

USING COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE ON FACEBOOK AND MYSPACE

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

Department of Communication and Dramatic Arts

Central Michigan University  
Mount Pleasant, Michigan  
October 2011

Accepted by the Faculty of the College of Graduate Studies,  
Central Michigan University, in partial fulfillment of  
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To my husband Brian, daughter Ryann, parents, siblings, and all extended family, for  
their unending support.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Dr. Michael Papa for heading my committee and to my committee members, Dr. Wendy Papa and Dr. Shelly Hinck. Also, thank you to Adam Barragato for spending many hours with me and helping me to run my data.

## ABSTRACT

### USING COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE ON FACEBOOK AND MYSPACE

by Morgan Hales

Gone are the days of young minds using good old fashioned face-to-face interaction. Today's youth instead chooses to use a new phenomenon to communicate: Online Social Networking Sites (OSNS), such as Facebook.com and MySpace.com.

The purpose of this study is to explore communication competence. Specifically, this study will examine Facebook.com and MySpace.com and how communication competence is used while using these social networking sites.

The first chapter will review literature on computer-mediated communication (CMC's) by examining (a) a brief history of the Internet, (b) the use of e-mail, (c) Instant Messages (d) OSNS and (e) communication competence, leading up to nine research questions posed by the researcher.

The second part of this study gives a detailed methodology by the researcher on how the study was conducted. The study included 109 participants from a Midwestern University.

The third and fourth parts of this study are the results and discussion section. Research from the first part of the study showed that women are more competent than men in using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com because women were more skilled than men, and therefore, more competent than men. The second part of the study, which examined frequency of use, found a significant positive relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and coordination, attentiveness, expressiveness, and satisfaction, but found no significant relationship between frequency

of use and motivation, knowledge, efficacy, composure, selectivity, appropriateness, effectiveness, clarity, attractiveness, efficiency/productivity, and general usage/experience. Therefore, there was only some support for past research for the argument that the more and individual used Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com, the more they would display these skills on OSNS. This may be because Facebook.com and MySpace.com are changing so much with their layout and how their programs work, that one may never feel or be a competent communicator on these sites. The last part of this study showed that men use OSNS more than women, which does not support previous literature. This could be because as Facebook.com and MySpace.com change and adapt, they may be becoming more interested in using these OSNS. More studies will need to be conducted in the future about Facebook.com and MySpace.com as well as other OSNS because they are changing the way people communicate today.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Not so many years ago, college and high school students would meet up at the mall, talk on the phone, and socialize at school. However, since the Internet became popular in the 1990s, how people communicate with one another has changed significantly. Once computers became more common in homes, people used the Internet and sent e-mails to one another as part of their daily lives, especially college students. A survey done by (Rainie, 2010) in December 2009, found that 74% of Americans ages 18 and older use the Internet. After e-mail, Instant Messaging (IM) was introduced to the world, offering two things: the ability to know who is connected to the Internet and the ability to have text-based conversations with others in real time (Hu, Wood, Smith, & Westbrook, 2004). Instant Messaging was very popular among college students who used it more than any other age group (Jones, 2002).

The newest trend to hit college and high school students is online communities, or online social networking sites (OSNS), also referred to as social networking sites (SNS). Some examples of OSNS are Match.com, Friendster, CyWorld, LinkedIn, Bebo, SixApart, Hi5, Ning, Orkut, Facebook.com and MySpace.com. OSNS such as Facebook.com and MySpace.com are the most popular for young people, providing a new forum for communication with others. In June 2008 Facebook.com had 132.1 million visitors, and MySpace.com had 117.6 million (Lipsman, 2008). These statistics represent a 153 percent increase in Facebook.com users and a 3 percent increase in

MySpace.com users since 2007 (Lipsman, 2008). LinkedIn is the OSNS user for business professionals with 11 million users (Fitzgerald, 2007), but this site focuses primarily on finding jobs and getting answers to business questions (Fox, 2007).

When Facebook.com and MySpace.com began, they became popular in quickly and continued to grow over the years, and now are available on cell phones. In viewing other's profiles, people may learn individuals' phone numbers, addresses, food preferences, religious and political views, and favorite quotes. People may even leave messages on other people's profile pages, referred to as writing on their "walls." Anyone may post information on these networks, and they have grown to reach college students, high school-aged children, business professionals, and many other communities. Because the OSNS's are continuing to grow, it is important to study these networks. Specifically, given the sheer volume of communication among OSNS users, researchers need to gain insight into how communication occurs among users and how such communication is perceived.

According to Jacobson (1999), the cyberspace trend has led researchers to ask how people in cyberspace imagine one another. In other words, how do those who participate in computer mediated communication (CMC), with its lack of many visual and auditory cues, form impressions of others online? By creating profiles and socializing through these networks, students are using new ways to communicate with one another, having an effect on how we will communicate in the future. Facebook.com and MySpace.com, among other sites, have been drawing media attention and headlines worldwide, and academic research on the topic is growing.

There has been research on Facebook.com and MySpace.com, including studies that have looked at impression formation in CMC (e.g. Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006; Hancock & Dunham, 2001; Jacobson, 1999; Ramirez, Walther, Burgoon, & Sunnafrank, 2002; Tanis & Postmes, 2003) and CMC competence (Spitzberg, 2006). However, none have explored communication competence on OSNS. By exploring these social networks in terms of their use of CMC, the ways in which these social networking sites are utilized might be better understood. The purpose of this study is to explore communication competence. Specifically, this study will examine Facebook.com and MySpace.com and how communication competence is used while using these social networking sites.

This topic is also important because many people use these networks to communicate with others instead of e-mailing, calling, or instant messaging. College students can be heard saying, "I facebooked you last night. Did you get my message?" So, these new social networks open up a variety of ways in which researchers may examine how we communicate with one another online.

This thesis will look specifically at Facebook.com and MySpace.com among college students and how communication competence is used OSNS. This study will examine gender differences on OSNS and whether the amount men and women use these sites correlates with them being more competent communicators. It will also examine whether men or women are more competent communicators. The variable that will be explored is communication competence in individuals using OSNS.

Previous research has explored CMC competence (Spitzberg, 2006), but there is not enough research on emerging CMC's such as OSNS.

Because academic research has been continuing to grow on OSNS and college students, this study seeks to establish a base for further research into how they use it as a means of impression management. These new OSNS may dramatically change how college students communicate and interact with one another. To examine impression management among college students using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com, this study will be divided into four chapters.

The first chapter will review literature on computer-mediated communication (CMC's) by examining (a) a brief history of the Internet, (b) the use of e-mail, (c) Instant Messages and (d) OSNS. Once a background of CMCs is established, the review will then explore the literature on communication competence. The first chapter will end with research questions drawn from the review of the current body of literature.

The second chapter will outline the methodology that will be used to answer the research questions in chapter one. This section includes the: (a) research design and rationale for the proposed design, (b) the population and sample of the study, (c) the variables and measures used, including how the variables are operationalized and steps taken to ensure validity, (d) the procedures used, including the protection of human participants and a step-by-step method of collecting data, (e) data treatment, including data entry, cleaning, coding, and reverse-scoring, and (f) data analysis, or the statistical technique selected. The third chapter will present the results of the study, and the fourth chapter will be a discussion of the study, including what is now known about the relationships between/among variables, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Overview

This review of literature describes how the internet began as well as the first ways people connected socially on the Internet – by the use of email and instant messaging. The review then examines OSNS as well as explores the variables central to this study, specifically, communication competence.

#### The Internet

In 1957, Sputnik, a satellite, was sent into orbit by the Soviet Union. In response, President Eisenhower founded Advanced Research Projects Administration, or ARPA, which set aside between five and eight million dollars for computer research (LaBonty, 1998). ARPA helped set up the Internet in 1968/1969 (Briggs & Burke, 2005). The U.S. Department of Defense used the Internet as an experiment to demonstrate the interconnecting of computing devices (Meeker & DePuy, 1996). According to Meeker and DePuy (1996), the Internet was called ARPAnet, and it started with four interconnected computers, three in California and one in Nevada, in September 1969. The Internet was a network that could not be destroyed by atomic blasts and was designed to link the Pentagon, military bases, defense contractors and universities (Glossbrenner, 1995). Eventually, more and more institutions and businesses connected to the Internet and it grew rapidly (Glossbrenner, 1995).

No one knows for sure who came up with the name “Internet” in 1979 but at least five companies and individuals claimed responsibility for it (Meeker & DePuy, 1996). The World

Wide Web as we know it was introduced in 1989 at the Conseil European pour la Recherche Nucleaire (CERN), based in Geneva, where Englishman Tim Berners-Lee developed it (Briggs & Burke, 2005; LaBonty, 1998; Meeker & DePuy, 1996). The World Wide Web allowed people to reference other documents (hypertext) on the Internet (Meeker & DePuy, 1996). Tim Berners-Lee also helped with HTML (hypertext markup language), HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol) and URL (Universal Resource Locators (LaBonty, 1998).

As the World Wide Web (now called the Web) grew, more ways to communicate developed. People could get information online, send and watch real-time audio and video, use personal communications services (PCS) and personal digital assistants (PDAs) to schedule appointments, and use television conferencing (Meeker and DePuy, 1996). According to Miniwatt's Marketing Group (2011), the Internet is used so much in the U.S, that as of March 2011, 272.1 million were using it and North America had a 78.3% penetration rate (% population). With this level of use, the U.S. ranks number one in the world. China follows with 162 million users and Japan ranks third with 89 million users.

### Internet and College Students

Most U.S. businesses use the Internet, and many people in this country use the Internet at home. The Internet is especially popular among college students. According to Jones and Johnson-Yale (2005), college students along with faculty and researchers were amongst the earliest users of the Internet. A study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project found that 86 percent of college students used the Internet and 72 reported that most of their Internet communication was with friends (Jones, 2002).

Internet access is also available at universities, many public libraries, coffee houses, restaurants, and even on people's cell phones all across the U.S., making it easy for people to access it anywhere at anytime. Because so many people could access the Internet at one time, this led to ways people could chat "real-time" with others on the Internet. Thus began the wave of computer-mediated communication.

### CMC defined

CMC use has been defined by a number of researchers, but the basis of each definition is the same. Spitzberg (2006) defined CMC as "any human symbolic text-based interaction conducted or facilitated through digitally-based technologies" (p. 630). CMC can include communicating by means of Internet, text messaging, instant messaging, and e-mail, to name a few.

### Types of CMC

There are two types of CMC messages: asynchronous and synchronous. Asynchronous messages are messages exchanged with considerable delay while synchronous messages are messages that are exchanged with no delay (DeVito, 2008). An example of an asynchronous message would be e-mail because the sender sends a message and it can be viewed by a receiver after it has been retrieved (Rabby & Walther, 2003). Examples of asynchronous messages are instant messaging or chat rooms, because the message is received instantaneously and a person can respond to it right away. The number of people using the Internet, and sending asynchronous and synchronous messages, has increased dramatically since the Internet first started. This thesis next explores the most popular types of CMC uses that have developed over the years.

## E-mail

While surfing the Internet, many people access their e-mail to communicate. E-mail has been used for over thirty years, and was one of the first ways to communicate with others on the Internet. The first electronic mail, or e-mail sent between computers, happened in 1971 (Bellis, 2009). According to Bellis (2009), the first e-mail sent was invented by Ray Tomlinson, a computer engineer at Bolt Beranek and Newman (BBN), which was the company that was hired in 1968 by the U.S. Defense Department to build the first internet. Tomlinson was experimenting with a program called SNDMSG that ARPANET programmers and researchers were using to send messages to each other. The two computers that sent the message were actually right beside each other, and the message sent was “Qwertyuip.”

The sending of e-mail messages in ‘real’ language was one of the main uses of the Internet and ARPANET (Briggs & Burke, 2005). According to Meeker and DePuy (1996), e-mail will continue to be in our future. A study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project found that 86% of working Americans use email at least occasionally, 81 percent of them having a work or personal email account (Madden & Jones, 2008). According to Fox (2005), the percentage of all internet users sending and receiving e-mail was 90 percent. One demographic group that uses e-mail frequently is college students.

## E-mail and College Students

In 2002, the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that 72 percent of college students checked their email at least once a day and 66 percent of students have at least two email addresses (Jones, 2002). The project found that many of these students used their email

to keep up with classes and interact with other students and professors. The study noted that 46 percent of college students use e-mail to tell their professors ideas they would not have said aloud in class, 48 percent of them used it to contact students in their classes, 58 percent used it to find out their grades, and 65 percent reported their absence to their professor through e-mail.

Although e-mail was one of the earlier forms of communication among college students using the Internet, another one soon emerged, instant messaging, which is even faster than e-mail.

### Instant Messaging (IM)

When the Internet became more popular in the early 1990s, chat-rooms were developed to allow groups of people to type in messages that everyone could see (Tyson & Cooper, 2001). Tyson and Cooper (2001) provide a timeline of the steps that follow: In November of 1996, Mirabilis introduced ICQ (“I seek you”) a free instant messaging program anyone could use. In 1997, America Online (AOL) allowed its users to use chat rooms and instant messages, and in 1998, they acquired Mirabilis and ICQ, becoming the leader in instant messaging. As of 2004, 195 million people were using AOL Instant Messenger (AIM) worldwide (Quan-Haase, Cothrel, & Wellman, 2005). According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project’s May-June 2004 tracking survey, 12 percent of Internet users IM others, meaning 13 million people are using IM daily, up nine percent since April 2000 (Shiu & Lenhart, 2004). Other IM providers include Microsoft Network (MSN) and Yahoo!

Instant Messaging (IM) is different than e-mail because it provides for the immediate delivery of messages. According to Hu, Wood, Smith, and Westbrook (2004), Instant Messaging is unique because it allows others to know who is connected to the shared space between or among friends and it allows people to have conversation by text in real time. IM applications include four components: a "pop-up" message that relays messages instantly, a "buddy list" of friends, and a way for knowing when "buddies" are online to receive a message, and a way to let others know where they are if they are away from the computer at the moment, also called "away messages" (Quan-Haase, Cothrel, & Wellman, 2005). Just like Internet usage and e-mail, Instant Messenger was quick to become popular among college students.

Findings from the 2002 Pew Internet and American Life Project suggest that college students using the Internet are twice as likely to use the Internet compared to the average user and are the heaviest users of IM in the U.S. (Jones, 2002). In the study, 42 percent of those college students say they use the Internet mostly to communicate socially, 10 percent use it for entertainment, and 85 percent said they found the Internet an easy and convenient way to communicate with friends.

The newest way college students are communicating socially with friends is through Online Social Networking Sites (OSNS). OSNS will be explored in the next section.

### Online Social Networking Sites

OSNS, also known as just SNSs by some researchers, are a relatively new phenomenon, having appeared on the Internet over the past few years. There have been many definitions of OSNS. According to Sieburgh and Berkus (2007), OSNS can be used for

recruiting, finding resources or reuniting with friends. In a report by The Pew Internet and American Life Project in January 2007, it described OSNS' as a place where people can connect to others by creating a profile and building a personal network (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined OSNS as "web-based services that allow individuals to: "(1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (p.211). When joining an OSNS, a person fills out forms about themselves including things such as age, interests, and an "about me" section, and is encouraged to upload a profile photo (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). OSNS then have replaced email and instant messaging with a new creative way of connecting with others that include not only talking to people online, but looking at photos and more detailed information about people.

### History of OSNS

According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), the first OSNS was SixDegrees.com, which was launched in 1997. This OSNS allowed others to create profiles, list friends, and look for other friends. SixDegrees.com combined features that already existed on separate sites. For example, on dating sites, such as Match.com, profiles existed, and on AIM, people could have a list of friends but no one else could see them. The popular Classmates.com, allowed people to look for high school or college friends and search through networks, but were not able to create profiles or have friends lists until years later. In 2000, SixDegrees.com closed. At this time, many people did not have an extended network of friends using the Internet, and found that once they accepted friend requests, there was not much to do with them. From 1997 to

2001, sites such as AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet, and MiGente were added to the Web, allowing people to create profiles and identify friends on their profiles. Then, other sites emerged, such as LiveJournal, where people allow others to look at their journal, Cyworld, a Korean OSNS, and Lunarstorm, a Swedish OSNS. In 2001, another wave of OSNS started with Ryze.com, which pertained to business networks. Following Ryze.com, were Tribe.net, LinkedIn, and Friendster. Starting in 2003, more and more OSNS were launched, all of which made user profiles part of their sites. One of these sites was MySpace.com

### MySpace.com

MySpace.com was created in 2003 by founders Chris DeWolfe and Tom Anderson (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Pace, 2006). According to MySpace.com, “MySpace Inc. is a leading social entertainment destination powered by the passions of fans. Aimed at a Gen Y audience, MySpace drives social interaction by providing a highly personalized experience around entertainment and connecting people to the music, celebrities, TV, movies, and games that they love” (MySpace, 2011). Here, you can also create a profile, share photos, and blog with others. In creating a profile, you can add music, videos, and “wallpaper” among other things. For example, to add music to a MySpace profile, a person would click on “music” in the upper right hand corner. A “MySpace Music” page then pops up allowing the user to type in the name of an artist. After hitting the enter button a page pops up listing the songs performed by that artist. If the user wants to add a song to their profile, he or she simply clicks “add” where the songs are listed. This will lead to another page, where a user may choose to “add song to profile” or “cancel.” In order to add “wallpaper” to a person’s MySpace page, many people search [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).

“Wallpaper is like a background for a person’s MySpace profile. For instance, if a user likes the television program “The Simpsons,” he or she could find MySpace layouts in a Google search. Once they find a background (wallpaper) they like, a “code for layout” is listed on the page. The user may highlight this code and copy it. Then the user goes to his/her MySpace.com page and clicks on “edit profile” and may add the wallpaper to their profile. A user can also decide whether or not they want their profile to be public or available to only their friends (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

MySpace.com was able to pick up members that Friendster lost in the U.S., including Independent Label rock bands (Indie-rock bands) who had been kicked off because they did not comply with profile regulations (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Party promoters also started to use the OSNS and in 2004, teenagers wanting to connect with their favorite bands, found MySpace.com and also began to join, increasing membership and forcing MySpace.com to change its user policy allowing minors to join the site (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). According to Boyd & Ellison (2007), three populations began to form on MySpace.com: musicians/artists, teenagers, and the post-college urban social crowd. In 2005, News Corporation purchased MySpace.com for \$580 million (Carr, 2005).

In 2007, MySpace.com was the number one OSNS in the world, with 100 million visitors in September of 2007 (Stross, 2007). In October 2007, an article in Time magazine online reported that MySpace accounted for 4.92 percent of all Internet visits, making it one of the most visited sites on the Internet (Tancer, 2007). That same article found that Facebook accounted for one percent of all Internet visits, ranking ninth. However, in recent years, Facebook has now surpassed MySpace. According to its

website, Facebook.com now has 900 million active users, with over 350 million users using Facebook on their mobile devices such as a Blackberry or iPhone (Facebook, 2011). Why has this happened? The reason, according to Vogelstein (2007), is that Mark Zuckerberg designed Facebook to re-create a “social graph” online, which means instead of building new connections like other OSNS, Facebook set out to just map out connections, making Facebook have two qualities: authenticity and identity. People who use the site are encouraged to post their personal information and to be honest.

#### Facebook.com

“Facebook is a social utility that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them” (Facebook, 2011). As a member of Facebook.com, users can create profiles, send gifts, upload photos, send imaginary drinks and cast Harry Potter spells, among other things. Facebook.com even allows users to add “applications” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007) such as quizzes and bumper stickers. There are over 900 million pages, groups, communities and events that people interact with.

Facebook was created in February 4, 2004 (Facebook, 2011) by Mark Zuckerberg. It began as a tool for Harvard students to meet other Harvard students, and soon expanded to other Ivy League schools and then colleges in the U.S. (Dye, 2007). Because Facebook.com was such a success among college students, it launched a high school version in 2005, and in 2006, expanded to commercial organizations (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). According to its website, of its users, 50% of them go on Facebook each day 2 billion comments and “likes” are posted on people’s walls. (Facebook, 2011).

Both Facebook.com and MySpace.com are popular among many demographic groups, but like e-mail and IM, using OSNS at American colleges and universities has become a normal thing (Eberhardt, 2007).

### OSNS and College Students

Connecting with other college students through OSNS such as Facebook.com and MySpace.com is a part of student life. According to Eberhardt (2007), in 2006, a Syracuse University Online Communities Research Team found that 94 percent of their students use Facebook.com. Some of these students even begin using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com before beginning their life on campus for the purpose of increasing their sense of belonging at a new university. Once these students arrive at the university, they came into contact with more people in their residence halls or classes, and could choose to add them as friends on their OSNS. Students can then view what their peers are doing, further helping them achieve a sense of belonging at their new school and providing comfort for them in a social setting. By making connections with their peers, students gain more social confidence and support, reducing the chances they will have anxiety about college life. OSNS also help with students transitioning to college because they are able to connect with their old friends from high school or from other colleges they attended.

### The Downside to OSNS

Although OSNS may be viewed in a positive way for college students, there are a number of potential drawbacks to OSNS. Eberhart (2007) noted that there may be a

safety concern regarding how much information students should post about themselves. OSNS have also led to a concern about online stalking or physical attacks leading universities to encourage students to limit the information on their profiles or how that information may be accessed.

Another harm that Eberhardt discussed is the physical separation that OSNS provides. Because students are online instead of face-to-face and are therefore, physically apart from one another, they may be more willing to post mean comments on someone's walls or develop groups that hurt people's feelings. Eberhardt (2007) noted that:

... such interaction can further hurt involved students by impairing their development of valuable interpersonal skills. Because online networks allow damaging expressions to occur while individuals are physically apart from each other, students can not directly see the pain that their comments may cause.

These exchanges can foster anger and discord, which diminishes participation in the educational environment for individuals involved in the negative situation.

Situations of this nature can also prevent students from learning how to resolve conflicts constructively" (pp.22-23).

The third concern that Eberhardt (2007) described was uncensored displays of negative behaviors by some students, which can affect their education and their future professional lives. He gives the examples of displaying drunkenness, using illegal substances, and sexual activity, to name a few. Eberhardt claimed that even if such depictions are not central to whom that person really is, they may become associated with such negative qualities by those who view their site. More specifically, universities and employers may use

OSNS against students. For example, some college administrators have used student profiles in order to pursue judicial action against a student. Police officers have also viewed profiles to find instances of underage drinking or illegal drug use that may be prosecuted. Finally, employers may use OSNS to search for background information on those they want to hire, and if they find something negative, eliminate the student from consideration for a job.

### The Importance of Studying Communication Competence and CMC's

According to Wiemann, Takai, Ota, & Wiemann (1997), communication competence is very much studied when doing research in communication, with research looking at how people communicate effectively to begin and maintain relationships. Spitzberg (2006) claimed that many users of CMC's use them to develop and form relationships and the more people use CMC's as technologies become better, the value of CMC to relationship development should go up. Spitzberg (1994) claimed that being incompetent in relationships is socially and relationally damaging. Therefore, people who are competent communicators are more likely to have better relationships.

### CMC Models

Many models and theories have been developed to CMCs. The first is the social identification/de-individuation model, or SIDE which examines how people in CMC cognitively form impressions of others based on little information (Lea & Spears, 1992; Lea & Spears, 1995). SIDE theorists suggest that lack of nonverbal cues online causes people to form impressions based on social categories of communicators (Lea & Spears, 1992). This means that people may use CMC to manage their impressions and disclose social information, depending on actual and implied cultural, social, and psychological

memberships (Becker & Stamp, 2005). With Facebook.com and MySpace.com, people get a snapshot of member's lives on their pages, yet people may form impressions based on this information. Also, due to the lack of nonverbal cues on these OSNS, users may form impressions of others people based on the profile information that is provided.

Social information processing theory, or SIPT, is a theory that has also been used to explain impression formation. According to Walther and Burgoon (1992), CMC and face-to-face interactions can be as relationally focused, there just has to be enough time and message exchange. This means, that with time, intimate relationship development may occur in CMC just as in face-to-face interactions. According to Lea and Spears (1992), CMC users adapt and use textual cues in order to form impressions of others.

A third theory is the hyperpersonal perspective that focuses on the processing of information online (Ramirez et al., 2002). The hyperpersonal model suggests receivers use attributional processes to reduce uncertainty, and may make exaggerated attributions based on the information that is provided to them. Attributional processes are explanations that people give about events in their lives (Bell-Dolan & Anderson, 1999). For example, if Kelly views Sarah's Facebook profile and sees pictures of Sara drinking alcohol at a bar, Kelly may conclude that Sarah is a partier. Kelly's attributions lead to beliefs about Sarah, whether or not these beliefs truly reflect who Sarah is as a person. So, on Facebook and My Space, viewing other's profiles may lead to attributional processes for the purpose of reducing uncertainty. Importantly, these attributional processes may also produce false or inaccurate conclusions about others. Similarly, on Facebook.com and My Space.com, attributions may be manipulated by changing a profile

to produce an intended affect. If someone has a profile, he or she may change anything (e.g., a name, a face, personal information) or exaggerate accomplishments in order to make an impact how others form attributions about them.

Communication competence has also been examined with SIDE, SIPT and the hyperpersonal perspective; however, competence does not explain why CMC and Face-to-Face (FtF) interactions are different (Spitzberg, 2006).

### CMC and Communication Competence

Communication competence in relation to CMC has largely been explored by Brian Spitzberg. According to Rothwell (2004), communication competence is selecting and doing communication behaviors that are both appropriate and effective in that particular situation. Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) developed what was called relationally competent communication, which also included the components of effectiveness and appropriateness. “Appropriateness refers to communication that avoids violation of relationally or situationally sanctioned rules, whereas effectiveness refers to communication that achieves the valued objectives of the interactant” (Papa & Canary, 1995, 154-155). According to Spitzberg and Canary (1985), “to be competent, a person’s communication needs to be both effective in achieving personal objectives and appropriate to the relationship and social context (p.391).” Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) developed a model to describe communication competence, including knowledge, skill, and motivation. In this model, knowledge is knowing the behavior to use in a certain situation, skills is being able to perform that behavior, and motivation is communicating competently (Papa, Daniels, & Spiker, 2008).

In recent work on communication competence, Spitzberg (2006) expanded his original model of communication competence as a function of motivation, knowledge, and skill. He explains:

“this model proposes that motivation represents the initial energizing process of knowledge search and application, which manifest through the selection of skills that are applied to the selection of media and messages...knowledge of the most competent messages and media is searched and selected accordingly and subsequently implemented through the skills of CMC. The messages transmitted through the selected media are filtered through the receivers’ expectations for messages in those media. Those expectancies are products of the receivers’ experiences with CMC and of the receivers’ culture, sense of chronemics, relations, environment, and the anticipated function of the messages. Through ongoing interaction, these expectancies are fulfilled, violated, or renegotiated, and the product of the message exchange and the degree to which expectancies are fulfilled or violated predicts the outcomes of the process for both the original sender and the cointeractant(s) (p.649).”

According to Spitzberg (2006), motivation plays an important role “in predicting the use and success in using CMC technologies,” and “the more knowledgeable a person is with CMC, the more motivated the person will be to use CMC. Conversely, the more motivated someone is to use CMC, the more knowledgeable the person should become” (p.640), and as CMC technology increases, knowledge and skills should also increase. According to Spitzberg (2006), there is then a feedback loop between these constructs even though they have their own boundaries, and CMC self-efficacy helps with this

overlap because it is the ability to use CMC effectively. Because of this, Spitzberg (2006), made these propositions: Motivation and CMC efficacy is positively related to CMC knowledge, and CMC anxiety is negatively related to CMC knowledge, so therefore, motivation and knowledge help predict CMC competence.

In Spitzberg's (2006) model, he also listed skills to go along with the model that are used in CMC, maintaining that these skills are used in service of motivation and knowledge, breaking it down to four specific skills: attentiveness, composure, coordination, and expressiveness. He found that if CMC competence is a function of attentiveness, composure, coordination, and expressiveness skills translated into the mediated context then CMC motivation is related to attentiveness, composure, coordination and expressiveness and CMC knowledge is positively related to these skills as well. Spitzberg (2006) explained what each of these skills are: "*attentiveness* (i.e., displaying concern for, interest in, and attention to the other person or persons in the interaction), *composure* (i.e., displaying assertiveness, confidence, being in control), *coordination* (i.e., displaying deft management of timing, initiation and closure of conversations, topic management, etc.), and *expressiveness* (i.e., displaying vividness and animation in verbal and nonverbal expression)" (p. 638). In his study, Spitzberg (2006) also found that "as CMC competence increases, coorientation, appropriateness, effectiveness, satisfaction, and preferred relational outcomes are more likely to occur (p.648)." Spitzberg (2006) explained these skills further:

"*Coorientation* refers to the degree of correspondence between a sender's intentions and/or message content and the interpretations of the receiver(s).

*Appropriateness* is the perceived legitimacy or fit of a message to the context. It is

related but not isomorphic with conformity, because an interactant may negotiate new contextual rules in the process of violating existing rules. *Effectiveness* is the degree to which preferred objectives are optimized. It is related to but not isomorphic with satisfaction because an effective choice may be relative when there is no satisfactory response, in which case the least punishing response may be considered effective. *Satisfaction* is the positive affect associated with the fulfillment of positively valenced expectancies (as cited by Spitzberg & Hecht, 1984). *Efficiency* is the relative economy with which preferred outcomes are achieved. The less time, effort, or resources invested to achieve the same outcome, the more efficient the process. Finally, *relational development* represents the degree of breadth, depth, intimacy, closeness, commitment, and attraction achieved in a relationship” (p. 648).

Next in the model, Spitzberg (2006) laid out the most common outcomes that CMC interaction can be assessed, including coorientation, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, task success, accomplishment, relationship development, and other specific outcomes like symptom relief. Spitzberg believed that as CMC competence increases, these skills would as well. He also found the following:

1. Competence outcomes (i.e., appropriateness, effectiveness, coorientation, satisfaction, and relational development) are positively related to one another but not isomorphic.
2. CMC motivation is positively related to competence outcomes (i.e., appropriateness, effectiveness, coorientation, satisfaction and relational development).

3. CMC knowledge is positively related to competence outcomes (i.e., appropriateness, effectiveness, coorientation, satisfaction, and relational development).
4. CMC skills (i.e., attentiveness, composure, coordination, and expressiveness) are positively related to competence outcomes (i.e., appropriateness, effectiveness, coorientation, satisfaction and relational development) (p.649).

This model works for facebook.com and myspace.com because OSNS represent a type of communication between people and communication competence is just as important in this CMC realm as it is in face-to-face contexts.

The model shown below adapted from Spitzberg (2006), further explains this theory and will be included in this study. According to Spitzberg (2006), this model shows “that motivation represents the initial energizing process of knowledge search and application, which manifest through a selection of skills that are applied to the selection of media and messages” (p.649). Spitzberg’s (2006) work did not focus on demographics; however, this study will explore sex of OSNS users and their frequency of OSNS use.

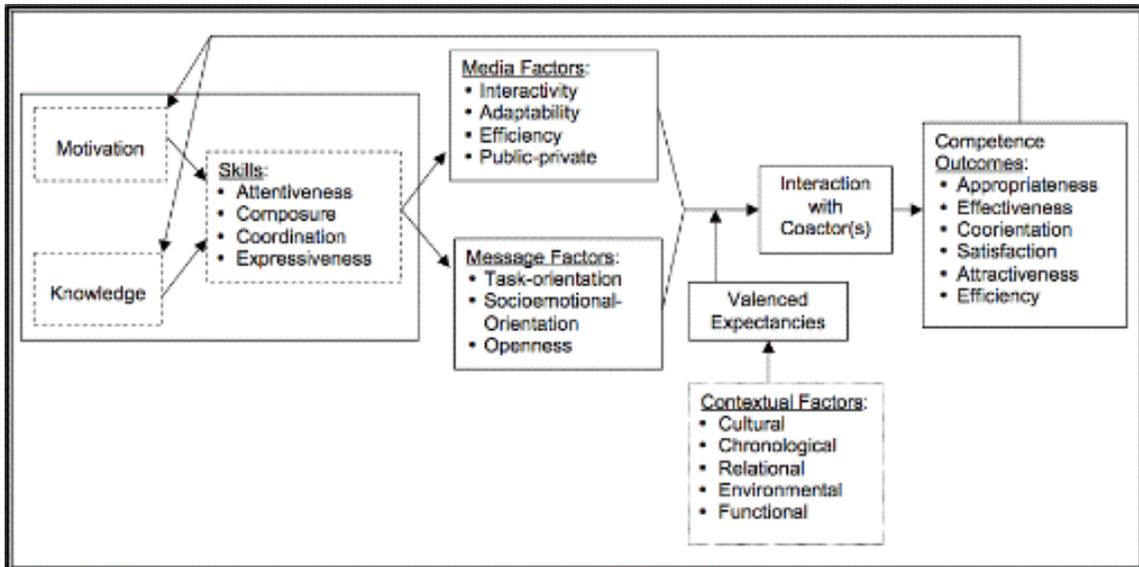


Figure 1. A Model of Computer-mediated Competence (Spitzberg, 2006)

The other skills Spitzberg (2006) measured in his study were selectivity, or choosing which CMC is used based on different factors, clarity, or how accurate and clear the messages are, general usage/experience, or how much people use CMCs and their experiences with them, and attractiveness, or people liking you or wanting to know more about you (see Appendix C).

### CMC and Sex of Users

This study will explore the differences between men and women concerning communication competence and OSNS use. There has been much research in the communication field on the differences in how men and women communicate, with entire classes and books devoted to the subject. Because OSNS are another way for people to communicate, there should also be differences between men and women. These differences have yet to be explored in depth. Though there hasn't been a lot of gender research done about OSNS, there has been some research on the differences

between men and women in their levels of communication competence (Algren & Eichhorn, 2007; Duran & Carveth, 1990). However, Duran and Carveth (1990) noted that in most research done on gender differences and communication competence, gender differences are not the main point of the study, rather gender is one of many variables explored. These researchers predicted that this could be because communication competence and gender is not based on theory or it is disjointed. However, there is some research on gender in the field of communication.

In a study exploring cognitive communication competence with public relations practitioners, it was found that there were no significant differences between gender and levels of cognitive communication competence (Algren & Eichhorn, 2007). Similarly, a study by Duran and Carveth (1990) tested the influence of gender-role expectations upon perceptions of communication competence. Their results indicated that assertive, instrumentally controlled communication styles are more competent than reserved emotionally responsive styles, and that males and females are more alike in their communication style preferences than unlike. Pew (2000) found that women recognize the “relational” value of CMC more so than men. In a study by Koesten (2004), it was found that women reported a greater competence in managing conflict with their friends than with romantic partners, while men did not rate their competencies for managing conflict differently when it came to rating the two different types of relationships. In another study by Pearson (2005), it was found that women are more communicatively competent in appropriate disclosure over men. These findings show that the literature is conflicting as to whether or not men or women are more competent over the other.

Though this research has been done on gender differences and communication competence, research has not been conducted to examine men and women's levels of communicator competence in using OSNS such as Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com. Research should be conducted in this area because OSNS are growing and are not going away. Because so much time is spent on these sites by people, it needs to be known whether or not using these sites will help make men or women more competent communicators or not and whether or not Facebook.com or MySpace.com is hurting or helping our communication with one another. Therefore, this study will focus on the differences between men and women and communication competence when using OSNS.

#### Rationale

Relevant literature leads to many research questions on the use of OSNS. The questions are drawn from Spitzberg's (2006) CMC competence model, verbal immediacy, and two demographic characteristics – sex and frequency of use. Sex was chosen by the researcher in order to find if there is a significant difference between college men's and women's levels of communication competence. Frequency of use was also chosen due to the fact that 84 percent of young adults ages 18-28 report going online (Fox, 2005), and the researcher was interested in seeing if there was a significant relationship between frequency of use and communication competence and frequency of use.

The first four research questions deal with the demographic of biological sex. Spitzberg's (2006) model begins with motivation. Because of this, the first research question is as follows:

RQ1: Do men and women differ in their motivation when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?

Spitzberg's (2006) model then moves to knowledge, in that motivation starts knowledge, as stated earlier. This leads the research to the next question:

RQ2: Do men and women differ in their knowledge when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?

Another variable Spitzberg (2006) explores in his research on communication competence is efficacy, or effectiveness, which leads to the third research question:

RQ3: Do men and women differ in their efficacy when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?

As earlier stated, Spitzberg's (2006) explores twelve different skills. Because of this, one broad research question is posed as well as sub-questions that relate to each of the different skills:

RQ4: Do men and women differ in their skills when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?:

RQ4a: Do men and women differ in their coordination when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?

RQ4b: Do men and women differ in their attentiveness when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?

RQ4c: Do men and women differ in their expressiveness when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?

- RQ4d: Do men and women differ in their composure when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?
- RQ4e: Do men and women differ in their selectivity when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?
- RQ4f: Do men and women differ in their appropriateness when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?
- RQ4g: Do men and women differ in their effectiveness when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?
- RQ4h: Do men and women differ in their clarity when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?
- RQ4i: Do men and women differ in their satisfaction when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?
- RQ4j: Do men and women differ in their attractiveness when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?
- RQ4k: Do men and women differ in their efficiency/productivity when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?
- RQ4l: Do men and women differ in their general usage/experience when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?

The second demographic this research will explore is the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com. The following three research questions also focus on motivation, knowledge, and efficacy:

- RQ5: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and motivation in using these OSNS?

RQ6: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and knowledge in using these OSNS?

RQ7: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and efficacy in using these OSNS?

The demographic frequency of use will also be explored using the 12 skills of communication competence. Once again, one broad research question is posed as well as sub-questions that relate to each of the different skills:

RQ8: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and skills in using these OSNS?:

RQ8a: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and coordination in using these OSNS?

RQ8b: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and attentiveness in using these OSNS?

RQ8c: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and expressiveness in using these OSNS?

RQ8d: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and composure in using these OSNS?

- RQ8e: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and selectivity in using these OSNS?
- RQ8f: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and appropriateness in using these OSNS?
- RQ8g: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and effectiveness in using these OSNS?
- RQ8h: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and clarity in using these OSNS?
- RQ8i: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and satisfaction in using these OSNS?
- RQ8j: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and attractiveness in using these OSNS?
- RQ8k: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and efficiency/productivity in using these OSNS?

RQ8: Is there a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and general usage/experience in using these OSNS?

Because both biological sex and frequency of use will be explored in this research, they can be combined in the following research question below:

RQ9: Do men and women differ in their frequency of use in using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com?

The following methods section will indicate how the research questions will be addressed and tested. The methods section will explain the sample, the instruments used, and the procedure with which the hypotheses and research questions can be tested.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### Design

The data collection used in this study was a cross-sectional survey design in order to gather information on how individuals use communication competence while using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com. A cross section survey was used because of its need to distribute only once. The current research examined OSNS, making experimental data collection difficult. Survey design was the preferred type of data collection for this study because of its rapid turn-around rate in collecting information, because it could describe characteristics of the population being examined (i.e., college students), and because the survey method could generalize explanations as to how communication competence is used when accessing Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com. Also, this quantitative method is better suited in finding out current trends with the OSNS. The survey was administered in an online setting on surveymonkey.com.

#### Population and Sample

The study was conducted at a Midwestern university with an enrollment of 28,389 for the 2010-2011 academic year, and a city with approximately 26,000 permanent residents. A convenience sample of 109 undergraduate students were recruited from COM 101 classes and graduate students from graduate level classes in the Communication department. A convenience sample was used to generalize how college students use OSNS. Though a convenience sample may hurt the external validity of the

survey, many students use OSNS for communication with others. Because every student at the university has to take an oral competency at the university, there is a diverse sample of this college's population.

### Procedures

Institutional Review Board approval was obtained before data were collected. Participants completed the survey through the online vehicle, Surveymonkey.com, a professional survey-hosting website, in order to offer students the opportunity to take the survey outside of class time. Surveymonkey.com is a fee-based website, allowing researchers to post surveys and allowing students to only complete a survey one time.

The survey was offered by Graduate Assistants and Professors in the Communication program at the University some sort of credit. Participants were recruited by contacting professors and instructors at the university and having them notify their students about the opportunity to complete the survey on Surveymonkey.com. The students were instructed to go to the website surveymonkey.com to complete the informed consent page (see Appendix A) before taking the survey by inserting their name and date in the fields provided with the option to print the form. The directions on the informed consent page noted the survey would take no longer than one half hour, that participants could cease participating at any time without fear of penalty, and it also informed them of the purpose of the study, eligibility, procedures, the risks, the benefits, and compensation for their participation. Listed on the informed consent page was also a way to contact the investigator. If the participant was offered extra credit or participation points, they typed in their professor/instructor's name, and the professor/instructor was

informed through e-mail which students participated in the study online. Informed consent forms were kept in a separate database and were not used to track participants in order to find out their identity. Once the informed consent form is filled out, students were directed to the survey page. As stated, all students earned some sort of extra credit for their participation from their professor/instructor, such as participation points. If students chose to not participate in the study, it was up to the professor/instructor to offer them an alternative assignment. Once the survey was completed, the student exited out of the survey and the results anonymously sent to the investigator.

### Variables

The variables measured in this study were communication competence, biological sex, and frequency of use. The communication competence measure was from Spitzberg's (2006) work and included subscales of motivation, knowledge, efficacy and twelve skills: coordination, attentiveness, expressiveness, composure, selectivity, appropriateness, effectiveness, clarity, satisfaction, attractiveness, efficiency/productivity, and general usage/experience

### Measurement

The variable measured in this study, communication competence, was operationalized and measured at the interval level. In addition to these measures, demographic questions were asked including biological sex, year in school, participant age, OSNS used, and hours per week of usage (see Appendix B). These responses were also provided on the online survey and submitted electronically.

Spitzberg's (2006) Communication Competence Measure, version five (Appendix C), was modified to measure how people use Facebook.com and MySpace.com. For example, question number one in Spitzberg's (2006) survey stated, "I enjoy communication using computer media," where the updated version states, "I enjoy communicating using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com." In most cases, Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com replaced the words CMC or computer. The modified questionnaire contained 74 items. The Likert-like items were measured on a five-point scale (from 1= "not at all true of me" to 5= "very true of me"). The questionnaire was given to participants without them knowing which questions went with what skill. Questions 1 through 4 measured communication, questions 5 through 9 knowledge, questions 10 through 16 efficacy, questions, 17 through 21 coordination, questions 22 through 26 attentiveness, questions 27-31 expressiveness, questions 32 through 37 composure, questions 38 through 49 selectivity, questions 50 through 53 appropriateness, questions 54 through 56 effectiveness, questions 57 through 59 clarity, questions 60 through 62 satisfaction, questions 63 through 65 attractiveness, questions 66 through 69 efficiency/productivity, and questions 70 through 74 general usage/experience. According to Spitzberg (2006), preliminary results from a study in Croatia reported reliabilities that parallel motivation, knowledge, skills and outcomes but the current measure is being prepared for data collection; the present study reported reliabilities of the modified measure.

In preceding years, Spitzberg has done much research on Communication Competence that establishes the validity of his measure, and as stated earlier, the Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) model is the model most often used to describe communication competence.

## Reliability for Communication Competence Skills and Overall Study

Cronbach alpha reliability for the overall survey was .92. For each subscale, the reliabilities were as follows (Table 1):

Table 1. Reliability

Skills	Reliability
Motivation (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)	r = .361
Knowledge (Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9)	r = .705
Efficacy (Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16)	r = .149
Coordination (Q17, Q18, Q19, Q20, Q21)	r = .793
Attentiveness (Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q26)	r = .792
Expressiveness (Q27, Q28, Q29, Q30, Q31)	r = .656
Composure (Q32, Q33, Q34, Q35, Q36, Q37)	r = .809
Selectivity (Q38, Q39, Q40, Q41, Q42, Q43, Q44, Q45, Q46, Q47, Q48, Q49)	r = .918
Appropriateness (Q50, Q51, Q52, Q53)	r = .876
Effectiveness (Q54, Q55, Q56)	r = .785
Clarity (Q57, Q58, Q59)	r = .753
Satisfaction (Q60, Q61, Q62)	r = .848
Attractiveness (Q63, Q64, Q65)	r = .780
Efficiency/Productivity (Q66, Q67, Q68, Q69)	r = .804
General Usage/Experience (Q70, Q71, Q72, Q73, Q74)	r = .874

Given the low subscale reliabilities associated with Motivation ( $r = .361$ ) and Efficacy ( $r = .149$ ), the data analyses associated with Hypotheses 3 and 7 (Efficacy) and Hypothesis 5 (Motivation) should be interpreted with caution.

### Data Treatment

Before data were entered into the statistical software, or SPSS program, the surveys were examined and incomplete surveys were excluded. Incomplete surveys were not used by the researchers' discretion. For example, if a participant started a survey, but only answered a few questions, the survey was thrown out. Blank surveys were discarded either because a survey was not completely filled out, or a survey taker

answered multiple answers for a question requiring one answer. Two surveys were discarded because the survey taker was under the age of 18. Also, it was made sure that the minimum number for each variable was not lower than the lowest possible number and the same for the maximum number. Data were then entered and then coded and sorted into categories on SPSS. Once done, some of the items on the survey were reversed scored because all items had to be in the same direction, meaning there could not be some items measuring motivation while others measure unmotivation. By reverse coding data, this ensured it would coincide with the rest of the items in the questionnaire.

### Data Analysis

Two statistical tests were run for the data. RQ1 through RQ4I, as well as RQ9 were measured with a t-test. Each one of these questions had one dependent variable. RQ1 was motivation, RQ2 was knowledge, RQ3 was efficacy, RQ4a through RQ4I were each a different skill (coordination, attentiveness, expressiveness, composure, selectivity, appropriateness, effectiveness, clarity, satisfaction, attractiveness, efficiency/productivity, and general usage/experience), and RQ9's was frequency of use. Each of these research questions was also a test of difference, had one independent variable (biological sex), had two categories (male and female) in the group, and were measured at the interval level. RQ5 through RQ8I were measured with the Pearson-Product Moment Correlation. Each of these questions had one dependent variable. RQ5 was motivation, RQ6 was knowledge, RQ7 was efficacy, and RQ8a through RQ8I were each a different skill (coordination, attentiveness, expressiveness, composure, selectivity, appropriateness, effectiveness, clarity, satisfaction, attractiveness, efficiency/productivity, and general

usage/experience). Each research question was also a test of association and was looking for a relationship among the variables, and the measure was at the interval level. This data analysis can also be described in the charts below:

T-Test

		Male	Female
RQ1	Motivation		
RQ2	Knowledge		
RQ3	Efficacy		
RQ4: RQ4a - RQ4l	Skills: coordination, attentiveness, expressiveness, composure, selectivity, appropriateness, effectiveness, clarity, satisfaction, attractiveness, efficiency/productivity, and general usage/experience		

Pearson-Product Moment Correlation

	A	B
RQ5	Frequency of Use	Motivation
RQ6	Frequency of Use	Knowledge
RQ7	Frequency of Use	Efficacy
RQ8: RQ8a – RQ8l	Frequency of Use	Skills: coordination, attentiveness, expressiveness, composure, selectivity, appropriateness, effectiveness, clarity, satisfaction, attractiveness, efficiency/productivity, and general usage/experience

T-Test

		Male	Female
RQ9:	Frequency of use		

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

Of the total amount of participants who took the survey, 41.7% were Freshman, 15.6% were Sophomores, 10.4% were Juniors, 11.5% were Seniors, 12.5% were graduate students and other was 8.3%. When asked which OSNS each participant uses, 88.5% said Facebook.com, 1.0% said MySpace.com, 9.4% said both, and 3.1% said neither. General usage of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com showed 21.9% using the OSNS' 0-2 hours per week, 39.6% using the sites 3-5 hours per week, 24% using the sites 6-8 hours per week and 14.6% using the sites 8 or more hours per week.

A t-test was used to measure RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4a through RQ4l, which asked if men and women significantly differ in motivation, knowledge, efficacy, and various skills (coordination, attentiveness, expressiveness, composure, selectivity, appropriateness, effectiveness, clarity, satisfaction, attractiveness, efficiency/productivity, general usage/experience) when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com. RQ1 found that women ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = .59$ ) were more motivated than men ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = .63$ ) when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com:  $t(74) = -3.33$ ,  $p = .001$ . RQ2 found that women ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = .57$ ) were more knowledgeable than men ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = .54$ ) when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com:  $t(74) = -3.17$ ,  $p = .002$ . RQ3 found men ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = .49$ ) and women ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = .48$ ) did not differ significantly in their efficacy when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com:  $t(74) = -.798$ ,  $p = .43$ . RQ4a found that women ( $M = 3.92$ ,  $SD = .61$ ) were significantly more coordinated than men ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = .57$ ) when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com:  $t(74) = -$

4.31,  $p < .001$ . RQ4b found that women ( $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = .60$ ) were significantly more attentive than men ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = .67$ ), when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com:  $t(74) = -4.21$ ,  $p < .001$ . RQ4c found that women ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = .71$ ) were significantly more expressive than men ( $M = 3.17$ ,  $SD = .67$ ), when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com:  $t(74) = -3.38$ ,  $p = .001$ . RQ4d found men ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = .60$ ) and women ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = .63$ ) did not differ significantly in their composure when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com:  $t(74) = -1.15$ ,  $p = .252$ . RQ4e found that women ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = .70$ ) were significantly more selective than men ( $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = .58$ ) when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com:  $t(74) = -3.93$ ,  $p < .001$ . RQ4f found women ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = .67$ ) were significantly more appropriate than men ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = .89$ ) when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com:  $t(74) = -6.17$ ,  $p < .001$ . RQ4g found women ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = .68$ ) were significantly more effective than men ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = .67$ ) when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com:  $t(74) = -3.18$ ,  $p = .002$ . RQ4h found that women ( $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = .65$ ) were significantly clearer than men ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = .67$ ) when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com:  $t(74) = -3.04$ ,  $p = .003$ . RQ4i found that women ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = .62$ ) were significantly more satisfied than men ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = .61$ ) when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com:  $t(74) = -5.38$ ,  $p < .001$ . RQ4j found men ( $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = .74$ ) and women ( $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = .71$ ) did not differ significantly in their attractiveness when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com:  $t(74) = -1.51$ ,  $p = .134$ . RQ4k found men ( $M = 2.53$ ,  $SD = .84$ ) and women ( $M = 2.40$ ,  $SD = .74$ ) did not differ significantly in their efficiency/productivity when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com:  $t(74) = .830$ ,  $p = .408$ . RQ4l found women ( $M = 2.80$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) and

men (2.67, SD = .97) did not differ significantly in their general usage/experiences:  
 $t(74) = -.685, p = .495$ . Below is a table of the results found (Table 2 Results).

Table 2. Results – t-test

Research Question	Women (M, SD)	Men (M, SD)	$t(74)$	$p$
RQ1	M = 4.02, SD = .59	M = 3.64, SD = .63	= -3.33	= .001
RQ2	M = 4.05, SD = .57	M = 3.71, SD = .54	= -3.17	= .002
RQ3	M = 3.76, SD = .49	M = 3.84, SD = .48	= -.798	= .43
RQ4a	M = 3.92, SD = .61	M = 3.44, SD = .57	= -4.31	< .001
RQ4b	M = 3.93, SD = .60	M = 3.41, SD = .67	= -4.21	< .001
RQ4c	M = 3.61, SD = .71	M = 3.17, SD = .67	= -3.38	= .001
RQ4d	M = 3.31, SD = .60	M = 3.44, SD = .63	= -1.15	= .252
RQ4e	M = 3.81, SD = .70	M = 3.33, SD = .58	= -3.93	< .001
RQ4f	M = 4.33, SD = .67	M = 3.39, SD = .89	= -6.17	< .001
RQ4g	M = 3.84, SD = .68	M = 3.43, SD = .67	= -3.18	= .002
RQ4h	M = 3.86, SD = .65	M = 3.47, SD = .67	= -3.04	= .003
RQ4i	M = 4.17, SD = .62	M = 3.54, SD = .61	= -5.38	< .001
RQ4j	M = 3.46, SD = .71	M = 3.25, SD = .74	= -1.51	= .134
RQ4k	M = 2.40, SD = .74	M = 2.53, SD = .84	= .830	= .408
RQ4l	M = 2.80, SD = 1.00	M = 2.67, SD = .97	= -.685	= .495

The Pearson-Product Moment Correlation was used to measure RQ5, RQ6, RQ7, and RQ8a through RQ8l, which asked if there was a significant relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and motivation, knowledge, efficacy, and various skills (coordination, attentiveness, expressiveness, composure, selectivity, appropriateness, effectiveness, clarity, satisfaction, attractiveness, efficiency/productivity, general usage/experience). RQ5 found no significant relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and motivation in using these OSNS:  $r(74) = -.178, p = .065$ . RQ6 found no significant relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and knowledge using the OSNS:  $r(74) = -.152, p = .116$ . RQ7 found no significant relationship between

the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and efficacy in using these Online Social Networking Sites (OSNS):  $r(74) = -.056, p = .560$ . RQ8a found a significant positive relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and coordination in using the OSNS:  $r(74) = -.192, p = .046$ . RQ8b found a significant positive relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and attentiveness in using the OSNS:  $r(74) = -.208, p = .030$ . RQ8c found a significant positive relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and expressiveness when using these OSNS:  $r(74) = -.219, p = .022$ . RQ8d found no significant relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and composure in using these OSNS:  $r(74) = -.176, p = .067$ . RQ8e no significant relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and selectivity in using these OSNS:  $r(74) = -.032, p = .743$ . RQ8f found no significant relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and appropriateness in using these OSNS:  $r(74) = -.098, p = .311$ . RQ8g found no significant relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and effectiveness in using these OSNS:  $r(74) = -.142, p = .142$ . RQ8h found no significant relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and clarity in using these OSNS:  $r(74) = -.102, p = .290$ . RQ8i found a significant positive relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and satisfaction in using these OSNS:  $r(74) = -.195, p = .042$ . RQ8j found no significant relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and attractiveness in using these OSNS:  $r(74) = -.131, p = .175$ . RQ8k found no significant relationship between the frequency of use of

Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and efficiency/productivity in using these OSNS:  
 $r(74) = .150, p = .119$ . RQ8l found no significant relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and general usage/experience in using these OSNS:  $r(74) = .087, p = .368$ . Below is a table of the results (Table 3).

Table 3. Results – Pearson-Product Moment Correlation

Research Question	$r(74)$	$p$	Relationship
RQ5	= - .178	= .065	No Significant Relationship
RQ6	= - .152	= .116	No Significant Relationship
RQ7	= - .056	= .560	No Significant Relationship
RQ8a	= - .192	= .046	Significant Positive Relationship
RQ8b	= - .208	= .030	Significant Positive Relationship
RQ8c	= - .219	= .022	Significant Positive Relationship
RQ8d	= - .176	= .067	No Significant Relationship
RQ8e	= - .032	= .743	No Significant Relationship
RQ8f	= - .098	= .311	No Significant Relationship
RQ8g	= - .142	= .142	No Significant Relationship
RQ8h	= - .102	= .290	No Significant Relationship
RQ8i	= - .195	= .042	Significant Positive Relationship
RQ8j	= - .131	= .175	No Significant Relationship
RQ8k	= .150	= .119	No Significant Relationship
RQ8l	= .087	= .368	No Significant Relationship

A t-test was used to measure RQ9. RQ9 found that men ( $M = 1.35, SD = 1.00$ ) use OSNS more often than women ( $M = 1.13, SD = .56$ ):  $t(74) = 1.49, p = .002$ . Below is a table of the results (Table 4).

Table 4. Results – t-test

Research Question	Women (M, SD)	Men (M, SD)	$t(74)$	$p$
RQ9	M = 1.13, SD = .56	M = 1.35, SD = 1.00	= 1.49	= .002

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

In this section, a comparison will be made between the findings of previous research and the results from this study. Some of the results found were consistent with findings in the literature review. Some of the results, however, were different from previous literature. The findings of this research are useful for those studying Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com both in the present and in the future. This research can also be extended and applied to other Online Social Networking Sites (OSNS) such as LinkedIn and/or Twitter as well as other current and future OSNS.

This chapter is presented in three sections. The first section explores the research questions and explains the links between the results found in the current survey compared to previous research, including which findings support and oppose what has been reported in the previous literature. Implications this study may have for researchers studying OSNS are explored in the second section. Finally, the last section presents limitations and direction for future research in this area.

#### Research Questions Explored

This study was conducted to explore communication competence in using OSNS. Specifically, its goal was to examine both Facebook.com and MySpace.com and how communication competence is used using these OSNS. This study also used the demographics of gender and frequency of use to provide further insight into how men and

women use communication competence and how much they use OSNS. At this time, no other studies have examined both Facebook.com and MySpace.com combined with communication competence, biological sex, and frequency of use.

In testing communication competence and biological sex, results from the survey showed that even though men used OSNS more than women, women were more motivated to use the sites, more knowledgeable about using the sites, more coordinated when using the sites, more attentive to other people when using the sites, more expressive when using the sites, more selective when using the sites, more appropriate with the comments they make on the sites, more effective when using the sites, clearer with their comments and messages on the sites, were more satisfied when using the sites, and have different general usage and experiences than men in using the sites. Men and women did not significantly differ in their efficacy in using OSNS, their composure in the messages they write or the comments they post on people's "walls," their attractiveness of getting people to like them and making friends, and their efficiency/productivity in using OSNS.

The interesting thing about this finding is that in the Spitzberg (2006) study, he found that motivation and CMC efficacy is positively related to CMC knowledge and motivation and knowledge help predict CMC competence. However, in this finding women were more knowledgeable and motivated than men, but they didn't differ in their efficacy. So it appears motivation and knowledge may not predict CMC competence.

It was found in this study that women are more competent than men in using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com because women were found to use more of the skills than men. Previous research has not supported this finding. For example, Duran and Carveth (1990), Algren and Eichhorn (2007), found that women and men were more

alike in their communication competence. In this study, however, it was shown that women were more skilled than men and therefore, more competent than men. In earlier times, women were often portrayed as not being able to do things a man can do and not being as competent as males. As more and more women are getting educations and have jobs in the workplace, these ideas are changing. Women are now bosses and managers and have shown themselves to be competent. As the world changes, women may be beginning to be more competent communicators than males. Another reason women may be more competent than men is because women have been found to be more relationally driven, while men are more instrumentally driven. For example, Kunkel and Burleson (1999) found that women over men were able to give more comforting behaviors to their friends and that both men and women would rather receive emotional support by a female over a male, with 71% of males choosing women over men to receive emotional support from. This shows that women are more relational than men. Mulac, Bradac, and Gibbons (2001) results of three studies found that the male language is perceived as direct, succinct, personal, and instrumental, where females are perceived as indirect, elaborate and effective.

It should be noted that past research on computer mediated communication (CMC) and gender has not included research on OSNS. In this study however, in using Facebook.com and or MySpace.com women were more competent in their communication than men. This study still leaves many questions unanswered concerning gender differences between men and women. For example, there needs to be more research on the differences between OSNS and different CMC platforms such as Instant Messaging, e-mail, etc.

The second part of this study examined frequency of use. Results found a significant positive relationship between the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and coordination, attentiveness, expressiveness, and satisfaction. This means that the more an individual uses Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com, the more skilled they will be concerning coordination, attentiveness, expressiveness, and satisfaction. There was no significant relationship between the frequency of use and motivation, knowledge, efficacy, composure, selectivity, appropriateness, effectiveness, clarity, attractiveness, efficiency/productivity, and general usage/experience. Therefore, there was only some support for the argument that the more an individual used Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com, the more they would display these skills on OSNS. This study also did not support Spitzberg's (2006) idea that the more a person uses motivation and knowledge, the more competent a person would become, which was a big part of the communication competence model he created. Also, Spitzberg (2006) proposed that motivation and knowledge are positively correlated to attentiveness, composure, coordination and expressiveness. This study only found attentiveness and expressiveness to have a significant positive relationship with motivation and knowledge.

The last part of this study found that of 109 individuals (57 men and 52 women), men used OSNS more than women. This does not support research reported by Facebook.com (2011) that women overall use OSNS more than men. Gender use statistics could not be found on MySpace.com. According to the Educause Center for Applied Research (2008), however, females are more likely to use MySpace.com (51.9% females compared to 42.2% males) than males. Conversely, a study by the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that men and women were both on social networks

equally (Lenhart, 2009). The reason why males could be using OSNS more than women could be because these OSNS are constantly changing daily, and could be giving men more reason to go online now. Men can now be found updating their statuses with sports statistics and advertisements are now geared towards what your profile shows on Facebook.com. One study by Donovan and MacIntyre (2004), found that males appear to increase in their willingness to communicate as they get older, while women have shown a parallel decrease. The researchers claimed that this could be because as women get older, they seek equal opportunities in many areas, and social factors may contribute to their unwillingness to communicate. Given the contradictory findings concerning gender and OSNS, further research is justified. In particular, we need to know if there are gender differences in the use of OSNS, why do these differences occur?

#### Implications for Future Research

This study is valuable for future studies in OSNS. This study provides information and knowledge in a field that is only slowly beginning to be researched. The implications for this study are explored further in the following paragraphs.

First, OSNS have just begun and are not going away. So many have been initiated that a number cannot even be given on how many there are because it is constantly changing. According to Browne (2011), \$3.08 million dollars, or 11% of advertising dollars, will be spent on marketing on OSNS in 2011, the number one being Facebook.com. This is a 55% increase since 2010. These statistics indicate that OSNS use will continue to grow so research into them is necessary so we can understand how they are influencing human communication.

The second implication of this research is that it furthered an understanding of both OSNS as well as computer-mediated communication. OSNS are a type of CMC that is just beginning to be explored. In the future, there should be research comparing different types of CMC such as e-mail and instant messaging (IM), and how they may expand on understanding of Spitzberg's (2006) model. As more knowledge about OSNS is produced, it would be interesting to also see more studies exploring other models of communication with OSNS, such as the social identification/de-individuation model (SIDE model), social information processing theory, or (SIPT model), and hyperpersonal models.

The third implication of this research is that it gained insight into how college students are communicating with one another and the differences between how men and women communicate on OSNS. This research should be extended to adults as well who are using OSNS in the workplace and in their personal lives, and also to older adults who may be on OSNS to stay in touch with their children and grandchildren. In a study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, it found that OSNS use among ages 50-64 from April 2009 to May 2010, grew from 25% to 47%, an 88% increase, and among ages 65 and older, OSNS use went from 13% to 26%, a 100% increase (Madden, 2010). This proves that it is not just the younger generation that is using OSNS.

### Limitations

Although the present study provided some interesting insights into in CMC, development of Spitzberg's (2006) communication capstone model, and OSNS, there were a few limitations to this study. Importantly, limitations within the current study provide areas for future researchers to explore, as explained below.

The first limitation was that there were some problems with the communication competence model. According to Spitzberg (2006), the preliminary measure for the communication competence test had revealed promise, but there were some problems. As he explained:

“first, the negatively worded items in the subscales of the measure tended to attenuate the reliability of those scales, especially those scales with few items. Second, the various items designed to measure context, message, and media factors were not as multidimensionally complex as originally anticipated” (Spitzberg, 2006, p. 651).

Because of these problems, the measure was simplified to increase the reliability. So, future research is needed concerning the reliability and factor structure of this communication competence scale.

Another limitation with this study was the problems the participants had with the survey. First, some participants appeared to have become confused during the survey. For example, some of the participants chose two answers for some questions instead of one. This could have been because the participants were unaware that they were only supposed to give one answer. Also, there were no page breaks reminding the participant what their choices were, so they may have gotten confused and lost their location in the survey. The main survey was only one page on a website in which participants scrolled through the entire thing. In the future, this problem could be fixed a few different ways. The first would be by giving participants the survey in person. This would allow the researcher to read out loud the directions to the survey. It would also allow the researcher to remind the participants that only one answer can be given per question. The

second way this problem could be fixed, would be to put only a few questions on each page, with directions on the top to remind the participants of their options from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”, with a reminder on each page to select only one answer. The way the survey was presented online, it was very easy for a participant to answer a question with two answers or lose their spot on the survey because the participant could not follow where they were on the survey. Because so many participants chose two answers for many of the questions, a survey that originally had 194 participants, produced only 109 final participants. So, a total of 85 surveys had to be thrown out, which could have impacted the data that was reported.

The third limitation of this study is that it used a convenience sample. This could negatively impact the external validity of the survey because it was only using college student participants from one particular location in one part of the United States. Future studies should use a random sample if possible, and should examine all adults over the age of 18 who use OSNS. This is especially important because OSNS use among those of ages 50 and older has almost doubled from 22% in April 2009 to 42% in May 2010, (Madden, 2010).

### Summary

In summary, this study explored communication competence and two social networking sites, Facebook.com and MySpace.com. Specifically this study looked at Spitzberg’s (2006) communication competence model and how gender plays a role in the use of these two OSNS. The study advanced insights into Spitzberg’s (2006) communication competence model, and gave insight into future research regarding a new

type of CMC, OSNS. The results of this study are useful to researchers who are just beginning to explore OSNS, and can be used to look at other social networking avenues such as Twitter or LinkedIn.

The first part of this thesis explained the rationale for the study, including a review of literature on computer-mediated communication, OSNS, and communication. The review of literature included a brief history of the Internet, the use of e-mail, Instant Messages (IM's) and a background of the OSNS Facebook.com and MySpace.com. Once the background of CMCs was established, the review of literature explored literature on communication competence including the SIDE, SIPT, and hyperpersonal models, which led to the development of Spitzberg's (2006) model of communication competence. The first chapter ended with nine research questions posed by the researcher based on Spitzberg's (2006) model. RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4a through RQ4l all dealt with gender and Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com. RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 asked if men and women differed in their motivation, knowledge, or efficacy when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com. RQ4a through RQ 4l explored twelve different skills in the Spitzberg (2006) model (coordination, attentiveness, expressiveness, composure, selectivity, appropriateness, effectiveness, clarity, satisfaction, attractiveness, efficiency/productivity, and general usage/experience) and whether there were differences between men and women when using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com. RQ5, RQ6, RQ7, and RQ8a-8l all dealt with frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com. RQ5, RQ6, and RQ7 asked if there was a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and motivation, knowledge, and efficacy respectively. RQ8a through RQ8l also explored the twelve

skills in the Spitzberg (2006) model (coordination, attentiveness, expressiveness, composure, selectivity, appropriateness, effectiveness, clarity, satisfaction, attractiveness, efficiency/productivity, and general usage/experience) to determine whether or not there is a difference in the frequency of use of Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com and these skills in using these OSNS. RQ9 combined biological sex and frequency of use and asked if men and women differed in their frequency of use in using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com.

The second part of this research study presented the methodology used by the researcher, including the design, population and sample, procedures, variables, measurement, data treatment, and data analysis.

The third part of the study analyzed the results from the survey. RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ's 4a-4l were analyzed using a t-Test. A Pearson-Product Moment Correlation was used to measure RQ5, RQ6, RQ7, and RQ's 8a-8l. Another t-Test was used to measure the final research question, RQ9.

The last part of this study, the discussion section, included an explanation of the findings and the relationships between the results found in the current survey compared to past research in literature. In addition, implications for future research, limitations for future research, and directions for future research in this area were discussed.

As OSNS become more popular as new avenues of communicating, it will be important for future researchers to investigate how these mediums change the way people communicate today. OSNS are not only for college students or young adults. This way of communicating is also being used by adults and older generations at home and in the workplace, as well as in advertising. OSNS make e-mail and instant messaging (IM)

look like a thing in the past. Once OSNS are further explored, we may gain more insight into the future of CMC as an important form of human communication.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY

Name of Study: Communication in Facebook.com and MySpace.com

Name of Investigator: Morgan Curtis Hales (Principal) and Dr. Michael Papa (Faculty Advisor)

Phone of Investigator: 989-506-7133 (Hales); 989-774-7896 (Papa)

Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in a research study on how one uses communication competence and immediacy while interacting on Facebook.com and/or My Space.com. The following information should help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, contact Morgan Curtis or Dr. Michael Papa.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to learn how people who use Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com to communicate with others.

Subjects: You are eligible to participate in this research because you are a CMU student and because you are at least 18 years old.

Procedures: If you decide to participate in this research project, we will ask you to complete a questionnaire on how you and your friends interact on Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com.

Timetable: Filling out the questionnaire should take you less than 30 minutes.

Risks: There is minimal risk in this study. Some people may get upset when thinking about messages they have posted on others walls or message boards. If you do encounter distress, feel free to contact Morgan Curtis Hales, Dr. Michael Papa, or the CMU Counseling Center (774-3381).

Benefits: This research will give you an idea of how we collect data in the field of communication. It may also help us gain better insight into how people use Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com over more traditional types of communication

Compensation for Participation: Depending on your instructor, you may be earning extra credit for participation in this study. On the other hand, for some individuals, there may be no compensation or reward for participation.

Please initial that you have read and understood this page\_\_\_\_\_

Confidentiality: As you will not identify yourself on the questionnaires, there is no way for the investigator to know who filled out which set of questionnaires. While your name will be on a consent form, these will be submitted separately from the questionnaires. All questionnaires will be destroyed after the data are coded onto disk.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw: You are free to refuse to participate in this research project or to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in the project at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your participation will not affect your relationship with the institution(s) involved in this research project.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which this study is being conducted, you may report (anonymously if you so choose) any complaints to the Institutional Review Board by calling 989-774-6777, or addressing a letter to the Institutional Review Board, 251 Foust Hall Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

Questions: If you have any questions at this time or at any other time, please feel free to contact Morgan Hales by letter, email or phone:

Morgan Curtis Hales  
Speech Communication & Dramatic Arts  
333 Moore Hall  
Central Michigan University  
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859  
(989) 506-7133  
curti1mm@cmich.edu

Dr. Michael Papa  
Speech Communication & Dramatic Arts  
333 Moore Hall  
Central Michigan University  
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859  
(989) 774-7896  
papa1mj@cmich.edu

Please keep one signed and dated copy of this form and return the other when you are instructed.

Your signature below indicates that you have voluntarily decided to participate in this research project as a subject and that you have read and understand the information provided above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's printed name

*A copy of this form has been given to me.* \_\_\_\_\_ Subject's Initials

For the Research Investigator—I have discussed with this subject the procedure(s) described above and the risks involved; I believe he/she understands the contents of the consent document and is competent to give legally effective and informed consent.

---

Signature of Responsible Investigator

Investigator's signature

---

Investigator's printed name

---

Date Signed

Date

APPENDIX B  
DEMOGRAPHICS

Directions: Please answer the following questions by placing a mark in the space provided.

1. Biological Sex:            \_\_\_\_\_ Male            \_\_\_\_\_ Female
2. Year in School:            \_\_\_\_\_ Freshman            \_\_\_\_\_ Sophomore  
   \_\_\_\_\_ Junior            \_\_\_\_\_ Senior
3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
4. I use the following:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Facebook.com    \_\_\_\_\_ MySpace.com    \_\_\_\_\_ Both            \_\_\_\_\_ Neither
5. Hours per week of use:  
\_\_\_\_\_ 0-2 Hrs            \_\_\_\_\_ 3-5 Hrs            \_\_\_\_\_ 6-8 Hrs            \_\_\_\_\_ 8 or More Hrs

## APPENDIX C

### COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE MEASURE

Directions: Please answer the following questions about your Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com use. Using the scale below, indicate the degree to which each statement regarding your use of FB and/or MS is true or untrue of you.

- 1 = Not at all true of me
- 2 = Mostly not true of me
- 3 = Neither true nor untrue of me; undecided
- 4 = mostly true of me
- 5 = very true of me

#### MOTIVATION

- \_\_\_01. I am nervous about using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com to communicate with others.
- \_\_\_02. I am very motivated to use Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com to communicate with others.
- \_\_\_03. I look forward to sitting down at my computer to write to others on Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com.
- \_\_\_04. Communicating through Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com makes me anxious.

#### KNOWLEDGE

- \_\_\_05. I am very knowledgeable about how to communicate using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com.
- \_\_\_06. I am never at a loss for something to say on Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com.
- \_\_\_07. I am very familiar with how to communicate through Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com.
- \_\_\_08. I always seem to know how to write or post things the way I mean them using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com.
- \_\_\_09. When communicating with someone through Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com, I know how to adapt my messages depending on who the person is.

#### EFFICACY

- \_\_\_10. I don't feel very competent in learning and using Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com technology.
- \_\_\_11. I am confident I will learn how to use any new online social networking sites other than Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com.
- \_\_\_12. I'm nervous when I have to learn how to use a new online social networking site such as Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com.
- \_\_\_13. I find changes in Facebook.com and/or MySpace.com very frustrating.
- \_\_\_14. I quickly figure out how to use new FB and/or MS technologies.

- \_\_\_15. I know I can learn to use new FB and/or MS technologies when they come out.
- \_\_\_16. If FB and/or MS wasn't user friendly, I'd not likely use it.

#### COORDINATION

- \_\_\_17. I know when to close down a topic of conversation in FB and/or MS dialogues.
- \_\_\_18. I know how to close down a topic of conversation in FB and/or MS dialogues.
- \_\_\_19. I manage the give and take of FB and/or MS interactions skillfully.
- \_\_\_20. I am skilled at timing when I send my responses to people who FB and/or MS me.
- \_\_\_21. I am skilled at prioritizing (triaging) my FB and/or MS traffic.

#### ATTENTIVENESS

- \_\_\_22. I ask questions of the other person in my interactions with them on FB and/or MS.
- \_\_\_23. I manage the give and take of my FB and/or MS interactions skillfully.
- \_\_\_24. I can show compassion and empathy through the way I write messages or on walls of people on FB and/or MS.
- \_\_\_25. I take time to make sure my messages or wall comments to others are uniquely adapted to the particular receiver I'm sending it to on FB and/or MS.
- \_\_\_26. I show concern for and interest in the person I am conversing with on to close down a topic of conversation in FB and/or MS.

#### EXPRESSIVENESS

- \_\_\_27. I am very articulate in my FB and/or MS messages or wall comments.
- \_\_\_28. I am very vivid in my FB and/or MS messages or wall comments.
- \_\_\_29. I use a lot of the expressive symbols [e.g., for "smile"] in my FB and/or MS messages or wall comments.
- \_\_\_30. I try to use a lot of humor in my FB and/or MS messages or wall comments.
- \_\_\_31. I am expressive in my FB and/or MS conversations.

#### COMPOSURE

- \_\_\_32. I display a lot of certainty in the way I write my FB and/or MS messages or wall comments.
- \_\_\_33. I use an assertive style in my FB and/or MS writing.
- \_\_\_34. I have no trouble expressing my opinions forcefully on FB and/or MS.
- \_\_\_35. I make sure my objectives of what I want to say are emphasized in my FB and/or MS messages or wall comments.
- \_\_\_36. My FB and/or MS messages or wall comments are written in a confident style.
- \_\_\_37. I am skillful at revealing composure and self-confidence in my FB and/or MS interactions.

I choose which medium (FB and/or MS over phone, face-to-face, etc) to communicate based on (use the same scale as used above)...

#### SELECTIVITY

- \_\_\_38. how quickly I need to get a message out to people.
- \_\_\_39. how much benefit there would be to having the other(s) present face-to-face.
- \_\_\_40. how lively the interaction needs to be on .
- \_\_\_41. how much access the person I need to communicate with has to the medium.
- \_\_\_42. how much information is involved in the message I need to communicate.
- \_\_\_43. how much access I have to the channel or medium.
- \_\_\_44. how long I need people to hang on to or remember the message.
- \_\_\_45. how many different uses and forms are needed (e.g., hardcopy, image processing, voicemail, computer language, etc.)
- \_\_\_46. how personal or intimate the information in the message is.
- \_\_\_47. how quickly the receiver needs to react to the message.
- \_\_\_48. the extent to which I need to get some “back and forth,” “give and take,” and interchange of ideas.
- \_\_\_49. the extent to which I need some creative brainstorming.

Directions: For this next part of the survey, using the same scale as above, indicate the degree to which each statement regarding your use of FB and/or MS is true or untrue of you.

#### APPROPRIATENESS

- \_\_\_50. I avoid writing or posting comments on FB and/or MS that might offend someone.
- \_\_\_51. I pay as much attention to the WAY I write or post comments as WHAT I write or post when using FB and/or MS.
- \_\_\_52. I never write or post things that offend the other person when using FB and/or MS.
- \_\_\_53. I am careful to make my FB and/or MS comments and behaviors appropriate to the situation.

#### EFFECTIVENESS

- \_\_\_54. I generally get what I want out of interactions when using FB and/or MS.
- \_\_\_55. I consistently achieve my goals in interactions when using FB and/or MS.
- \_\_\_56. My interactions are effective in accomplishing what I set out to accomplish when using FB and/or MS.

#### CLARITY

- \_\_\_57. My FB and/or MS comments are consistently accurate and clear.
- \_\_\_58. My FB and/or MS messages are rarely misunderstood.
- \_\_\_59. I feel understood when I interact with others when using FB and/or MS.

#### SATISFACTION

- \_\_\_60. I am generally satisfied with my communication encounters when using FB and/or MS.
- \_\_\_61. I enjoy my interactions with others when using FB and/or MS.
- \_\_\_62. I am generally pleased with my interactions when using FB and/or MS.

#### ATTRACTIVENESS

- \_\_\_63. If I can engage someone in conversation using FB and/or MS, I can usually get them to like me.
- \_\_\_64. I come across as someone people would like to get to know when I use FB and/or MS.
- \_\_\_65. I make friends easily using FB and/or MS.

#### EFFICIENCY/PRODUCTIVITY

- \_\_\_66. I get a tremendous amount accomplished through FB and/or MS.
- \_\_\_67. My FB and/or MS interactions are more productive than my face-to-face interactions.
- \_\_\_68. I am more efficient using FB and/or MS than other forms of communication.
- \_\_\_69. FB and/or MS technologies are tremendous time-savers for my work.

#### GENERAL USAGE/EXPERIENCE

- \_\_\_70. I rely heavily upon my FB and/or MS for getting me through each day.
- \_\_\_71. I use FB and/or MS as means of communication almost constantly.
- \_\_\_72. I can rarely go a week without any FB and/or MS interactions.
- \_\_\_73. I am a heavy user of FB and/or MS.
- \_\_\_74. If I can use FB and/or MS for communicating, I tend to.

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