

Abstract

The current study was designed to address the reasons why people want or form online friendships and the characteristics of ideal online friends. Furthermore, through factor-analyzing the various attributes of friendships, engagement, communication quality and accessibility are found to be the three factors of online friendships. Only engagement is a significant predictor of relational satisfaction in online friendships. Results also revealed that although the quality of online friendships is lower than that of offline friendships (in terms of communication quality and accessibility) at the beginning, with time the former can develop to become comparable to the latter. In addition, we found that males find their online friends more accessible than females do. Directions for future studies focusing on online relationships were also suggested.