. Each statement measured if

uncertainty was reduced based on the types of information self-disclosed in an online profile,

the scarcity/abundance of information self-disclosed, and how interesting the profile appeared.

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a number of statements. The scale response

format used was strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, undecided = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree =

5, and not applicable = 6. Examples of statements used to measure the extent of how online

profiles reduce uncertainty were, "I will self-disclose more information online to the person of

interest if I feel that their profile disclosed enough information about themselves," "If my

online dating profile has a scarce amount of information, online daters will not self-disclose

information about themselves to me," and "I will not self-disclose information about myself

online to individuals with limited profile information."

The differences in the rate of how long it takes for information to be self-disclosed

during online romantic relationships in comparison to face-to-face romantic relationships were

measured using two Likert scales. Each question measured the timeframe in which political

views, romantic fantasies, real name, occupation, religious beliefs, phone number, and email

were revealed. The scale response format used was never revealed = 1, less than 1 month = 2,

2-4 months = 3, 5-8 months = 4, 9-12 months = 5, and 12+ months = 6. Respondents were also

asked to agree or disagree with a number of statements. The second format used was strongly

disagree = 1, disagree = 2, undecided = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5, and not applicable = 6.

Examples of questions used to measure time frame were, "How long did it take for you to

reveal your political views in a romantic online setting," and "How long did it take for you to

reveal romantic fantasies in a romantic online setting." Examples of statements were, "In an

online dating setting, I will wait longer to self-disclose information about myself even if the

person of interest has already self-disclosed a large amount of personal information," and "If

the person of interest self-discloses personal information about themselves online early in the

relationship, I will also self-disclose personal information about myself at the same rate."

Strategies used to reduce uncertainty in online romantic relationships versus face-to-

face relationships were measured using a Likert scale. Each statement measured if online

searches were conducted on the person of interest in order to reduce uncertainty and if daters

tried to find out information about the person of interest to determine how much information

they will self-disclose. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a number of

statements. The scale response format used was strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, undecided

= 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5, and not applicable = 6. Examples of statements used were,

"In a romantic in-person relationship I conduct online searches of the person to reduce

uncertainty," and "I conduct searches of the person outside of the online dating site prior to

contact to reduce uncertainty."

Types of information daters feel comfortable in revealing in an online romantic

relationship versus a face-to-face relationship were measured using a Likert scale. Each

question measured the comfortability of the types of information self-disclosed such as political

views, romantic fantasies, real name, occupation, religious beliefs, phone number, and email.

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a number of statements. The scale response

format used was strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, undecided = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree =

5, and not applicable = 6. Examples of statements used were, "When in a romantic in-person

relationship, I feel comfortable self-disclosing large amounts of information about myself," "I

feel comfortable revealing my political views in a romantic in-person relationship," and "When

dating online, I feel comfortable self-disclosing large amounts of information about myself."

The survey ended with collecting basic demographics such as age, marital status, and race.

Results

Using predictive *analytics software* (IBM-SPSS), an Independent Samples *t*-test was

used to compare the differences in self-disclosure and uncertainty reduction strategies used in

an online dating environment versus face-to face relationships. The Independent Samples *t*-test

evaluates the difference in means between the two groups. Questions were designed to uncover

why people self-disclose information about themselves in face-to-face versus online

relationships, what are the differences in the rate of how long it takes for information to be self-

disclosed, to what extent do respondents say online profile information reduces uncertainty,

what strategies are effectively used to reduce uncertainty, and what types of information daters

feel comfortable disclosing.

RQ 1–Why Daters Disclose Information

Self-disclosure to increase interest. There was no significant difference in one self-

disclosing information about themselves in order to increase interest online ($M = 3.52$, $SD =$

1.12) and face-to-face ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.08$) conditions; $t(63) = -.916$, $p = .529$. While there

was no significant difference in self-disclosing information about oneself in order to increase

interest, research suggests that face-to-face daters disclose more information about themselves

to increase interest.

Future interaction. There was no significant difference in self-disclosing more

information about oneself if one intends on having future interaction online ($M = 3.72$, $SD =$

1.31) and face-to-face (M = 4.47, SD = .824) conditions; $t(64)$ = -2.79, p = .002. While there was no significant difference in self-disclosing more information about oneself if one intends on having future interaction, research suggests that face-to-face daters self-disclose more information if they intend on having future interaction.

Reciprocity of self-disclosure based on information received. There was a significant difference in self-disclosure if the person of interest self-discloses enough about themselves online (M = 3.44, SD = .921) and face-to-face (M = 4.08, SD = .846) conditions; $t(64)$ = -2.66, p = .238. Research suggests that face-to-face daters self-disclose more if information is revealed to them.

Self-disclosing more to get more information. There was no significant difference in one self-disclosing a greater amount of information in order to get more information from the person of interest online (M = 3.55, SD = 1.14) and face-to-face (M = 3.82, SD = 1.04) conditions; $t(63)$ = -.919, p = .529. While there was no significant difference in one self-disclosing a greater amount of information in order to get more information from the person of interest, research suggests that face-to-face daters reveal more information to receive more information.

RQ 2–Online Profile Information

Research set out to discover how online profile information reduces uncertainty in an online environment. Research also set out to find how discovering information prior to meeting reduces uncertainty. The dependent variables were the amount of information found about the person of interest prior to contact and its relation to reducing uncertainty, level of interest based on the information self-disclosed in an online profile, and willingness or unwillingness to disclose information after viewing an online profile.

Amount of information shared. There was a significant difference in how information shared by the person of interest reduces uncertainty in an online setting ($M = 3.44$, $SD = .921$) and face-to-face ($M = 4.35$, $SD = .785$) conditions; $t(64) = -3.99$, $p = .236$. Results suggest that face-to-face daters will self-disclose more about themselves if a large amount of information is given to them.

Scarcity of information. There was no significant difference in the willingness to self-disclose information about oneself if the person of interest self-discloses a limited amount of information about themselves online ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.23$) and face-to-face ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.21$) conditions; $t(64) = -1.17$, $p = .748$. There was no significant difference in the willingness to self-disclose information about oneself if the person of interest self-discloses a limited amount of information. These results suggest that face-to-face daters reveal more even though information given is scarce.

Interesting profile information. Those who responded yes to having an online relationship responded to the statement "I will self-disclose more information about myself online if I find the person of interest online profile to be interesting." Sixty-two percent agreed, 16% were undecided, and 22% disagreed.

Large amount of profile information self-disclosed. Those who responded yes to having an online relationship responded to the statement "Online dating profiles that disclose large amounts of information increase my willingness to disclose information about myself." Forty-five percent agreed, 17% were undecided, and 38% disagreed.

Limited profile information self-disclosed. Those who responded yes to having an online relationship responded to the statement "I determine the depth of information I will self-

disclose to the person of interest online after viewing their online profile." Thirty-four percent

agreed, 22% were undecided, and 44% disagreed.

RQ 3–Length of Time Known Before Information is Disclosed

Research set out to find how long it takes for daters to disclose information in an online

versus face-to-face relationship. The dependent variables were romantic fantasies, name,

occupation, religion, and email address.

Romantic fantasies. There was no significant difference in the scores for time taken to

reveal romantic fantasies online ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 1.41$) and face-to-face ($M = 2.27$, $SD = .578$)

conditions; $t(.818) = .231$, $p = .000$. While there is not a significant difference between the

lengths in time fantasies are revealed in a face-to-face relationship versus an online

relationship, results show online daters reveal fantasies faster than face-to-face daters.

Real name. There was no significant difference in the scores for time taken to reveal

one's real name online ($M = 2.55$, $SD = .983$) and face-to-face ($M = 2.23$, $SD = .666$)

conditions; $t(63) = 1.51$, $p = .134$. While there was no significant difference in the scores for

time taken to reveal one's real name online, these results suggest that online daters reveal their

names faster than face-to-face daters.

Occupation. There was no significant difference in the scores for time taken to reveal

one's occupation online ($M = 2.33$ $SD = .766$) and face-to-face ($M = 2.25$, $SD = .525$)

conditions; $t(64) = .503$, $p = .035$. While there was no significant difference in the scores for

time taken to reveal one's occupation, these results suggest that online daters reveal their

occupation faster than face-to-face daters.

Religion. There was no significant difference in the scores for time taken to reveal

one's religion online ($M = 2.0$, $SD = .872$) and face-to-face ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 1.28$) conditions;

$t(64) = -1.60$, $p = .005$. While there was no significant difference in the scores for time taken to reveal one's religion, these results suggest that face-to-face daters reveal their religion faster than online daters.

Email. There was no significant difference in the scores for time taken to reveal one's email address online ($M = 2.16$, $SD = .985$) and face-to-face ($M = 2.12$, $SD = .489$) conditions; $t(64) = .229$, $p = .000$. While there was no significant difference in the scores for time taken to reveal one's email, these results suggest that face-to-face daters reveal their email addresses faster than online daters.

RQ 4–Uncertainty Reduction Strategies

Research prior to contact. There was no significant difference in researching the person of interest prior to contact online ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.10$) and face-to-face ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.20$) conditions; $t(64) = .644$, $p = .374$. While there was no significant difference in conducting research on the person of interest prior to contact to reduce uncertainty, these results suggest that face-to-face daters research more about the person of interest prior to contact.

Conducting research on the person of interest in person. Those who responded yes to having a face-to-face relationship responded to the statement, "In an in-person romantic relationship, I try to find out information about the person of interest to determine how much information I will self-disclose to them." Seventy-one percent agreed, 24% were undecided, and 5% disagreed.

RQ 5–Comfortability of Types of Information Self-Disclosed

Research set out to discover the types of information one is comfortable in revealing in an online dating environment versus a face-to-face relationship. The dependent variables were fears, romantic fantasies, religion, political affiliation, and phone number.

Fears. There was a significant difference in the comfort level of revealing one's fears in an online relationship ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 1.04$) and face-to-face ($M = 4.12$, $SD = .866$) conditions; $t(64) = -6.63$, $p = .321$. These results suggest that face-to-face daters feel a greater level of comfort in revealing their fears.

Phone number. There was a significant difference in the comfort level of revealing one's phone number in an online relationship ($M = 2.05$, $SD = .802$) and face-to-face ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 1.17$) conditions; $t(64) = -7.28$, $p = .197$. These results suggest that face-to-face daters feel a greater level of comfort in revealing their phone numbers.

Romantic fantasies. There was not a significant difference in the comfort level of revealing one's romantic fantasies in an online relationship ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.24$) and face-to-face ($M = 4.12$, $SD = .866$) conditions; $t(64) = -5.58$, $p = .014$. These results suggest that face-to-face daters feel a greater level of comfort in revealing their romantic fantasies.

Religious beliefs. There was a significant difference in the comfort level of revealing one's religious beliefs in an online relationship ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.78$) and face-to-face ($M = 4.66$, $SD = .630$) conditions; $t(64) = -4.52$, $p = .000$. These results suggest that face-to-face daters feel a greater level of comfort in revealing their religious affiliation.

Political affiliation. There was not a significant difference in the comfort level of revealing one's political affiliation in an online relationship ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.13$) and face-to-face ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.18$) conditions; $t(64) = -.322$, $p = .689$. While there was not a significant difference in the comfort level of revealing one's political affiliation, these results suggest that

face-to-face daters feel a greater level of comfort in revealing their political affiliation. Those

who responded yes to having an online relationship responded to the statement "In an online

romantic relationship, I often disclose intimate personal things about myself without

hesitation." Sixty-one percent agreed, 17% were undecided, and 22% disagreed.

Discussion

Online dating is on the rise and becoming increasingly popular. In the late 90s there was

much fear around dating online. Some of those fears centered around being lured into a

dangerous relationship or being *catfished*. When someone has been catfished, they have been

deceived over social media and/or a dating website by a person that created a fake profile in

order to build a romantic relationship. Currently, on the popular television network MTV, there

is a reality-based docu-series about the truths and lies of online dating. The series is based on

the 2010 film *Catfish* and is hosted by Yaniv "Nev" Schulman. This docu-series exposes the

good and the bad of online dating. Nev and his partner, Max Joseph, travel around the nation

answering the calls of individuals that want to meet their online lovers. Some of these hopeful

romantics discover their online lovers to be online liars. Issues range from discovering the other

party is married, has an extensive criminal background, to not being the person pictured in the

profile. Emotions run high when both parties are made to meet because the individual being

catfished revealed some of their deepest secrets and insecurities, and has even fallen in love.

Some have loaned money, paid bills, and financed trips for their online lovers. On another note,

there have been positive occurrences documented where both parties were truthful and revealed

much information about themselves such as real names, sexual fantasies, fears, intimate

pictures, occupation, information about family members, and more. Some relationships have

developed over years and others over a period of weeks.

With the increase of daters finding love online, the methods of reducing uncertainty and the rate of self-disclosure have evolved. In addition to this evolution, one must remain prepared and educated on identifying the warning signs of a potentially harmful relationship. Online dating continues to be on the rise and understanding motives, relational goals, and communication nuances are key. Without the helpers of FTF verbal and nonverbal cues, communication online may be difficult in gauging level of interest. According to the social penetration theory, in order for interpersonal relationships to go from an impersonal stage to a more intimate level, increased self-disclosure is required over time (Taylor & Altman, 1987). Face-to-face communication has been studied by many scholars but there are still communication discoveries being made in the area of CMC.

Variable 1 of the current study sought to discover why daters disclose information online based on the conditions of attempting to increase interest, future interaction, and information reciprocity. Disclosing information about oneself is important in establishing relationships. In FTF relationships, daters have the luxury of making an easier first and lasting impression. No matter the type of FTF encounter, both parties have formed a general impression of the other party based on the obvious factors such as physical appearance, personality traits, verbal and nonverbal cues (Jones, 1990). In a CMC setting, daters may not have the luxury of those factors previously mentioned. In the current study, respondents were asked if they self-disclose information about themselves in order to increase interest; meaning to self-disclose before receiving information from the person of interest. Results found no significant differences between FTF and online daters. One must also be mindful of online profiles. Based upon the amount, depth, and type of information revealed in an online profile, the need to self-disclose or obtain more information may prove unnecessary. The results did

reveal that FTF daters slightly disclose more information about themselves to increase interest before receiving information. In exploring the element of reciprocity, which is to exchange information for personal and mutual benefit, this research found that FTF daters self-disclose more when there is an even exchange of information.

FTF daters quickly move into the secondary stage of self-disclosure where communication begins and each person starts the process of revealing information about themselves through direct communication and question asking. Because there is no profile to get information, the need for increased self-disclosure is mandatory in order to move into the exit stage. The exit stage determines future interaction. The current findings, however, do not fall in line with previous research. In the Joinson 2004 study, the amount of self-disclosure in an online versus a FTF relationship differed greatly. His study found online discussions led to four times as much self-disclosure than FTF. In the Antheunis et al. 2011 study, researchers investigated the amount affection statements made in an online versus FTF relationship when attempting to reduce uncertainty. Again, their study revealed there were greater affection statements found in online-text based conversations in comparison to those of a FTF conversation.

In the current study, the level of self-disclosure was also measured against one's intent to interact in the future. In their 2006 study, Ellison et al. suggested the amount, depth, and rate of self-disclosure may depend on the daters' anticipated future FTF meeting. In Tidwell and Walther's 2002 study, respondents who anticipated meeting in the future asked more personal questions and self-disclosed more information about themselves online in comparison to a FTF conversation.

In 2006, Gibbs et al. studied "The Role of Anticipated Future Interaction, Self-disclosure, and Perceived Success in Internet Dating." Their findings stated

individuals with long-term goals of establishing FTF relationships engage in higher

levels of self-disclosure in that they are more honest, disclose more personal

information, and make more conscious and intentional disclosures to others online.

These findings provide support for the importance of anticipated future (FTF)

interaction as outlined by SIP theory (Walther, 1994) and indicate its role in prompting

increased, more honest, and more intentional self-disclosure in the context of online

dating. (p. 169)

The current study found no significant difference in self-disclosing more information

about oneself if one intends on having future interaction. However, results revealed face-to-face

daters slightly self-disclose more information if they intend on having future interaction. In a

FTF relationship, it is easier to determine if the relationship will grow, whereas further probing

must be done online to avoid a potentially unpleasant meeting.

Variable 2 of the current study sought to discover how long it takes for information to

be self-disclosed in an online versus FTF relationship. The dependent variables researched

were romantic fantasies, real name, occupation, religion, and email. Traditionally, name,

occupation, and religion are first disclosed in order to determine compatibility and future

interaction.

In the area of revealing one's real name, in both FTF and online settings, there was no

significant difference in scores. While there was no significant difference in the scores for time

taken to reveal one's real name, the results suggest that FTF daters reveal their names faster

than online daters. This is typical because a name soon follows an introduction, "hello, my

name is." In an online setting, such as Google+ or Facebook, individuals tend to be truthful in revealing their real names because they tend to use those sites to communicate with people they know on a more intimate level. Individuals who use Twitter, Instagram, Vine, Tagged, and other dating sites tend to use fictitious usernames before revealing their real name, hence the reason for a delay.

In the area of revealing occupation in a FTF versus an online relationship, there was no significant difference in the scores. However, results suggest that online daters reveal their occupation sooner than face-to-face daters. In the area of revealing romantic fantasies in an online versus FTF relationship, there was a no significant difference in the scores. However, results show online daters revealing romantic fantasies faster than FTF daters. In the area of revealing religion in a FTF versus an online relationship, there was no significant difference in the scores. While there was no significant difference in the scores for time taken to reveal one's religion, these results suggest that face-to-face daters reveal their religion faster than online daters. In the area of revealing email addresses in online versus FTF relationships, there was no significant difference in the scores; however, results suggest that face-to-face daters reveal their email addresses slightly faster than online daters. In an online setting, the need to communicate via email is lowered because daters tend to use the messaging tool programmed within the website. Face-to-face daters tend to communicate through phone calls and text messaging.

Online dating is not considered the traditional way of finding love. Though untraditional, daters still require traditional information to determine the future and/or seriousness of the relationship. Out of all factors, name, religion, and occupation were all revealed in less than a month. On the topic of types of information, RQ5 researched how comfortable daters were in self-disclosing information. The dependent variables were fears,

romantic fantasies, religion, political affiliation, and phone number. Trust and comfortability are very important when individuals start to self-disclose their inner most feelings (Bargh et al., 2002). Joinson (2001) discovered even the reveal of intimate online personal information led to increased self-disclosure. Around the area of trust, reciprocity plays a role. In the current study, there was a significant difference in self-disclosure if the person of interest self-discloses enough about themselves online versus FTF. Research suggests that face-to-face daters self-disclose more information when mutually exchanged. This serves to be a true finding based on the results yielded from comfortability.

Daters feel a great sense of trust and comfort when interacting FTF. The level of trust and comfort is typically heightened when the dater can gauge interest, verbal/nonverbal cues, relationships with others, and personality traits. When dating online such factors are harder to evaluate in an online setting. The level of comfort in revealing fears, phone numbers, romantic fantasies, and religious beliefs in online versus FTF relationships differed significantly. Results suggested for all dependent variables mentioned that FTF daters feel a greater level of comfort in revealing said information. While there was no significant difference in the comfort level of revealing one's political affiliation, these results suggest that face-to-face daters feel a slightly greater level of comfort in revealing their political affiliation.

Uncertainty reduction looks at the interaction between people prior to communicating. The theory also says that people feel the need to obtain information about the other in order to move to the next level of relationship. The traditional progression of how much, why, and when information is self-disclosed has changed because of the availability of information (Walther, 2002). As a matter of fact, those in romantic relationships could spend a lifetime learning information about their significant other in order to reduce uncertainty. In the current study I

researched passive strategies used by daters to obtain information and reduce uncertainty. A

passive strategy can be observing the person online and FTF without making contact. In an

online setting, the pursuant can read posts, view photos, and sometimes view the friends of the

person of interest. Solomon (2001) and Theiss (2005) say a lack of information can discourage

relational goals. The current study asked respondents if they conducted research on the person

of interest prior to contact. The results yielded no significant difference in researching the

person of interest prior to contact online versus FTF; however, the results suggest that face-to-

face daters research more about the person of interest prior to contact. Face-to-face daters

responded to the statement, "In an in-person romantic relationship, I try to find out information

about the person of interest to determine how much information I will self-disclose to them."

Seventy-one percent agreed, 24% were undecided, and 5% disagreed.

The current research focuses on how an online profile can assist in reducing uncertainty.

The dependent variables were the amount of information found about the person of interest

prior to contact and its relation to reducing uncertainty, level of interest based on the

information self-disclosed in an online profile, and willingness or unwillingness to disclose

information after viewing an online profile. The content of online profiles may also determine

frequency of contact. Zoosk, an online dating company, released a study with a sample size of

4,000 in 2013. The study discussed how a well-structured profile could increase inbound

messages and response rates. Research found online profiles that displayed full body photos,

hobbies, and important information received more responses than those that did not. Wheeler

and Sheba (2015) wrote an article on how to write a winning online profile. The article stated,

> Dating experts say dissecting profiles and analyzing commonly used phrases can
>
> pinpoint players and cull the keepers, increasing the chances of becoming one of the

estimated one in five couples that meet online. Jennifer Oikle, a Denver relationship

psychologist and dating coach, says what's written in a profile may reveal more about

who the individuals are and who they tend to attract than they realize. (p. 1)

In asking questions strictly tied to online profiles, 62% agreed to the statement "I will

self-disclose more information about myself online if I find the person of interest online profile

to be interesting." Sixteen percent were undecided and 22% disagreed.

Forty-five percent of online daters agreed to the statement "Online dating profiles that

disclose large amounts of information increases my willingness to disclose information about

myself." Seventeen percent were undecided and 38% disagreed. Thirty-four percent of online

daters agreed to the statement "I determine the depth of information I will self-disclose to the

person of interest online after viewing their online profile." Twenty-two percent were

undecided and 44% disagreed.

In summary, findings reveal FTF daters self-disclose information at a slightly higher

rate than online daters. Research suggests that online daters are still cautious in how, what, to

whom, and when they release information.

Limitations and Strengths

The study presented limitations and strengths. The limitations were sample type, funding,

and the inability to distribute the survey through a number of online dating sites. The study used

a convenience sample of Facebook users and of students enrolled in the liberal arts program at a

private institution of higher learning in the northeast. A large number of respondents had never

dated online. The sample size of those who have dated online may have been larger if the survey

was distributed through an online dating website. Most dating sites required a monthly

subscription fee; lack of funding for those fees limited this researcher's access to the desired

sample group.

Future Research

Continued research into uncertainty reduction, and self-disclosure in a computer

mediated setting, will assist scholars in explaining the nuances of online dating. Online daters

will have a better understanding on how to communicate online and the motivations behind self-

disclosure and uncertainty reduction. Future research will explore the truthfulness of information

self-disclosed in an online setting as well as the motives behind being honest and/or deceitful.

While there were no significant differences in the rate of revealing romantic fantasies, results did

indicate that online daters reveal this information at a faster rate. Future research will aim to

discover why online daters reveal this type of information faster and if it is related to the level of

self-consciousness online versus FTF setting.

Conclusion

The present study gives a comprehensive view of why daters self-disclose information,

the differences in the rate of how long it takes for information to be self-disclosed, the

extent respondents say online profile information reduces uncertainty, the strategies used to

reduce uncertainty, and types of information daters feel comfortable disclosing in an online

versus FTF setting. The findings did not always fall in to line with previous research that states

online daters reveal more information about themselves due to the absence of non-verbal cues

and additional information received only in a FTF dating setting. There was a trend on

respondents revealing more information in a FTF relationship. Face-to-face relationships still

remain more intimate than online relationships. Daters are able to get the physical full view of a

person initially in a FTF setting than in an online setting. Though online profiles help in reducing

uncertainty, research suggests that FTF daters are more comfortable in self-disclosing

information about oneself. Though online dating is not considered traditional, the steps in getting

to know the person of interest still remain the same: observation, initial contact, information

exchange, and determination of future interaction. The environments in which daters use to

communicate through may change but the way in which a relationship develops remains the

same.

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Appendix

Survey Tool

Online Dating Survey:

1. I have had a romantic relationship that started from an online dating website.

2. I have had a romantic relationship that started face-to-face.

Online Dating Survey (Part 1):

Instructions: Stop and think about your most successful online dating relationship. Please

mark the following statements to indicate the degree to which the following statements

reflect how you communicated with this person to reduce uncertainty by marking

whether you strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, undecided = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5,

and not applicable = 6. Also select the appropriate responses for all other questions.

1. I self-disclose detailed information about myself in an online romantic

relationship because the individual will become more interested.

2. I self-disclose information about myself online in hopes of getting the person of interest to

disclose more information.

3. I self-disclose more information about myself in-depth in an online romantic relationship if I

plan on meeting the individual face-to-face.

4. I will self-disclose more information online to the person of interest if I feel that their profile

disclosed enough information about themselves.

5. I will self-disclose more information about myself online if I find the person of interest online

profile interesting.

6. If my online dating profile has a scarce amount of information, online daters will not self-

disclose information about themselves to me.

7. Online dating profiles that disclose large amounts of information increases my willingness to disclose information about myself.

8. I will not self-disclose information about myself online to individuals with limited profile information.

9. If the person of interest self-discloses personal information about themselves online early in the relationship, I will also self-disclose personal information about myself at the same rate.

10. When dating online, I feel comfortable self-disclosing large amounts of information about myself.

11. The more I know about the person of interest online is the more I will self-disclose information about myself.

12. How long did it take for you to reveal your political views in a romantic online setting?

13. How long did it take for you to reveal romantic fantasies in a romantic online setting?

14. How long did it take for you to reveal your real name in a romantic online setting?

15. How long did it take for you to reveal your occupation in a romantic online setting?

16. How long did it take for you to reveal your religious beliefs in a romantic online setting?

17. How long did it take for you to reveal your phone number in a romantic online setting?

18. How long did it take for you to reveal your personal email in a romantic online setting?

19. In an online dating setting, I will wait longer to self-disclose information about myself even if the person of interest has already self-disclosed a large amount of personal information.

20. I conduct searches of the person outside of the online dating site prior to contact to reduce uncertainty.

21. I conduct searches of the person outside of the online dating site after contact to reduce uncertainty.

22. When dating online I talk about myself often.

23. In an online romantic relationship, I often disclose intimate, personal things about myself without hesitation.

24. I initially reveal more about myself when dating online than I do in a face-to-face.

25. A lack of information on an online dating profile discourages me from self-disclosing personal information about myself.

26. I self-disclose less information about myself in an in-person romantic relationship than in do in a romantic online relationship.

27. When dating romantically online, I feel that I sometimes do not control my self-disclosure of intimate things I tell about myself.

28. When dating online, I feel comfortable self-disclosing large amounts of information about myself.

29. I feel comfortable revealing my political views in an online romantic relationship.

30. I feel comfortable revealing my romantic fantasies in an online romantic relationship.

31. I feel comfortable revealing my real name in an online romantic relationship.

32. I feel comfortable revealing my occupation in an online romantic relationship.

33. I feel comfortable revealing my religious beliefs in an online romantic relationship.

34. I feel comfortable revealing my phone number in an online romantic relationship.

35. I feel comfortable revealing my personal email in an online romantic relationship.

Traditional Face-to-Face Relationship Survey (Part 2):

Instructions: Stop and think about your most successful face-to-face dating relationship.

Please mark the following statements to indicate the degree to which the following

statements reflect how you communicated with this person to reduce uncertainty by

marking whether you strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, undecided = 3, agree = 4, strongly

agree = 5, and not applicable = 6. Also select the appropriate responses for all other questions.

1. I self-disclose detailed information about myself in an in-person romantic relationship because

the individual will become more interested.

2. I self-disclose information about myself in an in-person romantic relationship in hopes of

getting the person of interest to disclose more information.

3. I self-disclose more information about myself in-depth in an in-person romantic relationship if

I plan on starting a serious relationship.

4. I will self-disclose more information about myself an in-person romantic relationship if I feel

the person of interest disclosed enough information about himself or herself.

5. I will self-disclose more information about myself an in-person romantic relationship if I find

the person of interest interesting.

6. If the person of interest self-discloses personal information about themselves early in the

relationship I will also self-disclose personal information about myself at the same rate.

7. In an in-person romantic relationship, if a scarce amount of information is revealed I will not

self-disclose information about myself.

8. In an in-person romantic relationship, I try to find out information about the person of interest

to determine how much information I will self-disclose to them.

9. How long did it take for you to reveal your political views in a romantic in-person

relationship?

10. How long did it take for you to reveal your romantic fantasies in a romantic in-person

relationship?

11. How long did it take for you to reveal your real name in a romantic in-person relationship?

12. How long did it take for you to reveal your occupation in a romantic in-person relationship?

13. How long did it take for you to reveal your religious beliefs in a romantic in-person relationship?

14. How long did it take for you to reveal your phone number in a romantic in-person relationship?

15. How long did it take for you to reveal your personal email in a romantic in-person relationship?

16. In a romantic in-person relationship I conduct online searches of the person to reduce uncertainty.

17. When in a romantic in-person relationship, I feel comfortable self-disclosing large amounts of information about myself.

18. I feel comfortable revealing my political views in a romantic in-person relationship.

19. I feel comfortable revealing my romantic fantasies in a romantic in-person relationship.

20. I feel comfortable revealing my real name in a romantic in-person relationship.

21. I feel comfortable revealing my occupation in a romantic in-person relationship.

22. I feel comfortable revealing my religious beliefs in a romantic in-person relationship.

23. I feel comfortable revealing my phone number in a romantic in-person relationship.

24. I feel comfortable revealing my personal email in a romantic in-person relationship.

25. When in a romantic in-person relationship I talk about myself often.

26. In a romantic in-person relationship I self-disclose intimate, personal things about myself without hesitation.

27. In a romantic in-person relationship I initially reveal more about myself.

28. A lack of information in a romantic in-person relationship discourages me from self-

disclosing personal information about myself.

29. In a romantic in-person relationship I feel that I sometimes do not control my self-disclosure

of intimate things I tell about myself.