“What’s Love Got to Do with It?”

The Effect of Love Styles on the Motives for and Perceptions of Online Romantic Relationships

A thesis submitted to the College of Communication and Information of Kent State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Chapter I

Introduction

Interpersonal relationships are the core of the human experience. While animals have relationships with other animals and with people, due partly to the vast difference in the development of the brain, the ability to have deep, meaningful relationships with other people is one of the main distinctions between humans and other mammals in the animal kingdom. For some people, the human experience would not be whole or complete, or possibly, even worthwhile, if they did not have a romantic partner with which to share in life’s journey. Many people invest significant time, effort, and money to find, attract, and keep a romantic partner. One specific concept or location gaining recognition in terms of people’s quest for true love is through the Internet. Given the important nature of the search for romantic relationships, paired with the ubiquity and popularity of the Internet as a mode of communication, the guiding focus of this thesis is an exploration and investigation of using the Internet to create adult romantic relationships.

Online Dating

The availability of the Internet as a medium, channel, forum and/or tool for seeking relationship partners has changed over the last twenty-plus years since 1986, when the oldest online dating website still currently in existence, matchmaker.com, was officially launched as a dial-up bulletin board system for dating based on geography (Adams & Frey, 2001). Since 1986, people have continued to look for love online as evidenced by researchers Madden and Lenhart (2006) of the Pew Internet and American Life Project who reported that 11% of all Internet-using American adults (approximately 16 million people) indicated having visited an online dating website or other Internet site in order to meet other people online. Of all American adults, 31% (63 million people) know someone who has interacted with an online dating site, 26% (53 million people) know someone who has gone on a physical date with someone met through an online dating site, and 15% (30 million people) know someone who has been in a long-term relationship
or married someone whom they met online. Highlighting the possible desire for or practicality of online dating, the U.S. Census Bureau News (2008) reported that 42% (92 million adults) of all adult U.S. residents were unmarried in 2006.

In addition to the millions of people using the Internet to seek romantic partners, millions of dollars are spent in this pursuit. The estimated total market for online dating services as well as offline services (i.e., off-line chains, independent matchmakers and dating coaches, personal ads and radio station datelines, phone chat lines) in the U.S. was valued at $1.82 billion in 2008; notably, approximately 52% of the revenue was captured solely by online dating websites (LaRose, 2009). In 2005 the U.S. online dating industry was valued at $732 million, $848 million in 2006, and $914 million in 2007 (LaRose, 2009). While projections showed the U.S. market of online dating websites climbing to $932 million in 2011 (U.S. Online Dating Market, 2007) despite the recession and financial concerns for many American citizens, the online dating industry had already begun generating $948 million in 2008 and is forecasted to generate $1.21 billion per year in 2012 (LaRose, 2009).

Speaking to the popularity and success of online dating websites, there are numerous digital choices of where to go on the Internet to seek romantic partners. The market for niche websites has also grown exponentially; there are now 1,378 U. S. dating websites, an increase from 876 online dating services three years ago (Sullivan, 2008). With the growing popularity and wide usage, online dating websites and online romantic relationships are worthy of increased academic probing and attention to understand theoretical implications of this phenomenon.

**Limitations and negatives of online dating.** While usage of online dating websites is higher than ever, this new opportunity and avenue for finding romantic partners has its drawbacks. There are some affordances and constraints to consider with online romantic relationships (Buss, 2005; Lake, 2007; Zylbergold, 2007). For example, online predators are real, and online dating services provide a continuous source of potential victims for criminal activities. Research found that due to the high frequency and intensity of communication, some women
assume a false sense of security when looking for love on the Internet, leading them to an accelerated form of intimacy and risky sexual behavior, thus exposing themselves to sexual violence, stalking, and/or fraud (Zylbergold, 2007). In an effort to understand how people use this constantly changing and evolving technology to romantically interact and sexually behave, public health researchers and practitioners need to stay abreast of the online dating social phenomenon (Couch & Liampittong, 2007).

**The concept of online dating.** There is a need to better understand the types of people who go to dating websites and why they do so. While this particular study is focused on romantic relationships initially formed online, there are other types of online relationships such as relationships with friends, family, or colleagues. The communication phenomenon of online romantic relationships (also seen in past literature as online dating, Internet dating, and as a specific type of cyber relationship) includes millions of dollars and people. With countless hearts, families, and personal securities at stake, the trend of online romantic relationships needs a deeper level of academic attention to better understand who is using this mode of communication and the implications thereof.

Specifically, online dating is a type of dating system or service that allows people to meet on a particular website or Internet application for the purpose of becoming intimate (finding romantic and/or sexual partners). As a result of using the dating service, daters may develop online romantic relationships with other users. These online romantic relationships may remain online indefinitely, or may eventually progress into offline romantic relationships. Online dating is a purpose driven, large-scale social activity that crosses many portions of the adult American populous, for example: sex, age, education, income, sexual orientation, cultural identity, work schedule, and children status—sole parents and those without children (Brooks, 2008; Griscom, 2002; Mediamark Research Inc., 2007; Sullivan, 2008). It is worthwhile to explain that for the purposes of this study, the concepts of online dating and creating online romantic relationships are synonymous. In other words, participants completing the survey were encouraged to define an
“online romantic relationship” in whichever way they saw fit (e.g., using a specific dating website like Match.com or finding a romantic partner through a social networking site like Facebook.com). In this way, the terms online dating (verb) and online romantic relationship (noun) are used interchangeably throughout this thesis. In an attempt to better understand the types of people who visit online dating websites and why they do so, the overall rationale of this research is to investigate personal/individual differences in motives for online dating use and in perceptions of online romantic relationships.

**Uses and Gratifications Theory**

This thesis employs the theoretical perspective of uses and gratifications theory. The study of motives is essential to understanding why consumers choose to use specific media channels, particularly the Internet, to satisfy their individual needs (LaRose, Mastro, & Eastin, 2001). This study will use an established communication approach, uses and gratifications theory (Blumer & Katz, 1974; Katz, 1959; Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974; Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974b), to explore the motives for creating online romantic relationships. This theory, in particular, emphasizes individual agency and activity, which is relevant given the nature of online dating as an individually-driven, communicative activity that often results in purposive interaction.

Uses and gratifications theory is a well-known and popular approach to studying mass communication that puts more emphasis on the audience, or consumer, instead of societal influences or the specific message itself. Uses and gratifications questions “what people do with media” rather than “what media does to people” (Katz, 1959). This theory assumes that people are active participants and make personal, individual choices about how media is integrated in their lives and choose to use particular media to satisfy specific personal needs, or gratifications.

An important main assumption of the uses and gratifications theoretical approach is that both societal/environmental factors and individual/personal differences can impact the needs (or motives) that are held by media users for purposefully, actively selecting particular media to
fulfill those specific needs (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974; Klapper, 1960; Nabi, Stitt, Halford, & Finnerty, 2006). In order to attract users, the media need to understand their target audience’s real desires. The primary focus of this study is to investigate the potential effect of people’s love styles on their choice of motives for using the Internet to try and create new romantic relationships. This study also investigates the individual perceptions and attitudes regarding using the Internet as a medium for seeking romance. Perceptions about media channels are an important aspect of the social cognitive approach to uses and gratifications theory (LaRose, Mastro, & Eastin, 2001; McKenna & Bargh, 2000). Attitudes toward the media are an important precursor to psychosocial variables connected to the concept of ‘gratifications sought’ in the uses and gratifications theoretical paradigm (Sherry, 2004) and will be examined in further detail in this study.

**Love Styles**

Beyond reviewing literature from the uses and gratifications theoretical approach regarding motives information relevant to this study, the second aspect of chapter two is an exploration of the love styles framework (Lee, 1973). One area of individual/personal differences that is possibly applicable to how and why people use online dating websites is their particular love style as depicted in the “love style” construct, developed originally by Lee (1973; 1977; 1988). People can vary tremendously in their ideals, thoughts, practices, and interactions related to romantic relationships and love, according to the previous research done on love styles (Collins & Read, 1990; Hatfield & Rapson, 1987; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Munro & Adams, 1978a; Sternberg, 1986, 1988). In an attempt to investigate the different attitudes adults have about the ways to experience romantic love, a typology of love styles was proposed (Lee, 1973; 1977; 1988). Six specific love styles (i.e., storge, agape, mania, pragma, ludus, and eros), and many of their related common characteristics, attributes, behaviors, and communication styles have been explored through Lee’s and other researchers’ subsequent studies (see especially, Hendrick, 2007;

People’s individual differences based on their love styles appears as though it may be particularly important to understanding how and why people may differ in their motivations for using online dating websites. For example, long before online matching and dating was popular or widespread, Hendrick and Hendrick (1988) noted that the pragma love style, known as “shopping list lovers” (p. 401), enjoys the ability to selectively choose a partner based on certain criteria and would be well-suited for the activity of computer mating, because answers to personal questions (i.e., a potential dater’s personal attributes, characteristics, lifestyle choices, etc.) are systematically presented in a standard and clear format on online dating websites. With this in mind, this researcher aims to examine whether people with specific, dominant love styles view the utilization of online dating as potentially being able to successful fulfill particular motives, more so than other people with different dominant love styles.

**Variables of Interest and Review of Research**

There is an important need to understand what variables are associated with using the Internet to find romance. In order to investigate and better understand the diverse user typologies of people who are attracted to online dating websites and their various reasons for visiting and using such websites, this current study questions whether and how people’s love styles (independent variable) effect or impact two dependent variables: (a) their motives for trying to use the Internet to create a new romantic relationship (e.g., through online dating); and (b) their overall perceptions of online romantic relationships.

There are several areas of past research relevant to the current study. In chapter two, the literature review will examine a) motives for using the Internet to try and create romantic relationships, b) love styles, c) online dating, and d) perceptions of online romantic relationships. The first main section of the literature review is comprised of background information and applicable research for the uses and gratifications theoretical approach, with an emphasis on
motives for specific Internet use. The second section of the literature review includes multiple portions about love styles (also seen in past literature as *love types* and *love attitudes*) including history, description, and differences based on demographics and other variables. The concept and activity of online dating is further described though examples and statistics in the third main section of the literature review. The fourth section of the literature review delves into information related to historic and recent perceptions of online romantic relationships.

**Rationale for the Current Study**

From a sociopsychological communication perspective (Craig, 1999), or a psychological communication perspective (Fisher, 1978), the researcher acknowledges that it is difficult to completely understand the function and influence of all the small, individual moving parts deep within the mysterious, preverbal “black box” of the human brain (Fisher, 1978, p.139) which simultaneously and collectively work together in an efficient and synchronous fashion. While exactly precise conclusions are difficult, if not impossible, to obtain in social scientific research, this study is an initial attempt to further understand what elements are related in this specific media use context.

As further explained in the rationale section of chapter two, there are three main reasons why this proposed research is important. First, these research results, beyond being interesting and informative, could make a difference in the lives of real people seeking love, because additional information and knowledge is valuable in terms of assessing possible media choices. Second, this current study will extend uses and gratifications research to understand individual differences in motives for using the Internet to create romantic relationships. Third, these research results may provide information that could assist and foster better online dating websites, and, thus, may help the online daters themselves. This study is a unique mixture of aspects of at least two academic disciplines (i.e., communication studies and psychology), united for a truly interdisciplinary research venture.

**Conclusion**
Overall, this research is proposed to examine the growing importance of mediated communication, specifically the motives for and perceptions of seeking romantic relationships via the Internet, based on love styles. This introductory chapter has provided an overview of the basic concepts, issues, and questions explored in this thesis. Chapter II continues with a more specific review of relevant research literature that pertains to the current research study. Chapter III discusses the research methodology, including the survey participants, procedure, and data collection techniques. Chapter IV displays the results of the data analysis based on the research methodology. Lastly, Chapter V provides a discussion of the current research results, limitations of the current study, future research areas, and a summarizing conclusion.
Chapter II
Review of Related Literature
Uses and Gratifications

This chapter summarizes theory and research informed by the uses and gratifications theory. This review is divided into seven sections. First, the history and development of uses and gratifications theory is summarized. Second, research aimed at identifying uses of the media is surveyed. Third, perspectives on the application of uses and gratifications theory to the study of evolving older media channels and the introduction of new technologies are investigated. Fourth, motivations for general Internet use are reviewed. Fifth, the gratifications obtained for using the Internet are discussed. Sixth, research on the Internet and interpersonal relationships (in general) is examined. Finally, motives for using the Internet in an attempt to create new interpersonal relationships, both friendships, and, specific to this thesis, romantic relationships are explored.

The section below summarizes the history and development of uses and gratifications theory.

**Historical development through modern day application.** Historically speaking, uses and gratifications is a well-known approach for studying communication. The central focus is how and why people use particular media (Katz, 1959, 1987; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974, 1974b; Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973; Klapper, 1960, 1963; McQuail, 1984). Research using uses and gratifications theory often examined the attraction and adoption of new channels, technology, and content. The theory has a strong and robust tradition of identifying, explaining, and predicting mass media uses and effects (Papacharissi, 2009). Early approaches to understanding mass communication placed emphasis on the supposed powerful and immediate effects of the media pushed on to a passive audience. The media direct effects model (see e.g., propaganda techniques from Lasswell, 1927), was a pessimistic idea illustrated by hypodermic effect assumptions of the World War II propaganda era. The underlying premise was that consumers were mindless audience members who were simply ‘fed’ information and could not actually think for themselves under the unconscious direct and immediate influence of the media.
The beginnings of the modern uses and gratifications perspective can be tied to research in the 1940’s era (e.g., radio research by Lazarsfeld & Stanton, 1944), and most specifically, Lasswell’s research on the structure and function of communication in society. His results included a model of what types of people use what media, how they use the media, and the effects of using the media (Lasswell, 1948). Lasswell (1948) found evidence of three main mass media functions: surveillance of the environment, correlations of events, and transmission of social heritage. While not trivializing possible real media effects, a transition into a phenomenological perspective coupled with results from more recent research suggests that in comparison with previously held ideas: 1) the average person has more influence than the mass media, 2) mass media effects are of a less powerful nature, and 3) the process of mass media effects is more complicated and multidimensional than had been known in the past (Klapper, 1960).

Even without being titled as such, the uses and gratifications theory was originally applied as a functionalist perspective to aid understanding of audience member motives for listening to radio soap operas and quiz shows for the fulfillment of everyday needs through descriptive analysis (e.g., Herzog, 1944; Lazarsfeld, 1940). As the theory became more well-known, this psychologically based communication framework was used to study the uses - particularly aspects of audience activity, selectivity, interaction, and motives - of additional media sources, technology devices, channels, and contexts. For example: television programming (Greenburg, 1974; Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974, Rubin, 1981a; 1981b; 1983), newspaper readership (Elliott & Rosenberg, 1987), magazine readership (Payne, Severn, & Dozier, 1988), the video cassette recorder (Rubin & Rubin, 1989), advertising and public opinion polling (O'Donohoe, 1994), systematic commercial avoidance (Stafford & Stafford, 1996), free community newspapers (Tsao & Sibley, 2004), marketing of public safety messages in a crime reduction program (Banning, 2007), music listening (Lonsdale & North, 2011), and the personal MP3 player (Zeng, 2011).
**Research areas and measurement of uses and gratifications theory.** Uses and gratifications is an established theory with many researchers having contributed to the theory’s development over the years, notably Elihu Katz and colleagues (1959, 1973, 1974b, 1987), with *The Uses of Mass Communication* (Katz, Blumer, & Gurevitch, 1974) being a major contribution. Katz, Blumer, and Gurevitch (1974), postulated that within the realm of the uses and gratifications theory, various factors simultaneously interact to influence the uses and effects of media on consumers. Researchers (Katz et al., 1974) suggest the primary concern for uses and gratifications research might include: “(1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources which lead to (5) differential exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones” (p. 20).

The breadth and depth of uses and gratification research was noted by Palmgreen (1984), who summarized and categorized research into six main focus areas: (1) gratifications and media consumption, (2) social and psychological origins of gratifications, (3) gratifications and media effects, (4) gratifications sought and obtained, (5) expectancy-value approaches to uses and gratifications, and (6) audience activity. More recently, Rubin (2009) summarized the seven main areas of contemporary uses and gratifications research: “(1) links among media-use motives and their associations with media attitudes and behaviors, (2) comparing motives across media and with newer media, (3) examining the different social and psychological circumstances of media use, (4) linking gratifications sought and obtained when using media or their content, (5) assessing how variations in background variables, motives, and exposure affect outcomes such as perceptions of relationship, cultivation, involvement, parasocial interaction, satisfaction, and political knowledge, (6) theoretical developments in thinking and extensions that link uses and gratifications with other communication perspectives, and (7) considering the method, reliability, and validity for measuring motivation” (p. 170-171).
From its foundation through modern day use, the strengthened and extended uses and gratifications theory has been applied to help create typologies of media uses and resulting user gratifications with varying levels of predictive power (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). Uses and gratifications study methodology may include creating user profiles and typologies with a two stage research design (Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). The first stage generally includes creating an exploratory listing of terms to illustrate and describe uses and gratifications sought to further understand the reach and purview of a particular theoretical construct (Churchill, 1979). In stage two, using factor analysis, the descriptive terms are grouped into profiles that are representative of exact audience gratifications and also the anticipated uses for a media channel (Bantz, 1982; Levy & Windahl, 1984).

**Assumptions of uses and gratifications theory.** The underlying assumptions of the uses and gratifications theory are paraphrased as: “(a) media behavior is purposive, goal-directed and motivated, (b) people select media content to satisfy their needs or desires, (c) social and psychological dispositions mediate that behavior, and (d) the ‘media compete with other forms of communication—or functional alternatives—such as interpersonal interaction for selection, attention, and use’” (Rubin, Haridakis, Hullman, Sun, Chikombero, & Pornsakulvanich, 2003, p. 129). More recently, a fifth specific underlying assumption was reported: people (and thus impersonal and interpersonal relationships) usually have a greater impact and influence than ‘the media’ do on people (Rubin, 2009).

This theory emphasizes a socio-psychological approach noting that individualistic factors such as personal background, social environments, basic needs, emotions, cognition, experience, education, motives, needs, psychological circumstances, and expectations about mediated communication may impact the uses and effects of media (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974; Klapper, 1960; Nabi, Stitt, Halford, & Finnerty, 2006; Rosengren, 1974). Many uses and gratifications research studies explore user motives (and various social and
psychological precursors that are relevant to those motives) and the possible outcomes or effects related to the specific medium or channel that is being utilized (Papacharissi, 2009).

Research has combined 1) motives for using media, 2) attitudes about the specific media, and 3) psycho-social antecedents of media use to measure orientation toward media (Papacharissi, 2009). Therefore, in addition to the motives scale that may have been developed for a particular medium that includes motives typically seen in uses and gratification research (e.g., control and inclusion), demographic characteristics such as sex and age, and several specific socio-psychological variables also have been associated with specific media use patterns. The socio-psychological variables linked to media use include: affinity with certain media (Rubin, 1985, 1981a; Perse 1986); perceived realism (Greenburg, 1974; Rubin, 1979); unwillingness to communicate (Burgoon, 1976; Armstrong & Rubin, 1989); contextual age (Palmgreen, 1984; Rubin & Rubin, 1992); locus of control (Rubin, 1993; Wober & Gunter, 1982); loneliness (Perse & Rubin, 1990); temperament (Sherry, 2001); parasocial interaction, anxiety, creativity, and sensation seeking (Conway & Rubin, 1991); and individual attitudes toward the media (Sherry, 2004). The psychological and social antecedents of media use furthers the theory that people normally engage mass media when needed as a functional alternative, specifically to supplement or substitute unsatisfactory portions of the users’ environment (Rubin et al., 2003; Rubin & Windahl, 1986).

The uses and gratifications framework has evolved and optimistically assumes that people have free will and actively seek out media sources, channels, and mediums that best meet their individual needs, and further, that different people seek different gratifications from the same media outlets and devices (Ballard-Reisch, Rozzell, Heldman, & Kamerer, 2011; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). People can choose and limit the influence that media has on them and satisfy their needs by seeking out functional alternatives, both within and outside of traditional media sources (Rubin et al., 2003). The result is a more humanistic approach with the acknowledgment that there is much to still be investigated and explored—there are as many
media users as there are motives/reasons for using the media (Katz et al., 1974; Rubin et al., 2003). In the following section, research aimed at identifying these uses of the media will be surveyed.

Research on uses of the media: ‘media effects’ evolved into ‘media uses.’ While the above discussion focused on uses and gratifications theory as a whole and motives and psychosocial antecedents for media use (e.g., before media has been used), the following section will examine the impact of using media (e.g., after media has been used). With the consumption of any given media, there are limited consequences or effects of using that media channel or device. The term “effects” is used in a casual, informal manner because uses and gratifications studies have moved away from the idea of researching the supposed powerful, direct effects of media, and instead, progressed toward the focus of how people use media.

Uses and gratifications studies often examine the main concept, audience activity level, as a media orientation function. An audience activity typology was created that recognized three areas of audience activity—selectivity, involvement, and use—and looked at those areas across three different activity periods: the before, during, and after exposure to media (Levy & Windahl, 1984). Numerous studies have shown a link between user activity level and the media channel type as well as gratification sought and the gratification obtained by using the media channel (Katz, Blumer & Gurevitch, 1973; Lometti, Reeves, & Bybee, 1977; Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rayburn, 1981; Rubin, 1981a, 1981b, 1983).

Instrumental and ritualized orientations toward the media. By aggregating published research, Rubin (1994) argued for differentiating between two different orientations toward the media: instrumental and ritualized orientations. Instrumental media orientation generally refers to particular media activity (i.e., selectivity, involvement, and use), approaching the medium as a utility and for a specific purpose or function. Increased intentionality and involvement for the specific media channel is suggested with instrumental media orientation. By contrast, ritualized orientation generally refers to more escapist and habitual media activity (i.e., selectivity,
involvement, and use), with the purpose being to pass the time or have a diversion from more menial or obligatory tasks. Ritualized use is associated with increased time spent using, and having affinity for, the specific media channel (Rubin, 1994). Both the instrumental and ritualized orientation toward media result in various types of behavioral, interactional, communicative, cognitive, and attitudinal effects that are associated with the specific media consumption (Rubin, 1994).

**Gratifications obtained (go) and criticism of uses and gratifications theory.** When compared to the active, purpose-driven use of a chosen medium, gratifications are often defined by user reported aspects of their satisfaction (Herzog, 1944; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974b). “Gratifications obtained are an obvious outcome of gratification sought” (Papacharissi, 2009, p. 142), but uses and gratifications theory has been criticized for being too individualistic and too general of an approach (McQuail, 1979). Numerous researchers (Elliott, 1974; Lometti, Reeves, & Bybee, 1977; Swanson, 1977) have critiqued uses and gratifications, namely that the theory would continue to be plagued by several major problems with conceptualization and operationalization unless the theory was further refined and clarified; issues were related to: 1) an ambiguous framework of important concepts, 2) a lack of specific measurement of important concepts, 3) an explanatory system that is confusing and unclear, and 4) a lack of consideration for audience members’ attitudes toward media content.

As most research until the 1970s era focused on gratifications sought, almost to the exclusion of the discussion of outcomes/consequences/effects or gratifications obtained (Rayburn, 1996), some researchers were especially concerned with clarifying the conceptual relationship between gratifications sought and the actual gratifications that were truly obtained (Lometti, Reeves, & Bybee, 1977). In an attempt to address criticism of uses and gratifications theory, Palmgreen, Wenner, and Rayburn (1980) combined uses and gratifications with expectancy value theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) to develop the long-standing Gratifications Sought and Gratifications Obtained (GS-GO) approach. This was an attempt to further separate and
understand the concepts of gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. Palmgreen and
Rayburn (1982) supplemented the discussion by creating an expectancy-values model to further
investigate the relationship between user media exposure and user gratifications sought. This
blended model has been successfully used to measure and predict users’ gratifications sought and
then the gratifications obtained when involved in a new program (e.g., Palmgreen & Rayburn,
1982). Additionally, Rubin’s (2002) review of new, related research showed a clear attempt to
draw a line between concepts that are preceptors, or antecedents to behavior (e.g., gratifications
sought) and those concepts that are consequences, or effects, of behavior (e.g., gratifications
obtained).

Uses and gratifications theory combined with other approaches. In addition to uses and
gratifications being combined with expectancy-values model (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1982), the
theory has also been combined with other approaches and concepts. Heavy reliance on a specific
communications channel in order to satisfy personal needs or wants, or media dependency, has
been operationalized to include the extent to which certain people may miss the specific media
channel if it were no longer accessible (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976; Greenburg, 1974; Rubin,
1983, Rubin & Windahl, 1986). With media dependency including an implied lack of functional
alternatives, uses and gratifications and media dependency were combined and adapted to create
the Uses and Dependency Model (Rubin & Windahl, 1986), which is not used often in modern
research.

Furthermore, uses and gratifications has also been joined with diffusion of innovations
theory to investigate differences in gaming adoption (Chang, Lee, & Kim, 2006) and united with
social network theory to further understand social capital in social networking sites (Papacharissi
& Mendelson, 2011). Using this shared approach, researchers are able to further understand why
some consumers incorporate channels and tools like the Internet, or even more specific Internet
micro channels such as instant messages (e.g., AOL Instant Messenger), short-message-service
(i.e., SMS) or text messages, and microblogging on forums like Twitter into their personal
relationship initiation, maintenance, and termination activities when other consumers do not use this function, or perhaps not use the Internet medium at all (Ballard-Reisch, Rozzell, Heldman, & Kamerer, 2011). Addressing these developing, communicative roles, the following section investigates perspectives on the application of uses and gratifications theory to the study of evolving older media channels and the introduction of new technologies.

**Researching in the modern electronic world: evolving older media and introducing newer media.** Uses and gratifications research has continued to evolve by revisiting older media through new contexts or situations. For example, now considered an older medium, television motivations have changed over time as the choices for television viewership have grown and become more personal and interconnected. For example, the nuanced uses and gratifications for the television medium have been documented in several different contexts, such as: recall of television news (Gantz, 1978), television worship service audiences (Pettersson, 1986), religious television viewing motivations (Abelman, 1987), soap operas (Rubin & Perse, 1987a); television home shopping (Cortese & Rubin, 2010), the appeal of reality TV (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007), viewing and avoidance of the Al-Jazeera satellite television channel in Kuwait (Jamal & Melkote, 2008), and television violence: predicting exposure, liking and aggression (Greene & Kremar, 2005; Haridakis, 2002, 2006; Kremar & Kean, 2005).

**Uses and gratifications theory applied to new media environments.** As with the television, the uses and gratifications theoretical framework has continued to evolve as it has been applied to numerous contexts within the same medium. Additionally, the uses and gratifications approach has developed and matured as it has been used to investigate new digital environments and technological devices such as cellular phones (Leung & Wei, 2000), MP3 players (Ferguson, Greer, & Reardon, 2007; Zeng, 2011), satellite radio and podcasts (Albarran, Horst, Khalaf, Lay, McCracken, Mott, Way, Anderson, Bejar, Bussart, Daggett, Gibson, Gorman, Greer, & Guo, 2007), and e-newsletters (Jackson & Lilleker, 2007). As new environments, channels, devices, and technologies are introduced, new measurement tools have been created.
The sophistication and accuracy of measurement of motivation for specific media use has advanced as the uses and gratifications theory has evolved. Early new technology and Internet research often used scales developed for older media channel research (see e.g., Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Ferguson, Greer, & Reardon, 2007; Rubin, Perse, & Barbato, 1988). For example, the scale from Greenburg’s key investigation of British children’s TV viewing motives (1974) was adapted and helped further the discussion and influenced the creation of the motives scale for American children and adults (Rubin, 1977, 1979, 1981a, 1983). Rubin’s 27 item Television Viewing Motives Scale (TVMS) included the prompt: “I watch television….” on survey instruments. Participants indicated nine overall motives for watching television that were included in the TVMS: relaxation, companionship, habit, pass time, entertainment, social interaction, information, arousal, and escape (Rubin, 1983). Then, in addition to using the TVMS to investigate television, the scale was later applied to the Internet and new technologies. For example, Ferguson and Perse (2000) conducted research using the scale to understand if television use was similar to Internet use, while Ferguson, Greer, and Reardon (2007) investigated motives for personal MP3 player use.

Other researchers have combined the nine motive Television Viewing Motives Scale (TVMS) (Rubin, 1983) and the six motive Interpersonal Communication Scale (ICM) (Rubin, Perse, & Barbato, 1988) (i.e., created from the prompt: “I talk to people…” yielded six main motives - pleasure, affection, inclusion, escape, relaxation, control) because of their interest in the multidimensionality of the Internet. For example, studies reporting how the Internet is not a functional alternative to face-to-face communication (Flaherty, Pearce, & Rubin, 1998), and exploring predictors of Internet use (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000) investigated the convergence of mass and interpersonal uses of cyberspace.

There is a rich history of motivations for media use and numerous instruments to measure those motivations. Inevitably, as new media choices become available and are adopted, various audience groups create new gratifications and new motivations (Angleman, 2000). Media users’
motivations need to be recognized and investigated for new media sources, channels, and mediums, and consequently, new specific measurement instruments need to be generated. Thus, new scales for the study of uses and gratifications have been developed, for example: fantasy sport user types and their motivations (Farquhar & Meeds, 2007), and emotional and cognitive predictors of the enjoyment of reality-based and fictional television programming (Nabi, Stitt, Halford, & Finnerty, 2006). Albarran et al. (2007) developed new scales to explore the motives for Internet radio, satellite radio, MP3, and podcasts audience listening. Other researchers have continued to evolve the uses and gratification research on the Internet by looking at the channel through multiple lenses, for example, studying the commercial and business aspects of the medium (Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004).

**Uses and gratifications theory applied to new media environments, specifically the internet.** The most ubiquitous new digital environment is the Internet. The Internet is a widely diffused new technological medium that has been investigated through the theoretical lens of uses and gratifications. Researchers have suggested that people can actively use interpersonal communication to fulfill media-related needs, and can also purposely use media to meet interpersonal needs—they are not mutually exclusive (Rubin & Rubin, 1985; 2001); e.g., motives for using a modern technological medium, the MP3 player, include control, companionship, entertainment, status, and concentration (Zeng, 2011). A mixture of both interpersonal and media-related motives in research studies is a prevalent approach to more accurately assess the unique functions or abilities of the specific medium (Papacharissi, 2009). Research on motives for using a specific new technological medium, the Internet, has also found that both interpersonal and media-related motives may both be present in a particular context (e.g., YouTube video sharing, Haridakis & Hanson, 2009). The Internet medium is an evolution from traditional mass media channels such as movies, radio, and newspapers in that the Internet is unique for being both an interpersonal and mass communication medium (Flanagin & Metzger, 2001).
Due to the Internet’s media-like attributes and higher level of user interactivity in comparison with other historical media outlets (e.g., radio and television), many scholars agree that the flexible and robust uses and gratifications approach is particularly well-suited and positioned to conduct research about Internet use (Johnson & Kaye, 2004; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011; Weiser, 2000). Researchers Stafford, Stafford, and Schkade (2004) supported the conclusions of other researchers, noting that:

Specifically, U&G takes a user-level view as opposed to a mass-exposure perspective in understanding media use (e.g., Klapper, 1963), even though it is typically applied to the study of mass media innovations; hence, U&G provides the “customer-level” view of mass media such as the Internet. Given the inherent interactivity and user-directed nature of Internet media, this user-level approach seems particularly well suited for examining consumer Internet use. (p. 267)

Understanding consumer directed interaction is important as various media channels compete with and within each other to satisfy individual consumer needs (Katz et al., 1974); the Internet must compete with other media such as television and newspapers, but additionally there is also competition within the Internet itself—resulting in seemingly endless choices for media use. In comparison with older media choices, Internet users have far more power and control of their media experience. Research has promoted the idea that the Internet medium is “intentionally” used by consumers, and that users have to make purposeful choices to use particular websites or to even use the Internet at all (Rayburn, 1996). Clearly, many parts of the communication process on the Internet are controlled by individual users and their sheer power to gain access to and within the interactive medium (Stafford & Stafford, 2001). Given the individualistic nature of general Internet use, the next section will review the motivations thereof.

**Importance of researching motives for internet use.** The notion that media choices are active and purposeful makes motivation a central focus in the uses and gratifications approach (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009). Previous research suggests that goal-directed communication
behavior such as the selection, consumption, understanding, and distribution of media material is impacted by the users’ personal motivation (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Haridakis & Rubin, 2005; Levy & Windahl, 1984), including their sociopsychological disposition (Rubin, 1994). When considering research on the new technologies and digital environments of the twenty-first century, no specific medium, channel, or tool seems more important, and thus, deserving of research attention, than the Internet. Further, when discussing Internet research from a uses and gratification approach, a basic question addresses the use of traditional mass communication motives and interpersonal communication motives. Given the robust history of the uses and gratifications approach to research studies, researchers often investigate, explore, and examine user motivations (or motives)/reasons for choosing to use particular media in an attempt to further understand mass media use by various types of people. ‘Motives’ have been defined as “general dispositions that influence people’s actions taken for the fulfillment of a need or want and behavior” (Papacharissi, 2009, p. 139). Researchers consider motives to be an important part of the various aspects of gratifications sought (GS) and gratifications obtained (GO) that are working in tandem within the uses and gratifications paradigm.

**Interpersonal and media-related motives for using the internet.** Both traditional interpersonal and media-related motives for using the Internet have been found in past research. Research studies have reported various media-related motives for using the Internet such as: surveillance or information seeking (Ebersole, 2000; Jackson & Lilleker, 2007; Kaye & Johnson, 2002; McQuail, Blumer, & Brown, 1972; Sjoberg, 1999; Weaver Lariscy, Tinkham, & Sweetser, 2011; Wolfradt & Doll, 2001), alleviating boredom or passing time (Ebersole, 2000; Kaunchin, Chen & Ross, 2010; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Rafeali, 1988), and entertainment (Ebersole, 2000; Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Wolfradt & Doll, 2001).

In addition to media-related motives, there are other interpersonal motives for using the Internet that have been identified in past research including: learning and socialization (James, Wotring, & Forrest, 1995), social or interpersonal interaction (Ebersole, 2000; Haridakis &
Hanson, 2009; Wolfradt & Doll, 2001), social utility (Kaye & Johnson, 2002), interpersonal utility (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000), personal involvement and continuing relationships (Eighmey & McCord, 1998), chatting with others (Sjoberg, 1999), participation in a virtual community (Kaunchin, Chen & Ross, 2010), ability to voice opinions in a supportive environment (Korenman & Wyatt, 1996), and anonymity (McKenna & Bargh, 2000).

**General Internet use motivations.** A study of general motivations for using the Internet channel (Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999) reported that people choose to go online typically to search for and gather information and also find entertainment and escape. Specifically, seven motives were most salient: social escapism, transactional security and privacy, information, interactive control, socialization, nontransactional privacy, and economic motivation (Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999). Soon thereafter, Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) created an instrument intended to assess Internet motivation consisting of the five main reasons, or motives, for Internet use by consumers. Interpersonal utility, past time, information seeking, convenience, and entertainment were found to be the prominent motives (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000).

**Specific Internet use motivations.** In addition to motivations for general Internet use, there are also motivations for using the Internet for particular functions, activities, applications, and websites that exist within the Internet medium. Research on the psycho-social and behavioral aspects of Internet use motives has also found that both interpersonal and media-related motives may be present in a particular context. In a more specific Internet context, Johnson and Kaye (1998) concluded that in reference to political information, people use the Internet for surveillance and voter guidance and, to a lesser extent, social utility, excitement, and entertainment. Later Kaye and Johnson (2002) reported four main motives for political uses of the Internet: surveillance, voter guidance, social utility, and entertainment. Coupled with a social exchange approach, Ancu and Cozma (2009) explored the uses and gratifications of befriending political candidates on the social network site, MySpace, while Weaver Larisney, Tinkham, and
Sweetser (2011), found that young people consider political participation to include more solitary activities such as searching for information or reading blog content.

In addition to political contexts on the Internet, escapism and surveillance gratifications were the most accurate predictors of college student Internet news consumption behavior (Diddi & LaRose, 2006), while learning and socialization were primary reasons why people use electronic bulletin boards (James, Wotring, & Forrest, 1995). Ferguson and Perse (2000) identified four primary motivations for using the Internet as an alternative to watching television: entertainment, passing time, relaxation/escape, and social information. Perse and Ferguson (2000) reported that learning, followed by information and entertainment, were the most recognized motives for online browsing, or Internet surfing. Haridakis and Hanson (2009) found entertainment, co-viewing, and social interaction to be the primary reasons participants viewed and shared videos on YouTube. Additionally, studies have looked at other aspects of the Internet and the development of medium-specific uses and gratifications measurement instruments for activities such as e-mail communication (Dimmick, Kline, & Stafford, 2000), competition between the Internet and traditional news media (Dimmick, Chen, & Li, 2004), Massively Multiplayer Online Game (MMOG) use and dependency (Kaunchin, Chen, & Ross, 2010) and blogs maintained in cyber space (Kaye, 2010). In the next section, the gratifications obtained for using the Internet will be discussed.

**Internet use gratifications - traditional orientations toward the media: process and content dimensions.** Similar to the media orientation of *instrumental use* (Rubin, 1994), other studies suggest that people consume media for the specific content available in a particular medium; this first large dimension was broadly termed a *content gratification* (e.g., entertainment or information) (Cutler & Danowski, 1980; Stafford & Stafford, 1996; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). By contrast, similar to the media orientation of *ritualized use* (Rubin, 1994), some people consume specific media for the simple ability to experience something in the media consumption process. This second large dimension was broadly termed a *process gratification*
(e.g., surfing, browsing, trying new technology) (Cutler & Danowski, 1980; Stafford & Stafford, 1996; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004).

To be more specific, the messages passed through the medium are related to content gratifications, whereas the actual medium use itself is related to process gratifications (Cutler & Danowski, 1980; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). Users are generally more motivated by content considerations (e.g., information gathering) than by process considerations (e.g., playful surfing) (McDonald, 1997; Stafford & Stafford, 1998; Rubin, 1994), therefore reports show that website content and materials may be more satisfying (and, thus, gratifying) to Internet consumers than the actual process, and any resulting gratifications, of browsing the Internet.

To more fully tease out the difference between process-based and content-based gratifications that actually motivate people to use the Internet, the similarities and differences between process and content gratifications must be defined contextually, with operationalization, conceptualization, and resulting measures that are specific to the medium clearly applied (Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). As previously noted, much of the early Internet research relied on scales and dimensions used in television research, and therefore has not been markedly predictable for Internet studies (Lin, 1999). Additional research is highly encouraged that is Internet specific and takes a uses and gratifications approach with adapted scales and measures actually created for the Internet (Lin, 1999; Weaver Lariscy, Tinkham, & Sweetser, 2011).

The new Internet specific dimension, the ‘social dimension’. In addition to the process and content gratifications discussed above, there is a third major gratification, the social gratification that is specific to Internet use (Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). Early recognition of the social dimension included notation from Stafford and Stafford (2001) who found five overall motives specific to Internet use: searching, cognitive, new and unique, social, and entertainment. A 2004 analysis of commercial aspects of the Internet found three main gratifications linked to personal use of the Internet: (a) process gratifications and (b) content gratifications that had been noted in prior television research, but also (c) social gratifications, a
completely new dimension of gratifications that seemed to be specific to Internet use (Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). Research (Stafford, 2007) has found that the social gratifications available through the Internet (i.e., chatting, friends, interaction, newsgroups, and people) were different and separate when compared to traditional dimensions of media use gratifications: (a) instrumental use to satisfy content gratifications (Cutler & Danowski, 1980; Stafford & Stafford, 1996), and (b) ritual use to satisfy process gratifications (Cutler & Danowski, 1980; Stafford & Stafford, 1996).

The Internet has long been recognized as a medium that could be utilized for both interactional and communicative purposes (Armstrong & Hagel, 1996; Eighmey & McCord, 1998). There are possible uses and potential associated social gratifications (or effects/consequences) obtained when consumers treat the Internet as a social environment. As scales and measures are further developed for Internet specific usage, new and emerging social gratifications may be found, such as attending to social status from a social cognitive perspective (LaRose & Eastin, 2004). Many of the early Internet studies that merely adapted instruments taken directly from older television-based research (Eighmey, 1997; Rafaeli, 1988) unfortunately did not measure beyond the content/process contrast of media consumption (Cutler & Danowski, 1980; Levy & Windahl, 1984; Stafford & Stafford, 1996).

A recent review of literature noted that most modern Internet-related uses and gratifications research reported personal gratifications and/or social gratifications (Ballard-Reisch, Rozzell, Heldman, & Kamerer, 2011). For example, people with high levels of information motivation are more apt to engage in human-message interfaces on specific website (e.g., reading a published report), in comparison to people with high levels of social interaction motivations who are more heavily associated with interaction that is electronic human-human activity (e.g., typing questions to a live representative on a website) (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005). Given the social aspect of the Internet, the next section will examine research on the Internet and interpersonal relationships (in general) through a uses and gratifications perspective.
**Research on the Internet and interpersonal relationships.** Uses and gratifications was listed by researchers Ballard-Reisch, Rozzell, Heldman and Kamerer (2011) as one of four theories with “special potential for unpacking the relationship development processes mediated by online communication” (p. 66). The uses and gratifications approach has been used to explore interpersonal relationship development through computer mediated communication with modern measurement instruments that specifically account for the process, content, and previously unknown social gratifications of using the Internet medium, not simply older television measures recycled for this new medium (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). The Internet as a whole, and specific activities, functions, applications, interactions, and websites within the Internet should have specific instruments for assessing consumer uses and gratifications that apply to that specific uses of the Internet (Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004).

Recently, Internet researchers have spearheaded the call to investigate specific functions and available media choices within the Internet from a uses and gratifications perspective (Ballard-Reisch, Rozzell, Heldman, & Kamerer, 2011; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). While some researchers have focused on other aspects of online communication (e.g., blogs, email, online games), the focus of this research is an exploration of using the Internet to help initiate, create, and develop romantic relationships. As previously noted, there are several motives for using the Internet, many of which have been linked to specific socio-psychological attributes and certain types of Internet use (Ferguson & Perse; Perse & Ferguson, 2000; Papacharissi and Rubin, 2000). Results mutually indicate support for the functional alternatives aspect of uses and gratifications (Rubin & Windahl, 1986); that is, that online media may provide alternative opportunities or compliment particular aspects or areas of a consumer’s life that are less satisfying or could be more fulfilling. Previous research has shown that online communication can foster relationship building and development and improved communication between the users (Kiesler, 1997). A few noteworthy studies follow.
Chat rooms and instant messaging. Researchers (Perlis, Gimeno, Pinazo, Ortet, Carrero, & Sanchiz, 2002), reported that socially oriented people found online chat rooms to be virtual spaces of behavioral interaction where people used the space to engage with others. The most salient motives for chat room use were to: discuss various topics and subjects with other chat room users about work, hobbies, and other topics of interest, experiment with a new communication channel, satisfy a need to socialize, seek friendships, engage in virtual sex, and attempt to find a romantic partner.

Researchers (Peter, Valkenburg, & Schouten, 2005) investigated adolescents who used instant messaging functions or chat rooms on the Internet and found five motives for why they selected that Internet application specific option: entertainment, social inclusion, maintaining relationships, meeting new people, and social compensation. The findings also suggest that both extroverted and introverted people find positive benefits from using the Internet to communicate; specifically, people who were already social benefit from participation (e.g., that the rich do get richer), but that in addition, though to a more moderate effect, people who are more socially awkward or isolated also benefit from participating on the Internet (e.g., the ‘poor’ get a bit richer as well) (Peter, Valkenburg, & Schouten, 2005). Overall, the researchers assert that motives for communicating online need further investigation, and the antecedents of online relationships creation are more complicated than assumed previously in a more mutually exclusive, dichotomous mentality (e.g., the rich get richer and the poor get poorer) (Peter, Valkenburg, & Schouten, 2005).

Social networking sites (SNS). In an analysis of social networking sites (SNS) and social interaction, researchers collaborating for a portion of the most recent nationwide Pew Internet Project (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie, & Purcell, 2011) found that overall the number of people using SNS has grown by almost double since 2008. The majority of American adults (79%), indicated that they use the Internet, and almost half of American adults (47%), or 59% of American Internet users, indicate using one social networking site, at minimum. In 2008, 26% of
American adults (34% of Internet users) interacted with a SNS, a number showing exponential growth over the last few years. Additionally, results show that the average user has gotten older—an increase to age 38 from age 33 in 2008 with over 50% of all American adult SNS account holders over age 35. Furthermore, the research findings show that 56% of SNS users were female. While other SNSs have a respectable amount of online engagement (29% of adults used MySpace, 18% used LinkedIn, and 13% used Twitter), the current preference of SNS is Facebook (92% of users). The numerous Facebook users were interconnected with other users; on average, survey participants had 229 friends (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie, & Purcell, 2011).

Researchers have examined SNSs (i.e., MySpace and Facebook) to further understand college students’ uses and gratifications for having an account on either social networking site (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). Findings show that a large number of college students (87.1%) who participated in the study had at least one account on either social network, a percentage especially notable due to the fact that researchers Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) did not mention social networking or friend networking sites in the description of the research project that was used to advertise and recruit potential participants. Most remarkably, when asked to consider the social networking account they used most frequently 74.3% of college students indicated that they used both Facebook and MySpace. The students also indicated spending almost 3 hours each day on either someone else’s account (1.10 hours) or on their own account (1.46 hours) (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). The amount of time was especially notable, considering that the participants were asked to only report time spent on the SNS account they used most often. Further, users logged into their main SNS account 4.19 times daily, on average.

Respondents indicated numerous uses and gratifications for using the social networking sites: to keep in touch with old friends (96.0%), to keep in touch with current friends (91.1%), to post/look at pictures (57.4%), to make new friends (56.4%), to locate old friends (54.5%), to learn about events (33.7%), to post social functions (21.8%), to feel connected (19.8%), to share information about yourself (13.9%), for academic purposes (10.9%) and for dating purposes
(7.9%). Results also indicated that women were significantly less likely to use the social networking sites for dating purposes than men (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008), a finding that seems to replicate Weiser’s (2000) assertion that women engage in online communication for relationship maintenance with friends, coworkers, and family while men tend to pursue sexual and romantic interests through online communication.

**Exploring within social networking sites (SNS).** While some researchers have applied uses and gratifications to SNSs, specifically friend sites as a whole (e.g., Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008), other researchers (e.g., Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009), have investigated within an SNS, such as exploring Facebook groups designed for social interaction and information exchange. The “Facebook Groups” are popular applications of the SNS because of the common discussion board (or “wall”) for the members and the ability to post documents, photos, and comments both within the group and via private message to specific group members (Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009). Participants revealed four main needs/motivations for choosing to be a group member: socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking, and information. As expected and predicted within uses and gratification theory, the gratifications sought by participants were influenced by mediating demographic variables (Papacharissi, 2009) such as gender, hometown, and school (Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009). Further, factor analysis results indicate that informational uses of Facebook groups were more strongly associated with political and civic interaction and behavior than recreational uses of Facebook groups. Survey results seem to further validate Rubin’s (1994) concepts of instrumental use and ritualized use of media, and enlarged intentionality and involvement is suggested with instrumental media use.

**Investigating new media interaction with social networking sites (SNS).** While some researchers have applied uses and gratifications to social networking sites (SNS) as a whole (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008), and others have applied the theory within an SNS application (i.e., Facebook Groups) (Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009), still others have applied the uses and gratification framework to comparing two new media channels—an SNS (i.e., Facebook) and
instant messaging (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). From surveys and interview data, Quan-Haase and Young were able to complete a factor analysis of college student gratifications obtained from Facebook use. These included: past time, affection, fashion, share problems, sociability, and social information (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). When compared to the instant messaging communication behavior, results show that Facebook use related to being aware of the social functions, activities, and events that occur in a user’s social network, while the use of instant messaging was often for the development and maintenance of relationships (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010).

**Exploring a convergence of motives within social networking sites (SNS).** In a study done by Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011) on the uses, gratifications, and social capital of Facebook, several prevalent motives were evident in the results, including habitual passing of time and relaxing entertainment (both of which were combined categories for traditional media use motives). This further suggests a convergence of media services available within Facebook and that the prominent uses of the SNS for most Facebook members tended to be of a ritualistic (Rubin, 1994) and rather passive nature (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011). Two motives often linked to television research (Rubin, 1983), escapism and companionship, were found to be moderately salient, while more instrumental uses of the medium (i.e., expressive information seeking and professional advancement) were not as important to this population of college students (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011). Regression analyses showed some considerable links between the consumers’ motives for using Facebook, the consumers’ social and psychological predisposition, and social capital.

In comparison to previous popular illustrations of online communication users as awkward, anti-social computer “nerds” who use the Internet because they are isolated (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000), more recent findings tend to suggest that modern, mobile Facebook users who lead socially active lives are in the position to obtain the social benefits of Facebook by using the application to escalate the bonding and bridging of social capital between
the user and others on the SNS (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011). Now that the social nature of the Internet has been discussed more generally, the following section will explore motives for using the Internet in an attempt to create new interpersonal relationships, both friend relationships, and most specific to this thesis, romantic relationships.

**Motives for using the Internet to create interpersonal relationships, specifically friend relationships.** As noted above, previous studies have discussed (a) motives for using the Internet in general and (b) motives for using certain Internet specific applications and websites (i.e., Facebook, chat rooms), but little research has been positioned to create a comprehensive scale for the measurement of (c) motives of using the Internet for the purpose of trying to create new interpersonal relationships (not based on a specific application or website).

Furthering the discussion of motives, a four-stage empirical research study by Wang and Chang (2010) helped explain the motives for a very specific type of communication on the Internet—the creation of what they termed cyber relationships. Noting the obstacles to having future Internet studies without the aid of Internet application-specific measurement instruments, Wang and Chang (2010) saw the need to create a more specific scale available as a research tool in order to study online relationship activities. Wang and Chang used a factor analysis, typical for the study of uses and gratifications (Churchill, 1979), to propose nine different reasons, or motives, for why people use the Internet to create new relationships with other adults (Wang & Chang, 2010).

**Definition of “Cyber Relationship Motives.”** Wang and Chang (2010) indicated that the scale was applicable to measure cyber relationship motives, defining cyber-relationship motives as “the reasons people want to use [the] Internet to create a new relationship” (p. 290). The title of the subsequently published article included the term ‘cyber relationship’ but not ‘friendship.’ However, the actual verbiage in the published article (i.e., “we developed the Cyber-Relationships Motives (CRM) Scale to assess factors that may motivate individuals to make friends on [the] Internet”) and some of the item/factor descriptors indicate that the researchers
were focused on the creation of a specific type of online relationship: friendships (Wang & Chang, 2010, p. 290).

Notably, the relationships of interest to Wang and Chang (2010) are those that are originally created online, but, it may or may not change into a face-to-face relationship (or a hybrid where both face-to-face and online channels are used in the relationship). Their proposed motives for using the Internet to create cyber relationships have elements of both traditional interpersonal and media-related motives reported in previous studies of the Internet, such as: distraction and alleviating boredom (Rafeali, 1986), chatting with others (Sjoberg, 1999), social interaction (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009), anonymity (McKenna & Bargh, 2000), experimentation with a new communication channel (Perlis et al., 2002), relaxation/escape (Ferguson & Perse, 2000), meeting new people and social compensation (Peter, Valkenburg, & Schouten, 2005).

Cyber Relationships Motives (CRM) Scale. The nine motives for using the Internet to create new relationships proposed by Wang and Chang (2010) were grouped into three overall dimensions: 1) adventure, 2) escape to a virtual world, and 3) romance. The first dimension, adventure, is comprised of motives one through five: 1) to remain anonymous; 2) to meet new people; 3) to communicate easily; 4) to reduce curiosity; 5) to find emotional support. In order to provide greater context, Wang and Chang’s (2010) more lengthy written descriptions of the motives are paraphrased here by the researcher of this current study. 1) Anonymity: the Internet promotes greater intimacy and closeness by moderating the self-disclosure risks and impact of social norms that may be present in face to face situations. 2) The opportunity to meet new people: the Internet is an efficient tool, enabling anyone with an Internet connection to open their social circle and meet and interact with strangers around the world who share similar interests, backgrounds, personalities, and attitudes. 3) Easy to communicate: the Internet is a quick, accessible, and cost effective, non-travel intensive medium with seemingly endless options for people to interact with others worldwide. 4) Curiosity: the Internet is a relatively new technology and some people may use this novel medium because they are curious about and want to learn
more about the new communication channel itself. 5) *Emotional support*: people may use the Internet to gather emotional and social support by interacting and creating dialogue with other members of the virtual community.

The second dimension, escape to a virtual world, is comprised of motives six and seven: 6) to find social compensation; 7) to escape from the real world. 6) *Social compensation*: the Internet may be seen as a less stressful communication medium or way to compensate for people who have anxiety or apprehension about interacting in face-to-face social situations. 7) *Away from the real world*: the Internet may provide opportunities for online communication that help people to escape or temporarily avoid and be distracted from real life issues, troublesome worries, or bothersome activities.

The third dimension, romance, is comprised of motives eight and nine: 8) to find love; 9) to find sexual relations. 8) *Love*: the ability to find love has captivated Internet users and been the plot of numerous movie productions often enhancing the idea that close relationship development can be improved by computer mediated communication, and that the importance of physical attributes can be reduced while the prominence of other factors, such as similarity and shared interests, can be enhanced. 9) *Sexual partners*: previous research has found using the Internet for sexual purposes is prevalent and that searching for and pursuing sexual relationships is a preferred activity of many Internet users.

Results provided by Wang & Chang (2010), including the conceptualization of their nine motives, are a considerable step forward in understanding the overall reasons why people choose the Internet medium when attempting to create new interpersonal relationships. Whereas the Cyber Relationship Motives (CRM) Scale was developed primarily to measure motives for seeking both same and cross-sex friendships online, the categories would also seem relevant to a person’s motives for seeking romantic relationships on the Internet. This thesis will explore that possibility.
Motives for using the Internet to create interpersonal relationships, specifically romantic relationships. Dating and the search for romantic and/or sexual partners may be viewed as an inherently interpersonal interaction or behavior. Therefore, the use of the Internet when searching for relationship partners may be influenced by traditional face-to-face interpersonal communication motives such as pleasure, affection, inclusion, escape, relaxation, and control indicated in response to the prompt “I talk to people because/to…” (Downs & Javidi, 1990; Graham, Barbato, & Perse, 1993; Hosman, 1991; Rubin, Perse, & Barbato, 1988). On the other hand, motives for viewing traditional mass media (e.g., television, movies) such as entertainment, information, arousal, habit, pass-time, escape, and relaxation have been recognized in previous research (Greenberg, 1974; Haridakis, 2002; Kim & Rubin, 1997; Lin, 1999; Rubin, 1983) and may be factors for people surfing and browsing the Internet, even when looking for love.

While online dating services and online romantic relationships receive the most scholarly and public attention, it is important to note the breadth and depth of different activities reported by people who have used the Internet in a quest to find love. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project there are numerous ways people can use the Internet when seeking a romantic partner (Madden & Lenhart, 2006). There are a wide variety of dating-related behaviors and interactions for which people who are single and looking for romantic partners have been motivated to use the Internet: Flirt with someone (40%), go to an online dating website (37%), ask someone out on a date (28%), find a place offline, like a nightclub or singles event, where potential daters can be met and interacted with (27%), be introduced to a potential date by a third party using email or instant messaging (21%), participate in an online group where other daters can potentially be met (19%), search for information about a past romantic partner (18%), maintain a long-distance relationship (18%), search for information about a current romance partner or a potential partner who had planned, but not yet conducted, a first date (17%), and break up with a relationship partner (9%) (Madden & Lenhart, 2006).
The uses and gratification approach theory has been quite meaningful and operational in fleshing out and understanding Internet motivations and needs. Still, there are unanswered questions regarding the ambiguous nature of the relationship between users’ motivations for using the Internet, and in particular, the social interaction aspects possible when using certain types of websites and Internet functions (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005). One assumption of the uses and gratifications approach is that persons’ motives for any type of media use are influenced by a variety of individual differences and environmental factors. As noted in the introductory chapter, a main purpose of the thesis will be to investigate the influence of one individual difference—love styles—on motives for using online dating websites. The next portion of the literature review will discuss the conceptualization and measurement of love styles.

**Love Styles**

The review in this chapter summarizes theory and research informed by the love styles typology. The review is divided into four sections. First, the history and development of the love styles typology will be summarized. Second, the six specific love styles will be explored and described. Third, differences in love styles based on stage in the relationship, sex, age, and culture will be reviewed. Fourth, other content areas known to be related to love styles will be investigated. The section below will summarize the history and development of the love styles framework.

**Love styles historical information.** The love styles typology was developed by psychologist John A. Lee and first appeared in his classic book, *The Colors of Love* (1973). Lee completed a qualitative summary of in-depth interviews with people from a wide range of backgrounds and did an extensive review of the empirical evidence and historical accounts about love. By reviewing his own and others’ research, Lee (1973) postulated that a person’s attitudes, thoughts, and feelings toward love greatly influence how that person verbally and nonverbally communicates in the before, during, and after of a loving relationship. Lee’s beliefs pointed to the relationship between psychology and communication. Lee believed that how a person will act
and behave when attempting to develop, maintain, and have success with loving relationships is based, in part, on his or her particular love styles.

Lee further proposed six main types of love styles—or colors (later called *love attitudes* or *love types*)—each of which can be identified by special characteristics. Lee’s (1973) results led to the creation of a scale of love styles that has received much attention since its original inception, including additional work by Lee himself (1977, 1988). The six love styles were given the following names based on Greek root words: storge, agape, mania, pragma, ludus, and eros.

**Love styles - color wheel and matrix.** Lee (1973, 1977) used a color wheel to help explain his theory about love styles, stating that the six styles are similar to the primary and secondary colors on a color wheel, or the six pieces that make up a whole pie. The primary colors are eros, storge, and ludus; the secondary colors are agape, pragma, and mania. True to their color wheel analogy, secondary love styles are created by combining two primary love styles. Mania (purple) is created by combining eros and ludus (red and blue, respectively). Pragma (green) is the result of putting together ludus and storge (blue and yellow, respectively), and agape (orange) is the love style that emerges from a blend of eros and storge. But much like the concept of synergy, secondary love styles still have their unique characteristics and special features.

Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) further examined this idea and found that all people have some portion of all six love styles at all times, but have one dominant style at any given point in their lives. Their results confirmed a six-dimensional matrix in love styles for all people. Later researchers Levine, Aune, and Park (2006), agreed with Hendrick and Hendrick’s (1986) findings, surmising that it was rare to hold one and only one love style; rather, all people have one or more love styles, and the amount of any particular style at any particular time can vary—although one predominant style per person at any given time was the most typical scenario. Levine et al., (2006) found that different people seek and gain enjoyment from different love styles, and many of those differences are based on stages in the romantic relationship, gender, age, and culture.
In addition to the differences in love styles mentioned above, at any given time, a person may emphasize one or more love styles based on the various romantic relationships with which that person is involved. For example, a person may be in a long-standing, committed relationship where shared interests and lasting friendship are valued (i.e., storge and pragma), but also, at the same time, be involved in a romantic affair based on game playing and sexual attraction (i.e., ludus and eros). A description of each love style is given in the second main section of the love styles portion of chapter two.

**Love styles – testing and measurement.** The typology of the six love styles was originally organized into an instrument called “SAMPLE” (Lasswell & Lasswell, 1976), a fifty-item, true/false instrument. Although Lasswell and Lasswell (1976) reported analyses that defined six different love styles, room was left for additional interpretation of the styles because no in-depth reporting was ever publicized. Lee revisited the topic in 1977 and made a broad assertion, writing, “While no extrapolations to the population in general are possible, the samples are now large and diverse enough to suggest that all the major styles of loving found in ‘Western’ culture, have been identified” (p.191). Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) furthered the love styles theoretical framework, by adding conceptualization and specific instruments to the six dimensional typology and building on Lee (1973, 1977) and Lasswell and Lasswell (1976). As a result, the Love Attitudes Scale (LAS) was created (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). The LAS was originally created to test the validity of Lee’s theory but has since been used in numerous research studies on love styles. No longer is SAMPLE considered the instrument of choice to measure the love styles typology, but the word sample is still a convenient mnemonic to remember the six variations of love styles. In addition to the frameworks mentioned above, there are other approaches when conceptualizing the different ways that people love, which are discussed in the following section.

**Love styles - alternate approaches.** The “meaning of love” changes based on who a person is, and that meaning can shape how that person thinks about, approaches, and maintains relationships (Levine, et al., 2006). As previously mentioned, love styles are certainly an
extensive area of research in the academic sector (Arnold & Thompson, 1996; Hahn & Blass, 1997; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992; Li & Huddleston-Casas, 2005). There are many other approaches to love styles and the categorization of attitudes on love. The researcher acknowledges that while the choice has been made to use the conception of love styles as originally conceived by Lee (1973), there are many other legitimate views on attitudes about love and typologies of love styles (Collins & Read, 1990; Hatfield & Rapson, 1987; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Munro & Adams, 1978; Sternberg, 1986, 1988). However, each of these research studies breaks down attitudes toward love into only a few different types/stylers, effectively combining all people into just a few of the possible typologies of love attitudes. This limited approach may provide incorrect or inconclusive results, and love styles may be better explained by using the framework as conceived by Lee (1973).

For example, in the southern tip of Africa, a series of studies focused on the region, and researchers found that white South African boys were more likely to be romantic than white South African girls and black South African boys (Philbrick & Stones, 1988). In follow-up research (Stones & Philbrick, 1989) among Xhosa adolescents, a member of Bantu speaking people in South Africa, researchers found males and females to prefer an eros type of love (i.e. romance, passion, chemistry, emotional intimacy), which is similar to the dimension “Romantic Power” in the Munro-Adams Love Attitudes Scale (Munro & Adams, 1978). “Conjugal Love” is the belief that love should command considerable thought and attention, since love should be calm and have a sound and secure influence on the partners (Munro & Adams, 1978).

Interestingly, Conjugal Love, which is similar to pragma in the LAS, was preferred more by men than women. This is in direct contrast to research published about men generally being lower on the pragma subscale (Frey & Hojvat, 1998; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; Jacobs, 1992; Worobey, 2001). However, it is important to note that the scale used by Munro and Adams (1978) only has three options (Romantic Power, Romantic Idealism, and Conjugal Love). The fuller range that comes with six potential options in the LAS (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986;
Hendrick, Hendrick, & Dicke, 1998; Lee, 1973) is not present, which may account for this discrepancy. Therefore, while there are certainly alternate paradigms about love, according to Hahn and Blass (1997), Lee’s framework is more comprehensive and, thus, preferable, because this typology “seems to encompass the different love types proposed by other researchers, making Lee’s typology more theoretically efficient than others” (p. 596). In the next section, the six specific love styles will be explored and described.

The six love styles. The six “ideal” types of love aid with the comprehension of relationships, because “each love style is argued to represent an empirically manifested social style and underlying ideology for a particular person in a particular relationship [at a particular time]” (Levine et al., 2006, p. 466). It is important to note that while love can be between family, friends, and romantic partners, this study of love styles reported in this thesis will focus on romantic partners. The next section will characterize the six different love styles.

Storge love style – (S). Each of the love styles has specific characteristics that tend to be associated with that particular love style. For instance, the first love style refers to the ancient Greek word *storge*, which means “familial love.” This type of love is peaceful and slow (Levine et al., 2006), often seen in friend and family relationships. Intimate couples who do not “fall in love” until having a friendship for quite a while are often attracted by storge love (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992; Meeks, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1998). Storge lovers want companionship (Campbell, Foster, & Finkel, 2002) with someone they know and with whom they can share interests and activities. Storge lovers want to feel comfortable with their relationships and relational partners, not emotionally charged (Hahn & Blass, 1997). Storge love is enduring, has high commitment, stability, and psychological closeness but “passion and intense emotions [are] eschewed” (Levine, et al., 2006, p. 466).

Agape love style - (A). Agape love is considered altruistic, compassionate, selfless (Campbell, et al., 2002), sacrificing, and giving (Meeks, et al., 1998). Agape lovers tend to consider their love spiritual, offered without any selfishness or ulterior motive. Agape love is
caring, gentle, tolerant, and non-demanding (Levine, et al., 2006). Agape love is often seen with parents and children and with spiritual leaders such as Jesus, Mohammed, Mother Teresa, and Mahatma Gandhi. Agape lovers are often mature, other-centered, and think communicating love is important, because everyone deserves it (Hahn & Blass, 1997). Pushing a stranger out of a truck’s pathway with no regard for personal safety could be seen as agape love for the human race. In romantic relationships, higher education levels are linked with lower levels of agape love (Li & Huddleston-Casas, 2005). Agape is considered the ultimate, highest form of love, although Lee (1997) believes that it may be more idealistic, rather than realistic.

**Mania love style – (M).** Mania love is filled with elation and depression (Campbell et al., 2002). This type of person loves very strongly, but also passionately worries about losing that love, resulting in not enjoying the love as much as he or she could. Mania lovers typically have low self-esteem (Campbell et al., 2002) and report loving more intensely (Dion & Dion, 1975). Mania lovers are often “in love with love” (Hahn & Blass, 1997, p. 567) and feel that love is the only thing able to fulfill their self-worth, sometimes becoming obsessive with their partner. Mania lovers need reassurance consistently, and have a lot of emotional distress, ambiguity, and jealousy in their relationships (Levine et al., 2006). Recent research found that regardless of quality in their romantic relationships, mania lovers are more apt to use negative maintenance behaviors; mania love was most predictive of jealousy induction, avoidance, spying, and destructive conflict (Goodboy & Myers, 2010). Mania lovers will vary between a lot of self-disclosure (Arnold & Thompson, 1996) and possessive, dependent behavior (Meeks, et al., 1998). Significant associations between temperament (specifically fearfulness and distress) and the mania love style have been found (Worobey, 2001). Mania lovers often want to be in love so badly that they get involved with relational partners who are not good choices (Hahn & Blass, 1997).

**Pragma love style – (P).** By contrast, pragma love is practical and traditional. People with a pragmatic attitude toward love tend to view love as a useful relationship that makes the
Pragma lovers want compatibility and a relationship in which not only their desires are met but also their practical needs (Campbell et al., 2002). Pragma lovers are aware of their needs and wants and approach love with a “shopping list” mentality (Lee, 1988, p. 47). A pragmatic lover would be able to list the qualities he or she is looking for in a mate, something that researchers Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) postulate would be highly helpful with online dating and matching. Pragma lovers tend to believe in logic and reason, consider compatibility carefully, and think about future projects and realistic concerns and issues (Levine et al., 2006).

Pragma lovers believe in a rational approach to love, that there are criteria for potential relational partners to meet, and that a reasoned approach is the sensible way to look for love (Meeks et al., 1998). For pragmatic lovers, there is a belief in the growth potential of the relationship. Commitment and maintenance are core values, and pragmatic lovers (especially women) are less likely to have one night stands, because they are looking for relationships that last a long time (Knee, 1998). Pragmatic lovers (again, especially women) are also less likely to play a major role in relationship breakups, because they want to work on the relational issues (Knee, 1998). Pragma lovers are “optimistic” of a relationship’s potential and upon relationship dissolution are less likely to agree that the relationship was doomed from the start (Knee, 1998).

**Ludus love style** – (L). Ludus love is filled with entertainment and excitement. Love is considered a game (Meeks, et al., 1998) and should not be taken too seriously. Ludic lovers do not let emotions get in the way of having fun with a partner. For ludus lovers, some manipulation and deception is allowed, but jealousy or a strong attachment is discouraged (Levine et al., 2006). Sexual fidelity is not important and multiple partners are acceptable but obsessive or controlling behavior is not. Not surprisingly, then, the idea of multiple partners, especially, can lend itself to problems when one lover is ludus and one is not (Levine et al., 2006). Ludus lovers generally do not spend time in conversation talking about the state of the relationship or commitment; they avoid discussing feelings or the relationship future (Hahn & Blass, 1997). When considering their current relationship partner, ludus lovers often report having the desire for less closeness, rather
than increasing or maintaining their current levels of closeness (Goodboy & Booth-Butterfield, 2009). Taraban and Hendrick (1995) have found that ludus lovers are more secretive and inconsiderate, and ludus is associated with immature love and the personality variable of narcissism (Le, 2005). Deception helps link ludus lovers with narcissism, because ludus lovers show greater relational alternatives and less commitment to romantic partners (Campbell et al., 2002). Regardless of quality in their romantic relationships, ludus lovers are more apt to use negative maintenance behaviors; ludus was most predictive of jealousy induction and infidelity (Goodboy & Myers, 2010). Significant associations between temperament and love attitudes have found ludus lovers more likely to be playful and flirtatious (Worobey, 2001). Believing that lovers are really “players” in the complicated “game” of love is a very typical sentiment of the ludus love style.

**Eros love style – (E).** Eros lovers are usually committed lovers and encourage serial monogamy (Levine et al., 2006). People who believe in “love at first sight” and feel that “chemistry” is critical in relational partners are likely to be eros lovers. Eros is an emotionally intense love, where the romantic elements of the relationship are central and “being in love” is highly necessary (Levine et al., 2006). Eros love is also concerned with beauty and sexuality. Eros lovers often have early or immediate attraction and desire sexual intimacy early in relationships (Campbell, et al., 2002). Eros lovers focus on physical attractiveness and often have an unattainable, ideal image of beauty (Levine et al., 2006). People with an eros love style tend to be sensitive to physical imperfections in their partners and are not “blinded” as a result of being in love (Meeks et al., 1998).

Taraban and Hendrick (1995) found that eros lovers tend to be more exciting, loving, happy, and optimistic. Associations between temperament and love attitudes revealed that people with the eros love style are more likely to be extraverted (Worobey, 2001). In addition, eros lovers communicate in an open manner (Hahn & Blass, 1997) and often report a desire to keep or increase the level of closeness with their romantic partner (Goodboy & Booth-Butterfield, 2009).
“Initial impressions of satisfaction and closeness may function as success cues (if positive) or failure cues (if negative) that may be particularly salient to those who believe in romantic density,” an idea most closely resembling the eros love style (Knee, 1998, p. 367). Interestingly, when dealing with relational conflict, the eros lover’s belief in destiny is also associated with avoidance coping strategies. Perhaps eros lovers are more inclined to embrace a “what will be, will be” love philosophy (Knee, 1998). However, once the eventual “where is this relationship going” discussion happens, those with belief in love destiny (especially women) are also more likely to take a stronger role in the dissolution of a break up (Knee, 1998).

Recent research found that in low quality relationships, the eros love style was most predictive of spying as a negative maintenance behavior (Goodboy & Myers, 2010); however the researchers suggest that the eros lover, considered excitable, passionate, and intense, may be sincerely checking on the relationship status. Previous studies on secret tests in relationships maintain this argument. For example, results indicated that romantic partners may use hidden, secretive tests as a strategy to gather further knowledge about their relationship partner and current state of affairs (Baxter & Wilmot, 1984). Additional research confirmed the existence of secret tests and, specifically, eros lovers’ use of them in romantic relationships (Levine et al., 2006). As noted above, people typically encompass more than one love style at a given time or period in life, and the following section will review differences in love styles based on stage in the relationship, sex, age, and culture.

**Variability in love styles.** As the research below suggests, people seek and gain enjoyment from different love styles, and many of those variations are based on stages in the romantic relationship as well as a person’s sex, age, and culture.

**Love styles differences based on the stage in the romantic relationship.** Love styles have been found to change across the stages of a relationship (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; 1988; 1987; 1992; Hendrick, Hendrick, & Adler, 1988; Hendrick, Hendrick, & Dicke, 1998). When having initial interaction, many people tend to display characteristics most closely associated with
eros, mania, and ludus love, and as the relationship develops, people tend to fall into the storge pattern as they share in common interests and activities. Even later still, as the relationship bonds are strengthened and continually maintained, pragma characteristics are likely to follow as people are practically integrated into each other’s lives on a regular, more committed basis (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; 1988). It has been postulated that passionate love (eros) brings potential partners together for biological reasons, but that type of love is temporary; the intensity fades as the emotional commitment endures (Buss, et al., 1990; Montgomery & Sorell, 1997).

Interestingly, in a cross cultural study (Erwin, 1999), results showed that British research participants who are currently in love are also higher in agape and eros love styles compared to those participants who were not in love at the time of the study. Conversely, those participants who are not in love at the time are more likely to be ludus lovers (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). This difference in love styles may be because those participants who are not involved with serious/semi-serious relationships are more open and receptive to people from a variety of love styles, whereas those involved in serious relationships are not (Hahn & Blass, 1997). Unmarried people tend to emphasize varied love styles more than married couples (Montgomery & Sorell, 1997), perhaps, because married people have already chosen their mates; they, likely, picked people with similar love styles, whereas unmarried people are still looking for a relationship and, therefore, are open to many different types of love styles. In addition to differences in love styles based on the stage in the romantic relationship, there are also sex differences in love styles.

**Love styles differences based on sex.** Men and women tend to prefer different types of love. Neto (2007) addresses the importance of taking sex into account with love styles research. Overall, research has found that men have higher levels of eros, ludus, and agape love, while women have higher levels of mania, pragma, and storge love. Consistently, men score higher on ludus than women (Fallon & Bowles, 1999; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986, 1987; Meeks et al., 1998; Worobey, 2001). In addition, men are linked more with eros love (Parra, Brown, Huynh, Le, Stubbs, Leon, Mejia, 2000). While women score lower on agape, eros and ludus, they tend to
be higher on pragma (Frey & Hojjat, 1998; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; Jacobs, 1992; Worobey, 2001) and storge (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; Kanin, Davidson, & Scheck, 1970; Worobey, 2001). While women tend to disclose more (Meeks et al., 1998), they appear to be less romantic than men (Kanin, et al., 1970). Agape love is seen more in men than in women (Parra et al., 2000; Fallon & Bowles, 1999; Meeks et al., 1998), perhaps due in part to societal perpetuations of the stereotype of men as protectors and providers for women and children. In addition to differences in love styles based on sex, there is also variance based on age.

**Love styles differences based on age.** Differences in love styles continue based on the physical age of the partners. In comparison to older adults, mania love is most often seen in teenagers (Levine et al., 2006). Eros love is popular in young adulthood to early midlife, evidenced by the overwhelming majority of people (94%) in their twenties who said that “first and foremost, you want your spouse to be your soul mate” in a recent Galician research poll (Mazzarella, 2005, p. 2). People in young adulthood and in early midlife (age 21-30) are more likely to be eros, storge, and agape lovers, while people in later stages of midlife (36-62) take much more caution when approaching romantic relationships, a characteristic often seen in pragma love styles (Joo & Schultz, 2002).

Based on age, research with 215 college undergraduates (Yancey & Eastman, 1995) show that their ludus love style was negatively related to life satisfaction for women, but positively related for men. Yancey and Eastman (1995) conducted a follow up study with the same number (215) of middle-aged adults (those over age 29) to compare with their initial findings. Results show that responses differed little between the older population (both men and women) and college aged women, but responses were different for undergraduate men. In particular, the game-playing ludus love style was positively related to life satisfaction for younger men and negatively related to life satisfaction for both younger women and older men and women (Yancey & Eastman, 1995). There is evidence of a relationship between age groups and specific love styles.
for most people, but, overall, the structure and composition of love styles remain relatively consistent into middle age for particular people (Butler et al., 1995).

Even generational aspects have been considered (Inman-Amos, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1994). Cross generational research looking at biologically-related teens, moms, and maternal grandmothers found that the women’s love styles are not similar, and, actually, are significantly different in terms of eros, storge, pragma, and agape love. Although these women are biologically and genetically similar, their age group membership seemed to be a larger factor in the determination of their love styles than their family make-up (Inman-Amos, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1994), a possible indicator of the importance of life span research that considers societal factors and relationship activities prevalent in particular age groups (e.g., dating, getting married, having children, having grandchildren). In addition to differences in love style based on age, there is also variance based on cultural differences.

**Love styles differences based on culture.** As with other important issues being taken into consideration, this literature review would not be complete without a discussion of the differences in love styles based on culture. A study of thirty-seven cultures (Buss et al., 1990) found that men and women consistently apprised the value associated with physical attractiveness and potential financial monetary power differently, which provided further evidence for certain evolution-centered hypotheses that predict that financial and physical resources influence perceived attraction and reproductive value in sexual partners. This large-scale study spanned the course of six continents and five islands (N=9474) and found that the most significant relationship was between women and their preference for pragmatic love. Interestingly, chastity was the variable that had the most variability across participants (Buss et al., 1990).

Cultural effects are still active and numerous in the love styles literature. Many research studies have been conducted across multiple cultural barriers and country lines. Interesting relationships have been noted, such as Portuguese men are more ludic than women, as are Guatemalan men (Parra et al., 1998). Latino men are higher on the scale in terms of ludus and
agape love than Latina women (Leon, Parra, Cheng, & Flores, 1995). University students in Mexico displayed calm, deliberate, and compassionate love that might be seen as part of pragma, storge or agape love (Leon et al., 1994). In comparison to Anglo Americans, Mexican Americans were higher on pragma, mania, and ludus love styles (Contreras, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1996).

In addition to Southern Europe and Middle and Latin America, there is strong cross-cultural similarity and endorsement of the love styles with participants from Taiwan. Love styles research in Japan has yielded further insight: eros is related to positive feelings and perceptions of one’s own self, ludus and pragma are related to negative feelings toward oneself (and especially negative feelings toward partner attractiveness for ludus), and agape and mania show some similarities with the main difference being that agape lovers also think of themselves as kind (Kanemasa, Taniguchi, Daibo, & Ishimori, 2004). Next, other content areas known to be related to love styles will be investigated.

**Love styles and relationships with other content areas.** In addition to topics previously discussed such as stage in the relationship, age, sex, and culture, love styles have also been studied extensively in relation to other important content areas. Although this review will not cover explicit details of each study, it is important to note the wide array of topics that have been correlated, linked, and associated with love styles.

Previous research includes a connection between love styles and sex style. Results from Mosher's (1988) Sexual Path Preferences Inventory (Frey & Hojjat, 1998) showed that none of the six love styles were related to personal preferences for two specific sexual scripts (i.e., sexual trance and role enactment). However, ludus love style had a negative correlation with preferences for the sexual script of partner engagement, while all other love styles showed signs of a positive correlation with that preference. After taking into account the effects of participants’ number of sexual partners and biological sex, only storge, agape, and mania were significantly related in a positive way to the preference of partner engagement as a sexual script for behavioral interaction with a sexual partner.
Other areas of research include maladaptive eating attitudes in young women being linked to game playing (ludus) and obsessive (mania) types of love (Worobey, 2001), and parasocial relationship styles showing high correlations between the Celebrity Perceptions Scale and game playing (ludus) and dependent (mania) love styles (McCutcheon, 2002). As shown, interesting findings have resulted from investigating the possible influence and effects of love styles on various aspects of human life.

In addition, it is important to note that, while not summarized here because of the limited scope of this study, there is considerable research on the association of love styles and personality variables. For instance, the five main personality variables and relationship constructs that are studied in psychology—extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness—have been explored (White, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2004), as well as narcissism (Campbell et al., 2002) in relation to love styles. Love styles and self-esteem have been reviewed (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986, 1987) as has the moderate connection to personality disorders (Arnold & Thompson, 1996). Self-silencing, a concept linked to depression was significantly predicted by mania, eros, ludus, and agape for women, and mania for men (Collins, Cramer, & Singleton-Jackson, 2005).

The correlation of love styles and certain aspects of romantic relationships are the mainstay of research on love styles. Within romantic relationships, much has been studied such as relationship intensification strategies like opening lines and rating of use of investigative secret tests used by those currently in romantic relationships in order to evaluate the state of affairs between their partner and themselves, which is more likely to be used by those with an eros love style (Baiocchi, 2008; Levine et al., 2006). In addition, dating partner preference has long been examined (Davies, 2001; Davis & Latty-Mann, 1987; Hendrick, Hendrick, & Adler, 1988; Levine et al., 2006). For instance, Hahn and Blass (1997) found that people prefer others with similar love styles and that agape and storge are desired styles, while ludus is the least desired style. Therefore, it is not surprising that in terms of similarity of partner preferences, marriage partners
are similar in preference, but fewer parallels are found between young adult children and their parents, again, reiterating the age factor difference discussed previously (Inman-Amos et al., 1994).

In addition to the content areas discussed above, relationship satisfaction and love styles have been reviewed extensively. Relationship qualities have also been investigated (Meeks et al., 1998; Morrow et al., 1995), such as relationship stability (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1988; Park et al., 2003) and relationship closeness (Park et al., 2003). Satisfaction, passion, intimacy, and conflict have also been studied by Davis and Latty-Mann (1987) who found that eros is positively related to relationship satisfaction and stability, while ludus is negatively related. The negative relationship between ludus and relationship satisfaction has been well-documented (Davis & Latty-Mann, 1987; Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1988; Levy, 1989; Meeks et al., 1998; Morrow et al., 1995; Park et al., 2003).

Passionate love (i.e., eros in the LAS) is the best consistent predictor of marital satisfaction (Contreras, et al., 1996). For partners in dating relationships, having passionate love (i.e., eros) and not having obsessive, clinging love (typically women) or game playing, fun-seeking love (typically men) tends to lead to relationship satisfaction (Hendrick, Hendrick, & Adler, 1988). While most love styles research has focused solely on heterosexual couples, Finch (1999) replicated an earlier study by Hendrick and Hendrick (1988) in lesbian couples and, still, eros lovers were higher in satisfaction. The order of lesbian couples’ level of satisfaction ranged in accordance with their love style: eros or storge; pragma, agape, mania, and ludus (Finch, 1999).

Viewing romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process has also been of interest (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), along with developing four-part typologies of attachment styles (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Working with important sources (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Hazan & Shaver, 1987) to further document the dimensions of the prototype of love, Aron and Westbay (1996) found a) the strongest correlation of the passion attachment style is with eros love style, b) the intimacy attachment style is with storge, and c) the commitment attachment
When investigating the role of love styles and attachment styles on relationship satisfaction, Fricker and Moore (2002) found that the eros love style has an obvious positive effect on relationship satisfaction and an indirect positive effect on relational satisfaction based on sexual satisfaction. In contrast, ludic love has a clear negative effect on relationship satisfaction, and an indirect negative effect on relational satisfaction based on sexual satisfaction (Fricker & Moore, 2002).

With the array of research existing on the relationship of particular variables and love styles, it is not surprising that love styles research is now being used in family and couples therapy (Hendrick, 2007). The body of research on love styles is increasing in size and significance “...to a growing body of literature suggesting that love styles are associated with individual differences in relational and communities behavior across the life span of romantic relations” (Levine et al., 2006, p. 465). Therefore, love styles should be considered an important concept where more depth and attention is warranted. Given the nature of this study, the next important topic of discussion is the context for this research: the concept and activity of online dating.

**Online Dating**

The focus of this section of the literature review is online dating. There are many aspects of online dating; therefore, it is necessary to discuss the varying factors that play a role in this activity. First, the concept of online dating needs further explanation. Second, more discussion is needed about where on the Internet online dating is happening, the people who use online dating, and when online dating takes place. Third, it is essential to better understand the reasons why people engage in online dating. Subsequently, the basics of online dating use are reviewed.

**Online dating—what is it?** The oldest of the current online dating websites, *matchmaker.com*, was born out of an electronic pen pal system created in 1983. As of 1986, the site was officially launched as a dial-up bulletin board system for dating, based on emphasizing the ability for people to search for other people in similar geographic areas (matched by zip code)
and only allowing limited communication with people from more geographically distant locations (Adams & Frey, 2001). Since the mid 1980’s, online dating websites have hosted people who want to meet other people. These potential daters use their personal computers, the Internet, PDAs, and cell phones in their quest for love. Potential daters create “profiles” with personal information on the website. This information may include hobbies, political beliefs, height, number of children, and income among other attributes and characteristics. Profiles generally include photos of the member and details about the type of mate that member is seeking. People who visit these websites can search the profiles of those people who have already created a dating profile, and, once on the site, the dating services, such as yahoopersonals.com, will prompt the new visitors to create their own dating profile and become a member.

Levels of involvement encompass using virtual- or community-based dating, doing a background check (e.g., marital status, criminal history) on potential love interests, talking on the phone, emailing messages, feeling as though the love connection has moved to the “dating” stage, feeling as though the love connection has moved to the “relationship” stage, meeting offline, and more. The level of relational involvement in online dating can also increase as a dater progresses along and even result in the ultimate level of relational involvement, marriage. People’s level of involvement with online dating is also likely related to their individual attitudes and feelings about online dating, such as if they believe online dating is a convenient and quick way to meet others, or if it is scary and strange (Anderson, 2005; Baiocchi, 2008; Wildermuth, 2001; Wildermuth & Vogl-Bauer, 2007).

Many dating websites charge a membership fee, but will often allow a person to create a profile or have certain limited access on the website for free, without becoming a paid member. If there is a free trial offer, it may be valid for a limited period of time, usually one month. These offers include public relation campaigns such as eHarmony.com with their “Free Communication Weekend” where a potential member can contact other members without being charged, using the time to decide whether or not to become a full-paying member of the dating site.
Plentyofish.com, DateHookUp.com, OkCupid.com, Matchdoctor.com, Bookofmatches.com, Smooth.com, and CrazyBlindDate.com are all examples of free online dating services (Marsan, 2008).

Profiles can be searched and sorted by specific criteria, including age, location, religion, and marital status. Most sites allow daters to upload multiple photos of themselves and even offer advice to the daters about what types of photos to choose. Some sites offer extensive relationship and dating advice and suggestions such as MindFindBind with Dr. Phil McGraw on Match.com.

To help likeminded people find and connect with each other, some dating sites go well beyond the basic service of asynchronous communication (e.g., email) to offer enhanced, synchronous (or real-time) features such as webcasts, message boards, chat rooms, and online chat (Online Dating Magazine, 2010).

Usually these additional, enhanced features require that the online dater be a full-paying member of the dating website. In addition to searchable profiles, webcam chatting and virtual dating are interactive additions to reading static profile pages. Webcam chatting is a popular, innovative feature, allowing daters to have real-time conversations without leaving the security of their own homes. An inexpensive, small webcam can provide the eyes and ears into another dater’s life (or living room) for a 3-5 minute conversation. Several dating sites offer this feature, including: lavalife.com, videodatinglove.com, cupidcams.com, and loveaccess.com.

Virtual dating, another recent trend and step further into the future of the online dating phenomenon, allows daters to go on virtual dates using an avatar to represent themselves and participate in a virtual dating activity, such as eating at a restaurant with a new love interest (Gates, 2007). This virtual restaurant could be in classic Paris, on a beautiful southern beach, or in iconic Manhattan—the location, scenery, music, physical avatar appearance, and more is up to the online daters. Researchers at MIT and Harvard (Frost, Chance, Norton & Ariely, 2008; Frost, Norton, & Ariely, 2006) found that people who participate in virtual dates, such as viewing a museum online, are more likely to have a positive experience once the daters met face to face.
Virtual dating is the next step in online dating because daters are able to screen and select potential matches (Epstein 2007). Researchers have found that many sites only allow you to view searchable attributes (i.e., height, age, weight) but not experiential ones such as sense of humor and rapport (Frost, et al., 2008). With virtual dating, members can see a person’s reaction to various situations in real time, such as waiter spilling hot soup on his or her avatar, to help determine that person’s temperament, mood, and personal qualities without ever physically meeting. OmniDate.com is an example of this type of service and Second Life is rumored to becoming involved with online dating (Marsan, 2008).

Some sites such as eHarmony.com and perfectmatch.com feature lengthy personal questionnaires that are used to help determine possible matches and then the service will deliver the matches to the dater, rather than the dater needing to consistently search for new love interests. Neil Warren, clinical psychologist and founder of eHarmony.com, concluded that 29 dimensions of compatibility (including spirituality, mood management, and sexual passion, to name a few) must be present for a couple to succeed in a long term relationship and, ideally, couples will match up on at least 25 of the 29 dimensions (Buss, 2005). While getting started on eHarmony.com is lengthy and time intensive considering its 436 item questionnaire, it seems the website’s system can work for those people who are willing to put in the time and effort to complete the questionnaire and embark on the company’s specific steps in exact order (Buss, 2005).

Other online dating websites are a contrast to eHarmony’s strict style, allowing daters to create a profile and start flirting more quickly, and to have more control over the process. For example, most of the dating websites will send members an email several times per week with their “new matches.” However, other dating sites have a different approach, such as plentyoffish.com, which allows the users’ actions to dictate the types of profiles that are brought to that user. For example, if a user says she likes young men with red hair, but continually clicks on profiles of older men with gray hair, then the website will automatically begin to send her
more profiles of the older, gray-haired men, while still allowing her to search and choose a man of any age and with any type of hair.

Dating websites are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Most online dating websites can be formatted so that users communicate in asynchronous fashion through mediums like email where one person leaves a message and another reads it at his or her own convenience and then responds. As previously mentioned, other sites try to go beyond the strict turn-taking conversation styles and allow synchronous communication such as group chat rooms, private chat rooms, webcams, and virtual dating where the daters are able to communicate in real time. Regardless of the types of communication, the messages and online involvement tend to take place over an extended period of time. In terms of physical time, nerve.com catered to young professionals and has found that their traffic was strongest on weekdays, with daily peaks over the noon hour and between five and six in evening during Spring 2001 (Griscom, 2002). By late Fall 2002, the visiting traffic peaked on Thursdays and Fridays, with continuing hits climbing throughout the day to a first summit around 5:30 pm, followed by a second highpoint between 11:00 pm and midnight (Griscom, 2002). This may indicate that browsing e-personals and communicating with online love interests may be a social activity in and of itself (Griscom, 2002). In addition to the chronological time when online daters participate in the activity, the intensity of participation also varies.

Collectively, all of these online dating initiatives, along with the growing number of niche websites, allow people to narrow the dating pool and, eventually, screen specific potential lovers without the need to meet each suitor in person. The ability to screen and be selective without leaving home is a large security enhancement as well as a time and money saver. However, regardless of all the affordances and safeguards in place, there are always constraints and dangers to consider in relation to online dating.

**Online dating limitations.** Naturally, the online dating companies purport the affordances of online dating, but there are also limitations and negative aspects of which the
potential online dater should be aware. These constraints include the ratio of men to women, which is seldom equal on any given online dating website; although online daters can use an unlimited number of dating websites, this type of demographic information may affect a dater’s decision to primarily use one dating website over another. For instance, match.com is about 58% male and 42% female, while eHarmony.com is about 58% percent female and 42% male (Buss, 2005). This may be due, in part, to the goals of each of the websites: match.com advertises a casual, fun approach to dating (stereotypically more appealing to men), while eHarmony.com advertises a serious, marriage-minded approach (stereotypically more appealing to women). Just a year later, in 2006, WebPersonalsOnline.com reported that chemistry.com had the largest percentage of female members (71.8%). In addition, yahoopersonals.com was the online dating site that had the largest percentage of male members (51.4%). Naturally those numbers change frequently as a result of growing popularity, diverse marketing and advertising techniques, and mergers and acquisitions of online dating sites by competing sites.

Other limitations include complaints about discrimination on dating websites made by gay and lesbian people. Homosexuals and their advocates claim that only allowing heterosexual singles to join particular dating websites is unfair and antiquated in our current times. Certain sites are able to do this not by outwardly banning gay and lesbian people, but by giving limited options in their drop down boxes of only “man seeking woman,” and “woman seeking man.” Bisexual people are also discriminated against by overtly having to choose one or the other. These limited options also require that members explicitly choose their gender from a drop down box, with male or female options only—a potential problem for hermaphrodites, cross dressers, and transgender people. In response, more niche websites have been created, thus providing virtual meeting locations that cater to all types of people. The most popular niche-dating sites match people based on race, sexual orientation, or religion. Included in the twenty most popular niche sites were JDate (for Jewish Singles), Christian Mingle, Christian Café, Manhunt (for gay men), Love from India, Black Christian People Meet, Amigos (for Latinos), Asian People Meet,
Shaadi (for Indians), and Alarena.com (for Africans) (Sullivan, 2008). International (or non-American) dating services tend to be more progressive and open to numerous orientations and various types of people.

Very recently eHarmony.com joined the gay and lesbian online dating scene. In 2011, the site launched a progressive dating site for homosexual people called compatiblepartners.net. The homosexual-oriented website is formatted in a similar manner as the heterosexual-oriented website. The “Why Compatible Partners” page on compatiblepartners.net explains that eHarmony’s patented Compatibility Matching System® was developed by researching married heterosexual couples and that similar studies have not been conducted with same-sex relationships. In addition to limitations regarding discrimination and the lack of fluidity and options, there are also constraints in terms of how the online daters represent, or misrepresent, themselves on the dating websites. Unfortunately, there are people who misrepresent information about themselves in their online profiles and this misrepresentation can be observed through outright lies about marital status, flattering white lies about weight or age, or by using outdated photos that lack currency (Gerhardt, 1999; Lake, 2007, Sullivan, 2008).

Misrepresentation can also occur when dating websites advertise a member’s profile long after the person has last logged in, making it seem like a site has a larger dating pool than it does. Some sites, such as eHarmony.com, expect you to subscribe “blind,” meaning you have little to no ability to search profiles before you become a paid member. Therefore, advertisements for the website may appear to have many people whom a dater might be interested in, but only after the dater has paid to join the site does the truth about the website’s members actually reveal itself.

Many online dating sites, such as yahoopersonals.com, limit communication between paid members and nonmembers, so it is often hard for paid members to decipher who is a nonmember (nonpaid members can often still make a free profile) and if that nonmember will be able to respond to messages. Some sites require that both parties be full-paying members before any “off-system communication” takes place (this is communication through other email systems
such as hotmail.com, gmail.com, or meeting for coffee in a local cafe). Other sites go even further
to filter in-system messages for personal email addresses, surnames, telephone numbers, and
other identifying information that would work to circumvent the system, and allow two daters to
contact each other outside of the dating service system without paying for the service first. Also,
there is always the potential for sites to misuse daters’ personal information such as Quechup.com
may have done when they were accused of harvesting personal information for use in email spam
(Lake, 2007).

Other potential limitations include dating services such as match.com and
yahoopersonals.com, which have actually been accused of flooding their sites with “bait,” or
attractive profiles of people who do not truly exist on the site. Even some websites admit to
engaging in this type of behavior; the site adultfriendfinder.com has a disclaimer on its homepage
that reads, “Persons appearing in photographs may not be actual members. Other data for
illustrative purposes only.” In addition to fake profiles from the dating service itself, another
danger for potential daters is that some users of the dating sites will post “fake” profiles to lure
people into a scam of some kind.

Lastly, is the important issue of personal security. Online predators are a real, and online
dating services provide a continuous source of potential victims for their criminal activities. One
study found that some women assume a false sense of security when looking for love on the
Internet, exposing them to sexual violence, stalking, and fraud (Zylbergold, 2007). A recent study
from the University of Texas Health Science Center led by Dr. Paige Padgett found alarming
results, reporting that women using the Internet to find love matches assumed an artificial,
elevated sense of safety:

Examining the choices women made when meeting men from online personal ads for
friendships, love, and sex, Dr. Padgett concluded that the high frequency and intensity of
email communication, prior to meeting face to face, lent itself to an accelerated form of
intimacy on behalf of her participants. Said Padgett, “This may have affected women’s decisions to engage in risky sexual behavior.”

(Zylbergold, 2007)

These crimes and violations of safety and security can happen because in the online world, as discussed in the hyperpersonal communication model (Walther, 1996), people can present their ideal selves and engage in highly-personal interaction when using the seemingly anonymous, timeless space of the Internet. This elevated level of self disclosure might suggest an exaggerated (or even untrue) level of personal knowledge, and as a result of these inflated feelings of openness and intimacy, the daters may meet face-to-face prematurely (Walther, 1996; Zylbergold, 2007). During the face-to-face date, the daters may use a decreased level of traditional monitoring of the situation that mimicked the conversation topics and depth used online. In other words, because the daters may have had such intimate conversations online, daters (typically women) are more likely to engage in the same highly-personal communication if they meet certain predators (typically men) offline, making the daters more vulnerable.

Considering all of the safety concerns, government regulation of dating websites is not overwhelming, but some measures have been taken to help safeguard online dating citizens. For example, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services of the Department of Homeland Security implemented the International Marriage Broker Regulation Act (IMBRA). This new law took effect in March 2007, and requires all internationally-oriented dating sites to complete sex offender checks before a U.S. citizen can communicate with a foreigner (Aytes, 2006). In another recent trend, New Jersey became the first state to require dating websites to disclose whether they complete background checks (Online Dating Squabbles, 2008).

**Online dating—who uses it?** All types of people from various age groups and cultures and with different expectations use online dating as a way to meet and connect with potential love interests. Some online daters want to become close friends for lengthy periods of time (Parks & Floyd, 1996) before moving into a romantic relationship, while others look for only those they
see as love matches and are not interested in finding new friends online. Even within the large
realm of romantic relationships, some daters may be seeking a casual, shorter term relationship,
while others are searching for “the one” and have an end goal of getting married. Different daters
sign up for various dating websites partly based on the type of dating site. Some sites are
marriage-oriented and long-term-relationship oriented, while others are short-term-relationship
oriented, and others still cater to those looking for cyber-sex or a one-night stand.

Researchers reporting for the Pew Internet and American Life Project, Madden and
Lenhart (2006), found that the Internet has become an important avenue for people to meet and
date in the 21st century. In assessing the total Internet user population, the findings from a
national sample, large scale survey found 11% of all Internet using American adults
(approximately 16 million people) report having visited an online dating website or other Internet
site in order to meet other people online (Madden & Lenhart, 2006). The survey found that 7% of
adults online (approximately 10 million people) were searching for romantic partners at the time;
within that demographic, 37% report visiting an online dating website.

Of people who have used at least one online dating site or other Internet website in order
to meet people online, 43% of all online daters (approximately 7 million adults), have physically
met and gone on a date with at least one person met online, and 17% (approximately 3 million
adults) have married or begun long-term relationships with at least one person met online
(Madden & Lenhart, 2006). Specifically, the survey reported that of the majority of online
Americans who consider themselves single and looking for romantic partners (approximately 10
million people), 74% reported having used the Internet in at least one form in order to pursue
their personal romantic interests (Madden & Lenhart, 2006). Given the number of people using
the Internet to create romantic relationships, it is important to investigate how and why people
choose to use this mode of communication for this purpose.

According to a 2007 survey conducted by the Mediamark Research Inc. (MRI), a
member of the GfK Group, almost 2.5 million American adults partook in online dating during
the previous thirty days. According to the MRI’s Spring ’07 Survey of the American Consumer, where data were collected from November 2006 to May 2007, significant demographic variables are present. Of the 2.463 million adults who participated in online dating in the last 30 days, the breakdown is noteworthy. To summarize this information, the following details are provided: For each demographic variable, there is a percentage figure listed of who those people are out of the overall 2.5 million surveyed, such as men (52.2%). Also provided is the percentage of people within that particular demographic (men) who are more or less likely than all adults to have participated in online dating, such as +8% for men. Therefore, based on this large scale survey, more men (52.2%; +8%) participated in online dating than women (47.8%; -8%).

Naturally, age plays a role as well. Of the MRI’s survey respondents, the following was provided: age 18-34 (49.1%; +59%), age 35-44 (24.2%; +22%), age 45-54 (15.7%; -19%), and age 55+ (11.0%; -63%). In terms of age, Baby Boomers, in particular, are targeted by online dating sites, because around 30% of America’s 80 million Baby Boomers are currently single (Marsan, 2008). Two giants in the online dating world, yahoopersonals.com and eHarmony.com have both reported double digit growth in the 50 and older market (Marsan, 2008). Match.com had the largest percentage of members under 30, although, ironically, match.com is also the online dating site that has seen its senior membership double over the past two years (WebPersonalsOnline.com, 2006).

The average age range of membership varied by site; for example: eHarmony.com, 35 through 54 years of age; chemistry.com, 33 through 52 years of age; yahoopersonals.com, 21 through 40 years of age; and match.com, 21 through 30 years of age (WebPersonalsOnline.com, 2006). Yahoopersonals.com has the largest percentage of online daters over 55 years of age with over 25% of their online dating profiles from members of this demographic group (WebPersonalsOnline.com, 2006). However, in contrast to a general dating site that is suitable for most or all online daters, the demographics can be different on niche dating sites that are specifically designed to attract a certain type of online dater. For example,
SeniorFriendfinder.com, was the site with the most dating profiles from men and women over age 55 (WebPersonalsOnline.com, 2006).

In addition to age, economic status of online daters is also of interest to researchers studying uses of the Internet to find romance. The figures reported were: less than $50,000 (48.2%; +7%), $50,000 - $75,000 (13.2%; +22%), and greater than $75,000 (14.4%; +61%). A recent article reported that members of eHarmony.com had an annual income of over $50,000 per year, on average (The Dating Journal, 2010). Perhaps not coincidentally, eHarmony.com also has the highest monthly membership price, with a one-month subscription cost of $49.95.

Chemistry.com also has a $49.95 monthly subscription cost, but also usually has enticing deals that lower the fees to draw new members to the site.

In addition, education level also plays a role in who is online dating: college graduates (21.6%; +25%), and those who have a masters, doctorate or professional degree (13.1%, +62.0%). Lastly, the demographics factors that seemed to have the biggest role in determining online dating participation levels of the MRI’s survey respondents in comparison to all other adults, are a) whether the person is a sole parent to at least one child (16.1%; +185%) and b) people who looked or used the Internet five or more times a day (53.0%; +160%). Therefore, it is important to note that being a sole parent and/or heavy Internet usage by survey participants seems to be a significant force behind participation in online dating. Ms. Anne Marie Kelly, Vice President of Marketing and Strategic Planning at MRI had several comments to add to the reported results:

While the increased acceptance of this kind of dating might lead people to assume ‘everyone is doing it’, in actual fact a very small percentage of adults participate in online dating. What’s interesting is that both genders, younger and more mature adults, and most income brackets are represented in a profile of online daters. The relatively high incidence of people with sole responsibility for a child participating in online dating
could speak to the fact that this is a fairly ‘safe’ or neutral method to tap into the world of
dating and screen people before introducing them to their children. (p.1)

As seen in examples above, the sheer number and percentages of online daters continues
to rise and cross the gamut of many demographics and segments of the American populous. This
data and analysis reinforces the idea that within the millions of people who participate in online
dating, there is no standard or ideal type of person, and differences among daters is welcome,
common, and mirrors the true variances that can be found among people in “real life” dating
situations.

**Online dating—why people do it?** The quest for love is a natural human need. It can be
long, hard, and expensive. Some people have a “happily ever after” mentality without knowing
where to look for love or what to do once they are in a good circumstance to meet a match.
Online dating is a purpose-driven activity where the ambiguity of figuring out who is single and
looking for love is greatly reduced; online dating is shedding stigma as a matchmaker and is
becoming more accepted into the mainstream (Anderson, 2005; Madden & Lenhart, 2006). “It’s
okay to look,” famous television psychiatrist Dr. Phil McGraw has preached in his folksy
commercials for match.com, and millions worldwide have taken him up on the offer. The
practicality of online dating is addressed by Rufus Griscom in the following *Wired Magazine*
(2002) article:

> Twenty years from now, the idea that someone looking for love without looking for it
> online will be silly, akin to skipping the card catalog to instead wander the stacks because
> ‘the right books are found only by accident.’ Serendipity is the hallmark of inefficient
> markets and the marketplace of love, like it or not, is becoming more efficient. (p.1)

Aside from seeing a wedding ring or other cultural or personal marker of a person’s
relationship commitment, it can be very hard to determine who is single, dating, engaged, or
married simply by the way that people look on first impressions. The uncertainty in dating can be
lessened by going to specific places where the other people present are also looking for love or
romance in some fashion and are willing to say so upfront. In-person speed dating and singles clubs provide similar services to what online dating websites offer. Essentially, with both forums, people who are interested in dating are gathered in one central place. For in-person speed dating or singles clubs, that location may be a church fellowship hall, park, bar, or recreation center. Online dating is similar in the sense that potential daters are gathered in a central place, on the Internet, in the online dating websites.

If a dater’s schedule, shyness, reticence to communicate, or lack of knowledge about specific in-person events makes attending live get-togethers not as appealing, the online dater still has many options. From the comfort and safety of the dater’s own couch at any time day or night, millions of profiles can be searched and sorted based on the criteria and attributes the dater is looking for.

Even if a dater knows about a live event and has the communication competence and schedule availability to attend, that dater still must wade through many people and ask numerous basic and personal questions in order to find out if the other people are even remotely potential matches. As cited previously, sole parents are 185% more likely to use online dating than the average American adult (Mediamark Research Inc., 2007). Therefore, it would be very helpful for a sole parent to have the ability to quickly discern which other daters are open to a romantic relationship where a child is also present, as well as which daters are not open to that possibility. How a person feels about children may be a make-it-or-break-it topic for a sole parent who is looking for love.

Discovering answers would take a lot of time and probing questions to determine compatibility in a live event, but the answers are found quickly on the Internet by searching and sorting online profiles. Online dating services save daters considerable time and effort by asking the standard questions (e.g., children status, income level, age, location, religious preference, etc.) so that the individual daters do not have too. Online dating profiles display numerous demographics and attributes about the person who maintains that profile. Sections with
information “about me” and “my interests/hobbies” are likely to be clearly displayed and searchable by keyword.

Furthermore, if a person does not meet an individual dater’s criteria, said dater can then simply and swiftly move on to other options by clicking “delete” and moving on to the next possible match. The process of sifting and sorting can be immediate and give fast, sometimes idealistic or unforgiving, first impressions. The humorous how-to-do-it Internet relationship guide book “Meet Me, Don’t Delete Me” (Bacon, 2004), speaks to the fast nature of online relationships.

Obviously, participating in online dating websites has a broad public base and is just one of many options for the romantically inclined online or offline. Although this current study specifically focuses on online dating websites, it is worth noting that daters have more than just dating websites to use when trying to meet and date other people online. For example, daters utilize general chat rooms, bulletin boards, and social networking sites like socialgrid.com, MySpace.com, facebook.com, Second Life, and Circle of Friends to meet new people (Bishop, 2008b).

**Perceptions of Online Romantic Relationships**

Consumer psychosocial background has been shown to be an antecedent or precursor to gratifications sought within the uses and gratification theory (Rubin, 1994). Research has noted that psychosocial variables such as temperament (Sherry, 2001) and attitude toward media (Sherry, 2004) influence media channel evaluation, selection, and use. For example, how young Swedish teenagers perceive the Internet has been shown to influence how they also choose to interact and engage with the Internet (Sjoberg, 1999). It is important in a theoretical sense to examine the perceptions toward the specific function or application of the media channel (in this case, using the Internet as a vehicle for romance) as those perceptions and attitudes may be mediating variables that possibly influence user wants and needs. These wants and needs may be fulfilled as gratifications sought that eventually become gratifications obtained and the user
satisfied. Researchers have criticized certain applications of uses and gratifications theory as they noted many studies have failed to take audience member perceptions of media content into consideration when exploring audience member media use (Elliott, 1974; Lometti, Reeves, & Bybee, 1977; Swanson, 1977).

Akin to how perceptions toward the Internet vary from person to person (Sjoberg, 1999), individual attitudes and perceptions about online romantic relationships vary from person to person, and those thoughts are likely to affect their perceptions of the online dating world. The study of perceptions is important because of the impact that perceptions can have on a consumer’s choice regarding which medium to use (i.e., is finding love online acceptable?) and subsequent communicative behavior and interaction.

Further, perceptions of online love held by family and friends can affect a user’s communicative behavior. Positive or negative social support received from family and friends may influence the relationship (Parks & Adelman, 1983). Researchers have shown that communicating with family and friends about an existing romantic relationship often results in relationships which receive increased social support, and thus, have higher levels of stability, more certainty about the relationship partner, and lower levels of relationship termination (Parks & Adelman, 1983). Online daters will be more likely to communicate with others about their dating life and media choices if they believe that the listener has a positive perception of online romantic relationships.

In an early investigation of the development of personal relationships on the Internet, Parks and Roberts (1998) found that 235 users of text-based virtual environments occurring in real-time known as MOOs (Multi-User Dimensions, Object Oriented) reported nearly all survey participants (93.6%) had used MOOS to form ongoing personal relationships and that 26.3% of those relationships were romantic in nature. Of the online relationships, many eventually transferred to other digital forums, and approximately one third (33%) engaged in offline interaction (Parks and Roberts, 1998). However, despite their growing popularity, there is little
chronological history of empirical results which indicate how people perceive using the Internet to foster romance (Baiocchi, 2008; Wildermuth & Vogl-Bauer, 2007).

According to Anderson (2005), the perceptions of online relationships, particularly romantic relationships, is negative and somewhat of a “talk show phenomena” (p. 521). Although overall negative, opinions seem to range from online dating being a desperate last ditch effort to find romance (Donn & Sherman, 2002), an illusory experience as mass media is personalized through increase in pseudocommunity (Beninger, 1987), superficial and impersonal (Slouka, 1995), lacking critical nonverbal cues (Lea & Spears, 1992), difficulties of building relationship over online social networks (Lea & Spears, 1995) of reduced social involvement and psychological well-being (Kraut, Patterson, Lundmark, Kiesler, Mukopadhyay, & Scherlis, 1998), to online dating websites being ideal forums for self-identified deviant behaviors such as cybersex, pornography, and child abuse (Durkin & Bryant, 1995; Kantrowitz, King, & Rosenberg, 1994).

In addition to influence from interpersonal sources (Parks & Adelman, 1983; Wildermuth & Vogl-Bauer, 2007), the media also emphasize safety hazards and risks that add to the negative perception of online romance with popular press articles (e.g., Gerhardt, 1999; Lee, 2007; Potter, 2007) to specific television programs (e.g., Dateline NBC’s To Catch a Predator). These messages offer a warning to those people hopeful for online romance and act as self-selected reinforcement for other people who believe that they are already aware of the honest realities of online dating. The idea, for example, that using the Internet to foster romance is for strange, lonely, and generally deceptive—even risky—people (Baiocchi, 2008).

In a study by Perlis et al., (2002), perceptions of online romantic relationships seem to mirror perceptions of the interpersonal interaction in Internet chat rooms. Research participants reported feeling that: 1) online relationships were not credible and had problems, 2) people who created interpersonal interaction were more likely to be reticent or shy people with potential relationship problems offline, 3) people who are lonely, and/or 4) people who are only interested
in the possibility of sexual activity are the types of people looking for relationships online (Perlis et al., 2002).

Previous research studies show that the overall perception of online dating is undesirable. Exploration into the attitudes and practices regarding the formation of online romantic relationships found that participants had a negative impression of online dating websites and the people who use these sites (Donn & Sherman, 2002). Research has shown negative stigmatized perceptions about online daters (i.e., they are loners, losers, freaks, and geeks) (Wildermuth, 2001). Research has also investigated the effects of stigmatizing discourse on the quality of online relationships (Wildermuth, 2004) and found that strong, negative stigmas were associated with online romantic relationships by other people who were not in an online relationship.

Negative attitudes about online romantic relationships can influence people’s behavioral choices when they interact with people who are members of romantic relationships online (Parks & Adelman, 1983). Specifically, research found that people outside of the online romantic relationship (e.g., offline family and friends) were more likely to explicitly share their negative opinions in a strong, direct manner to the specific family and friends who make the [assumed negative] media selection choice to engage in online relationships by denoting the person’s online relationship partner with demeaning names such as “geek” or “nerd” (Wildermuth, 2004). Further, merely because of their known ties to online dating, other people tend to perceive online daters as having social anxiety issues such as being lonely, weird, and desperate (Donn & Sherman, 2002; Wildermuth, 2004).

Additional research explored the perceptions of online romances from the online romantic relationship participants themselves (Wildermuth & Vogl-Bauer, 2007). Five specific themes were identified from 202 written narratives: (a) intense emotional arousal, (b) high levels of caution, (c) strong linguistic connections, (d) high numbers of extramarital affairs, and (e) a lack of social support from offline family and friends. These results suggest a close relationship between personal/individual cognition, the medium of choice: i.e., communication mediated
through the Internet, and the potential impact of the nature of an online romantic relationship (Wildermuth & Vogl-Bauer, 2007). As discussed in this section, although research is lacking, people seem to have strong perceptions of online dating; the next section will discuss modern measurement for perceptions of online romantic relationships with the intent of furthering research.

**Perceptions of online romantic relationships – modern measurement.** As noted by Anderson, research on perceptions of online romantic relationships was scarce. Therefore, Anderson (2005) created the first scale specifically for the measurement of perceptions of romantic relationships that were formed and maintained online. The three-item scale was simple and parsimonious, logically making conceptual and operational sense as a measure of participants’ negative-to-positive perceptions of online romantic relationships. Anderson (2005) found that overall participants had somewhat negative perceptions of online romantic relationships. From Anderson’s 177 college student participants who had never been in an online romantic relationship, the mean for all three items was below the theoretical midpoint (3.03 on a 1–7 scale where 7 = very positive).

Further, results suggest that the amount of Internet affinity and time spent using the Internet does seem to be a significant influence on perception outcomes (Anderson, 2005). Findings show a positive correlation exists between respondents’ self-reported frequency of social Internet use and their perceptions of online romantic relationships (Anderson, 2005). The idea of using the Internet to find love may not be a big leap for people who already use the Internet for social purposes to connect with friends, family and colleagues. Similarly, persons who use the Internet more frequently for any purpose perceive online relationships more positively (Anderson, 2005). As people become more accustomed to using the Internet to keep track of the intimate details of their lives such as financial disclosures and health information, it has become more acceptable and seemingly normal to use the Internet in another personal realm—people’s love and sexual lives (Anderson, 2005).
Other research (Baiocchi, 2008) examined the intersections of perceptions of online dating and several additional variables, including: participant sex, (social) Internet usage frequency, affinity for the Internet, online romantic relationship experiences. Results suggest that overall, college student participants have negative perceptions of online dating and that, in general, men tend to hold more positive perceptions of online dating than women. Further, data analysis indicates that individuals who have been or are currently involved in an online romantic relationship perceive online romantic relationships more positively than individuals who have not engaged in online romantic relationships (Baiocchi, 2008). Additional results show that in contrast to previous research (Anderson, 2005), the amount of liking of the medium, or Internet affinity, and time spent using the Internet overall did not seem to be a significant influence on perception outcomes (Baiocchi, 2008). While not the focus of this study, the convergence of these variables needs additional scholarly review in the future.

While other people believe that online dating is dangerous, weird, or only for nonsocial people, some people think that online dating is a fun, easy, and a fast avenue to meet potential suitors. Following the theory of diffusion of innovations, the concept and activity of online dating continues to gain popularity as it becomes more widespread as an idea and practice (Rogers, 1962). Although the overall perception of online dating is negative (Wildermuth, 2001), generally speaking the more recent the research, the less negative the overall perceptions of online dating tend to be (Hussain, 2010; Madden & Lenhart, 2006; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011). Thus, as time goes on and online dating becomes more mainstream and popular, studies show that people have perceived online dating as more positive. Knowledge of other people’s experiences with online romantic relationships may also influence perceptions. Researchers suggest that the negative social stigma associated with online dating is being improved by the messages that users share with others about their reasons for and consequences of using the Internet to create romantic relationships (Chan & Cheng, 2004; McKenna & Bargh, 1999; 2000; Parks & Roberts, 1998). A person may not have participated in online dating themselves, but could be positively or
negatively influenced about online dating by the opinion leaders in that person’s life (Rogers, 1962); for example, if a person is uncertain about the prospect of online dating, but has a sister who met a loving person on an online dating website and subsequently married that person, then the overall uncertainty of online dating as a potential matchmaker may be reduced for the original person (Berger, 1986; Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

In addition to stigma, several areas related to uses and gratifications are measured when using the well-known communication research approach. Cross sectional empirical surveys are often incorporated when studying uses and gratifications (e.g., Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000) and longitudinal panel studies are less common due to numerous factors, including the difficulties associated with participant dropout rate over long periods of time. In 1998, researchers (Kraut, Patterson, Lundmark, Kiesler, Mukopadhyay, & Schepis) published findings of reduced social involvement and psychological well-being for a sample of new Internet users during 1995-96. Kraut et al., (1998) referred to these effects or consequences a curious “paradox” as most of the participants used the Internet primarily for communication purposes, typically seen to have positive consequences for the users. Viewing the issue as important for communication, social psychology, social interaction, social support, and overall well-being, researchers incorporated aspects of social exchange theory and followed up with 208 of the original respondents three years later to find that the negative consequences of using the Internet had collapsed (Kraut, Kiesler, Boneva, Cummings, Helgeson, & Crawford, 2002).

A large, nationwide sample of the Pew Internet and American Life Project, found that the majority of people (79%) who have engaged in online dating perceived that using online dating websites is a good way to meet people (19% disagreed), as documented by Pew Internet Project researchers (Madden & Lenhart, 2006). Of the Internet users who were single and searching for dating partners, 61% agreed that the Internet can provide productive, conducive forums for finding a relationship partner. When examining all Internet users, however, American adults are somewhat divided in their perceptions of online dating: while 11% reported they did
not know, 44% agreed that online dating was “a good way to meet people,” and the exact same percentage of people disagreed.

In general, several demographics were reported to impact perceptions of online romantic relationships: 1) sex: online men (48%) find more benefits in the concept of online dating than online women (41%), 2) age: dating services are more likely to be rated favorably by younger people, and 3) location: 48% of urban users, 44% of suburban users, and 38% of rural users indicated that online dating is a good choice for meeting people to create romantic relationships (Madden & Lenhart, 2006).

Research by Stephure, Boon, MacKinnon, and Deveau (2009) examined the relationship between age and perceptions of and involvement in online dating. They found that online dating activity may increase instead of decrease with age as more adults are turning to the Internet as a functional alternative to compensate for the diminished satisfaction available from creating romances through more traditional measures. While negative perceptions and stigma do still exist for online romances, participants of their 175 person online survey indicated that, on average, they were more likely to openly disclose their online dating activities to others, and more likely to receive a favorable response to the revelation of how they had been interacting online in the search for romance (Stephure et al., 2009).

Furthermore, as finding love online continues to become less obscure and more mainstream, “cyberspace has become the hottest pick-up joint on the planet” (Hussain, 2010, p.1). A recent poll of almost 11,000 adults throughout 19 countries who had used the Internet or email in the last six months indicated that online dating is increasing in acceptance and positive perceptions (New Global Poll, 2010). The poll, conducted by GlobeScan for BBC World Service, found that 30% of Internet users agreed that ‘the Internet is a good place to find a partner’ (New Global Poll, 2010). Of the approximately 11,000 face-to-face and telephone survey participants, the extent of agreement with the poll prompt was as follows: strongly agree (10%), somewhat agree (20%), somewhat disagree (26%), strongly disagree (34%), and do not know (10%).
Specifically, the 773 American participants indicated the following responses: strongly agree (5%), somewhat agree (16%), somewhat disagree (20%), strongly disagree (47%), and do not know (12%).

The international poll found that specific countries have different levels of agreement with the idea that the Internet is a good place for romantic introductions. Pakistan (60%) and India (59%) had the highest level of supporters, while Indonesia (49%), Ghana (47%), and the Philippines (42%) had moderate levels of agreement with the poll question. Additionally, countries such as Germany (37%), Russia (33%), Turkey (34%), Britain (28%), and France (27%), reported moderate to lower levels of agreement. Notably, only fewer people from South Korea (16%) or China (17%) think the Internet is a good place to find a boyfriend/girlfriend than did Americans (21%).

In addition to culture, the poll found that participant sex, age, and education level also impacted participant perceptions of the Internet as a good place to find a boyfriend or girlfriend. Men (33%) were more enthusiastic than women (27%) about finding love online. Younger people have more positive perceptions of using the Internet to find love, but many older adults are also open to the idea: age range 18-24 (36%), 25-34 (34%), 35-44 (29%), 45-54 (24%), 55-64 (23%), and 65+ (23%). Lastly, the findings showed that education also makes a difference in that the higher the level of education, the lower the level of perceptions of using the Internet to find romance. Findings indicate that the level of agreement with the poll question is influenced by: high level of education (28%), medium (29%), and low (36%).

Overall, with approximately 1 in 3 people (or 30%) agreeing that the Internet is a good place to find a boyfriend/girlfriend, GlobeScan Research Director Sam Mountford stated: “This shows what a major role the Internet now plays in the lives of millions of people around the world. For many, and particularly in the developing world, it’s not just somewhere to work, shop, or communicate with friends, but a credible way of finding a partner in life” (New Global Poll, 2010, p.1). The public perceptions of online romantic relationships continue to rise positively.
Rationale

This study is proposed as a first step to investigating people’s motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships. It was anticipated that research on this issue would contribute to knowledge in several ways, which are discussed below.

Three main reasons for the current study. First, as noted above, using the Internet to find a romantic relationship poses a number of risks in addition to the potential rewards. Understanding the effect of love styles on motives for seeking love online may be useful in identifying persons who are particularly vulnerable to the possible hazards, while creating a greater awareness of these risks for this target group. In addition to being thought-provoking and interesting, the results of this study may have an impact on the lives of real people seeking romance, love, and sexual partners. By further understanding consumers’ use of the Internet to create romantic relationships, academic personnel, relationship experts, public health professionals, journalists, psychologists, mental health specialists, and other real world practitioners can provide accurate information to people when having discussions and writing articles about love, sex, dating, and relationships. Professionals should be aware that others’ perceptions of online romantic relationships are important to those adults who are engaged in the practice (Parks and Adelman, 1983).

Second, this study is proposed as a first step to empirically measuring the uses and gratifications of using the Internet to create romantic relationships. There is not currently a published instrument that measures the uses and gratifications of the Internet in this romantic context. Therefore, this study will use a published instrument primarily designed to study the motivations for using the Internet to create cyber relationships (Wang & Chang, 2010). While not application specific (this current study is more centered on using the Internet to create romantic relationships rather than to create friendships), Wang and Chang’s (2010) scale is the closest measurement tool available. Overall the scale was created to measure motives for seeking relationships via the Internet; the scale includes both traditional interpersonal and media-related
motives. Using this related scale will help further flesh out possible motives based on what the scale currently measures, and perhaps become a springboard for future studies and advance the discussion of Internet uses for romance.

Third, another rationale for this study is that these research results may provide information and ideas for discussion that ultimately lead to better online dating websites, and thus, promote a more satisfying and fulfilling experience for the online daters themselves. In addition to advancing uses and gratifications nuanced research, more precise awareness of what people’s motives for using online sites may allow businesses with Internet applications (e.g., AOL company website) the flexibility to better serve and assist their customers (Gallaugher, 1999; Lohse, Bellman, & Johnson, 2000; Rao, Salam, & Dos Santos, 1998; Stafford & Stafford, 2001; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). With more online dating websites created and updated with realistic consumer use motivations in mind, online daters could better understand their love styles and, therefore, their preferences and needs, which could potentially help them to more easily be matched online to a suitable romantic partner. Essentially, as more becomes known about the real desires (wants and needs) of people who try to create romantic relationships via the Internet, online dating websites and marketers may possibly use the results of this research study to enhance their business strategy, marketing, and advertising materials, (Wang & Chang, 2010). For example, based on the results of this study, advertisements may potentially be able to suggest that if a person wants to find love based on specific, identifiable, searchable criteria (e.g., pragma love style), or being able to share mutual interests in a deep friendship before having romantic relations (e.g., storge love style), then online dating may be an especially good option for them.

The phenomenon of online dating affects and informs areas of personal importance and research significance. Technology, social practices, health and safety concerns, communication, and romantic relationships are all interwoven in the concept of online dating. For this reason, the motives for seeking romantic relationships via the Internet have implications for researchers and
practitioners of interpersonal communication, mediated communication, and health communication. The main goal of this research is to investigate the effects of love styles on motives for and perceptions of using the Internet to create online romantic relationships. By exploring motives for creating cyber relationships (i.e., love, romantic partners, curiosity, emotional support), this study extends the uses and gratifications theoretical approach to an interactive mediated environment. In particular, this research will explore reasons why specific love styles may influence people to have certain motives when going online to create romantic relationships. For example, a game playing ludus lover (Meeks, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1998) may be motivated primarily by the opportunity to meet numerous sexual partners in a convenient digital environment.

Choice of measurement in the current study. As noted earlier, the study employs uses and gratifications as a theoretical perspective. Historically, uses and gratifications has focused on media-related motives and gratifications such as surveillance, information seeking, and escape, but the flexible and psychosocial nature of the theory allows the paradigm to evolve and include gratifications that are relationship-based (Ballard-Reisch, Rozzell, Heldman, & Kamerer, 2011; McQuail, Blumer, & Brown, 1972). Researchers Rubin and Windahl (1986) have found that people supplement or substitute for unfulfilling portions of their own environment by engaging mass media as a functional alternative, and that individual psychological and social antecedents influence media use choice. Using the Internet to aid in the creation of romantic relationships is a functional alternative to face-to-face interaction for different reasons for different users.

Even with the robustness of the known motivations for Internet use that were previously discussed, “History has shown that new media often create new gratifications and motivations, therefore the uses-and-gratification approach (U&G) would be a logical model for this line of study [the Internet]” (Angleman, 2000, p. 1). For example, several recent studies have used historical uses and gratification methods and found indicators of a third and distinct Internet
specific dimension: social gratification (Ballard-Reisch, Rozzell, Heldman, & Kamerer, 2011; Stafford & Stafford, 1998, 2001; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). While the results are preliminary, they assert the necessity of uses and gratifications research that is Internet specific, taking the social gratifications dimension into account.

The current study proposes to help further understand the motives for creating online relationships, specifically online romantic relationships by examining existing, intended, and/or perceived online romantic relationships. This study will focus on the antecedents for the gratifications sought (GS) portion (i.e., user motivations) of the uses and gratification model (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Rubin, 1994). The author acknowledges that the effects and consequences or gratifications obtained (GO) (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1982) from using the Internet to create romantic relationships are also critically important to the understanding of online romantic relationships, but GO will not be investigated in this current study.

Some researchers (Elliott, 1974; Lometti, Reeves, & Bybee, 1977; Swanson, 1977) have been critical of specific uses and gratifications studies that failed to take audience member perceptions of media content into consideration when exploring media choices. This study will investigate perceptions of online romantic relationships as a key psychosocial variable. Anderson (2005) suggested that future studies examining perceptions of online romantic relationships should include instruments that measure not only the perceptions of such relationships but also measure attitudes about romantic relationships more robustly using instruments such as the Relationship Beliefs Questionnaire (Romans & DeBord, 1996) or the Love Attitudes Scale (LAS) (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1998). Based on that call to action (Anderson, 2005), and for reasons previously discussed in the review of love styles research, this study will use the LAS (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1998) as part of the survey instrument.

Hypotheses and Research Questions
The research questions and hypotheses investigated in the study are given below. Predictions regarding the effects of the love styles on perceptions of and motives for seeking online romantic relationships are considered separately for each love style.

**Eros love style.** A core tenet of the eros love style is the inherent chemistry, passion, and emotional or sexual “spark” between partners. Eros lovers enjoy romantic excitement, compassion, and tend to have an idealistic view of love. Eros lovers believe in the idea of finding “the one” (Mazzarella, 2005). A previous study (Anderson, 2005) found that as participants’ “romantic belief” increased, their perceptions of online romantic relationships moved to being more negative, with the researcher concluding that the idea that finding love on the Internet is unconventional and therefore may not be attractive to people who believe that true serendipity is necessary to find real love and that the online dating world is likely too artificial and logical for eros lovers. However, Anderson (2005) remarked, this study did not use a measure with the full explanatory power of the Love Attitudes Scale (Hendrick and Hendrick, 1986) and relied on somewhat generic labels and phrases such as “love conquers all” in order to understand the “romantic belief” concept. Additionally, while eros lovers are concerned with emotional commitment and monogamy, they are also concerned with beauty and sexuality, which is more difficult to ascertain online.

Conversely, researchers (Campbell et al., 2002) have noted that eros lovers often have early or immediate attraction and desire sexual intimacy early in relationships. Additionally, eros lovers focus on physical attractiveness, often have an unattainable, ideal image of beauty (Levine et al., 2006), and tend to be sensitive to physical imperfections in their partners (Meeks et al., 1998). One of the main features of online dating is the ability to quickly search for profiles that meet your specific dating criteria (e.g., no children, Christian faith members, etc.). If online daters can quickly disregard profiles that do not meet their lifestyle requirements, then the same ability applies to their physical attraction criteria as well (e.g., blond hair, green eyes, curvy body type). With the seemingly unlimited choices of potential daters on many dating websites, as an online
dater scrolls through the numerous profiles that appear based on their search results, it is quick and easy to delete those profiles of not-as-attractive dating services members. This feature of online dating gives eros lovers more power and control in their dating choices. Thus, hypothesis one of this current study postulates that to the extent that persons have an eros love style, they perceive online romantic relationships more positively.

H1: To the extent that persons have an eros love style, they will perceive online romantic relationships more positively.

As mentioned previously, there has been very little formal research done on the motives for creating and forming cyber relationships, specifically romantic relationships. Furthermore, as of this date, there has been little or no research done where both motives for creating online relationships are observed, as well as the psychological love styles of the respondents. As noted earlier, past research suggests eros lovers are more extroverted (Worobey, 2001), open (Hahn & Blass, 1997) and often have early or immediate attraction and desire sexual intimacy early in relationships (Campbell, 2002). Whether these qualities would cause eros lovers to be motivated to meet new people, seek love, and/or seek sexual partners, is not clear. As there is no past research supporting such predictions, the relationship of the eros love style to motives was treated as a research question.

RQ1: Is the extent to which persons have an eros love style related to motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships?

**Ludus love style.** People with a ludus love style enjoy the ability to play the “dating game” with several partners at one time. Ludus lovers desire to gain control over a partner. This goal-oriented behavior is often created through manipulation, lying, cheating and deception (Campbell et al., 2002). Having the chance to communicate and date multiple people in one convenient, central location (and in secret) seems likely to appeal to a ludus lover. Therefore, hypothesis two predicts that persons who have a ludus love style, perceive online romantic relationships more positively.
H2: To the extent that persons have a ludus love style, they will perceive online romantic relationships more positively.

Ludus lovers are known for subscribing to the idea that ‘love is a game to be played’ and that he or she is merely ‘a player’ in the larger societal network (Meeks et al., 1998). Multiple sexual partners are acceptable to ludus lovers, and characteristics most closely associated with ludus love tend to be shown at the beginning stages of communication interaction with a particular relationship partner (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). This thesis suggests that when trying to create new romantic relationships, ludus lovers may turn to the Internet. Having a bevy of romantic partners to potentially choose from, in what can be considered a quick and superficial fashion, may be a very salient motivation for ludus lovers to choose the Internet as a device to foster relationship development. People who are not in love at the time are more likely to be ludus lovers (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1988), and those people are part of an aggregate group (e.g., single people, people otherwise not ‘in love’ but yet in a romantic relationship of some kind) that may turn to the Internet when searching for dating partners. Ludic love has a clear negative effect on relationship satisfaction and an indirect negative effect on relational satisfaction based on sexual satisfaction (Fricker & Moore, 2002), and as multiple partners are acceptable to ludus lovers, the lover may actually be in a relationship (or multiple) but still open to the possibility of communicating on the Internet in an attempt to create new relationships because their own current love relationships are not satisfactory. In this way, the following hypothesis predicts that the more likely someone is a ludus lover, the more likely the person will indicate “finding a sexual partner” as a reason for finding a romantic relationship online:

H2a: To the extent that persons have a ludus love style, they will be more likely to indicate “finding a sexual partner” as a motive for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships.

Sexual fidelity is not important and multiple partners are acceptable but obsessive or controlling behavior is not. Deception helps link ludus lovers with narcissism, because ludus
lovers show greater relational alternatives and less commitment to romantic partners (Campbell et al., 2002), perhaps resulting in the Internet being an attractive option for ludus lovers seeking anonymous, fast forums for romance with multiple people. Therefore, one might expect the ludus love style to be positively related to the motives for seeking a romantic relationship online. As there is no evidence to support this prediction, the relationship of the ludus love style to motives is also treated as a research question:

RQ2: Is the extent to which persons have a ludus love style related to motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships?

**Storge love style.** Following in a similar vein of logic, storge lovers enjoy getting to know each of their romantic partners as friends, based on shared interests and similarities. Storge love is a gradual and slow process that takes place over time; friends falling in love with friends are the most obvious form of genuine storge love. A main feature of online dating websites is the ability to engage in consistent, time-sensitive synchronous and asynchronous communication through a variety of means. By sharing information through email, instant messages, and text messages (all facilitated within the dating service website, thus, keeping true email addresses and phone numbers private), there are more opportunities to develop a safe and slow relationship based on commonalities. Therefore, hypothesis three postulates that to the extent that persons have a storge love style, they perceive online romantic relationships more positively.

H3: To the extent that persons have a storge love style, they will perceive online romantic relationships more positively.

Storge love is peaceful and slow (Levine et al., 2006), often seen in friend and family relationships. Intimate couples who do not “fall in love” until having a friendship for quite a while are often attracted by storge love (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992; Meeks, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1998). Storge lovers want companionship (Campbell, Foster, & Finkel, 2002) with other people who will share common interests and activities. The Internet may be an opportune forum to learn about and potentially meet others who are interested in spending time together.
One might expect the storge love style to be positively related to the motives for seeking a romantic relationship online. As there is no evidence to support this prediction, the relationship of the storge love style to motives is also treated as a research question:

RQ3: Is the extent to which persons have a storge love style related to motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships?

Pragma love style. Pragma lovers, known as “shopping list lovers” (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986), enjoy the ability to selectively choose their partners based on certain criteria. Pragma love is not intense or out of control, rather it is love based on common sense, reason, and practicality. Pragma lovers approach picking a partner in a very serious, carefully considered, and reasoned manner. For instance, a dater may have “no preference” when it comes to eye color, but wanting children in the future is “a must have.” While these criteria are likely still the same criteria that the dater would use in an offline love search, it is easier and quicker to find out specific, discerning information online than offline.

Daters no longer have to spend multiple dates going out with the same person in order to find out if that person has the interests, commonalities, attributes, and goals that the dater is looking for. A quick skim and scan of a profile search will yield numerous results, and if none of the profiles meet the standards for the dater’s “ideal match,” then the dater can simply search again based on other criteria. For instance, if there were not enough interesting matches in an initial search, a dater could widen the location (from 0-10 miles, to 10-30 miles, etc.), change the age range (from 25-30 to 25-31), or simply wait a day or so. New profiles are posted daily, and most dating services will even send their members a notification email to let the members know that new profiles have been posted which match their selection criteria. Therefore, hypothesis four postulates to the extent that persons have a pragma love style, they will perceive online romantic relationships more positively.

H4: To the extent that persons have a pragma love style, they will perceive online romantic relationships more positively related to the motives for
seeking a romantic relationship online.

Pragma lovers are known to be practical, rational, and logical in their approach to life, including decisions regarding love, sex, and romantic relationships. People with a pragmatic attitude toward love tend to view love as a useful relationship that makes the rest of life easier. Pragma lovers want compatibility and a relationship in which not only their desires are met but also their practical needs (Campbell et al., 2002). Pragma lovers are aware of their needs and wants and approach love with a “shopping list” mentality (Lee 1988, p. 47). A pragmatic lover would be able to list the qualities he or she is looking for in a mate, something that researchers Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) postulate would be highly helpful with online dating and matching. This research postulates that of the nine noted motives for participants choosing to use the Internet to create romantic relationships, easy to communicate will be a highly salient motive for use by pragma lovers. Factors that suggest that the Internet interface is easy and convenient to use will likely solicit agreement from pragma lovers, which leads to the next hypothesis:

H4a: To the extent that persons have a pragma love style, they will be more likely to indicate “easy to communicate” as a motive for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships.

Pragma lovers tend to believe in logic and reason, consider compatibility carefully, and think about future projects and realistic concerns and issues (Levine et al., 2006). Pragmatic lovers believe in a rational approach to love, that there are criteria for potential relational partners to meet, and that a reasoned approach is the sensible way to look for love (Meeks et al., 1998). Therefore, one might expect the pragma love style to be positively related to the motives for seeking a romantic relationship online. As there is no evidence to support this prediction, the relationship of the pragma love style to motives is also treated as a research question:

RQ4: Is the extent to which persons have a pragma love style related to motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships?

**Agape love style.** Agape lovers take pride in selfless, giving, relationships with those whom they love. Agape lovers are caregivers, often very supportive, compassionate, kind and
nurturing. This type of love usually develops with many interactions over a long time and the nature of the Internet dating medium provides many opportunities for interaction, the action of the online dating world is often very quick and, perhaps even consequently, crass. Agape love takes patience, and agape lovers may or may not prefer the rapid nature of the online world. In the online dating world, instant gratification is the name of the game. Therefore, because of the reasons mentioned above, hypothesis five is that to the extent that persons have an agape love style, they perceive online romantic relationships more negatively.

H5: To the extent that persons have an agape love style, they perceive online romantic relationships more negatively.

Agape love is considered altruistic and compassionate (Campbell et al., 2002), sacrificing, and giving (Meeks et al., 1998). Agape lovers tend to consider their love spiritual, offered without any selfishness or ulterior motive. Agape love is caring, gentle, tolerant, and non-demanding (Levine et al., 2006). Agape is considered the ultimate, highest form of love, although Lee (1997) believes that it may be more idealistic, rather than realistic. The Internet may be seen as a common, ordinary place, or even perhaps a dangerous or seedy gathering spot that may be less than respectable or admirable to a person seeking a higher calling, even throughout their personal search for love. One might expect the agape love style to be negatively related to the motives for seeking a romantic relationship online. As there is no evidence to support this prediction, the relationship of the agape love style to motives is also treated as a research question:

RQ5: Is the extent to which persons have an agape love style related to motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships?

**Mania love style.** People with mania love style tend to love obsessively with both the highs and the lows of a romantic relationship. When the relationship is going well, the person is elated and excited, and when the relationship is not going well, the mania lover is very unsure and depressed. When in love, mania lovers can experience love as an overwhelming experience, and
that experience can subsume their own personal identity. Mania lovers often have low self-esteem and can be impulsive, needy, and out of control. Mania lovers would likely perceive online romantic relationships as positive if they are getting attention in the form of emails or instant messages from other members. If, however, the mania lover is not getting attention online (or the type/amount they feel they need), or the mania lover reads into a time lapse in online communication, he or she would likely perceive online dating as negative. In addition, mania lovers tend to be paranoid; therefore, a mania lover may send an icebreaker such as, “Hey, I like your profile, would you like to go out?” with a reply from the pursued person responding, “Thanks, but I’ve decided to take a break for a while,” only to then see that person back on the site trying to make a match with other people, thus, resulting in lower self-esteem and an increasingly negative view of online dating for the mania lover. While is it is likely that there are some mania lovers who would perceive online romantic relationships as positive, ultimately the uncertainty of the ups and downs of the Internet and ambiguity of online communication, similar to some face to face situations, would prove to be too much for most mania lovers. Therefore, hypothesis six is that to the extent that persons have a mania love style, they perceive online romantic relationships more negatively.

H6: To the extent that persons have a mania love style, they will perceive online romantic relationships more negatively.

Mania lovers need reassurance consistently and have a lot of emotional distress, ambiguity, and jealousy in their relationships (Levine et al., 2006). Recent research found that regardless of quality in their romantic relationships, mania lovers are more apt to use negative maintenance behaviors; mania love was most predictive of jealousy induction, avoidance, spying, and destructive conflict (Goodboy & Myers, 2010). Mania lovers will vary between a lot of self disclosure (Arnold & Thompson, 1996) and possessive, dependent behavior (Meeks et al., 1998) perhaps being subsumed by the prospect of love online. Therefore, one might expect the mania love style to be negatively related to the motives for seeking a romantic relationship online. As
there is no evidence to support this prediction, the relationship of the mania love style to motives
is also treated as a research question:

**RQ6:** Is the extent to which persons have a mania love style related to motives
for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships?

Further representation of the concepts and variables is provided by the visual illustration
of the hypotheses and research questions shown in Figure 2. Additionally, a summary list is
specified below.
Figure 1: Model of the relationships between variables included in the hypotheses and research questions.
Summary of Hypothesis and Research Questions

**Eros love style.**

H1: To the extent that persons have an eros love style, they perceive online romantic relationships more positively.

RQ1: Is the extent to which persons have an eros love style related to motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships?

**Ludus love style.**

H2: To the extent that persons have a ludus love style, they perceive online romantic relationships more positively.

H2a: To the extent that persons have a ludus love style, they will be more likely to indicate “finding a sexual partner” as a motive for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships.

RQ2: Is the extent to which persons have a ludus love style related to other motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships?

**Storge love style.**

H3: To the extent that persons have a storge love style, they perceive online romantic relationships more positively.

RQ3: Is the extent to which persons have a storge love style related to motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships?

**Pragma love style.**

H4: To the extent that persons have a pragma love style, they perceive online romantic relationships more positively.

H4a: To the extent that persons have a pragma love style, they will be more likely to indicate “easy to communicate” as a motive for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships.

RQ4: Is the extent to which persons have a pragma love style related to other motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships?

**Agape love style.**
H5: To the extent that persons have an agape love style, they perceive online romantic relationships more negatively.

RQ5: Is the extent to which persons have an agape love style related to motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships?

Mania love style.

H6: To the extent that persons have a mania love style, they perceive online romantic relationships more negatively.

RQ6: Is the extent to which persons have a mania love style related to motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships?
Chapter III

Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design. Volunteer adult participants completed an online questionnaire, including a number of empirical surveys.

Participants

The sample consisted of 217 adult participants. Of those people who completed the survey, 57.6% were female, 41.9% were male, and .5% chose not to answer this question. The age range of the sample was 18-58, with the mean age of 25.13 ($SD=8.47$). The participants were asked to indicate their highest level of education: some college (47.9%) was the most frequent response. Other responses included: less than high school (0%), high school / GED (10.6%), 2-year college degree (5.5%), 4-year college degree (19.8%), master’s degree (12.9%), doctoral degree (2.8%), and other (.5%). In addition to education, participants were asked to self-select their socioeconomic status; most sample members were middle class (49.8%), but also some people self-identified as lower class (2.8%), lower middle class (22.1%), upper middle class (24.4%), and upper class (.9%).

Additionally, the sample was asked to indicate their sexual orientation, ethnic background, and relationship status. In term of sexual orientation, the sample self-selected heterosexual (84.3%) as the most frequent answer. Additional responses included: asexual (7.4%), bisexual (3.2%), homosexual (4.1%), other (.5%), and .5% of participants chose not to answer this question. In terms of ethnic background, participants indicated Caucasian (84.3%) most frequently, but other ethnic backgrounds were also indicated: African American (6.5%), American Indian (.5%), Asian (3.2%), bi-racial (1.4%), Latina/o (1.8%), multi-racial (1.4%), and other (.9%). In terms of relationship status, the participants reported being in a multitude of different arrangements including: single - not dating (25.3%), single - widowed (.5%), single - divorced (.9%), casual dating - dating one person (7.8%), casual dating - dating more than one person (6.0%), in a relationship (12.0%), in a serious relationship (24.0%), engaged (2.8%), in a
domestic partnership (1.4%), in a civil union (0%), in a legal marriage (18.9%), and .5% of participants chose not to answer this question.

Only adults over eighteen years of age were eligible to fill out this survey. The respondents did not have to be currently in, or have previously been in a romantic relationship in order to participate in the online survey. Specifically, the call for participants asked for people who “had previously used or had considered using the Internet to try and create a new romantic relationship.”

The participants were solicited from two different areas. The larger group of participants (132 people) was comprised of undergraduate college students enrolled in a 1200+ person introductory course at a large Midwestern university. Students in this course had the option to participate in research experiences to obtain ten percent/points of their grade throughout the course of the semester, including surveys, focus groups, interviews, and experiments.

Students were not forced to participate and had to complete informed consent procedures before choosing whether or not to participate in this survey. Conversely, “alternate research” may have been completed for the same amount of course credit by reading and reviewing academic journal articles. Each time a student participated in a research study or completed one alternate research assignment, he or she received two and one half points/percent toward the ten points/percent needed in the course. Two separate databases were contained within the overall survey. Both were hosted by the survey management website qualtrics.com and were not connected to each other. The first database was to be the larger of the two and contains the students’ responses to the survey questions, while the second—until it was deleted—contained the students’ identifying information in order to properly recognize students who then received course credit for participation.

Additionally, 85 survey participants were gathered from the social networking site Facebook.com, where billions of social cyber relationships are created, developed and maintained. Willing participants responded to the snowball sampling technique through calls for
participants that were posted on the researcher’s personal Facebook wall and on the wall of a “fan page” created by the researcher to help advertise the existence of the survey. The fan page allowed participants an easy access online bookmark in order to find the URL link to the survey and a quick and easy forum for participants to contact the researcher with any questions or concerns. Language in the call for participants asked Facebook users to consider: a) taking the survey, if willing and eligible, b) “liking” the fan page in order to draw further attention to the research study and the need for participants, and c), reposting the call for participants on their own Facebook wall and/or in private messages to others in their social network.

**Procedure**

Participants completed an online survey housed on *qualtrics.com*. This collection site was selected because the clear format was widely accessible for any participant with Internet access, was available twenty four hours a day, and could be taken from the privacy of the participants’ homes. The survey and procedure was approved by the Institutional Review Board where the data were collected.

**Measures**

The complete online survey for this study included three published measures: the Cyber Relationship Motives (CRM) Scale (Appendix A), the Perceptions of Online Romantic Relationships (Appendix B), and the Love Attitudes Scale (Appendix C). In addition to the three published measures, respondents were asked to provide background information regarding their experiences with romantic relationships, online romantic relationships, overall Internet usage in terms of time involvement (Appendix D), and demographic details such as sex and age (Appendix E).

**Cyber Relationship Motives (CRM) Scale.** Participants’ motives for using the Internet to create and develop cyber relationships were measured by the Cyber Relationship Motives (CRM) Scale (Wang & Chang, 2010). The instrument measures the nine specific motives for creating cyber relationships. Each of the nine motives is measured by 3 items (see Appendix A).
Responses were provided on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = “disagree strongly” to 5 = “agree strongly.” This study used a slightly altered prompt from the original scale (Wang & Chang, 2010) in order to more directly inquire about romantic relationships, rather than friendships. In random computer-generated order, the prompt asked participants to indicate their agreement with 27 statements that would finish the sentence “I have used/I have considered using the Internet to try to create a new romantic relationship [insert statement/item].” The three items measuring each motive included: “Because I can present the real me when I make friends online” (anonymity); “Because I rarely interact with others in real life” (social compensation); “Because making friends online is fun” (curiosity); “Because online friends are willing to listen to me” (emotional support); “Because I want to escape my real life temporarily” (away from the real world); “Because I want to fall in love with someone” (love); and “Because I am looking for sexual relationships” (sexual partners).

For all nine motives, Wang and Chang (2010) reported acceptable Cronbach alphas: anonymity (.77), the opportunity to meet new people (.66), easier communication (.83), curiosity (.85), emotional support (.78), social compensation (.84), away from the real world (.91), love (.94), and sexual partners (.98). Notably and of most interest in this current study is that the strongest alpha scores were for love (.94), and sexual partners (.98). Based on a factor analysis, Wang and Chang (2010) grouped the nine motives into three more general dimensions: 1) adventure, 2) escape to a virtual world, and 3) romance. In the current study the motives are analyzed as distinct.

**Perceptions of Online Romantic Relationships.** The Perceptions of Online Romantic Relationships instrument (Anderson, 2005) measured respondents’ perceptions of online romantic relationships (see Appendix B). The respondents’ scores were calculated as the average of the three items. This measure contains three items, which include: “Indicate the degree to which you think it is right or wrong for someone to be involved in an online romantic relationship;” “Indicate the degree to which you think it is positive or negative for someone to be involved in an
online romantic relationship;” and “Indicate the degree to which you think it is acceptable or unacceptable for someone to be intimately involved in an online romantic relationship.” Responses were provided on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = “very wrong/negative/unacceptable” to 7 = “very right/positive/acceptable.” Anderson’s results (2005) demonstrated high reliability for the construct. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was 0.87, and the mean for the scale was 3.03 (SD = 1.31) (Anderson, 2005).

**Love Attitudes Scale (LAS).** Hendrick and Hendrick (1986, 1988, 1990) further legitimized the study of love styles by treating each of the categories as *six separate variables* rather than a six part typology, supplementing the ability to run advanced statistical measurement with love styles data (Neto, 2007). The LAS has been tested and retested and is considered the best measure of love styles in current literature (e.g., Thompson & Borrello, 1992). Presently, the LAS has two forms available: the original 42 item measure (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986) and the 18 item short form (Hendrick, Hendrick, & Dicke, 1998).

Participants answered forty two items, in random computer-generated order, regarding personal perceptions and feelings toward love (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). The LAS has six subscales, each with seven items (see Appendix C). Each of the six love styles was treated as a different variable. This measure assessed the participants’ love style(s) as originally conceived by Lee (1973). Question responses were on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = “disagree strongly” to 5 = “agree strongly.” Examples of items are: “My partner and I were attracted to each other immediately after we first met” (eros love); “I enjoy playing the ‘game of love’ with my partner and a number of other partners” (ludus love); and “I would endure all things for the sake of my partner” (agape love) (Appendix C).

Studies have demonstrated high levels of reliability for the love styles measure. Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) revised the wording of items 5, 15, 16, 17, 19, 36 (Appendix C) between Study I and Study II. In Hendrick and Hendrick’s often cited research article, for Study I, the data reported are based on the original written version of the items; for Study II, the data reported are
based on the revised written items. In Study II, the Cronbach’s alphas for the six love styles were: storge (.69), agape (.83), mania (.72), pragma (.74), ludus (.74), and eros (.70) (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986).

**Romantic Relationships Background Experiences.** The fourth section of the survey asked the participants to indicate responses to a variety of questions regarding aspects of their online romantic relationship seeking behaviors, including participants’ time spent using online dating websites and using the Internet in general (see Appendix D). There were some items in Appendix D not contained in the hypotheses or research questions for this current study. This study measured those additional variables, where each item was considered a separate variable, for the purpose of describing the characteristics of the sample in more detail and for possible subsequent analysis. The more contexts provided about the respondents and their previous experiences with online romantic relationships will help clarify the participants’ demographics.

This fourth section of the survey (see Appendix D) had sixteen total questions, including nine questions with yes/no response choices. These nine questions included inquiries such as: “Have you ever been ‘in love’?;” “Have you ever been in a romantic relationship?;” “Are you currently in a romantic relationship?;” “Have you ever visited an online dating website;?” “Have you ever visited an online dating website for the purpose of online dating?;” “Have you ever been in an online romantic relationship?;” and “Are you currently in an online romantic relationship?” This section also included four open ended questions. These items included: “Including anything current, what is the total number of romantic relationships you have been in?;” and “Including anything currently, what is the total number of online romantic relationships you have been in?”

Lastly, this fourth section of the survey also included three questions where the participant could indicate time spent online by choosing their response from an electronic table provided in the survey. For example, respondents could choose from .5 hour, 1 hour, 1.5 hours, etc. in order to respond to the following three questions: “From the following list of options, please indicate how much time on an average day you spend on the Internet, on an online dating
website?;” “From the following list of options, please indicate how much time on an average day you spend on the Internet, for any type of social and/or entertainment purposes?;” and “From the following list of options, please indicate how much time on an average day you spend on the Internet?”

**Demographics.** Lastly, in order to better understand the sample used for this study, participants answered seven demographic questions such as age, sex, and ethnic background. Questions included one fill-in-the-blank inquiry, and six questions where respondents were asked to select from multiple choice options (see Appendix E). Questions included: “What is your sex?;” “How old are you, in years?;” and “What would you say is closest to your ethnic background?”
Chapter IV

Results

Reliability

The Cronbach’s coefficient alpha (reliability) found in this study for each of the three measures used are shown in Table 1. Overall, most Cronbach’s alphas were not acceptable when using the boundary of the alpha being greater than or equal to .80. The reliability was weaker for some of constructs but stronger for others. With the exception of storge love style (.66), all love style alphas were .70 or higher, with agape considered the most strongly endorsed (.77). Additionally, the measurement of perceptions of online romantic relationships had high reliability (.87). Furthermore, motives for using the Internet to create romantic relationships ranged from the weaker side of curiosity (.64) and easy to communicate (.68), to the more reliable motives of sexual relations (.81) and love (.87). Please refer to Table 1 for more information.

Means

The means and standard deviations found in this study for each of the three measures used are shown in Table 1. Specific love styles were more strongly endorsed by participants (i.e., the ones with higher means) while others were not seen as salient (i.e., the ones with lower means). On a scale from 1-5, eros (3.84, SD=.59) was the most strongly endorsed love style on average, followed by storge (3.65, SD=.56), agape (3.60, SD=.64), pragma (3.21, SD=.67), mania (2.95, SD=.72), and ludus (2.53, SD=.75). On a scale from 1-7, the average rating of participants’ perceptions of online romantic relationships was a 4.49 (SD=1.37). On a scale from 1-5, participants indicated agreement, on average, with certain motives more than others. The motives in order from most salient to least salient for this sample were: new people (3.16, SD=.98), easy to communicate (2.99, SD=.94), curiosity (2.89, SD=.90), anonymity (2.73, SD=1.03), emotional support (2.63, SD=.99), away from the real world (2.60, SD=1.02), love (2.59, SD=1.22), sexual partners (1.95, SD=1.03) and social compensation (1.87, SD=.99). Please refer to Table 1 for more information.
**Characteristics of the Sample**

In addition to using the three measures for this research study, information regarding romantic relationships background experiences was collected. Please see Table 2 for more information. On average, members of the sample had been in 4.29 romantic relationships ($SD=4.75$), and 1.22 online romantic relationships ($SD=8.68$). The average participant knew of 3.83 romantic relationships current or past where the people involved originally met online ($SD=14.53$). On average the participants reported knowing of 1.90 serious long term relationship or married relationships (current or past) where the people involved originally met online ($SD=3.12$).

Additional characteristics of the sample were as follows: 82.0% of participants reported having been “in love” at some point in their lives, 92.6% had been in a romantic relationship, and 60.8% were currently in a romantic relationship. Over two-fifths (43.3%) of participants indicated they had used the Internet for the purpose of trying to create a new romantic relationship. Almost half (45.6%) of the participants had visited an online dating website in the past, and further still, 32.7% had visited an online dating website for the purpose of creating a new romantic relationship. Moreover, 20.7% of the participants indicated they had been in an online romantic relationship, and 5.5% indicated that they were currently in one. The majority (75.6%) of the sample reported personally knowing someone who is or has been in a romantic relationship formed with a person they originally met online (see Table 2).

For additional context and further understanding of the participants and their perceptions, the item measuring perceptions of online romantic relationships that received the highest mean score ($4.56, SD=1.57$), was the third item of the measure: “Indicate the degree to which you think it is acceptable or unacceptable for someone to be intimately involved in an online romantic relationship.” Mean values were calculated from 1 = wrong/negative/unacceptable to 7 = right/positive/acceptable; by comparison, the mean of the first item of the perceptions measure was 4.55 ($SD=1.56$) and the mean of the second item was 4.40 ($SD=1.45$).
Table 1

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Cronbach’s Alphas for Love Styles, Perceptions of Online Romantic Relationships, and Cyber Relationship Motives*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Love styles</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eros</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storge</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agape</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragma</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mania</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludus</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceptions of online romantic relationships</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cyber relationship motives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New people</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy communication</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymity</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Away from the real world</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual partners</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social compensation</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* N = 217. Means for love styles and cyber relationship motives are on a 5-point scale where 5 = higher score on a love style, and greater agreement with a cyber-relationship motive. Means for perceptions of online romantic relationships are on a 7-point scale where 7 = more positive perception of online romantic relationships. α = Cronbach’s coefficient alpha.
Table 2

Responses to Questions Regarding Experience with Romantic Relationships (Frequency Distributions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th></th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been “in love”?</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been in a romantic relationship?</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently in a romantic relationship?</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used the Internet for the purpose of trying to create a new romantic relationship?</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited an online dating website?</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited an online dating website for the purpose of creating a new romantic relationship?</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been in an online romantic relationship?</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently in an online romantic relationship?</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 217. Due to some missing data, not all frequencies and percentages add up to 100. The symbol N/A* denotes that “Not Sure” was not an answer choice for that specific question.
Responses to the third prompt (i.e. are online romantic relationships unacceptable vs. acceptable?) yielded the following results: very acceptable (11.1%), acceptable (19.4%), somewhat acceptable (22.1%), neutral or unsure (24.0%), somewhat unacceptable (13.4%), unacceptable (5.5%), and very unacceptable (4.6%). Additional characteristics of the sample include the amount of time participants spent on the Internet. The average amount of time spent on online dating websites per day was .22 hours ($SD=.57$). On average, 2.42 hours per day were spent on the Internet for social and/or entertainment purposes ($SD=1.74$). Further, 3.63 hours on average were spent on the Internet overall per day ($SD=2.42$) (see Table 3).
Table 3

Average Hours Per Day Spent On the Internet (In General), for Social and/or Entertainment Purposes, and on Online Dating Websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average hours per day spent on online dating websites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday-Sunday</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>0-3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday-Friday</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>0-2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0-5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>0-8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average hours per day spent on the Internet, for social and/or entertainment purposes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday-Sunday</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>.14-8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday-Friday</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.10-8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0-12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>0-12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average hours per day spent on the Internet (in general)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday-Sunday</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>.57-11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday-Friday</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>.50-2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0-12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>0-12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* $N = 217$. 
Findings

To test the hypotheses and answer the research questions, zero-order correlation coefficients were calculated. The results are shown in Table 4.

**Eros love style.** H1 predicted a positive relationship between the extent to which a person has an eros love style and perceptions of online romantic relationships. As Table 4 indicates, H1 was not supported. RQ1 asked whether the extent to which persons have an eros love style is related to motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships. As shown in Table 4, the eros love style was related only to the social compensation motive and the direction of the relationship was negative.

**Ludus love style.** H2 predicted a positive relationship between the extent to which a person has a ludus love style and perceptions of online romantic relationships. As Table 4 indicates, H2 was not supported. A significant relationship in the negative direction was found. H2a predicted a positive relationship between the extent to which a person has a ludus love style and likelihood to indicate sexual partners as a motive for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships. As Table 4 indicates, H2a was supported. A significant relationship in a positive direction was found. RQ2 asked whether other motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships were related to the extent to which persons have a ludus love style. As shown in Table 4, the ludus love style was also positively related to the away from the real world motive and the anonymity motive.

**Storge love style.** H3 predicted a positive relationship between the extent to which a person has a storge love style and perceptions of online romantic relationships. As Table 4 indicates, H3 was not supported. RQ3 asked whether the extent to which persons have a storge love style is related to motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships. As shown in Table 4, the storge love style was related only to the social compensation motive and the sexual partners motive. The direction of the relationships was negative for both motives.
**Pragma love style.** H4 predicted a positive relationship between the extent to which a person has a pragma love style and perceptions of online romantic relationships. As Table 4 indicates, H4 was not supported. H4a predicted a positive relationship between the extent to which a person has a pragma love style and likelihood to indicate easy communication as a motive for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships. As Table 4 indicates, H4a was not supported. RQ4 asked whether other motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships were related to the extent to which persons have a pragma love style. As shown in Table 4, the pragma love style was not related to any motive for using the Internet to create romantic relationships.

**Agape love style.** H5 predicted a negative relationship between the extent to which a person has an agape love style and perceptions of online romantic relationships. As Table 4 indicates, H5 was not supported. RQ5 asked whether the extent to which persons have an agape love style is related to motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships. As shown in Table 4, the agape love style was not related to any motive for using the Internet to create romantic relationships.

**Mania love style.** H6 predicted a negative relationship between the extent to which a person has a mania love style and perceptions of online romantic relationships. As Table 4 indicates, H6 was not supported. RQ6 asked whether the extent to which persons have a mania love style is related to motives for using the Internet to seek romantic relationships. As shown in Table 4, a mania love style was related to anonymity, new people, curiosity, emotional support, away from the real world, and sexual partners motives. The directions of the relationships were all positive.
Table 4

Correlations among Love Styles and Cyber Relationship Motives and Perceptions of Online Romantic Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Love styles</th>
<th>Eros</th>
<th>Storge</th>
<th>Agape</th>
<th>Pragma</th>
<th>Mania</th>
<th>Ludus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New people</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy communication</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymity</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Away from the real world</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual partners</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.14*</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.28**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social compensation</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perceptions of online romantic relationships

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 217. Both love styles (1-6) and cyber relationships motives (1-9) are listed in rank order of highest means. For example, the eros love style (3.84) and the new people motive (3.16) had the highest means as indicated by the participants’ responses. * p < .05, ** p < .01.
Chapter V

Discussion

Summary and Implications

Researchers have long suggested that the Internet medium was blending (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009) and blurring (Morris & Ogan, 1996) the distinctions between traditional mass and interpersonal communication. This research study was conducted to investigate the influence of love styles (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1988; Lee, 1973) on motivations for using the Internet to seek new romantic relationships and on perceptions of online romantic relationships. This thesis was guided in an attempt to generate specific knowledge that could be used as an extension to the large body of research currently available on the uses and gratifications theoretical approach.

While the researcher acknowledges the importance of examining the entire uses and gratifications process, including the antecedents and effects of the media choice/interaction (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1982), this research was focused on the gratifications sought (GS) portion of this process, rather than the gratifications obtained (GO). With further research it may be deemed that GO is an obvious satisfactory result to GS (Papacharissi, 2009), but that has yet to be shown for the particular context examined in this project. This research was motivated by an interest in obtaining information about possible antecedents to specific online communication behavior and interactional processes.

Communication, love, sex, romantic relationships, and the Internet are all parts of a complex, interwoven social system and social reality. The interaction and behavior (including antecedents and consequences) is not uniform, simplistic or necessarily linear or mechanistic. Research guided by the sociopsychological uses and gratifications framework acknowledges a complex, independence among numerous variables (e.g., specifically audience activity and motivation) (Rubin, 2009), that simultaneously interact - a far cry from one variable or one-dimensional explanations for media use and effects that many (e.g., some researchers, politicians, policy groups, and members of the general public) would like to simplistically point too.
The uses and gratifications theory helps illuminate the proposition that there are many different versions of reality, and thus, many different pathways to the creation of new romantic relationships for the billions of people who experience non-uniform uses and effects of media. This theory, and further, the findings of this specific research, suggests that some portion of these multiple versions of reality may indeed be influenced or impacted by love styles. This thesis is offered as an initial attempt at starting a discussion about the lack of understanding of how these various factors interact and influence the decisions involved with using (or not using) the Internet when seeking new romantic relationships.

One main principle of the uses and gratifications theory is that motives for media use are impacted by numerous interconnected elements, including influence yielded by individual differences. Earlier, it was argued that one such individual difference, love styles, may be relevant to gratifications sought in seeking a romantic partner on the Internet. Accordingly, the current study asked whether individual differences in love styles would predict motives for seeking romantic relationships created through the Internet, and/or predict perceptions of such relationships. The data analysis confirmed numerous significant correlations among the variables. While the direction of causality cannot be stated with absolute certainty, the tenets of uses and gratifications theory help support the proposition that the relationships between a) love styles and motives or b) love styles and perceptions situates love styles as the independent variable (i.e., as an antecedent/precursor to the interaction), while online communicative behavior and interaction for the purpose of creating new romantic relationships – specifically, the motives for and the perceptions of - is the dependent variable (i.e., a consequence/effect).

**Cyber relationship motives summary.** When viewing the data overall, particular cyber relationship motives were more strongly endorsed by participants (i.e., the ones with higher means on a scale from 1-5) while other motives were not seen as salient (i.e., the ones with lower means on a scale from 1-5), regardless of the participants’ dominant love style. In general, all nine cyber relationship motives measured and observed in this study have been reported in earlier
research on motives for Internet use (see Chapter 2 for more details), and include motives found in both traditional interpersonal and mass communication research. In this study, cyber relationship motives with the highest saliency included: new people (3.16, SD=.98), easy to communicate (2.99, SD=.94), and curiosity (2.89, SD=.90). Cyber relationship motives with moderate saliency in this study included: anonymity (2.73, SD=1.03), emotional support (2.63, SD=.99), and away from the real world (2.60, SD=1.02). Based on the results of this study, cyber relationship motives with lower saliency included: love (2.59, SD=1.22), sexual partners (1.95, SD=1.03), and social compensation (1.87, SD=.99).

Overall, results of this current study indicate that some specific love styles (i.e., ludus and mania) are better predictors of specific cyber relationship motives and/or perceptions of online romantic relationships than other specific love styles (i.e., agape and pragma). While the results of this thesis do not show evidence that all six love styles (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1988) are powerful, strong predictors of cyber relationship motives and/or perceptions of online romantic relationships (with this specific sample, at this specific time), there are many factors that may have impacted the current findings. Discussion of possible interpretations and implications of the results and potential mitigating factors, including measurement issues and other limitations, are offered in this chapter.

Influence of specific love styles on cyber relationship motives. The following discussion is organized by love style, and the love styles are listed in rank order based on the overall mean responses indicated by the participants. On a scale from 1-5, eros (3.84, SD=.59) was the most strongly endorsed love style on average, followed by storge (3.65, SD=.56), agape (3.60, SD=.64), pragma (3.21, SD=.67), mania (2.95, SD=.72), and ludus (2.53, SD=.75).

Eros love style. The eros love style was significantly negatively related to one of the nine motives for using the Internet to create new romantic relationships: social compensation (see Table 4). Therefore, as people more intensely identify with the eros love style, the less likely they are to be driven by the social compensation motive.
The social compensation motive is attractive when a person has a need to use virtual systems to make up for or compensate for a lack of offline social systems and opportunities and locations to find and create relationships (i.e., “1-Because I rarely interact with others in real life, 2-Because I cannot find friends in other places, 3-Because I do not have other chances to make friends”). The negative correlation between the eros love style and social compensation motive ($r = -.19^{**}$) makes sense as research has reported eros lovers as being more likely to be exciting, loving, happy, and optimistic (Taraban & Hendrick, 1995), extraverted (Worobey, 2001), and to communicate in an open manner with many friends (Hahn & Blass, 1997). Therefore, considering the operationalization of the social compensation motive by Wang and Chang (2010), eros lovers would not be driven so much by a social compensation motive. Considering that the mean age of the sample was 25.13 ($SD=8.47$) and that the average time per day spent on the internet, for social and/or entertainment purposes was 2.42 hours, this group of participants were primarily young adults who spend lots of time on the internet socializing. Perhaps young people who are socially active face-to-face and online, have other opportunities to meet people (e.g. 60.8% of the participants were enrolled undergraduate students) who may become future romantic partners and are therefore less likely to be driven by the social compensation motive to use the Internet in the search for new romantic relationships.

**Storge love style.** The storge love style was the second (of six) most salient love style for the participants in the sample, and was significantly negatively related with two of the nine motives for using the Internet to create new romantic relationships: sexual partners and social compensation (see Table 4). Therefore, people with the storge love style are not so driven by the social compensation or the sexual partners motive.

Of the two significant relationships, the negative correlation between the storge love style and the social compensation motive ($r = -.16^*$) is of greater magnitude. This negative relationship makes sense as storge lovers tend to interact and have companionships based on common interests (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992; Meeks, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1998). Storge lovers,
therefore, would likely not strongly agree with statements that imply limited interaction with other people in face to face situations and closed social systems that may make the social compensation motive more appealing (i.e., “1-Because I rarely interact with others in real life, 2-Because I cannot find friends in other places, 3-Because I do not have other chances to make friends”). Storge lovers think it takes gradual time and slow progress to build real genuine love, which often grows out of friendship. Storge lovers believe that the best romantic partners are actually best friends, and that the most satisfying romantic relationships have evolved from long lasting, quality friendships.

Additionally, as storge lovers believe that love is really a deep friendship, not a mysterious attraction, and that the boundary between the end of a friendship and beginning of a romantic relationship is hard to define, the negative correlation between the storge love style and sexual partners motive (r = -.14*) seems logical. Storge love is enduring, has high commitment, stability, and psychological closeness but “passion and intense emotions [are] eschewed” (Levine, et al., 2006, p. 466). Storge lovers would likely want to become friends before becoming sexually intimate (Campbell, Foster, & Finkel, 2002), so the idea of using the Internet in an attempt to find new romantic relationships for the motive of sexual partners (i.e., “1-Because I am looking for a one-night stand, 2-Because I am looking for sexual relationships, and 3-Because I am looking for cyber-sex”) are not particularly appealing to a storge lover.

The correlations between storge love style and the other seven cyber relationship motives were all nonsignificant findings, and this outcome may have resulted, in part, due to measurement issues related to the specific weak reliability of the storge subscale (α = .63).

**Agape love style.** While the agape love style was the third (of six) most salient love style for the participants in the sample, the agape love style was not related to any of the nine motives for using the Internet to create romantic relationships (see Table 4). Based on the collected data from this specific sample, there was no relationship between the agape love style and any of the
cyber relationship motives, and therefore it is unknown why agape lovers would be driven or compelled to use the Internet when seeking new romantic relationships.

A possible explanation for the nonsignificant findings is attributed to the fact that all motives for using the Internet to create new romantic relationships have not been identified, perhaps including those motives that may be particularly salient to agape lovers. Agape love is considered altruistic, compassionate, selfless (Campbell, et al., 2002), sacrificing, and giving (Meeks, et al., 1998). Agape lovers tend to help romantic partners with difficult times, love them unconditionally, place their happiness before their own, sacrifice personal wishes for the partner’s wishes, share material possessions, and endure things and suffer rather than allow their partner to suffer. Agape lovers tend to consider their love spiritual, offered without any selfishness or ulterior motive.

While there are three items within the Emotional Support motive that may specifically appeal to agape lovers (i.e., 1-Because making friends online comforts my spirit, 2-Because online friends are willing to listen to me, and 3-Because my online friends help me calm my mind), the CRM scale does not have many items, or any motives, that specifically deal with the Internet’s – and online communication’s - ability to foster the loving and giving outwardly focused approach to romantic relationships that agape lovers tend to appreciate and implement. While the items in the emotional support motive do hold components of potential interest to an agape lover (i.e., concepts of comforting, listening, calming) those concepts are all written about in the sense that the new partner will help do those activities (inwardly focused – mentality of “I want to receive”), whereas in the opposite direction, the agape lover may want to be providing those activities and behaviors for their new romantic partner (outwardly focused – mentality of “I want to give”).

Pragma love style. While the pragma love style was the fourth (of six) most salient love style for the participants in the sample, the pragma love style was not significantly related to any of the nine motives for using the Internet to create romantic relationships (see Table 4). There
was no relationship between the pragma love style and any of the nine cyber relationship motives based on the collected data from this specific sample, and thus it is unknown why pragma lovers would be driven or compelled to use the Internet when seeking new romantic relationships.

This is a surprising finding due to previous research which has reported that pragma lovers are aware of their needs and wants and can articulate them (an important consideration for uses and gratifications theory) and approach love with a “shopping list” mentality (Lee, 1988, p. 47). A pragmatic lover would be able to list the qualities he or she is looking for in a mate, something that researchers Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) postulate would be highly helpful with online dating and matching, especially when people interact with media in purposeful, active ways (an important tenet of uses and gratifications theory).

A possible explanation for the nonsignificant findings is attributed to the fact that as for the agape love style discussed above, it is possible that the CRM did not include motives relevant to persons in this particular sample with a pragma love style. These might include the concept that pragma lovers tend to plan life carefully and consider the future potential of a possible romantic partner when making dating decisions, in particular. Therefore, a motive that may be termed something akin to “systematic searching and selection” could potentially include items that emphasize using a rational, logical approach to finding romantic relationships based on selecting partners who meet pre-formed, specific categories.Pragma lovers prefer others with similar backgrounds as themselves and consider lovers almost with a “vetting” type process to determine commonalities and resemblances (i.e., reflections on the pragma lover’s own family and personal career, whether or not the potential partner would be a good parent, and the compatibility of hereditary background in case of children). While there is one item within the Opportunity to Meet New People motive that may specifically appeal to pragma lovers (i.e., item #3 “Because I can find friends who share my interests”), the CRM scale does not have many items, or any overall motives, that specifically deal with the Internet’s – and online communication’s -
ability to foster the reasoned, traditional approach to romantic relationships that pragma lovers tend to appreciate and implement.

**Mania love style.** The mania love style was the fifth (of six) most salient love style for the participants in the sample, and was significantly positively related with six of the nine motives for using the Internet to create new romantic relationships: curiosity, emotional support, sexual partners, anonymity, away from the real world, and new people (see Table 4). Therefore, people with the mania love style are more likely to driven or compelled to use the Internet to seek out new romantic relationships by the curiosity, emotional support, sexual partners, anonymity, away from the real world, and new people motives.

First, regarding the positive correlation between the mania love style and the curiosity motive ($r=.24^{**}$), it is important to note that of all correlations measured in this entire study, this positive correlation demonstrates the second strongest relationship between variables. This robust relationship makes sense as mania lovers are enthusiastic about a new opportunity of possible interaction to have with a relationship partner (Goodboy & Myers, 2010) and can get so excited about being in love that sleeping becomes difficult (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1988). Therefore, perhaps the idea that using the Internet to create new relationships is fun, novel, and other people are having successful results is an attractive motive for ludus lovers. Additionally, information about online activity gathered in this survey may help illuminate the curiosity motive. Of the overall survey participants, approximately half (45.6%), reported visiting an online dating website whereas less people (43.3%) indicated using the Internet for the purpose of trying to create a new romantic relationship, and even fewer people (32.7%), indicated visiting an online dating website for the purpose of creating a new romantic relationship. This data may suggest that more people are curious about visiting actual online dating websites than using the Internet (in general, or specifically through online dating websites) for the purpose of trying to create a new romantic relationship.
Second, the connection between emotional support motive and mania love style ($r = 18**$) seems logical since mania lovers need a great deal of reassurance and communication with their partner (Levine et al., 2006). The ideas behind the emotional support motive (i.e., “1-Because making friends online comforts my spirit, 2-Because online friends are willing to listen to me, 3-Because my online friends help me calm my mind) may resonate well with mania lovers who tend to feel physically ill and emotionally upset—even suicidal— if there are relational issues, including the amount of attention paid (usually deemed as inadequate) to the mania lover.

Third, the motive of sexual partners ($r = 18*$) resonates well with mania love styles, perhaps due, in part, to the fact that people who identify with the mania love style often have off-line relationships problems (Goodboy & Myers, 2010; Meeks et al., 1998) which may have, in essence, helped create a situation where seeking for sexual partners online (for the specific purposes of one night stands, virtual sex, or sexual relationships) becomes the most attractive and, perhaps, seemingly last available option.

Fourth, the positive correlation between mania love style and the anonymity (McKenna & Bargh, 2000) motive ($r = 17*$) seems logical because mania love is filled with elation and depression (Campbell et al., 2002). This type of person loves very strongly, but also passionately worries about losing that love, resulting in not enjoying the love as much as he or she could. Therefore, there may be a greater need for emotional support (as seen through the emotional support motive), and further, the ability to have anonymity, specifically, being able to communicate with another adult without knowledge of personal identity in a space where the topics are unrestricted and the person can be themselves in unadulterated form, may be appealing to mania lovers.

Fifth, a connection between the away from the real world (Kaunchin, Chen & Ross, 2010; Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999) motive and mania love style ($r = 16*$) makes logical sense. Mania lovers have trouble focusing on other thing when they are in love, and conversely also find it difficult to remain calm and relaxed if they suspect infidelity (or frankly just too much time
spent with someone else) (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1988). Therefore, because mania lovers indicate loving more intensely than other people (Dion & Dion, 1975), perhaps mania lovers would enjoy escaping momentarily and forgetting their “real world” worries for a period of time.

Sixth, the opportunity to meet new people (Ebersole, 2000; Wolfradt & Doll, 2001) motive may be salient with mania lovers (r=.15*) due to their low self-esteem (Campbell et al., 2002) and need for ego bolstering. Therefore, the constant advancement and expansion of social networks, and potential increase in companions and friends to spend time and interests may attractive to mania lovers.

**Ludus love style.** The ludus love style was the sixth (of six) most salient love style for the participants in the sample, and was significantly positively related with three of the nine motives for using the Internet to create new romantic relationships: sexual partners, away from the real world, and anonymity (see Table 4). Therefore, people with the ludus love style are more likely to driven by the sexual partners, away from the real world, and anonymity motives when considering the use of the Internet to create a new romantic relationship.

Of the three significant relationships, the positive correlation between the ludus love style and the sexual partners motive (r= .28**) is of the greatest magnitude. It is important to note that of all correlations measured in this entire study, this positive correlation demonstrates the strongest relationship between variables. The strong positive correlation between the ludus love style and sexual partner motives seems logical as ludus lovers tend have less relational commitment and be open to dating multiple people at one time (Campbell et al., 2002; Levine et al., 2006). Since ludus lovers enjoying “playing the game of love” with numerous different partners, deal with love affairs relatively painlessly and efficiently, and desire to keep their romantic partners slightly unclear about the nature of their exact relationship, the sexual partners motive (i.e., “1-Because I am looking for a one-night stand, 2-Because I am looking for sexual relationships, 3-Because I am looking for cyber-sex) may be more appealing.
Second, the positive correlation between the ludus love style and the away from the real world motive ($r = .19^{**}$) is of a lesser, but still strong magnitude. The positive correlation between the away from the real world motive (Ebersole, 2000; Kaunchin, Chen & Ross, 2010; Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999) and the ludus love style makes sense as the away from the real world motive (i.e., “1-Because there are many annoyances and troubles in real life, 2-Because I want to escape my real life temporarily, 3-Because I want to forget my worries temporarily”) seems to coincide with attitudes that characterize the ludus love style. Characterizations include the mantra that “love is a game” that is not to be taken very seriously by the playful and flirtatious ludus lover (Worobey, 2001). Additionally, the ludus lover desires less relational closeness and wants to back away and escape when other relational partner becomes too dependent (Goodboy, & Booth-Butterfield, 2009).

Third, the positive correlation between the ludus love style and the anonymity motive ($r = .18^*$) is slightly smaller, but still rather strong in magnitude. The positive correlation with anonymity motives (McKenna & Bargh, 2000) seems logical as ludus lovers would likely enjoy escaping momentarily and forgetting their worries while taking advantage of the anonymity features of the Internet (i.e., being able to speak freely about anything to new people who do not know the person offline). Ludus lovers believe that secrets kept from their relationship partner will not harm the partner, and have had to keep two partners from becoming aware of each other’s existence because the ludus lover knows that the partners may get emotional if they were fully apprised of the situation (i.e., what the ludus lover “had done with” the other third person). Therefore, the ideas behind the anonymity motive (i.e., “1-Because I want to talk with someone who does not know who I am, 2-Because I can talk to online friends about anything, 3-Because I can present the real me when I make friends online”) seem especially appealing to the potentially secretive ludus lover (Taraban & Hendrick, 1995) who only wants to open up about their “sexual or relational truth” in a forum where they feel comfortable and protected. Perhaps the assumed
anonymity of the Internet may help provide a space that ludus lovers would be motivated to seek out.

**Special note on love and sexual partner motives.** Mania, ranked fifth, and ludus, ranked sixth, were overall the least salient love styles for this specific sample of people. However, in an interesting paradox, the two least salient love styles were also the exact same two love styles for which the highest numbers of motives have been correlated (i.e., mania with five motives and ludus with three motives). Additionally, the two relationships of the greatest magnitude detected in the entire study were both related to ludus and mania, i.e., ludus love style and the sexual partners motive ($r= .28**$), and mania love style and the curiosity motive ($r= .24**$).

While fewer people in this sample indicated high levels of agreement and identification with the mania and ludus love styles, the findings of this research are able to point to more motives of the ludus and mania lover than any other love style. It is curious, and worthy of increased research attention that love styles which may be seen as immature, perhaps even taboo ways of loving (i.e., ludus and mania), are also the love styles with the most known associated cyber relationship motives.

In another interesting paradox, the sexual partners ($\alpha= .81$) and love ($\alpha= .87$) motives have the highest levels of internal consistency of all nine motives in the study. However, the sexual partners motive helps to understand three love styles (i.e., a positive relationship for ludus and mania, and a negative relationship for storge), whereas the love motive did not help explain any of the six love styles. Considering the purpose of this study focused on the creation of new romantic relationships via the Internet, it is important to contemplate why the correlations for the love motive would all be non-significant, especially in comparison to the sexual partners motive. While the love motive was most reliable motive in the whole study, no significant relationships were detected. These results indicate that for this particular sample, the sexual partners motives (i.e., one-night stands, sexual relationships, cyber-sex) are more salient than love motives (i.e., soul mate searching, falling in love with someone, looking for sweet romance).
Perhaps this is because participants solicited for this study had to meet the criteria of “I have used/I have considered using the Internet to try to create a new romantic relationship,” and therefore the people who ultimately chose to partake in this survey were already under a “love mindset” when responding to survey questions. Therefore, perhaps these participants did not necessarily articulate “love” motives as defined by Wang and Chang (2010) with their three specific love items (i.e., soul mate searching, falling in love with someone, looking for sweet romance) because the participants were considering love to be the higher level, more important overall goal of what anyone taking the survey would actually be trying to accomplish (more abstract), while the survey questions related to motives were on a lower level that dealt more with viewing the Internet as a tool or channel with specific strategies and tactics (less abstract) (e.g., the interface for cyber relationships is easy to use) that can be advantageous for reaching the overall goal of “love.”

Additionally, it is important to interpret the results in context of the people the data were collected from, including their overall low level of online dating activity (e.g., the minority of participants, 20.7%, has actually been in an online romantic relationship). Therefore, the data collected is more representative of the general person and their motives and perceptions than people with a great deal of online romantic relationship experience. The general public’s view of romantic relationships created through the Internet breaks down into two main areas that may be seen as complimentary and sometime oppositional motivations - the motive of love “versus” the motive of sexual partners. While searching for “love” may be a more socially acceptable answer, the results of this study indicate numerous explanations about sexual partners motives but not about love motives. The data suggest that the correlations in this study now offer a deeper understanding of sexual motives which groups of people, based on their love styles, are most attracted to sexual reasons for using the Internet, as a specific media choice, to create new romantic relationship. It is more unclear at this point, what love styles may drive people to an
alternative behavioral outcome - that is - based on love motives, to be attracted to using the Internet, as a specific media choice, in order to create new romantic relationships.

While more research is needed in these areas and overarching conclusions cannot be drawn to measurement issues and other potential limitations, the results of this current study indicate that people believe that relationships created via the Internet are better able and equipped to fulfill motives based on sex rather than motives based on love.

Influence of love styles on perceptions of online romantic relationships. On a scale from 1-7, the average rating of participants’ perceptions of online romantic relationships was a 4.49 (SD=1.37). Overall, results do not indicate significant relationships between the participants’ love styles and their perceptions of online romantic relationships (see Table 4), with the exception of the ludus love style. Ludus love style has a strong, negative relationship (r= -.19**) with perceptions of online romantic relationships. This result indicates that the more participants identified with the ludus love style, the less right/positive/acceptable the participants perceived online romantic relationships. The large magnitude of the negative correlation (r = -.19**) is strong enough to be considered statistically significant at the p <.01 level. Possible explanations for this strong correlation are discussed in the section below.

Ludus lovers are known for having multiple partners and relational alternatives (Campbell et al., 2002), and as noted above, ludus lovers are driven to use the Internet to find romantic relationships based, in part, due to the 1) sexual partners motive (most significant correlation in the entire study, r=.28**), the 2) away from the real world motive, and the 3) anonymity motive. However, ludus lovers are also playful and flirtatious (Worobey, 2001), often desire less relational closeness (Goodboy & Booth-Butterfield, 2009), generally do not spend time in conversation talking about the state of the relationship or commitment and avoid discussing feelings or the relationship future (Hahn & Blass, 1997). Love is considered a game (Meeks et al., 1998) and should not be taken too seriously for ludus lovers.
Considering the previous research, one possible explanation for the strong, negative relationship between the ludus love style and perceptions of online romantic relationships is that ludus lovers view online romantic relationships as being too time consuming, requiring too much commitment, advocating too much self-revelation, and as requiring substantive answers dealing with too many “state of the relationship” questions such as “Looking for marriage/dating/casual sex?,” from potential partners – all of which a ludus lover may attempt to avoid (e.g., Hahn & Blass, 1997). Additionally, as jealously and strong attachment is discouraged by ludus lovers (Levine et al., 2006) seeking love online may open too many doors for the ludus lovers’ multiple current partners (if applicable) to find out about each other, and leave too many ways for previous lovers met online to remain active (even if only in the virtual sense) in the ludus lover’s life when the ludus lover has decided to quickly and quietly move on to a new romantic partner (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1988). For example, many online dating websites publically display the last time a member has logged into the website – information that a ludus lover may not want broadcasted to current and former relationship partners. Membership to paid websites may also be listed on the ludus lovers’ credit card statement which could present a problem if the online dating membership was used in attempt to commit infidelity. Further, while ludus lovers are more likely than other love styles to have multiple partners and commit infidelity (Goodboy & Myers, 2010), the ludus lover may prefer that these partners never know about or meet each other. The ability to remain secretive (Taraban & Hendrick, 1995) and meet with these partners in person may seem advantageous (e.g., having different partners in different locations that can be visited on business trips and conferences).

Additionally, the playful flirtation (Worobey, 2001) that ludus lovers use to obtain romantic partners may not be as satisfying, fulfilling or conveyed as easily through virtual means as compared to face-to-face methods. Becoming attractive and appealing online may be something that ludus lovers do not want to invest the time, money, or energy doing (e.g., it may seem like a great deal of effort to meet sexual partners) when visiting a physical sports bar,
martini lounge, dance club or other potential adult hangout may seem more instantly gratifying. It is important to note there are online dating websites that do cater to the people interested in one night stands, casual sexual “flings” and “hook ups,” and extramarital affairs (e.g., onenightstanddate.com, naughtymeetings.com, fling.com, affairsclub.com), including specific websites with more discreet titles and URLs (e.g., ashleymadison.com). However, ludus lovers (and other love styles) from this particular sample of people may not be aware of these specific types of online forums because of the overall low online dating activity and involvement of the participants in this study (e.g., 20.7% had been in an online romantic relationship).

Lastly, ludus lovers may have negative perceptions of online romantic relationships because they erroneously assumed that “online romantic relationships” start online, but also only stay online. For online romantic relationships that do, in fact, remain online and never transition to a face-to-face context or a hybrid of the two, there may be playful chatting and suggestive pictures and video, perhaps even virtual sex. However, sex in an online only relationship clearly stays online only. Physical one night stands are not possible if the relationship stays online only, which may not be as appealing to ludus lovers as compared to the chance to meet offline for “real sex.” Broadly speaking, the possibility of misinterpretation related to the definition of an “online romantic relationship” is a more general measurement issue that encompasses all six love styles, including the ludus love style, and is discussed in more detail below.

Beyond the specifics related to ludus love style mentioned above, one possible reason for the overall non-significant correlations between the love styles and perceptions of online romantic relationships is related to precision of measurement. The Perceptions of Online Romantic Relationships measure (Anderson, 2005), asks participants to “Indicate the degree to which you think it is right/positive/acceptable or wrong/negative/unacceptable for someone to be involved in an online romantic relationship” (in condensed form – see Appendix B for the full instrument). While this current study intended to measure perceptions of romantic relationships that a) start online and either b) stay online or c) transition to an offline state, the participants may have
misinterpreted the premise for the instrument. The participants clearly thought the three total items of the measure were internally consistent and thus the measure was reliable (i.e., as seen through the $\alpha = .87$). However, the measure may not have been completely valid as it was used in this study. For example, participants may have misinterpreted the overall measure to be referring to only romantic relationships that start online and a) stay online. Relationships that both a) start online and b) remain online indefinitely may be seen as less normative and for more specific purposes such as arrangements for virtual sex and pen pals than relationships that a) start online and c) transition to an offline environment. In order to lessen the possibility of this potential issue affecting future studies in this area, clearer directions and definitions that explain the specific conceptualization and operationalization of variables should be provided to participants (i.e. the researcher is asking about perceptions of romantic relationships that a) start online, and either b) stay online or c) eventually transition to an offline state).

Another possible reason for the mostly non-significant correlations between love styles and perceptions of online romantic relationships is suggested by some of the data in Table 2, specifically the lack of direct experience with seeking romantic relationships online. As discussed in the literature review, a central focus of the uses and gratifications theory is user activity, comprised of a) selection, b) attention, and c) use (Rubin et al., 2003). In this current sample, just under half (45.6%) of the survey participants had ever visited an online dating website or had used the Internet for the purpose of trying to create a new romantic relationship (43.3%). Approximately one third of the sample indicated having visited an online dating website for the purpose of creating a new romantic relationship (32.7%) and only one in five (20.7%) had been in an online romantic relationship. However, while direct experience was somewhat low, the majority of participants (75.6%) personally knew someone who is or has been in a romantic relationship formed with a person they originally met online.

Remarkably, notwithstanding the low levels of personal, direct involvement of using the Internet to seek new romantic relationships, the results of this study show that the percentage of
people who believe that online romantic relationships are acceptable (52.6%), neutral or unsure (24.0%), and unacceptable (23.5%) is a substantial positive increase over previous research and statistics from studies on perceptions (Anderson, 2005). For example, the average 30% of worldwide Internet users who thought the Internet was a good place to meet a boyfriend of girlfriend in 2010 (Hussain, 2010).

In summary, only one love style (i.e., ludus) was significantly related to perceptions of online romantic relationships (and was in a negative direction). Love styles, for the most part, may not have a significant effect on perceptions of online romantic relationships. However, due to measurement issues and limitations of this current study, overarching conclusions cannot be drawn. As this study was an initial attempt to understand dynamics of that relationship, the interaction between love styles and perceptions of online romantic relationships needs further exploration.

Limitations

While there were certain affordances of this study, there were also general limitations that should be noted. One potential limitation of this project is the specific research method, a cross sectional empirical survey that only allowed for a one-day-in-time snapshot of participant attitudes. Additionally, some may view the lack of qualitative data to triangulate the methods as a potential limitation. Another issue for some participants may have involved a potential bias to make the researcher happy, influence the research results in a specific way, or to deceive the researcher in an attempt to shield their privacy, especially in regards to questions or prompts of a sensitive nature (i.e., “I am looking for a one night stand”).

Lastly, a limitation of this project could be seen through the survey distribution method. A natural assumption is that the privacy provided by a home or laptop computer and Internet connection would allow people participating in online surveys to be more comfortable and honest when answering questions. However, the opposite may also be true in some cases as participants may be so comfortable that they drift away from the online survey to make dinner, talk on the
phone, or look at other websites. Naturally, a person may complete a survey packet in a classroom or other quiet face-to-face environment and still be distracted (e.g., by other students, by people walking down the hallway, cell phones ringing, personal cognitive activity), but the chances for distraction are likely greater in the users’ home or dorm room.

In addition to the general limitations discussed above, there is the possibility that other specific measurement issues may have influenced the results. More discussion on these issues is provided below.

**Specific measurement issues that possibly affected the study results.**

*Potential measurement issue: Reliability of instrument items.* There is the chance that some participants did not “correctly” interpret the items, at least not in the same way that the original researcher intended, which may help explain the large number of non-significant results in this current study. Based on the Cronbach’s alphas, the internal consistency among items measuring the same construct was low in particular instances, indicating weak reliability for some of the subscales used in this study (see Table 1). For example, using the boundary of the alpha being greater than or equal to .70, the reliability of the love styles measure, specifically the storage subscale, was weak ($\alpha = .63$). Additionally, the reliability of certain subscales of the cyber relationship motives scale, specifically new people motive ($\alpha = .66$), easy communication motive ($\alpha = .68$), and curiosity motive ($\alpha = .64$), were all poor. On a positive note, the third instrument – perceptions of online romantic relationships – measured with three total items, was the only complete instrument that had an acceptable level of internal consistency across participants ($\alpha = .87$).

*Potential measurement issue: Additional individual differences not accounted for.* As uses and gratifications theory asserts, there is a complex myriad of interdependent personal and psychological factors that simultaneously work together in the process that results in some effect of using particular media. As these media effects are not uniform, in this specific context of...
seeking new romantic relationships online, there other factors (e.g., the participants’ sex, age, relationship/marital status, sexual orientation, personality traits, religious beliefs, ethnic group membership, various current life situations, etc.) that may have possibly mitigated potential effects of a specific love style on a specific cyber relationship motive or on perceptions of online romantic relationships.

In trying to understand the non-significant findings of this current study, it is important to recall that researchers (e.g., Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; 1988; Levine et al., 2006) have found that different people seek and gain enjoyment from different love styles, and many of those differences are based on stages in the romantic relationship, sex, age, and culture. Additionally, the six “ideal” types of love aid with the comprehension of relationships, because “each love style is argued to represent an empirically manifested social style and underlying ideology for a particular person in a particular relationship [at a particular time]” (Levine et al., 2006, p. 466).

Because information about some individual differences was collected for enhanced demographic understanding of the sample population (e.g., sex, age, etc.), but not accounted for in the statistical correlations examining the relationship between a) love styles and motives and b) love styles and perceptions of online romantic relationships, there may be correlations, and thus, relationships, between the independent and dependent variables that were non-significant in this current study, but may actually be a significant relationship if that other variable was accounted for in the data analysis. These demographic data (i.e., sex, age, relationship status, sexual orientation, etc.), and other questions about the participants’ time spent online, experience with online dating websites, etc. can be used in future texts created as a result of this rich data set. For example, as these results are based on a general public’s view (considering that only 20.7% of participants had ever been in an online romantic relationship) of cyber relationship motives and perceptions of online romantic relationships, the results may vary if they were controlled for the participants’ previous experience with romantic relationships (see Table 2), and/or the participants’ average time spent with online dating websites in the past (see Table 3).
Additionally, there are other personality variables that were not collected, but perhaps should be collected in future studies of this topic due to the potential for these extraneous variables to play a mitigating role in the relationships between a) love styles and motives, and/or between b) love styles and perceptions of online romantic relationships. Research has shown links between certain personality variables and certain love styles, and that may hold true through the media uses and effects process, including the choice to be in engaged in activity (comprised of selection, attention, and use) with seeking new romantic relationships through the Internet. Guided by the tenets of uses and gratifications theory, the personality variables would be antecedents to the individual needs and motives for the person.

When examining correlations between motives and love styles that were deemed non-significant, the significance may change (in a positive or negative direction, and in magnitude), with the inclusion of additional personality variables (e.g., sensation seeking, social anxiety, loneliness). For example, these may include variables such as self disclosure as related to mania (Arnold & Thompson, 1996), self-silencing as related to mania, eros, ludus, and agape (Collins, Cramer, & Singleton-Jackson, 2005) and narcissism as related to ludus (Le, 2005), especially when further linked with the propensity to engage in deception (Campbell et al., 2002). Collecting and analyzing these additional variables may allow for more fleshing out of the influence of love styles on motives and perceptions, and thus, possibly further contribute to the overall understanding of this research area one small piece at a time.

This study included the investigation of love styles and perceptions, both which can be seen as individual differences, however, this study could have accounted for more individual variables in an attempt to further add nuances of understanding when considering the contribution of this study to the large body of research related to uses and gratification theory. Focusing the examination on two, and not more, individual differences can be seen a potential limitation, but also a potential positive in the idea that uses and gratifications is sometimes criticized for being overly concerned with the individual and individual differences (McQuail, 1979), and the fact
that this study represents a more general view of both love styles and perceptions as the participants’ level of interaction and activity with seeking romantic relationship online is somewhat low (e.g., only 20.7% had been in an online romantic relationship).

**Potential measurement issue: Reliability of the CRM scale considering limited history, college student item generation, and cultural differences.** Additionally, insignificant findings for particular motives may be somewhat attributable to the limited history of the Cyber Relationships Motive (CRM) scale (Wang & Chang, 2010). While the published article was the conclusion of four large empirical studies, it is important to note that the motives for using the Internet to create new relationships were only reported by college students. There may be differences in college students’ motives and the motives held by members of the general public for seeking relationships on the Internet (Wang & Chang, 2010). Within the relatively moderate-to-small total sample size (217 participants) of this current study, the specific population measured (132 college students at a large university in the Midwest, and 85 adult members of Facebook) may have affected the results. Furthermore, all four of Wang and Chang’s surveys were conducted in Taiwan. Cultural background may impact users’ motivations for creating online relationships, specifically those related to love and sexual partners. Thus, Wang and Chang’s scale (2010), may not account for all the different motives that people from different cultures may have for using the Internet in the pursuit of interpersonal relationships.

**Potential measurement issue: Inclusion of additional motives.** An additional explanation for the lack of significance between some of the motives and love styles overall (e.g., pragma and agape) is that the measurement instrument (Wang & Chang, 2010) does not account for all the possible motives that all people may have for choosing to use the Internet in an attempt to create a new romantic relationship. Wang and Chang (2010) offered nine specific motives for why people may choose to use in the Internet in their attempts to create a new romantic relationship. As online romantic relationships involve both interpersonal communication and media activity, it may be appropriate in future studies related to this topic of seeking romance
online to cast a wider net of possible motives that may be predictive of communicative activity, behavior, and interaction.

For example, future studies may have efforts to include not just some, but all, of the prominent motives seen in traditional interpersonal communication research as seen through the Interpersonal Communication Scale (ICM) from Rubin, Perse, and Barbato (1988) (i.e., pleasure, affection, inclusion, escape, relaxation, control), and all of the prominent motives seen in traditional media research as seen through the Television Viewing Motives Scale (TVMS) from Rubin (1983) (i.e., relaxation, companionship, habit, pass time, entertainment, social interaction, information, arousal, and escape). By starting with a larger pool of options and considering the motives as separate, distinct reasons for interaction, it may be easier to eliminate those motives which do not apply in this new context rather than take the chance of overlooking some potential key motive which had been identified in previous research. Further, it is paramount to push beyond Wang and Chang’s (2010) nine suggested motives and include other possible motives that have been reported in different uses and gratifications research which was Internet specific that may also apply in this particular context.

In addition to motives mentioned above from research on traditional media (i.e., television), motives have been reported in Internet specific research. Some of these Internet specific motives are also seen in traditional media (e.g. television, radio), while other motives have been identified specifically in the Internet context. Often reported Internet use motives include: *entertainment* (Ebersole, 2000; Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Perse & Ferguson; 2000, Peter, Valkenburg, & Schouten, 2005; Stafford & Stafford; 2001, Wolfradt & Doll, 2001) and *surveillance of the environment or information seeking* (Diddi & LaRose, 2006; Ebersole, 2000; Jackson & Lilleker, 2007; Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Park,
Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009; Perse & Ferguson, 2000; Sjoberg, 1999; Stafford & Stafford, 2001; Weaver Lariscy, Tinkham, & Sweetser, 2011; Wolfradt & Doll, 2001).

Other often noted motives that have been reported in Internet specific research that may be salient for people who use the Internet to seek out new romantic relationships are interpersonal or social utility, information, or interaction (Ebersole, 2000; Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; James, Wotring, & Forrest, 1995; Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009; Perlis, et al., 2002; Peter, Valkenburg, & Schouten, 2005; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010; Stafford & Stafford, 2001; Wolfradt & Doll, 2001). Specifically, this includes motives related to the personal involvement in the development of new relationships (Eighmey & McCord, 1998; Peter, Valkenburg, & Schouten, 2005; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010) through specific motives such as chatting with others (Sjoberg, 1999), and discussing various topics and subjects of common interest (Perlis et al., 2002).

Furthermore, other motives specific to Internet use that may show promise in relation to this research topic include: learning and cognitive reasons (James, Wotring, & Forrest, 1995; Perse & Ferguson, 2000; Stafford & Stafford, 2001), participation in a virtual community (Kaunchin, Chen & Ross, 2010), the ability to voice opinions in a supportive environment (Korenman & Wyatt, 1996), economic motivation and transactional security and privacy (Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999), excitement (Johnson and Kaye, 1998), companionship (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011), co-viewing (Haridakis and Hanson, 2009), affection (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010), convenience (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000), control (Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999) and the combined motive of habitual passing of time (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011).

Potential measurement issue: The altered instrument prompt used to measure cyber relationship motives. It is doubtful that any particular social scientific measurement tool would result in tremendous accuracy, but most especially a measure that has been adapted from its
original use in order to attempt to work for the focus of this study. This study used a slightly altered prompt from the original scale (Wang & Chang, 2010) in order to more directly inquire about romantic relationships by asking participants to indicate their agreement with several possible statements that would finish the sentence “I have used/I have considered using the Internet to try to create a new romantic relationship [insert statement/item].”

However, over 15 of the 28 sample factor items included the word ‘friends,’ perhaps creating confusion for the participants, or even more likely, simply not effectively measuring romance motivations. The CRM was created for the study of motives to use the Internet to create friendship, after all. Scale factor items clearly emphasized friendships, for example: “I can present the real me when I make friends online” (anonymity motive); “Because making friends online is fun” (curiosity motive); and “Because online friends are willing to listen to me” (emotional support motive).

Even people with love styles who typically emphasize common interests and friendship before more intimate exchanges (i.e., storge love style) and, therefore, normally may have found saliency in the motives presented by the CRM, ultimately may have been confused by the wording of the question prompt (with a romantic emphasis) in relation to the wording of the factor items (with a friendship emphasis). Future studies may help create more specific motives for this context and, thus, different factor items for new measurement scales. For example, the following statement may end up being typical of an item measuring the motives of someone with the storge love style: “I have used/I have considered using the Internet to try to create a new romantic relationship because…having the ability to search for someone with common interests is important to me.”

**Future Research Directions**

Overall, this research and the above considerations suggest a number of possible future research projects in this area to help further reduce questions surrounding the idea of venturing online to seek out new romantic relationships. The Internet serves as a meeting or focal point for
many online communities, and further exploration is necessary to more fully understand the converging dynamics at play. Due to the fact that different people seek different gratifications from the same media outlets and devices (Ballard-Reisch, Rozzell, Heldman, & Kamerer, 2011; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004), further research is necessary.

The researcher advocates at least three subsequent uses and gratifications studies that take the already noted limitations and potential measurement issues into consideration. First, the uses and gratifications of using the Internet (in general) to create romantic relationships must be investigated (e.g., flirting online, researching information about a new potential love interest, etc.). Second, the uses and gratifications of using online dating websites to create romantic relationships should be explored with projects that investigates niche (e.g., JDate) and general interest websites (e.g., Match.com) as part of the overall online dating website world. Third and most specifically, the uses and gratifications of using particular online dating websites (e.g., eHarmony.com, Match.com) or other social websites (e.g., Facebook) to create romantic relationships should be examined.

In addition to developing uses and gratification studies to flesh out motives for new Internet specific functions and applications, future research would benefit from further discussion of several psychosocial antecedents to gratifications sought. Motives for using the Internet to foster romance may be related to variables such as: Internet affinity, amount of time spent on the Internet in general, and on the Internet for social purposes (e.g., chat rooms, instant messages, and websites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter). Additionally, further work on the perceptions of online romantic relationships is needed, specifically with respect to potential effects of previous romantic relationship involvement (offline and online) by the participants themselves and online romantic relationships experienced by the participants’ family and friends.

**Conclusion**

From a uses and gratifications perspective, this research project investigated the effects of love styles on motives for using the Internet to create new romantic relationships as well as on
perceptions of online romantic relationships. Information about participants’ demographics, Internet use, and background experiences with romantic relationships was also collected in an effort to further characterize members of the sample. While this study offered a first attempt at answering questions about the interconnectedness of love styles, motives and perceptions, this thesis unearthed a more complex mystery that needs investigation. Future research in this line of inquiry has the power to make a positive impact on understanding of specific Internet usage, online dating services/functions, and most importantly, on the real people who use or may consider using the Internet in the search for romantic relationships.
Appendix A

Cyber Relationship Motives Scale

Wang and Chang (2010)

*Note: When the actual questionnaire was hosted on the qualtrics.com online survey website, the order of items was randomized separately for each participant.

Participant Directions:
- Listed below are several statements that reflect different thoughts about using the Internet to create a new romantic relationship. For each statement, click the corresponding radio button to indicate how much you agree or disagree with that statement.
- The statements may or may not describe you; there are no right or wrong answers.
  - If you have used the Internet to create a new romantic relationship(s), answer the following questions with your most recent experience in mind.
  - If you have never used the Internet to create a new romantic relationship(s), but have considered doing so, answer the following questions with your most recent considerations in mind.
- Please respond to the following prompt:
  - “I have used/ I have considered using the Internet to create a new romantic relationship”…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Neutral or Unsure</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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**Adventure**

**Anonymity**

1) Because I want to talk with someone who does not know who I am
2) Because I can talk to online friends about anything
3) Because I can present the real me when I make friends online

**Opportunity to meet new people**

4) Because I can expand my social network
5) Because I can find companions with whom to spend time
6) Because I can find friends who share my interests
Easy to communicate
7) Because making friends online is easy
8) Because making friends online is convenient
9) Because the interface for cyber relationship is easy to use

Curiosity
10) My friends use the Internet to make friends, so I want to try it
11) Because making friends online is new for me
12) Because making friends online is fun

Emotional support
13) Because making friends online comforts my spirit
14) Because online friends are willing to listen to me
15) Because my online friends help me calm my mind

Escape to a virtual world

Social compensation
16) Because I rarely interact with others in real life
17) Because I cannot find friends in other places
18) Because I do not have other chances to make friends

Away from the real world
19) Because there are many annoyances and troubles in real life
20) Because I want to escape my real life temporarily
21) Because I want to forget my worries temporarily

Finding romance

Love
22) Because I am looking for my soul mate
23) Because I want to fall in love with someone
24) Because I am looking for sweet romance

Sexual partners
25) Because I am looking for a one-night stand
26) Because I am looking for sexual relationships
27) Because I am looking for cyber-sex
Participant Directions:

- Listed below are several statements that reflect different thoughts about online romantic relationships. For each statement, click the corresponding radio button to indicate how much you agree or disagree with that statement.

1) Indicate the degree to which you think it is **right or wrong** for someone to be involved in an online romantic relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Wrong</th>
<th>Wrong</th>
<th>Somewhat Wrong</th>
<th>Neutral or unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat Right</th>
<th>Right</th>
<th>Very Right</th>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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2) Indicate the degree to which you think it is **positive or negative** for someone to be involved in an online romantic relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Negative</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Somewhat Negative</th>
<th>Neutral or unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat Positive</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Very Positive</th>
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3) Indicate the degree to which you think it is **acceptable or unacceptable** for someone to be intimately involved in an online romantic relationship.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Very Unacceptable</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Somewhat Unacceptable</th>
<th>Neutral or unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat Acceptable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Very Acceptable</th>
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Appendix C

Love Attitudes Scale

Hendrick and Hendrick (1986)

*Note: When the actual questionnaire was hosted on the qualtrics.com online survey website, the order of items was randomized separately for each participant.

Participant Directions:
- Listed below are several statements that reflect different thoughts about love. For each statement, click the corresponding radio button to indicate how much you agree or disagree with that statement.
- The statements may or may not describe you; there are no right or wrong answers.
- Whenever possible, answer the questions with a specific romantic partner in mind.
  - If you are currently dating someone, answer the questions with that romantic partner in mind.
  - If you are not currently dating someone, answer the questions with your most recent romantic partner in mind.
  - If you have not been in a romantic relationship, answer in terms of what you think your responses would be most likely if you were.

Specify the degree to which you agree with each statement by indicating a number from 1 (disagree strongly) to 5 (agree strongly).

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<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>Disagree or disagree somewhat</th>
<th>Neutral or unsure</th>
<th>Agree or agree somewhat</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
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Eros

1. My lover and I were attracted to each other immediately after we first met.
2. My lover and I have the right physical "chemistry" between us.
3. Our lovemaking is very intense and satisfying.
4. I feel that my lover and I were meant for each other.
5. My lover and I became emotionally involved rather quickly.
6. My lover and I really understand each other.
7. My lover fits my ideal standards of physical beauty/handsomeness.

Ludus

8. I try to keep my lover a little uncertain about my commitment to him/her.
I believe that what my lover doesn't know about me won't hurt him/her.

I have sometimes had to keep two of my lovers from finding out about each other.

I can get over love affairs pretty easily and quickly.

My lover would get upset if he/she knew of some of the things I've done with other people.

When my lover gets too dependent on me, I want to back off a little.

I enjoy playing the "game of love" with a number of different partners.

It is hard to say exactly where friendship ends and love begins.

Genuine love first requires caring for a while.

I expect to always be friends with the one I love.

The best kind of love grows out of a long friendship.

Our friendship merged gradually into love over time.

Love is really a deep friendship, not a mysterious, mystical emotion.

My most satisfying love relationships have developed from good friendships.

I consider what a person is going to become in life before I commit myself to him/her.

I try to plan my life carefully before choosing a lover.

It is best to love someone with a similar background.

A main consideration in choosing a lover is how he/she reflects on my family.

An important factor in choosing a partner is whether or not he/she will be a good parent.

One consideration in choosing a partner is how he/she will reflect on my career.

Before getting very involved with anyone, I try to figure out how compatible his/her hereditary background is with mine in case we ever have children.

When things aren't right with my lover and me, my stomach gets upset.

When my love affairs break up, I get so depressed that I have even thought of suicide.

Sometimes I get so excited about being in love that I can't sleep.

When my lover doesn't pay attention to me, I feel sick all over.

When I am in love, I have trouble concentrating on anything else.

I cannot relax if I suspect that my lover is with someone else.

If my lover ignores me for a while, I sometimes do stupid things to get his/her attention back.

I try to always help my lover through difficult times.

I would rather suffer myself than let my lover suffer.

I cannot be happy unless I place my lover's happiness before my own.

I am usually willing to sacrifice my own wishes to let my lover achieve his/hers.

Whatever I own is my lover's to use as he/she chooses.

When my lover gets angry with me, I still love him/her fully and unconditionally.

I would endure all things for the sake of my lover.
Appendix D

Romantic Relationships Background Experiences

Participant Directions: Please answer the following questions about yourself at this point in time.

1) Have you ever been “in love”?  
   _____Yes  
   _____No  
   _____Not sure

2) Have you ever been in a romantic relationship?  
   _____Yes  
   _____No  
   _____Not sure

3) Are you currently in a romantic relationship?  
   _____Yes  
   _____No  
   _____Not sure

4) Including anything current, what is the total number of romantic relationships you have been in?  
   _____Number

5) Have you ever used the Internet for the purpose of trying to create a new romantic relationship?  
   _____Yes  
   _____No

6) Have you ever visited an online dating website?  
   _____Yes  
   _____No

7) Have you ever visited an online dating website for the purpose of creating a new romantic relationship?  
   _____Yes  
   _____No

8) Have you ever been in an online romantic relationship?  
   _____Yes  
   _____No  
   _____Not sure
9) Are you currently in an online romantic relationship?
   ______ Yes
   ______ No
   ______ Not sure

10) Including anything currently, what is the total number of online romantic relationships you have been in?
    ______ Number

11) Do you personally know someone who is or has been in a romantic relationship formed with a person they originally met online?
    ______ Yes
    ______ No

12) How many current and past romantic relationships do you personally know of where the people involved originally met online?
    ______ Total Number

13) How many serious romantic (for example: long term relationship or married) current and past relationships do you personally know of where the people involved originally met online?
    ______ Total Number

14) From the following list of options, please indicate how much time on an average day you spend on an online dating website.

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15) From the following list of options, please indicate how much time on an average day you spend on the Internet, for any type of social and/or entertainment purpose.

- Using the Internet for social purposes includes, among others, utilizing email messages, chat rooms, bulletin boards, instant messages, blogs, and websites such as skype.com, facebook.com, myspace.com, and twitter.com.
- Count only your time spent using the Internet for social purposes and/or entertainment (not for work or education purposes, etc.).

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*Note: Some questions within this measure will be used for subsequent analysis.*
Participant Directions: Please answer the following questions about yourself at this present time.

1) What is your sex?
   _____ Female
   _____ Male
   _____ Other (________________________)

2) How old are you, in years? __________

3) What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   _____ Less than High School
   _____ High School / GED
   _____ Some College
   _____ 2-year College Degree
   _____ 4-year College Degree
   _____ Master’s Degree
   _____ Doctoral Degree
   _____ Professional Degree (JD, MD)
   _____ Other (________________________)

4) What would you say is closest to your socio-economic status?
   _____ Lower Class
   _____ Lower Middle Class
   _____ Middle Class
   _____ Upper Middle Class
   _____ Upper Class

5) What would you say is closest to your sexual orientation?
   _____ Asexual
   _____ Bisexual
   _____ Heterosexual
   _____ Homosexual
   _____ Other (________________________)
6) What would you say is closest to your ethnic background?
   _____African American
   _____American Indian
   _____Asian
   _____Bi-racial
   _____Caucasian
   _____Latina/o
   _____Multi-racial
   _____Other (________________________)

7) What would you say is closest to your relationship status?
   _____Single - Not Dating
   _____Single - Widowed
   _____Single - Divorced
   _____Casual Dating
   _____In a Relationship
   _____In a Serious Relationship
   _____Engaged
   _____In a Domestic Partnership
   _____In a Civil Union
   _____In a Legal Marriage
   _____Other (________________________)

Note: Some questions within this measure will be used for subsequent analysis.
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