

Abstract

The present study examined the quality of same- and cross-sex friendships across different stages of development in the online setting. A total of 97 participants who have ongoing same- and cross-sex online friendships completed questionnaires assessing the quality of their online friendships. MANOVA results revealed that at later stages of friendship development, male same-sex online friendships were of lower quality than female ones as well as cross-sex online friendships of both genders, e.g., in terms of intimacy and trust. Females also disclosed more in their online friendships than did males at later stages. Besides, hierarchical multiple regressions showed that the depth of self-disclosure was predictive of relationship satisfaction in both same- and cross-sex online friendships among both genders. Interpersonal trust, on the other hand, emerged as a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction in cross-sex online friendships. Implication on the two opposing views of online relationships – the social information processing perspective (Walther, 1992) and the reduced-cues hypothesis (Culnan & Markus, 1987) – was discussed.