

Abilene Christian University

Graduate School

APA Thesis Sample Pages

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ABSTRACT

The contents of this paper are taken directly from the Purdue Online Writing Lab. The text is quoted exactly from the APA style paper located on that website (Purdue University, 2011). Changes have been made in inserting headings, tables, and figures, and in adding a signature page, dedication, acknowledgements, table of contents, list of tables, and list of figures.

This paper explores four published articles that report on results from research conducted on online (Internet) and offline (non-Internet) relationships and their relationship to computer-mediated communication (CMC). The articles, however, vary in their definitions and uses of CMC. Butler and Kraut (2002) suggest that face-to-face (FtF) interactions are more effective than CMC, defined and used as “email,” in creating feelings of closeness or intimacy. Other articles define CMC differently and, therefore, offer different results. This paper examines Cummings, Butler, and Kraut’s (2002) research in relation to three other research articles to suggest that all forms of CMC should be studied in order to fully understand how CMC influences online and offline relationships.

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Varying Definitions of Online Communication and
Their Effects on Relationship Research

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School

Abilene Christian University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

Communication

By

First Name Last Name

July 2015

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Optional dedication

To Bob,
Thanks for your support

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the members of my thesis committee, my advisor, and the Purdue Online Writing Lab for their assistance and dedication to helping me complete these Sample Pages.

Chapter titles and first-level headings align.

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Roman numerals for chapter numbers.

Appendix titles included with headline-style capitalization.

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Table titles are capitalized.

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numeral page number.
Begin counting with
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Only first word of figure title is capitalized.

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CHAPTER I

SAMPLE THESIS PAGES

Level-1 headings are bold and centered.

Introduction

Numerous studies have been conducted on various facets of Internet relationships, focusing on the levels of intimacy, closeness, different communication modalities, and the frequency of use of computer-mediated communication (CMC). However, contradictory results are suggested within this research mostly because only certain aspects of CMC are investigated, for example, email only. Cummings, Butler, and Kraut (2002) suggest that FtF interactions are more effective than CMC (read: email) in creating feelings of closeness or intimacy, while other studies suggest the opposite. In order to understand how both online (Internet) and offline (non-Internet) relationships are affected by CMC, all forms of CMC should be studied. This paper examines Cummings et al.'s research against other CMC research to propose that additional research be conducted to better understand how online communication affects relationships.

Literature Review

In Cummings et al.'s (2002) summary article reviewing three empirical studies on online social relationships, it was found that CMC, especially email, was less effective than FtF contact in creating and maintaining close social relationships. Two of the three reviewed studies focusing on communication in non-Internet and Internet relationships mediated by FtF, phone, or email modalities found that the frequency of each modality's use was significantly linked to the strength of the particular relationship (Cummings et

al., 2002). The strength of the relationship was predicted best by FtF and phone communication, as participants rated email as an inferior means of maintaining personal relationships as compared to FtF and phone contacts (Cummings et al., 2002).

Cummings et al. (2002) reviewed an additional study conducted in 1999 by the HomeNet project. In this project, Kraut, Mukhopadhyay, Szczypula, Kiesler, and Scherlis (1999) compared the value of using CMC and non-CMC to maintain relationships with partners. They found that participants corresponded less frequently with their Internet partner (5.2 times per month) than with their non-Internet partner (7.2 times per month) (as cited in Cummings et al., 2002). This difference does not seem significant, as it is only two times less per month. However, in additional self-report surveys, participants responded feeling more distant, or less intimate, towards their Internet partner than their non-Internet partner. This finding may be attributed to participants' beliefs that email is an inferior mode of personal relationship communication. Table 1 bears absolutely no relation to the topic of this thesis at all.

Table 1

Dogs Scoring Above Average on Intelligence by Breed and Gender

Breed	Male	Female	%
Dachshund	123	234	17.6
Terrier	456	567	31.1
Siberian Husky*	789	897	51.3
Totals ($n = 3060$)	1368	1692	

Note. Average score = 150. No animals were harmed during testing.

*Three huskies (one male, two female) escaped before testing was completed and are therefore not included in the table.

Place tables and figures at top or bottom of page when possible. Never interrupt a paragraph with a table or figure.

CHAPTER II

MORE SAMPLES OF APA STYLE

Intimacy is necessary in the creation and maintenance of relationships, as it is defined as the sharing of a person's innermost being with another person, i.e., self-disclosure (Hu, Wood, Smith, & Westbrook, 2004). Relationships are facilitated by the reciprocal self-disclosing between partners, regardless of non-CMC or CMC. Cummings et al.'s (2002) reviewed results contradict other studies that research the connection between intimacy and relationships through CMC.

Instant Messaging

Hu et al. (2004) studied the relationship between the frequency of Instant Messenger (IM) use and the degree of perceived intimacy among friends. The use of IM instead of email as a CMC modality was studied because IM supports a non-professional environment favoring intimate exchanges (Hu et al., 2004). Their results suggest that a positive relationship exists between the frequency of IM use and intimacy, demonstrating that participants feel closer to their Internet partner as time progresses through this CMC modality.

Shared Secrets

Level-2 headings are flush left and bold.

Similarly, Underwood and Findlay (2004) studied the effect of Internet relationships on primary, specifically non-Internet relationships and the perceived intimacy of both. In this study, self-disclosure, or intimacy, was measured in terms of shared secrets through the discussion of personal problems. Participants reported a

significantly higher level of self-disclosure in their Internet relationship as compared to their primary relationship. In contrast, the participants' primary relationships were reported as highly self-disclosed in the past, but the current level of disclosure was perceived to be lower (Underwood & Findlay, 2004). This result suggests participants turned to the Internet in order to fulfill the need for intimacy in their lives.

Non-Verbal Cues and Intimacy

In further support of this finding, Tidwell and Walther (2002) hypothesized CMC participants employ deeper self-disclosures than FtF participants in order to overcome the limitations of CMC, e.g., the reliance on nonverbal cues. It was found that CMC partners engaged in more frequent intimate questions and disclosures than FtF partners in order to overcome the barriers of CMC. In their 2002 study, Tidwell and Walther measured the perception of a relationship's intimacy by the partner of each participant in both the CMC and FtF conditions. The researchers found that the participants' partners stated their CMC partner was more effective in employing more intimate exchanges than their FtF partner, and both participants and their partners rated their CMC relationship as more intimate than their FtF relationship. Figure 1 bears no relation at all to the topic, but it is a good example.

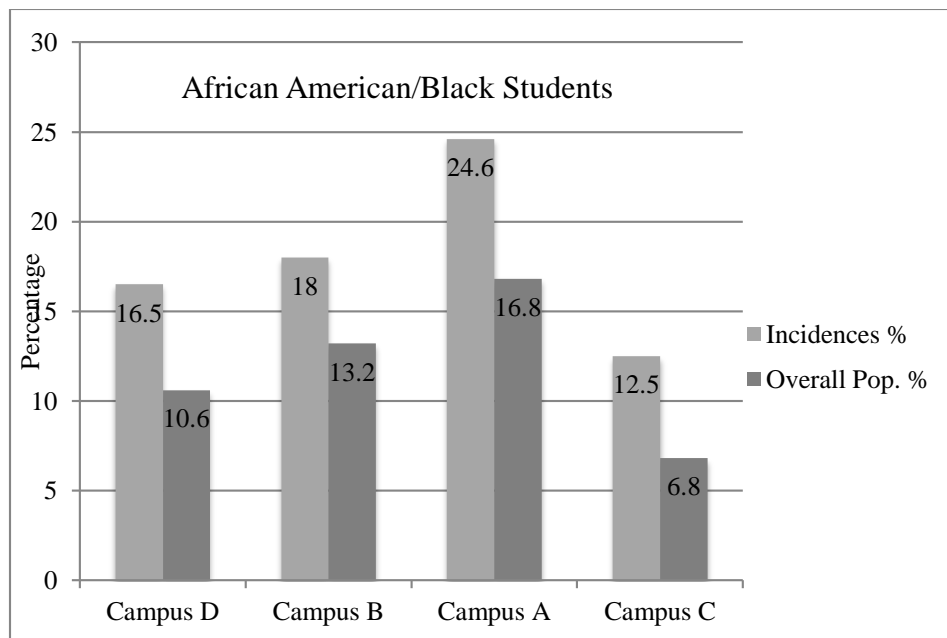


Figure 1. Disproportionality of population to discipline incidences. From “Disproportionality of Discipline within Middle School Special Education in a West Central Texas School District” by Leticia Cisneros, 2015, unpublished master’s thesis submitted to Abilene Christian University.

Level-3 headings are bold, sentence style, indented 1/2 inch, ending with a period.

Opportunities for self-expression. In 2002, Cummings et al. stated that the evidence from their research conflicted with other data examining the effectiveness of online social relationships. This statement is supported by the aforementioned discussion of other research. There may be a few possible theoretical explanations for these discrepancies. First, one reviewed study by Cummings et al. (2002) examined only email correspondence for their CMC modality. Therefore, the study is limited to only one mode of communication among other alternatives, e.g., IM as studied by Hu et al. (2004). Because of its many personalized features, IM provides more personal CMC. For example, it is in real time without delay, voice-chat and video features are available for many IM programs, and text boxes can be personalized with the user’s picture, favorite colors and text, and a wide variety of emoticons, e.g., :). These options allow for both an

increase in self-expression and the ability to overcompensate for the barriers of CMC through customizable features, as stated in Tidwell and Walther (2002). Self-disclosure and intimacy may result from IM's individualized features, which are not as personalized in email correspondence.

Personal self-disclosure. In addition to the limitations of email, Cummings et al. (2002) reviewed studies that focused on international bank employees and college students. It is possible the participants' CMC through email was used primarily for business, professional, and school matters and not for relationship creation or maintenance. In this case, personal self-disclosure and intimacy levels are expected to be lower for non-relationship interactions, as this communication is primarily between boss and employee or student and professor. Intimacy is not required, or even desired, for these professional relationships.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS

Instead of professional correspondence, however, Cummings et al.'s (2002) review of the HomeNet project focused on already established relationships and CMC's effect on relationship maintenance. The HomeNet researchers' sole dependence on email communication as CMC may have contributed to the lower levels of intimacy and closeness among Internet relationships as compared to non-Internet relationships (as cited in Cummings et al., 2002). The barriers of non-personal communication in email could be a factor in this project, and this could lead to less intimacy among these Internet partners. If alternate modalities of CMC were studied in both already established and professional relationships, perhaps these results would have resembled those of the previously mentioned research.

In order to gain a complete understanding of CMC's true effect on both online and offline relationships, it is necessary to conduct a study that examines all aspects of CMC. This includes, but is not limited to, email, IM, voice-chat, video-chat, online journals and diaries, online social groups with message boards, and chat rooms. The effects on relationships of each modality may be different, and this is demonstrated by the discrepancies in intimacy between email and IM correspondence. As each mode of communication becomes more prevalent in individuals' lives, it is important to examine the impact of all modes of CMC on online and offline relationship formation, maintenance, and even termination.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval

The first item in the appendices should be a copy of your IRB approval letter.

Continue adding appendices as needed to detail the instruments used, appropriate tables for findings and other relevant items.

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent