Preserving Romantic Relationship through Social Media

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

Facebook is one of the most popular social networking sites (SNS) that recreates face-to-face interactions on the web by allowing people to interact publicly or privately. Many people use Facebook as a way to stay in contact while others use it to develop new connections. The objective of this study was to investigate how Facebook serves as medium in preserving romantic relationships of faculty members, staff and students of the university. The study used a descriptive-survey and correlational research designs to determine if there is a relationship between the variables. A questionnaire was utilized to determine respondents' use of Facebook and status of romantic relationships in terms of partner surveillance, relationship satisfaction, self-disclosure and social intimacy. The results revealed that Facebook influence the preservation of romantic relationship as the study found a slight positive relationship between the partner surveillance and relationship satisfaction. The increase in partner surveillance will lead to an increase of relationship satisfaction; hence the absence of it can push a relationship into a negative state. However, other important factors like affectionate communications can lead to relationship satisfaction. Therefore, it was recommended that a strong communication/interaction between couples is needed in maintaining romantic

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relationship; there is a need of a school program to guide the students, faculty and staff in handling healthy relationship and affectionate communication shall be given value in maintaining romantic relationship.

1. INTRODUCTION

People have created ways to communicate especially in maintaining a romantic relationship or having intimate attachment towards their partner is evolving from primitive language and markings to more recent technologies including cellphones and computers. The use of telephones and computers has paved the way for the recent addition to communication, the social networking platform (SNS).

Facebook is one of the most popular social networking sites (SNS) that recreates face-to-face interactions on the web by allowing people to interact publicly or privately. Many people use Facebook as a way to stay in contact while others use it as a way to develop new connections and linkages. One of the benefits of Facebook is to allow people develop or maintain relationships with individuals who may not be near with each other geographically.

Increasingly, people use technology for social communication. In fact, around 80% of American adults use the Internet, and many Internet users report that their social lives and relationships have improved through computer-mediated communication [1].

According to the statistics [2], currently there are around thirty million Facebook (FB) users in the Philippines, which made it at eighth in the ranking of all Facebook statistics by country. SNS shows that Facebook penetration in Philippines is 30.12% compared to the country's population and 93.13% in relation to number of internet users. The total number of FB users in Philippines grew by more than nine hundred fifty thousand in the last six months. The latest survey of Facebook in the Philippines found out that roughly 72% who met on their site are now in a very strong relationship. The survey was done to their users who updated their relationship status, which users can choose who they want to share it with.

On the other hand, romantic relationships are fostered and challenged by emerging communication technologies. These are one of the most complicated and intense social connections individuals undertake in their life [3,4]. SNS like Facebook provide users with a variety of ways to share social information which includes status updates wall posts, photographs and private messages. The use of media has changed the way people interact and has made people nosier [5].

According to one study Hampton et al. [6], half the adults and three- quarters in the United States are active SNS users. As a matter of fact, [7] age has an inverse relationship with internet use. More recently, Pew Internet and American Life Project (2004) echoed the findings of Madden and Savage. Similar findings can be found in the adoptions of specific Internet–related technologies such as online chat rooms and Webcasting [8].

To deal with the different aspects of self-disclosure in relationship development is called the Social Penetration Theory. According to this theory Altman and Taylor [9], relationships develop as the level of social penetration increases. The dimensions of self-disclosure include; a) breadth, the amount of information, or number of topics of self-disclosure, and b) depth, the intimacy has a much larger effect than the amount disclosed in the disclosure-linking framework [10].

Moreover, the researcher found out in the pre-survey that 91.6% of the total numbers of 415 selected faculty members, staff and students have Facebook accounts, forty one and three percent (41.3%) of which use Facebook in maintaining romantic relationships.

The subject of this study were the purposively selected students, faculty members and staff who were engaged in using Facebook in maintaining romantic relationships for at least six (6) months ago.

Thus, this study primarily aimed to investigate how efficient the people who are engaged in romantic affairs use Facebook as a tool in maintaining relationships.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive-survey research design with the aid of questionnaires [11] to determine respondents' use of Facebook in maintaining romantic relationships.

The locale of the study was the Bohol Island State University (BISU) Candijay Campus, Cogtong, Candijay, Bohol, Philippines. The respondents of this study were pre-surveyed based upon their engagement in a romantic relationship within six months period.

The researcher's instrument were divided into three (3) parts, namely: (i) the demographic profile, (ii) use of Facebook in terms of partner surveillance and status of romantic relationships scales examining relationship satisfaction, (iii) self-disclosure and social intimacy.

To determine the precise results as perceived by the respondents, descriptive statistics were used the percentage, weighted mean and the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section deals with the presentation of the gathered data on Facebook as a medium in preserving romantic relationships. The said data were then analyzed and interpreted in accordance to the specific problems of the study.

Table 1. Distribution of the respondents'
profile by age N= 75

Age	Frequency (F)	%
36-40	2	2.67
31-35	2	2.67
26-30	3	4.00
21-25	16	21.33
16-20	52	69.33
Total	75	100

As reveals in the table, the highest frequency on respondents' profile by age lies within the interval 16-20 with the frequency of fifty two (52) or 69.33% of the total population while the lowest frequency fall within the range of 31-35 and 36-40 with the total number of two (2) respondents or 2.67% of the total population. It can be observed from the data that majority of the respondents were adolescent Facebook users.

Table 2. Distribution of the respondents'
profile by educational attainment N= 75

Educational Attainment	F	%
College Level	56	74.67
College Graduate	19	25.33
Total	75	100

On the Educational Attainment, majority of the respondents were in the college level with the frequency of fifty-six (56) or 74.67%, while the college graduates got the frequency of nineteen (19) or 25.33% of the total population. Majority of them were continuing their study in college.

Table 3. Distribution of the respondents'
profile by sex N= 75

Sex	F	%
Male	18	24
Female	57	76
Total	75	100

Most of the respondents were female who covered the major populace in the university and dominated the number of population in school with fifty-seven (57) or 76%.

Item number 1 of the Table 4 "I trust my significant other" obtained the highest weighted mean of 5.25 described as "Strongly Agree", implies that trust is one of the most important ingredients in love. One can trust without loving but cannot love without trusting. In a romantic relationship, trust is obtained through close observation with one another and it directly corresponds with trust issues within couples [12, 13]. The overall composite mean of 4.08 described as "slightly agree", indicates that the respondents used Facebook to survey their significant other and had trusted them.

The Table 5 revealed that in every romantic relationship, both should feel satisfaction with each other as the relationship will grow and sustain. It also denotes that the respondents' original expectation towards their respective relationships has been realized in a reason that the respondents and their significant other have involvement in their relationship. It can be supported Rau et al. [14] that an inequity in activity involvement among individuals in romantic relationship can affect a partner's perceived satisfaction.

Table 4. Status of respondents' use of facebook in terms of partner surveillance N= 75

Items	WM*	DV**	I***
1. I trust my significant other.	5.25	SA	VH
2. I trust my significant other's online activity.	4.84	MA	MH
3. I check my significant other's Facebook Profile.	4.49	MA	MH
4. I check my significant other's Facebook Profile to see his/her activity online.	4.23	SLA	SH
5. I check my significant other's Facebook Profile to see the activity on his/her friends' pages.	3.73	SLA	SH
6. I know that my significant other may have ex-lovers on his/her Facebook page.	4.19	SLA	SH
7. It bothers me that my significant other has ex-lovers on his/her Facebook page.	3.19	SLD	L
8. I like when my significant other posts on my page about me/us.	4.44	MA	MH
9. I like when my significant other posts on his/her page about me/us.	4.33	MA	MH
10. I like to post pictures that have my significant other in them.	3.92	SLA	SH
11. I like when my significant other posts pictures of us.	4.24	SLA	SH
12. I know people who check their significant other's Facebook profile.	3.52	SLA	SH
13. I like seeing other people post status updates about their relationship on Facebook.	3.59	SLA	SH
14. I like seeing pictures of friends who are in a relationship on Facebook.	3.92	SLA	SH
15. I think couples should demonstrate their happiness online.	3.36	SLD	L
Composite Mean	4.08	SLA	SH

Legend:
*Weighted Mean (WM)

Range	**Descriptive Value(DV)	***Interpretation (I)
5.16-6.00	Strongly Agree (SA)	Very High (VH)
4.33-5.15	Moderately Agree (MA)	Moderately High (MH)
3.50-4.32	Slightly Agree (SLA)	Slightly High (SH)
2.67-3.49	Slightly Disagree (SLD)	Low (L)
1.84-2.66	Moderately Disagree (MD)	Slightly Low (SL)
1.00-1.83	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Very Low (VL)

In terms of the question, "How good is your relationship compared to most?'' the respondents responded "Better than most" with a weighted mean of 3.95. It signifies that they are more secured and contented with their partners, thus makes their relationship stronger and last longer.

However, in the next item, the "How often do you wish you had gotten into this relationship?" has the highest weighted mean of 2.48 described as "a great deal". This signifies that respondents feel a sense of satisfaction in their relationship with their significant other. The lowest weighted mean in relationship satisfaction in item was "How many problems in your relationship are solved?" which has 2.00 described as "a little". It implies that problems are inevitable in a romantic

relationship. The overall composite mean of 10.15 described as "moderately high". This means that the respondents were satisfied in their relationship even they used of Facebook in preserving their relationship.

Table 6 revealed that the respondents are conscious and careful to their actions toward their significant other. However, they also expressed positively about their selves although they encountered negative things in their respective relationships. In general, the respondents agree on expressing one's intimate feelings, attitudes and experiences about their romantic relationship will gain desirable feedback. The overall interpretation of self-disclosure is" slightly high".

Table 5. Status of the respondents' romantic relationship in terms of relationship satisfaction N= 75

Items	WM	DV
1. How well does your partner meet your needs?	3.85	Satisfied
2. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	4.11	Satisfied
3. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?	3.75	Satisfied
Composite Mean	3.90	Satisfied
Legend:		
Highly Satisfied (4.21-5.00); Average (2.61-3.40); Highly Unsatisfied (1.00-1.80);		
Satisfied (3.41-4.20) Unsatisfied (1.81-2.60)		
4. How good is your relationship compared to most?	3.95	Better than most
Legend:		
Best (4.21-5.00); Average(2.61-3.40); Worst (1.00-1.80);		
Better than most (3.41-4.20); Worse than most(1.81-2.60);		
5. How often do you wish you had gotten into this relationship?	2.48	A Great Deal
6. How much do you love your partner?	2.43	A Great Deal
7. How many problems in your relationship are solved?	2.00	A little
Composite Mean	2.30	A little
Legend:		
A Great Deal (2.35-3.00); A little (1.66-2.34); Not Very Much (1.0-1.65)		
Over-all Relationship Satisfaction Rating	10.15	Moderately High
Legend:		
Very High(11.27-13.00) Moderately High (9.56-11.26) Slightly High (7.85-9.55)		
Average (6.14-7.84) Slightly Low (4.43-6.13) Moderately Low (2.72-4.42		
Very Low (1.00-2.71)		

Table 6. Status of respondents' romantic relationship in terms of self-disclosure N=75

Items	WM	DV	I
1. When I wish, my self-disclosures are always accurate reflections of who I really am.	4.71	MA	MH
2. When I express my personal feelings, I am always aware of what I am doing and saying.	5.05	MA	MH
3. When I reveal my feelings about myself, I consciously intend to do so.	4.77	MA	MH
4. When I self-disclose, I am consciously aware of what I am revealing.	4.72	MA	MH
5. My statements of my feeling are usually brief.	4.09	SLA	SH
6. I usually talk about myself for fairly long periods of time.	3.63	SLA	SH
7. My conversation lasts the least time when I am discussing myself.	3.87	SLA	SH
8. I often talk about myself.	3.77	SLA	SH
9. I often discuss my feelings about myself.	3.97	SLA	SH
10. Only infrequently do I express my personal beliefs and opinions.	4.08	SLA	SH
11. I usually disclose positive things about myself.	3.81	SLA	SH
12. On the whole, my disclosures about myself are more positive than negative.	3.19	SLD	L
13. I normally "express" my good feelings about myself.	4.41	MA	MH
14. I often reveal more desirable things about myself than undesirable things.	4.04	SLA	SH
Composite Mean	4.15	SLA	SH
Legend:			
Range Descriptive value(DV) Interpretation (I)			
5.16-6.00 Strongly Agree (SA) Very High (VH)			
4.33-5.15 Moderately Agree (MA) Moderately High (MH)			
3.50-4.32 Slightly Agree (SLA) Slightly High (SH)			

Items			WM	DV	I
2.67-3.49	Slightly Disagree (SLD)	Low (L)			
1.84-2.66	Moderately Disagree (MD)	Slightly Low (SL)			
1.00-1.83	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Very Low (VL)			

Table 7. Status of respondents' romantic relationship in terms of social intimacy N=75

Items	WM	DV
1. When you have leisure time how often do you choose to spend it with him/her alone?	2.16	Some of the Time
2. How often do you share very personal information with him/her?	2.16	Some of the Time
3. How often do you show him/her affection?	2.4	Almost Always
4. How often do you confide very personal information to him/her?	2.11	Some of the Time
5. How often are you able to understand him/her?	2.45	Almost Always
6. How often do you feel close to him/her?	1.33	Very Rarely
Composite Mean	2.05	Some of the Time

Legend:

RANGE	DESCRIPTIVE VALUE		
2.35-3.00	Almost Always	1.66-2.34	Some of the Time
1.00-1.67	Very Rarely		

Items	WM	DV
7. How much do you like to spend time alone with him/her?	2.57	A Great Deal
8. How much do you feel like being encouraging and supportive to him/her when he/she is unhappy?	2.72	A Great Deal
9. How close do you feel to him/her most of the time?	2.61	A Great Deal
10. How important is it to you to listen to his/her very personal disclosures?	2.76	A Great Deal
11. How satisfying is your relationship with him/her?	2.73	A Great Deal
12. How affectionate do you feel towards him/her?	2.59	A Great Deal
13. How important is it to you that he/she understands your feeling?	2.91	A Great Deal
14. How many typical disagreement are settled in your relationship with him/ her?	2.12	A little
15. How important is it to you that he/she be encouraging and supportive to you when you are unhappy?	2.85	A Great Deal
16. How important is it to you that he/she shows you affection?	2.83	A Great Deal
Composite Mean	2.67	A Great Deal

Legend:

RANGE	DESCRIPTIVE VALUE
2.35-3.00	A Great Deal
1.66-2.34	A little
1.00-1.67	Not Very Much

Over-all Social Intimacy Rating	4.72	Moderately High

Legend:

Range	DESCRIPTIVE VALUE
5.16-6.00	Very High (VH)
4.33-5.15	Moderately High) (MH)
3.50-4.32	Slightly High (SLH)
2.67-3.49	Slightly Low (SLL)
1.84-2.66	Moderately Low (ML)
1.00-1.83	Very Low (VL)

Table 8. Relationship between respondents' partner surveillance and the relationship satisfaction N=75

Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient (r_s)	CV	A	Interpretation
0.211	0.228	0.05	Slight positive relationship, Insignificant

Table 7 shows the social intimacy of the respondents towards their significant other. It indicates that respondents value the importance of understanding in maintaining relationships as they answered the item, "How important is it to you that he/she understands your feeling?" with highest weighted mean of 2.91 described as "a great deal. Understanding towards one another makes a relationship more intimate. The more intimate a relationship, the more interaction are needed, and the more likely people are to adopt and expand their media used to support the exchanges [5]. However, it also signifies that in the absence of interaction between the couple may perhaps cause of uncertain relationship. It was found out that the more they communicate with their social networks (friends and family members); the least uncertain that will be experienced [15].

The results of the data in the Table 8 stated that there is slight positive relationship between respondents' partner surveillance and their relationship satisfaction since the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient "0.211" is less than the critical value "0.228" at α = 0.05.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the study discovered that Facebook influence the preservation of romantic relationship wherein the study found a slight positive relationship between partner surveillance and relationship satisfaction which means that partner surveillance will lead to an increase of relationship satisfaction. Therefore, partner surveillance is one of the factors that motivate the relationship satisfaction which include affectionate communication that portrays feelings of fondness and positive regard to another [16]. Furthermore, affection is a basic human need and it is met through interpersonal interaction, in forming mutually supportive relationships, a key in establishing relationships and keeping them close; the absence of it can propel the relationships into a negative state [17].

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has declared no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
http://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/60044