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Maintaining Relationships on Facebook: Associations with Uncertainty, Jealousy, and Satisfaction

Margaret C. Stewart, Marianne Dainton, & Alan K. Goodboy

Existing research suggests that social networking sites (SNSs) allow romantic partners to maintain their relationships online. This study examined how relational maintenance behaviors associated with Facebook (FB) use were predicted by satisfaction, uncertainty, and FB jealousy. A survey was conducted sampling 281 undergraduates in a romantic relationship where both partners were active users of FB. The results revealed that when partners (a) perceived mutual and definitional uncertainty in their relationship they used more FB monitoring to maintain their relationship; (b) when partners reported future and definitional certainty they used more FB assurances and openness; (c) when partners experienced FB jealousy they used more FB positivity, openness, assurances, and monitoring; and (d) when partners were satisfied they used more FB positivity and assurances.

Keywords: Facebook; Jealousy; Relational Maintenance; Relational Uncertainty; Relationship Satisfaction

Introduction

Romantic relationships are fostered and challenged by emerging communication technologies (Bryant & Marmo, 2009; Utz & Beukeboom, 2011). For example,

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jealousy may ensue between partners if uncertainty arises as a result of observed online behavior (Bevan, 2004). The ubiquitous use of Facebook (FB) among college students and indications that relational maintenance is a motive for FB use have caused scholars to begin exploring the effects of the use of social networking sites (SNSs) on the maintenance of romantic relationships (e.g., Bryant & Marmo, 2009; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Utz & Beukeboom, 2011). This study seeks to examine the associations between Facebook relationship maintenance behavior and relational satisfaction, uncertainty, and jealousy.

Review of Literature

Social Media Use in Relationships

Facebook is a social networking site that allows its users to create an online profile to display their identity and interests in a public forum, reveal personal information, and connect with other users (Bryant & Marmo, 2009). At present, there are upwards of one billion users of Facebook (Facebook.com, 2012). Ellison et al. (2007) revealed that 20% of college-age participants spend more than an hour on the site daily, and that close to 90% of college student participants reported posting their relationship status on Facebook for public display.

The prevalence of Facebook is changing the relational landscape, in that it provides an opportunity for surveillance by partners (Bryant & Marmo, 2009). The pervasiveness of SNSs can be compared with those traditional in-person social networks as uncertainty reduction sources (Westerman, 2008). As Walther (1996) acknowledged, the lack of contextual cues online may create uncertainty or spark jealousy when using SNSs to communicate in romantic partnerships. Given the likelihood that SNSs might be associated with uncertainty, this study is framed in Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT).

According to the original URT axioms, there is a positive relationship between information-seeking and uncertainty. URT indicates that partners utilize communicative behavior in an attempt to reduce uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). As such, SNSs may be employed to communicate with and acquire information about romantic partners. Previous research supports this theoretical couching. Parks and Adelman (1983) examined URT in the context of dating relationships, finding that the social networks of partners (i.e., partners' family and friends) served as sources for uncertainty reduction and provided relational stability. Conversely, Muise, Christofides, and Desmarais (2009) acknowledged that increased time using FB predicts FB-related jealousy. As such, FB may yield complications to maintenance norms and present challenges for partners due to the potential risk of creating uncertainty via online interactions (Donath & Boyd, 2004; Spitzberg & Hoobler, 2002).

Relationship Maintenance and Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)

Although there are several definitions of relational maintenance, one of the most common suggests that it involves behaviors that partners enact for the purpose of

keeping the relationship in a preferred state (Dindia & Canary, 1993). The majority of maintenance research focuses on satisfaction as the variable of interest, although variables such as commitment, control mutuality, trust, and certainty have also been considered (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 1992; Dainton, 2003; Dainton & Aylor, 2001; Stafford & Canary, 1991). Stafford and Canary (1991) developed the most commonly used relational maintenance typology. *Positivity* involves demonstrating that the partners feel hopeful and optimistic in their interactions. *Assurances* are the signals used by partners to communicate their affection. *Openness* is discussion about the future of the relationship. *Sharing tasks* refers to instrumental efforts such as housework and child care. Finally, using *social networks* refers to relying on friends and family for maintenance purposes. Research supports that these behaviors are evident not only in face-to-face interaction, but also in CMC (Ledbetter, 2010).

The Stafford and Canary (1991) approach to relationship maintenance has focused solely on prosocial activities enacted for relationship purposes. Other scholars argue that both prosocial and antisocial activities contribute to relationship maintenance (Ayres, 1983; Dainton & Gross, 2008; Dindia & Baxter, 1987). In support that both positive and negative behaviors are associated with maintenance, in an open-ended study that asked participants how they used FB to maintain their relationship, Bryant and Marmo's (2009) respondents identified online surveillance as a maintenance strategy. Muise et al. (2009) also identified online monitoring as a relevant behavior for SNSs. *Monitoring* involves examining a partner's online interactions for the purpose of seeing what the partner is communicating and with whom s/he is connecting (Muise et al., 2009). This behavior is conceptually analogous to spying, which Dainton and Gross (2008) recognized as a negative maintenance behavior. Utz and Beukeboom (2011) speculated that it is more socially acceptable to monitor an individual online than in-person, suggesting that this negative maintenance behavior might be even more evident as a FB maintenance strategy than a more general maintenance strategy.

Although work has begun to identify FB maintenance behaviors, scholars have not yet determined the extent to which FB maintenance is associated with increased relationship satisfaction. Recall that, by definition, relationship maintenance behaviors are enacted in order to sustain preferred relationship characteristics such as satisfaction. In face-to-face contexts, prosocial relationship maintenance has consistently been correlated positively with satisfaction (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Dainton, 2003; Stafford & Canary, 1991). Negative maintenance behaviors such as spying or monitoring have been correlated negatively with satisfaction (Dainton & Gross, 2008; Goodboy & Bolkan, 2011; Goodboy, Myers, and Members of Investigating Communication, 2010). Therefore, we anticipate that prosocial FB maintenance would also be correlated positively with relationship satisfaction, and that online monitoring will be associated negatively with satisfaction. This leads to our first two hypotheses:

- H1: Prosocial FB maintenance is related positively to relationship satisfaction.
- H2: Online FB monitoring is related negatively to relationship satisfaction.

Uncertainty in Romantic Relationships

Although originally developed for initial interactions, scholars also rely on URT to explain uncertainty in long-term relationships (Planalp & Honeycutt, 1985; Planalp, Rutherford, & Honeycutt, 1988). URT suggests that when an individual is unable to predict or explain someone's behaviors, she or he experiences uncertainty; the theory argues that this is uncomfortable, which motivates uncertainty reduction behavior (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Berger (1979) identified three possible means by which an individual can reduce uncertainty, two of which are related to this study. The first is passive strategies, which involve unobtrusive surveillance of the partner, analogous to online monitoring, described earlier. The second is an interactive strategy, which involves direct interaction with the target of uncertainty, conceptually similar to openness. Indeed, research indicates that uncertainty is a strong predictor of the use of prosocial relationship maintenance behaviors, suggesting it as one of the ways that romantic partners might reduce uncertainty (Dainton, 2003, 2011; Dainton & Aylor, 2001).

The relationship between uncertainty and the use of SNSs is complex. On one hand, using SNSs provides an outlet for partner communication and public display of the relationship, which might decrease uncertainty. Conversely, the ambiguity of online interactions may lead to the misinterpretation of online behavior by romantic partners. For example, FB might increase partner uncertainty due to the significant relationship found between the increased use of FB and FB-related jealousy (Muise et al., 2009). Indeed, Craig and Wright (2012) found that CMC might simultaneously increase and decrease an individual's ability to predict partner behavior. This proposition is consistent with uncertainty management research by Brashers (2001), who suggested that communication can be both the source of and mechanism for resolving uncertainty.

It should be noted that not all uncertainty is the same. Knobloch and Solomon (1999) forwarded four distinct types of relational uncertainty: behavioral, mutual, future, and definitional uncertainty. *Behavioral uncertainty* refers to the boundaries between what is considered to be acceptable and unacceptable standards of behavior within the relationship. *Mutuality uncertainty* is that which is experienced about the similarity and reciprocity of shared feelings between partners. *Future uncertainty* deals with long-term relational forecast and the relationship outcome over time. *Definitional uncertainty* involves how the status of the relationship is explained by the partners to people outside of the relationships.

Previous research has established that relational uncertainty predicts prosocial maintenance enactment, especially for dating couples (Dainton, 2011). For example, Dainton (2003) found that all four forms of uncertainty are strongly and negatively correlated with assurances, and are moderately, negatively correlated with the remaining six prosocial maintenance behaviors described earlier. In a separate study, Dainton (2011) found that mutuality uncertainty was a negative predictor of the use of assurances. At question is the nature of the relationship between experiencing uncertainty and the use of FB maintenance behaviors. We propose that online

monitoring behavior is associated with increased levels of relational uncertainty (Muise et al., 2009), but that prosocial maintenance enactment on Facebook will be associated with decreased levels of relational uncertainty (Dainton, 2003). As such, and as URT would suggest, maintenance behaviors can function both to incite and to reduce feelings of uncertainty.

- H3: Relationship uncertainty is associated negatively with the use of prosocial FB maintenance behaviors.
- H4: Relationship uncertainty is associated positively with the use of online FB monitoring.

Facebook and Jealousy

Planalp and Honeycutt (1985) argued that uncertainty in dating relationships not only influences behavior, but that it is also associated with other negative emotions. For example, research grounded in URT suggests that individuals who experience relationship uncertainty are more likely to experience jealousy (Afifi & Reichert, 1996; Dainton & Aylor, 2001). Uncertainty can surface as a result of knowing too much or too little about the partner; Afifi, Dillow, and Morse (2004) found that knowing too much information about a romantic partner can lead to increased jealousy and negative relational consequences.

Research consistently has found a relationship between FB use and feelings of jealousy (Muise et al., 2009; Utz & Beukeboom, 2011). Scholars attribute the increased jealousy to the lack of context on FB, acknowledging the potential for misinterpretation of content displayed on a partner's profile (Muise et al., 2009). Thomas (2010) found that 25% of romantic partners involved in infidelity used Facebook to communicate with the rival partner, thus supporting that relational partners might in fact have cause for FB jealousy.

Although the relationship between Facebook and jealousy seems clear, the association between relationship maintenance behavior and jealousy is not. On the one hand, Dainton and Aylor (2001) found that jealousy was related negatively to prosocial maintenance activities. On the other hand, Utz and Beukeboom (2011) found online monitoring was related positively to trait jealousy, suggesting that some Facebook maintenance behaviors might function to increase, rather than decrease, jealousy. This leads to our research question:

RQ: What is the relationship between the use of FB maintenance and jealousy?

Method

Participants

Participants were 281 undergraduate students (187 men, 91 women, 3 unreported) enrolled in multiple sections of lower-level communication studies courses at a mid-Atlantic university. Participants had to meet three criteria to be included in

the study: (a) they had to be currently involved in a romantic relationship, (b) they had to be an active user of Facebook (i.e., they must have an active Facebook account), and (c) their romantic partner had to be an active user of Facebook. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 30 years ($M = 20.05$, $SD = 1.72$). Of these romantic partners, 25 were in a casual relationship (8.9%), 113 were in a dating relationship (40.2%), 128 were in an exclusively committed relationship (45.6%), 12 were engaged (4.3%), and three did not indicate their relationship status (1.1%). One hundred fourteen participants (40.6%) were involved in a long-distance relationship (defined by asking whether "you and your partner live geographically separated the majority of the time") whereas 161 participants (57.3%) were in a proximal relationship (6 unreported; 2.1%). The length of the romantic relationships ranged from 1 month to 87 months ($M = 21.41$ months; 1.78 years, $SD = 18.80$ months; 1.57 years).

Regarding use of Facebook, respondents indicated how frequently they accessed their Facebook account, with 1 = less than once per week ($n = 10$, 3.6%), 2 = once per week ($n = 7$, 2.5%), 3 = several times per week ($n = 32$, 11.4%), 4 = once per day ($n = 37$, 13.2%), and 5 = several times per day ($n = 195$, 69.4%), $M = 4.42$, $sd = 1.03$.

Procedures and Instrumentation

Participants completed a questionnaire that asked about their current romantic relationship and their use of Facebook. The paper-based surveys were approved by the university's IRB and then distributed in class, where students were instructed to complete them outside of class and return them to the researchers. The questionnaire included the *Facebook Jealousy Measure* (Muisse et al., 2009), the *Relational Maintenance Strategies on Facebook* (Dainton, 2013), the *Online Monitoring Measure* (Utz & Beukeboom, 2011), the *Quality Marriage Index (QMI)* (Norton, 1983), the *Relationship Uncertainty Measure* (Knobloch & Solomon, 1999), a question on frequency of FB use, and a series of demographic questions.

The *Facebook Jealousy Measure* consists of five items that assess the degree to which relational partners experience jealous behavior after using FB to view their partner's page. The scale accounts for behaviors such as adding friends of the opposite sex on FB, the accuracy of the partners' posted (romantic) relationship status, and the levels of suspicion and worry over private messages exchanges and connection with potential romantic rivals online. The items were measured using a Likert-scale response format, ranging from *very strongly disagree* (1) to *very strongly agree* (7). Previous reliability coefficients for this measure have been .96 (Muisse, et al., 2009; Utz & Beukeboom, 2011). In this study, the obtained Cronbach alpha was .87 ($M = 16.46$, $SD = 8.16$).

The survey contained the *Relational Maintenance Strategies on Facebook* (Dainton, 2013), which is a modification of three factors developed by Marmo and Bryant (2010). Specifically, the scale includes three items for each of the following maintenance behaviors: positivity, openness, and assurances. Positivity was measured using three items: "I post on my partner's wall to make him/her feel special," "I send

cheerful messages I think s/he will enjoy,” and “I respond in a timely manner when he/she sends me a Facebook message.” The openness measure also includes three items: “I update my profile information and status so he/she will stay up-to-date on my everyday life,” “I seek support by posting emotional (sad or exciting) news and hoping he/she will respond,” and “I make posts to share my thoughts and positions on current events with him/her.” The assurances items were: “I write ‘I love you’ on my partner’s wall,” “I post future plans or events on my partner’s wall,” and “I comment on his/her profile so other users will see our connection.” In addition, Utz and Beukeboom’s (2011) measure of monitoring behavior was used to operationalize the FB monitoring behavior. For each measure, respondents used a Likert-scale response format, ranging from *very strongly disagree* (1) to *very strongly agree* (7). Previously reported reliability coefficients were .86 for FB positivity, .79 for FB openness, and .75 for FB assurances (Dainton, 2013). The monitoring items were derived from Utz and Beukeboom (2011), who reported a previous reliability coefficient of .80. In this study, reliabilities and means of the measures obtained are as follows: FB positivity ($\alpha = .76$, $M = 14.84$, $SD = 4.37$), FB openness ($\alpha = .76$, $M = 8.01$, $SD = 4.26$), FB assurances ($\alpha = .72$, $M = 10.97$, $SD = 4.83$), and FB monitoring ($\alpha = .86$, $M = 13.69$, $SD = 6.71$).

The *Quality Marriage Index (QMI)* is six items and measures the degree to which a romantic partner experiences satisfaction in the relationship (Norton, 1983). Five items use a Likert response format ranging from *very strongly disagree* (1) to *very strongly agree* (7). The sixth item measures general happiness in the relationship with a semantic differential item ranging from 1 to 10 with anchors of *very unhappy* and *perfectly happy*. The QMI was slightly modified with the word “marriage” replaced with “relationship.” Previous reliability coefficients have been .96 (Dainton, 2000) and .95 (Dainton, 2003). In this study, the obtained Cronbach alpha was .94 ($M = 39.30$, $SD = 6.73$) for the summed scale.

Knobloch and Solomon’s (1999) *Relationship Uncertainty Measure* is a 16-item scale, broken into four subcategories, used to measure how certain partners are about the status of the relationship at the present time. Participants respond using a six-point Likert-type response format ranging from *completely or almost completely uncertain* (1) to *completely or almost completely certain* (6). Previous research indicates the reliability coefficients for these subscales ranged from .85 to .91 (Dainton, 2003). In this study, the following reliability coefficients were obtained for each of the measured subscales: behavioral uncertainty ($\alpha = .83$, $M = 23.91$, $SD = 4.01$), mutual uncertainty ($\alpha = .91$, $M = 24.03$, $SD = 4.62$), future uncertainty ($\alpha = .83$, $M = 21.60$, $SD = 5.17$), and definitional uncertainty ($\alpha = .92$, $M = 23.96$, $SD = 4.48$).

Results

Intercorrelations between all variables are presented in Table 1. The first hypothesis predicted that prosocial FB maintenance would be related positively to relationship satisfaction and the second hypothesis predicted that online monitoring would be related negatively to relationship satisfaction. Results of Pearson correlations provide

Table 1 Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Behavioral Uncertainty	—								
2. Mutual Uncertainty	.76 [†]	—							
3. Future Uncertainty	.61 [†]	.68 [†]	—						
4. Definitional Uncertainty	.67 [†]	.80 [†]	.78 [†]	—					
5. FB Jealousy	.01	.11	.03	.07	—				
6. FB Positivity	-.09	-.10	-.11	-.13*	.25 [†]	—			
7. FB Openness	.01	.02	-.07	-.02	.36 [†]	.40 [†]	—		
8. FB Assurances	-.11	-.07	-.21**	-.13*	.44 [†]	.60 [†]	.51 [†]	—	
9. FB Monitoring	.04	.18**	.03	.15*	.73 [†]	.22 [†]	.44 [†]	.40 [†]	—
10. Relationship Satisfaction	-.50 [†]	-.62 [†]	-.63 [†]	-.62 [†]	-.07	.24 [†]	.11	.19**	-.06

Note. Two-tailed. FB = Facebook.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. [†] $p < .001$.

partial support for Hypothesis 1. Relationship satisfaction was related positively to FB positivity ($r = .24$, $p < .001$) and FB assurances ($r = .19$, $p < .01$), accounting for 6% and 4% of the variance respectively, but was not significantly related to FB openness ($r = .11$, $p > .05$). Hypothesis 2 did not receive support because online monitoring was not significantly related to relationship satisfaction ($r = -.06$, $p > .05$).

Hypothesis 3 predicted that relationship uncertainty is associated negatively with the use of prosocial Facebook maintenance behaviors, and Hypothesis 4 predicted a positive relationship with the use of online monitoring. A canonical correlation was used to evaluate the multivariate shared relationships between both variable sets and minimize the probability of committing a type I error (Nimon, Henson, & Gates, 2012). Results of the canonical correlation, which accounted for 15% of the variance, revealed partial support for these hypotheses as two significant functions were discovered (see Table 2). Based on recommendations by Sherry and Henson (2005), only structure coefficients at the .45 level or above were interpreted.

The first function ($R_c = .30$) revealed that when romantic partners perceived both mutual and definitional uncertainty in their relationship, they used more FB monitoring to maintain their relationship. The second function ($R_c = .24$) revealed that when romantic partners lacked future and definitional uncertainty (i.e., they were certain about these aspects of their relationship), they used more FB assurances, and to a lesser extent, FB openness, to maintain their relationship.

The research question asked about the relationship between FB jealousy and the use of FB maintenance behaviors. Results of Pearson correlations suggest that FB jealousy was related positively to all of the FB maintenance behaviors: positivity ($r = .25$, $p < .001$), openness ($r = .36$, $p < .001$), assurances ($r = .44$, $p < .001$), and monitoring ($r = .73$, $p < .001$), accounting for 6%, 13%, 19%, and 53% of the variance respectively.

Table 2 Canonical Solution for Uncertainty Predicting Facebook Relational Maintenance for Functions 1 and 2

Variables	Function 1		Function 2		
	r_s	r_s^2 (%)	r_s	r_s^2 (%)	h^2
Set 1: Uncertainty					
Behavioral Uncertainty	.266	7.07	-.405	16.40	23.47
Mutual Uncertainty	.771	59.44	-.297	8.82	68.26
Future Uncertainty	.357	12.74	-.900	81.00	93.74
Definitional Uncertainty	.731	53.43	-.564	31.81	85.24
Redundancy Coefficient	[.332]		[.345]		
Set 2: Facebook Maintenance					
Positivity	-.248	6.15	.393	15.44	21.59
Openness	.122	1.49	.465	21.62	23.11
Assurances	.028	0.00	.966	93.32	93.32
Monitoring	.870	75.69	.296	8.76	84.45
Redundancy Coefficient	[.018]		[.021]		

Note. Wilks's $\Lambda = .85$; $F(16, 813.28) = 2.77$, $p < .001$. r_s = structure coefficient; r_s^2 = squared structure coefficient; h^2 = communality coefficient. Structure coefficients (r_s) greater than .45 are in bold. Communality coefficients (h^2) greater than 45% are in bold.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships that exist between FB relationship maintenance behavior and relational satisfaction, uncertainty, and jealousy. The findings highlight the uniqueness of Facebook as a communication channel; the patterns revealed in this study are not fully consistent with previous research on maintenance or the use of SNSs, thus highlighting how FB may contribute to relational uncertainty or be utilized for uncertainty management.

The first hypothesis stated that the use of prosocial FB maintenance would be related positively to relationship satisfaction and the second hypothesis predicted online monitoring would be related negatively to satisfaction. Only partial support was found for H1, as there were weak, positive correlations between satisfaction and two FB maintenance behaviors: assurances and positivity. In previous studies these two behaviors have been consistently related to satisfaction, providing some degree of construct validity of the FB measures (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Dainton, 2000; Stafford & Canary, 1991). However, the general measures of positivity and assurances typically have correlated with satisfaction much more strongly than did the FB measures of these behaviors. The implication is that channel-specific maintenance may not be as important to satisfaction as is the overall performance of maintenance behavior. Accordingly, the power of maintaining romantic relationships via SNSs might not be as likely as people may assert (Sheldon, 2008). Indeed, Ellison et al. (2007) found that college students reported using FB primarily to connect with friends rather than romantic partners.

It is notable that there was no significant relationship between the use of openness via FB and relationship satisfaction. Previous research has consistently found a positive correlation between openness and satisfaction (e.g., Dainton, 2000, 2003; Stafford & Canary, 1991). Counterintuitively, when researchers regress general maintenance behavior on satisfaction, openness has emerged as a negative predictor of satisfaction (Dainton, 2000). Clearly, the impact on the relationship of sharing private thoughts and ideas is complex and deserves further scrutiny. In past research, two explanations have emerged for this puzzling finding. Stafford and Canary (1991) suggested that the finding that openness was a negative predictor of satisfaction was a methodological artifact; they argued that perhaps once the variance of other behaviors (especially assurances and positivity) was accounted for, the remaining disclosures might be more negative in valence. Dainton (2000) argued instead that the popular belief that disclosure was central to relationship success might simply be untrue. In this case, we believe that the lack of a relationship between openness and satisfaction might be a function of the nature of SNSs. Although FB is a platform for publicly sharing information, it seems likely that relationship partners might refrain from more intimate disclosures in a public forum, making openness a less utilized maintenance behavior on FB. Note that this is consistent with the results presented by Houser, Fleuriet, and Estrada (2012), who found that openness was used more frequently in instant messaging and texting than through FB.

No support was found for H2; the failure of online monitoring to be related to relationship satisfaction is surprising. Although previous research into online monitoring has not considered its impact on satisfaction, a more generalized form of monitoring has been found to be related to dissatisfaction. Dainton and Gross (2008) found that the negative maintenance behavior called spying was associated negatively with satisfaction, a result supported by Goodboy et al. (2010) and Goodboy and Bolkan (2011). Perhaps the lack of a significant relationship between online monitoring and satisfaction has to do with the commonplace nature of the activity; recall that Utz and Beukeboom (2011) concluded that online monitoring is a more socially acceptable than other forms of monitoring, and that people engaged in monitoring via FB more frequently than via other communication channels. As such, online monitoring might be a more socially sanctioned behavior that is neither indicative of, nor responsible for, relationship dissatisfaction.

Our third hypothesis predicted that relationship uncertainty is associated negatively with the use of prosocial Facebook maintenance behaviors, and our fourth hypothesis predicted a positive association with the use of online monitoring. In support of H3, we found that future and definitional uncertainty were associated negatively with the use of FB assurances, and to a lesser extent, FB openness, a finding that is consistent with previous maintenance research (Dainton, 2003). We did not find the negative association between uncertainty and positivity found in previous research, however. We believe this result may be explained by the perceived intimacy (or lack thereof) of the behavior in an online setting. If an individual is not certain about the nature or the future of a relationship, s/he might refrain from enacting intimate behaviors such as reassurances or openness publicly; however, being cheerful and positive is a behavior that is enacted in a wide variety of relationship types,

making public enactment less risky. That is, because of politeness norms people regularly post cheerful messages on others' walls, or respond in a timely fashion, regardless of the intimacy of the relationship.

Not surprisingly, H4 received support as online monitoring was associated positively with uncertainty. In their initial formulation of URT, Berger and Calabrese (1975) identified passive strategies, such as observing the partner, as mechanisms for uncertainty reduction. In romantic relationships, Baxter and Wilmot (1984) found that partners often engage in "secret tests" to uncover the status of the relationship, such as "espionage" (Bell & Buerkel-Rothfus, 1990). Although this research was conducted before the advent of social networking sites, Bell and Buerkel-Rothfus's (1990) definition of espionage was "covert surveillance of the partner's oral and written communications" (p. 79), which is conceptually analogous to the definition of online monitoring.

Our final focus was on the relationship between the use of FB maintenance and FB jealousy. The fact that online monitoring was correlated strongly and positively with FB jealousy is, again, not surprising. Bevan (2004) acknowledges the relationship between experiencing relational uncertainty and a partner's expression of jealousy. Further, Muise et al. (2009) argued that online monitoring and FB jealousy are cyclical; heightened jealousy may lead to increased surveillance on FB and diligence may yield information to provoke jealousy. Regarding more generalized jealousy, Utz and Beukeboom (2011) found that individuals who experience trait jealousy were more likely to engage in online monitoring than others. Future research should strive to disentangle personality characteristics like trait jealousy with situational experiences like FB jealousy, as well as behaviors like online monitoring that can both contribute to and resolve feelings of jealousy.

Of greater significance, FB jealousy was correlated positively with the three pro-social FB maintenance behaviors. This is surprising, because previous research has found negative relationships between positivity, assurances, openness, and jealousy (Dainton & Aylor, 2001). As a correlational study the directionality is not clear; is it because people experience FB jealousy that they engage in more public forms of maintenance? Or are there simply people who enact their relationship publicly, and therefore are highly susceptible to questioning the meanings of their partner's FB behavior? Future research should seek to uncover which possibility, or combination of possibilities, might explain this conundrum.

In sum, the results of this study indicate that URT is an appropriate theoretical frame for understanding the role of FB in college student romantic relationships. Our results suggest that the experience of uncertainty is associated with passive uncertainty reduction strategies within romantic relationships such as online monitoring. This is fully consistent with the original formulation of URT (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Conversely, a lack of uncertainty (especially confidence in the definition and future of the relationship) is associated with prosocial relationship behavior, consistent with URT's axioms suggesting that increases in certainty are associated with increases in self-disclosure, linking, and intimacy. Dating couples who rely on social networking sites such as Facebook should know that their online behavior can simultaneously instigate and resolve negative relational outcomes such as uncertainty, jealousy, and dissatisfaction.

Although this study provided some support to existing research, it also raised more questions regarding the complexity of FB behavior and its effects on romantic relationships. The results of these data suggest that maintenance behavior does vary by communication channel, and the impact of the use of maintenance on SNSs may result in unexpected consequences. Nonetheless, relatively little of the variance in relationship satisfaction was explained, which begs the question as to whether FB functions as a channel for the maintenance of romantic relationships to the same extent as it might contribute to the maintenance of friendships or distance relationships, or whether it is a significant channel by which maintenance occurs at all. Future research might seek to link individuals' self-reported motives for relationship maintenance with their use of FB maintenance. It should also seek to ascertain the relative importance of FB maintenance on overall maintenance efforts.

This study is not without limitations. For one, the data gathered is limited to understanding the behavior and effects on college-aged individuals in romantic partnerships. Further, given that the data were self-reported in an unsupervised context, social desirability might explain some of the results. Next, this study could have afforded to more carefully consider the impact that FB maintenance might have on geographically close versus long-distance romantic relationships among college students. The appropriate classification of their distance-status, and differences in distance between their permanent and academic home(s), may yield an impact on if/how they use FB as a channel to enact maintenance and if/how they experience and manage uncertainty.

There are a number of possible directions for future research. First, this study used preexisting measures of FB maintenance. Although these measures were based on previous open-ended research (Bryant & Marmo, 2009), it is possible that scholars have not yet identified the most important FB behaviors that contribute to the sustenance of romantic relationships. Second, although we focused on passive and interactive methods of uncertainty reduction, future research might seek to understand the active ways that romantic partners might seek to reduce uncertainty online. For example, individuals might not only monitor their partner's online activity directly, but also their partner's network in order to gather information. Finally, the results of this study, and others like it, lead to questions about the efficacy of using traditional theoretical frameworks and measures to explain communication behavior on SNSs, as their newness and transiency creates challenges for ongoing research endeavors.

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