

Running Head: Analyzing Two Theories

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### Analyzing Two Theories

#### Social Information Processing Theory:

I feel like I can relate to Social Information Processing Theory the most because the situations that the theory brings up are most relevant in the lives of my peers and myself. Things like online dating and social networking are more prevalent than ever. It is not as strange nowadays to hear about people meeting on the internet, falling in love and getting married. We hear these stories all the time now. They are put in commercials and ads. We even hear about these from friends, family and loved ones. I just attended a wedding last month of my childhood friend who married a man she met on an online role playing game. I believe that some situations and instances in my life have become even clearer after examining SIP.

I used to be very cynical about online dating and relationships. I think this is probably because online relationships were discouraged by my parents. It was kind of like the rule of not talking to strangers. All people on the internet were strangers. This was the period when social networking had just begun to appear. Yes, we had email that I did use, but that was primarily for people who I knew already, not those who I could meet. When I was in middle school I was very into a couple of music artists and used to participate on discussion boards on their websites regularly. I also used discussion boards to post my writing. I wrote primarily short fiction at that point in my life. I made contacts with several people within those discussion boards and branched out to instant messaging to get to know them further. One person in particular I had conversations with pretty regularly for a while. We discussed writing and music and other topics, but we stayed away from more personal topics.

Other than similar “relationships” with people online that included limited personal information, I have not had that many experiences with meeting people and developing relationships with them online. However, I have met and known people physically, but developed our relationship primarily online afterwards. My fiancé and I were friends for two years before we began officially dating. We spent a large amount of time at the beginning of our friendship getting to know each other online through Facebook chat, email, and text messaging. At that point, he didn’t live that close to me so we didn’t see each other that often, so this was the way we got to know each other when we didn’t see each other.

SIP discusses how the exchange of information through text only communication is much slower than face-to-face communication. I think this is true in some sense, but at the same time, I think they are underestimating how text only communication can be used. Yes, it takes a little longer to send a text message, have the other person receive it, think of how to respond and then reply. But text only communication can go on for a lot longer than face-to-face communication. My fiancé and I would text each other throughout the day, making conversations on topics last all day and all through the next day. When communicating face-to-face, this cannot happen unless you quit everything else in your life to hang out with this person and talk to them all day. With text only communication, all day communication is possible and extremely realistic. It is a way to have almost constant communication, as well as family members making fun of you when they announce your monthly text count of over 10,000.

Soon, we began to see each other more and more face-to-face. We had gotten so used to communicating textually that communicating verbally was foreign to us and it took a while before that awkwardness went away. We had learned how to communicate through text in a very efficient way. We could read each other very well after a while, but it took us longer to develop

our relationship outside of that bubble because of this. We had to learn to read outside of just words on a page and into facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice. It was like a whole new world had sprung up and we were forced into it. But I think our friendship became well balanced in that we could communicate very well both ways after some time. But learning how to communicate effectively textually, ended up helping our relationship in the long run since for most of our relationship, we were living at least a two hour drive apart.

I like SIP because it gives validity to all kinds of different relationships that are going on in the world today. I believe that online relationships can be just as real and personal as face-to-face physical relationships. I also agree with the statement that it takes a little longer to develop online relationships than face-to-face ones. But I think this also depends on the people. I also think this is changing with the changing technology that is constantly coming out.

SIP also mentions that people change the way they communicate in text only communication in order to compensate for the lack of cues and aspects of face-to-face communication. Human beings have adapted technology so that we can have face-to-face communication over the internet with inventions like Skype and Google Hang Outs. Several online relationships have turned to Skype in order to gain that lost aspect of not only verbal cues but non-verbal cues like body language and facial expressions. I wonder how the inventors of SIP theory would fit new technological aspects like video chatting into the SIP theory today. Would Skype be considered a face-to-face interaction? I believe that as technology becomes more advanced that this theory should become more advanced and developed.

Relational Dialectics:

There are several realities to the Relational Dialectics Theory that I believe can be true, but I think that it could be more developed and more structured as a theory. Some of the things said about the theory in our textbook say that Relational Dialectics is a “sensitizing theory” that helps us see relationships in a new light. Honestly, this is not how I felt whenever I read about Relational Dialectics theory. I felt that the theory made relationships more complex and more confusing than they should be. A light was not shown on this confusion. The darkness still remains. Yes, relationships can be confusing. People can be hard to communicate with. Some people love to play confusing games. But that is not how it always is.

Relationships can be wholesome, rewarding, beneficial, and even clarifying. Relationships can make life more enjoyable and easier to go through and understand. This theory makes it seem like relationships do not make your life better, but only make it unenjoyable and stressful.

I do agree with an aspect of Relational Dialectics in that people want to be a part of a group, but they also want to be an individual. I think those yearnings are stronger or weaker depending on the person, but as human beings, we need to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. I believe that we all yearn for that. We want community. We want to belong. Individualization comes out of some of our selfish and proud desires. A lot of our culture today is like this. We need to be independent from others. We need to be unique and different from people. But this can only be done to a certain extent. We need others to survive.

I feel like the theory highlights a lot of opposites and tries to connect them together to make people seem more conflicting and emotional than they really are. I think that the overall message of the theory is that relationships are unpredictable, undeterminable, complex and confusing. I think that by the time you get to college or part of college, you figure that out on

your own. Yes, relationships can be confusing, they can be stressful, and they can be overwhelming, but they don't have to be like that all the time. In fact, even reading these descriptions in Relational Dialectics theory made me feel stressed, overwhelmed and unhealthy.

I dislike the way that this theory is laid out. It is messy and incoherent. The figures given to help explain in a visual way are definitely not helpful. The understandings that are given of people are general and do not apply to everyone or all relationships.