

This sample paper is cut out of a larger paper along with the first couple of pages of its reference section. This example is given so you can see how in-text citations, a title page, the beginning of a paper, and a reference section (reference pages) actually look when completed. Hope it helps!

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Pilot Study: An Expectancy Approach
To Computer-Mediated Communication Competence

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Pilot Study: An Expectancy Approach
To Computer-Mediated Communication Competence

Computers and computer-mediated communication (CMC) have become ubiquitous. The growth of computer-mediated communication throughout the world is one of the great scientific and social developments of the past two decades. According to Computer Industry Almanac (2004), by mid-2005, more than one billion people worldwide will be using the internet everyday. Prior to the digital age, face-to-face (FtF) communication competence was the primary social skill affecting a person's quality of life (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). Increasingly however, CMC competence is becoming an additional essential skill in people's careers and social lives as well. Competence in CMC transcends basic technical skills; CMC competence requires the development and maintenance of appropriate and effective interaction in relationships mediated, either partly or completely, by computer technologies. There is a need for elaborating theory that accounts for evaluation of communication competence in the CMC context. Several theories have been developed that account for competence in media selection (Walther & Parks, 2002), but relatively few theories have been tested explicitly regarding the competence of social actors in their use of new media.

In light of the growing need to communicate competently in the CMC context, this pilot study involves some preliminary tests that are preludes to a planned study for a Master's degree thesis. The thesis study will examine an approach to CMC competence based on expectancy violation and fulfillment, which will be called the "expectancy-based competence model" (ECM). This approach is part of a larger model of communication competence (Morreale, Spitzberg, & Barge, 2001; Spitzberg, 2004; Spitzberg & Brunner, 1991). Research has been limited on this aspect of the competence model, but what is available has been reviewed (Bubaš,

2002; Bubaš, Radošević, & Hutinski, 2003; Bunz, 2002). Less known is the applicability of these propositions in the CMC context. Spitzberg has extended the model of competence into the CMC context, as have others. Generally, communication theorists expect that the qualities that make a person competent in face-to-face (FtF) interaction have parallels in the CMC context. Although Spitzberg considered it appropriate to generalize a model of FtF interaction into the CMC context (Morreale et al., 2001; Spitzberg, 2004), to date there is sparse research to support this assumption. Therefore, that study will investigate whether expectancy violations processes have their parallel in the CMC context.

A pilot study is necessary because the nature of the experiment is covert and involves the use of constructed experimental conditions, built around human characteristics and expectancies. The complex nature of the experiment requires testing some of the strategies ahead of time in order to make the main study as effective as possible. The theoretical base of the main study is the same as that for the pilot study; therefore, what follows is a tri-part literature review of expectancies, computer-mediated communication, and competence, which make up the core of the main study. Also included is a section that briefly describes the literature used to choose the names and characteristics of the constructed “people” in the experiment.

Expectancies

Communication researchers explain expectancies as, “mental pictures of what ought to be” (Morreale et al., 2001, p. 46), as a relatively fixed pattern of anticipated, but not necessarily desired behavior (Burgoon & Walther, 1990) and as “cognitive schemata” (Andersen, 1998, p. 45). There are several angles from which to examine expectancies in communication studies. The four perspectives on expectancies included in this review are: expectancies as cognitive prototypes; expectancy violations theory; affect control theory; and cognitive valence theory.

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