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Social Media Acknowledgement and Relationship Satisfaction

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SOCIAL MEDIA ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND

RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

by

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Abstract

Research has demonstrated that relationship satisfaction is a broadly defined construct and as such, is the product of a number of contributing factors. Recently, social media and its numerous uses have demonstrated some effect on interpersonal relationships and their degree of success. While both social media and relationship satisfaction have both been extensively researched, no concrete relationship has been established between the use of social media and the degree of an an individual's overall relationship satisfaction. Consequently, the present study addressed the effect of social media, when used for relationship acknowledgement purposes, on overall relationship satisfaction in monogamous couples, using data from surveys provided over the three major social media sites, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

The sample of the current study consisted of 82 men and women, over the age of 18, in committed relationships of an intimate nature. Relationship satisfaction was measured using the Relationship Rating Form, and social media acknowledgement was measured using the Social Media Acknowledgement Scale, which was created specifically for this study. A regression model was used to examine the relationship between the two variables.

The results of the study supported the study hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between levels of social media acknowledgement and relationship satisfaction. The findings of the study are relevant because they establish a connection between certain functions of social media use with relationship satisfaction and will be helpful in determining the specific aspects of social media use that affect individual ability to maintain and be satisfied in intimate relationships.

Relationship Satisfaction and Social Media Acknowlegement

Relationship Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction is a complex construct that has been studied in depth. Three major components of relationship satisfaction have been identified: psychological, sexual, and emotional. The balance between these generates overall relationship satisfaction. Satisfaction is the linking factor between psychological, sexual and emotional components of the relationship and reflects the existing balance of the three within a dyadic relationship. Relationship satisfaction is most commonly defined in the general population as the happiness level of both members of an intimate and romantic relationship (Felmlee, 2001). Relationship satisfaction, as a construct, relies on several commonly held characteristics of emotional, psychological, and sexual factors as a function of intimacy, successful communication, successful conflict resolution, likeness of ideas, emotional satisfaction, and sexual satisfaction (Gibbs et al., 2006). There are numerous understudied components to relationship satisfaction, such as intimacy, emotional connection, and sexual satisfaction. Intimacy is particularly understudied. Social penetration theory regards disclosure of intimacy as one of the key factors contributing to the development of satisfying interpersonal relationships and predicts that self-disclosure leads to relational intimacy and satisfaction (Gibbs & Ellison, 1987).

Studies of relationships have also been concerned with the outcome or success of such relationships, usually conceptualized as either formation of intimate or enduring relationships, or as relationship satisfaction as a whole (Gibbs et al., 2006). Relationship satisfaction can be seen as the current level of success in an intimate relationship as a composite of emotional satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, and psychological satisfaction, which includes high levels of communication, mutual self-disclosure, similar ideals, and conflict resolution capabilities. Relationship satisfaction is also the product of qualities

such as mindfulness, physiological linkages, stimulating exchange of ideas, personality characteristics, overall happiness, and effective communication. These qualities are encompassed in the emotional, sexual and psychological components of relationship satisfaction.

Emotional. Emotional factors of relationship satisfaction play a large role in overall relationship happiness. Among these are factors such as partner feelings, healthy interaction styles, personality, physiology, and attitudes that work together to guide both partners in a dyad towards or away from a lasting commitment. A good predictor of relationship satisfaction is implicit partner affect, which is composed of spontaneous partner feelings, the gut reactions that an individual experiences when his or her partner is thought of or seen (Lebel & Campbell, 2009). Relationships have previously been defined by their qualities established in direct face to face contact between partners, before the availability and possibility of indirect, online relationships. In fact, one of the best predictors of liking or desiring another individual is sheer proximity (Merkle & Richardson, 2000). Direct contact also contributes to high levels of intimacy, trust and communication satisfaction (Anderson, 2005). Initial attraction and the development of a secure relationship both create a platform for secure attachment between individuals that thrive on mutual trust and similar feelings about the relationship. When both partners perceive heightened support in the relationship, they report better relationship quality (Campbell et al., 2005).

Mindfulness is most commonly defined as being the state of attentiveness and awareness of what is occurring in the present (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Mindfulness promotes interaction styles that support healthy relationship functioning and generally en-

hances relationship quality (Barnes & Brown, 2007). Mindfulness, which is also synony-
mous with conscientiousness, is typically characteristic of a considerate, non-narcissistic
individual who is able to put others before themselves in a non-deliberate and automatic
manner. Prioritizing a partner over the self is often a very important aspect of a relation-
ship, as consideration and compromise are central to the give-and-take aspect of a dyadic
interaction. Mindful partners tend to view their relationships more positively. As a result,
there is less experienced negativity within the relationship, as well as less experienced
negativity in the form of verbal aggression, passive aggression, and hostility (Barnes &
Brown, 2007).

Physiological similarities between partners have also been shown to predict the
level of marital happiness within a couple, as couples who demonstrated the same level
of physiological response during times of stress and conflict were more likely to have sta-
ble and enduring relationships than couples who did not share the same level of arousal
(Levenson & Gottman, 1985). However, these similarities are not indicative of physio-
logical similarities in health status, such as symptomology or dysfunction, but rather of
similar patterns of emotional or physiological response, which may manifest as outward
emotion, physiological arousal, or sexual response. In fact, eHarmony, a pioneer site in
online dating, conducted a study in 2007 which revealed that similar arousal and emo-
tional response patterns (including anxiety, fear, enthusiasm, and irritability, among oth-
ers) in both partners mediated the association between personality convergence over time
and relationship satisfaction (Gonzaga et al., 2007).

Personality affects the connection of individual traits to relationship quality and
how these might be perceived by a partner (Neyer & Voigt, 2004). Individuals are more

likely to judge their relationship as a function of their personality rather than on the personality of their partner. When any existing personality dissimilarities are not taken into account, the relationship can then be based on its own overall quality and not its qualities based on certain personality traits. Assortive mate selection stipulates that individuals seek partners who share similar attributes (Maloudd et al., 2009). Assortive mechanisms speculate that the creation, persistence, and dissolution of social relationships are all outcomes that rely on the compatibility and complementarity of partner attributes (River et al., 2010). The five factor model, a dimensional model of personality, has been a useful tool in determining congruence between personality traits in a couple and the level of relationship satisfaction of the partners, supporting the theory of mating assortment. Personality characteristics, according to the model, factor heavily into what people look for in a potential mate, taking into account the availability of a perfect match. Studies have shown that relationships with high similarity between partners on the factors of agreeableness, openness, and emotional stability had a positive prognosis for relationship satisfaction over time (Botwin et al., 1997).

There is significant evidence that love and the emotions associated with attachment, sex and attraction are rooted in neurotransmitter release and reuptake, particularly dopamine and norepinephrine. Serotonin is another neurotransmitter associated with these love chemicals, but whereas dopamine tends to be high in individuals who are in love, serotonin levels tend to be low. It is responsible for obsessive thinking, or "intrusive thinking" in romantic love, particularly during the growing stages of a relationship (Fisher et al., 2007). Increasing serotonin, therefore, generates a blunting effect on the emotions experienced in romantic love, and hindering relationship satisfaction (Meyer,

2007). Because of this, medications like SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors), which are prescribed to elevate mood in patients with depression, should be taken with such an outcome in mind, as they may have a dampening effect on sexual drives and emotional desires towards their partners, which would, in turn, have a compound effect on their overall relationship satisfaction.

Sexual. Sexual satisfaction is a crucial component of relationships in general. Sexual factors such as intimacy, novelty, effective communication and openness contribute to the sexual element of romantic relationships. Sexual satisfaction is a complex construct based on both inherently physical as well as nonphysical sexual behaviors. These behaviors, more specifically, encompass all actions that generate feelings of excitement or arousal in partners.

Similar patterns of arousal contribute to a mutual experience of excitement by both partners that serves to combat long-term relationship boredom, especially after the honeymoon period (Aron et al., 2000). Undeniably, most romantic relationships peak within a critical period of a year or two with novelty and associated excitement. However, given that many intimate relationships tend to form rapidly, there will inevitably be some degree of decline in how stimulating the relationship remains over time.

There is evidence that partners who enjoy seeking excitement from other sources besides the relationship itself are able to reignite relationship passion by creating strong associations between new experiences and the relationship. These activities include, but are not limited to, traveling, exploring new interests and participating in challenging activities together (Tsapelas, Aron, & Orbuch, 2009). Similarly, partners who frequently

engage in stimulating exchanges of ideas and knowledge are able to maintain conversation and mutual excitement in information sharing that is crucial to communication over time. Consequently, evidence suggests that partners who do not continuously introduce some form of novelty into the relationship are likely to find the relationship under-stimulating and may also be more likely to seek dissolution entirely (Aron et al., 2000).

Effective verbal and sexual communication between partners is a vital predictor of relationship satisfaction, (Montesi et al., 2012). It is essential, particularly sexually, for couples to establish ground rules and a baseline satisfaction rate so they are able to express emotion and concerns clearly. Perspective taking, self-disclosure, relationship attitudes, and conflict tactics all contribute to communication within a relationship and are essential to convey equal roles in the relationship (Meeks et al., 1998).

Sexual communication is related to both sexual and nonsexual aspects of a relationship. Communication of sexual issues, concerns, and desires is important in relationships that may result in sexual involvement and long-term commitment (Harvey et al., 2004). Initiation, acceptance, and refusal of sexual advances, interest, likes and dislikes are all crucial to communicate to maintain pleasing sexual interactions with a partner. Typically, a clear awareness of a partner's sexual likes and desires results in fulfilling, rewarding, and satisfying sex for both individuals. In 1976, Masters and Johnson found that sexual self-disclosure positively predicts sexual satisfaction, and consequently, relationship satisfaction, in committed relationships, and contemporary research has supported their findings (Harvey et al., 2004). Couples must also discuss compromises and desires for the relationship in a way that satisfies both participants equally. Understandably, discrepancies in sexual preferences between partners may generate tension that must either

be resolved through compromise or sexual exploration to determine willingness to maintain or dissolve established sexual boundaries for the sake of the relationship as a whole (Byers & Demmons, 1999). Individuals who are unable or unwilling to express concerns, feelings and thoughts to their partner are susceptible to trust issues and misunderstandings about the stage and progression of the relationship.

Psychological. Psychological satisfaction as a component of relationship satisfaction is perhaps the most understudied. These psychological factors, particularly in the context of a romantic, dyadic relationship, are abstract. Psychological factors comprise perception of reciprocity in communication, relationship idealization, expectations, conflict and conflict resolution, and feelings such as insecurity, mistrust, and jealousy. Any factor that might negatively affect overall satisfaction as the result of stress, discomfort, insecurity, or distress would fall into this category. Similarly, these factors might also affect a relationship positively if they alleviate any of these.

Currently, new forms of communication are taking root, particularly in the context of relationship building. Individuals now have the ability to communicate over the phone, internet, and messaging applications, in addition to traditional face-to-face contact. There are new elements to conversation and communication that have emerged as a result that serve as an extension of nonverbal communication like behavioral cues, intonation, and body language. Individuals have now developed the ability to detect emotive affect through texts and internet messages, as well as emotion and conversational emphasis, through the use of capital letters, emoticons and punctuation that would otherwise be conveyed verbally in direct contact (Lo, 2008). While there is some argument that the use of text and the internet depersonalizes conversation, it has become a major medium for

constant interpersonal communication while the individuals are physically separated and would otherwise not be able to interact. For people in intimate relationships, this allows them to discuss even the minutest aspects of their daily lives for the sake of maintaining conversation, which reflects the essential property of mutual sharing within the relationship (Mesch & Talmud, 2006).

Implications of relationship satisfaction for relationship prognosis should all correlate positively. Recent research indicates that perception of daily relationship events strongly colors how individuals interpret the motives and intentions of their partner (Campbell et al., 2005). People who tend to see their relationships positively with little conflict tend to believe that their partner has the interests of the relationship in mind and has good intentions and motives for the progression of the relationship. Positive idealization, a mental process of attributing overly positive value to another individual or thing, can minimize conflict and insulate the couple against the pressures of time and experience on a relationship. Intimates who idealized one another more initially also reported relatively greater increases in satisfaction and decreases in conflicts and doubts over the year (Murray et al., 1996). The positive illusions may provide an alternative for excessive expectations and disappointment over the course of the relationship. As such, they may well be a romantic necessity. Individuals are motivated to seek safety and fulfillment in romantic relationships, as well as qualities that provide satisfaction in both the long and the short term.

Relationship satisfaction does tend to depend on some factors more than others. Daily perceptions of conflict and support should play a stronger role in day-to-day relationship feelings (Campbell et al., 2005). Recently, there has been a distinct change in the

facets of a relationship that are important over time, and with the advent of new social networking methodology, this is an ongoing process.

In view of the above, there are numerous factors that affect relationships satisfaction, particularly sexual, emotional and psychological factors. The advent of social media has changed the entire context of social relationships and relationship satisfaction.

Social Media.

In the last few decades, social networking, the exchange of information, ideas, and services among groups or institutions, has been affected by the growth of social media and the internet. Networking is about engagement and creating relationships, and maintaining them through contact and connectivity. Over time, it has undergone significant change, which has affected the networking process as a whole. Due to the advent of the internet, individuals have discovered new avenues for communication, knowledge, information sharing, and networking. Social media erupted as a new avenue for communication and relationship building. Popular social media sites have developed as a result, enabling people to connect with others around the world and make contact through posts, comment threads, private messaging, and photo sharing. Inevitably, social network sites and applications emerged as a popular and convenient method of interpersonal relationship maintenance, as they allow for constant contact and interaction with others. Relationships, both platonic and romantic, are increasingly reliant upon electronic communication to maintain connection on a daily basis.

The most commonly used social networking platforms today are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Although used primarily for social networking, these platforms have

many supplemental features in common, such as private messaging and photo sharing. Users can monitor and refresh their feeds, each network's continuous streams of data, to stay up to date and current with other users' posts and photos. Such platforms have made it possible to remain in contact with friends and personal networks at all times by continuously polling the system for updates and making them available within a second of posting. Such utility has had a great impact in a network user's ability to observe other users' behaviors both on and offline, as illustrated by the status updates, tweets and photo posts of other users. These resources allow for a wider possibility of social interaction and connection. However, they have also begun to generate a compelling desire to pursue and absorb information at a rate that exceeds time restrictions and appropriate opportunities to do so (Przybylski et al., 2013). This "fear of missing out" has developed as a negative impact of the growth of social networking on internet users, and is expressed as an anxiety in many users that lack of posts or acknowledgement in posts negates the reality of having participated in an activity or event at all. By utilizing a social network in this way, individuals tend to post or tweet photos or updates that would elicit responses such as "likes" or "retweets" from other users as a form of validation. Social media, as incredible as it is, may be permeating and changing patterns of human behavior simply through its accessibility (Grohan, 2011).

Networking platforms such as Twitter and Facebook offer user-generated and user-consumed content that facilitates these methods of communication (Agichtein et al., 2008). Other applications such as Instagram function similarly, creating a wide variety of options for information sharing in the current day. People in relationships have become increasingly reliant upon the publicity of the internet to share the most private aspects of

their relationships. Self-disclosure on the internet is a primary initiator and facilitator of many current relationships. Acknowledging friendships and intimate relationships on public forums is commonplace, but has become required as a solidifier of the relation on a digital platform, ranging from tags on posts or photos to a listing in a relationship status between individuals.

Social media acknowledgement can take the form of any recognition of a passionate, romantic relationship on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. Acknowledgement of a relationship online can range from private to explicit public content, but occurs on an online domain on which other individuals will see and recognize the relationship between the two individuals as intimate or exclusive in some way. Acknowledgement is not reserved only for individuals in a committed relationship but for any romantic involvement from casual dating to marriage. The more serious the individuals perceive their relationship to be, the more likely it is that they will utilize social media to express love, feelings, and events within the union.

Facebook. Facebook is an online social networking service that boasts approximately one and a half billion worldwide users. It was originally intended for use as a networking tool for college students to connect with their peers and potential employers. However, after several extremely successful years, it became available to anyone over the age of 13 anywhere in the world. Today, Facebook is the medium for individuals to join interest groups, maintain friendships, and post status updates and photos about their lives for anyone in their friends list, or the public, to see. As such a platform, it has also become useful for defining the boundaries of friendships or other relationships, as individuals are

able to select privacy settings that allow or limit certain individuals or groups from accessing anything they post to their profile. Should a relationship end, there is flexibility in whether to block, unfriend, or simply limit the other person's accessibility entirely. On the flip side, however, it is also a useful medium to publicize a friendship or intimate relationship through a relationship status, which is essentially a relationship label or "virtual marriage license." Options include single, in a relationship, married, widowed, divorced, and in a civil union, among others. Many individuals believe that a relationship is not solidified unless it is "Facebook official," meaning that unless the label is posted to Facebook, it is as if it does not exist (Papp et al., 2012). Interestingly , as of May 2014, Facebook created a feature that allows one individual to ask another individual out. If one person is not in a relationship on Facebook, other users can click on an "ask" button to determine their relationship status in real life and whether they are open to entering into a new relationship (Weber, 2014).

Twitter. Twitter, another major social network, is a microblogging service that allows users to send and receive short messages, "tweets," on a private news feed that can be catered to their liking. Individuals "follow" other users whose topics, thoughts or genre of tweets appeal to them, as well as friends, family, coworkers, intimate partners, celebrities and others. Twitter was created in 2006, and in eight short years, boasts over 200 million active users (Smith, 2014). The platform is a direct, but not necessarily reciprocal, service. Users are not contracted into a friendship the way that Facebook friends are. On Twitter, one user can follow another without that other individual following back. There is a lower element of friendship per se, given that tweets are not always directed at another user and the intent is not to create a profile to keep up with friends and networks,

but rather to blog at a micro level instead of composing a long and drawn out post on a private blogging site. As a result, Twitter has become useful for initiating contact with other individuals, which may then lead to further pursuit of contact on other media from one or both parties involved.

Instagram. Instagram is an online, mobile video and photo-sharing application that has risen to become a major networking service alongside Twitter and Facebook. Users take photos and video and apply filters and special effects and can then share the edited media to other social networking platforms as well as their personal social feed. Users can post photos of experiences, events, accomplishments, food, pets and the like, as well as photos with people they know. Instagram is also the youngest of the three platforms, but has a tremendous user base, with 200 million registered users in just under four years of opera-tion as of May 2014 (Smith, 2014). Similar to Twitter's interface, while users have a pro-file, their information is not laid out in the form of a profile, as it is on Facebook. How-ever, individuals can post a short biography on their profile with information like their name, location, hobbies, and any basic information that may inform other users whether or not their photos and videos will be appealing. In essence, Instagram users have the lux-ury of using photos to describe their life rather than by posting status updates or short thoughts. They are also able to "tag," or mention, other users in their uploads if they are partaking in photo-worthy activities together. They have the option to tag other users who might appear in photos as a way of acknowledging shared experiences and publicizing the friendship. In romantic relationships, posting photos is one way to expose the rela-

tionship by displaying activities done together and documenting the closeness and development of the couple as a pair. From Instagram, couples can share the photos to other sites such as Facebook and Twitter as well.

Social Media Acknowledgement

Social media acknowledgement can take the form of any recognition of a passionate, romantic relationship on Facebook, twitter, or Instagram. Acknowledgement of a relationship online can range from private to explicit public content, but occurs on an online domain on which other individuals will see and recognize the relationship between the two individuals as intimate or exclusive in some way. Acknowledgement is not reserved only for individuals in a committed relationship, but for any romantic involvement from casual dating to marriage. The more serious the individuals perceive their relationship to be, the more likely it is that they will utilize social media to express love, feelings, and events within the union.

Different levels and capacities of acknowledgement exist on each network site and application, via direct and indirect interactions between pairs, such as wall posts, likes, status updates, photos, and conversations open to public view (Burke et al., 2010). Twitter users have 140 characters to directly post updates to communicate specifically with another person. According to recent studies, 25% of posts are directed, displaying the importance of communication with others over such a site (Huberman et al., 2008). This provides a platform for active communication and passive observation among users of relationships between users and their degree of interaction. Twitter's reduced character count on posts also dictates how concise users must be in what they post, reducing tweets

to meaningful expressions of thought or emotion that other social media sites may not express as well. Individuals in a romantic relationship might use the site to direct feelings towards one another, to passively express occurrences in the relationship or to participate in Twitter trends with their partner.

On Facebook, the original contemporary social media site, there are slightly wider options for relationship acknowledgement. Facebook users have a profile on which they designate their relationship status as single, in a relationship, married or one of several other options, allowing for explicit mentioning of their significant other to anyone who visits their page. In addition, Facebook allows users to post photos not only to their wall, but to their profile image, which many romantically involved couples choose to set as a photo of himself or herself with his or her partner. Users can also post status updates, create events, set anniversaries, and express emotions or thoughts onto their own wall and those of others with unlimited word counts. Privacy settings do allow control of what posts others can see, but typically, romantic information is public and few individuals choose to hide their relationship status while the relationship is active and progressing well. In a 2012 study, Facebook profile choices were shown to play a role in the overall functioning of the relationship. Male participants who indicated partnered relationship status on the site demonstrated higher levels of their own and their partners' relationship satisfaction. Interestingly, female participants' displays of their partner in their Facebook profile picture were linked with higher levels of their satisfaction and their partners' (Papp et al., 2012).

Facebook is a more closed network than others and it is considered a more private space than Twitter or Instagram (Sener, 2012). Choosing whether to disclose a relationship status on a Facebook profile can be considered as a start as well as an end to a relationship (Sener, 2012), as it may be more important to one partner than the other. Given the available features and components of a Facebook account, it is much more widely used for relationship publicity purposes than other networks, at least at the onset. Typically, social media users log on to each of their social network accounts on a daily basis. Even when individuals are not sharing content, they are still consuming it in some way. According the Facebook's press team, 50% of users will log on daily for an average of 55 minutes per day (Mod, 2010). With the surge of mobile networking applications, these numbers are actually higher.

Primarily, social media is used for forming and establishing connections with other individuals with similar interests or ties. One of the most observable consequences of social media communication is social capital, which is composed of the benefits one acquires from connections with other individuals (Steinfield et al., 2008). Self-esteem is a large moderator of social capital and social network use, as social capital tends to be inversely related to self-esteem. However, given that the ability to form and maintain relationships is a prerequisite of social capital, it also becomes necessary for users to extend themselves somewhat outside of their comfort zone to establish worthy connections (Steinfield et al., 2008). An advantage of using social media to do so is establishing strong ties and lines of communication with individuals most like oneself. Social support offered by those with whom one has ties can improve mental health and positive self-image (Gilbert & Karahalios, 2009).

While social network sites also provide the ability to connect with long-lost friends, they also allow people to make information public within their circle of friends and the public (Muise et al., 2009). The advantage of information sharing is transparency that may not otherwise occur in direct, face-to-face interaction. In a sense, this transparency, or lack of privacy, displays more about individuals than they might otherwise reveal, giving insight into whether that bond is actually beneficial. Social network sites such as Facebook have changed the nature of publicity and privacy in that much more information is available about a partner than many individuals would have access to through other methods of offline communication (Muise et al., 2009). However, many online networks restrict access to individuals about members and their relationships through privacy controls (Narayanam & Shmatikov, 2009).

Social networks connect individuals on some level between exclusively private interaction and explicitly public information. The edges, the intermediate information between two nodes of information, can be sensitive in terms of what individuals choose to share. They are public by default, and their attributes reveal more than what is unequivocally revealed to other users (Muise et al., 2009). For example, a description of certain related interests may indicate an underlying motive or relationship that would otherwise not have been evident to other users.

In addition, internet personals and profiles allow for deliberate self-presentation and construction of the image that they want to communicate through profile authoring, photo selection, and asynchronous interactions (Gibbs et al., 2006). Other than the actual self, the variations in the self-concept are all concerned with future, potential versions of the self that do not yet exist in the present time (Bargh et al., 2002). The internet allows

presentation of the self in a positive light to initiate interactions with others and project an image of the self that would be appealing to others at first impression. Consequently, people may adopt a new persona that is not genuine and that may be misleading when interacting with other users. As the relationship progresses, the individual must either adopt the new image to maintain the relationship under its original pretenses, or slowly divulge information about themselves and risk losing ties because of the original deception.

Self-disclosure is an important aspect of creating relationships, but positive valence is necessary to maintain them. The advantages of social media are positive and constructive only up to a point. If individuals self-disclosure is false information, there is the possibility of some connections dissolving, as they were created under false pretenses. To maintain healthy, positive and long-lasting relationships, it is important to be genuine and truthful. Previous research has linked positive disclosure with increased relational intimacy and satisfaction (Muise et al., 2009). The sharing of personal information triggers an emotional response in the consumer, leading the disclosing user to feel understood and appreciated. The most frequent reasons for revelation were: felt obligation to reveal based on the relationship with the target, the desire for emotional expression and the desire for psychological support from the target (Baxter and Windenmann, 1993). Individuals who make friends via the Internet tend to take appropriate precautions and find this medium an effective and safe way to interact with others and to expand one's social system (McCown et al., 2001).

Social media, for all of its benefits, comes at a cost. Exposing social network activity in a public forum may have some negative impact on romantic relationships. The internet is a unique medium for relationship acknowledgement and information sharing.

Facebook and Twitter, by their very nature, provide easy access to information and activity (Muise et al., 2009). Exposure to such information about an individual or romantic significant other's social activity and interactions create an environment that may generate jealousy, insecurity, and lurking. In this context, jealousy in particular is a complex amalgam of thoughts and feelings about any action or observable behavior that a significant other performs online and on a public domain that may pose a perceived threat to the quality or existence of the relationship.

Social media site users are connected in a person-to-person manner and must explicitly state their relationship with other people. These make the relationships among members in a social networking site more visible, direct and interpersonal than the relationships among other members (Rau et al., 2008).

Relationship Satisfaction and Social Media Acknowledgement

Social media, at its core, was created explicitly to network and to connect with others, particularly within dyadic friendships and relationships. Given the wide variety of settings and capabilities of each social application, it is clear that the networks serve purposes in supplementing or detracting from the quality of established relationships. The frequent usage of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram is a contributor to the stagnation of some relationships and development or dissolution of others. There are many ways in which social network factors are likely to augment or supplant dyadic factors in accounting for couple stability or longevity (Felmlee, 2001). Approval from individuals outside the relationship may play a role in how the relationship progresses, as the influences of family and friends may weigh heavily on choices the couple will make. The amount of

time spent online and the affinity for the Internet are positively related to more favorable perceptions of online romantic relationships (Anderson, 2005). Couple labeling, invitation to events as a couple, and other positive reactions about the union are likely to favor strong dyadic identity and longevity.

Social network sites provide readily available information about one's significant other for both the individual and the public. Network embeddedness, the sharing of common network users, engenders extension of social groups and increasing investment in the family and friend circles of each person within the couple (Felmlee, 2001). This embeddedness therefore increases the cost of a breakup in terms of social capital, as dissolution would also result in the breaking of several other social ties for each person involved. Self-esteem serves to moderate the relationship between Facebook usage intensity and bridging social capital: those with lower self-esteem gained more from their use of Facebook in terms of bridging social capital than higher self-esteem participants (Steinfield et al., 2008). Social reactions and encouragement to maintain a relationship contribute to the cementing of commitment in intimacy, romance and love. Typically, social media tends to aid the success of a relationship, but there is evidence that it establishes negative influences as well. Differences in religion or ethnicity may create some tension from social network participants and transfer strain onto the couple. Disapproval from outsiders can trigger discouragement in a relationship and catalyze its dissolution. It is true that in some cases, outside resistance serves as an encouragement to a couple to prove the resilience of their bond, but typically, negative perceptions are likely to pose a threat to couple identity (Felmlee, 2001).

In general, social media serves to enhance relationship quality rather than detract from it. Romantic involvement is associated with network involvement and social support, occasionally evolving into emotional interdependence as the result of such a strong connection (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). People in romantic relationships tend to develop attachment to subsequent relationships that exist because of it, therefore expanding their network and emotional contacts. These individuals generate positive feelings and support for the relationship that substantiate and advocate for its existence. Network involvement and romantic involvement are said to be positively and reciprocally related, according to the principle of transitivity, which dictates that romantic involvement and involvement with the partner's close family and friends will predict strong ties among all individuals involved (Felmlee, 2001). Transformation of motivations can occur as a result of joint interactions, the satisfaction of social expectations, information exchange, and restricted access to alternative partner (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). These changes are not necessarily negative, as compromise and some degree of change are not only healthy but expected in an emotionally reciprocal relationship.

The amount of contact between an individual and his or her partner's network and the resulting amount of support are vital to the direction and strength of the relationship. Family and friends may be more supportive if they envision the relationship is serious and that the relationship will endure (Fraley & Shaver, 2000). Communication with the partner's network may also serve to intensify the relationship by limiting the amount of time the partner has to interact with possible alternative significant others while in the main relationship (Utz & Beaukeboom, 2011). Fundamentally, social support and strong attachments to a partner and his or her network are positive aspects of a well-maintained

romantic relationship. Due to the public nature of a relationship displayed on social media, an individual can assume that his or her partner's extended network will have access to the details of the dyad and its progression, and it is therefore in his or her best interests to establish a strong and positive connection with that network (Utz & Beaukeboom, 2011).

When it comes to romantic relationships, users can display photos as a couple and relay information to their network about the relationship. This also increases the information available about each partner via wall postings, daily activity, new contacts and photo posts (Utz & Beukeboom, 2011). It is important to a relationship to have transparency and publicity, to appear in public together, and to know about the details of a relationship based on the willingness to make the relationship visible to the public (McPherson et al., 2001). Young adults sometimes conceal information about their partner to social networks in anticipation of a negative social reaction (Felmlee, 2001). Intimate relationships are difficult to hide indefinitely and it comes at a cost to do so; it is likely that the effects of social reaction are a direct function of the dyad's own perceptions of the relationship and self-presentation efforts. Relevant information should be displayed as a sign of full commitment and dedication to the relationship.

Displaying information to social network sites also intensifies the reality and validity of the relationship by establishing the pair as a couple rather than two separate individuals. Public expressions of love on the social network site or application can strengthen the relationship and induce relationship happiness (Mod, 2010). This is the result of feelings of mutual pride in the relationship, as displayed in the willingness to put the relationship in the public eye despite external reactions and the possibility of public

scrutiny. Social media is a good platform for nonverbal and non-observable behaviors to connote intimacy between partners (Anderson & Emmers-Sommer, 2006). It adds a layer of security to the relationship, as a relationship status exudes feelings of progression and acts as a mechanism to curb flirting from outside suitors.

Therefore, lack of acknowledgement denotes a lack of commitment and lack of desire to be exclusively involved. Satisfaction of expectation often occurs when there is mutual disclosure on social networks by each partner. If communication and publicity expectations are not satisfied, it may create uncertainty regarding partner feelings and dedication. Romantic partners usually expect a certain amount of contact with the other's social circle, as it may preserve and intensify the feelings on each side and reduce mistrust. Individuals who manifest low to moderate levels of trust may be motivated to test for signs of partner commitment regularly (Campbell et al., 2005). These tests may signify whether a partner feels that they are worth of love and mutual attraction, as uncertainty illustrates lower feelings of self-esteem being satisfied. Lack of acknowledgement can be an indication of relationship stagnation, unequal readiness of partners, a lack of desire to be exclusive, or something more serious such as cheating or multiple concurrent, ongoing relationships.

Emotional consequences of uncertainty and mistrust are very likely to follow initial recognition of the problem. Unlike other online forums, social networks expect to gratify socio-emotional needs rather than information needs (Rau et al., 2008). Therefore, interactions are more direct and often addressed brusquely and emotionally, rather than passively, as would occur via email or another forum. Intimacy, particularly between romantic partners, is essential to social network ties and connection. Intimacy develops

through the participation in shared activities and discussion of diverse issues of personal concern (Mesch & Talmud, 2006). Users are connected directly and are socially expected to state their relationship explicitly, making the relationship more visible to all involved. Since trust online might not be as easily violated as with physical betrayal or sexual infidelity, the definition of trust may need to be expanded to include signs of true commitment and indicators of monogamy, as displayed by relationship acknowledgement. Heightened disclosure is central to computer-mediated relationships, and so it seems plausible that infidelity online can be better explained as emotional betrayal than as extra-relational sexual behavior (Merkle & Richardson, 2000). Networks like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have the potential to display the direction of a relationship and how each individual feels, acting as a mediator when feelings and thoughts go unsaid (Bowe &Mod, 2010). Having high expectations of relationship progression may contribute to future disappointment when a partner is unable or unwilling to meet such standards. Individuals may feel mistrust, doubt, and jealousy. Exposure to information about a romantic partner's friends and social interactions may also result in an environment that enhances feelings of jealousy.

Summary

Relationship satisfaction has many complex components. These include sexual, emotional, and psychological factors that are important and understudied. Social media is a vehicle for relationship initiation, maintenance and acknowledgement and is being used as such, with a spectrum of effects, both positive and negative. Many relationships start and are maintained through the use of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. In general, research indicates social media is a good predictor of the overall

success of a relationship and its prognosis based on the level of relationship acknowl-edgement by each member of a romantic pair. Acknowledgement of relationships is im-portant, but vastly understudied.

Rationale

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between social media acknowledgement and the level of relationship satisfaction in couples. Past research has determined that social media use is typically a good predictor of relationship direction and progression. Studies have also determined that transparency in relationships is im-portant to the success of the couple in the long term. This study aimed to determine whether acknowledgement of the relationship on social media predicts relationship satis-faction.

Methods

Participants. Participants were 82 men and women with a minimum age of 18-years-old who are currently engaged in a romantic relationship with one partner. Initially, 119 indi-viduals participated, but 27 participants were removed for missing data in significant so-cial media or relationship satisfaction questions. Descriptive analyses were conducted us-ing SPSS v.20. Most participants indicated that use of social media platforms to acknowledge their relationship contributed significantly to their satisfaction in their cur-rent relationship. The majority of participants were female (84%) with a total mean age of 28. 21($SD = 12.43$). Participants identified their religion as Catholic (56%), Protestant (2%), Jewish (3.3%), Muslim (1.2%) or Other (35%). Participants identified

as either having a high school education (2.5%), some college (37%), college degree (40%) or a graduate degree (19%). Regarding length of time in participants' current relationship, the mean length, in years, was determined to be 4.57 years ($SD = 3.86$). A majority of participants indicated having been involved in only one or two serious romantic relationships in their lifetimes ($N = 2.04$, $SD = .97$).

Procedure. The participants were recruited from the three social media outlets in question (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). An electronic announcement was posted on each social network and was open to anyone who fit the criteria and was interested in participating (See Appendix A). The posting included a link to surveymonkey.com. The page included a consent letter (see Appendix B), and three forms: a demographic questionnaire, the Relationship Rating Form (RRF), and the Social Media Acknowledgement Survey (SMAS). The data was collected anonymously.

Measures

 Demographic Questionnaire. The demographic form (see Appendix C), has items assessing age, gender, ethnicity, and length of relationship. A sample item reads, "How long have you been in your current relationship?"

 Relationship satisfaction. The *Relationship Rating Form* (*RRF*) (see Appendix D) by Davis (1996) was used to measure characteristics of romantic relationships and overall relationship satisfaction. The modified RRF in this study is a 68 item scale that measures participant responses on a 5-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from 1 (*very little*) to 5 (*completely or extremely*). Each item was rated based on how accurately it described the participant's feelings towards his or her partner. A sample item reads as follows: "Does it give you pleasure just to watch or look at this person?" The

RRF contains 10 subscales, which include: viability, intimacy, passion, care, global satisfaction, conflict/ambivalence, maintenance, commitment, coercion, and equality. Responses within each of the 10 sub scales are summed, with reverse scaled items accounted for. Reverse scaled items were scored by subtracting the participant's selected value for those questions from 6 for a 5 point format. The total score was calculated by summing the responses and dividing by the total number of questions (68) to maintain a 5- point scale. Scores could range from 68-340.

Social Media Acknowledgement. The Social Media Acknowledgement Scale (SMAS, Appendix E) is a measure that was created for the purposes of this study. It is an 8 item checklist measuring the number of ways to acknowledge a relationship on the social media sites Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. There are three response options each for Instagram and Facebook, and two responses for Twitter. Each item contains a statement about social media usage and relationship acknowledgement. Participants were asked to check each item that holds true for their relationship. An example of an SMAS item is "I include my partner/spouse/significant other in my display picture on Facebook." All checked responses were summed for a total score. Scores could range from 0 to 8.

Hypothesis

1)It is hypothesized that more relationship acknowledgement on social media sites would predict higher levels of overall relationship satisfaction.

Results

Scale Reliability. The Social Media Acknowledgement Scale (SMAS) was subjected to the same test of internal consistency and was also found to be high,   = 0.777. The SMAS was created for this study and was divided into three subscales: Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Tests of internal consistency were run for each subscale, and they are as follows: Instagram (= 0.687), Facebook (= 0.743), and Twitter (= 0.476). Facebook was determined as the strongest individual predictor of relationship satisfaction. In view of the comparably low reliability coefficients for each social media platform within the scale, the total reliability score was used in the regression analysis. These scores were calculated with SPSS software by first using individual sets of questions for each sub scale for reliability analyses, and then by utilizing all questions on the scale for a reliability score for the total scale.

Frequency Analysis. To examine the contributions of the three social networks (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) individually, frequency analyses were performed on the data to determine which social media functions were used most for the purpose of relationship acknowledgement. Analyses showed that 75% of participants used at least one Facebook function for relationship purposes. Similarly, 70% of Instagram users endorsed one or more functions on the SMAS. However, only 30% of Twitter users acknowledged their relationship at all on the platform.

Linear Regression. The data were subjected to a linear regression. The dependent variable was relationship satisfaction (score range: 0-340) and the independent variable was total amount of social media acknowledgement (score range: 0-9). The regression was significant, $F(1, 80) = 9.375$, $p = .003$. $\beta = .32$ and with a R^2 of .105, which indicates that approximately 11 percent of the variance of relationship satisfaction was accounted for

by social media acknowledgement. The hypothesis of the study was supported.   Higher social media acknowledgment predicted higher relationship satisfaction.

Discussion

The hypothesis of the study was supported, that is, social media acknowledgement predicted relationship satisfaction. That is, individuals who scores high on relationship satisfaction also scored high on social media acknowledgement scores. This is consistent with the literature. Previous literature showed a relationship between relationship satisfaction and acknowledgement and between social media acknowledgement and trust, security, and intimacy. The previous literature indicated that the two might be related, so this study was performed to evaluate the existence of that relationship. Some research has already indicated some prediction of relationship satisfaction by social media acknowledgement (Felmlee, 2001), but this study has determined specific contributions of major social networks to overall relationship satisfaction. Several studies, like that by McPherson et al. in 2001, have suggested that active acknowledgement of relationships are good indicators of relationship prognosis and maintenance. Similar studies, like that done by Mod in 2010, have demonstrated that internet use for relationship acknowledgement may contribute to the aforementioned transparency, generating trust, relationship pride, and genuine feelings for one's partner.

However, no study specifically addressed the relationship between overall relationship satisfaction and social media acknowledgement. Even though the relationship was not determined to be causal, an interpretation can be made that the two are correlated

because high endorsement of relationship satisfaction questions on the RRF was associated with high endorsement of social media acknowledgement on the SMAS. However, this study aimed to build upon that research to explore the effect of social media, which has been traditionally understudied in the context of relationships, on romantic relationship satisfaction. Past research, while generally positive, has also uncovered some negative effects of social media on relationship prognosis because of the potential for issues of jealousy, privacy, and mistrust (Campbell et al., 2005).

Regression analyses determined that the relationship between Social Media Acknowledgement and Relationship Satisfaction was significant. Several significant patterns emerged. First, a large number participants (34%) indicated that they have been in their current relationships for less than one year, which may indicate that relationship novelty is a contributing factor to relationship satisfaction and potentially to the frequency of social media use as well. Secondly, most participants indicated that they were either dating or married, which may suggest that individuals in committed or established relationships are more likely to publicize and acknowledge their relationships on social media. Past research has also shown that novelty in relationships is critical to their success, although established relationships also tend to be satisfying as a product of time and commitment (Aron et al., 2000). It is likely that these results will not only benefit the general population, but also perhaps more specifically, relationship counselors, social scientists, and business entrepreneurs in matchmaking and social media development.

Limitations

Certain predictions could not be made based on the data. Because of the weak Social Media sub-scale reliability, it was not possible to assess the predictive ability of each platform on overall relationship satisfaction. Although total internal consistency was good, there was decreased reliability with fewer items, which may indicate the lack of a formal scale. The analyses would have been possible with a much larger sample size and it would have been useful to assess each. The suggestion for future research is that better scales be created with higher reliability. This would then allow individual scales to be correlated with the relationship scores for analysis of aspects of relationship functioning, which were reliably measured in this study.

A second limitation to the study is the large difference between the percentages of male and female participants. It is likely that the study topic appealed more to females volunteers than to males, and therefore, an implication for future studies would be that it has to appeal to males as well for a more accurate representation of the population of social media users overall.

A third limitation is the fluid nature of social media. The functions used in this study to measure social media acknowledgement constantly change, so it is probable that some of the functions used in the Social Media Acknowledgement Survey may either be obsolete or modified in the future in such a way that new research will have to adapt the design of the scale or create a larger scale to incorporate those changes. With this in mind, future studies should be guided by the changes in Social Media and its use for relationship acknowledgement.

Another limitation is the ability to determine which social network is most commonly used for social media acknowledgement. Frequency analyses determined that a

majority of participants used all available Facebook functions, but were unable to measure which network was used most frequently overall. While this finding is consistent with other studies that evaluated Facebook as the network with the most flexibility of social media functions with regard to relationship status and publication (Papp et al., 2012), the absence of comparative research about Twitter and Instagram, serves as a good starting point for future analysis about the strengths of each social network for this purpose.

Lastly, while the data in this study has highlighted some significant trends in the effect of social media functions on relationship satisfaction, relationship satisfaction has different components. It is likely that social media may affect specific aspects of relationship satisfaction (emotional, sexual, and physical), which, as mentioned above, were not feasible to assess given the low reliabilities of the Social Media Acknowledgement Survey. The suggestion for later studies is to search for the causal element, if any, of the relationship between Social Media and Relationship Satisfaction.

There are several questions to consider before conducting future research. Past studies have shown that there is a relationship between social media acknowledgement and relationship satisfaction. However, this study addressed the relationship in only one direction. There may be a different approach to the research if the relationship direction was switched so that social media use could be considered in view of relationship satisfaction. That is, perhaps if people are happier in their relationships, they might acknowledge their relationships more on social media. To date, most research has been limited to the effect of social media on relationships, and there is a possibility that while a relationship has been established, no causal link has been found because of the nature of the studies in favor of a certain correlation direction.

Additionally, past studies have also examined cultural differences as factors in an individual's emphasis on social media use for relationship purposes. While this study addressed ethnicity in the demographic questionnaire, it did not emphasize cultural factors in the context of relationship satisfaction or social media use. With a larger study and more significant reliability, future research should take culture into account for a component of the R-squared that was not identified by the limitations of this study.

Similarly, this study encompassed all sexual orientations in the participant group, but did not identify differences between heterosexual and homosexual individuals in their use of social media for relationship acknowledgement or for its impact on their overall relationship satisfaction. Because relationship satisfaction is a broad construct, it would be critical to examine the differences of the results in each sexual orientation subgroup in order to determine whether the results are generalizable to all populations and types of relationships.

Lastly, gender differences were critical to examine in this study. While some general results were observed, the power and reliability of the study limited the ability to perform extended analyses with significant results. Future studies should be performed on a larger sample size, equally divided between male and female participants, to make more specific conclusions about the importance of social media use to overall relationship satisfaction.

Appendix A

Announcement Letter

You are invited to participate in an anonymous psychological survey examining the relationship between social media use and relationship satisfaction.

This will take approximately 20 minutes, and you will receive one unit of extra credit.

Please go to the following link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/gpSMRSsp15MA

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact me, Gabriella Puleo, at Gabriella.Puleo@mymail.barry.edu, or my supervisor, Dr. Frank Muscarella, at fmuscarella@barry.edu.

Thank you,

Gabriella Puleo

Appendix B

Cover Letter Form

Barry University
Cover Letter

Dear Research Participant:

Your participation in a research project is requested. The title of the study is Relationship Satisfaction and Social Media. The research is being conducted by Gabriella Puleo, B.A., a graduate student in the Psychology Department at Barry University, and it is seeking information that will be useful in the field of psychology. The aims of the research are to examine –relationship satisfaction and social media. In accordance with these aims, the following procedure will be used: Three questionnaires, a demographic form, the Relationship Rating Form and the Social Media Acknowledgement Scale, follow this letter. I anticipate the number of participants to be 300.

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to do the following: Answer the questions on the demographic form, the Social Media Acknowledgement Scale and the Relationship Rating Form. The questionnaires are estimated to take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

Your consent to be a research participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to drop out at any time during the study, there will be no adverse effects. If you are a student, there will be no effect on your grades.

There are no risks to this study. The following procedures will be used to minimize any risks: You can skip any questions you do not want to answer. There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study; however, your participation will contribute to research in the area of psychology. If you are a student, you may be able to receive extra credit for your participation. Print the last page as proof of your participation.

As a research participant, any information that you provide is anonymous, that is, no names or other identifiers will be collected. SurveyMonkey.com allows researchers to suppress the delivery of IP addresses during the downloading of data, and in this study no IP address will be delivered to the researcher. However, SurveyMonkey.com does collect IP addresses for its own purposes. If you have concerns about this you should review the privacy policy of SurveyMonkey.com before you begin.

By completing and submitting this electronic survey you are acknowledging that you are at least 18-years-old and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you may contact me, Gabriella Puleo, by phone at (305) 302-7862 or by email at Gabriella.Puleo@mymail.barry.edu or my academic supervisor, Dr. Frank Muscarella at (305) 899-3275, or at fmuscarella@barry.edu.. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board point of contact, Barbara Cook, by phone at (305) 899-3020 or by email at

bcook@mail.barry.edu.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Gabriella Puleo, B.A.

Appendix C

Demographic Form

What is your age? _____

What is your gender? Male _____   Female _____

What is your ethnicity? (Check one)

     White (non hispanic) _____

     Hispanic _____

     Black _____

     Other _____

What is your religion? (Check one)

     Catholic _____

     Christian _____

     Jewish _____

     Muslim _____

     Other _____

How long have you been in your current relationship? (Check one)

     1.1.   years _____

     1-5 years_____

     5-10 years _____

     10-20 years_____

     20 or more years _____

What is your level of education? (Check one)

     Less than high school _____

     High school _____

     Some college _____

College degree_____

Graduate degree _____

What is your relationship status?

Single _____

Dating _____

Engaged _____

Married _____

If you are in one of the above relationships, how long have you been together ?

Less than one year _____

2 years _____

3 years _____

4 years _____

5 years _____

6 years _____

7 years _____

8 years _____

9 years _____

10 or more years _____

Have you ever been divorced?

Yes _____

No _____

How many romantic relationships have you had in your life?

1 _____

2_____

3_____

4_____

5_____

6_____

7 or more _____

Appendix D

Social Media Acknowledgement Survey (SMAS)

On the following social media platforms, please check off each social media function that you <u>do</u> use to acknowledge your relationship.

Instagram
1) I post photos with my significant others.   1. ____
2) I tag my significant other in photos and use hashtags (#) about them.   2. ____

3) My default photo on my account is a photo of me with my significant other.
     3. ____
4) I include information about my significant other in my profile "About Me" section.
     4. ____

Facebook
5) I officially report my relationship status ("in a relationship", "married", etc.).
        5. ____
6) I post photos and status updates about my significant other.
        6. ____
7) I include my significant other in my profile picture and profile bio.
        7. ____

Twitter
8) I include information about my significant other in my Twitter bio.
        8. ____
9) I direct tweets at my significant other (@twitterhandle) or tweet about them.
        9. ____

Appendix E

Modified Relationship Rating Form (RRF) (Davis, 1996)

Instructions: Below, you will find questions about your relationship with your friend, partner, lover, or spouse. To answer the questions, circle the number between 1 and 5 that best reflects your feelings about your relationship with this person. Use the following key to the meaning of their numbers:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Very little	Sometimes/ Somewhat	Moderately	Usually/ Mostly	Completely/ Extremely

1.Do you accept this person as she/he is?

2.Are you willing to ignore this person's sins because of the way you feel about her/him?

3.Is it easy for you to forgive this person?

4.Does this person disappoint you?

5.Do you respect this person?

6.Does this person make bad judgments on important matters?

7.Does this person bring out the best in you?

8.Is this person a good sounding board for your ideas and plans?

9.Do you trust this person?

10.Can you count on this person in times of need?

11.Does this person ever forget your welfare?

12.Does this person use things against you that she/ he shouldn't?

13.Do you and this person openly discuss personal matters?

14.Do you confide in this person?

15.Do you feel that there are things about you that this person just would not understand?

16.Do you feel some things about yourself are none of this person's business?

17.Do you know what kind of person he/she is?

18.Is this person's behavior surprising or puzzling to you?

19.Do you know this person's faults and shortcomings?

20.Do you know about this person's past?

21.Does this person dominate your thoughts?

22.Does it give you pleasure just to watch or look at this person?

23.Do you think about this person even when you are not with him/her?

24.Are there things that you only do with this person?

25.Do you have feelings about this person that you couldn't have about others?

26.Would you feel betrayed or hurt if this person had the same relationship with someone else that he/she now has with you?

27.Do you and this person have your own way of doing things?

28.Are you sexually intimate with this person?

29.Do you find this person sexually attractive?

30.Do you enjoy being touched by this person and/or touching her/him?

31.Can you count on this person to lend you a substantial sum of money?

32.Can you count on this person to risk personal safety to help you if you were in danger?

33. Can you count on this person to give the utmost on your behalf?
34. Are you prepared to make a significant sacrifice on this person's behalf?
35. Can you count on this person to let you know how others feel about you?
36. Can you count on this person to support you in an argument or dispute with others?
37. Can you count on this person to champion your interests where there is a conflict between your interests and those of others?
38. Can you count on this person to come to your aid when you need help?
39. Can this person count on you for help when she/he is in need?
40. Can you count on this person to tell you what he/she really thinks about issues regardless of whether he or she agrees with you?
41. Do you tell this person exactly what you think about important issues regardless of whether he or she agrees with you?
42. Are you happy in your relationship with this person?
43. Has your relationship with this person satisfied your needs?
44. Has your relationship with this person been a success?
45. Do you enjoy doing things with this person more than with others?
46. Do you enjoy doing things with this person that you otherwise would not enjoy?
47. Do you enjoy this person's company?
48. Does your partner share the same feeling for you that you have for him/her?
49. Does this person really care about you as a person?
50. Do you feel that your partner cares for you as much as you care for him/her?
51. Does your partner make you feel worthwhile and special?
52. Does your partner make you feel proud of yourself?
53. Do you fight and argue with this person?
54. Does this person treat you in an unfair way?
55. Is there tension in your relationship with this person?
56. Are you confused or unsure of your feelings toward this person?
57. Do you feel that this person demands too much of your time?
58. Do you feel trapped in this relationship?
59. Do you talk with this person about your relationship?
60. Do you and this person try and work out difficulties that occur between you?
61. Are you trying to change things that you do to make the relationship better between the two of you?
62. Are you committed to staying in your relationship?
63. Does this person measure up to your ideals for a life partner?
64. How likely is it that your relationship will be permanent?
65. How committed is your partner to this relationship?
66. Has your partner ever forced you to do something that you did not want to do?

67.Have you ever forced your partner to do something that he/she
did not want to do?
68.Is your relationship one of equals?

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