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# Bosom Buddies: Factors Associated with Experiences of Passionate Friendship Among Men and Women

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BOSOM BUDDIES: FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH EXPERIENCES  
OF PASSIONATE FRIENDSHIP AMONG  
MEN AND WOMEN

by

Katherine A. Peterson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

EDUCATIONAL SPECIALIST

in

Psychology

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Logan, Utah

2009

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## ABSTRACT

Bosom Buddies: Factors Associated with Experiences  
of Passionate Friendship Among  
Men and Women

by

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Utah State University, 2009

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Scholars historically have separated friendships and romantic relationships into two qualitatively distinct relationship categories. Contemporary research examining passionate friendships, however, has identified qualities within platonic relationships that appear to mimic characteristics typically associated with romantic relationships. Primary critiques of the existing passionate friendship literature include exclusively examining females, including samples that predominately identified as lesbian, bisexual or questioning, and research utilizing solely qualitative designs.

The current study used a quantitative design to investigate 375 emerging adults' (18-26 years of age; 149 males, 226 females) friendship experiences. Specifically, four quasi-independent variables (i.e., biological sex, sexual orientation, gender-role orientation, and cross vs. same-sex dyads) were examined as factors associated with passionate friendship. Findings from this study indicated that both males and females

experience passionate friendship, and that these experiences are not specific to individuals who identify as nonheterosexual. Additionally, results from this study shed light on the occurrence of passionate friendship experiences observed in both cross- and same-sex dyads.

Characteristics of passionate friendships (e.g., levels of attachment, thought preoccupation, intensity of the relationship) were also examined using a newly created measure. Female participants and individuals whose closest friend was described as a cross-sex friend scored higher on nearly every continuous scale of the designed measure. Additionally, sexual orientation and gender-role orientation yielded significant results on several of the identified subscales, with sexual-minority individuals and those who claimed androgynous or masculine gender-role orientation obtaining higher scores. Finally, predictability of passionate friendship occurrence was evaluated and indicated that passionate friendships may be predicted based on existing demographics or personality characteristics of an individual.

(117 pages)

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Katherine A. Peterson

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Social science research almost ubiquitously refers to human relationships in terms of three distinctively separate domains: (a) family or kinship, (b) romantic or sexual relationships, and (c) platonic relationships or friendships. With the exception of family members, nearly all other relationships, including acquaintances, fall into one of the latter two categories. Which of the two it falls into simply depends on the level and degree of intimacy displayed in the relationship (Berg & Clark, 1986; Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995; Prager, 1995). While one might assume that a relationship with an acquaintance would be characterized by the least amount of intimacy, and a romantic partner would experience the greatest amount of intimacy, friendships in particular appear to vary in the nature and quality of intimacy displayed (Bukowski, Newcomb, & Hartup, 1996). As a result, for the purposes of researching the complex construct of friendship, a limited definition of friendship has been offered that specifies friendship as a platonic, nonkin, reciprocal relationship (Deralega & Winstead, 1986).

Although researchers and laypeople alike traditionally assume that friends and romantic partners are separated into two distinctively separate domains, passionate friendships (Diamond, 2000), historically recognized as romantic friendships (Faderman, 1981; Nardi, 1992; Rotundo, 1989; Sahli, 1979), have blurred this commonly distinctive line between friend and lover. Historically, romantic friendships have been described as same-sex dyads, wherein partners engage in intimate discourse with one another, physical affection, and even sleep in the same bed. While these relationships appear to be reflective of romantic relationships, they lack evidence of sexual motivation or behaviors.

Until recently (Brown, 2001; Diamond, 2000, 2002), there had been no empirical research to support the occurrence of these relationships in the present-day.

Diamond (2000) introduced the study of recently termed “passionate friendships,” and revealed remarkable parallels to historical romantic friendship characteristics such as cuddling, hand holding, gazing into each other’s eyes, preoccupation, and inseparability. Unlike historical evidence, however, contemporary research has only been conducted with adolescent and young adult females. While there are some reports of women engaging in cross-sex passionate friendships (Diamond), there is no recent evidence to support the occurrence of these relationships reported by males. Furthermore, there is no empirical research that examines this phenomenon specifically in males.

In addition to passionate friendship research, other contemporary researchers have studied friendships and have identified a range of specific factors in friendships such as biological sex, cross- versus same-sex friendships, gender-role orientation, and sexual minority status as a means of gaining greater understanding of different friendship experiences (Diamond & Dubé, 2002; Diamond & Lucas, 2004; O’Meara, 1989; Radmacher & Azmitia, 2006; Reeder, 2003; Sanborn, 2005; Wright & Scanlon, 1991). By concentrating on these individual factors, researchers have revealed qualitatively different friendship experiences based on these factors or features involved in a given platonic dyad. Though some researchers have examined the effects of combined factors, with the exception of sexual minority status, there has yet to be research completed with regard to passionate friendship in which each of the four previously stated factors are varied.

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the unique experience of passionate friendships among both males and females, as affected by various factors or demographic characteristics (e.g., sexual orientation, cross- vs. same-sex friendship, and gender-role orientation) associated with the friendship experience. Additionally, this study was designed to investigate whether passionate friendships could be predicted based upon features present in a given friendship.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature has been divided into four sections, which include the following: (a) an overview of general theory and research relating to friendship formation, (b) a general overview of the definition and associative characteristics of friendship, (c) a review of the literature regarding historical accounts of romantic friendships and empirical research on contemporary passionate friendships, and (d) a brief review of research relating to each factor associated with friendship that will be examined in the proposed study.

#### Theories and Characteristics of Friendships

Friendship is an experience so common to our existence in society that it is assumed. It is not specific to gender, race or ethnicity; it occurs across cultures, ages, and generations (Gay, 1985; Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995; Von Sydow, 1995). Though the study of friendship in psychology did not begin until approximately the 20<sup>th</sup> century, philosophers have been interested in friendship for over 20 centuries (Newcomb & Bagwell). Aristotle considered the importance and function of friendship in ancient Greece in his writings (1973) as early as 350 B.C. Due to the complex nature of the construct, however, friendship researchers in psychology have struggled to arrive at a consistent, standard definition of friendship. Friendship has often been defined quite broadly (e.g., in terms of friend vs. nonfriend) rather than specifically, based upon the actual quality of the relationship (Newcomb & Bagwell). Currently, researchers no longer limit definitions of friendships to mere social interactions or degrees of liking or disliking

(Bukowski et al., 1996). The complex definitions of friendships are no longer restricted to simply the characteristics that separate a friend from an acquaintance, but include categorizing and quantifying the nature of one's friendship quality (Berndt, 2002; Bukowski et al.).

### *Theories of Friendship Development*

The individuals to whom we are drawn or attracted depend upon the needs we desire to be met by other human beings. Several theories have been developed regarding the principles of platonic attraction. The first set of theories implemented behavioral or reinforcing principles. The guiding premise of behavioral theories is that people who are in our presence during reinforcing experiences become discriminative stimuli and are associated with pleasurable responses or feelings (Clore & Byron, 1974; Perlman & Fehr, 1986). Consequently, people themselves can become reinforcing or punishing. Thus, we continue to build relationships with those by whom we are reinforced and discontinue contact with those who are associated with punishing or aversive experiences (Clore & Byrn).

Exchange and equity theories describe friendship building and maintenance from a reciprocal perspective (Hatfield, Utne, & Traupmann, 1979; Rusbult, 1980). The underlying premise of equity theory is that a relationship's success is a result of both parties' equal input to the relationship (Hatfield et al.). In other words, if a person does not feel their efforts in the relationship are being reciprocated, the relationship will not progress and may terminate if reciprocity is not attained.

Much like Rusbult's (1980) and Hatfield and colleagues' (1979) theory of equity, Heider's (1958) theory of cognitive organization conceptualizes friendship maintenance

and attraction based on a theory of triadic balance. The theory conceptualizes two people and an object as three points in a triangular diagram. If there is any perceived imbalance in the relationship, adjustments will be made to restore balance in order for the relationship to succeed. The principal cause of imbalance in the triadic relationship is a disproportion of positive regard toward one point that is not being matched or equated by the third point. For example, if person A feels particularly positive toward object X, and person B does not share the same regard for object X, an imbalance will occur and restoration will not take place unless person B adapts and moves in the direction of an equal or matched regard for object X.

Individually, these theories are incomplete in representing attraction in its entirety. A final set of theories of attraction are known as developmental theories and conceptualize attraction and friendship development from a holistic perspective. Altman and Taylor (1973) developed a theory of social penetration that addresses friendship development from an expansive and progressively deepening perspective. They proposed that friendship begins with attraction fostered with superficial displays of the personality of the individual and then progressively grows toward unrestricted interactions, reflecting the core of one's personality, thus cultivating intimacy between both parties.

#### *Factors Associated with Friendship Development*

In addition to theoretical approaches to the prediction and development of adolescent friendships, research indicates that similarity between individuals contributes largely to the development of a new relationship. Thus, attitude and interest similarities have been found to be important predictors of friendship development (Knapp & Harwood, 1977; La Gaipa & Werner, 1971). Initial attraction, according to Knapp and

Harwood, is based considerably on what are perceived as coincidental characteristics, such as age, race, religion, gender, education, or physical attractiveness. This belief is based on the assumption that these superficial characteristics tell us whether or not another is approachable.

According to Bernt (1982), adolescents, in particular, choose their friends primarily based on perceived similarities. Adolescents are similar to their friends in age (often), sex, and race. Usually adolescents choose friends who have similar characteristics such as orientations towards school (this includes aspirations and achievement), clothing, music, and often have similar preferences in leisure activities. Though there is reason to believe adolescents choose similar friends, there is plausible reason to believe that friendship similarity is due in part to mutual influence as friendships develop over time. Who influences who, however, is a bit more difficult to distinguish due to the individual and developmental differences among friends. It has also been observed that some adolescents choose friends who are opposite them or who have complimentary traits. Bernt described this phenomenon as adolescents choosing friends whom they can idealize or who fascinate them; peers who engage in behavior or activities that they themselves would not do but are intrigued by.

In addition to similarity between potential friends, the amount of time spent with one another is also an important factor when predicting friendship. In a longitudinal study conducted by Hays (1984), 87 first-year college students were found to successfully form close relationships within 12 weeks, consistent with Altman and Taylor's (1973) theory of social penetration. Though one would believe there is a minimum time requirement for a successful relationship to form, the minimum amount of time for this to occur is not

definite. Results from this study demonstrated relationship intensity was actually greater than was originally predicted, based on the short period of time allotted for friendship formation.

Research also demonstrates that proximity predicts self-disclosure as well as friendship development (Knapp & Harwood, 1977; Zick & Stephen, 1978). Without physical proximity, it would be nearly impossible for people to meet, much less have the opportunity to develop a close, successful relationship. Proximity also plays an important role in determining the quality or nature of the relationship one experiences (Knapp & Harwood). More specifically, proximity allows one to become intimately familiar with another's mannerisms, their facial expressions, and unique idiosyncrasies.

### *Characteristics of Friendship*

The categorization of a relationship as a friendship first necessitates that the relationship be defined as platonic, thereby removing any sexual characteristics or romantic intentions (Deralega & Winstead, 1986). Secondly, friendship should also be defined as a relationship with nonkin (Deralega & Winstead), thereby precluding consideration of relatives who are close or supportive and act in friend-like roles. Third, in accordance with Deralega and Winstead's definition of friendship, friendships include emotional commitment but are free of the expectation of exclusivity that is characteristically found in romantic relationships. More specifically, though we often feel a sense of personal commitment to our friends, we do not restrict ourselves from engaging in additional friendships, based on other current close platonic relationships. Finally, friendships are defined by the nature of the behaviors engaged in by both parties. It is common to think of behaviors that we engage in with our friends as things we do for

them or mutually with them. These things might include shared activities, self-disclosure or talking, touching, or doing services for them such as helping them move or giving them a ride when they do not have a car. Some researchers indicate that friendship is often defined by expected reciprocated behaviors. Bernt (2002) discussed the definition of friendship, by indicating that children and adults alike expect displays of prosocial behaviors such as loyalty and praise for their personal successes in life as indicators of true friendship qualities. People further expect encouragement from their friends when they experience failures or troubling times. Bukowski and Sippola (1996) added to this definition by indicating that the friendship behaviors must also be voluntary as opposed to obligatory in nature.

#### *Intimacy as a Central Characteristic of Friendship*

Intimacy has commonly been described as a primary or central characteristic of friendship based on a primary function that it serves, to essentially differentiate close relationships from casual relations or acquaintances. While intimacy is central to friendships, it is, however, a difficult construct to define. Depending upon the nature of the relationship or the characteristics or personality of the persons involved, intimacy within a relationship can look very different from one relationship to another. Reis and Shaver (1988) further claimed that intimacy is truly a relative term with few absolutes.

“Intimacy” and “intimate”-from the Latin words *intimus* (innermost) and *intimare* (to make the innermost known) (Partridge, 1966) are elusive terms for social scientists. They can be used to refer to feelings, to verbal and nonverbal communication processes, to behaviors, to people’s arrangements in space, to personality traits, to sexual activities, and to kinds of long-term relationships. (p. 367)

For the purposes of the current study, the operational definition of intimacy will include emotionally deep feelings towards another, in addition to verbal as well as nonverbal behavior. Also, it is pertinent that definitions of intimacy for this study include only platonic relations, excluding any sexual feelings, desires, or behaviors.

There are noticeable differences between close friendships and casual acquaintances. As noted previously, levels of intimacy are often a hallmark of who we define or characterize as close friends. Berg and Clark (1986), for instance, differentiated close or intimate relationships from casual relationships by reporting that intimate relationships typically possess intrinsic satisfaction, are uniquely defined by the expected length of the relationship, and by the degree that the relationship partners think of themselves as a unit. Also, intimate relationships are often distinguished from casual friendships or acquaintances by the behaviors that characteristically define them. Though intimate behavior includes both verbal (e.g., disclosure) and nonverbal behavior (e.g., close physical proximity, eye contact, forward lean, and smiling), and although nonverbal behavior is arguably as important as verbal intimate behavior, the majority of current literature describes verbal behavior, or self-disclosure, as the predominant defining characteristic distinguishing intimate friends from casual friends. In many respects, self-disclosure has become the gold standard for measuring intimacy in a relationship. Disclosing personal aspects of one's self to another seemingly accelerates progress toward trust and mutual vulnerability.

Taking into consideration, as noted by Prager (1995), that not all self-disclosure can be considered intimate, it would however, be remiss to neglect including self-disclosure as a major component of the construct of intimacy. On the other hand, self-

disclosure tends to overshadow other contributing factors of intimacy in much of the psychological research. More recent research suggests that perhaps we are too narrowly defining intimacy by placing such emphasis on verbal behavior and not enough emphasis on nonverbal behaviors such as shared activities (Fehr, 2004; Johnson, 2004; McNelles & Connolly, 1999; Radmacher & Azmitia, 2006). Both Fehr and Radmacher and Azmitia indicated that previous studies of intimacy neglected the notion that there are many pathways by which intimacy is attained. Their research suggested that shared activities, in addition to self-disclosure, lead to intimacy, especially between men. As Reis and Shaver (1988) proposed, emotional support either expressed or felt (e.g., being comforted by a friend after a breakup, helping a friend to regulate negative emotions such as calming down after a fight) appeared to be equally as important as self-disclosure in achieving intimacy in friendships. The expansion of possible pathways or means of attaining intimacy argues against previous conclusions that self-disclosure is the primary pathway to intimacy attainment. It further alludes to the critical importance of researchers' awareness of these additional pathways such that intimacy in various relationships is not overlooked or underestimated if exhibited in a nontraditional manner.

### Passionate/Romantic Friendships

#### *Definition/Characteristics of Passionate/ Romantic Friendships*

As stated previously, relationships are often categorized or differentiated based on the level of intimacy that is displayed and reciprocated in the relationship (Berg & Clark, 1986). If, for example, there is an absence or lack of intimacy displayed, we might conclude that the relationship is an acquaintance; however, if there appears to be intense

and frequent intimate displays, such as ongoing discourse and affection, one would conclude the relationship is closer in nature. If, however, one were to observe a dyad where both partners were engaging in more physical affection and appeared to display more intimate behaviors, such as “eye gazing,” or if observers were made aware of subjective experiences, such as preoccupation or fascination, it might be concluded that the relationship was of a completely different domain all together and that it was romantic in nature.

Though friendship has been defined previously to include characteristics that are solely of a platonic nature, there is research and historical anecdotal evidence to suggest that some friendships include romantic characteristics while continuing to be viewed as strictly platonic relationships by the dyad (Brown, 2001; Diamond, 2000, 2002; Nardi, 1992; Rotundo, 1989; Sahli, 1979). These “romantic friendships,” also recently termed “passionate friendships” (Diamond, 2000, 2002), have been defined in recent research as emotionally intense, platonic relationships (Diamond), which are characterized by qualities typically associated with romantic relationships such as: passion, commitment, exclusivity, fascination, thought preoccupation, and physical affection, but lack some qualities considered essential to romantic relationships, such as sexual attraction and/or behaviors (Diamond, 2000, 2002).

### *Historical Romantic Friendships*

Historically, romantic friendships between men were relatively common and highly valued, as evident in ancient Greek and Renaissance historical literary sources (Nardi, 1992). There is also anecdotal evidence to support men and women engaging in romantic friendships in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Faderman, 1981; Nardi; Rotundo,

1989; Sahli, 1979). These friendships often included partners sleeping in the same bed, writing descriptive, expressive letters to one another, and engaging in flirtatious and often “courting” like behaviors.

As described by Sahli (1979), in her compilation of 19<sup>th</sup> century accounts of women’s same-sex relationships, romantic friendships were evidenced in a report on Health Statistics of Women College Graduates, produced by the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (1885). A primary focus of the report was a specific concern the committee had at the time regarding an activity known as “smashing,” a term which was generally associated with and used at Vassar. Smashing referred to a “courting” like behavior by which one girl pursued another by sending gifts, notes, candy, locks of hair, and other tokens until the other became “captured.”

The two become inseparable, and the aggressor is considered by her circle of acquaintances as smashed. If the smash is mutual, they monopolize each other & “spoon” continually, & sleep together & lie awake all night talking instead of going to sleep. (pp. 21-22)

Though these relationships were typically associated with Vassar women, women attending other schools were reportedly also engaging in these relationships as well. As one woman from the North Western Female College in the late 1850s wrote,

I was willing in my loneliness to have a “little friendship.” So I fell in love just like a boy, and wooed and won, as a friend and a good one, a sweet tempered, sweet faced girl. (p. 21)

As one woman engaging in several “smashes” reported, these relationships were also characteristically described as writing “the wildest love-letters” and “like a real courting of the Shakespearian style” (Sahli, 1979, p. 22).

Male romantic friendships have also been described that depict young men engaging in similar intense, same-sex friendships during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Rotundo, 1989).

As described by Rotundo, the young men engaging in these relationships often slept in the same bed and wrote emotionally articulate love letters to one another expressing longing for each other and a desire to be nearer to one another.

Rotundo illustrated this phenomenon by offering an excerpt by Daniel Webster, an 18-year-old male who described his best friend in the early 19th century as “The partner of my joys, grief’s, and affections, the only participator of my most secret thoughts” (p. 1). Later, Daniel said of a different friend, “My heart is now so full of matters and things impatient to be whispered into the ear of a trusty friend, that I think I could pour them into yours till it ran over” (p. 1).

As described by Rotundo (1989), Daniel’s relationships were intense and there were even arguably romantic undertones as depicted in several characteristics of Daniel’s letters. Many letters, for instance, began with “Dearly Beloved” or “Lovely Boy” and closed with “Accept all the tenderness I have, D. Webster” or “I am, dear Harvey, your Daniel Webster.” There are also several statements that indicate one partner’s longing for the other as in the following excerpt from one of Daniel’s letters: “I knew not how closely our feelings were interwoven; had no idea how hard it would be to live apart, when the hope of living together again no longer existed” (Rotundo, p. 3). Rotundo also noted that, while there is reasonable suspicion regarding the romantic undertones of these letters, the heterosexual nature of this (and other friendships) appears fairly certain, since the content of these intimate exchanges overwhelmingly regarded women. Though their letters often discussed career goals, college life, other friends, and their love for one another, they frequently discussed their romantic aspirations for women as well.

In retrospect, only since the 1880s one would even consider the nature of such a relationship to be anything other than platonic (Nardi, 1992). As Rotundo (1989) asserted:

In other words, a man who wished to kiss or embrace an intimate male friend in bed did not have to worry about giving way to homosexual impulses because he would not assume that he had them. In the Victorian language of touch, a kiss or an embrace was a gesture of strong affection at least as much as it was an act of sexual expression. And..., the fact of two men sharing a bed had fewer sexual overtones in the nineteenth century than it might today. (p. 10)

As history has progressed, there is less evidence of these romantic friendships (Nardi; Rotundo). Some researchers have argued, that once homosexual “taboos” began to arise in America around the 1880s (Nardi), the intense nature of these friendships began to be questioned by people outside the relationships. Consequently, once partners in these relationships began to fear that they may be viewed as homosexual or that their friendships were of an “impure” nature, it is speculated that these friendships become increasingly less common (Nardi; Rotundo). This is consistent with contemporary research suggesting that men, in particular, do not engage in substantially intimate same-sex friendships, likely as a result of homophobia or a desire to maintain socially held masculine norms (Bank & Hansford, 2000). It should be noted, however, that although taboos surrounding same-sex sexuality have become socially normative in the U.S., there is substantial variability regarding the extent of or acknowledgment of such taboos in other cultures. Additionally, it is imperative to consider that although there appears to be a dominant culture or mentality with regards to same-sex sexuality in U.S. culture, it would be negligent to dismiss the variability in levels of “taboo” that occur *within* the U.S. based on factors such as geographical location, ethnicity, socioeconomic status (SES), and other demographic characteristics.

### *Contemporary Passionate Friendships*

The term passionate friendship, as denoted by Diamond (2000), has been offered in reference to historical “romantic friendships” but is intended to distinguish contemporary instances from historical ones. Contemporary research indicates that historical romantic friendships still occur among women, but there appears to be no contemporary empirical research to support the occurrence of these relationships in males. The research supporting the occurrence of passionate friendships in females, however, is strongly reminiscent of historical romantic friendships.

Diamond, a primary researcher in this area, first began researching this phenomenon in her 2000 study that involved interviewing adolescent and young adult sexual minority women. More specifically, participants self-identified as lesbian, bisexual, or nonheterosexual women who declined to label their sexual identity. Participants were initially asked to identify three people whom they recall being most attracted to in their lifetime. Participants responded with detailed answers indicating highly emotional and physically intense relationships with same-sex friends. Diamond illustrated this by presenting several excerpts from different interviews.

“Our relationship was so intense it was nearly spiritual.”

“We spent the kind of time together that you usually only spend with a lover.”

“We had the kind of deep love where I know I could *hold* her, which is something I normally wouldn’t do with a friend.” (p. 194)

The study then isolated friendships that were uniquely passionate by asking participants if they had “ever had a platonic friendship that was as emotionally intense as a romantic relationship” (p. 197). Patterns emerged from the interviews revealing that, in instances when participants had indeed experienced uniquely emotionally intense

friendships, characteristics of their friendships were often typically associated with romantic relationships. The feelings and behaviors experienced in these unique dyads included proximity seeking, separation distress, use of the partner as a safe haven, inseparability, cuddling, hand holding, gazing in to each other's eyes, preoccupation, fascination, possessiveness, and inseparability.

While results indicated that several participants did in fact engage in sexual behaviors with their friend, many did not. Furthermore, though several women reported engaging in physical behaviors such as sitting on each other's laps, walking arm in arm, cuddling with one another on couches, and sleeping in the same bed, the suspicion of a sexual relationship was often refuted when respondents insisted that the relationship was entirely platonic. As one woman asserted, "If there had been some sexual element, I could never have been so physically comfortable around her" (Diamond, 2000, p. 194).

Diamond further addressed the suspicion of women's passionate friendships being sexual in nature rather than primarily platonic in her 2002 study, which speaks to the argument that platonic friendships involve qualitatively different behaviors and feelings than romantic relationships that distinguish them from each other. Thus, when the two distinctively separate domains of relationships are interwoven, it is insinuated that the relationship created is not, in fact, platonic, but rather an unreciprocated romantic relationship that is rooted in repressed sexual longing. Diamond addressed this argument in her 2002 study by again interviewing sexual minority women between the ages of 18 and 25. Similar to her 2000 study, Diamond requested that participants focus on their most intense adolescent friendships. Participants were then asked to describe the type and frequency of the physical affection in the relationships, whether they ever became

sexually attracted to or became sexually involved with their friend, whether they ever became fascinated or preoccupied with their friend, and how frequently they spent time together. They were also questioned regarding the importance of the friendship relative to other close relationships in their lives at that time, in addition to the similarities and differences between their particular friendship and their typical romantic relationships.

Initially, results may suggest that these relationships could be characterized as repressed sexual longings. Three fourths of the women in Diamond's (2002) second study reported feeling strongly possessive of their friend's time and attention, and were frequently fascinated with their friend's behavior and appearance. Additionally, three fifths of participants reported engaging in two or more physical behaviors typically associated with sexual partners such as, cuddling side-to-side, cuddling face-to-face, gazing into each other's eyes, and holding hands. It is surprising, however, that while some women did report engaging in sexual behaviors with their friends, many did not. Many participants reported having even spent several years searching for repressed sexual attraction toward their friend as a means of explaining their connection but could not. One participant stated, "It was like this pull to be near her, this longing for nearness, but it wasn't sexual" (p. 10). As Diamond noted, some participants concluded that the platonic nature of their friendship was what ultimately allowed them the freedom to experience such a high degree of physical intimacy.

Although Diamond's (2000, 2002) work appears to be the first documented empirical study of isolated instances of passionate friendships in sexual minority females, other research has documented similar friendships in both sexual minority and sexual majority women (Brown, 2001; Gay, 1985; Glover, 2009; Von Sydow, 1995). Brown,

who also examined isolated instances of passionate friendships, interviewed a sample of adolescent and young adult women including both self-identified sexual minority and sexual majority women. Using a grounded theory approach to gain understanding about passionate friendships, Brown uncovered several themes consistent with Diamond's research, in addition to a few new themes that had not previously been examined. As Diamond had found, Brown's findings indicated that feelings or behaviors such as proximity seeking and other aspects of emotional support (e.g., safe haven, inseparability, etc.) were characteristics that were typically reported by participants regarding their passionate friendships. In addition to these characteristics, however, several unique themes emerged including a transcendent or spiritual connection.

As Brown (2001) interviewed participants, she discovered that many women began to describe their friendships in ways that indicated that they believed that something greater was responsible for their relationship than what they could account for. Brown illuminated this pattern of responses by providing a series of quotes by her participants.

We see each other as soul mates. We've *belonged* together since the beginning of time kind of thing.

There's 'ishq', [one of the words to describe love in her first language] which is like the spiritual love, which is what I would describe for her, it's very spiritual, it's very...it's mental and emotional, but it's not a physical love, it's beyond that, you know. The physical seems so *trite*, I mean the physical world's like 'ugh' [laugh]. That's the way I'd describe it. It's considered beyond sort of you know, the ordinary world. 'Ishq', I mean that's the word that they use and they usually ascribe it to feelings for one's God or someone you love so intensely but you're never physically involved with them, you know, there's the barrier of that, there's no physical involvement but in every other way, this person's your soul mate, so that's the word I would use." (p. 73)

A second theme that was unique to Brown's (2001) study was what she has labeled instantaneous connection. With little needed further explanation, this theme resulted from participants expressing an immediate connection to one another. As many participants indicated, this instantaneous connection was an initial indicator that differentiated their current passionate friendships from other previous close platonic relationships.

A final noteworthy theme unique to Brown's study (2001) is the feeling of isolation that accompany the often indescribable nature of passionate friendships. As discussed in historical romantic friendships, as well as in Diamond's (2000, 2002) research, outsiders often place unwarranted pressures on passionate friendship dyads as a result of suspicions about the sexual nature of the atypical affectionate behaviors observed. Brown examined these feelings of isolation in more detail and exposed the fears of being viewed as "queer" or being the target of homophobic hostility. In many instances, participants expressed that their friends and family members simply did not understand the significance of the passionate friend in their life as a platonic partner rather than a romantic one. As one woman stated jokingly, "If only we were gay, then everything would be taken care of... It would make things easier, it would be easier to define I think also" (p.126). One woman even stated that she felt there was "no space" for these types of relationships in society. Brown's research indicated that many women had not even heard of other relationships like their own until Brown interviewed them and conducted focus groups with similar dyads. While it appears these unique relationships are rare, as evidenced by Glover (2009), this phenomenon is perhaps more common than initially thought.

Glover (2009) conducted a quantitative study that examined the occurrence and characteristics of passionate friendships among emerging adult females. In her study of 232 college women (primarily Caucasian and heterosexual), Glover asked respondents to complete an online survey that included several psychosocial measures and a newly developed measure that assessed specific qualities that have been previously identified and associated (Diamond, 2000, 2002) with passionate friendships. The passionate friendship assessment included items addressing respondent's closest adolescent same-sex friendship in addition to questions regarding their current, closest same-sex friendship. Results from the study indicated that nearly half (49%) of the heterosexual women and nearly all (94%) of the nonheterosexual women had experienced passionate friendship at least once in their adolescence. Additionally, results indicated that 33% of heterosexual and 75% of nonheterosexual respondents were experiencing a passionate friendship at the time of assessment.

In addition to evidence that suggests passionate friendships occur relatively frequently and at various periods of life, Glover (2009) also suggested that the developmental level in which passionate friendship occurs is also indicative of relationship styles in adulthood. Specifically, according to Glover, individuals who experienced passionate friendship in adolescence also experience stronger attachment in their adult relationships. Furthermore, individuals who experience passionate friendships both in adolescence and adulthood appear to experience higher intensity overall in their adult relationships (as evidenced by thought preoccupation). According to Glover, these findings may be indicative of overall relational styles rather than mere instances of highly intense relationships.

Finally, Glover (2009) examined the function of passionate friendships via interviews conducted with survey participants who had been previously identified as having experienced passionate friendship both in adolescence as well as adulthood. Overall, findings from Glover's qualitative study indicated that both heterosexual and nonheterosexual women experienced similar features or characteristics in their friendships. Notably, however, the functions that these unique relationships served were different for sexual minorities than for heterosexuals. In particular, despite consistent reports from heterosexual women indicating that their relationships were crucial to their development in terms of support and importance, they explicitly indicated that these relationships served solely platonic functions and were devoid of any romantic or sexual motivations or feelings. Alternatively, nonheterosexual participants consistently described their relationships as having a vital role in understanding their own personal attraction towards the same-sex. Glover further indicated that sexual minority women recognized the romantic nature of these relationships and later attributed their passionate friendships to the process of identifying their same-sex sexuality.

### *Future Research*

As stated previously, although it appears that we only have empirical evidence supporting women's reports of passionate friendships, we do have evidence of women engaging in passionate friendships where the target friend was a male (Diamond, 2000). In these instances, however, all the target friends were gay. Unfortunately, there are no reports from the male participants to validate that the perceptions of these friendships are reciprocated by both parties. There is also no recent empirical evidence of passionate friendships that have been engaged in by males who are identified as heterosexual. As

evident in contemporary research (see Diamond, 2000), examining the occurrence of passionate friendships in males would be an important feature of further exploration of this phenomenon. As indicated by Diamond (2002), passionate friendships are not to be loosely placed in either domain of romantic partner *or* friend. Passionate friendships are arguably a domain of human relationships in their own right and research aimed at describing the characteristics and circumstances under which they occur is important.

### Factors Associated with Friendship Experience

The four factors described below were selected based upon deficits in the passionate friendship literature, and thus have been included such that the current state of the literature regarding each factor may be examined as a means of gaining further understanding relating to these deficits. Specifically, gender has been selected to identify the current empirical conceptualization of male versus female same-sex platonic relationships. Due to the overwhelming amount of literature addressing female same-sex passionate friendships, cross-sex friendships have been selected as a second factor with the intent to address the possibility of passionate friendships occurring within cross-sex platonic dyads as well. As with same-sex friendships, sexual minorities are also overrepresented in the current passionate friendships literature. While sexual minorities do not represent a gap in the passionate friendship literature, it is apparent that this factor is substantially important to consider when studying passionate friendships and should not be excluded from the current study. Finally, though no known studies regarding contemporary passionate friendships examine gender-role orientation, it has been included as a fourth factor in the current study due to the interesting implications it may

have regarding personality traits of those who engage in specific friendships (e.g., cross- vs. same-sex friendships). Secondly, the gender-role orientation of individuals may have additional implications regarding passionate friendships that have not yet been examined.

### *Biological Sex*

When describing the qualitative differences between men and women, a hallmark difference between the two sexes is that women are “talk” focused and men are “do” focused (Winstead, 1986). Talking or shared disclosure is viewed as central to women’s same-sex friendships. Men, on the other hand, tend to view shared activities as more central to their relationships. They often spend time with their same-sex friends engaging in activities such as sports in which they both pursue the same goal or focus but do not include each other as the main object of interest (McNelles & Connolly, 1999; Radmacher & Azmitia, 2006; Winstead). From a developmental perspective, many researchers have concluded that the “talk” versus “do” differences in men’s and women’s friendships begin in childhood (Lever, 1976, 1978; Waldrop & Halverson, 1975).

Beginning in childhood, males and females differ in both play styles as well as activity choices (Lever, 1976, 1978; Waldrop & Halverson, 1975). Boys tend to engage in structured, competitive play or games that usually consist of teams and direct rules by which play must abide. They also tend to play in larger groups, which some researchers believe contributes to the perceived lack of intimacy in their relationships (Waldrop & Halverson; Winstead, 1986). Girls on the other hand, tend to engage in turn-taking play that results in little role differentiation or competition (Lever). They also typically play in small groups or exclusive dyads in which they engage in role-play activities (e.g., house, dolls, and dress-up) that facilitate complex communication between playmates (Waldrop

& Halverson; Winstead). Based on previous research that has observed male and female childhood play styles, researchers have postulated that these apparent gender differences are in large part responsible for adolescent and adult gender differences in friendship (Winstead).

Much of the literature regarding gender differences in friendship suggests that men's friendships serve an instrumental function while women's serve a communal function; however, there is some debate concerning the differences in the quality of each gender's friendships. Particularly, past research indicates that women experience more intimate relationships than men do (Buhrmester & Furman, 1987; Crocket, Losoff, & Petersen, 1984). Much of the basis for this conclusion is rooted in the theory and data consistently demonstrating that women self-disclose more often than men. The theory that women have more intimate relationships is primarily due to the heavy weight researchers and theorists place on self-disclosure. The apparent gender differences regarding levels of intimacy in same-sex friendships, however, may be more a result of differing definitions of intimacy than actual friendship experiences (Fehr, 2004; Johnson, 2004; McNelles & Connolly, 1999; Radmacher & Azmitia, 2006). In addition to this, some research suggests that gender differences regarding intimacy in friendship are not sufficiently accounted for by extrinsic definitions; rather individual, intrinsic, meanings of intimacy may aid in accounting for gender differences in friendship quality. For example, Monsour (1992) asked respondents: "What do you mean by the term 'intimacy' when used in reference to your cross-sex (same-sex) friends? In your reply please also indicate how you and your cross-sex (same-sex) friends express intimacy in your relationship." Responses were then coded according to categories of intimacy (e.g., trust,

self-disclosure, emotional expressiveness, unconditional support, physical contact, trust, activities, and sexual contact). Results from this study demonstrated that self-disclosure was specified as a meaning of intimacy more frequently than any other domain for both men and women in either same or cross-sex friendships. This finding is consistent with Fehr's research and provides further support for her perspective that men conceptualize intimacy similarly to women, but as a result of socialization in the United States, prefer not to express intimacy by the same means or to the same extent as women.

While men and women were similar in their ratings of disclosure as a meaning of intimacy, consistent with other research (McNelles & Connolly, 1999; Radmacher & Azmitia, 2006), men in same-sex friendships were the most frequent in rating shared activities as a meaning of friendship compared to women in same-sex friendships or either sex in cross-sex friendships. Interestingly, emotional expressiveness (characterized as emotional closeness, warmth, affection, caring and compassion) was the second most frequently mentioned meaning of intimacy for males. Monsour (1992) also found that physical contact was the second most frequently mentioned meaning of intimacy for women (32%) in same-sex friendships, while only 16% of men in same-sex friendships indicated this as a meaning of intimacy in their relationships. Finally, though men and women differed in their rank of meanings of intimacy, both men and women included disclosure, emotional expressiveness and physical contact in their top three most frequently mentioned meanings of intimacy. Thus, though there appear to be some qualitative differences between men's and women's same-sex friendships, many contemporary researchers posit the assumption that male and females are actually more alike than is often assumed.

Some research indicates that gender differences in friendship may actually be a result of incomplete reporting from participants or perhaps a product of inadequate questioning methods in quantitative studies of platonic relationships. This point is further punctuated by Walker's (1994) qualitative study addressing gender differences in same-sex friendships. In this study, in-depth interviews were completed with both men and women (some of whom were friends). Respondents were asked to address general questions about the definition of friendship and the differences between men's and women's friendships. Consistent with a majority of other research (Fehr, 2004; Johnson, 2004; McNelles & Connolly, 1999; Radmacher & Azmitia, 2006), men and women typically defined friendship differently (i.e., men primarily engage in shared activities and talk about sports and politics; shared feelings of closeness and support are central to women's relationships). When asked about the differences between men's and women's friendships, both men and women consistently referred to the degrees of openness or closeness that are exhibited in a relationship to differentiate between the nature of men's and women's friendships. Walker better illustrated this point by offering an excerpt from two separate interviews taken from this study:

Men keep more to themselves. They don't open up the way women do. Some women will spill their guts at the drop of the hat. (working-class man)

I don't think men are as close as women are to each other. I think they're a little more distant with each other. I don't think men tell each other everything. (working-class woman). ( p. 7)

Walker (1994) indicated that U.S. society has developed expectations regarding what friendships should be like and that we, as individuals, tend to dismiss behaviors or opinions that do not fit expectations. Perhaps the most interesting finding in Walker's (1994) study was that, while the majority of definitions of friendship and explanations of

how men's and women's friendships differ were in accordance with gendered stereotypes, when participants were asked detailed questions about the activities they participated in or the topics of conversation with their friends, many participants' actual friendship experiences were contradictory to gendered norms. Findings further indicated that 75% of males reported engaging in gender atypical behaviors such as intimate shared disclosure about spouses, other family members, and their feelings. One third of these men also reported that they engaged in other behaviors that were more consistent with the female gender role, in addition to intimate verbal behavior.

The response of Joe, a working-class man, illuminates the meaning of shopping as a gendered activity. He reported that sometimes he went food shopping with a married friend: "Anita gives him the list and we go to the supermarket like two old ladies and we pick out the things. Well, this one's cheaper than that one so let's get this." Joe seemed a little embarrassed by this activity. He laughed softly as he reported these shopping trips. His married friend, whom I also interviewed, denied that he shopped with friends. (Walker, 1994, p. 10)

Nongendered behavior was also common in women. According to Walker's (1994) findings, 65% of women reported engaging in nongendered activities such as attending spectator sporting events or playing sports together. Other nongendered behaviors, such as a lack of openness, were included. For example, 25% of women who indicated that they felt some things were too personal to disclose to their friends or in a few cases, women felt uncomfortable disclosing much of anything personal.

Finally, though there appear to be substantial similarities between male and female same-sex friendships, the credible differences are not to be dismissed. Some differences may even assist in explaining other relationship phenomena that occur in cross-sex relationships. For instance, research shows that women demonstrate abilities to elicit self-disclosure from others. Miller, Berg, and Archer (1983) found that females rate

higher than males on the “Opener’s Scale,” which has been used as a valid instrument in measuring one’s ability to get others to “open up” or disclose information. This finding, though not directly related, is interesting when one also considers Reis and Shaver’s (1988) research that indicated that loneliness was significantly correlated with interaction quantity only in cross-sex interactions for males and same-sex interactions for women. In other words, loneliness was only affected by time spent with women. There were no significant correlations between loneliness and time spent with men for either sex. As noted by Winstead (1986), based upon intrinsic qualities specifically expressed by women, it may be no surprise that cross-sex relationships for males are more similar terms of intimacy and self-disclosure to female same-sex friendships than male same-sex friendships (Sanborn, 2005).

#### *Cross-Sex Versus Same-Sex Friendships*

In the past, same-sex relationships have been the primary target of friendship research. Only recently (since approximately the mid-1990s) have cross-sex (male-female) friendships received a substantial amount of research attention (Reeder, 1996). The majority of current research that addresses these previously ignored dyads examines how male-female platonic relationships differ from same-sex platonic relationships. The initial difference may first be described by establishing a definition.

Cross-sex friendship is a specific type of friendship--a nonromantic, nonfamilial, personal relationship between a man and a woman. The relationship is nonromantic in the sense that its function is purposefully dissociated from courtship rites by the actors involved. Nonromantic does not mean, however, that sexuality or passion are necessarily absent from the relationships. (O’Meara, 1989 p. 526)

Based on O'Meara's (1989) widely used definition of cross-sex friendships (Reeder, 1996; Sanborn, 2005), the first and arguably most frequently discussed difference between cross- and same-sex friendships is the potential for sexual attraction and/or related behaviors. Before this discussion continues, it is important to note that the assumption of sexual potential is rooted in social and heterosexual norms found in U.S. dominant culture and that the majority of research examining cross-sex friendships does not specifically address sexual minority populations. Furthermore, as O'Meara noted, the potential for sexual attraction is specific to heterosexual (or sexual minorities who experience opposite-sex attraction) individuals and does not pose an issue in the context of sexual minorities who experience only same-sex attraction.

The entire idea of male-female relationships being platonic in nature seems relatively counterintuitive based upon culturally held ideologies of heterosexual romance (Werking, 1997). According to Werking, current models of men's and women's relationships are "passionate in nature" and are formed with an ultimate goal of marriage. This consequently leaves little room for the exclusion of sexual attraction as a possible characteristic of the friendship. However, according to O'Meara's (1989) definition, though sexuality may not necessarily be absent from the relationship, the behaviors typically associated with it are. The absence of sexual behaviors or "courtship rites" as described by O'Meara has created several challenges that partners in cross-sex friendships often encounter.

The first challenge that researchers have investigated is what some have termed "sexual tension" (Monsour, Harris, & Kurzweil, 1994; O'Meara, 1989; Reeder, 1996; Sanborn, 2005; Werking, 1997). Sexual tension is best described as partners in a

friendship controlling romantic feelings and behaviors while experiencing the desire to experiment sexually with their cross-sex friend. While some friends in cross-sex friendships report disliking the occurrence of sexual tension in their friendship due to concerns that sexual behaviors will destroy the relationships (Sapadin, 1988), others report that they enjoy the tension, indicating that it adds zest and excitement to the friendship (Bell, 1981; Rubin, 1985). A second challenge that occurs in cross-sex friendships is known as the emotional bond challenge (Monsour et al., 1994; O'Meara, 1989; Werking, 1997). Different from the sexual challenge (i.e., sexual tension), emotional bond challenges involve the development of attraction rather than a currently existing sexual attraction. As discussed previously, this challenge is strongly rooted in socialization of beliefs that men and women typically view each other from a potentially romantic position. Thus, when men and women engage in close, intimate relationships, it is likely that they will question the meaning of their bond. For example, in Monsour and colleagues' study, researchers examined the emotional bond challenge by asking open-ended questions about challenges to participants in cross-sex friendships. A typical emotional bond challenge response as indicated by Monsour and colleagues was, "Sometimes I am confused about how I really feel about her." The emotional bond challenge was found to account for the largest percentage of challenges listed by male and female participants.

While personal challenges with sexual attraction and romance occur within cross-sex friendships, external influences also appear to affect cross-sex friendships. Because American society continues to maintain heterosexual norms, those who maintain male-female platonic relationships, absent of sexual interest or attraction, face a third challenge

in the form of public scrutiny. Male and female dyads are assumed by default to be a romantic couple. As a result, many cross-sex friendships face what Monsour and colleagues (1994) has termed the audience challenge. The audience challenge, in essence, is the ongoing process of defending one's platonic male-female relationship as strictly "friends" (Monsour et al.; O'Meara, 1989; Werking, 1997). Furthermore, public attention can be a powerful influence on one's relationship that can occur as early as childhood. As Sanborn (2005) described, the prevalence of cross-sex friendship appears to have a curvilinear pattern of occurrence. Children typically engage in primarily same-sex friendships and appear to avoid opposite-sex friendships based upon what children believe is "unacceptable" due to social norms (e.g., it is socially unacceptable in a fourth grader's world for girls to be close friends with boys; Rose, 1985). Cross-sex friendships are most common, however, in adolescence and early adulthood (McBride & Field, 1997; Sanborn). The significant increase in prevalence of male-female friendships in adolescence and early adulthood, as described by Sanborn and McBride and Field, is likely a result of serving a "testing ground" function for adult romantic relationships. Thus, when cross-sex friendships are consistent with heterosexual norms, it appears they are more acceptable. Finally, cross-sex friendships once again decreased in adulthood, which has been attributed to marriage and family commitments, as well as a result of possible partner jealousy (O'Meara; Rose; Sanborn). If one were to plot the prevalence rates of cross-sex friendships across all ages, as Sanborn noted, the resulting image would have an inverted "U" appearance. This prevalence can arguably be attributed to the audience challenge by which individuals are requested to defend the nature of their relationship as it coincides with or deviates from heterosexual norms. As O'Meara

indicated, our society (i.e., that of the United States of America) in many ways is relatively skeptical that men and women *can* even have truly platonic relationships, and there is a scarcity of male-female friend role models. The lack of role models, consequently, creates an even bigger challenge in defending the occurrence of a truly platonic male-female relationship.

One of the most famous depictions of social skepticism and/or rejection of the potential for men and women to engage in strictly platonic relationships is portrayed in the 1989 film *When Harry Met Sally*. The main characters, Harry and Sally, try to maintain a platonic relationship while resisting sexual allurements. At one point in the movie, Harry addresses the nearly overwhelming challenge of sexual tension by saying to Sally, “Men and women can’t be friends because the sex part always gets in the way” (Reiner, 1989; Sanborn, 2005). Once again, even the media’s fictional attempt of creating a successful cross-sex platonic relationship is influenced by sexual attraction, thus perpetuating Werking’s (1997) argument of culturally held ideologies of heterosexual romance. The challenge of audience is further a problem as a result of the ambiguity people use when actually defending their relationships. As asserted by O’Meara (1989),

Even the language that we use to describe our cross-sex friends is vague, confusing, and open to misinterpretation due to the often maligned phrase of “just a friend” when applied to male-female relationships. This phrase often conveys a failed romantic relationship, or is used as a euphemism for an actual romantic relationship, or to downgrade the relationships since it is not a “real” man-woman relationship--“just” a friendship. (p. 527)

Consequently, when people are, in fact, in platonic male-female relationships, defending the nature of their relationship is particularly challenging. As O’Meara described, in some cases, assumptions made about a relationship’s nature may negatively influence a

relationship to such a degree that one or both partners decide to terminate the relationship rather than continually defend it.

A final challenge that is posed to cross-sex friendships is one of equality. Equality is a concern for several reasons. First, as described by Rose (1985), people throughout the world typically live in a homosocial society, which essentially means that individuals generally seek (either by personal choice or by adherence to cultural norms), enjoy and often prefer the company of same-sex friends. Also according to Rose, we (i.e., Americans) live in a patriarchal society where men have more resources (political, economic, educational, etc.), leaving them with little motivation to engage in cross-sex friendships in order to gain access to valued resources. Research indicates that, while men's cross-sex friendship functioning did not appear to differ significantly from same-sex friendship functioning in terms of intimacy and acceptance, women reported significantly less feelings of intimacy and acceptance in male-female friendships than in female-female friendships (Rose). As Rose and O'Meara (1989) explained, it may be that women tolerate what appears to be a "social deprivation" that accompanies their cross-sex friendships, in addition to a power differential, in exchange for status that is acquired by association. O'Meara also asserted that there may be added challenges of communication and understanding that occur as a result of social status differential between men and women.

Despite several challenges that appear to co-occur with cross-sex friendships, research suggests there are also benefits associated with these relationships. One of the most important benefits indicated by both men and women is the opportunity to obtain a better understanding of the opposite sex (Sanborn, 2005; Sapadin, 1988). As described in

Sapadin's study, in which men and women in cross-sex friendships were asked a series of questions regarding qualities of their same- and cross-sex friendships (which were then coded based on nature of their responses), when participants were asked, "What do you like most about your friendships?", "obtaining a cross-sex perspective" was the most frequently mentioned category of responses. Examples of responses included remarks like, "getting a woman's view about various subjects" or "discovering and learning how they (men) think and operate..." (pp. 397-398). In addition to gaining understanding about the opposite sex, other research suggests that men in particular receive emotional benefits from engaging in male-female friendships that may otherwise not be received in traditional same-sex friendships (Aukett, Ritchie, & Mill, 1988; Bell, 1981; Rubin, 1985; Sanborn, 2005; Werking, 1997).

As discussed above, many men feel that women are more "open" than their male friends, and thus feel more comfortable disclosing intimate information to them (Aukett et al., 1988; Bell, 1981; Rubin, 1985; Winstead, 1986). In some cases, as described by Bell, men report feeling that the masculine social expectations placed on them restrict their same-sex friendships, thus leaving them needing women to fulfill unmet emotional needs. Bell encapsulated this point by sharing an interview excerpt from a previous study he conducted examining cross-sex friendships:

Right now, and I am sure in the future, my female friends are far more important to me than my male friends, although that was not true in the past. I am beginning to think that "macho" threatens male friendships and that is not a threat with women friends. It gets down to the bottom line of there being trust with the woman that is often not there with the man. (p. 111)

The emotional benefits that men receive by engaging in cross-sex friendships not only appear to be in addition to same-sex friendships benefits, but more importantly,

research suggests these qualities are specific to cross-sex friendships. As described in Aukett and colleagues' (1988) study examining both U.S. and New Zealand men and women in both same- and cross-sex friendships, men specifically reported deriving both emotional and therapeutic support from opposite-sex friendships more frequently than from same-sex friendships. In addition to this, a significantly higher percentage of men shared personal problems with their opposite-sex friends than women.

As discussed in Rose's (1985) study, not only does research indicate that men benefit more from cross-sex friendships, some research indicates that women may actually be deprived of typically rewarding qualities when they engage in cross-sex as opposed to same-sex friendships. In Sapadin's (1988) study, men's and women's same- and cross-sex friendships were examined by asking open-ended questions addressing various qualities of their friendships. Interestingly, when they asked both men and women, "What do you dislike most about your friendship?" men and women differed significantly on "superficiality" as a primary source of dissatisfaction in cross-sex friendships. In this study, Sapadin found that women equally reported both superficiality and sexual tension as the most frequent response to the question. However, men's reports of superficiality ranked second to last and interestingly rated "sexual tension" first and "nothing" as the second most frequent response of sources of dissatisfaction in their cross-sex friendships.

#### *Gender-Role Orientation (Masculinity/Femininity)*

While a substantial amount of the literature on friendship has addressed differences between genders and differences between same- and cross-sex relationships, a growing body of research has included gender-role orientation as a major source of

influence on friendship experience (Bowman, 2006; Buckner, 2001; Fischer & Narus, 1981; Jones, Bloys, & Wood, 1990; Williams, 1985; Winstead, Derlega & Wong, 1984; Wright & Scanlon, 1991). This body of literature suggests that individual friendship experiences (e.g., satisfaction, intimacy, self-disclosure, or the type of friendship in which they engage, such as cross- vs. same-sex) appear to be significantly impacted by one's gender-role orientation.

Gender-role orientation (otherwise known as sex-role orientation or identity) has historically been thought of as a single continuum with only two polar opposite constructs identifying each end of the continuum; masculinity at one end and femininity at the other (Bem, 1974; Bowman, 2006). Until 1974, an individual's gender-role orientation could only include some given level of either masculinity or femininity. At this time, however, Bem concluded that an individual could possess both masculine *and* feminine characteristics simultaneously, which consequently led to the creation of a third possible sex-role known as androgyny. According to Bem, masculinity is characteristically defined by displaying qualities that are assertive, instrumental, or competitive. Femininity on the other hand, includes qualities such as behaving in a manner that is yielding, expressive, or compassionate. Typically, we think of masculinity in relation to males and femininity in relation to females. If an individual were to personally endorse the characteristics that stereotypically coincide with his or her biological sex, their gender-role orientation would be labeled typical or sex-typed.

When compared individually, individuals with androgynous gender-role orientations appear to have the advantage in some cases when it comes to positive friendship experiences. As indicated by Jones and colleagues (1990), androgynous

individuals reportedly experienced significantly less loneliness and more satisfaction in their friendships than undifferentiated individuals. Androgyny has also been found to relate to relationship quality in friendship partners as well. In a study examining gender-role orientation sensitivity in friendship, Wright and Scanlon (1991) asked participants to complete a Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974; which had been altered so that it could be completed for a target person) for a close or best friend. Participants then rated their friends using the Acquaintance Description Form-F (ADF-F; Wright, 1985) on variables such as stimulation value, utility value, emotional expression, exclusiveness, and general favorability. Interestingly, results demonstrated that women, in particular, rated androgynous friends more favorably compared to sex-typed or masculine friends, and significantly higher than undifferentiated friends. Though there were no significant results indicating that androgyny had an effect on male-other friendships (it did not appear to matter what the perceived gender-role orientation of male friends were), some research suggests that androgyny in male relationships is related to increased perceptions of closeness and interdependence (Bowman, 2006), as well as increased levels of intimacy in same-sex friendships (Williams, 1985). Some research suggests that the positive experiences related to androgyny may be a result of the mere presence of feminine characteristics.

As demonstrated by Williams (1985), the inclusion of femininity in any sex-role identity (e.g., androgyny or cross-sex typed for males and androgyny or sex-typed for females) was significantly positively correlated with intimacy in same-sex friendships. Interestingly, there was no significant difference in levels of intimacy between sex-typed and undifferentiated males or masculine and undifferentiated females. As noted earlier, a

primary factor that contributes to intimacy is self-disclosure and, consistent with Williams research regarding intimacy, Winstead and colleagues (1984) indicated that not only is femininity positively correlated with intimacy in same-sex friendships, but it is also positively correlated with self-disclosure among male-male platonic friendships. In Winstead and colleagues' research, masculinity was significantly negatively correlated with self-disclosure between male-male dyads. Interestingly, however, masculinity did not have an effect when males were paired with female partners. This is consistent with other cross-sex research explaining that men appear to feel more comfortable disclosing to women than men (Aukett et al., 1988; Bell, 1981; Rubin, 1985; Winstead; 1986).

Finally, there is some research that suggests that gender-role orientation predicts cross-sex or same-sex friendship preference (Lenton & Webber, 2006; Reeder, 2003). Lenton and Webber examined gender-role identity and friendship preference, suggesting that increasingly masculine individuals (males and females) were likely to choose male friends while increasingly feminine individuals (males and females) were likely to choose female friends. Thus, increasingly cross-sex individuals were more likely to engage in cross-sex friendships than were traditionally sex-typed individuals. Though Lenton and Webber's results were consistent with Reeder's findings, there are some inconsistencies in the literature regarding gender-role orientation and proportions of cross-sex friendships. One example of notable inconsistency is in Jones and colleagues' (1990) findings. These authors suggested that androgynous males typically had more male friends than sex-typed males, while androgynous females typically had more male friends than their sex-typed counterparts.

### *Sexual Minority Status*

Research indicates that sexual minority status appears to have a substantial effect on friendship experience (D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Diamond & Lucas, 2004; Grossman & Kerner, 1998; Nardi, 1992; Savin-Williams, 1998). In addition to the obstacles sexual-minority individuals face (e.g., rejection and disapproval from loved ones, loss of friendship, and delicate boundaries placed within same-sex friendships so that behaviors are not misinterpreted as sexual attraction) regarding disclosure of one's sexual orientation, sexual-minority friendships appear to differ from heterosexual friendships qualitatively in many facets.

Diamond and Lucas (2004) examined sexual-minority adolescents (nonheterosexual) compared to heterosexual adolescents, and found that sexual-minority youth had smaller peer groups and more friendship loss than their heterosexual counterparts. As discussed by Diamond and Lucas, this suggests that minority status appears to have a significant effect on one's peer group. Contrary to previous research, however, Diamond and Lucas' findings indicated that there were no differences observed between sexual-minority and heterosexual adolescents' perceived control over friendships, nor regarding the level of feelings of connectedness between friends. Thus, it appears that sexual-minority youth do not have less intimate friendships than heterosexual youth.

In other research conducted by Diamond and Dube (2002), examining adolescent friendship attachment and the gender of adolescents' friends, results indicated that sexual-minority females, when compared to sexual-minority males and both heterosexual males and females, had the highest percentage of same-sex friends and were

the most likely to have same-sex best friends. Consistent with adult research, sexual-minority males had the highest percentage of cross-sex friendships compared to other groups, and the fewest number of same-sex friendships. Finally, this study indicated that sexual-minority women had slightly higher levels of attachment for their romantic partners than their friends, while sexual-minority males scored significantly higher on attachment scales for their *friends* compared to their partners. This is consistent with Nardi's (1992, 1999) conclusion that many adult gay men consider their friends to be their most important relationships. As indicated by Nardi (1999), gay men reported that their same-sex friendships are often more involved than typical heterosexual platonic friendships. Furthermore, many gay men feel that their friendships are more like chosen family members.

There are other unique qualities that indicate that sexual-minority status may distinguish heterosexual friendships from sexual-minority friendships. As discussed by Nardi (1999), the same-sex sexual attraction that nonheterosexual individuals experience may be potentially challenging for minority same-sex friendships, a unique challenge that is unassociated with heterosexual same-sex friendships. This challenge may be further complicated when one considers bisexual individuals as in Galupo's (2007) study. While heterosexual men and women tend to only experience challenges with sexual attraction affecting their friendships in cross-sex friendships, and gay or lesbian friendships only face this challenge in same-sex friendships, for bisexuals, theoretically the challenge exists in *any* friendship.

Sexual minorities also appear to differ from heterosexuals in terms of friendship climate with respect to cross- and same-orientation friendships. In Galupo's (2007) study

examining same- and cross-orientation (sexually oriented differently than themselves) friendships, results suggested that while all sexual minority groups (bisexual, gay, and lesbian) had more cross-oriented friendships than same-oriented friendships, gay men's and lesbians' friendships were comprised mainly of sexual-minority friends. Thus, even their cross-oriented friends frequently included sexual minorities (bisexuals), allowing the combination of same-oriented and sexual minority cross-oriented friends to create the majority of their friendships. The most notable group in this study were those who were self-identified as bisexual. Bisexual men and women accounted for the majority of cross-oriented friendships, and contrary to their gay and lesbian counterparts, bisexual cross-oriented friendships were more frequently with heterosexuals than with sexual minorities.

A final distinctive characteristic, in which sexual minorities appear to differ from heterosexual friendships, is gender differences. As described previously, gender differences are a major factor associated with the heterosexual friendship experience. Heterosexual same-sex friendships are almost unanimously described in the literature as female friendships being "talk" focused and male friendships being "do" focused (Nardi, 1994; Winstead, 1986). In other words, women are arguably more self-disclosing, while men are more instrumental. Research on gender differences in sexual minority friendships does not show such remarkable differences, however. Actually, as depicted in Nardi's study, there were no significant differences in sexual minority men's and women's frequency of self-disclosure or in the level of intimacy of topics regarding disclosure. In addition to the lack of differences relating to disclosure, there were also no differences observed regarding shared activities. When participants were asked about the

frequency and types of activities engaged in with friends, no significant differences between sexes were observed.

As demonstrated by research, sexual minority status appears to substantially reform traditional conceptualizations of platonic same-sex relationships. In many cases, previous research conducted exclusively with heterosexual participants may not even apply to sexual minority friendships, as was demonstrated by Nardi (1994) with gender differences in sexual minority friendships. There is also evidence that the relationships developed with friends in sexual minorities may be qualitatively different from heterosexuals.

Finally, while contemporary passionate friendship research examines primarily sexual minorities (Diamond, 2000, 2002), and though there is evidence of these unique relationships occurring in heterosexual friendships both in contemporary passionate friendship research and historic romantic friendship literature (Brown, 2001; Rotundo, 1989; Sahli, 1979), there has yet to be research conducted that examines whether passionate friendships are qualitatively the same for both heterosexuals and sexual minorities. Thus, sexual minority status has been included as a primary factor of friendship and will be included in this study in order to address this apparent gap in the literature.

### Purpose and Objectives

Based on the current state of friendship literature, it is evident that additional research is needed regarding passionate friendships among both males and females. This study will address the apparent gaps in the literature regarding male passionate friendships, in addition to investigating other factors associated with passionate

friendship experiences. Specifically, this study proposes to examine gender, cross- versus same-sex friendships, sexual orientation, and gender-role orientation as associated factors of friendship experiences. Outlined research questions are as follows:

1. How are the individual psychological or demographic characteristics biological sex, biological sex of friend, gender role orientation, and sexual orientation—associated with the experiences of passionate friendships? Specifically, are the features that characterize passionate friendships (e.g., physical affection, intimate self-disclosure, devotion, exclusivity, fascination, etc.) expressed differently for the different subgroups outlined above?

Hypothesis: All variables including sex of participant, sex of friend, gender-role orientation of participant, and sexual orientation will be associated with the characteristics of passionate friendship. Although it is hypothesized that passionate friendships do occur in males, the features that define the passionate friendship may be different. For example, while physical affection is likely to be present, some features will be different from females (e.g., eye gazing); intimate self-disclosure, devotion, and exclusivity, in some cases, are all features that are present in contemporary male passionate friendships.

2. Based on gender, sexual orientation, gender-role orientation and the sex of one's friend, can we identify who is more likely to engage in passionate friendships?

Hypothesis: We can predict passionate friendships to a limited extent. Based on current research, women are hypothesized to engage in them more frequently than men, due to the intense and often physically affectionate nature of the friendship. It is also hypothesized that both male and female sexual-minority individuals will engage in

passionate friendships more frequently than heterosexuals. It is also hypothesized that androgynous individuals are more likely to engage in these unique relationships. Finally, as there is limited evidence of passionate friendships in cross-sex friendships, it is further hypothesized that, consistent with historical romantic friendships and contemporary passionate friendships, same-sex friendships are also more likely to be categorized as passionate friendships. Thus, individuals who are androgynous, sexual-minority, female, and engaged in a close same-sex platonic relationship are most likely to experience a passionate friendship.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### Participants

Participants ( $N = 375$ ) were recruited from undergraduate courses at Utah State University (USU), in addition to USU-based gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, androgynous (GLBTA) groups. Students in undergraduate courses as well as GLBTQ group meetings were informed of the study via verbal, in-class announcements and handouts which included instructions for participation in the study. Additionally, recruitment letters were distributed online via course instructor emails and listserv managers. Based on the entire sample of participant who completed the survey, less than 5% of the sample ( $n = 17$ ) was recruited from university GLBTQ groups or listservs.

Target participants were 18-26 years of age ( $M = 19.84$ ,  $SD = 2.0$ ). There were 390 participants who began the survey; 7 participants' data, however, could not be used because they were older than the upper age limit. Additionally, several respondents began the survey, but did not provide sufficient data to complete any scale scores or analysis and, consequently, were excluded. Of the remaining 375 participants, 40% of the sample were male and 60% were female. Eighty-eight percent were Caucasian, 3.5% were Latino, 2% were Asian, and the remaining 6.5% consisted of Native American, African American, Multiracial, or other, unspecified racial backgrounds.

As indicated by the survey of demographic information, 89% of the sample reported heterosexual/straight as their current sexual orientation. An additional 9% reported either a gay/lesbian or bisexual sexual orientation, and the remaining portion of

the sample indicated either questioning or failed to specify. Eighteen percent of the sample reported currently engaging in some form of a long-term committed romantic relationship (i.e., married or dating someone for a long period of time). An additional 80% reported being single, less than 1% reported being divorced or separated, and the remaining participants marked “other” as their current relationship status. Also, consistent with demographics associated with the geographic location in which recruiting took place, the majority of the sample (78%;  $n = 291$ ) was comprised of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint (LDS) individuals. In addition to LDS participants, 9% of the sample consisted of nonreligious individuals, 5% reported other Christian religions (e.g., Catholic, Protestant, or Baptist), and an additional 8% reported other religions (e.g., Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, etc.). Each participant received either lab credit (for course participation) or a \$10 compensation for his or her participation in the study.

Finally, based on information obtained using the Short BSRI (Bem, 1981) results from a brief chi-square analysis indicated that the sample was evenly distributed across gender role orientations regardless of biological sex or sexual orientation, Pearson  $\chi^2(9, n = 346) = 11.09, p = 0.27, V = 0.10$ . In other words, the sample included approximately equal numbers of masculine, feminine, androgynous and undifferentiated individuals represented by males and females as well as sexual minorities and heterosexual individuals (see Table 1 for a detailed summary of observed- versus expected frequencies of gender-role orientations.)

Table 1

*Chi-Square Analysis Results for Gender-Role Orientation*

Orientation		Masculine	Feminine	Androgygenous.	Undiffifferentiated
Minority males	Observed	3	4	4	8
	Expected	4.4	4.8	4.7	5.1
Heterosexual male	Observed	36	24	28	31
	Expected	27.9	29.9	29.6	31.6
Minority female	Observed	5	6	2	3
	Expected	3.7	4	4	4.3
Heterosexual female	Observed	37	53	52	50
	Expected	44.9	48.3	47.7	51.1

*Procedures*

Participants completed the questionnaire using an online survey software package (PsychData). Each participant received a link to the online survey from their course instructor or the class website, or via an announcement posted to listservs for campus GLBT organizations and Allies on Campus (see Appendix A for a copy of the recruitment letter). The announcement contained a link and instructions to access the survey. Once they accessed the survey and indicated their informed consent (see Appendix A), participants completed a series of questionnaires designed as a collaborative project examining the experiences of and outcomes associated with passionate friendships among young adults. This study was designed as part of a larger study that included additional measures. The measures relevant to the current study are described in the next section. The majority of items on the questionnaire required participants to respond using multiple-choice, or a Likert-scale rating system. In addition, some questions required participants to provide open-ended responses. Once the survey

had been completed, participants were routed to a separate information page where they were requested to report their names and the names of their instructors in order to receive lab credit, or their names and addresses for monetary compensation. In addition, participants were given the option to receive a summary of the results (see Appendix B). The information page was not, however, linked to participants' questionnaires. Once compensation for participation and a summary of the results had been dispersed, all identifying information was destroyed.

## Questionnaire Measures

### *Demographic Information*

The demographic information section assessed participants' age, education level, sexual orientation, ethnicity, relational status, and religious affiliation.

### *Passionate Friendship Survey*

A recent passionate friendship measure was developed by Glover (2009) and was adopted for the current study. The measure consists of three separate sets of questions. The first set includes questions regarding participants' most important same-sex friend during adolescence. The second set addressed participants' most important same-sex friend at the time of assessment (i.e., currently). The third set, created and adopted for the current study, includes questions regarding the most important friend participants have *ever* had, excluding kin and romantic partners. Due to the open nature of the third set of questions (i.e., target friends could be male or female), an additional question was included that requested participants to identify the sex of their friend. To examine both

same- and cross-sex friendships, the current study included results solely from the third set of questions. See Appendix C for measures.

The friendship measure was originally created due to the previous lack of existing quantitative measures assessing passionate friendships. Based on Diamond's (2000) qualitative assessment of passionate friendships, Glover (2009) developed a passionate friendship measure that assesses behaviors, attitudes, and emotions that have been demonstrated to be strongly associated features of passionate friendship, including possessiveness, affectionate behavior, preoccupation, fascination, proximity seeking, and attachment (i.e., secure base, separation distress, and inseparability). Each question is answered using a Likert scale in which 1 = *never* and 4 = *always*. Responses of higher value are indicative of characteristics associated with passionate friendships. The original 27-item measure was evaluated using a brief pilot study in which participants ( $n = 32$ ) took a paper version of the survey. At the conclusion of the survey, participants were encouraged to write suggestions and comments with regard to their experience of both comfort and comprehension. Based on participants' feedback from the pilot study, the final measure was revised to include 22 items (see Glover). Glover's original principal axis factor analysis, with only the 232 college-aged females from the current study's larger sample reporting on their most important current, as well as retrospective reports on adolescent same-sex friendships, resulted in retaining 18 items in three replicable factors. Resulting subscales assessed attachment/secure base functions (seven items; e.g., "I turn to this friend when I have a problem"), affection/preoccupation (seven items; e.g., "I hold hands with this friend" "I think about this friend or wonder where they are"), and intensity/exclusivity (four items; "I am inseparable from this friend"). In addition, Glover

retained as a separate score the sum of two items addressing experiences of jealousy (e.g., “Sometimes I am jealous when she dates” and “Sometimes I am jealous when she is with other friends”). Although the two jealousy items did not constitute a replicable factor, they were included as a separate score by Glover due to the important theoretical implications of experiences of jealousy in passionate friendship. As indicated previously, the current study includes results based solely on responses regarding participants’ most important friend ever, and as discussed in the following sections, yielded a factor structure in which the jealousy items were retained. The factor structure retained by Glover yielded high internal consistency for the total scores in regard to both adolescent (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.85$ ) and current (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.85$ ) friendships. Additionally, Glover's reliability coefficients indicated that Cronbach’s alphas ranged from 0.74 to 0.85 for the adolescent subscales, and ranged from 0.77 to 0.90 for the current friendship subscales.

#### Short Bem Sex-Role Inventory

The Short BSI (SBSRI; Bem, 1981) was used to assess gender-role orientation. The BSRI is a previously validated assessment (Bem, 1974) and as Lenney (1991) stated, is “the most frequently used measure in sex-role research, and is most often used as a standard to which other instruments are compared” (p. 582). The original version of the BSRI (Bem) presents 60 statements that are loaded on factors of either masculinity or femininity. Respondents use a 7-point Likert scale assessing the degree to which each statement describes them. High scores in one’s own sex characteristics (e.g., masculine for males) and low in opposite-sex characteristics indicate a sex-typed orientation. Scores that are high in both masculine and feminine domains indicate androgyny; and finally,

scores that are rated low in both masculine and feminine domains were termed as undifferentiated.

The short version of the BSRI contains exactly half (30) of the items included on the original form of the measure. According to the author, the shortened BSRI is a refined version of the original measure. After completing factor analyses, only items with loadings greater than 0.35 were included in the short version. The short version of the BSRI has also demonstrated high internal consistency with scores ranging from  $r = 0.84$  to  $r = 0.87$  (Bem, 1981). The SBSRI has also demonstrated good test-retest reliability with a Pearson product-moment coefficient of  $r = 0.91$ . Reliability tests for the current sample yielded a Cronbach's alpha of  $\alpha = 0.81$  for the entire measure. Each participant was classified according to a calculated scaled score for both masculinity and femininity subscales. Subscale scores were then converted to  $T$  scores that were used to identify if the individual scored high or low on scales of masculinity and femininity. Then, using dichotomous characterizations of high or low masculinity and femininity, each participant was categorized as having a respective gender-role orientation of either masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated (e.g., high masculine and high feminine qualifies as androgynous, low on both qualifies as undifferentiated, low on masculine and high in feminine is considered feminine, etc.). Due to the copyright of this measure, permission has to be obtained to use this measure; therefore, no forms have been provided in Appendix C.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The results section has is subdivided into two sections. First, an initial analysis of Glover's (2009) measure used to assess passionate friendship characteristics was conducted with this sample of male and female young adults. Second, evaluation of variables associated with passionate friendship is described. Relevant analysis addressing identified research questions will be addressed in corresponding sections separately as indicated in the purpose and objectives section.

#### Passionate Friendship Survey Evaluation

##### *Item Analysis*

An initial exploratory principal axis factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted to evaluate whether items were accurately evaluating the desired constructs of passionate friendship and how each construct was clustered. The method of rotation was selected based on the orthogonal method (as opposed to oblique methods; e.g., Equimax), which yielded more distinct factors as evidenced by fewer cross-loaded items. Initially, the original 22 items presented by Glover (2009) were included in the analysis, which yielded four factors with eigenvalues larger than 1.0. However, since the item, "I prefer to hang out alone with this friend" did not yield loadings greater than 0.4 on any of the four factors, it was removed from the measure. Additionally, since "At times I wish we weren't friends" was the only reverse coded item and it loaded equally high on more than on factor, it was removed as well. The principal axis analysis was then conducted a second time using the remaining 20 items. Results from this analysis also yielded four

factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. A parallel analysis using a Monte Carlo stimulation (100 simulated random data sets generated from real data) was then conducted (Watkins, 2008) to identify the optimal number of factors to be retained from the measure.

Based on results from the parallel analysis, it was apparent that eigenvalues from the first three factors would be sufficient for replication, but the fourth identified factor did not meet the identified analysis criteria. The principal component analyses was conducted again using only factors with eigenvalues with the identified minimum of 1.2 or greater, which then yielded three factors that fit this criterion. A detailed summary of factor loadings for each item for each corresponding factor is presented in Table 2. Items loading most heavily on the first factor included several affectionate behaviors as well as preoccupation or fascination with the friend. The first factor was labeled preoccupation/affection. The second factor yielded patterns of items that assessed individuals' perceptions of friendship satisfaction, availability, and security or support. Thus, the second factor was labeled attachment/secure base. Finally, items that loaded on the third factor included assessment of constructs such as exclusiveness, intensity, and overall importance of the relationship and was consequently labeled intensity/exclusivity. As indicated in Table 2, there were three items that cross-loaded (where item loadings were greater than or equal to 0.4) onto more than one factor. To create subscales from the factor loadings, items were included only on subscales for which item loadings were highest, thus preventing items from inclusion on multiple subscales. The three factors accounted for approximately 54% of the variance in item responses. As noted in Table 2, Cronbach's alphas were 0.80 or higher for all three identified scales, indicating adequate

Table 2

*Principal Axis Analysis Loadings*

	1 Preoccupation/ affection	2 Attachment/ secure-base	3 Intensity/ exclusivity
Turn to this friend when I have a problem	0.14	0.67 <sup>a</sup>	0.27
This friend was there for me	0.05	0.71 <sup>a</sup>	0.17
My friend meets my needs	0.10	0.80 <sup>a</sup>	0.11
I am satisfied with this friend	-0.04	0.75 <sup>a</sup>	-0.01
Our friendship is better than most other peoples	0.08	0.65 <sup>a</sup>	0.22
This friend meets my expectations	0.04	0.72 <sup>a</sup>	0.10
I have long heart-to-heart talks with this friend	0.34	0.62 <sup>a</sup>	0.15
I cuddle side by side with this friend	0.81 <sup>a</sup>	0.15	0.03
I hold hands with this friend	0.75 <sup>a</sup>	0.04	0.14
I look into this friend's eyes without speaking	0.72 <sup>a</sup>	0.17	0.05
I think about this friend or wonder where he/she is when we aren't together	0.70 <sup>a</sup>	0.14	0.37
I am fascinated with details about this friend's behavior or appearance	0.63 <sup>a</sup>	0.12	0.27
I hug this friend	0.57 <sup>a</sup>	0.38	0.07
I am possessive of this friend's time or attention	0.59 <sup>a</sup>	-0.00	0.43
Sometimes I am jealous when he/she dates	0.51 <sup>a</sup>	-0.13	0.28
Feel lonely when apart from this friend	0.43	0.18	0.65 <sup>a</sup>
Enjoyed being with this friend more than others	0.18	0.34	0.64 <sup>a</sup>
Most important friendship at this time	0.12	0.34	0.63 <sup>a</sup>
Sometimes I am jealous when he/she is out with other friends	0.45	-0.10	0.53 <sup>a</sup>
Was inseparable from this friend	0.15	0.35	0.52 <sup>a</sup>
Eigenvalues	7.20	3.37	1.53
% of variance	36.00	16.86	7.64
Cronbach's alphas	0.88	0.88	0.80

<sup>a</sup>Indicates qualifying inclusion on corresponding factor.

reliability for each. Internal consistency for the total score across all 20 items of the measure yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90, which is acceptable for a measure of 20 items.

Three subscale scores were calculated by summing the scores for items that loaded most heavily on each factor. Due to several respondents' surveys with items with missing data, approximately 15 scores could not be calculated for each subscale. In an effort to maintain as many participants' data as possible, a mean substitution method was implemented to account for individuals with missing data on subscale items. Specifically, an algorithm was created, such that if an individual provided responses for more than half of the items on a particular subscale, that person's mean score on completed items would be substituted for any missing items. After cases that qualified for mean substitution were sufficiently completed, a total of nine cases for each subscale remained with insufficient data to compute scale scores.

Lastly, a total passionate friendship score was calculated by summing all 20 items from the entire measure. Descriptive statistics for friendship characteristics were calculated for each of the quasi-independent variables (i.e., gender, cross- vs. same-sex friend, sexual minority status, and gender role orientation). Table 3 includes a summary of correlations among measure subscales. Table 4 provides a summary of descriptive statistics for each quasi-independent variable, including means and standard deviations for each quasi-independent variable, including means and standard deviations for each corresponding subscale score; additionally, Table 5 provides measure descriptive statistics for the entire sample

Table 3

*Correlations for the Passionate Friendship Survey Scales*

	Attachment/ secure base	Affection/ preoccupation	Intensity/ exclusivity	Total
Affection/Preoccupation	**0.350	—	—	—
Intensity/Exclusivity	**0.452	**0.575		—
Total	**0.703	**0.853	**0.452	—

\*\* Correlations significant at  $p < 0.01$  level.

*Cluster Analysis*

Once exploratory analyses were completed, a two-step cluster analysis was conducted to determine whether or not the survey items could reliably distinguish types of friendships. Results yielded two identifiable clusters, with one cluster that was comprised of 39.5% of the sample, and a second cluster that was comprised of 54.5% of the sample. An additional 6.1% of the sample was excluded due to missing data. Participants in cluster one scored higher ( $M = 64.07$ ,  $SD = 7.10$ , range = 56-80) on average than those in cluster two ( $M = 46.14$ ,  $SD = 6.17$ , range = 20.55) on the total score as well as on every item, with no overlap in confidence intervals for any items. In order to create a passionate friendship measure cutoff score, such that participants could be classified as having engaged in passionate or nonpassionate friendships, the entire data set was split based on cluster analysis results, such that individuals were sorted according to their corresponding cluster assignment (i.e., two data sets were created; one with those from cluster one, and another from those in cluster two).

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Passionate Friendship Measure Scores Organized by Quasi-Independent Variables*

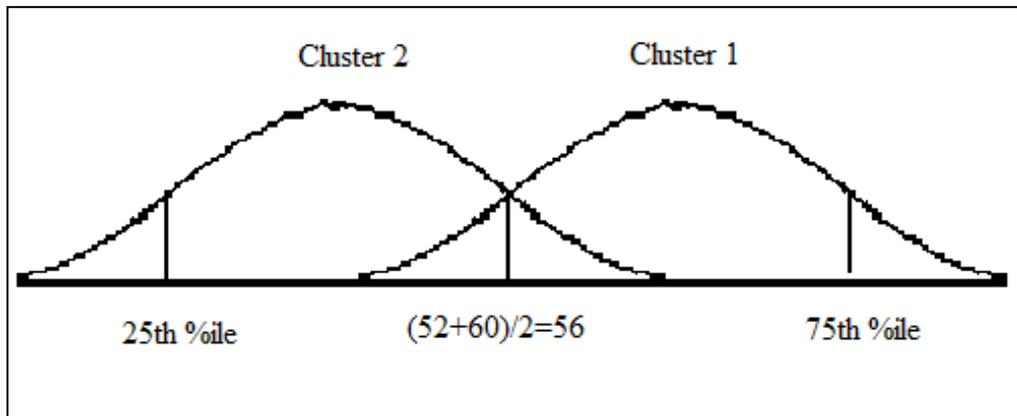
		Total score			Attachment/Secure-base			Preoccupation/affection			Intensity/exclusivity		
		Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range
Male	<i>n</i> = 143	50.72	10.82	20-80	21.88	4.03	7-28	15.39	6.05	8-32	13.45	3.09	5-20
Female	<i>n</i> = 223	54.06	10.30	26-80	23.78	3.92	8-28	16.93	5.64	8-32	13.35	3.54	2-20
Heterosexual	<i>n</i> = 328	52.42	10.57	20-80	23.06	4.05	7-28	16.13	5.82	8-32	13.23	3.38	2-20
Sex. Miority.	<i>n</i> = 35	55.60	10.62	30-75	22.94	4.18	10-28	18.00	5.81	10-30	14.66	3.13	8-20
Masculine	<i>n</i> = 80	54.55	11.32	26-76	23.56	3.97	12-28	17.25	6.12	8-31	13.73	3.33	5-20
Feminine	<i>n</i> = 87	52.59	9.60	36-80	23.29	3.70	12-28	15.99	5.15	8-32	13.31	3.67	2-20
Androg.	<i>n</i> = 86	55.07	11.37	28-79	23.80	3.94	10-28	17.66	6.69	8-32	13.58	3.45	5-20
Undiff.	<i>n</i> = 93	49.98	9.39	20-80	21.92	4.24	7-28	15.00	5.12	8-32	13.10	3.03	5-20
Male: Same	<i>n</i> = 70	45.84	9.09	20-72	21.31	4.46	7-28	11.63	3.55	8-27	12.90	3.03	5-20
Male: Cross	<i>n</i> = 73	55.40	10.31	38-80	22.42	3.51	14-28	19.00	5.77	10-32	13.97	3.07	7-20
Female: Same	<i>n</i> = 110	53.41	9.23	26-80	24.51	3.65	12-28	15.21	4.77	8-32	13.70	3.35	5-20
Female: Cross	<i>n</i> = 111	54.69	11.17	28-79	23.05	4.06	8-28	18.56	5.95	8-32	13.07	3.57	5-20

Table 5

*Sample Descriptive Statistics for Measure Including Subscales*

	Mean	SD	Range
Total score	52.76	10.62	20-80
Attachment/Secure-base	23.04	4.06	7-28
Preoccupation/affection	16.33	5.84	8-32
Intensity/exclusivity	13.39	3.37	2-20

Then based upon total passionate friendship scores, as shown in Figure 1, using the score that fell between the 75th percentile score (52) for cluster two and the 25th percentile score (60) for cluster one, a cutoff score (56) was selected as a marker to differentiate participants in passionate friendships from those in nonpassionate friendships. Finally, based on this cutoff score, each participant was then given a dichotomous passionate or nonpassionate friendship score (yes/no). In sum, participants whose total passionate friendship score was greater than or equal to 56 were categorized as engaging in a passionate friendship, and those whose total scores were less than 56 were categorized as nonpassionate. A case summary report was completed to determine the level of overlap between cluster assignment, categorization, and actual total passionate friendship score. Results from this analysis indicated that group assignment was the same for all participants using either the cluster analysis results or the cut-off score. Thus, the cut-off score selected proved a sufficient discriminator of passionate friendship based on cluster analysis results for the current sample. Categorization results indicated that 37% ( $n = 135$ ) of the total sample qualified as passionate friendships, and



*Figure 1.* Cluster analysis cutoff score election. Using the 75th percentile score from cluster 2, and the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile score from cluster one, a cutoff score of 56 was elected to categorize passionate from nonpassionate friendships.

the remaining 63% ( $n = 231$ ) were categorized as nonpassionate friendships. Nine cases were deleted due to missing data, thus categorization percentages are based on a decreased sample of  $n = 366$ .

Tests were conducted to evaluate heteroscedasticity of the data, which yielded results indicating that subscales measuring attachment/secure-base and preoccupation/affection did not meet adequate assumptions of constant variance within the error term. In addition, tests of skewness and kurtosis indicated that the data were not normally distributed for the attachment/secure-base and preoccupation/affection scales. Also, one outlier was observed for scores on the total scale as well as the intensity/exclusivity scale, and two outliers were detected for the attachment/secure-base scale. Consequently, the preoccupation/affection scale was transformed using log-base 10, which corrected for heteroscedasticity, violations of the assumption of normality, and any previously identified outliers. The attachment/secure-base subscale was changed using a cubed transformation of the data. Though one outlier was identified for both the

intensity/exclusivity and total passionate friendship scales, these outliers were not removed due to tests of skewness and kurtosis which indicated that the data were, in fact, sufficiently normally distributed. Subsequent analyses were conducted using the appropriately transformed data.

## Links Between Passionate Friendship Characteristics and Relationship Factors or Demographic Characteristics

### *Research Question 1*

How are the relationship factors or demographic characteristics—biological sex, biological sex of friend, gender role orientation, and sexual orientation—associated with the experiences of passionate friendships?

Differences among the subgroups of the quasi-independent variables on the passionate friendship characteristics were analyzed using two sets of multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) including three-way interactions. The first MANOVA evaluated gender-role orientation, (including four levels: masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated), cross- versus same-sex friendship, and biological sex. The dependent variables were calculated using ratings from the three previously identified passionate friendship characteristics, in addition to the total score. As a result of unequal subgroup sample sizes, a more stringent alpha of 0.001 was used for the Box's M test of homoscedasticity. The use of a more stringent alpha has been implemented in response to the extreme sensitivity of the Box's M test, which frequently results in exaggerated estimates of violations of the assumption of multivariate normality (Garson, 2008). Based on a more stringent alpha, Box's M was nonsignificant,  $p = 0.002$  for the initial MANOVA conducted.

The MANOVA showed significant main effects for cross- versus same-sex friendship, Wilks' Lamda = 0.66,  $F(4, 325) = 41.16$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.34$ , as well as biological sex, Wilks' Lamda = 0.87,  $F(4, 325) = 12.47$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.13$ . Main effect results for gender-role orientation demonstrated a nonsignificant trend, Wilks' Lamda = 0.94,  $F(12, 860.16) = 1.62$ ,  $p = 0.08$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.02$ . Additionally, results were significant for the cross- versus same-sex and biological sex interaction, Wilks' Lamda = 0.94,  $F(4, 325) = 5.33$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.06$ ). All other two-way interactions were nonsignificant, including, biological sex and gender-role orientation, Wilks' Lamda = 0.96,  $F(12, 860.16) = 1.26$ ,  $p = 0.24$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.02$ , and gender-role orientation and cross- versus same-sex, Wilks' Lamda = 0.96,  $F(12, 860.16) = 1.07$ ,  $p = 0.39$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.01$ . Finally, the three-way interaction between biological sex, cross- versus same-sex and gender-role orientation, yielded insignificant results, Wilks' Lamda = 0.98,  $F(12, 860.16) = 0.70$ ,  $p = 0.76$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.01$ .

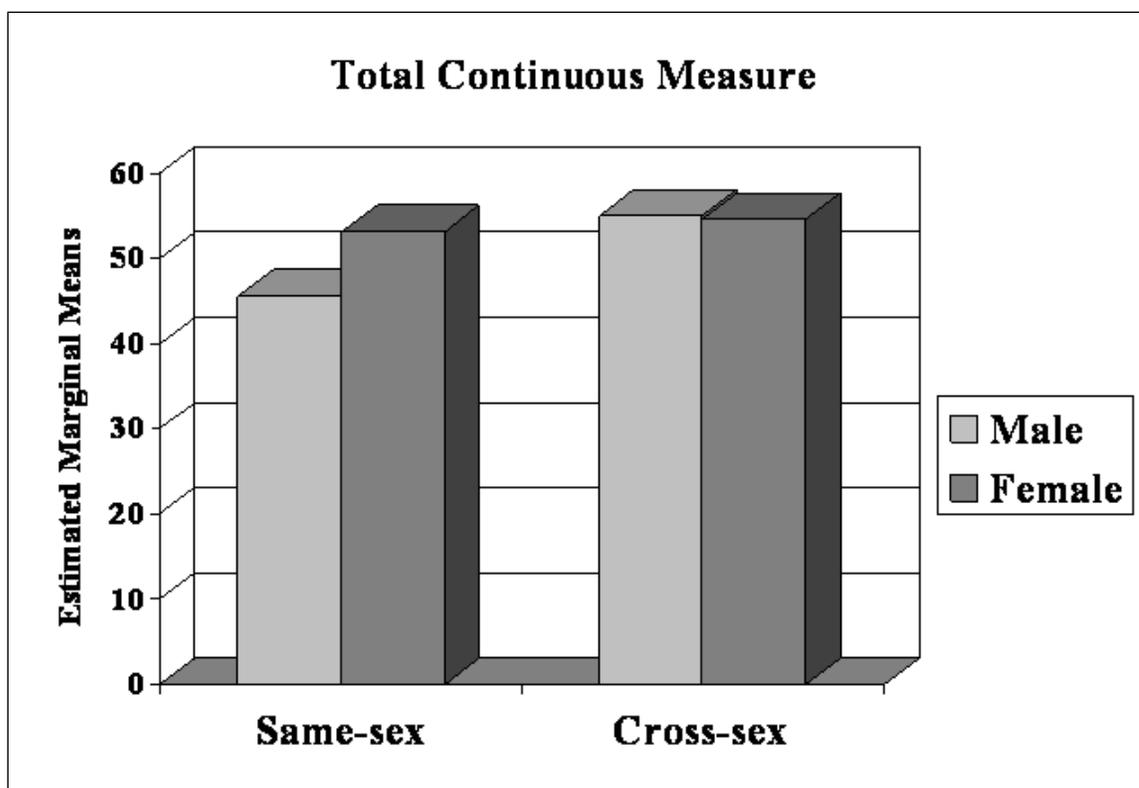
Table 6 displays the univariate results from the first MANOVA. Significant results were graphed for the two-way interaction between cross- versus same-sex friendship and biological sex for attachment/secure base, preoccupation/affection, and the total score. Observed trends indicated that both males and females engaged in cross-sex dyads score the highest on the overall measure of passionate friendship. Notably, however, while males' overall passionate friendship scores were dramatically higher in cross- versus same-sex friendships, female scores do not differ substantially regardless of same- or cross-sex dyads (see Figure 2). Figure 3 portrays the two-way interaction between biological sex and cross- versus same-sex friendship for the attachment scale. There was an increase in scores for attachment for males from same to cross-sex

Table 6

*MANOVA Results for Biological Sex, Cross- Versus Same-Sex Friendship, and Gender-Role Orientation*

	<i>df</i>	Total PF			Attachment/Secure-base			Preoccupation/ Affection			Intensity/ exclusivity		
		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
Cross	1,328	22.95	< 0.01	0.07	0.74	0.39	< 0.01	97.24	< 0.01	0.23	0.44	0.51	< 0.01
Bio. Sex	1,328	8.66	< 0.01	0.03	18.91	< 0.01	0.06	13.09	< 0.01	0.04	0.21	0.65	< 0.01
Gen.Role	3,328	3.08	0.03	0.03	4.58	< 0.01	0.04	1.41	0.24	0.01	0.49	0.69	< 0.01
Cross*Bio.Sex	1,328	12.45	< 0.01	0.04	7.78	0.01	0.02	19.38	< 0.01	0.05	3.54	0.06	0.01
Cross*Gen.Role	3,328	1.16	0.33	0.01	0.82	0.48	0.01	0.72	0.54	0.01	1.04	0.38	0.01
Bio.Sex*Gen.Role	3,328	0.76	0.52	0.01	1.09	0.35	0.01	0.26	0.85	< 0.01	1.53	0.21	0.01
Cross*Bio.Sex*Gen. Role	3,328	0.19	0.90	< 0.01	0.25	85	< 0.01	0.64	0.59	0.01	0.21	0.89	< 0.01

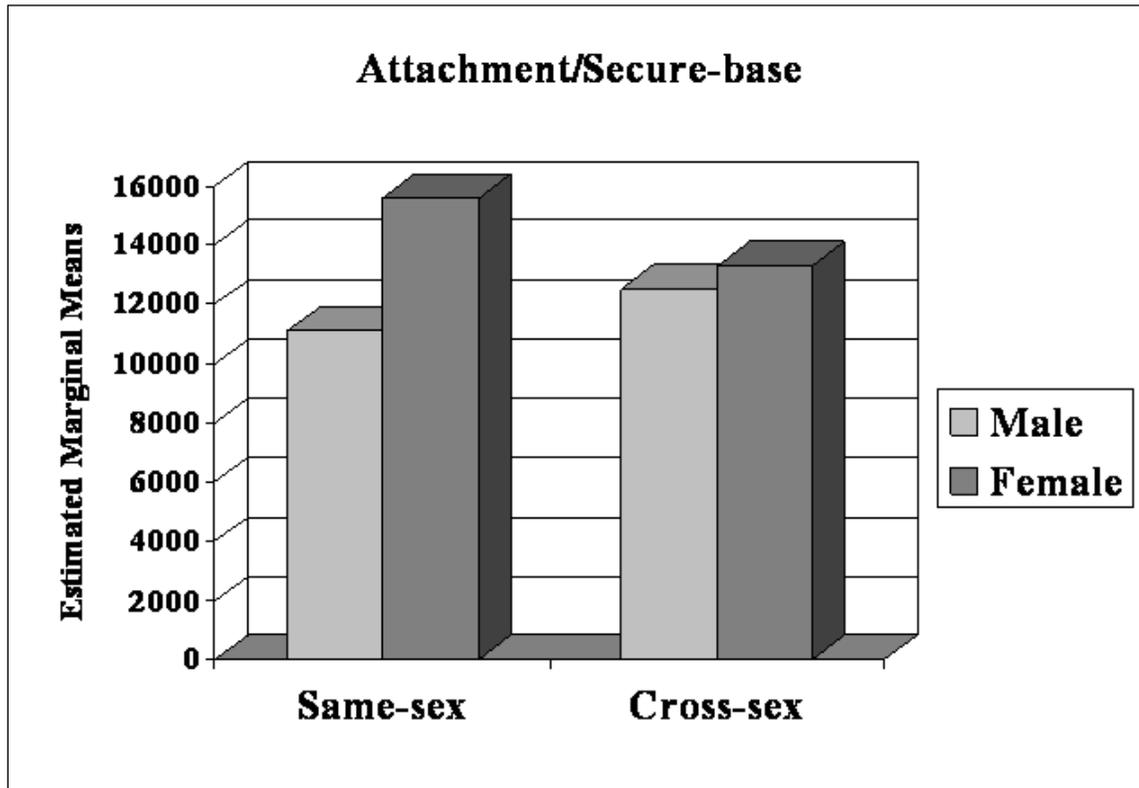
*Note.* Cross indicates cross- versus same-sex friendship.



*Figure 2.* Two-way interaction for total continuous passionate friendship scale with regard to biological sex and cross- versus same-sex friendship .

friendships. This pattern was reversed for females, however, as they scored higher in same-sex dyads and substantially lower in cross-sex dyads. Finally, although males demonstrated a dramatic increase in characteristics of preoccupation/affection when engaged in cross-sex friendships as opposed to same-sex dyads, females appeared to only slightly increase with regard to these characteristics when engaged in cross-sex as opposed to same-sex friendships (see Figure 4).

Follow-up univariate results, pairwise comparisons, and estimates of effect size for main effects are presented in Tables 6 and 7. Significant univariate results were observed for cross- versus same-sex friendship with regard to the overall passionate friendship and preoccupation/affection scales. Findings from these analyses indicate that



*Figure 3.* Two-way interaction results for the attachment/secure-base scale with regard to biological sex and cross-vs. sex friendship.

individuals whose selected friendships were cross-sex dyads scored higher on both of the subscales than individuals reporting same-sex dyads. Biological sex also yielded significant results for the attachment/secure-base scale, the preoccupation/affection scale, and the total measure score. Females scored higher than males on each of these scales. Finally, univariate results indicated that gender-role orientation was significant for the attachment/secure-base scale and the total measure.

Follow-up analyses for gender-role orientation were conducted to examine pairwise differences among subgroup means. After determining that assumptions of homogeneity of variance were met, a series of Scheffe's tests were conducted on all

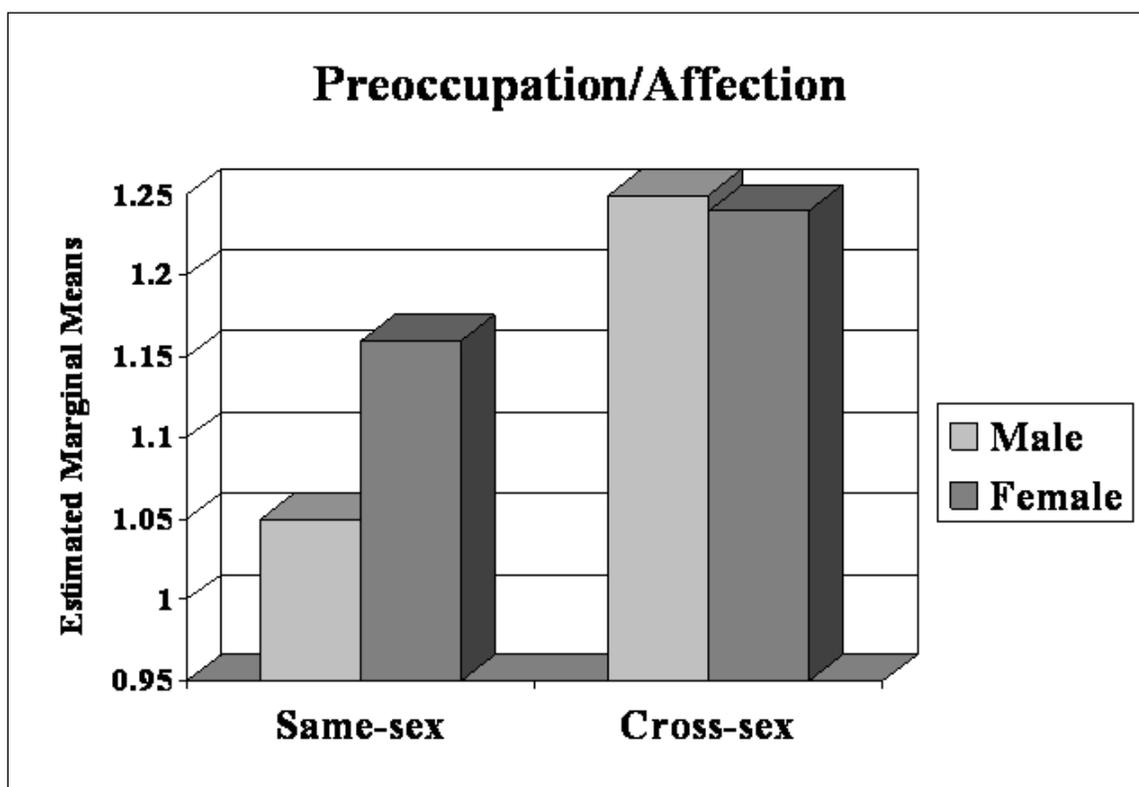


Figure 4. Two-way interaction for preoccupation/affection scale with regard to biological sex and cross- versus same-sex friendship.

levels of the dependent variable (i.e., full and subscale scores) that met assumptions of homogeneity of variance. A Games-Howell test was used to examine differences for the preoccupation/affection scale due to a failure to meet appropriate assumptions.

As indicated in Table 7, significant pairwise differences with medium effect sizes were observed between androgynous and undifferentiated individuals with regard to attachment characteristics, preoccupation/affection, and the total score. Specifically, androgynous individuals scored significantly higher than undifferentiated individuals on identified subscales and the total score. Additionally, post-hoc results yielded a significant difference with a medium effect size for masculine individuals as compared to

Table 7

*Effect Size for Gender-Role Orientation Pairwise Comparisons*

	Total PF			Attachment/Secure-base			Preoccupation/ affection			Intensity/ exclusivity		
	Mean Diff.	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	Mean Diff.	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	Mean Diff.	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	Mean Diff.	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
MAS-FEM	1.82	0.71	0.19	512.93	0.95	0.07	0.03	0.67	0.22	0.29	0.96	0.12
MAS-AND	-0.34	1.00	-0.05	-271.64	1.00	-0.06	-0.01	1.00	-0.06	0.19	1.00	0.04
MAS-UND	4.57	0.03	0.44	2498.51	0.04	0.40	0.05	0.09	0.40	0.63	0.67	0.20
FEM-AND	-2.16	0.57	-0.24	-784.57	0.85	-0.13	-0.03	0.51	-0.28	-0.10	1.00	-0.08
FEM-UND	2.75	0.33	0.27	1985.58	0.14	0.34	0.03	0.52	0.19	0.34	0.92	0.06
AND-UND	4.91	0.01	0.49	-2770.14	0.02	0.46	0.06	0.05	0.45	0.44	0.85	0.15

*Note.* MAS = masculine, FEM = feminine, AND = androgynous, UND = undifferentiated.

undifferentiated individuals with regard to the total score and the attachment/secure-base scale. Similar to androgynous individuals, participants who were categorized as masculine scored significantly higher than undifferentiated individuals with regard to overall characteristics of passion friendship as well as with characteristics of attachment.

A second MANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of cross- versus same-sex friendships, biological sex, and sexual orientation. The dependent variables for the second MANOVA remained the same as in the previous analysis. Additionally, despite the use of a more stringent alpha for Box's M, the assumption of homoscedasticity was not met for this analysis,  $p < 0.001$ . Again, the Box's M test has been conceptualized as an extremely sensitive test that frequently results in exaggerated violations of the assumption of multivariate normality (Garson, 2008). It should therefore be understood that while assumptions of normality were not formally met for this particular MANOVA, these results should be cautiously interpreted.

Multivariate tests indicated that main effects were significant for biological sex, Wilks' Lamda = 0.96,  $F(4, 350) = 3.89$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.04$ , cross- versus same-sex friendship, Wilks' Lamda = 0.88,  $F(4, 350) = 11.57$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.12$ , and sexual orientation (Wilks' Lamda = 0.97,  $F(4, 350) = 3.08$ ,  $p < 0.02$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.03$ ). MANOVA results indicated that none of the two-way interactions were significant (biological sex and cross- versus same-sex friendship Wilks' Lamda = 0.98,  $F(4, 350) = 1.56$ ,  $p = 0.19$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.02$ ; biological sex and sexual orientation, Wilks' Lamda = 0.98,  $F(4, 350) = 1.67$ ,  $p = 0.16$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.02$ ; or cross- versus same-sex friendship and sexual orientation, Wilks' Lamda = 0.98,  $F(4, 350) = 1.42$ ,  $p = 0.23$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.02$ ) at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level. Additionally, the three-way interaction among biological sex, cross- versus same-sex friendship, and

sexual orientation yielded insignificant results (Wilks' Lamda = 0.99,  $F(4, 350) = 1.09$ ,  $p = 0.36$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.01$ ).

Finally, follow-up univariate results were consistent with regard to the main effects of cross- versus same-sex friendship and biological sex as indicated by the first MANOVA. Specifically, the total measure score, as well as the preoccupation/affection scores were significant for both cross- versus same-sex friendship and for biological sex. In addition to these two scales, however, biological sex also yielded significant results for the attachment/secure-base scale. Additional univariate results for sexual minority status illustrated significant differences between heterosexual and sexual minority individuals with regard to characteristics of preoccupation/affection, intensity/exclusivity, and the overall passionate friendship measure. Results further indicated that sexual minority individuals scored higher than heterosexual individuals on each of the respective scales. A detailed summary of MANOVA results is presented in Table 8.

#### Links Between Passionate Friendship Status and Relationship or Demographic Characteristics

Two-way contingency table analyses were conducted as a means of identifying differences in prevalence rates of passionate and nonpassionate friendships for each subgroup (e.g., males vs. females, heterosexual vs. sexual minority.) of the identified quasi-independent variables. A detailed summary of all chi-square analysis results, including observed versus expected frequencies of passionate and nonpassionate friendships may be presented Table 9. As indicated by the first chi-square, biological sex and passionate friendship status were significantly related, Pearson  $\chi^2(1, n = 366) = 6.1$ ,

Table 8

*MANOVA Results for Biological Sex, Cross- Versus Same-Sex Friendship, and Sex Identity*

	<i>df</i>	Total PF			Attachment//Secure-base			Preoccupation/affection			Intensity/xclusivity		
		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
Cross	1,353	12.31	< 0.01	0.03	0.13	0.72	< 0.01	32.54	< 0.01	0.08	1.58	0.21	< 0.01
Bio. Sex	1,353	5.76	0.02	0.02	5.37	0.02	0.02	7.55	0.01	0.02	0.12	0.73	< 0.01
Sexual Orientation	1,353	5.71	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.84	< 0.01	9.36	< 0.01	0.03	6.87	0.01	0.02
Cross*Sex.Orient.	1,353	.34	0.56	< 0.01	1.23	0.26	< 0.01	0.43	0.51	< 0.01	0.97	0.33	< 0.01
Cross*Bio.Sex	1,353	1.30	0.26	< 0.01	2.98	0.09	0.01	1.54	0.22	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.98	< 0.01
Bio.Sex*Sex.Orient.	1,353	.25	0.62	< 0.01	0.39	0.53	< 0.01	0.51	0.48	< 0.01	0.07	0.79	< 0.01
Cross*Bio.Sex*Sex. Orient.	1,353	1.57	0.21	< 0.01	0.03	0.85	< 0.01	2.77	0.10	0.01	2.33	0.13	0.01

*Note.* Cross indicates cross- versus same-sex friendship.

Table 9

*Chi-Square Analysis Results Organized by Quasi-Independent Variables*

	P.F. Observed	P.F. Expect	Non-P.F. Observed	Non-P.F. Expect.	$\chi^2$	$p$	V
Male	42	53.1	101	89.9	6.10	0.01	0.13
Female	94	82.9	129	140.1			
Heterosexual	117	122.2	211	205.8	3.50	0.06	0.10
Sex Min.	19	13.8	18	23.2			
Masc.	35	30.5	45	49.5	11.97	0.01	0.19
Fem.	32	32.8	54	53.2			
Androg.	42	33.2	45	53.8			
Undiff.	23	35.5	70	57.5			
Male: Same-sex	8	25.9	62	44.1	25.53	< 0.01	0.26
Male: Cross-sex	34	27	39	46			
Female: Same-sex	43	40.7	67	69.3			
Female: Cross-sex	50	41.4	62	70.6			

$p = 0.01$ ,  $V = 0.13$ . Results indicated that females were more likely than chance to experience passionate friendships and males were more likely to experience nonpassionate friendships. In addition to biological sex, sexual minority status yielded a nonsignificant trend, Pearson  $\chi^2(1, n = 365) = 3.50$ ,  $p = 0.06$ ,  $V = 0.10$ , indicating a trend for individuals who identify as LGBTQ experience passionate friendships more frequently than would be expected by chance alone, and heterosexual individuals experience passionate friendships less frequently than expected.

A third chi-square was conducted to assess the relationship between cross- versus same-sex friendship style and passionate friendship status. Results from this analysis indicated that cross- versus same-sex dyads and prevalence of passionate friendship are also significantly related, Pearson  $\chi^2(3, n = 365) = 25.53, p < 0.01, V = 0.26$ . Specifically, results suggested that males and females who engaged in cross-sex friendships experienced passionate friendship more frequently than expected, followed by female same-sex dyads. Results further suggested that male same-sex dyads, on the other hand, experienced nonpassionate friendships more frequently than expected by chance alone.

Finally, chi-square analysis for gender role orientation, Pearson  $\chi^2(3, n = 346) = 11.97, p = 0.01, V = 0.19$ , yielded significant results. Notably, androgynous individuals experienced passionate friendships more often than expected by chance, and undifferentiated individuals experienced nonpassionate friendships more frequently than expected.

### *Research Question #2*

Based on gender, sexual orientation, gender-role orientation and the sex of one's friend, can we identify who is more likely to engage in passionate friendships?

A logistic regression model was built to predict the occurrence of passionate friendships based on the four quasi-independent variables (biological sex, same- versus cross-sex friend, gender role orientation, and sexual orientation). Using a Backward Stepwise method, all variables (including any two-way interactions) that were significant at the 0.10 level were included in the final passionate friendship model (see Table 10 for a summary of variables and corresponding beta values included in the model).

Results for the overall model were significant,  $\chi^2(5) = 42.43, p < 0.01$ , Cox & Snell  $r^2 = 0.12$ , Nagelkerke  $r^2 = 0.16$ . The significant chi-square value indicates that the final passionate friendship model is significantly more accurate at predicting the occurrence of passionate friendship based on the variables included in the model as opposed to predicting passionate friendship based on every possible combination of the quasi-independent variables. Overall, the final model demonstrated 61% accuracy of predicting passionate or nonpassionate friendships. In particular, the model correctly predicted observed passionate friendships 80% of the time, and was 50% accurate at predicting nonpassionate friendships.

Variables were removed from the full model in eight steps. The final model indicated that sexual minorities as well as individuals who endorsed gender role orientations other than undifferentiated were most likely to engage in passionate friendships. The biological sex by cross- versus same-sex friendship interaction indicated that males in cross-sex relationships were the most likely to report experiencing passionate friendships and alternatively, males in same-sex dyads were the least likely.

Table 10

*Summary of Variables Included in Final Passionate Friendship Model*

Variable	<i>df</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
Sex. Orient. (Heterosexual)	1	0.88	0.03
Gen. Role (Masculine)	1	-0.82	0.02
Gen. Role (Feminine)	1	-0.57	0.10
Gen. Role (Androgynous)	1	-1.01	< 0.01
Bio. Sex (M)*Cross(S)	1	1.83	< 0.01
Constant	1	0.04	0.93

*Note.* M = male, S = same-sex.

## CHAPTER V

## DISCUSSION

This study was designed to examine the unique experience of passionate friendships among both males and females in addition to investigating the relationships among various relationship variables or individual characteristics (e.g., sexual orientation, cross- vs. same-sex friendship, and gender-role orientation) and friendship experiences. Specifically, this study examined how each of the previously identified quasi-independent variables were associated with various aspects of passionate friendship.

As hypothesized, the occurrences of passionate friendships are reported by both males and females. Notably, however, results from this study support previous empirical research indicating that women appear to experience highly intimate platonic relationships more frequently than men (Buhrmester & Furman, 1987; Crocket et al., 1984). Results from the current study indicated that 29% of male respondents and 42% of female respondents reported engaging in passionate friendships.

Results from the study indicated that cross-sex and same-sex friendships were significantly different on nearly all measures of passionate friendship including continuous and dichotomous scoring systems. In particular, cross-sex dyads, regardless of participant's biological sex, were the most frequently identified passionate friendships, representing nearly 62% of all identified passionate friendships in the sample. Additionally, it was determined that individuals who identified with an undifferentiated gender-role orientation were the least likely to experience passionate friendship and appeared to score the lowest on all of the continuous measures of passionate friendship as

compared to other gender-role orientations. Finally, although sexual orientation was not a frequently significant variable associated with passionate friendship, as noted above, sexual minority individuals did appear to experience passionate friendships more than their heterosexual counterparts.

A second purpose of this study was to determine if passionate friendships could be predicted based upon demographic information and identified features of friendship dyads (i.e., biological sex, gender role orientation, biological sex of friend, and sexual orientation). The implications of predicting passionate friendship based on given characteristics suggest that these unique relationships are not solely a result of finding a “best friend,” but perhaps also relate information regarding personality and relational styles involved in the development of passionate friendships. Specifically, the regression model developed alludes to a possibility of understanding passionate friendships as a function of relational style rather than merely as a result of specific interpersonal situations (i.e., meeting someone with whom one feels particularly close). Specifically, individual characteristics associated with the occurrence of passionate friendships may not be mere coincidences observed in identified cases of passionate friendship; instead, there may be general characteristics or overarching unidentified processes that account for these relationships.

### Biological Sex

Young women in this sample were more likely to be categorized as engaging in passionate friendships, and also reported higher levels of attachment, preoccupation, and affection in their relationships. In particular, females experience the highest levels of

attachment when their identified target friend was also a female. Though gender differences are observed with regard to attachment, the increased levels of attachment that are observed when the target friend is a female are experienced likewise by males. These findings are consistent with previous research that suggests the mere presence of a woman in a platonic dyad increases levels of intimacy (Sanborn, 2005; Winstead, 1986). Specifically, as suggested in previous research, women appear to offer a sense of openness that is often manifested via an eased sense of disclosure and emotional availability; characteristics that are also associated with attachment (Miller et al., 1983).

The observed gender differences regarding preoccupation and affection are also intuitively consistent with previous research (Monsour, 1992). As noted earlier, these findings may best be explained by espoused beliefs and behaviors imposed by social norms. For example, one can easily think of any number of occasions when two women were spotted in public walking arm in arm, or affectionately embracing and not an eye is batted. Alternatively, however, when these exact behaviors are observed in men, the immediate evaluation of sexual orientation is nearly ubiquitous in U.S. society (see Derlega, Lewis, Winstead, & Costanza, 1989). Thus, results may not be indicative of higher levels of intimacy in female relationships compared to men's, but rather a social luxury afforded to women in which endearment may be expressed overtly.

Lastly, findings from the regression analysis indicated that although heterosexual individuals, undifferentiated individuals, and males in same-sex relationships are the least likely to experience passionate friendships, this is not to say that these groups of individuals never report these unique relationships. Supplemental analysis indicated that

26% ( $n = 33$ ) of heterosexual males had engaged in passionate friendships; 15% of which were same-sex relationships. Furthermore, when males were observed regardless of sexual identity, nearly 30% of all men in the sample reported relationships that met criteria for categorization of passionate friendship. Despite the small numbers of participants observed, this study has arguably illustrated the occurrence of these unique relationships among men, despite the previously discussed socialized norms observed in U.S. culture.

### Cross- Versus Same-Sex Friendship

A primary criticism of the passionate friendship literature is that the reported intensity identified in passionate friendships is actually a manifestation of unrequited love rather than an authentically platonic relationship (Diamond, 2000). Results from the current study, which indicate that heterosexual individuals (both male and female) engaged in cross-sex dyads score the highest with regard to preoccupation/affection, suggests this criticism cannot entirely be refuted.

For instance, results for heterosexual males that demonstrate consistent increases in subscale scores from same- to cross-sex friendships (i.e., passionate friendship scores are higher for cross-sex relationships than same-sex dyads), give way to suspicion regarding the platonic nature of these dyads. Alternatively, despite relatively low occurrences of male same-sex passionate friendships in comparison to women, assumptions regarding the etiology of these findings would be unsupported due to the formative state of passionate friendship research. Additionally, although results for the current study may demonstrate support against criticisms of unrequited love for women

(e.g., attachment scores were higher in same- vs. cross-sex dyads, as well as insignificant differences between same and cross-sex preoccupation/affection scores), previous findings from other studies suggest such broad inferences cannot be drawn. Specifically, Glover's (2009) qualitative study examining adolescent and current passionate friendships indicate that despite identifying these relationships as platonic in nature, retrospectively, many nonheterosexual women conceptualized these relationships as serving poignant roles in understanding and exploring the development of their sexual identity and same-sex attraction. Suffice it to say, although these relationships were indeed devoid of sexual motivations, their experiences in these relationships lead to later exploration of same-sex attraction which gives way to criticisms of unrequited love.

#### Gender-role Orientation

Masculine and androgynous individuals consistently scored higher on continuous measures of passionate friendship as well as on the attachment/secure-base scale, than undifferentiated individuals. Percentages of passionate friendships accounted for by various gender-role orientations were as follows: masculine individuals accounted for 27%, feminine were 24%, androgynous individuals accounted for nearly 31%, and undifferentiated individuals accounted for only 18% of all passionate friendships.

Overall, undifferentiated individuals scored lower on all measures of passionate friendship (including dichotomous categorization) than all of the other gender-role orientations. Some implications from these findings include the postulation that individuals who are not overtly masculine or feminine do not possess the needed levels of qualities (i.e., nurturance, assertiveness, etc.) that are perhaps necessary in relationship

closeness. Perhaps these results also point to the need for reciprocity and similarity from the target friend's perspective. Said differently, perhaps if target friends do not feel reciprocated closeness or similarities with their friends, they do not invest high levels of intimacy or attachment in the relationship. Consequently, as gender-role orientation is determined for the participant rather than the target friend, perhaps undifferentiated individuals are reporting based on unidentifiable extraneous variables (e.g., target friend's perspective of the participant).

Regarding the mere distribution of gender-role orientations, results from the current study indicated that both males and females were equally spread across gender-role orientations. This finding has notable implications with regard to common beliefs that feminine characteristics are most closely associated with females and masculinity is assumed to be characteristic of males. It seems intuitive, however, that these findings demonstrate support for changing gender norms in society. Although Americans, in particular, have moved toward a more common acceptance of a "career woman" or a "Mr. Mom," results from the sample suggest that traditional gender-norms have substantially lost footing and may no longer apply in certain circumstances.

Along with traditional assumptions of gender-role orientation and societal norms regarding males and females, results also demonstrated important implications for traditional personality characteristics of sexual minorities. Specifically, results indicated that gender-roles were equally spread across sexual minority and heterosexual individuals. There have been long standing assumptions and stereotypes within the dominant culture that sexual minority women are masculine and that sexual minority males are feminine. Likewise, individuals who overtly display atypical gender-roles are

frequently assumed to be sexual minorities. Findings from the current study present implications for a movement to dispel traditional assumptions and stereotypes.

### Sexual Minority Status

Sexual orientation, as a demographic variable, appears to be related to passionate friendship experience as indicated by dichotomous (passionate friendship vs. nonpassionate friendship) results and is further supported by regression analysis findings. Of notable interest, results indicated that although 87% of all reported passionate friendships were accounted for by heterosexual individuals (likely as a result of a severely unbalanced sample of sexual minorities and heterosexuals), only 35% of heterosexuals in the sample actually reported experiencing passionate friendship. Alternatively, nearly 51% of sexual minorities in the sample were categorized as having experienced passionate friendship. Due to the prominent U.S. heterosexual norm, intimacy in cross-sex relationships is not only acceptable, but expected. This norm consequently seems to allow for a given level of freedom and normalcy for sexual minority individuals engaged in highly intimate cross-sex relationships. Additionally, individuals who identify with nonheterosexual orientations may be more comfortable openly engaging in intimate same-sex relationships, and are less concerned with homophobic norms and assumptions. This plausibly less restrictive worldview may also contribute to explaining observed subscale differences between sexual minority and heterosexual individuals.

Specifically, the observed differences relevant to preoccupation/affection and intensity/exclusivity may directly point to the disregard for homophobic concerns. Again,

sexual minority status did not demonstrate significant results for attachment. Although scores of attachment were high, they did not differ from heterosexuals as the entire sample was distributed heavily on the high end of the attachment/secure-base scale. As stated above, it appears that the characteristics of attachment are normalized with such frequency within typical American assumptions of friendship, that associated characterizations of attachment seem immune to homophobic norms or any speculation about nonplatonic motivations. Needless to say, heterosexual individuals are likely much less hesitant to report or experience qualities of attachment when these characteristics or qualities are acceptable within the dominate culture.

### Summary and Limitations

In summary, results for this study offer empirical evidence that supports previous findings regarding the occurrence of passionate friendships in women, and extends these findings to include males and cross-sex relationships. Consistent with previous findings, passionate friendships are reported more frequently by women, and are more frequently observed in the friendships of sexual minorities as opposed to heterosexual individuals. Despite prominent observations of these relationships in women, findings from this study specifically identify contemporary accounts of highly intimate platonic relationships between males as well. Additionally, passionate friendships have also been observed in cross-sex dyads for both males and females. Results further expand upon previous studies investigating this phenomenon by providing a quantitative analysis of passionate friendship experiences among both females and males, with regard to demographic information and features associated with both passionate and nonpassionate friendships.

All the identified demographic characteristics or features (gender-role orientation, biological sex, sexual minority status, and biological sex of target friend) have been associated with passionate friendship experiences. The most prominent conclusion, however, is that there is a substantial amount of variability experienced with regard to passionate friendship characteristics (attachment, preoccupation/affection, and intensity/exclusivity) based on the unique features of the relationship. The noted variability is observed across demographic variables, and throughout friendship characteristics. Finally, study findings suggest that passionate friendship can be predicted based on demographics information or relationship characteristics. Sexual minority women engaged in cross-sex friendships, and those who are anything other than undifferentiated are most salient in the prediction of passionate friendships.

There are several limitations to this study. Primarily, the sample was obtained using a convenience sample method. The majority of participants were recruited from undergraduate psychology courses at a homogenous university setting. Specifically, approximately 78% ( $n = 291$ ) of the total sample were affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). Although not confirmed, it is speculated that the findings from this study may have been impacted due to the highly concentrated LDS sample. In particular, it is possible that religious affiliation may have affected participants' responses due to potential concerns regarding homophobia or heterosexism (e.g., failure to report honestly on the passionate friendship measure for fear of being labeled "gay"). Additionally, it may be possible that religious beliefs and or practices impacted findings and other speculations regarding truly platonic cross-sex friendships (e.g., LDS doctrine teaches sexual abstinence before marriage and thus it may be possible

that respondents considered cross-sex relationships “platonic” merely due to an absence of sexual behavior rather than considering sexual attraction or motivation as well).

In addition to limitations associated with the religious homogeneity of the sample, the uniquely rural location of the university from which participants were recruited lends itself to an entirely different set of concerns or limitations. Levels of acceptance or tolerance of highly intimate same-sex relationships within a small, predominately Anglo, conservative community, are likely quite different from tolerance levels of a more ethnic, sociopolitically diverse community. Even within the U. S., there is a substantial amount of variability with regard to overall acceptance and tolerance of highly affectionate and intimate friendship experiences (e.g., cultural norms within predominately Latino, gay, or politically liberal geographical locations.) Consequently, generalization of results for this study is particularly limited as the sample is not adequately representative of the general population of emerging adults. Additionally, due to a small sample of sexual minority participants ( $n = 35$ ) recruited from campus and local LGBTQ organizations, generalization to the larger LGBTQ population is restricted.

Aside from sample limitations, conclusions regarding assumptions of unrequited love (specifically with regard to males) are indeterminate. Despite assumptions of societal influences and/or social norms most pertinently applicable to men, the lack of qualitative data makes rigid conclusions imprudent. As indicated in other friendship literature, men in particular receive unique benefits from engaging in platonic relationships with women that are otherwise uncommon in same-sex friendships (Aukett et al., 1988; Rose, 1985). Ergo, there is adequate reason to believe that the intense cross-sex relationships experienced by men may in fact be platonic, rather than sexually

motivated. Additionally, as mentioned previously in this section, recent research (Glover, 2009) examining these relationships more closely in women suggests there may actually be some merit to criticisms of unrequited love. In short, premature interpretations of this study's findings would be remiss, as there is a substantial amount to be learned with regards to various patterns of passionate friendships as well as the various contexts in which passionate friendships develop and are maintained.

Despite the aforementioned contributions this study has made to the passionate friendship literature, a major limitation with regard to reciprocity of relationships remains. The data collected for this study (as well as previous research conducted) is limited to the respondents' perspectives alone. Needless to say, the mere term of relationship or dyad suggests there are two parties involved. Future researchers would be advised to examine both sides of the story, including the target friend's experience of the relationship and the level of reciprocity experienced or perceived within a given dyad.

Lastly, results of the regression analysis are ambiguous to interpret objectively. First, this model is limited due to cross-sectional data as opposed to longitudinal data. If, however, data were obtained longitudinally, we may better understand or conceptualize the extent to which demographic information and features of a given relationship accurately predict passionate friendship development over time. Finally, since model covariates were limited to the quasi-independent variables, the current model is limited with respect to alternative characteristics that were not examined and may be potentially associated with the occurrence of passionate friendship.

In response to study limitations, several recommendations have been offered. Primarily, future research should include a qualitative component to examine the nature

and function of male passionate friendships. Including this component would not only contribute to the overall conceptualization of this unique domain of human relationships, it would also be vitally important in exploring postulated theories of sexually motivated cross-sex (or same-sex relationships in sexual minorities) relationships for both men and women. Additionally, although applicable to both males and females, research examining specific contexts in which passionate friendships are facilitated (e.g., combat veterans, athletic teams, organizational membership, etc.) is a rich and untapped area of study that lends itself to multiple social, cultural, and anthropological realms. In particular, norms within particular subgroups (e.g., military, athletic teams, fraternities) may contribute to increased tolerance, and in some cases even promote, highly intimate same-sex friendships.

Furthermore, this area of research would benefit by examination of the prevalence and function of these relationships in diverse cultures. In many countries and cultures, assumed Western societal norms are atypical. For instance, in many Latino cultures, physical affection between friends (both males and females) is commonplace (Singh, Mckay, & Singh, 1998). In many cultures (i.e., Native American, Aboriginal, African, and European) families are comprised of not only genetic relatives, but include nonrelated friends and community members as well (Sue & Sue, 2007). Consequently, as many individuals are raised collectively with no relative peers, the closeness observed in these relationships may manifest similar to characteristics observed in passionate friendships. There is arguably some skepticism, however, pertaining to the function of passionate friendship characteristics observed in other cultures. Physical affection for instance, has been identified as a symbol of comradery rather than serving a primary

function of intimacy in Latino cultures (Singh et al.). Thus, in addition to studying the mere occurrence of passionate friendship in other cultures, future research may be enriched by also examining the generalizability of passionate friendship characteristics and their identified functions.

Recommendation for future researchers also includes a needed scientific approach to study mechanistic underpinnings of these relationships. Namely, research needs to determine if individuals are actually oriented to “passionate” type friendships as in traditional romantic relationships, or if passionate friendships emerge solely out of social opportunities. Said differently, the current study indicates that characteristics of an individual may be used to predict passionate friendship occurrence, but as characteristics are assumed to be innate, these findings might offer insight into possibilities that passionate friendship may not be limited to particular instances (or given relationships) but rather suggest a predisposition to a particular relational orientation (much like sexual or gender-role orientation). Though demographic characteristics and personality theories offer supplementary insight regarding possible processes of these (or any other) relationships, identifying these processes would have indispensable implications for the relationship field at large.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Recruitment Letter and Informed Consent

## Recruitment Letter

### **Why am I getting this email?**

Hello! Our names are Jenna Glover and Katherine Peterson and we are graduate students at Utah State University. We are working with Dr. Renee Galliher, psychology professor at USU, and we would like to **invite you to participate in a research study** designed to explore the experiences of friendship among young adults. We are all active in affirming the LGBTQ community and hope that our research can be used to **further support LGBTQ persons**. The goal of our research is to develop a better understanding of the friendship experiences of young adults. We invite you to participate in our study if you have some degree of same-sex attraction, regardless of self-identification (gay, lesbian, bisexual, questioning, transgender, intersex, etc.).

### **What would I have to do?**

Your participation would involve completing an anonymous online survey about your past and current friendship experiences. This should take you **between 30-50 minutes**. All survey responses will be confidential and anonymous.

### **What is in it for me?**

You may choose to submit your name and address to receive \$10.00 compensation for your participation in this study. If you choose, you may also be selected to participate in an additional interview for additional \$10.00 compensation. Person information used for compensation will be held in a separate database, and survey responses will not be traceable to specific identifying information. In addition, you can choose to receive a summary of the study results by email.

If you have any questions about the research, please do not hesitate to contact us, Jenna Glover at [jenna.glover@aggiemail.usu.edu](mailto:jenna.glover@aggiemail.usu.edu), or Katherine Peterson at [k.peterson@aggiemail.usu.edu](mailto:k.peterson@aggiemail.usu.edu). You may also contact our faculty advisor, Renee V. Galliher, Ph.D. at (435) 797-3391 or [Renee.Galliher@usu.edu](mailto:Renee.Galliher@usu.edu). Thanks!

**To participate, please follow the link below:**

<https://www.psychdata.com/s.asp?SID=122737>

## Letter of Information

### Factors Associated with Friendship Experiences Among Men and Women.

**Introduction/Purpose:** Katherine Peterson and Jenna Glover, graduate students in the Department of Psychology at Utah State University, and Dr. Renee Galliher are in charge of this research study. We would like you to be in the study because we want to know more about friendships among college students. About 300 students will complete this questionnaire.

**Procedures:** Participation will require you to complete a series of online forms which are estimated to take between 30-50 minutes. You will be asked a series of questions regarding your friendship experiences, in addition to a few questions relating to your personality characteristics.

**Risks:** Some of the questions in this study may elicit some feelings of discomfort. Please keep in mind that all responses will be kept entirely confidential and will in no way be associated with identifying information. You can choose not to answer survey questions that relate to personal or difficult issues, although it will help us most if you honestly answer all questions.

**Benefits:** By participating in this study, you will be contributing to a growing body of research assessing unique friendship experiences which have rarely been studied or observed. We hope that you will also find this study enjoyable and useful as you reflect upon your experiences and self perception.

**Explanation and Offer to Answer Questions:** If you have any questions, please contact Katherine Peterson at HYPERLINK "mailto:k.peterson@aggiemail.usu.edu" [k.peterson@aggiemail.usu.edu](mailto:k.peterson@aggiemail.usu.edu) or Jenna Glover at [jenna.glover@aggiemail.usu.edu](mailto:jenna.glover@aggiemail.usu.edu). You can also ask the Primary Investigator, Professor Renee Galliher at (435) 797-3391 or HYPERLINK "mailto:Renee.Galliher@usu.edu" [Renee.Galliher@usu.edu](mailto:Renee.Galliher@usu.edu).

**Payment:** When you finish this research, you will have the option to submit your name to receive a lab credit if you are in a psychology undergraduate class. If you are not completing the survey as an assignment, you will be able to submit a mailing address and receive \$10 for your participation. Upon completing the final question of this survey, you will be taken to a new webpage where you can enter this information. Clicking the "Submit" button at the bottom of the page will enter your information so you can receive lab credit or your \$10 compensation. Your name and contact information will be stored in a separate data base and your survey answers will not be linked to your name in any way.

**Voluntary Nature of Participation and Right to Withdraw without Consequences:** Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time during the study without penalty.

**Confidentiality:** Consistent with federal and state rules, all responses will be kept private. All information will be stored in a secure database accessible only by, Katherine Peterson, Jenna Glover, Dr. Galliher, and research assistants. No other individuals will have access to the data. Your responses to questionnaires will receive an ID number and will in no way be linked to you personal identifying information. Additionally, because your IP address will be invisible, it will be impossible to identify your computer. If you choose to submit your name or email address for compensation for participation, this information will not be associated with **any** of your responses, and will be stored in a separate database. All identifying information will be destroyed as soon as the lab credit or compensation has been dispersed, and results have been sent out by email to those who express interest.

**IRB Approval Statement:** The Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects at Utah State University has approved this research project. If you have any questions regarding IRB approval of this study, you can contact the IRB administrator at (435)797-1821.

**Copy of Consent:** Please print a copy of this consent for your personal files.

**Investigator Statement:** I certify that the research study has been presented to the participant by me or my research assistant. The individual has been given the opportunity to ask questions about the nature and purpose, the possible risks and benefits associated with participation in the study.

**PI and Student Researcher:**

Renee V. Galliher, Ph.D.  
Principal Investigator  
Department of Psychology  
Utah State University

Katherine A. Peterson  
Student Researcher

Jenna A. Glover  
Student Researcher

**Participant Consent:** If you have read and understand the above statements, please click on the “CONTINUE” button below. This indicates your consent to participate in this study.

Appendix B:  
Participant Summary of Results

## Utah State University

Jenna Glover, MS: (435) 797-1107  
Katie Peterson, MS: (435) 797-8303  
Dr. Renee Galliher: (435) 797-3391

## Importance of College Students Closest Friendships Research Newsletter

### Why this study was important:

Previous research has suggested that friendship provides important benefits and understanding how men and women experience their closest friendships helps us better understand the importance of different types of friendships. Additionally, men and women may experience friendship development and characteristics in different ways. This study better helps us understand not only the importance of men and women's closest friendships but also how gender is related to friendship experience.

### How the study was conducted:

This study was conducted in two parts. In the first part, university students ages 18 to 26 completed an online survey. Participants responded to questions about their closest friendship experiences. The second part involved a more in-depth interview regarding these friendships with women between the ages of 18 to 22. These individuals were asked about friendship development, characteristics, importance, uniqueness, problem areas, and benefits of the friendship.

### Who participated:

- Part 1: 375 emerging adults (18–26 years of age; 149 males, 226 females) participated in the survey portion of the study. 88 % percent of the sample was Caucasian, 3.5% were Latino, 2% were Asian, and the remaining 6.5% consisted of Native American, African American, Multi-racial, or other-unspecified racial backgrounds. 89% of the sample reported a straight sexual identity, and approximately 78% reported a Latter Day Saint religious orientation.
- Part 2: Six women were interviewed ranging in age from 18 to 22. Each woman was interviewed on her closest adolescent and current female friendship.

### Women's most important friendships:

Women's responses to the online survey indicate that during adolescents a majority of women in this sample engaged in emotionally close and intense friendship experiences with other women. Women who engaged in these types of friendships were more likely to feel confident about their current ability to be a good partner in an intimate relationship suggesting that close female friendships may provide a positive foundation for developing future relationships. Results indicate that as women move into young adulthood they are less likely to have as emotionally intense female friendships and those that do may be more likely to be preoccupied by relationships in general. Women who participated in Part 2 of the study reported that their closest friendship experiences provided important benefits such as caring, social support, and contributed to identity development. They also discussed difficulties within these friendships that were mostly due to jealousy involving completing relationships.

### Men and Women's close friendships:

Responses from both men and women with regard to the online survey indicated that both males and females experience highly intimate and emotionally close platonic (non-romantic) relationships. According to results, these relationships may be with either a member of the same or opposite sex. Additionally, results suggested the characteristics of participants (e.g. sexual orientation, gender-role orientation, etc.) are potential factors in predicting these highly intimate relationships. Finally, results from this study suggest that certain aspects of a friendship (e.g. affectionate behavior, preoccupation, attachment, etc.) may be affected by characteristics within the friendship (e.g. gender, cross- vs. same-sex dyads, & gender-role orientation)

Thank you all so much for your participation in this study! We plan to present my findings at conferences as well as write a research article for publication. We also hope to share this information with professionals to improve understanding of men and women's most important relationships.

Appendix C:  
Measures

## Demographics

Background Information

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

2. *Biological sex:*\_\_\_\_\_ *male*      \_\_\_\_\_ *female*3. *Which category or categories best describe your racial background? (check all that apply)*

\_\_\_\_ White

\_\_\_\_ Hispanic/Latino

\_\_\_\_ African American

\_\_\_\_ Native American

\_\_\_\_ Asian

\_\_\_\_ Other (please describe)

\*if you selected more than one race, with which one do you most identify?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. *Religious Affiliation:*

\_\_\_\_ LDS

\_\_\_\_ Catholic

\_\_\_\_ Protestant

\_\_\_\_ Jewish

\_\_\_\_ Baptist

\_\_\_\_ Other

(please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

\_\_\_\_ None

5. *What year are you in school?*

\_\_\_\_ Freshman

\_\_\_\_ Sophomore

\_\_\_\_ Junior

\_\_\_\_ Senior

\_\_\_\_ Graduate Student

\_\_\_\_ Graduate School

6. *Which of the following best describes the way you see your sexual orientation?*

\_\_\_\_ Straight

\_\_\_\_ Gay/Lesbian

\_\_\_\_ Bisexual

\_\_\_\_ Questioning

\_\_\_\_ Other

## Romantic Friendship Survey

**Now think of your most important, platonic, (non-romantic) friendship ever (male or female), and use this relationship to answer the following questions.**

1. *How old were you when this friendship began?* \_\_\_\_\_
2. *How old was your friend?* \_\_\_\_\_
3. *What is the biological sex of this friend?* \_\_\_\_\_ male \_\_\_\_\_ female
4. *How long did this friendship last?* \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. years, months, ongoing)
5. *The following describes how this friendship ended:*  
 It ended in a negative way (e.g., fight)  
 It ended in a neutral way (e.g., moved)  
 I still maintain this friendship
6. *On average during our friendship I saw her/him*  
 Many times in a day  
 Once a Day  
 Weekly  
 Monthly  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Please use the scale below to respond to the following statements.**

**1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly agree**

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7. <i>This was the most important relationship at this time</i>   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. <i>I enjoyed being with this friend more than others</i>       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. <i>I felt lonely when I was apart from this friend</i>         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. <i>I turned to this friend when I had a problem</i>           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. <i>I was inseparable from this friend</i>                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. <i>This friend was there for me</i>                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. <i>Sometimes I was jealous when she/he dated other people</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

14. Sometimes I was jealous when she/he was with other friends	1	2	3	4
15. My friend meets my needs	1	2	3	4
16. I preferred hanging out with this friend alone instead of in a group	1	2	3	4
17. I am satisfied with this friendship	1	2	3	4
18. Our friendship is better than most other people's friendships	1	2	3	4
19. At times I wish we weren't friends	1	2	3	4
20. This friend meets my expectations	1	2	3	4
21. I cared more for this friend than she/he did for me	1	2	3	4
22. My friend cared more for me than I did for her/him	1	2	3	4
23. My friend and I cared for each other equally	1	2	3	4

**Please use the scale below to respond to the following statements.**

**1 = Never   2 = Occasionally   3 = Often   4 = Always**

24. During the course of this friendship I dated	1	2	3	4
25. During the course of this friendship I was in a romantic relationship with another person	1	2	3	4
26. I had long heart to heart talks with this friend	1	2	3	4
27. I hugged this friend	1	2	3	4
28. I thought about this friend or wondered where she/he was when we weren't together.	1	2	3	4
29. I cuddled side by side with this friend	1	2	3	4
30. I was fascinated with details about this friend's behavior and/or appearance	1	2	3	4
31. I held hands with this friend	1	2	3	4

32. *I was possessive of this friends time or attention* 1 2 3 4
33. *I looked into this friend's eyes without speaking* 1 2 3 4