

**Relational Deception: 'Til Facebook Due Us Part**

by

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate romantic relational deception that occurs on Facebook based on participants' gender, relationship status, and their amount of time spent on Facebook per week. Millennials as well as other age groups are interpersonally communicating, developing relationships, and possibly deceiving through computer-mediated communication such as Facebook. Therefore, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of interpersonal communication, deception, and infidelity that occurs through computer-mediated communication on Facebook. Interpersonal Deception Theory was used as the theoretical foundation for this study. 353 undergraduate students enrolled in a general public speaking course participated in a survey about their romantic relational deception on Facebook. Results from a MANOVA showed that male participants, participants who are in a committed relationship, and participants who spent more than 11 hours or more on Facebook per week self-reported significantly higher relational deception on Facebook.

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## List of Abbreviations

IDT	Interpersonal Deception Theory
MIE	Motivational Impairment Effect Model
SNS	Social Network Site
CMC	Computer-Mediated Communication
FTF	Face-To-Face
SPT	Social Penetration Theory
IAT	Interaction Adaptation Theory



## Chapter One: Literature Review

### Introduction

The media's attention in early 2013 on deception in online dating, false profiles, and social networking sites sparked a frenzy in social network users' interest about who is on the other side of the computer. Media stories such as the Manti T'eo scandal (Feeney & Nelson, 2013) and MTV's show *Catfish* (Schulman, Schulman, & Joseph, 2012) are just two examples of exposing deceptive social network users. Notre Dame linebacker Manti T'eo was involved in an online romantic relationship with someone who created a false online account. His supposed girlfriend claimed to be injured in a car accident and later claimed to be diagnosed with cancer. Whether she was real and whether he had knowledge of her existence is still up for debate. If his naïveness is true, this is a perfect example of a "catfish" scandal.

"Catfish" is a relatively new term that describes social network users who create fake profiles, attract innocent victims, reel them in to a relationship, and break their romantic partner's heart when they are exposed. This deceptive relationship occurs so often that MTV created a show called *Catfish* with a host who had previously been catfished. The host Nev and his recording crew meet online couples in person and attempt to unite online those with good intentions; however, most of the time, they expose catfish scandals. Deception on Facebook could now be considered the "lipstick on your collar." In many instances, individuals typically claim that infidelity is a black and white issue. Nevertheless, when individuals are

provided with personal narratives, it is obvious that the distinction is subjective. Now that connecting online has become so popular, terms surrounding adulterous and deceptive acts could apply to all types of infidelity.

Online deception occurs so often that it is essential to increase understanding of interpersonal communication, computer-mediated communication, deception, Facebook, infidelity, and how these areas are intertwined online. The review of literature of these areas exposed several considerable gaps in current research. The first gap is that social media is not necessarily recognized as a channel for interpersonal communication; therefore, Interpersonal Deception Theory (Buller & Burgoon, 1996) has not been applied to computer-mediated communication such as social networking sites in research studies. There is also a gap in research analyzing deception online. Until recently, research regarding interpersonal communication has focused mostly on face-to-face interactions. As communication continues to occur through multiple new mediums, such as Facebook, challenges arise for researchers to stay current and informed about these new platforms for interaction. Since technology and communication are constantly evolving and converging, the definitions of interpersonal communication and computer-mediated communication continue to develop. Likewise, the techniques that Internet users employ online deception also increase and evolve. The review of previous research found that social networking sites *are* developing interpersonal relationships, and Facebook is commonly the medium that deceivers use to manipulate their victims. This study attempts to fill the gaps in previous social networking site (SNS) research by investigating Facebook users' gender, and relationship status to discover how these

variables interact with relational deception on Facebook.

The following section reviews previous literature focusing on deception and the Interpersonal Deception Theory (IDT). Areas of Interpersonal Deception Theory and deception specific to this section include the Motivational Impairment Effect (MIE) Model, Detecting Deception, Detection Accuracy, Biases, Good Deceivers, Mood and Relational Closeness, and Transparency. There is a void detected in the research about the relationship between interpersonal communication, deception, the Interpersonal Deception Theory, and Facebook, and this study fills that void.

Deception has been studied by many scholars who have taken different approaches to what deception is, how it is affected, when it occurs, and who deceives (DePaulo, Kirkendol, Tang, & O'Brien, 1989). Deception is a complex topic that entails multiple variables that affect its success, detection, and how it affects participants involved. This section focuses on Buller and Burgoon's Interpersonal Deception Theory (1996).

### **Interpersonal Communication**

Interpersonal communication denotes a general context for intentional, two-way, ongoing communication that is created, and exchanged to form meaning in day-to-day situations (Hartley, 1999). The content of communication reflects the individuals' characteristics, social roles, and relationships. People communicate with others in order to develop some sort of relationship, but not all communication is interpersonal. 'Non-interpersonal' communication occurs during automated interactions such as passing someone in the hall. An example of non-interpersonal communication is the culturally accepted greeting of "Hi, how are you?" with the

general expected response being, “Good, how are you?” Situations where automatic responses to a question include ‘good’ or ‘you too’ are considered ‘non-interpersonal communication.’ Greeting or parting communication phrases similar to these responses are typically social gestures (Hartley, 1999) and not interpersonal communication.

Six main concepts that influence interpersonal communication include the following: (1) The first concept is the nature of the audience, which is the context and the setting; (2) The second determinate of interpersonal communication is the relationship of the participants, which can be determined based on degree of trust, openness of feelings, and personal history; (3) The third determinate relates to the mutual liking of the individuals. Two additional concepts of interpersonal communication include (4) the medium or channel the message is sent through, and (5) the roles of the participants. Lastly, (6) how messages are decoded influence interpersonal communication (Hartley, 1999).

### **Understanding**

Different degrees and types of understanding influence interpersonal communication. Understanding interpersonal communication depends on six different aspects: (1) the participants’ purpose, or social context where the interaction takes place; (2) how the individuals see each other, which is also called social perception; (3) the individuals’ social identity, or the way participants see themselves; (4) the codes, normalities or social expectations and rules of conversations that allow us to expect and adjust behaviors; (5) the representation of information; and (6) the presentation of the participants’ relationship (Hartley, 1999). Each participant’s self-

perception defines the situation. Simultaneously, participants try to define each other's presentation or role in order to create the desired interaction.

Each channel that sends interpersonal messages has differences in its purpose, information formation, message impact, and social meanings. This study examines computer-mediated communication exchanges which are often "rapid and informal, and hence more like spoken language" (Hartley, 1999, p. 226). This form of social communication has different rules and constraints to interpersonal interactions. Hartley (1999) reports identity is more impersonal with computer-mediated communication (CMC), and predicts that computer-mediated communication will lead to "less orderly ways" of communicating; such as being "rude, abusive and antisocial" (p. 227). Norms and social cues that apply to face-to-face (FTF) interaction are not always used in computer-mediated communication. In online communities, the term used to describe coding and social cues is called 'netiquette.' As computer-mediated communication becomes more prominent and used by more people, it is salient to study computer-mediated communication interactions to understand the differences and similarities between Face-to-Face interaction and Computer-Mediated Communication in SNS. Reality that involves both Face-to-Face and Computer-Mediated Communication as interpersonal communication reflects that Face-to-Face communication and Computer-Mediated Communication are *both* major forms of social interaction for a majority of people, and the relationship between the two is a critical issue for researchers to study.

### **Computer-Mediated Communication**

Spitzberg (2006) defines computer-mediated communication (CMC) as “any human symbolic text-based interaction conducted or facilitated through digitally-based technologies” (p. 630). This definition incorporates any form of interpersonal communication that occurs using computerized mediums, computer-assisted technologies or computer-mediated communication at some point in the exchange of information. computer-mediated communication can occur via the Internet, a text message, an instant message or multiuser interactions (Spitzberg, 2006). The two types of computer-mediated communication involve synchronous computer-mediated communication and asynchronous computer-mediated communication. Synchronous computer-mediated communication occurs in real time, for example “text-based online chat, computer, audio, and video conferencing” (Simpson, 2013, p. 414), and asynchronous computer-mediated communication occurs anytime, for example, email and discussion forums; although most communication that takes place via computer-mediated communication is text based. Computer-mediated communication can also include “cultural communication, images, architecture, metaphors, and other iconographic meanings” (Spitzberg, 2006, p. 631). Face-To-Face (FTF) interaction occurs in an environment where “only one person speaks at a time,” while computer-mediated communication is “a parallel environment where all conversationalists can enter text simultaneously” (p. 237). Because there is no competition for speaking rights in computer-mediated communication, the participants feel relatively equal in status and in participation level (Boucher, Hancock, & Dunham, 2008).

Contextual cues can also determine status and identity of the participants. Computer-mediated communication has a lack of contextual cues that can determine

social status, such as dress, social roles, manner, identity, and nonverbal cues (Boucher, Hancock, & Dunham, 2008). Some researchers consider the lack of contextual cues as a negative outcome of computer-mediated communication, which is not always the case. The presence of nonverbal cues in face-to-face communication can create positive and negative biases and judgments of individuals. When these cues are not visible, as in computer-mediated communication, similar conclusions can form based off the information given (Boucher, Hancock, & Dunham, 2008).

Because technology and communication constantly evolve and converge, the definition of computer-mediated communication continues to develop. Some studies claim that face-to-face communication has suffered because of dependence on computer-mediated communication. People have integrated computer-mediated communication into a list of relationship resources and tools, even though computer-mediated communication has typically been viewed as a task-oriented communication tool. Today more intersections of computer-mediated communication and social contexts exist than even ten years ago as consumers use technological mediums to initiate, maintain, and conclude relationships (Spitzberg, 2006). Houser, Fleuriet, and Estrada (2012) claim individuals use computer-mediated communication channels “to initiate and develop relationships that are proving to be just as satisfying and important as Face-to-Face interactions” (p.36). Walther (1992) considers “relationships developed and maintained through CMC” are just as satisfying and deeply rooted as relationships based on face-to-face communication alone (p. 36).

Most Internet users try to create relational bonds, expand relationship networks, and enhance the quality of relational interactions. Computer-mediated communication and other “lean” media increase intimacy because of computer-mediated communication’s anonymity, lack of ‘gating’ barriers, such as physical attraction cues and computer-mediated communication’s ability to connect those with shared interests (Spitzberg, 2006). Because computer-mediated communication can increase self-disclosure and expression of one’s true self, there could be greater depth and breadth in the quality of computer-mediated communication interaction than in Face-to-Face interaction (Spitzberg, 2006).

### **Self-Disclosure**

Self-disclosure is a necessary characteristic of relational communication in Face-to-Face. Online self-disclosure is also one of the most critical behaviors in computer-mediated communication. Self-disclosure occurs everywhere online from personal blogs and online communities to social networks (Jiang, Bazarova, & Hancock, 2011). Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) performed a content analysis on Facebook profiles and found about 25% of the information users posting on their personal profiles revealed “highly personal, sensitive, and potentially stigmatizing information” (p.59). Surprisingly, computer-mediated communication can contain more intimate self-disclosures than Face-to-Face interactions; however, there is not much research that compares the correlation of self-disclosure to intimacy in Computer-Mediated Communication versus Face-to-Face (Jiang, Bazarova, & Hancock, 2011). Self-disclosure and intimacy develop from relational maintenance, which will be discussed in the next section.



## **Relational Maintenance**

Relational maintenance is an ongoing communication process that maintains and repairs relationships with both parties' goals and needs at the center of interaction. Relational maintenance has five dimensions: positivity, openness, assurance, networks, and shared tasks (Houser, Fleuriet, & Estrada, 2012). Characteristics of these dimensions can be applied to face-to-face interactions as well as computer-mediated communication. Men and women participate differently with each relational maintenance strategy, but both genders remain consistent when using these relational maintenance strategies during face-to-face interactions and computer-mediated communication. Computer-Mediated Communication and Face-to-Face communication are often used simultaneously because relationships that begin online usually expand communication to other forms of technology and face-to-face interactions (Houser, Fleuriet, & Estrada, 2012). Research supports both negative and positive effects of computer-mediated communication on relationships. Spitzberg (2006) claims Internet use increases social isolation, depression and loneliness, and it decreases family/friend and face-to-face interaction. In contrast, other studies found that computer-mediated communication decreases feelings of depression, increases feelings of belonging, and increases social interaction online without detracting from offline communication (Spitzberg, 2006).

The previous section reviewed literature on Facebook and specifically social networking sites, the question of who uses Facebook, the relationships developed online, and the identities developed on Facebook. The subsequent section develops

the review of literature in order to identify the audience who participates in heavy social networking.

## **Deception**

The following section focuses on deception that occurs on the social networking site Facebook. The first topic of discussion defines deception. The second area of discussion focuses on early deception studies and the theory from which it evolved, the Motivational Impairment Effect (MIE) model. Next, this section looks at the types of deception and the principles of the main theory, Interpersonal Deception Theory (IDT). This section also includes deceivers and detecting deception, detection accuracy, moderation, biases, and what makes a convincing deceiver. The final section looks at mood and relational closeness in deception and transparency.

Buller and Burgoon (1996) define deception as “a message knowingly transmitted by a sender to foster a false belief or conclusion by the receiver through the manipulation of information” (p. 98). Information senders and receivers constantly influence each other’s behaviors and adjust their responses to one another. Deceptive adjustments to conversation are difficult to analyze. Buller and Burgoon (1994) developed the Interpersonal Deception Theory (IDT) to explain how individuals send or receive actual or perceived deception in interactive, two-way, and interpersonal communication. Buller and Burgoon (1994) identify three types of deception: falsification, or the act of lying; concealment, or the act of omitting information; and equivocation, also known as avoidance. Interpersonal Deception Theory also claims that truthful statements do not demand as much cognitive

interaction as deceptive statements. Online interactions occur frequently which is why online written deception is just as salient to study as verbal and nonverbal communication in face-to-face deception. Before delving into a more detailed explanation of the Interpersonal Deception Theory, this study examines how the theory developed and the studies that took place prior to Buller and Burgoon's initial elaboration of the theory.

### **Early Deception Studies**

Past studies do not consider the deceptive process to be interactive communication (Hartwig & Bond, 2011). Earlier studies of deception analyze what is considered deception and what aspects determine whether or not deception is successful. These earlier studies use indirect communication examples, which are usually previously recorded and scripted disclosures of true and false statements. More recently, an example of interactive communication would be when observers use Face-to-Face interaction and determine if the subject is being truthful or deceptive. Participants then react to suspicions of deception, the deceiver senses the detection, changes deceptive tactics, and successfully deceives. This interactive aspect is missing from early static studies of deceptive interaction. Prior to Buller and Burgoon's 1994 study, deception had not been observed through direct face-to-face interaction. Similar to original studies of deception, the evolution of online deception studies has transformed from static studies, email for example, to live, interactive interpersonal communication. Deception is "a psychological trait rather than a communication event" (Burgoon, Buller, Ebesu, & Rockwell, 1994, p. 304). The acknowledgement of interactive communication during deception detection—as

opposed to static, strategic behavior—is a new paradigm in the study of deception and its detection (Burgoon et al., 1994).

### **Motivational Impairment Effect (MIE) Model**

Prior to Buller and Burgoon's (1994) development of the Interpersonal Deception Theory, DePaulo, Kirkendol, Tang and O'Brien (1989) analyzed deception using the Motivational Impairment Effect (MIE) Model. The model predicts that people who are more motivated to deceive will be less successful when nonverbal cues are available to a receiver, because deceivers are more likely to expose themselves through verbal and nonverbal leakage. According to Motivational Impairment Effect, as long as nonverbal cues are visible, even motivated liars are easily detected because individuals have less control and awareness of their nonverbal expressions than their verbal expressions. Even though online deception does not display nonverbals, there are other factors that can leak cues of deception. In both instances, when deceivers are made aware of their leakage, deceivers attempt to control one factor over others to avoid detection, which can result in suspicions of deception (DePaulo et al., 1989).

Another factor of the Motivational Impairment Effect model is the attractiveness of an individual. According to Motivational Impairment Effect, more attractive individuals participating in interpersonal communication are less likely to be accused of lying than less attractive participants (DePaulo et al., 1989). Senders are more motivated to accomplish deception without detection when the sender is attractive compared to when a sender is less attractive. A more attractive sender or receiver has more confidence and therefore is not suspected of lying as often as an

unattractive participant. Women are found to be more predisposed to the Motivational Impairment Effect than are men (DePaulo et al., 1989). Although attractiveness plays a role in deception, the motivation of a sender to successfully deceive is not solely based on his or her attractiveness factor. Therefore, Burgoon and Floyd (2000) chose to take the Motivational Impairment Effect model in a different direction.

When looking at face-to-face interaction where nonverbals are visible, Burgoon and Floyd (2000) assert, “Motivation often enhances verbal and nonverbal performance, regardless of deception or truth-telling” (p. 243). Deception can involve traits such as “increased emotional, cognitive, and psychological arousal triggered by feelings of guilt, discomfort, or fear of detection,” which can be displayed and detected through a deceiver’s verbal and nonverbal leakage (Burgoon & Floyd, 2000, p. 244). When deception is applied to the interactive and constantly changing online atmosphere, senders and receivers must be more intelligent in order to monitor, detect, and perform successful online deception.

Unlike the claims of the Motivational Impairment Effect, Burgoon and Floyd (2000) explain, “Deceivers are active, not passive, agents who can strategically plan and adapt their interpersonal behaviors to maximize credibility and deceptive success” (p. 245). If a receiver or a deceiver detects suspicion, the truth-teller or deceiver will adjust his or her behavior to decrease detection. The adjusted behavior will most likely resemble the manners of the receiver. Truth-tellers and deceivers may encourage questioning in order to mimic the receiver, gain more time to prepare a response and possibly give more convincing responses (Burgoon & Floyd, 2000).

Buller and Burgoon's main contradiction to the Motivational Impairment Effect is the claim that sender's motivation may enhance verbal and nonverbal performance and deception success (1996). Motivation can enhance successful deception and detection of deception in face-to-face interaction. Online deceivers can also be more motivated to secure their information in order to prevent and detect deception than online nondeceivers.

### **Interpersonal Deception Theory (IDT)**

Buller and Burgoon expand some ideas of the Motivational Impairment Effect Model and oppose other aspects of the theory to create the Interpersonal Deception Theory (IDT). They define deception as a two-way communication interaction between people that are actively participating in interpersonal communication. Burgoon and Buller (1996) use concepts such as "interactive contexts, manipulation of language, nonverbal leakage, truth bias, suspicious probes, and behavioral adaptation" to explain Interpersonal Deception Theory (p. 106). Some deceivers are difficult for receivers to expose because "almost all communication is intentional, goal directed, and mindful" (Buller & Burgoon, 1996, p. 103). Deception also "occurs over time in interactions, not in a single event" (Burgoon, Blair & Strom, 2008, p. 573); therefore, some static deception studies might not include the entire act of deception.

**Types of deceit.** Deception can take on many forms, consequently Buller and Burgoon (1996) label three types of deceit: (1) falsification, also described as lying or fiction, (2) concealment, which is the act of omitting information, and (3) equivocation, also known as avoidance. Falsification is the type used most often in

close relationships; concealment is the next most common type, followed by equivocation. Equivocation is “the safest deception because it is the closest to truth, most people feel most comfortable using this type” (Burgoon et al., 1994, p. 305). Falsification is the least accurately detected type due to avoidance tactics. Equivocation is the least complete, direct, clear, personalized, and truthful type of deception (Burgoon et al., 1994). All of the aspects of deception that Buller, Burgoon, and Strom (2008) define are parallel to an online forum or chat room and can be applied to online deceivers and detectors.

**Assumptions and principles of IDT.** Interpersonal Deception Theory has three main assumptions relating to the interpersonal communication that occurs within the act of deception: (1) The first assumption is that the actions of interpersonal deception require strategic behavior by the sender and the receiver. The sender creates a believable performance while the receiver is trying to determine the credibility or the presence of deception in the sender’s communication. (2) Second, as the interpersonal communication occurs, both people’s behaviors adapt to, influence, and sometimes reflect one another’s behaviors or manners. Multiple communication functions occur simultaneously and may facilitate or hinder deception and detection success depending on the situation of the event. (3) Finally, interaction promotes expectations and familiarity that guide behavior and judgments throughout the entire interaction (Burgoon et al., 1994). These three assumptions of the Interpersonal Deception Theory can be applied to computer-mediated communication through interpersonal interactions that occur on Facebook. Each participant uses strategic behavior to create a deceptive message. Both users will adapt to the others’

actions and reactions to the interpersonal interaction while creating expectations and familiarity to guide future behavior and judgments.

In addition to the main assumptions of Interpersonal Deception Theory, there are several propositions that explain the theory further. One major principle of this theory defines interpersonal communication as an interactive process involving feedback and behavior adjustments. Strategic deception demands mental effort, including constant manipulation of information. There are four message characteristics that reflect strategic intent within deception: (1) uncertainty and vagueness in a response, (2) nonimmediacy, (3) reticence, and (4) withdrawal, or the desire to be out of a situation. Buller and Burgoon (1996) categorize these theoretical characteristics as ‘leakage,’ a term that refers to nonverbal and verbal cues that give away deception. Another feature of Interpersonal Deception Theory is disassociation, which is defined as symbolically removing oneself from a situation using group references to defer an individual choice. Disassociation uses modifiers such as ‘sometimes’ to try to separate oneself from the situation. A final trait of deception is image- and relationship-protecting behavior, which is the act of trying to control nonverbal leakage. A deceiver displaying this behavior would “nod in agreement, avoid interrupting, and smile frequently” (Buller & Burgoon, 1996, p. 102). Smiling also seems to be a common nonverbal divergence tactic to avoid detection. Both face-to-face and online deception display most behavioral characteristics described in Interpersonal Deception Theory’s propositions.

**Deceivers and detecting deception.** The three main characteristics of Buller and Burgoon’s Interpersonal Deception Theory are deceivers, detection of deception,



and the accuracy of the detection of deception. Moderators and biases are also two important pieces of the theory. The next sections will include descriptions of how each aspect of Buller and Burgoon's theory affects the accuracy of deception.

Some ways of preventing deception detection may seem simple and natural, but there is more planning involved than most people assume according to the Interpersonal Deception Theory. If the communication is highly interactive, a deceptive sender will put more effort into performing the deception. This kind of interaction occurs "when the participants are very familiar with each other, when the deceiver is fearful of detection, when the deceiver has selfish motivations, and when the deceiver is a good communicator" (Buller & Burgoon, 1996, p. 102). Most detection occurs when the sender leaks nonverbal cues, also known as self-adaptors. Buller and Burgoon (1996) claim self-adaptors include "shaky hand movements, increased blinking, enlarged pupils, frequent speech errors, increased speech hesitations, higher voice pitch, increased inconsistencies between verbal and nonverbal behaviors, and facial cues, which are also considered faking cues" (pp. 103-104). Online deceivers do not display nonverbal cues, since there is no face-to-face interaction. Therefore, online deception usually includes false information, incorrect representations of a person's identity, and contradicting information on a personal Facebook page.

Even though some individuals claim to be effective at detecting deception, this is most likely not the case. Detecting deception is difficult because everyday deceptive acts try "to accomplish a specific task, establish or maintain a relationship with the respondent, save face or maintain the image of one or both parties" (Buller &

Burgoon, 1996, p. 102). In early studies (Bond & DePaulo, 2008) using static communication, such as previously recorded audio or video, receivers are rarely more than sixty percent accurate in detecting deception. It is more difficult to detect deception online if the information is not obvious, bluntly false or contradictory, or if the information is private and a receiver cannot find information.

**Detection accuracy.** Accuracy depends on the degree of truthfulness of the information provided, the amount of statements within an interaction, and the perception of deception between participants and observers (Burgoon et al., 1994). Detection accuracy applies to the entire deceptive interaction, not just one detected deceptive act. Accurate detection begins as suspicion. Buller and Burgoon (1996) define suspicion as a “state of doubt or distrust that is held without sufficient evidence or proof” (p. 105). Usually when a receiver suspects deception, he or she will try to hide uncertainties and avoid direct confrontation. The receiver will most likely use some sort of probing to fulfill an interview-style inquiry. Typically deceivers successfully sense receivers’ suspicion more accurately than receivers who detect senders’ deception. When the sender detects the receiver’s suspicion, s/he could adjust behaviors to relieve the receiver’s suspicion, perhaps by mimicking the mood or manner of the receiver. Truth-tellers, when falsely accused of lying, also adjust their behaviors to resemble the manners of the receiver (Buller & Burgoon, 1996).

**Moderation.** Moderation is defined as the way a receiver accurately detects deception. The following section focuses on the accuracy of moderation (Burgoon, Buller, Ebesu, & Rockwell, 1994) that occurs in interpersonal deception. Four principles of accurate moderation are (1) deception type, (2) receiver probing

strategies, (3) familiarity, and (4) suspicion. These principles were developed to improve the accuracy of deception detection and elaborate on the Interpersonal Deception Theory.

Deception type depends on the “amount of information given, the degree of truth and clarity, relevance, ownership, and intent” (Burgoon, et al., 1994, p. 305). As previously mentioned, Buller, and Burgoon (1994) identify three types of deception: falsification, concealment, and equivocation, and identifying which type of deception is occurring is the first principle of moderation. Using probing questions are an example of the second principle of moderation used to detect deception. When receivers ask probing or follow-up questions, deceivers are more likely to be truthful. Unexpected questions can cause deceivers to become suspicious of the receiver’s detection of deception. These spontaneous questions can create instances where deceivers leak nonverbal cues before they monitor and manage their behavior. If a deceiver has preplanned and rehearsed lies, spontaneous questions can cause spontaneous lies that are more easily detected. Another example of the second principle to moderate deception transpires by asking questions referring to previously asked questions.

The third principle of moderation used to detect deception refers to the familiarity of the participants. There are two types of familiarity: relational and behavioral. According to Burgoon et al. (1994), *relational* familiarity refers to the “acquaintance of participants or personal knowledge of sender and habits” (p. 308). Additionally, previous experience with a sender could construct *behavioral* familiarity as the expectancy baseline (Burgoon et al., 1994, p. 308). The final

principle of moderation used to detect deception is suspicion. At times deceiving participants convey suspicion that they are being detected by the receivers, which can change the dynamic of the interaction. When online receivers and deceivers are participating in moderation behaviors, misunderstandings can be common because of the lack of nonverbal cues when decoding information like the use of questioning. Sometimes questions can be deferred completely online because the deceiver does not have the face-to-face responsibility to answer inquisitive questions.

**Biases.** Receivers can also be misled by a variety of stimuli and biases when receivers suspect deception. Biases, which give a deceiver an advantage, are “mental shortcuts that are used in potentially deceptive situations” and can cause inaccurate evaluations (Burgoon, Blair, & Strom, 2008, p. 572-573). Biases can also occur online. Common biases transpire on personal Facebook pages because of the individual’s perceived identity. Possibly the most influential biases are truth bias, demeanor bias, lie bias, positivity bias, and expectancy violation bias.

A common predisposition is truth bias, which “regards interpersonal messages as honest, complete, direct, relevant, and clear—even when the speaker is lying” (Buller & Burgoon, 1996, p. 104). Truth bias emphasizes the reliability of information, while the demeanor bias judges the communication styles. Lie bias assumes that participants lie or deceive in interpersonal interaction (Burgoon et al., 1994). Positivity bias discusses the presumption that the more familiar participants are with each other, the more tolerant and accepting they will be of a sender’s information. Visual bias puts more emphasis on visual cues than on vocal or linguistic information. Expectancy violation bias occurs when receivers judge

senders' unusual behavior as deceptive and do not analyze the information communicated (Burgoon, Blair, & Strom, 2008).

Interaction bias could be one of the most influential biases when receivers detect deceptive information online. Interaction bias bases preference on how often participants engage in communication and how much participants disclose in an interaction. The more participants disclose in frequent communication, the less deception receivers suspect. The amount of participation in an interpersonal interaction will affect the detection of deception and the favorableness of the interaction. Dunbar, Ramirez, and Burgoon (2003) found a significant difference in the participants' detection of deception and the observers' detection of deception. Because participants have more involvement than the observers in interpersonal communication, a difference transpires in their judgments of sender's deception. Due to the different levels of involvement, observers usually detect more deception than participants. Participants find the interaction more favorable and see the deceiver as more credible and more competent (Dunbar, Ramirez, & Burgoon, 2003). When online communication is detailed and occurs regularly and frequently, deception may be ignored due to the interaction bias. Senders who take advantage of these biases are considered good deceivers.

**Good deceivers.** Successful deception depends on the deceiver's ability to be a good liar, the liking factor, the mood and the relational closeness of the participants, and the transparency of the participants. Senders who use deception need to be good liars or deceivers in order to go undetected in an interpersonal interaction. Vrij, Granhag, and Mann (2010) refocus deception towards what makes a good liar. Their

study combines Buller and Burgoon's Interpersonal Deception Theory; DePaulo and Friedman's 1998 Persuasion Theory; Zuckerman, DePaulo, and Rosenthal's Multiple Factor Model (1981); and De Paulo's Self-Presentational Perspective. Their research presents some qualities of exceptional liars. A liar usually has some personality traits that allow him or her to be identified as a manipulator, a good actor, or an expressive person. Deceivers have positively attributed behaviors or emotions that do not show feelings of guilt or fear. As found in Interpersonal Deception Theory, deception requires a larger cognitive load in order for a deceiver to mask cues and feelings that may be assumed as deceptive. Deceivers are required to have rapid thinking, intelligence, and good memory. This allows deceivers to adapt their responses to the receiver's behaviors and probing questions. Liars use strategies such as creating a theme within the conversation, using deceiving nonverbal behaviors, and repeating or reconstructing their answers consistently (Vrij, Granhag, & Mann, 2010). A good online liar would need to be an effective monitor of the information he or she discloses. Information people post online is potentially permanent; therefore, Internet users' decisions to post specific information and to keep other information private are key components of successful deception.

Vrij, Granhag, and Mann's (2010) research highlights what hinders and helps liars and what responses liars could have to receivers' monitoring questions. What kinds of people are socially deemed likeable, trustworthy, honest, and what persuasive tactics liars use to successfully deceive are all important factors to consider (Vrij, Granhag, & Mann, 2010). The deceiver's credibility also affects the success of deception. The deceiver will seem more credible to the receiver if the

receiver senses similarities between the two. An additional factor that determines the success of deception includes suppressing nonverbal leakage cues of deception. Similarly, self-presentation is one of the most important aspects for a deceptive sender. The deceiver's impression on the receiver creates an identity that suggests his or her level of truthfulness or likeliness to lie. The more likable the deceiver appears to be, the more likely he or she will be able to persuade the receiver. A deceiver needs to constantly concentrate on his or her interaction and keep information consistent throughout the conversation to appear credible.

Successful deception detection derives from recognizing nonverbal leakage and nonverbal cues that indicate deception. The receiver's accuracy of deception increases when fewer nonverbals are visible. The more cues senders display, the less accurately the receiver will detect deception. According to Burgoon, Blair, and Strom (2008), the deceiver's nonverbal cues can distract the receiver from accurately detecting deception. Less reliance on nonverbal cues will allow the receiver to be more accurate in detecting deception. The most accurate detection transpires from audio-only interaction. In addition to leaking nonverbal cues, other attributes can also increase undetected deception; one such factor is the liking factor.

Being a good liar is not always enough to convince a receiver to overlook suspicions of deception. One factor that determines the success of deception emerges from the receiver's perception of the deceiver's likability. Burgoon, Stern, and Dillman's (1995) Interaction Adaptation Theory (IAT) applies the liking factor to predict when nonverbal expressions of liking are reciprocated (Floyd & Burgoon, 1999). Verbal and nonverbal expressions of liking can reduce uncertainty and predict

behaviors and expectations. Verbal expressions are usually the preferred expression of liking because nonverbal expressions are less consciously controlled and can give away false emotions. A negative or unreciprocated response to a liking expression can potentially result in sender insecurity. In addition to the liking factor, the mood, and relational closeness of the individuals within the interpersonal interaction can also inhibit the detection of deception.

**Mood and relational closeness in deception.** Householder and Wong (2011) studied the effects of mood and closeness of receivers and deceivers. They specifically analyzed friends and strangers to test if the mood and closeness of the participants affected the detection of deception. The study found that the happier a detector was prior to and during the interaction, the less detection occurred compared to detectors in a sad or unhappy mood. The closer the relationship between the participants, the more fear a deceiver will have that they will be detected. This fear derives from the high level of expectancy violation receivers develop during interaction. Expectancy violation occurs during an interpersonal interaction when participants' expectations or predictions of verbal and nonverbal behaviors are violated. Overall, the mood and relational closeness of the participants determines the level of expectancy violation and detection of deception that occurs.

**Transparency.** The final aspect of successful deception occurs through the transparency of the participants within the interpersonal interaction. Receivers see a transparent sender as honest when telling the truth and dishonest when lying. In Levine, Shaw, and Shulman's (2010) study, using strategic questioning within an interaction increased the accuracy of detection. Comparably, *Interpersonal Deception*



Theory says that spontaneous questioning can increase detection accuracy based on a deceiver's response. When spontaneous questioning occurs, two outcomes are possible based on the deceiver's transparency. The first outcome transpires when a deceiver does not adapt to the receiver's inquisitive efforts. In this situation, receivers usually leak verbal and nonverbal cues that indicate deception. The second result occurs when a deceiver mimics the receiver's behaviors. When this happens, the deceiver seems more truthful due to his or her adaptation. At this time, receivers might doubt their suspicions resulting in successful deception (Levine, Shaw, & Shulman, 2010). The Interpersonal Deception Theory elaborates on Levine, Shaw, and Shulman's (2010) study to include positive and negative effects of strategic questioning based on a deceiver's transparency.

The previous section reviewed literature on deception and the Interpersonal Deception Theory (IDT). Areas specific to this section were the Motivational Impairment Effect (MIE) model, detecting deception, detection accuracy, biases, good deceivers, mood and relational closeness, and transparency. This section focused on Buller and Burgoon's Interpersonal Deception Theory, how the theory was developed, deception, how deception is detected, who deceives, and what effects deception, especially successful deception. Research on deception, particularly the Interpersonal Deception Theory, has not been applied to relational deception occurring on Facebook because it has not been studied.

### **Infidelity**

The following section focuses on infidelity that occurs online, particularly on the social networking site Facebook. The first two topics of discussion include what

counts as infidelity and who participates in deceptive acts of infidelity online. The third area in this section looks at how and why individuals engage in interpersonal interactions with individuals besides their significant other.

**What counts as Infidelity?** Parker-Pope claims that “engaging in digital flirting/cheating does not technically break a marriage vow” (2011, p. 5). Additionally, Parker-Pope (2011) says, “Facebook and other social networking has replaced school reunions” (p. 5). Chang’s (2010) article defines Facebook as the “lipstick on your collar” because cheating is now just a keystroke away instead of sitting at the next barstool. In order to analyze spouses’ infidelity on Facebook, a definition of cheating, and more specifically online cheating needs to be determined.

In order to define online infidelity, *Glamour* magazine asked some questions regarding what counts as cheating online. This popular magazine asked readers to send in their most borderline experiences with cheating. Personal stories included topics such as: Is it cheating if it isn’t official? Is it cheating to go on a ‘pseudodate’? Is it cheating if you just sleep in the same bed? Is a girl kissing another straight girl cheating? Is it cheating to exchange steamy Facebook messages? Is it cheating to have a ‘work spouse’? Is getting a private dance at a strip club cheating? Is it cheating if your boyfriend fools around with his gay best friend? Readers were polled to analyze which situations counted as cheating. The article also includes suggestions for dealing with a romantic partner’s questionable actions, such as friending an ex on Facebook, kissing another girl while drunk, having a close relationship with a coworker, and sexting another person (Sandell, 2009). In many instances, individuals typically claim infidelity is a black and white issue. However, when *Glamour*

magazine provided readers with personal narratives, it was obvious that the distinction is subjective.

Amy Capetta defines cheating terminology in her article, “The Truth About Online Cheating.” In this article, Dr. Laura Berman, a sex educator, researcher, and therapist, defines key vocabulary such as sexual infidelity, emotional infidelity, cyber infidelity, and virtual affair. According to Dr. Berman, sexual infidelity refers to “having sexual contact with a person who is not your partner,” while “emotional infidelity means you are confiding in and emotionally connecting with a person outside your relationship without sex” (Capetta, 2011). However, now that connecting online has become so popular, these definitions could be reworded and specified to apply to all available forms of infidelity. Dr. Berman labels “sexting, social media, and e-mail flirting as ‘cyber infidelity’, and considers these acts to fall under the category of ‘virtual affair’” (Capetta, 2011). Tara Fritsch, a licensed marriage and family therapist, says that an emotional affair, online or face-to-face, have the potential to be just as detrimental to a romantic relationship as a sexual affair (Ludden, 2010). Because online infidelity can be a damaging emotional affair, redefining infidelity to include online interaction is necessary.

**Why cheat online?** To those outside looking in, a common question remains; why cheat online? Online forums make it far too easy to find past lovers and strike up conversations with new connections. Capetta’s (2011) research highlights Stacy Kaiser’s view on online infidelity. Kaiser is a licensed psychotherapist, relationship columnist for *USA Today*, and author of *How to Be a Grown-Up*. She claims that the illusion of privacy is the biggest factor for online cheating. The illusion of privacy

occurs online for two reasons. The first reason is that Internet users have the ability to create or alter their online identity. The second factor in the illusion of privacy occurs because Internet users think that once they log off, their interactions are erased, even though all interactions are traceable.

The curiosity element is probably the second biggest factor for why individuals turn to online interpersonal connections. The curiosity element describes the “what-if” factor. For example, a person might wonder if there are other romantic partners online or what might happen if online communities are never explored. The curiosity element sparks interest in online interactions and holds a user’s attention because of the “what-if” factor. Similarly, a fantasy life with the one that got away tempts romantic partners to develop online relationships. In Chang’s 2010 article, Terry Real reports people use Facebook to live out their fantasy life and escape reality. In an interview with ABC News, Real says, “there is nothing more seductive than the ones that got away fantasy that’s always better than someone who is up to her eyeballs in bills” (Chang, 2010).

Capetta states, “the instantaneous feedback and immediate gratification make for an irresistible environment that keeps drawing you back” (2011). The unlimited, immediate, and intimate interactions with others satisfy an individual’s boredom and fulfill a need for instant satisfaction. When commenting on social media, David Jones, global CEO of Havas Worldwide and Euro RSCG Worldwide declares, “We used to meet in bars and restaurants, we now meet on Facebook and Twitter. Social media hasn’t replaced face-to-face interactions, but it has enhanced real world relationships making them faster, more transparent and more authentic” (Edge &

Gruber, 2011). Even though some individuals like Jones find Facebook to be beneficial, Parker-Pope articulates, “It leaves a digital trail that increases chances of getting caught” (2011, p. 5). Capetta (2011) highlights some red flags that may indicate trouble with a partner. Some examples include secrecy with personal technology, spending more time using technology than normal, and having a secret account.

Capetta (2011) finds many online disclosures to be purposefully and more drastically deceptive than face-to-face interactions. She discusses what counts as cheating in an online setting by defining key vocabulary such as sexual infidelity, emotional infidelity, cyber infidelity, and virtual affair. She claims, “Sexual infidelity means you need to have sexual contact with a person who is not your partner and emotional infidelity means that you’re confiding in and emotionally connecting with a person outside of your relationship without the sex” (Capetta, 2011). Because there are so many other avenues that are borderline interactions, the term, “cyber infidelity” casts a broad net including sexting and flirting through social media and e-mail. Kaiser refers to this cyber infidelity more specifically as a “virtual affair” (Capetta, 2011).

But not just anyone is likely to take these online risks and participate in online infidelity. Individuals who are natural risk-takers and involved in a relationship that already has problems are more likely to be involved in cyber infidelity (Capetta, 2011). Even though “cheating and betrayal have occurred since the institution of marriage began, social networking makes these acts of infidelity easier” (Parker-Pope, 2011, p. 5). The American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers asserts, “81

percent of divorce lawyers say they've seen an increase in social networking evidence in their cases over the last five years" (Capetta, 2011). While millennials turn to the Internet for support from strangers, ex-lovers, or new acquaintances (Waters & Ackerman 2011), Parker-Pope (2011) says individuals ages 18-29 are more likely to be involved in "sexting."

While some people assume men are the ones who stray in romantic relationships, Parker-Pope finds otherwise. Parker-Pope (2011) highlights that women participate in adulterous relationships online more often than do men. Parker-Pope claims Facebook, email, and texting have allowed women to engage in more intimate relationships outside their primary romantic relationship (2011). According to one third of women surveyed by Edge and Gruber (2011), women initiate online relationships because SNS, such as Facebook, take the edge off initial interactions. Another reason why women stray from their primary relationship is their need for more physical connections. Men, however, take the chance of flirting online more often than physically connecting with additional romantic partners. While they are motivated differently, both women and men use SNS like Facebook to participate in infidelity.

Of all the social networking sites, individuals engage in adulterous relationships most often on Facebook. Capetta says Facebook is unrivaled by any other social networking site in terms of providing evidence for divorce and custody cases (2011). The influx of Facebook evidence present in court cases makes users' activity a prominent factor in their conviction. Users involved in legal issues need to take more caution with what information they make visible to the public.

## **Facebook**

The following section reviews literature on social networking sites and Facebook, describes who uses Facebook, discusses identities developed on Facebook, and explains the relationships developed online. This section identifies the audience who participates in interpersonal communication on social networks.

**Who uses Facebook?** Social networks fill a middle ground between individuals and communities, requiring the study of this new social structure. Even though online communication lacks face-to-face characteristics like physical proximity, frequent interaction, and physical appearance, relationships are becoming more frequently maintained through online interaction using interpersonal communication, according to Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Sheldon, 2009). Social networks have developed faster, easier, cheaper ways for people to establish, re-establish, and maintain relationships through their sites. More specifically, Facebook is the most popular, highly trafficked social networking site on the Internet with over one billion active users as of the fall of 2012. According to Facebook Statistics (2012), there are 584 million daily active users on average and 604 million monthly active users who used Facebook mobile products when last measured in the fall of 2012. Facebook defines itself as “a social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently with their friends, family, and coworkers” (Facebook Factsheet, 2010, para. 1). Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) claim college students use Facebook to maintain current relationships, and Sheldon (2008) says students use Facebook to “pass time when bored, and to find companionship” (para. 4). With more than 500 million active users, the fastest growing demographic using Facebook is people 35

years old and above, according to research done by Eyewitness News 5's Wendell Edwards. Some studies (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007) suggest that emerging adults use social networking sites to connect with people from their offline lives (Sheldon, 2009). Some generations use social networking sites more than others.

Millennials are a digital generation who use Facebook more than any other generation ("Inside Facebook", 2009) and who have integrated technology into their every day lives (Merritt & Neville, 2002). Some important aspects of social networking research focus on the motivations of millennials to self-disclose on Facebook, the way participants perceive consequences of self-disclosure, and the differences in self-disclosure based on gender (Waters & Ackerman, 2011). This new generation's habits of taking in everyone and everything available, playing the field and trying out new partners and relationships is going to have a major impact on the way this generation approaches love as well as business (Edge & Gruber, 2011). Prensky (2001) refers to the generation born between 1980-1994 as the "digital native" generation or the "net generation" by Tapscott (1998). This generation spends the majority of their daily lives submerged in all types of technology (Sheldon, 2009, para. 2).

Most Facebook users have significantly more friends on Facebook than in their offline lives (Acar, 2008; Sheldon, 2008). Users feel more pressure to accept friend requests and keep individuals whom they are no longer in contact with as friends and they feel a false confidence to friend other users. Most Facebook users feel a "social desirability", also known as a "positive feeling of online popularity" from increasing their social network friends (Acar, 2008, p. 77; Sheldon, 2009, para.



2). Only slightly more than half of Facebook users surveyed (Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, & Espinoza, 2008) had any overlap between their top instant messaging, social networking, and face-to-face friends. Few (i.e., 2.5%) had a perfect overlap between their online and offline friends. This suggests that young adults' offline and online worlds are not mirror images of each other (Subrahmanyam et al., 2008; Sheldon, 2009).

Quinn, Chen, and Mulvenna (2011) performed a study to analyze social networking sites' user behaviors by categorizing users into a younger (15-30) and an older (50+) age range. Their results depicted younger users having about 11 times more friends on average than the older users. The study analyzed a group of 250 young users and found that the minimum number of friends was 84 and the maximum was 1,402, with an average of 483 friends. An older group of 250 adults had a minimum of 0 friends and a maximum of 3,797 friends, with an average of 62 friends. Younger users also used more applications or functions that Facebook offers, such as status updates. Older users were found to reply to interactions at almost half the rate of younger users. However, older users' wall comments occurred at over twice the rate of younger users, indicating that older users favor the wall function more than younger users. Since younger and older groups of Facebook users interact on Facebook differently, the importance to continue to study how users interact and how often they use Facebook remains (Quinn, Chen, & Mulvenna, 2011).

Baym (2010) analyzes how individuals incorporate social media in their daily life. She also looks at how interpersonal relationships intersect with a broad range of media. With previous research placing a norm on face-to-face interaction and a new

age of interpersonal communication developing through social media, considering the old norms as significant as the new online norms continues to be critical. Online interpersonal communication involves individuals who develop emotions and relationships online through social cues (Baym, 2010). Baym says social cues are transferable from face-to-face to computer-mediated interactions, defining them as a variable. She also claims that “rich media” contains a lot of social cues, while “lean media” includes fewer cues (Baym, 2010). Even though interaction has transferred from face-to-face to online, signals and words are still used as a means of creating an identity, personally and collectively, which also creates new standards and social norms (Baym, 2010).

**Online identities.** Other scholars look at social network sites (SNS) with a different perspective, focusing on creating an identity. According to boyd and Ellison (2007), SNSs are “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (para. 4). They also claim that social network sites are used to extend pre-existing social communities and replicate offline connections rather than build new relationships. The network is defined by the connections made, the information shared, and the purpose of the social network (chatting with others, sharing pictures, making job connections, sharing music and videos, or updating information in 150 characters) (Baym, 2011).

**Relationships developed online.** After creating an online profile, the next step is to build a network or following of people that the initial user desires to interact

with, also known as ‘friending’ on Facebook. The act of ‘friending’ creates a lot of “social anxiety, conflict, and misunderstanding” (Fono & Raynes-Goldie, 2006). The ambiguity of individuals’ relationship presence on SNSs can also create problematic misunderstandings because of the appearance of what kind of relationship public interactions represent (Fono & Raynes-Goldie, 2006). Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT) (Walther, 1992) explains how people develop and maintain online relationships. This theory proposes that when participants exchange substantial information over a significant amount of time, relationships that develop through computer-mediated communication (CMC) can reach a similar level of relational development as face-to-face interactions (Walther & Burgoon, 1992; Walther, 1996; Sheldon, 2009). Besides friendships and romantic relationships, boyd and Ellison (2007) note a “fan/band relationship.” The fan performs identity work and audience building through the interactions that the fan has with the other individual who fulfills the band position. This type of relationship may occur because one individual, also known as the fan, admires another user, or the band. The fan may feel a connection between the two or feel that he or she knows the other person based on how much information is disclosed or visible on SNSs (Baym, 2011; boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Baym, Zhang, Lin, Kunkel, and Ledbetter (2007) found that because relationships are becoming more mediated by technology, the question remains, does technology mediation enhance or detract from relational quality? Some say computers nonverbally weaken ‘lean’ medium (Daft & Lengel, 1984), making it hard to create a social presence (Short, Williams & Christie, 1976), convey interpersonal cues, and maintain emotional closeness. Who communicates with whom, how they

communicate, and how often interpersonal interactions continually change on the Internet are becoming more prevalent in daily life (Baym et al., 2007). The Internet is being used more often as an interpersonal medium, which continues to morph the patterns of relational communication. A common use for email allows individuals to maintain meaningful relationships, especially long-distance relationships (Stafford, Kline, & Dimmick, 1999; Wellman & Gulia, 1999). Parks and Floyd (1996) found that friendships formed via the Internet were deemed as moderately committed relationships, while offline relationships were only slightly more developed and involved. Overall, communication via the Internet performs relational maintenance more often in friendships than in romantic relationships (Baym et al., 2007).

So who benefits from these online relationships? The Social Compensation or the 'Poor-Get-Richer' Hypothesis claims that Internet users with small social networks and increased social anxiety can benefit from social networks. Individuals who fall into this category usually self-disclose freely and create new relationships through these social networks (Sheldon, 2009). Internet users have the ability to be anonymous and create a desired identity for themselves through online interaction. Introverts who might defer from self-disclosing in face-to-face interactions feel more confident to share information with others online because of the reduced possibility of being rejected or teased (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993). Sheldon and Honeycutt (2008) found individuals who are weary of face-to-face interactions are more likely to self-disclose online, especially on Facebook, because it puts less pressure on online social interactions. More introverted people may lean toward

online interpersonal interactions to meet new people or reconnect with old friends or people of interest because of the lack of real time, face-to-face pressure.

Other researchers appeal to the “Rich-Get-Richer” Hypothesis. Some extroverts, unlike introverts, use Facebook as an additional tool to increase quantity and quality of their relationships that already exist in real life. McKenna and Bargh (2000) claim online interpersonal interaction benefits introverts more than extroverts because these online interactions compensate for the lack of social interactions introverts have in the offline world. According to the ‘Poor-Get-Richer’ Hypothesis, introverts use Facebook to form and maintain online-only relationships, while the ‘Rich-Get-Richer’ Hypothesis claims extroverts partake in online interaction to further develop and enhance pre-existing relationships. Extroverts’ offline and online interactions mirror each other in both quality and quantity (Sheldon, 2009). Therefore, extroverts’ Facebook friendships will generally resemble their offline relationships. Introverts and extroverts use social networking sites in different ways to develop or maintain friendships within online interpersonal interactions.

The observable difference in relationship types developed online, proposes the following question: Is gender a factor in how and what kinds of relationships are developed online? Baym et al. (2007) claim small differences in how women and men understand and evaluate their personal relationships on and offline could determine the difference in interactions through online media. Some research claims that women value close relationships more than men (Duck & Wright, 1993). Additionally, certain studies indicate that women are more accurate receivers and

senders of non-verbal communication messages (Hall, 1998). Thus, the first hypothesis of this study is proposed:

H1: Female Facebook users will use Facebook for relational deception more often than male Facebook users.

Cross-sex friendships have distinct rewards, but they also have consequences including communication differences such as jealousy and sexual tension (Arnold, 1995). One of the most common advantages of cross-sex relationships is the ‘romance adviser’ phenomenon. This phenomenon provides insight about members of the opposite sex. For example, a woman would ask for a man’s opinion on an issue in order to understand a man’s perspective or vice versa (Canary & Emmers-Sommer, 1997). Men seek cross-sex friendships because of the possibility of higher levels of intimacy, self-disclosure, and trust in these relationships (Reis, 1998). Parks and Roberts (1998) found that cross-sex friendships usually develop more often online than in face-to-face interactions (Baym et al., 2007). Baym, Zhang, and Lin (2004) found that the type of relationship influences the level of interaction, the expectations, the relational satisfaction, and the quality of the online interpersonal interaction.

While online and offline interactions within romantic relationships and cross-sex friendships have differences, these differences progress similarly as the relationships develop. Mesch and Talmud (2006) and Parks and Roberts (1998) claim that initially, online relationships are less developed than offline interactions. The differences between the two types of relationships diminish over time and with more interactions. Baym, Zhang, and Lin (2004) and Baym et al., (2007) show that

college students rarely use the Internet to connect and communicate with individuals that they do not already communicate with through other mediums. Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) say SNSs are used most often for keeping in touch with people that have been met elsewhere offline. SNSs are used for relational maintenance much more often than relational creation (Baym, 2011). Therefore, the second hypothesis of this study is posited:

H2: Facebook users in a committed romantic relationship will use Facebook for relational deception more often than Facebook users who are not in a committed romantic relationship.

While face-to-face interactions continue to be the preferred and most widely accepted way for interpersonal interactions to occur, the fact that even the most intimate relationships are continuing to appear through multiple media outlets makes studying these interactions more relevant (Baym, 2003). Baym (2011) identifies three major themes that categorize social networking research which are identity, relationships, and community (Baym, 2002; Silver, 2000a). Since the initial development of social networks, online communities have connected individuals regardless of geographical restrictions. In reference to the Internet and social communities, Wellman, Hampton, Isla de Diaz, and Miyata (2003) note that the technological age of modernism has moved away from firmly bound social communities and toward a progressively individualized network where each person lies at the center of his or her own personally-developed network. This is most obvious in twenty-first century social networking sites (Baym, 2011).

The Internet gives users an open forum to express themselves and create a preferred identity from a blank slate. In some ways, this allows individuals to have a clear personal or collective identity (Baym, 2010) and for others, it creates an opportunity to construct a desired identity. Baym (2011) says identity on SNSs remains a longstanding area of research especially since SNSs allow individuals to choose their self-presentation, create an online identity, and potentially maintain anonymity. Online identities form based on how individuals position themselves or appear socially. Status, which is based off socioeconomic factors such as money, social class, and education, also contributes to identity (Liu, 2007). Since Internet users can include a variety of information on their SNS, the truth of their information becomes questionable, which creates a false self-presentation viewed by the surrounding online community (Baym, 2011). Individuals are in complete control of their site, the information they provide, and the audience that views their personal page. Users reach outward to other individuals, groups, and pages with whom they wish to exchange information (Allan, 2006). This person-centered community neither eliminates the individual nor the community, but combines the two, creating a “cultural shift enabled and accelerated by the Internet” (Allan, 2006, p. 385).

Baym (2010) says that individuals’ main goals of using social media are to initiate and maintain friendships. She defines a few patterns of relational development that occur online. Due to early idealization and hyper-personal communication, users perceive more similarities than they actually have in reality because of selective communication tactics. Highly anticipated messages give instant gratification through each interaction. Once relationships feel comfortable enough,



usually other forms of interaction are used including snail mail and other media outlets. This step immediately blurs the lines between online and offline life, interaction, and relationships. Most individuals eventually meet in person, which demonstrates that “people can and do develop meaningful personal relationships online” (Baym, 2010). Baym (2010) considers cyberspace to be just another tool that individuals use to connect.

While there are many threats to individuals who use social network sites, benefits include maintaining social connections, enhancing relationships, and increasing access to social capital (Baym, 2011). Baym claims that “most lies told through the wonders of technology’s affordances are minor strategic manipulations rather than malevolent falsehoods” (Baym, 2010, p. 117). Baym (2010) acknowledges that dishonesty occurs online, but notes that the benefits associated with deceptive behaviors online are reduced because of “physical separation, time lag, and other realities of mediated interaction” (Wayne, 2011, p. 150). Baym considers dating sites to be more deceptive in individuals’ descriptions of themselves. However, she says these false descriptions are harmless, because the individuals may hope for these initially fabricated details to become a reality by the time they interact with the person they connected with online.

**Disclosing online.** Initially, innocent interpersonal interactions can quickly escalate from simple disclosures to potentially harmful relationships. Joinson and Payne (2007) define disclosure as “the telling of previously unknown information so that it becomes shared knowledge” (p. 237). Some disclosures may be helpful to develop relationships online. However, deceitful disclosures can do more harm than

good. Other researchers state that “self-disclosure can also be a strategy for impression formation, social validation, or social control” (Kim, Lee, & Park, 2006; Derlega et al, 1993; Sheldon, 2009, para. 15). In many instances, small lies within disclosures develop into larger, deceptive information as individuals build onto the original lie. These small lies can contribute to the downfall of online and offline relationships once the truth is revealed.

According to Social Penetration Theory (Altman & Taylor, 1987), relationships develop as the level of social interaction increases. Altman and Taylor’s (1973) dimensions of self-disclosure “include: a) breadth, the amount of information, or number of topics of self-disclosure, and b) depth, the intimacy of self-disclosure” (Kim, Lee, & Park, 2006; Collins & Miller, 1994; Sheldon, 2009, para. 15).

According to Walther’s (1996) Hyperpersonal Communication Framework, the reduced nonverbal cues of computer-mediated communication make individuals feel less subdued and more likely to disclose their feelings earlier in online relationships than in face-to-face relationships. Individuals disclose information to others that they find socially attractive. Similarly, liking or attraction at the platonic or romantic levels increases because of the *increase in disclosure* (Collins & Miller, 1994; Kim, Lee, & Park, 2006). Individuals develop more liking with an increase in disclosure, which also reduces uncertainty through this disclosure.

Rosenfeld and Kendrick (1984) found significance in the type of relationship that develops between individuals who disclose. With more intimate relationships, the reasons for disclosing usually include relationship maintenance and development, reciprocity of information, self-clarification, expression, and social validation

(Petronio, 2007; Rosenfeld & Kendrick, 1984). The less intimate the relationship, the more individuals disclose for reciprocity of information and impression management (Rosenfeld & Kendrick, 1984). Youn (2005) found that individuals disclose personal information online when there is instant gratification or an appealing benefit, even when individuals are concerned about online privacy. The benefits of disclosing, which include an increase in trust, rapport, and reciprocation, seem to outweigh the traceable risks to some individuals (Joinson & Pain, 2007). Women have been found to disclose more information more often, while men are more likely to flirt online. Surprisingly, Youn (2005) found females to be more concerned with risks associated with disclosing. On the other hand, men were more attracted to the benefits and were more willing to disclose risky information while flirting online (Waters & Ackerman, 2011).

In Krasnova, Kolesnikova, and Guenther's 2009 article, Dinev and Hu (2007) use an "it won't happen to me" attitude to describe most SNS users' behaviors. This term portrays users who supply a large amount of private information to their personal pages without expecting consequences. These personal pages, such as those on Facebook, are available to an online community created by each user. This "it won't happen to me" attitude directly relates to Chellappa and Sin's (2005) studies of individual privacy risks when disclosing information online (Krasnova, Kolesnikova & Guenther, 2009). Anyone can be susceptible to falling into the illusion of an online fantasy world and forget all about reality. Kaiser acknowledges that initial interactions may be harmless, but these naïve involvements can quickly escalate into an inappropriate relationship, crossing ethical commitment lines into the realm of a

cyber-affair (Capetta, 2011). Many individuals continue to have inappropriate interactions online knowing it leaves a digital trail, which can increase the chances of getting caught (Parker-Pope, 2011). This research ultimately shows that the perception of online privacy exists, however users continue to ignore warnings against disclosing personal information online.

The previous section reviews literature on Facebook and social networking sites, the question of who uses Facebook, the relationships developed online, and the identities developed on Facebook. This section develops a review of literature in order to identify the audience who participates in heavy social networking, and looks at who participates in deceptive acts on Facebook.

**Infidelity on Facebook.** Facebook's overall goal is to connect individuals through a social networking site. New relationships are easily created on Facebook. But Facebook can also add stress to romantic relationships by facilitating additional online relationships. Multiple media outlets reveal Facebook's negative effects on romantic relationships. In a study performed by Euro RSCG Worldwide, 31% of participants knew someone whose relationship ended because of a spouse's actions online (Edge & Gruber, 2011). For example, in CNN Wire Staff's (2010) article, an avid Facebook user was involved in a divorce as a result of his wife rekindling with an old boyfriend on Facebook. He called Facebook a cheating tool even though he admitted, "The affair's going to happen anyway, but Facebook makes it much easier." It is important to remember that Facebook does not always cause breakups, but it certainly contributes tension to already troubled relationships.

Italie (2010) highlights that Facebook is not always used to connect with others; lawyers are using Facebook to pull evidence for divorce and custody cases. Chats, messages, excessive spending, suggestive material, unreasonable behavior, and interaction on Facebook have all been used in court to support one side or another. The American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers states that, “81 % of divorce attorneys have seen an increase in the number of cases using social networking evidence during the past five years, including Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and even YouTube and LinkedIn” (Italie, 2010). Evidence from social networks went from nonexistent to prominent in a large percentage of cases (Italie, 2010). Facebook is the leader for “turning virtual reality into real-life divorce drama” (Italie, 2010). Slip-ups on Facebook are the leading source of online evidence according to 66% of lawyers surveyed; additionally, “1 in 5 adults use Facebook for flirting” according to the 2008 Pew Internet and American Life Project (Italie, 2010).

Some adults use social networking sites to spew inappropriate or false information on their personal pages (Italie, 2010). In one example, a husband going through a divorce “goes on Match.com and declares his single, childless status while seeking primary custody of said nonexistent children.” Another husband “denies anger management issues but posts on Facebook in his ‘write something about yourself’ section: If you have the balls to get in my face, I’ll kick your ass into submission” (Italie, 2010). Men and dads are not the only ones that contradict real life with their virtual reality; wives and moms do it too. One mom confidently denies smoking marijuana while posting photos partying and smoking pot on Facebook. Another mother was checked into “the gaming site, World of Warcraft with her

boyfriend at the exact time she was supposed to be out with her children” (Italie, 2010). Both of these moms were fighting for sole custody of their children. This excessive use of online sites including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and even Farmville at all the wrong times allows husbands and wives involved in custody battles and divorces to document their exes’ destructive behavior. Not only are adults deceiving about his or her relational status, they are outright lying about huge parts of their lives on social networks (Italie, 2010).

As Italie (2010) notes, social networks ooze with evidence that lawyers use to support legal cases. Users disclose juicy information right and left on Facebook. When lawyers present these compelling Facebook facts to a judge, the evidence is hard and reliable. Lawyers are even making lists of do’s and don’ts for clients when going through a legal process. Such suggestions include, “If you plan on lying under oath, don’t upload information to social networks with evidence to the contrary; remember that the judge can read anything you put up on social networking sites; beware of your frenemies; a picture can be worth BIG BUCKS; keep your emotional disclosures to a minimum; do not post explicit photos; increase your privacy settings” (Italie, 2010). Not all clients heed their lawyers’ advice, but the smart ones usually fall silent online.

Lawyers are not the only ones being bombarded with Facebook evidence. Ludden (2010) quotes Tara Fritsch, a licensed marriage and family therapist, saying, with “40% of the couples coming in, there is a link to Facebook or to MySpace that has caused a breach in their marriage.” She also says, “When things start being said that you don’t want your spouse to see, things that you might hide, things that you

might not be comfortable saying in person or having your spouse hear, then it's taken that step across a boundary." The boundary Fritsch refers to is the line of infidelity that troubled romantic partners cross online (Italie, 2010).

Overall, infidelity has occurred for a long time and will continue. Men and women in committed, new, long-term, and even married relationships develop other connections through online, interpersonal interaction. The more technology people incorporate into their daily lives, the more options individuals have to participate in infidelity. Online users constantly make new connections on social networking sites like Facebook. This increases the chances of finding an undercover lover online where adulterous partners can maintain their relationship. One of the most important things to remember remains, "The cheating behavior starts with a simple poke, a simple message, wall post, and even an add request" ("Divorces From Social," 2010).

The former section focuses on infidelity that occurs online, predominantly on the social networking site, Facebook. The areas of emphasis include who participates in deceptive acts of infidelity online, and how and why individuals are involved in interpersonal interactions with individuals besides their significant-other, sometimes even strangers. Overall this section explains who is deceiving on Facebook and why these individuals are choosing to participate in deceptive acts on Facebook.

## **Chapter 2: Methods**

The purpose of this study is to examine relational deception on Facebook due to participant's gender, age and relationship status. It compares the different types of deception, relationships that form online and the individuals who are involved in these interactions to specifically investigate who is deceiving, and what ages groups deceive more and if gender influences deception. This chapter contains two sections. The first section describes the design of the study detailing the participants involved and the process of distributing surveys. The second section describes the scales used in the survey and its reliability.

### **Sample and Procedure**

The relevant sample consisted of respondents, ages 19 and above. The participants were Facebook users who have accessed their account in the last 30 days while the survey was available. The group surveyed contains a large population of undergraduate students enrolled in communication classes at a large Southern university. Undergraduates were chosen as part of the population for this study because they are part of the population known as 'Millennials' who have incorporated social network sites into their daily use.

The survey was created using Qualtrics, which is a web-based survey software that allows researchers to create and electronically distribute surveys, collect and store data and produce reports. The university owns the license for Qualtrics and provides Qualtrics to researchers as needed. The Qualtrics report indicated that 367 responses to the survey were completed. However, after cleaning the data, 14 surveys were removed due to incompleteness, leaving 353 surveys to be analyzed as the data



set.

The survey included a section of demographic questions to measure the audience surveyed. Of the 367 surveys taken, 353 were completed in the analysis, and 114 (32%) were male and 239 (68%) were female. Of the participants surveyed, 219 (61.5%) were single, 131 (36.8%) were in a committed relationship, 3 (0.8%) were married, and 3 (0.8%) were divorced. 352 (98.9%) of the participants surveyed were in the 18-29 age range, while 4 (1.1%) participants were in the 30-39 age range. When participants were asked to select *all* mediums that they use to access Facebook, 292 (82%) used a home computer, 29 (8.1%) used a work computer, 310 (87.1%) used a personal cell phone, 3 (0.8%) said they used a work cell phone, and 73 (20.5%) used a tablet. 12 (3.4%) of participants additionally selected the “Other” category. Some of the responses for the “Other” category include the following: 1 (0.3%) participant said s/he deleted the Facebook account, 3 (0.9) reported they did not have a Facebook profile, 3 (0.9%) claimed to access Facebook through a personal laptop, 1 (.3%) said s/he used a school computer, and 1 (0.3%) said s/he used an iPod touch to access Facebook.

Upon securing IRB approval, the researcher asked department instructors to email a link to a Qualtrics online survey to students enrolled in Communication classes. The surveys were prefaced with an informed consent form, which briefly defined voluntary disclosure, the purpose of the survey and any mandatory information required. The university IRB process had been completed and approval was given for this study. The survey was voluntary and anonymous for the participants who had the choice to stop or contact the researcher and withdraw from

the study later. Participation took place outside of the classroom and undergraduate participants received an incentive for taking the survey (e.g., class bonus points if the instructor allowed).

## **Measures**

Pre-existing tested deception scales were used for the quantitative survey tool named Paulhus Deception Scales (PDS): The balanced inventory of desirable responding-7, taken from Paulhus (1998). This scale asks participants to self-report their involvement with deception using the Paulhus Deception Scales, a seven-point scale to measure deceptive behaviors with a total of 40 questions, and the researcher added “on Facebook” to some of the questions. The researcher added 30 additional questions to the survey that consisted of demographic questions and relational deception questions regarding Facebook that were interesting to the researcher. The slightly modified survey statements taken from the Paulhus Deception Scale are the following: (1) My first impressions of people usually turn out to be right on Facebook; (2) It would be hard for me to break any of my bad habits on Facebook; (3) I don't care to know what other people really think of me on Facebook; (4) I have not always been honest with myself; (5) I always know why I like things; (6) When my emotions are aroused on Facebook, it biases my thinking; (7) Once I've made up my mind, other people cannot change my opinion; (8) I am not a safe driver when I exceed the speed limit; (9) I am fully in control of my own fate; (10) It's hard for me to shut off a disturbing thought; (11) I never regret my decisions on Facebook; (12) I sometimes lose out on things because I can't make up my mind soon enough; (13) The reason I vote is because my vote can make a difference; (14) People don't seem

to notice me and my abilities on Facebook; (15) I am a completely rational person on Facebook; (16) I rarely appreciate criticism on Facebook; (17) I am not very confident of my judgments on Facebook; (18) I have sometimes doubted my ability as a lover; (19) It's all right with me if some people happen to dislike me on Facebook; (20) I'm just an average person; (21) I sometimes tell lies on Facebook if I have to; (22) I never cover up my mistakes on Facebook; (23) There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone on Facebook; (24) I never swear on Facebook; (25) I sometimes try to get even on Facebook rather than forgive and forget; (26) I always obey laws, even if I'm unlikely to get caught; (27) I have said something bad about a friend behind his or her back on Facebook; (28) When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening; (29) I have received too much change from a salesperson without telling him or her; (30) I always declare everything at customs; (31) When I was young, I sometimes stole things; (32) I have never dropped litter on the street; (33) I sometimes drive faster than the speed limit; (34) I never read sexy books or magazines; (35) I have done things on Facebook that I don't tell other people about; (36) I never take things that don't belong to me; (37) I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I wasn't really sick; (38) I have never damaged a library book or store merchandise without reporting it; (39) I have some pretty awful Facebook habits; and (40) I don't gossip about other people's business on Facebook.

Additional survey questions added to the survey are the following: (1) What is your gender?; (2) What is your age?; (3) What is your relationship status?; (4) How often do you use Facebook?; (5) How do you access Facebook?; (6) I admit my

wrongdoing when I am caught lying on Facebook; (7) I am not the best romantic partner; (8) I speak up when I know about others' infidelity (physical or emotional); (9) I come clean about my lies; (10) I act single around others at the beginning of a relationship; (11) I look at others' sexy pictures on Facebook; (12) I have problems committing to one romantic partner; (13) I flirt on Facebook with others besides my romantic partner; (14) I meet potential romantic partners through Facebook; (15) I interact with my romantic partner on Facebook; (16) I use Facebook to keep track of romantic ex-partners; (17) I use Facebook to contact previous romantic partners; (18) I interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook; (19) I put my romantic partner first; (20) I feel satisfied with my romantic relationships; (21) I have known about others' infidelity (physical or emotional) and done nothing about it; (22) I am judgmental of others' decisions while in a committed relationship; (23) I am respectful of my romantic partner; (24) I have cheated on my romantic partner; (25) I have intentionally lied to my romantic partner; (26) I have been involved in an emotional romantic relationship with someone other than my romantic partner; (27) I am suspicious my romantic partner is cheating on me through Facebook; (28) I would feel comfortable giving my romantic partner my Facebook password; (29) I know of relationships that have ended because of Facebook; and (30) It is appropriate to interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook.

**Validity and reliability for the Paulhus deception scales.** The balanced inventory of desirable responding-7, taken from Paulhus (1998) used Cronbach alphas that were in the acceptable range. Internal reliability was measured with the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was an overall summary coefficient. All values

of Cronbach's alpha were above .80 in past studies using PDS, which is considered excellent. These items have face validity and structural validity for measuring response bias. First, they all are worded in such a fashion that legitimate claims to the desirable response guarantees further that response bias, rather than personality content, is being captured. Evidence for structural validity lies in the pattern of relations with established measures of desirable responding. The correlations among the 10 variables were factored using principal-components extraction, followed by a Varimax rotation. The first three Eigen values were 5.2, 2.43 and .91 (Paulus, 1998).

**MANOVA.** Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to analyze the differences between gender of the subjects and the questions about relational deception. SPSS was used to conduct the MANOVAs. The independent variables are gender with two levels: male and female; and relationship status with four levels: single, in a committed relationship, married, and divorced. The dependent variables are the questions about deception. MANOVA was conducted to evaluate the differences between gender and relationship status of the subjects using questions about deception. Follow-up tests were conducted.

This chapter presented the design of the study, including the demographics of the sample, the procedure for data collection and the instrumentation. Data was collected in compliance with the research guidelines set by the Auburn University Institutional Review Board. The subsequent section will present an analysis of the data gathered using SPSS.

### **Chapter 3: Results**

This study examines relational deception on Facebook in at a large Southern university measured by the Paulhus Deception Scales (1998) and 30 questions from the researcher. This chapter will include demographic results from the data, results from analysis of the two hypotheses presented, as well as a summary of the findings.

The sample population for this study included 353 students enrolled in a public university in the southeastern United States during the spring semester 2013. The students were asked to answer demographic questions and questions relating to relational deception on Facebook. Of the 367 surveys taken, 353 were completed in the analysis, and 114 (32%) were male and 239 (68%) were female. Of the participants surveyed 219 (61.5%) were single, 131 (36.8%) were in a committed relationship, 3 (0.8%) were married, and 3 (0.8%) were divorced. 352 (98.9%) of the participants surveyed were in the 18-29 age range, while 4 (1.1%) participants were in the 30-39 age range. When participants were asked to select all mediums that they use to access Facebook, 292 (82%) used a home computer, 29 (8.1%) used a work computer, 310 (87.1%) used a personal cell phone, 3 (0.8 %) said they used a work cell phone, and 73 (20.5%) used a tablet. 12 (3.4%) of participants additionally selected the “Other” category. Some results from the “Other” category included the following: 1 (0.3%) participant said s/he deleted the Facebook account, 3 (0.9) reported that they did not have a Facebook profile, 3 (0.9%) claimed to access Facebook through a personal laptop, 1 (.3%) said s/he used a school computer, and 1 (0.3%) said s/he used an iPod touch to access Facebook.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to analyze the differences between gender and relationship status of the subject and questions about relational deceptive behavior on Facebook. SPSS software was used to conduct the MANOVAs.

To answer hypotheses one and two a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the differences between gender, relationship status with deception on Facebook. The independent variables are gender with two levels: *male* and *female*; and relationship status with four levels: *single*, *in a committed relationship*, *married*, and *divorced*. The dependent variables are the 65 questions about relational deception on Facebook.

The first hypothesis states:

H1: Female Facebook users will use Facebook for relational deception more often than male Facebook users.

Of the 65 variables on the deception scale, 22 were found to be significant when analyzing gender. The questions that were not germane towards deception are not reported on. These are: (1) My first impressions of people usually turn out to be right on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 4.54$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ . (2) It would be hard for me to break any of my bad habits on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 11.88$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .04$ . (3) I don't care to know what other people really think of me on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 10.69$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$ . (4) When my emotions are aroused on Facebook, it biases my thinking, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 6.523$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$ . (5) The reason I vote is because my vote can make a difference, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 4.98$ ,  $p <$

.01,  $\eta^2 = .02$ . (6) I rarely appreciate criticism on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 11.67, p < .01, \eta^2 = .04$ . (7) It's all right with me if some people happen to dislike me on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 18.35, p < .01, \eta^2 = .06$ . (8) I'm just an average person, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 10.25, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$ . (9) There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 5.80, p < .01, \eta^2 = .02$ . (10) I never swear on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 7.67, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$ . (11) When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 8.15, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$ . (12) I have done things on Facebook that I don't tell other people about, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 8.88, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$ . (13) I look at others' sexy pictures on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 45.56, p < .01, \eta^2 = .13$ . (14) I have problems committing to one romantic partner, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 5.04, p < .01, \eta^2 = .02$ . (15) I flirt on Facebook with others besides my romantic partner, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 6.95, p < .01, \eta^2 = .02$ . (16) I meet potential romantic partners through Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 8.14, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$ . (17) I use Facebook to keep track of romantic ex-partners, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 3.93, p < .01, \eta^2 = .01$ . (21) I use Facebook to contact previous romantic partners, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 6.26, p < .01, \eta^2 = .02$ . (18) I interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 8.68, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$ . (19) I am judgmental of others' decisions while in a committed relationship, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 5.07, p < .01, \eta^2 = .02$ . (20) I would feel comfortable giving my romantic partner my Facebook password, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 9.06, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$ .



(21) It is appropriate to interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 6.71$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ . (22) I have lied about my relationship status on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .52,  $F(1,304) = 4.01$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ . The means and standard deviations for deception on Facebook by participant gender are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Group Means and Standard Deviations for Deception on Facebook by Participant Gender for significant findings*

Gender Dimensions	Mean	SD
My first impressions of people usually turn out to be right on Facebook		
<i>Female</i>	3.35*	0.96
<i>Male</i>	3.10	0.98
It would be hard for me to break any of my bad habits on Facebook		
<i>Female</i>	2.54*	1.19
<i>Male</i>	2.04	1.13
I don't care to know what other people really think of me on Facebook		
<i>Female</i>	2.79	1.28
<i>Male</i>	3.30*	1.17
When my emotions are aroused on Facebook, it biases my thinking		
<i>Female</i>	3.05*	1.23
<i>Male</i>	2.67	1.17
I rarely appreciate criticism on Facebook		

<i>Female</i>	3.37*	1.15
<i>Male</i>	2.89	1.03
It's all right with me if some people happen to dislike me on Facebook		
<i>Female</i>	3.56	1.13
<i>Male</i>	4.13*	0.91
I'm just an average person		
<i>Female</i>	3.16*	1.35
<i>Male</i>	2.62	1.38
There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone on Facebook		
<i>Female</i>	1.53	0.91
<i>Male</i>	1.83*	1.16
I never swear on Facebook		
<i>Female</i>	3.68*	1.54
<i>Male</i>	3.15	1.50
When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening		
<i>Female</i>	2.33	1.05
<i>Male</i>	2.72*	1.18
I have done things on Facebook that I don't tell other people about		
<i>Female</i>	2.01	1.34
<i>Male</i>	2.52*	1.44
I look at others' sexy pictures on Facebook		
<i>Female</i>	1.79	1.01
<i>Male</i>	2.69*	1.20
I have problems committing to one romantic partner		
<i>Female</i>	1.63	0.99
<i>Male</i>	1.91*	1.09
I flirt on Facebook with others besides my romantic partner		
<i>Female</i>	1.46	0.82
<i>Male</i>	1.74*	1.00
I meet potential romantic partners through Facebook		
<i>Female</i>	1.32	0.68
<i>Male</i>	1.58*	0.83
I use Facebook to keep track of romantic ex-partners		
<i>Female</i>	2.60*	1.30
<i>Male</i>	2.29	1.11
I use Facebook to contact previous		

romantic partners		
<i>Female</i>	1.67	0.88
<i>Male</i>	1.96*	1.05
I interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook		
<i>Female</i>	1.76	0.88
<i>Male</i>	2.10*	1.03
I am judgmental of others' decisions while in a committed relationship		
<i>Female</i>	3.10*	1.03
<i>Male</i>	2.81	1.08
I would feel comfortable giving my romantic partner my Facebook password		
<i>Female</i>	3.66*	1.24
<i>Male</i>	3.17	1.42
It is appropriate to interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook		
<i>Female</i>	2.61	1.07
<i>Male</i>	2.96*	1.09
I have lied about my relationship status on Facebook		
<i>Female</i>	1.69	1.10
<i>Male</i>	1.98*	1.23

*Note:* \*Means of this gender differs significantly from means of other gender at  $p < .01$   
Total Respondents: 353

Of the significant variables, *males* self-reported significantly higher than *females* for the statements: I have lied about my relationship status on Facebook; It is appropriate to interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook; I interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook; I use Facebook to contact previous romantic partners; I meet potential romantic partners through Facebook; I flirt on Facebook with others besides my romantic partner; I have problems committing to one romantic partner; I look at others' sexy pictures on Facebook; I have done things on Facebook that I don't tell other people about; When I hear people talking privately, I avoid

listening; There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone on Facebook; It's all right with me if some people happen to dislike me on Facebook; I don't care to know what other people really think of me on Facebook. *Females* self-reported significantly higher than *males* on their deception for twelve significant statements which included: My first impressions of people usually turn out to be right on Facebook; It would be hard for me to break any of my bad habits on Facebook; When my emotions are aroused on Facebook, it biases my thinking; I rarely appreciate criticism on Facebook; I'm just an average person; I never swear on Facebook; I use Facebook to keep track of romantic ex-partners; I am judgmental of others' decisions while in a committed relationship; I would feel comfortable giving my romantic partner my Facebook.

To answer hypothesis two, a MANOVA was conducted to evaluate the differences between the independent variable relationship status and the dependent variables about relational deception on Facebook. The independent variable of relationship status has four levels: *single*, *in a committed relationship*, *married*, and *divorced*. The dependent variables are the 65 questions about relational deception on Facebook. The questions that were not germane towards deception are not reported on.

The second hypothesis states:

H2: Facebook users in a committed romantic relationship will use Facebook for relational deception more often than Facebook users who are not in a committed romantic relationship.

Of the 65 dependent variables on the deception scale, 16 were found to be significant for participant relationship status: post hoc analyses to the univariate

ANOVA for the relationship status consisted of conducting pairwise comparisons to find which relationship status affected deception on Facebook most strongly. (1) The category *married* was significantly different than *single*, *in a committed relationship*, and *divorced* for the statement, I sometimes try to get even on Facebook rather than forgive and forget, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 4.19$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .04$  (2) No categories were significantly different than the others for the statement, I admit my wrongdoing when I am caught lying on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 2.64$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .26$  (3) No categories were significantly different than the others for the statement, I am not the best romantic partner, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 2.73$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .26$  (4) The category *single* was significantly different than *in a committed relationship* for the statement, I act single around others at the beginning of a relationship, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 4.25$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .04$  (5) The category *single* was significantly different than *in a committed relationship* for the statement, I look at others' sexy pictures on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 3.32$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .32$  (6) The category *single* was significantly different than *in a committed relationship* for the statement, I have problems committing to one romantic partner, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 8.37$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$  (7) The category *single* was significantly different than *in a committed relationship* for the statement, I flirt on Facebook with others besides my romantic partner, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 5.25$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .05$  (8) The category *single* was significantly different than *in a committed relationship* for the statement, I use Facebook to keep track of romantic ex-partners, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 4.89$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .46$  (9) The category *single* was significantly different than *in a*

*committed relationship* for the statement, I use Facebook to contact previous romantic partners, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 10.11$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .09$  (10) The category *single* was significantly different than *in a committed relationship* for the statement, I interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 8.30$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$  (11) The category *single* was significantly different than *in a committed relationship* for the statement, I put my romantic partner first, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 8.34$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$  (12) The category *single* was significantly different than *in a committed relationship* and *married*, and the category *in a committed relationship* was significantly different than *divorced* for the statement, I feel satisfied with my romantic relationships, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 35.44$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .26$  (13) The category *in a committed relationship* was significantly different than *single* and *divorced* for the statement, I am respectful of my romantic partner, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 7.66$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .07$  (14) No categories were significantly different than the others for the statement, I have been involved in an emotional romantic relationship with someone other than my romantic partner, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 3.63$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .04$  (15) The category *single* was significantly different than *in a committed relationship* for the statement, I would feel comfortable giving my romantic partner my Facebook password, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 9.94$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .09$  (16) The category *single* was significantly different than *in a committed relationship* for the statement, It is appropriate to interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook, Wilks's Lambda = .29,  $F(3,302) = 4.34$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .04$ . The means and standard

deviations for Deception on Facebook by Participant Relationship Status are presented in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Group Means and Standard Deviations for Deception on Facebook by Participant Relationship Status for significant findings*

Relationship Status Dimensions	Mean	SD
I sometimes try to get even on Facebook rather than forgive and forget		
<i>Single</i>	1.82	1.14
<i>In a committed relationship</i>	1.61	1.03
<i>Married</i>	4.00*	0.00
<i>Divorced</i>	1.00	0.00
I admit my wrongdoing when I am caught lying on Facebook	3.79	1.19
I am not the best romantic partner	2.33	0.94
I act single around others at the beginning of a relationship		
<i>Single</i>	2.34*	1.26
<i>In a committed relationship</i>	1.87	0.94
I look at others' sexy pictures on Facebook		
<i>Single</i>	2.22*	1.23
<i>In a committed relationship</i>	1.80	0.97
I have problems committing to one romantic partner		
<i>Single</i>	1.94*	1.13
<i>In a committed relationship</i>	1.37	0.74
I flirt on Facebook with others besides my romantic partner		
<i>Single</i>	1.70*	0.98
<i>In a committed relationship</i>	1.31	0.66

I use Facebook to keep track of romantic ex-partners		
<i>Single</i>	2.70*	1.26
<i>In a committed relationship</i>	2.24	1.18
I use Facebook to contact previous romantic partners		
<i>Single</i>	1.98*	1.00
<i>In a committed relationship</i>	1.41	0.73
I interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook		
<i>Single</i>	2.07*	0.98
<i>In a committed relationship</i>	1.54	0.80
I put my romantic partner first		
<i>Single</i>	3.89	0.81
<i>In a committed relationship</i>	4.30*	0.76
I feel satisfied with my romantic relationships		
<i>Single</i>	3.35	0.97
<i>In a committed relationship</i>	4.38	0.71
<i>Married</i>	5.00*	0.00
<i>Divorced</i>	3.00	0.00
I am respectful of my romantic partner		
<i>In a committed relationship</i>	4.57*	0.58
<i>Single</i>	4.23	0.83
<i>Divorced</i>	3.33	0.58
I have been involved in an emotional romantic relationship with someone other than my romantic partner	1.83	1.17
I would feel comfortable giving my romantic partner my Facebook password		
<i>Single</i>	3.20	1.28
<i>In a committed relationship</i>	3.97*	1.25
It is appropriate to interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook		
<i>Single</i>	2.89*	1.04



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*Note:* \*Mean of this relationship status differs significantly from means of other relationship statuses at  $p < .01$  Total Respondents: 353

Of the significant variables, *single* participants self-reported significantly higher than participants *in a committed relationship* for the statements: I act single around others at the beginning of a relationship; I look at others' sexy pictures on Facebook; I have problems committing to one romantic partner; I flirt on Facebook with others besides my romantic partner; I use Facebook to keep track of romantic ex-partners; I use Facebook to contact previous romantic partners; I interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook; It is appropriate to interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook. *Married* participants self-reported significantly higher than, and *divorced* participants, and participants *in a committed relationship*, for the statements: I feel satisfied with my romantic relationships and I sometimes try to get even on Facebook rather than forgive and forget. Participants *in a committed relationship* self-reported significantly higher than *single* participants for the statements: I would feel comfortable giving my romantic partner my Facebook password and I put my romantic partner first. Participants *in a committed relationship* self-reported significantly higher than *single* and *divorced* participants for the statement: I am respectful of my romantic partner. There was no significant differences between the relationship statuses, *single*, *in a committed relationship*, *married*, and *divorced*, for the following statements: I am not the best romantic partner; I admit my wrongdoing when I am caught lying on Facebook; I have been involved in an emotional romantic relationship with someone other than my romantic partner.

This chapter presented results of this study investigating the relationship between deception on Facebook and the independent variables in relation to gender and relationship status. Three hundred and fifty-three students participated in the study. Collected data included the participant's scores on the Qualtrics survey from the Paulhus Deception Scale and the researcher's scale along with demographic information. Based on statistical analysis, a significant relationship was indicated for several variables of each hypothesis; therefore, both hypotheses were partially supported.

## Chapter 4: Discussion

The results of this study concluded that when examining the independent variables of participants' gender, relationship status, and the dependent variables which were survey questions analyzing deception, partially significant results were obtained when examining participants using the Paulhus Deception Scale (PDS) and the researcher's additional survey questions. The results for hypothesis one and two, were all partially significant.

Hypothesis one states *female* Facebook users will use Facebook for relational deception more often than *male* Facebook users. Hypothesis one was partially supported by the results of this study. Of the twenty-six significant statements, *males* self-reported significantly higher than *females* for the fourteen following statements, many of which were negative: (1) I have lied about my relationship status on Facebook; (2) It is appropriate to interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook; (3) I interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook; (4) I use Facebook to contact previous romantic partners; (5) I meet potential romantic partners through Facebook; (6) I flirt on Facebook with others besides my romantic partner; (7) I have problems committing to one romantic partner; (8) I look at others' sexy pictures on Facebook; (9) I have done things on Facebook that I don't tell other people about; (10) When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening; (11) There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone on Facebook; (12) It's all right with me if some people happen to dislike me on Facebook; and (14) I don't care to know what other people really think of me on Facebook. *Females* self-reported on their deception significantly higher than *males* for nine significant

statements, many of which were positive, include: (1) My first impressions of people usually turn out to be right on Facebook; (2) It would be hard for me to break any of my bad habits on Facebook; (3) When my emotions are aroused on Facebook, it biases my thinking; (4) I rarely appreciate criticism on Facebook; (5) I'm just an average person; (6) I never swear on Facebook; (7) I use Facebook to keep track of romantic ex-partners; (8) I am judgmental of others' decisions while in a committed relationship; (9) I would feel comfortable giving my romantic partner my Facebook.

As noted in the literature review, Baym, Zhang, Kunkel, Ledbetter, and Lin (2007) claim that there are small differences in how women and men understand and evaluate their personal relationships on and offline could determine the difference in interactions through online media. Some research claims that women value close relationships more than men (Duck & Wright, 1993). Additionally, certain studies indicate that women are more accurate receivers and senders of non-verbal communication messages (Hall, 1998). Women have been found to disclose information more often than men, while men are more likely than women to flirt online. Surprisingly, Youn (2005) found females to be more concerned than women with risks associated with disclosing. On the other hand, men were more attracted to the benefits of connecting online and were more willing than women to disclose risky information while flirting online (Waters & Ackerman, 2011).

Perhaps females did not rate significantly higher as often as males because they were not as honest with their self-reporting of their deception. Females rated themselves higher than males for statements that reflected positively on their character and for the statements that were not as relevant to deception on Facebook.

Male participants rated higher for more negative statements than females, possibly because they self-reported higher for questions that reflected risky and uncaring characteristics. Males self-reported deception more often than did females in this study. This difference could result because overall, females possibly self-report deception less often or because females possibly “cheat smarter” than males.

The second hypothesis, Facebook users in a committed romantic relationship will use Facebook for relational deception more often than Facebook users who are not in a committed romantic relationship, was partially supported in that *single* participants rated higher more often than participants *in a committed relationship*, and *married* and *divorced* participants. Of the sixteen significant variables, participants *in a committed relationship* self-reported significantly higher than *single* participants for two statements: (1) I would feel comfortable giving my romantic partner my Facebook password; and (2) I put my romantic partner first. Participants *in a committed relationship* self-reported significantly higher than *single* and *divorced* participants for the statement: (1) I am respectful of my romantic partner. *Single* participants self-reported significantly higher than participants *in a committed relationship* for the following eight statements: (1) I act single around others at the beginning of a relationship; (2) I look at others’ sexy pictures on Facebook; (3) I have problems committing to one romantic partner; (4) I flirt on Facebook with others besides my romantic partner; (5) I use Facebook to keep track of romantic ex-partners; (6) I use Facebook to contact previous romantic partners; (7) I interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook; and (8) It is appropriate to interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook. *Married* participants self-reported

significantly higher than *divorced* participants and participants *in a committed relationship* for the following two statements: (1) I feel satisfied with my romantic relationships; and (2) I sometimes try to get even on Facebook rather than forgive and forget. There was no significant differences between the relationship statuses, *single*, *in a committed relationship*, *married*, and *divorced* for the following statements: (1) I am not the best romantic partner; (2) I admit my wrongdoing when I am caught lying on Facebook; and (3) I have been involved in an emotional romantic relationship with someone other than my romantic partner.

These results are congruent with research by Baym, Zhang, and Lin (2004) who found that the type of relationship influences the level of interaction, the expectations, the relational satisfaction, and the quality of the online interpersonal interaction. While online and offline interactions within romantic relationships and cross-sex friendships have differences, these differences progress similarly on and offline as the relationships develop. Mesch and Talmud (2006) and Parks and Roberts (1998) claim that initially, online relationships are less developed than offline interactions. The differences between the two types of relationships diminish over time and with more interactions. Baym, Zhang, and Lin (2004) and Baym et al., (2007) show that college students rarely use the Internet to connect and communicate with individuals they do not already communicate with through other mediums. Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) state SNSs are used most often for keeping in touch with people that have been met elsewhere offline. This is reflected in the results of the study as participants self-reported keeping track of and interacting with ex-romantic partners through Facebook.

Although previous studies examining participants' online relationships concluded that SNSs are used for relational maintenance much more often than relational creation (Baym, 2011), the findings from this present study differed from those studies. This possibly occurred because most of the participants self-reported a *single* relationship status, and therefore this relationship status was not significantly different than participants *in a committed relationship, married relationship, or divorced relationship*.

### **Limitations**

A limitation of this study is the uneven ratio of the 353 participants that completed in the analysis; 114 (32%) were male and 239 (68%) were female. Additionally, the relationship statuses of the participants were skewed. Of the participants surveyed, 219 (61.5%) were single, 131 (36.8%) were in a committed relationship, 3 (0.8%) were married, and 3 (0.8%) were divorced. Because 352 (98.9%) of the participants surveyed were in the 18-29 age range, and 4 (1.1%) participants were in the 30-39 age range, age was not considered as a differential factor in determining significance for this study.

Another limitation of this study may be that the nearly all of the participants were in a basic public speaking course in the communication department at a large southern university. The face validity of the survey used for this study was off because the researcher added "on Facebook" to the many of the questions taken from the PDS survey. Potentially, this addition made some questions vague to the participants, resulting in inaccurate self-reporting. Finally, the Paulus Deception Scale (PDS) included general statements that measured participants' general self-

reporting of their day-to-day and lifelong deception, rather than specifically targeting deception on Facebook. Using a scale that is specifically tailored to measure interpersonal deception online could produce more direct results as to whether gender, relationship status, and time spent online per week were significantly different in affecting participants' relational deception online.

### **Future Research**

In the future, research in this area could consider examining relational deception on Facebook with various age groups. Research could also consider surveying individuals other than undergraduates. More focused research using individuals who have a variety of relationship statuses would be beneficial since the majority of participants in this study were not married or divorced. It would also be interesting to examine perceived deception from an outsiders' perspective of Facebook profiles. A future study might also redefine the methodology to include qualitative analyses.

### **Conclusion**

Online deception occurs so often, it is essential to increase understanding of interpersonal communication, computer-mediated communication, deception, Facebook, infidelity, and how these areas are intertwined online. The review of literature of these areas exposed several considerable gaps in current research. The first gap is that social media is not necessarily recognized as a channel for interpersonal communication; therefore, Interpersonal Deception Theory (Buller & Burgoon, 1996) had not been applied to computer-mediated communication such as social networking sites until this study. The review of previous research found that



social networking sites are developing interpersonal relationships, which is why Facebook is the medium that deceivers use to manipulate their victims. There is also a gap in research analyzing deception online. Until recently, research regarding interpersonal communication has focused mostly on face-to-face interactions. As communication continues to occur through multiple new mediums, such as Facebook, challenges arise for researchers to stay current and informed. Because technology and communication are constantly evolving and converging, the definitions of interpersonal communication and computer-mediated communication continue to develop. Likewise, the ways Internet users employ online deception increase and evolve. Now that connecting online has become so popular, terms surrounding adulterous and deceptive acts could apply to all types of infidelity.

This paper attempted to fill the gaps in early research by investigating Facebook users' gender and relationship status. These independent variables were analyzed to discover if they correlate with relational deception on Facebook. A total of 353 undergraduate students enrolled in a general public speaking course participated in a survey about their romantic relational deception on Facebook. Results from a MANOVA showed that male participants and participants who are in a committed relationship self-reported significantly higher relational deception on Facebook. The deceptive behavior can start with a simple poke, an introductory inbox message, a friendly wall post, and even an add friend request.

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## Appendix A: Qualtrics Survey

▼ Relational Deception on Facebook Survey

Q15

Information Letter for a Research Study entitled  
"Relational Deception on Facebook: Effects of Gender and Marital Status"

You are invited to participate in a research study to learn about the effects of gender and marital status on levels of relational deception on Facebook. This study is being conducted by Melissa McNelis under the direction of Dr. Susan Waters in the Auburn University Department of Communication. You were selected as a possible participant because you are age 19 or older.

Taking part in this study involves completing a web survey that will take about 5-10 minutes. This survey contains questions about your opinions and perceptions about relational deception on Facebook.

The information you provide will be kept completely anonymous and confidential. Data collected for survey use will be anonymous. Only participants enrolled a course in the Communication and Journalism Department at Auburn University can receive extra credit. The exact value of participation will be determined by the individual instructor. If a participant wishes to receive extra credit (if offered by the instructor), he or she should print out the last page of the survey, write his or her name on the paper, and turn it in to his or her instructor. Names will not be linked to the survey. Only the principal investigator and her advisor will have access to the data. The data will be password protected. Only summarized data will be presented at meetings or in publications.

There will be no direct benefits to you, but the findings will be useful to the communication profession and educators for understanding relational deception on Facebook. The chief risk is that some of the questions may make you uncomfortable. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer.

If you have questions about this study, please contact Melissa McNelis at [MJM0036@auburn.edu](mailto:MJM0036@auburn.edu) or Susan Waters at [sew0013@auburn.edu](mailto:sew0013@auburn.edu).

**If you have questions about your rights as a research participant**, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at [hsubjec@auburn.edu](mailto:hsubjec@auburn.edu) or [IRBChair@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBChair@auburn.edu).

**YOUR PARTICIPATION IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY.** You are free not to participate or you may stop participating any time before you submit your answers.

If you understand the statements above, are at least 19 years old, and freely consent to be in this study, click on the link to the survey to begin. A copy of this document can be printed for you to keep.

Thank you!

Melissa McNelis

"The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from October 30, 2012 to October 29, 2015. Protocol #12-330 EX 1210 "

Q1

What is your gender?

- Male  
 Female

Q2

Select your age range from the following:

- 18-29  
 30-39  
 40-49  
 50 or older

Q3

Choose your relationship status from the following:

- single  
 in a committed relationship  
 married  
 divorced

Q4

How often do you use Facebook per week?

- less than 1 hour  
 1-5 hours  
 6-10 hours  
 11-15 hours  
 16 hours or more

**Q5** How do you access Facebook? (select all that apply)

- home computer
- work computer
- personal cell phone
- work cell phone
- tablet
- other (indicate below)

**Q16** Read each statement, and select the answer that best describes you, from *Not True* to *Very True*.

	Not True	Somewhat Not True	Neutral	Somewhat True	Very True
My first impressions of people usually turn out to be right on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It would be hard for me to break any of my bad habits on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't care to know what other people really think of me on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have not always been honest with myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always know why I like things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When my emotions are aroused on Facebook, it biases my thinking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Once I've made up my mind, other people cannot change my opinion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not a safe driver when I exceed the speed limit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q17** Read each statement, and select the answer that best describes you, from *Not True* to *Very True*.

	Not True	Somewhat Not True	Neutral	Somewhat True	Very True
I am fully in control of my own fate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It's hard for me to shut off a disturbing thought.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I never regret my decisions on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes lose out on things because I can't make up my mind soon enough.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The reason I vote is because my vote can make a difference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People don't seem to notice me and my abilities on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a completely rational person on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I rarely appreciate criticism on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q18** Read each statement, and select the answer that best describes you, from *Not True* to *Very True*.

	Not True	Somewhat Not True	Neutral	Somewhat True	Very True
I am not very confident of my judgments on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have sometimes doubted my ability as a lover.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It's all right with me if some people happen to dislike me on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm just an average person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes tell lies on Facebook if I have to.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I never cover up my mistakes on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I never swear on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q19

Read each statement, and select the answer that best describes you, from *Not True* to *Very True*.

	Not True	Somewhat Not True	Neutral	Somewhat True	Very True
I sometimes try to get even on Facebook rather than forgive and forget.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always obey laws, even if I'm unlikely to get caught.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have said something bad about a friend behind his or her back on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have received too much change from a salesperson without telling him or her.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always declare everything at customs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I was young, I sometimes stole things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have never dropped litter on the street.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q20

Read each statement, and select the answer that best describes you, from *Not True* to *Very True*.

	Not True	Somewhat Not True	Neutral	Somewhat True	Very True
I sometimes drive faster than the speed limit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I never read sexy books or magazines.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have done things on Facebook that I don't tell other people about.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I never take things that don't belong to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I wasn't really sick.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have never damaged a library book or store merchandise without reporting it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have some pretty awful Facebook habits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't gossip about other people's business on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q21

Read each statement, and select the answer that best describes you, from *Never* to *Always*.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
I admit my wrongdoing when I am caught lying on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not the best romantic partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I speak up when I know about others' infidelity (physical or emotional).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I come clean about my lies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I act single around others at the beginning of a relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I look at others' sexy pictures on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have problems committing to one romantic partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I flirt on Facebook with others besides my romantic partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I meet potential romantic partners through Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I interact with my romantic partner on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use Facebook to keep track of romantic ex-partners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use Facebook to contact previous romantic partners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Q22

Click to write the question text



	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I put my romantic partner first.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel satisfied with my romantic relationships.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have known about others' infidelity (physical or emotional) and done nothing about it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am judgmental of others' decisions while in a committed relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am respectful of my romantic partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have cheated on my romantic partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have intentionally lied to my romantic partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been involved in an emotional romantic relationship with someone other than my romantic partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am suspicious my romantic partner is cheating on me through Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel comfortable giving my romantic partner my Facebook password.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know of relationships that have ended because of Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is appropriate to interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have lied about my relationship status on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendix B: Breakdown of Survey Questions

### Slightly Modified Paulhus Deception Survey Questions

Section 1 (questions 1-40) are the exact questions from the original PDS Survey with the addition of “on Facebook” to some of the questions. Section 2 (questions 41-71) includes demographics and additional questions that the researcher included.

1. My first impressions of people usually turn out to be right on Facebook.
2. It would be hard for me to break any of my bad habits on Facebook.
3. I don't care to know what other people really think of me on Facebook.
4. I have not always been honest with myself.
5. I always know why I like things.
6. When my emotions are aroused on Facebook, it biases my thinking.
7. Once I've made up my mind, other people cannot change my opinion.
8. I am not a safe driver when I exceed the speed limit.
9. I am fully in control of my own fate.
10. It's hard for me to shut off a disturbing thought.
11. I never regret my decisions on Facebook.
12. I sometimes lose out on things because I can't make up my mind soon enough.
13. The reason I vote is because my vote can make a difference.
14. People don't seem to notice me and my abilities on Facebook.
15. I am a completely rational person on Facebook.
16. I rarely appreciate criticism on Facebook.
17. I am not very confident of my judgments on Facebook.
18. I have sometimes doubted my ability as a lover.
19. It's all right with me if some people happen to dislike me on Facebook.
20. I'm just an average person.
21. I sometimes tell lies on Facebook if I have to.
22. I never cover up my mistakes on Facebook.
23. There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone on Facebook.
24. I never swear on Facebook.
25. I sometimes try to get even on Facebook rather than forgive and forget.
26. I always obey laws, even if I'm unlikely to get caught.
27. I have said something bad about a friend behind his or her back on Facebook.
28. When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening.
29. I have received too much change from a salesperson without telling him or her.
30. I always declare everything at customs.
31. When I was young, I sometimes stole things.
32. I have never dropped litter on the street.
33. I sometimes drive faster than the speed limit.
34. I never read sexy books or magazines.

35. I have done things on Facebook that I don't tell other people about.
36. I never take things that don't belong to me.
37. I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I wasn't really sick.
38. I have never damaged a library book or store merchandise without reporting it.
39. I have some pretty awful Facebook habits.
40. I don't gossip about other people's business on Facebook.

Additional survey questions:

41. What is your gender?
42. What is your age?
43. What is your relationship status?
44. How often do you use Facebook?
45. How do you access Facebook?
46. I admit my wrongdoing when I am caught lying on Facebook.
47. I am not the best romantic partner.
48. I speak up when I know about others' infidelity (physical or emotional).
49. I come clean about my lies.
50. I act single around others at the beginning of a relationship.
51. I look at others' sexy pictures on Facebook.
52. I have problems committing to one romantic partner.
53. I flirt on Facebook with others besides my romantic partner.
54. I meet potential romantic partners through Facebook.
55. I interact with my romantic partner on Facebook.
56. I use Facebook to keep track of romantic ex-partners.
57. I use Facebook to contact previous romantic partners.
58. I interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook.
59. I put my romantic partner first.
60. I feel satisfied with my romantic relationships.
61. I have known about others' infidelity (physical or emotional) and done nothing about it.
62. I am judgmental of others' decisions while in a committed relationship.
63. I am respectful of my romantic partner.
64. I have cheated on my romantic partner.
65. I have intentionally lied to my romantic partner.
66. I have been involved in an emotional romantic relationship with someone other than my romantic partner.
67. I am suspicious my romantic partner is cheating on me through Facebook.
68. I would feel comfortable giving my romantic partner my Facebook password.
69. I know of relationships that have ended because of Facebook.
70. It is appropriate to interact with previous romantic partners on Facebook.

## Appendix C: Original PDS Survey

1. My first impressions of people usually turn out to be right.
2. It would be hard for me to break any of my bad habits.
3. I don't care to know what other people really think of me.
4. I have not always been honest with myself.
5. I always know why I like things.
6. When my emotions are aroused, it biases my thinking.
7. Once I've made up my mind, other people cannot change my opinion.
8. I am not a safe driver when I exceed the speed limit.
9. I am fully in control of my own fate.
10. It's hard for me to shut off a disturbing thought.
11. I never regret my decisions.
12. I sometimes lose out on things because I can't make up my mind soon enough.
13. The reason I vote is because my vote can make a difference.
14. People don't seem to notice me and my abilities.
15. I am a completely rational person.
16. I rarely appreciate criticism.
17. I am very confident of my judgments.
18. I have sometimes doubted my ability as a lover.
19. It's alright with me if some people happen to dislike me.
20. I'm just an average person.
21. I sometimes tell lies if I have to.
22. I never cover up my mistakes.
23. There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone.
24. I never swear.
25. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
26. I always obey laws, even if I'm unlikely to get caught.
27. I have said something bad about a friend behind his or her back.
28. When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening.
29. I have received too much change from a salesperson without telling him or her.
30. I always declare everything at customs.
31. When I was young, I sometimes stole things.
32. I have never dropped litter on the street.
33. I sometimes drive faster than the speed limit.
34. I never read sexy books or magazines.
35. I have done things that I don't tell other people about.
36. I never take things that don't belong to me.
37. I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I wasn't really sick.
38. I have never damaged library book or store merchandise without reporting it.
39. I have some pretty awful habits.
40. I don't gossip about other people's business.