Butch in the Streets, Femme in the Sheets; An Examination of Lesbian Dating Scripts

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ABSTRACT

BUTCH IN THE STREETS, FEMME IN THE SHEETS; AN EXAMINATION OF

LESBIAN DATING SCRIPTS

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The purpose of this investigation was to examine romantic lesbian dating scripts,

understand the meanings shared among them, and compare them to heterosexual dating

scripts. Twelve in-depth interviews constructed around three research questions were

conducted with lesbian women between the ages of 18 and 43. Results indicated that lesbian

women used both hypothetical and interpersonal dating scripts, which were affected by butch

and femme identities, as well as high levels of privacy and self-awareness that characterize

lesbian women. Specific actions such as initiation between potential partners, preparation for

dates, and payment methods were highly discussed. Results also indicated that social media

has revolutionized lesbian dating, allowing for more preferred dating scripts to be used. With

the lack of gender to dictate roles, communication is key for lesbians to both negotiate and

assign acceptable dating behavior.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Questioning is what LGBTQ stands for and with nearly 4% of the population identifying as one of these individuals (Gates,2011), the importance of studying this community is growing every day. Academics have started journals specified for homosexual studies, politics are focusing on equal rights for these communities, and celebrities are speaking out for these individuals. Queer studies have become a multidisciplinary subject in which researchers are developing upon in numerous ways. Geographers study the safest and best locations for LGBTQ individuals and psychologists train therapists to better understand LGBTQ couples. This qualitative communication study focused on lesbian dating, and the meaning that was shared when using romantic dating scripts.

Within the discipline of human communication, many LGBTQ studies have commonly focused on the coming out process (revealing gay identity to social networks), gay and lesbian parenting, and the relational dimensions of these relationships (Peplau & Beals, 2004). Regardless of the amount of studies that have been conducted, research on homosexual relationships is nowhere near to their heterosexual counterparts when discussing dating behaviors. Peplau and Beals (2004) have encouraged further study of the homosexual community explaining that little is known about the interactions of gay and lesbian couples. Specific topics that need further investigation, as suggested by Peplau and Beals (2004) include "conversational patterns (Kollock, Blumstein, & Schwartz, 1985), influence tactics (Falbo & Peplau, 1980), styles of problem solving (Kurdek, 1998), intimate communication (Mackey,

Diemer, & O'Brien, 2000), and relationship maintenance behaviors (Gaines & Henderson,

2002)" (p. 240). Additionally, Peplau and Beals (2004) confirmed that there is very little known

about how gay men and lesbians identify and communicate sexual interest in romantic partners.

This study investigated this specific need in research, focusing on lesbians.

Definition of Problem

With the confirmation that more research is needed to understand how gay men and

lesbians identify and communicate sexual interest, more questions arise. With about 4% of the

population identified as single homosexuals (Gates,2011), and 650,000 same sex couples in the

United States, 51% of which are lesbians (Gates, 2013), it is time that the areas of research

suggested by Peplau and Beals (2004) are investigated. Along with these statistics, the current

political push to legalize gay marriage also makes this issue more prevalent. As of April 2014,

the National Conference of State Legislature (NCSL) has reported that 17 states, plus

Washington D.C., have legalized same-sex marriage. These legalizations plus DOMA (defense

of marriage act) being ruled as unconstitutional make the United States closer to full *legal*

acceptance of homosexual individuals (Finzel & Fredrick, 2013). Although legal acceptance is

closer, social acceptance may be lagging behind. The Kaiser Family Foundation (2000) reported

that even though 76% of the homosexual community surveyed claimed that there is more

acceptance of LGBT individuals than in the past, 74% have been victims of discrimination, 26%

of whom have experienced "a lot" of discrimination such as being the target of physical violence

to either their body or property.

The legal acceptance may infer that there will be an increase of lesbian courtships (dating

with the intent of marriage). The social discrimination on these relationships, however, means

that the homosexual community is left to come up with their own ways of identifying and

initiating these romances, unlike heterosexuals who were given societally built scripts to do so. Laner and Ventrone (2000), who revisited dating scripts, added to the importance of this study by stating "it is important to better understand the process by which people come to know their potential mates because it may contain long-term-implications for break ups, for cohabitation, and for more permanent pairings such as marriage" (p. 499).

<u>Statement of Purpose</u>

The purpose of this investigation was to discover, specifically, how lesbian women identify potential partners, how first dates are initiated and carried out, and to find if lesbian women have created some type of romantic dating script. Dating scripts, one of many types of cognitive scripts, are hypothetical and interpersonal scripts that society creates and follows when going on romantic dates (Rose & Frieze, 1989). This investigation will compare results to similar heterosexual studies. Peplau and Beals (2004) stated that this approach can "dispel harmful myths about gay and lesbian couples by documenting many commonalities across all couples regardless of sexual orientation" (p. 240). Peplau and Beals went further to say that comparative research of homosexual and heterosexual couples can also test the generalizability of theories originally developed with heterosexuals.

In order to examine these concepts, Script Theory will be used. Scholars (Rose & Frieze, 1989, 1993; Emmers-Sommer et al., and 2010; Korman, 1983) have used script theory to look into dating scripts for decades, however, all have been used to understand heterosexual dates. Script Theory posits that people follow stereotyped sequences of events that are routinely performed in nearly all daily events (Alksnis, Desmarais, & Wood, 1996). Thus, the goal of this study was to investigate and explain lesbian dating scripts and how they compare to heterosexual dating scripts.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Culture defines how men and women are supposed to act in everyday situations. When two women come together in a romantic relationship, there is no guidance on how one is "supposed" to act. Multiple studies have been conducted to understand heterosexual dating scripts (Rose & Frieze, 1993 &1989; Korman,1983; Emmers-Sommer et al., 2010; Sassler & Miller, 2010), but few have been done to understand lesbian dating scripts. The purpose of this paper is to explore and identify lesbian dating scripts. In order to do this, one must first understand what scripts are, how dating scripts work, and know the unique dimensions of lesbian relationships. Linking the gender differences within heterosexual dating scripts to lesbian relational dimensions may allow us to understand how two women initiate and behave on first dates. After reviewing these concepts, research questions are offered about lesbian dating scripts, and the methodology of this investigation will be discussed.

Script Theory

Cognitive scripts are nothing more than "stereotyped sequences of events that are routinely performed" (Alksnis, Desmarais, & Wood, 1996, p. 322). These events can include first dates, ordering food at a restaurant, grocery shopping, or any other everyday event. Shank and Abelson introduced the idea of scripts in 1977. The early concepts of this theory included the ideas of general and specific knowledge. General knowledge is the understanding that all humans have specific needs to live, and therefore must do certain things to fulfill these needs (Shank & Abelson, 1977). These types of events allow us to easily understand people and the world around us (Shank & Abelson, 1977). Specific knowledge helps to understand events we have previously

experienced. Shank and Abelson (1977) explained this idea by stating that "specific detailed knowledge about a situation allows us to do less processing and wondering about frequently experienced events" (p. 37). This specific knowledge assists us in making assumptions of what will happen next, and what meanings are being made. These assumptions or stereotypes provide faster understanding of everyday events occurring around us. It is important to understand however, that even though these events may be familiar to an individual, there is always a possibility of change. This possibility of change means that scripts are not 100% predictive for all events (Alksnis, Desmarais, & Wood, 1996); however, people still use the script and pattern they know, and adapt as needed so that they feel as though they have maximized their control over the given situation (Rose & Frieze, 1993). Maximized control is extremely important in scripts that can cause anxiety, such as dating scripts.

Dating Scripts

Dating scripts are one of many types of cognitive scripts which people use. Dating scripts lower our anxiety and even eliminate some of the awkwardness that could occur during first dates. Multiple studies have been conducted to better understand the average dating script. Rose and Frieze (1989) found that behavior in early dating, particularly first dates, is highly scripted. They also found in a later study, that first dates consist of both hypothetical and actual (interpersonal) scripts. Hypothetical scripts account for culturally developed sequences of events and give individuals a base line for expectations held on dates. In a heterosexual dating script, this may include the man picking up the woman in his car, or the man paying for the bill. These scripts are often very traditional in nature (Emmers-Sommer et al., 2010). While hypothetical scripts are steps created by the individual's culture, interpersonal scripts are steps that are *actually* taken during the date. These scripts are often a modified version of a hypothetical script

to allow individuals to adapt to their specific date (Rose & Frieze, 1993). According to Korman (1983), these dating scripts, hypothetical and interpersonal, constrain individuals' behaviors in every step of the dating process. For example, women's dating scripts include waiting to be asked on a date or waiting to be proposed to by males, and even though some women do not desire this arrangement, they will follow this script anyhow (Sassler & Miller, 2010). Sassler and Miller (2010) found that women often wait because they fear that their partner will be unhappy or upset with their break in tradition. This example also expresses the gender differences in dating scripts.

Gender Differences

Dating scripts are heavily based on gender. Society, peers, and culture are significantly responsible for shaping our expectations during heterosexual dates (Schleicher & Gilbert, 2005). Green and Sandos (1983) confirmed this when they found that both men and women surveyed rated it less socially acceptable for a woman to initiate a date than for a man to do so. According to Rose and Frieze (1993), these gender roles tend to be "more salient earlier in a relationship because, during the initiation phase, individuals rely on socially defined roles to guide behavior, also, relationship continuation often depends on the adequate fulfillment of these roles" (p.500). It may seem these gendered expectations for dating scripts may have changed over time, but Laner and Ventone (2000) found similar results with today's scripts.

These roles and behaviors can also be shaped by the goals of the partners when initiating a date (Alksnis, Desmarais, & Wood, 1996). Men tend to cite sexual activity as their goal, whereas women often cite emotional intimacy as their goal in dating relationships (Roscoe, Diana, & Brooks, 1987). This may explain what Grauerholz and Serpe found in 1985. They stated that men were more comfortable expressing proactive power in dating relationships, while

women were more comfortable expressing reactive power (Rose & Frieze, 1993). These

proactive and reactive behaviors can be better understood when men and women's scripts are

broken down.

Table 1

First Date Scripts for Hypothetical Dates

Woman's Script	Man's Script
Tell friends and family	Ask for date
Groom and dress	Decide what to do
Be nervous	Worry about appearance
Worry about appearance	Prepare car, apartment
Wait for date	Pick up date
MAN: Pick up date	Meet parents/roommates
Welcome date to home	Courtly behavior (open door)
Introduce to parents, etc	Leave
Leave	Confirm plans
Confirm plans	Get to know and evaluate date
Get to know and evaluate date	Talk, laugh, joke
Talk, laugh, joke	Eat
Go to movies, show, party	Pay
Eat	Make out
Accept/Reject date's moves	Take date home
Man: Take home a date	Ask for another date
Tell date had a good time	Kiss goodnight
Man: Kiss goodnight	Go home
Go home	
Total	
16 actions for women	19 actions for men
3 actions for men	

From "Young Singles' Contemporary Dating Scripts," by S. Rose and I. H. Frieze, 1993, *Sex Roles, 28,* p. 504.

Table 1 demonstrates the gender differences in dating scripts. The scripts shown in Table 1 are

from hypothetical dates, exemplifying the role that culture and society has on scripts. This table

also shows the proactive and reactive behaviors by men and women on first dates. Proactive

actions taken by men are behaviors such as asking for the date, initiating physical contact, and planning the date. Along with these proactive actions, men's scripts also include more self-directed behaviors (deciding what to do), whereas women's scripts often include actions performed by themselves and their dates (Rose & Frieze, 1993). Rose and Frieze (1993) explained women's scripts in three parts: "the private domain (concern about appearance, enjoying the date), participating in the structure of the date provided by the man (being picked up, having doors opened), and responding to his sexual overtures" (p. 507). Men clearly exercise more power in first dates than women (Rose and Frieze, 1993), which leads to the questioning of lesbian dating scripts. Lesbian couples do not have a man to be proactive and lead dates. To explore this issue, two previous studies that have been conducted on lesbian dating scripts, will be discussed.

<u>Lesbian Dating Scripts</u>

Twenty years ago in 1994, Klinkenberg and Rose surveyed 55 gay men and 44 lesbian women on their use of dating scripts. Lesbian women did indeed have both hypothetical and actual dating scripts. In actual scripts for lesbian women, intimacy and affectionate actions (e.g. evaluate feelings about date, have positive feelings about date) were present. These actions were not present in gay males' scripts. Another unique element to the lesbian actual dating script was the inclusion of partner-initiated actions (e.g., partner picked me up, partner went home). This finding matched with the heterosexual female dating scripts. In heterosexual dating scripts, only women included partner-initiated actions, so it is not surprising that lesbian women would do this as well. While this study did find that lesbian dating scripts did exist in 1994, it may be safe to assume that with the current gay and lesbian acceptance movement that these scripts may have changed over time. The same year this study was published, Fitzpatrick (1994) explained that

studies done on gay and lesbian couples during this time period may not be fully accurate because:

> In the absence of socially provided supports for relationships, homosexuals may be more likely to "act out" traditional understandings of ongoing relationships. Rather than define new relationship patterns for same-sex couples, homosexual couples may be more likely to "act out" their understanding of a stable relationship first presented to them in the birth family. Same-sex couples may have discovered that relationship stability is facilitated by traditional patterns. (p. 275)

With twenty years passed, multiple states legalizing gay marriage, the rising amounts of gay and lesbian families being represented in popular culture, and the U.S. Supreme Court deeming DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act, a law stopping gay partners from receiving federal protections in their marriages) as unconstitutional, it is possible that gay and lesbian couples have begun to define new relationship patterns instead of "acting out" traditional relationships.

In another study by Rose and Zand (2002), 38 lesbians between the ages 22 and 63 were interviewed to explore the unique aspects of lesbian dating. In this study, the researchers distinguished the difference between dating and courtship. Dating, according to Cate and Lloyd (1992), "refers to informal interactions with no specific commitment or goal between two individuals with the implied intent of assessing each other's romantic potential" (p86-87), while courtship refers to "a system of searching for a mate with whom to make an emotional commitment and enter into a permanent marriage" (Rose & Zand, 2002 p86-87). Rose and Zand (2002) studied the differences between lesbian romance, friendship, and sexually explicit scripts. In these scripts, it was noted that lesbian women prefer the term courtship to dating. It is obvious that many lesbian women date; however, dating seemed to be only the means of initiating the

relationship and quickly moving toward courtship. This was clear when studying the lesbian romance scripts. According to Rose and Zand (2002), in order for two women to be attracted to each other, the lesbian romance script intertwines emotional intimacy and sexual attraction, and is usually quickly followed by commitment. This study found that while romance scripts may be used, friendship scripts were the most commonly used scripts to develop a relationship between lesbians.

In a friendship script, two women become friends, which may or may not be sexual, and at some point in the friendship, become partners. This script is believed to emphasize emotional intimacy over sexuality and about 74% of the participants reported having been in a friendship with a woman before becoming romantic with her. Rose and Zand (2002) found that motives for a friendship script varied. While some women use this script because they were currently in a romantic relationship, other women used it because they were unaware of either their own, or their friend's sexual orientation. There seem to be drawbacks to using this method, as 50% of the participants in this study acknowledged that it was less preferred. When using a friendship script, lines can be blurred as to if the pair is romantic or not, making the process confusing. A possibly less confusing script, however, is the sexually explicit script.

Sexually explicit scripts emphasize sexuality over emotional intimacy, and are used when two women are physically attracted to each other and engage in sexual contact with no goal of future commitment. In Rose and Zand's (2002) study, 63% of participants revealed that they had engaged in this type of script. Participants reported these relationships either immediately ended after having sexual relations, or ended within weeks. This script had mixed reviews by respondents. Some participants reported having positive experiences, and some negative, making the romance script still more preferred.

In this study it was found that the romance script, while it was not most commonly used, was the most preferred method. The reasoning for this is due to the fact that lesbian women favor emotional intimacy either more so or equally to sexual desire (Rose & Zand, 2002). For this reason, the present study focused more on the romance scripts developed for lesbian women. The following question was offered: *RQ1: What is the lesbian romance dating script?*

While Rose and Zand's (2002) study found that lesbian women have scripts, and was conducted more recently than Klinkenberg and Rose's (1994) study, it did not look for specific dating scripts used by lesbian women. Heterosexual dating scripts are specific and detailed, as seen in Table 1. This study will attempt to discover a specific and detailed script for lesbian women. To better understand what this script may entail, basic lesbian relational dimensions must be understood.

Lesbian Relational Dimensions

To begin, it is important to state that heterosexual and homosexual relationships are more alike than different in many aspects (Peplau & Beals, 2004); however, understanding relational dimensions that may affect dating scripts in lesbian relationships may help us understand scripts created by the lesbian community. Without the presence of a man, lesbian relationships do not have culturally defined gender roles to follow. Gender roles define our dating scripts, roles and responsibilities, and much of our daily lives. Without a person of each gender to separate these roles, lesbian women often split their tasks so that both partners have equal amounts of work to do (Peplau & Beals, 2004). Peplau and Spalding (2000) conducted a study in which they reported that lesbian women have greater satisfaction in their relationships when they perceive higher equality and fairness in their relationships. This fairness even includes equality in finances between partners (Peplau & Beals, 2004). While equity may seem ideal for lesbian couples,

when a child is biologically brought into the picture (one mother gives birth to a child), the equality in roles becomes more difficult (Pelka, 2009). Sullivan (2004) found that lesbian couples with young children (infants and toddlers) often experience jealousy, much like heterosexual couples do. This jealousy is due to the child's natural instinct to rely on one person for food and comfort (Sullivan, 2004). Sullivan referred to this phenomenon in lesbian relationships as "food mother/fun mother," and explained that often one mother is sought out to feed and sooth the child, while the other mother is sought out to be playful, and in turn, partners become jealous of each other's roles with the child. Interestingly, Pelka (2009) found that lesbian women who did not have clearly defined divisions of labor experienced more maternal jealousy (47%) than lesbian couples who did have clear divisions of labor (8%). After reviewing literature over lesbian couples' use of gender roles and equality, it seems that while equity is ideal, it may not be possible or satisfying in all situations.

Another relational dimension in lesbian relationships that may affect dating scripts is privacy. Kurdek (2001) found in a study that lesbian women have lower levels of approval from their families than do gay male or heterosexual individuals. This low level of approval may be one of the reasons why lesbian women tend to be more private in their dating and relationships (Kurdek, 2001). Also, as homosexual relationships are becoming more accepted, there is still prejudice against gay and lesbian couples, causing lesbian couples to have higher levels of self-consciousness than heterosexual couples (Kurdek, 2001). This higher self-awareness is associated with higher levels of privacy in lesbian relationships as well (Kurdek, 2001).

Understanding the higher levels of equality, lower levels of family support, and higher levels of self-consciousness in lesbian relationships may help researchers explain dating scripts in lesbian relationships.

Dating and Sexual Scripts in Lesbian Relationships

Hypothetical dating scripts guide heterosexuals' actions on first dates, in which they can adapt as needed. Lesbian couples do not have a guide built by larger societies and cultures. There is no socially built acceptance of who should be reactive and who should be proactive when initiating first dates between two women. One of the three parts of women's scripts, constructed by Rose and Frieze (1993), was to participate in the structure of the date provided by the man. There is no man in lesbian relationships, so who provides the structure of the date? Who pays for the date? Who picks up whom?

As stated before, lesbian women perceive satisfaction in their relationships when there is perceived equality (Peplau & Beals, 2004). It is possible that this goal of equality is present in the beginning stages of dating, and will influence lesbian dating scripts as well. Instead of a man exercising more power on a first date, two women may exercise the same amount of power. This could mean that lesbian dating scripts will reveal that lesbian women "go Dutch (each person paying for half the meal)" more often than heterosexuals do. Instead of a man picking up a woman, to keep equity, partners may drive themselves and meet at the date location that both partners agreed upon. Another possibility is whichever partner initiated and asked for the date may be the partner responsible for exercising the proactive behaviors that men were responsible for in heterosexual dating scripts. In order to answer these questions, a second research question was presented: ***RQ2: How are roles assigned in lesbian dating scripts, if at all?***

Another question provoked by previous research concerns the understanding of privacy and its effect on first date partners introducing each other to family or roommates. In heterosexual dating scripts, partners often expect the man to meet the woman's family or roommate. With high levels of privacy, and low levels of approval from families of women in

lesbian relationships, it is plausible that partners are less comfortable with introducing or meeting their partner's family early on in dating. Thus, the following question was offered: ***RQ3: How does privacy affect lesbian women's desires to introduce their partner to families on first dates, if at all?*** This research question, hopefully will further the understanding of privacy and the effect it has on lesbian couples early on in relationships.

Research on gay males and lesbians is becoming more popular, however, much research is still needed. Culturally defined gender roles do not have as much importance in lesbian relationships as they do in heterosexual a relationship, which means that lesbian women must occasionally define their own roles. One way in which lesbian women may have to define their own roles is the manner in which they initiate and go on first dates. By understanding the gender differences in heterosexual dating scripts, a linkage between female dating scripts and lesbian relational dimensions can be made to understand the possibility of lesbian dating scripts. The present study was carried out to find hypothetical and interpersonal lesbian dating scripts to better understand homosexual relationships.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

<u>Participants</u>

In-depth interviews constructed around the three research questions were conducted with lesbian women until theoretical saturation was reached. Saturation was reached by the tenth interview; however, two additional interviews were conducted resulting in 12 total interviews. Theoretical saturation is reached when a researcher finds similar stances over and over, meaning there is no longer new enough information being reported to create new codes or themes (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). Participants had to be at least 18 years old, and had to be either single, or in a relationship lasting no longer than 12 months. Participants in relationships shorter than one year were chosen to ensure that dating and courtship was of relevance to them. The average age of the participants was 23 with the youngest participant at 18 years old and the oldest participant at 43 years old. Five participants identified as being single, and all other participants identified as in a relationship. Relationship lengths ranged from 1 month to 9 months. Two of these participants reported being engaged. All participants reported being in between one to three relationships in the past year except one participant who was in her first lesbian relationship. The highest income reported was $30,000 per year, with the education level varying from high school diploma to a graduate degree. All participants were Caucasian and resided in areas in, or surrounding, a large Midwestern city.

<u>Procedures</u>

Participants were recruited using a snowball method. Snowballing is "a method that yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest" (Biernacki, & Waldorf, 1981, p. 141). Participants already known by the researcher were asked to spread the word of the study by mouth, and gave the researcher inside access to their networks.

In-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the lesbian women by the investigator. The interviews were conducted at times and places most convenient to the participants, most commonly occurring in their homes. To ensure honesty of participants, as suggested by Shenton, (2003) participants were given opportunities to refuse participation and were encouraged to be frank throughout the interview. Interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes resulting in 785 minutes of recordings and 147 single-spaced pages of transcriptions. Participants' names were changed within the transcriptions and assigned pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

The interview protocol was semi-structured, allowing for flexibility on the investigator's behalf. The topic at hand is relatively understudied, and therefore needed much room for exploration. All interviews began with the participant filling out a face-sheet, which is a quick demographic data collection sheet that allows for retrieval of information such as gender, organizational affiliation, and so on (La Pelle, 2004). This face sheet allowed the investigator to learn participants' dating experience, as well as their basic demographic information. The participants were then asked questions about their dating experiences. Questions prompted participants to detail how they get ready for dates, what they typically like to do on dates, and how their dates typically end. They were also asked questions such as: "how do you know if a

woman is sexually interested in you?" and, "what happens on a date that you would characterize as unsuccessful?" Some questions were altered or added from the original protocol as the interview process proceeded.

In order to ensure credible, dependable, transferable, and confirmable data, extra steps were taken, as recommended by Lincoln and Gubba (1985). These steps included member checks of data collected, debriefing sessions with superiors, examination of previous research to frame findings, tactics to ensure honesty from participants, an in depth methodological section to allow the study to be repeated, presence of background data to establish context, and recognition of the methods shortcomings (Shenton, 2003).

Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed and coded using thematic analysis. According to Manning and Kunkel (2014), thematic analysis "helps a researcher to have a keener sense of what is there, in terms of the data, and what possibilities lie ahead for interpretation" (p 159). Thematic analysis is often used when little research has been done in a particular area, such as the present study. The thematic analysis in this study was approached in a six-step manner, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, the researcher became very familiar with the data. This included transcribing all interviews, listening to recordings multiple times, and re-reading over transcripts. Second, initial codes were created. These codes were created around the research questions. Next, emergent themes were generated within codes, followed by all themes and codes being reviewed for analysis, including member checks. The fifth step was determining and defining theme names. The final step was selecting quotations from actual interviews to best illustrate themes.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate and explain lesbian dating scripts and how they compare to heterosexual dating scripts. In order to accomplish this, qualitative interviews were conducted with 12 lesbian women. After conducting and transcribing the interviews, open and axial coding was conducted and multiple themes emerged that related to the three research questions asked in the literature review. In this section, these themes will be discussed along with additional findings that were found outside of the research questions.

Lesbian Dating Script

Dating scripts are one of many cognitive scripts in which people use to lower anxiety and eliminate awkwardness. Research Question 1 asked, "What is the lesbian dating script?" When conducting interviews, although all participants were lesbian women, there were two different scripts being reported, scripts from "butch" lesbian women, and scripts from "femme" lesbian women. A butch woman often dresses and acts in masculine ways, while a femme woman commonly dresses and acts in more feminine ways.

Butch versus femme

Although some lesbian women take on more masculine roles, and other women take on more feminine roles, it was clear that these roles come and go with moods and stages of life for other lesbian women. Tabatha, a 23 year old lesbian who currently lives with her girlfriend of 8 months explained that, "we can both be butch, like in the summer we both have shaved heads, but we can both have femme hair too. I mean I will wear a dress in our wedding, so it all depends

on the timing." Another participant, Randi, a single lesbian woman who has been out for 4 years stated,

> There are definitely women who are gay and want to be perceived as gay and then dress that way…like when you first come out, you know you are gay and you want everyone else to know you are gay too, and that's when you put a lot more effort into the way you dress, like I cut all my hair off, I kept telling my mom its not because I am gay, its because I wanted to cut my hair off, but it was totally because I was gay, I wanted people to see me as a lesbian.

While some women change their butch/femme identity with different stages of life, and some women stick to one or the other, their current identity seems to affect their dating script. One way the script is affected by this is in the initiation phase of dating. When butch participants were asked how they let a woman know she is romantically interested in her, many responded by saying that they are up front, clear, and forward with the woman. Tabatha illustrated this finding stating that,

> You know you are either going to toy with me, or you want to be in a relationship, what are you doing? I almost 24 years old, I have to figure out what to do with my life. I want to have a family. I want to do these things so I don't have time to be jerked around I guess.

April, another self-identified butch lesbian intertwines directness and humor to let women know she is romantically interested in them. She said

> Well, I do compliment her a lot. I'm pretty sarcastic sometimes. I'll make jokes about her not having clothes on or I'll just tell her that her face is a piece of art and I should frame it with my legs.

When asked how other women initiate contact with them, the majority of these participants responded similarly to Hannah, a butch lesbian who is considering making a transition into becoming a female-to-male transgendered individual. Hannah reported,

It doesn't really happen, I mean the only time it has happened is online, and that's because she just didn't have the context clues I guess. I honestly can't really think of a time it ever happened. I pretty much do the initiation.

Femme lesbian women tended to be on the opposite side of the phenomenon. When femme lesbian women were asked how they let other women know they are romantically interested in them, many responded saying it does not happen very often face-to-face. Randi told a story of when her previous, more butch lesbian partner, Alicia, confronted her in a bar, adding that she could never be so forward:

She just blatantly asked me the first time we hung out. Like we went to a bar and I came out of the bathroom and she was like, so are you gay? In the first like hour of knowing her and I was like yea, yep, yep that's happening. Ok… I on the other hand just make it obvious and try to be flirtatious, but me personally I'm not like that. I don't just go up to girls and ask flat out if they are gay, or if they will go on a date…

Some femme participants, when asked how they initiate contact with women they are romantically interested in also mentioned a more mutual initiation:

I mean it is not too different from a straight relationship, like I have dated men in the past, and it is almost exactly the same, like you spend time talking to each other and you can tell there is interest, like you know there are common interest, or like constantly texting each other. You can just tell when there is extra attention added, that's how you know, for me that's how it is.

A Femme lesbian initiating a date does happen more often, however, when using online social networks and dating websites such as Plenty of Fish or Facebook. Janelle, a 28-year-old self-identified femme and single lesbian, reported that "If I'm online, usually it's just taking a stab at it. Being like, 'Hey, I saw that we have a lot in common. Would you like to get to know each other better?'" One participant, Brittany, a 19-year-old lesbian woman who has been in a relationship for nine months, explained the change in action by stating that,

> If you are at a club, a gay bar, there is a group of girls who you can tell are very dominate and they go out and they look for someone to woo and all of that stuff, then there is that group of girls who sit back in the corner who watch and are like wow I wish I could do all that stuff.

This clarity of who is an initiator and who needs to be initiated is not as clear online, and therefore either woman is likely to make first contact. Tabatha explained this when she said,

> Sometimes if it is a more butch one I am going after, I will let her initiate, but if I like a femme, which is rare, I will initiate, but it can always go both ways online, whoever beats you to the punch really.

> Another way that butch/femme affects lesbian dating scripts is when deciding on an activity to do for the date. When butch women were asked about their first date expectations, many participants reported preferring a more traditional date. Delany, a 23-year-old lesbian who resides in a more rural area explained "on a first date? Just a movie and dinner is fine." Brittany added,

> Movie and dinner is what I typically plan for, I mean, we do most of our talking in the car and over dinner, and then we can cuddle during the movie, and if we liked that cuddling, we can go home and cuddle more.

First dates for butch women often tend to be more of a 'movie and dinner' date. In these dates the butch women explained that opening doors and picking up their dates were acceptable behaviors.

This again, tended to be different than what femme lesbian women would report. In this case, femme women discussed a preference for first dates to be more of an activity such as going to a national park, hiking, or going to an event downtown. Randi stated that she often decides on what type of activity to do based on common interests. She stated,

> I usually ask their interests and things they like doing, and if they are interested in something that they haven't done, or something I haven't done, I'm like 'hey we should try this out since you have never done it before!' and it usually works out really well.

Alex, a lesbian woman in her mid-thirties further illustrated this preference by discussing why she enjoys these types of dates:

> I expect to do something that is somewhat not active but intellectually stimulating. Um, I just expect to have good conversation. That's my main thing. I expect to have a good time but that's, you know, that's myself. I'm in control of that.

Randi illustrated the many activities she has done on dates as alternatives to the traditional "movie and dinner; date:

> I have done weird things with people and they are kind of fun, like skating, or my first girlfriend took me fishing. We've had favorite movie marathons, heck I have even rock climbed with a girl who was terrified of heights, that was pretty awesome.

Women who cited wanting to do an activity instead of a typical movie and dinner date discussed that this type of date keeps them out of the public eye, and therefore away from potential judgment. Janelle discussed that "it's nice to do something different too, because you can get

away from all the eyes on the lesbian couple." Femme women were also more comfortable when meeting their date at a neutral location, rather than one person picking up the other. Sarah expressed, "I would just like to meet them there, that way we are responsible for ourselves, and if it is a shitty date, I don't feel trapped." This neutral location was extremely important when meeting an online date face-to-face. Sarah, who met her current girlfriend online carried on to say,

> Oh, it is super important when you are meeting them in person for the first time, I've went on a date with a woman who was not who she came off to be online, and for that reason I continue to meet them there.

For many women, meeting a potential partner found on the Internet in a neutral place gave both a sense of safety and an easy exit plan in case the date was not a positive experience.

Participants wanted to make it clear that while being butch or lesbian seemed to affect their dating, they believed it was something that faded quickly after becoming a couple. Sarah, a lesbian woman in her mid-forties, best described how being butch or femme fades in a relationship when she said,

> Being butch or femme in the long run doesn't really matter. You know there is that saying "butch in the streets femme in the sheets," it just means that when you both come home you both have vaginas, and you both are women. I think it is more of a mating call, you know like when a bird puffs its feathers and does a mating dance to attract a mate. I think the butch and femme thing is the same thing, just an attraction thing.

This means that being butch, femme, or somewhere in the in between, may make dating scripts have slight differences among lesbian women, however, they are all still lesbian women and

have many more similarities in their scripts than differences. These similarities will now be discussed.

Initiation

Participants reported three ways to initiate contact with a woman they were romantically interested in; baiting, through social networks, and through social media.

Baiting. When participants discussed initiation, they rarely mentioned meeting a potential partner in person who is not part of their social network or from online. Only two of the 12 participants reported ever doing so. One participant, Hannah, who is in her mid-twenties, met her current girlfriend, Mary, at her place of employment. Mary was a customer in whom Hannah was interested. Hannah, however, did not know if Mary was gay. The second participant who reported meeting a partner in this manner was Randi, the single lesbian who has been out for four years. Randi worked as a camp counselor at one time and while at camp she described everything as being very "organic", meaning they had no cell phones, computers, or cars. While working at the camp Randi became interested in another camp counselor, Kristen. Randi did not know if Kristen was gay. This is where a baiting tactic comes in. Participants did not feel comfortable with directly asking other women if they were gay. When discussing how Randi discovered Kristen was gay, Randi mentioned that "you can't just ask her if she is gay. You don't want to freak her out. That is a weird situation." Another participant, Rebecca explained this as well. She said,

> Like if I were to go up to you like, "hi I think you are attractive, are you a lesbian?" and you are like no, we don't like rejection and a lot of people are negative to the fact that a lesbian is hitting on them, so we don't want to get bashed in any way, so we kind of try to keep quiet.

Instead of asking directly, both participants used a bait to find out if the women they were interested in were gay. Hannah saw that Mary often came into her place of employment wearing a military uniform, and saw it as a good opportunity to bait Mary into disclosing if she was gay or not. Hannah told Mary that she thought a woman in uniform was hot, in response Mary said, "I agree." This was Mary biting the bait, and now Hannah knew it was safe to ask her for her phone number. Randi used another kind of baiting. She said

> Finding out if they are gay, which is hard, harder than you imagine, I mean like over camp where I found my last girlfriend, I could not tell if she was gay. I spent like over months just like asking her questions, or like just talking about myself being gay and seeing how she would react to it, and she would never say anything! I was going insane!

This baiting did not work for Randi, and therefore a mutual acquaintance asked Kristen if she was gay. This was done because it was too risky to simply ask.

Social networks. This risk is often why many participants stick to their social networks and social media when looking for a date. Every participant mentioned meeting past girlfriends through other friends. One participant, who lives in a more rural area discussed that all her friends date each other:

> There has always been that group, everyone was doing each other. We took boards one time and marked who had slept with who. It was sick, everyone basically slept with each other. Living in a small town, there is only so many lesbians within so many miles.

Participants who lived in more urban areas described befriending groups of women while doing extracurricular activities, such as roller derby, and then dating through those social networks. Randi mentioned,

I think that lesbians meet each other in major cities and stuff, like in roller derby, that is a

huge place to meet girls, obviously. I think that is the case but I mean I am sure there are

women who just meet randomly, but, once you get in the community I think that's how

you really meet people.

Another benefit to having lesbian friends face to face, is that the more you know in person, the

more you can connect with online.

Social media. Social media was by far the most mentioned way of connecting with and

initiating contact with other lesbian women. Tabatha explained that "it is easy to find. If you

have one (lesbian) person on your page, and they know 5 to10 more, you see a person that

interests you (on their page), and you message them." Facebook, and a free dating website

named Plenty Of Fish were the two most common social media sites mentioned. Ten of the 12

participants reported using Plenty Of Fish. The benefit of using this website was detailed by

Brittany saying that "the popular one is plenty of fish, you can scout every lesbian for miles, you

can put in that you just want women who like women, it is like the ultimate trolls site." This

makes it easy for participants to know who is a lesbian, and to begin communication with their

potential date. There are, however, a few disadvantages to using this website. Six participants

mentioned that they often will have straight couples message them looking for a third partner to

join in sexual activities. Tabatha shared "it happens all the time, a guy or woman messaging you

on Plenty Of Fish asking you to join their fun night, which is annoying because my profile says

I'm a lesbian, not bi, and not poly." This does not, however, deter participants away from the

website. Janelle elaborated on this subject saying, "it happens quite often actually, I mean you

learn to not even open them when they are from a man, and if not, you just ignore them and

move on with your day." Another drawback to using this site is the same that most online dating

sites pose, not really knowing who the other person is. April, a single lesbian who tries to date often, described her first run-in with someone not being who they presented on their dating profile: "I date more femme girls, and me and this really pretty girl were messaging on there and we decided to meet up, and when we met up I guess the picture was old because she had transitioned into being a guy… I usually know what people look like and that was the first time it happened. Like you were a girl in your picture. What happened? You were pretty, I was actually pissed." Facebook offers a better sense of knowing who the other person is due to having mutual friends. Plenty Of Fish does not offer this comfort. Meeting people for dates can be very stressful, and meeting someone off the Internet can be scary.

Preparation for date.

While it is natural to be nervous for a date, participants reported some unique activities that happen when preparing for dates. Online creeping and mental preparation were two qualities that stood out.

Online creeping. The term creep was used several times in the interviews when discussing how participants prepared for their dates. Because the majority of the participants date women they find online, they also use the online sites to find more information about their potential date. This online creeping helps participants to prepare conversation and ideas for the date activities. April illustrated this idea by saying,

> I creep, I mean I creep. I will go back through their pictures from like the last ten years. If it's just a dating profile I will read everything they have written, but on facebook, I look at everything, if they knew they wouldn't even want to go on the date with me anymore.

After participants absorb as much information as possible about their date, they begin to mentally prepare.

Mental preparation. Many women know the exhaustion that occurs when physically trying to prepare for a date, such as picking out their outfit, makeup, and doing their hair. Yet participants in this study did not mention this process. Instead, when asked how they prepared for dates they were more inclined to discuss a mental preparation process. Randi discussed her preparation expectations by saying,

> It's just like no makeup, try to wear something that looks cute, maybe do my hair, there is not a whole bunch of preparation. It is more mentally preparing myself not to act like a jackass and not be totally nervous. That is way more of the focus than what I look like. I am just usually so nervous, I spend more time not worrying about what to look like, but more time worrying about what I am going to say.

Another participant, Sarah, mentioned how she often plans to get to the location of the date early so that she has time to sit in her car and calm herself down, followed by reminding herself what to talk about. The focus on mental preparation was much heavier than the focus on physical preparation for the majority of the participants. Most participants simply mentioned getting dressed and smelling "good" when physically preparing for a date. When asked what she does to prepare for a date, Hannah responded "I mean I shower, I guess that's a good thing, shower, good nice clean clothes, that's about it." When Alex was asked the same question, she nearly had no answer; she said "How did I prepare? Same thing I always do. Just… I just do what I normally do to get ready." After creeping and mentally preparing for a date, participants had other obstacles to overcome when the date actually occurred, such as deciding on how to pay for the date.

Payment method

In heterosexual dating scripts, a man is typically in charge of paying for the date. When the participants for this study were asked how they expect to pay for dates, participants universally agreed on two options: going Dutch, or a date-by-date payment method. Participants also expressed dissatisfaction when one of these two options was not followed.

Going Dutch. Going Dutch is a term used when each person pays for their own share of the date. Many participants expressed comfort in using this method. April expressed,

> Paying is a big issue because it is like we usually go halvesies. If they are obviously depending on me to pay, I will pay, like if there are undertones that they are expecting me to pay because I am the man blah blah, then I will. Don't expect it all the time, but it should be equal.

This payment method, however, sometimes created an awkward conversation between the dating couple. When Brittany was asked how she expects paying for the date to happen, she explained,

> That is always the most awkward event, so I try not to expect. If I can, I expect that myself, personally, is going to pay for the date. That's what, just in general, what I think of the situation. As far as if it's 50/50, I'm fine with that but I expect an awkward discussion. If the person doesn't ask and then just brings the check, I'm usually the first person to go for it. And then if they go for it, then we discuss. Usually I try to be more persuasive but if they insist, I'll say, 'Fine, we'll do 50/50.' It's fine and that's fair.

However, many participants noted that sometimes they enjoy paying for an entire date, or are content when the other woman offers to pay for the date, as long as it does not continue for every date.

Date-by-date payment. When going Dutch does not occur on a date, there is one other option. This is a date-by-date method. This method includes one woman paying for the current date, and the other woman promising to pay for the next date. When asked how she expects payments to happen on a date, Sarah responded,

> It is pretty duel, I mean I can pay for the food and you can pay for beer later, or I can get today and you get next time, I usually offer to pay first, but if I don't, I am definitely paying for the next one.

This method is also an indicator that the individuals want another date. Randi illustrated this idea when she stated,

> I usually don't go to dinner, I'm like lets go golfing, its really gay, like lets go golfing and drinks, every situation where one person pays I am like I am getting it next time, and I will tell them next time we go out on another date, 'I am paying for it, and now you have to because I am paying for it.'

If one woman keeps paying for every date, it can become frustrating for the other woman. When asked what happens when one woman pays for every date, one participant answered "I would be like 'I make money, I can treat you,' I like treating people, so it would kind of drive me nuts." Another participant said, "I mean, you know, if you go out again it's like I don't personally need you to cover everything. That's kind of rude. It's 50/50 because that's what relationships are about anyway." A third participant expressed,

> It will annoy me because I don't think it's fair so I guess it's a double standard for me. I expect that I'll pay and it doesn't bother me but I don't expect them to pay for it every time. I mean, I try and be as persistent as possible. I'll try and offer money in other ways. But if anything, a lot of it is just discussing, but it does bother me.

After understanding how lesbian women prefer to pay for dates, how they typically initiate dates, and how having a butch or femme identity effects the dating script, it was possible to compile both hypothetical and interpersonal dating scripts for lesbian women.

The script

Over 100 actions were mentioned when discussing what lesbian women do on first and early relationship dates. Similar to the Rose and Frieze (1989) study, only actions that were mentioned by 25% (3 participants) of the participants were used to create the lesbian dating script. The hypothetical script included 15 actions while the interpersonal script (actual script) included 21 actions. Script mentioned by over half (6) of the participants is shown in bold in Table 2. Actions that are partner initiated are labeled with the letters PI.

Table 2

First Date Scripts for Lesbian Women

Hypothetical Date	Actual Date
Meet through friends or online	**Meet through friends or online**
Exchange numbers	**Creep partner online**
Mutually decide on plans	Exchange numbers
Groom/Dress	**Text to get to know each other**
Mentally prepare	**Mutually decide on plans**
Meet date at pre-arranged location	**Groom/Dress**
Activity or Movie	Mentally prepare
Talk about common interests	Go to date's house/ Pick up Date
Eat/get drinks	**Activity or movie**
Talk/Laugh/ Joke	**Talk about common interests/Evaluate Date**
Pay 50/50 "Dutch"	Leave for another location
Announce if date was enjoyable or not	Eat/Drink
Initiate physical contact/ Kiss	**Talk/Laugh/Joke**
Make plans for another date	**Pay for date or** PI: Pay for date
Go Home	Offer to pay for next date or PI: Offer to pay for next date
	Initiate physical contact
	Bring date home
	Sex
	Go Home or PI: Go home
	Text date upon arriving home
	Make plans for another date

PI Indicates partner initiated action
Bold type indicates an action cited by 50% or more of the participants

Table 2 shows both proactive and reactive actions, confirming the need to understand how

lesbian women assign roles in their dating scripts.

Script Role Assignment

Research question two asked "how are roles assigned in lesbian dating scripts, if at all?"

In a heterosexual script, men take on proactive roles and women take on reactive roles. Proactive

roles include actions such as asking for a date, initiating physical contact, and planning the date

(Rose & Frieze, 1993). Reactive roles include actions such as waiting for the date, confirming

plans, and accepting or rejecting date's physical contact. Participants in this investigation made it clear that both partners switch between roles throughout the date, and explained that there is not one proactive and one reactive partner at any given time. Tabatha illustrated this comment when discussing her most previous date. She explained,

> Well since I picked her up and drove, she paid, that way it was pretty equal I think….
> When the date was over, she asked for me to come to her place, and the second we got in
> I just went for the kiss.

This statement shows both individuals going back and forth between proactive actions throughout a single date. There was, however, one scenario brought up by multiple participants in which it is normal for these proactive and reactive roles to play out more like a heterosexual couple; the gay bar. Sasha, a self- identified femme lesbian, stated that "at the gay bar you can tell who is butch and who is femme. The butch ones are all confident and have this air about them. I wait for them to come talk to me." While it may seem simpler to date in a more genderized scene, participants noted that meeting women at a bar is not a preferred method of finding dates. Janelle explained her reasoning behind not wanting to find a date at a bar by saying "my mom always said you never meet a man at a bar. It's the same; you never meet a lesbian at a bar." Since meeting women at a bar is not preferred, lesbian women have came up with a way to assign roles on dates, through constant communication.

Constant communication

Mentioned by 11 out of 12 participants, constant communication is a key factor to having a successful date. Participants explained that this continual communication (*constantly* texting, talking on the phone, messaging each other on social media, and emailing) starts right away, including before ever meeting their potential partner, and carries through into stable

relationships. Tesla explained how her and her current girlfriend constantly spoke before ever meeting: "we were obviously constantly talking and texting and calling and stuff, but we didn't meet until she came here to pick me up like 8 months later." Randi justified her reasoning for this communication by saying,

> I honestly try to mine people for data basically. Like when I talk to someone via text messaging I am trying to find out so many things, like I ask them what they are interested in and I am like 'oh I am totally interested in that' Google…. Like I will watch an entire season of TV shows to know what they are talking about.

Continual communication allows for women to learn which actions each partner is comfortable with, enabling roles to be negotiated rather than assigned.

<u>Privacy's Effect on Lesbian Scripts</u>

Research question three asked, "How does privacy affect lesbian women's desires to introduce their partner to families on a fist date, if at all?" This research question came from heterosexual dating scripts in which it is common for women to introduce their male partner to their family or roommate before going on a date. When participants were asked if they introduced their dates to their families or roommates on first dates, many participants gave a response similar to Rebecca, who said "I'm okay with friends, family is kind of, 'Wow, this is really intimate really fast' so that would probably make me a little uncomfortable. If it's what they want, then that's what they want." Due to uncertainty caused by the common misunderstanding of homosexual relationships, partners often avoid meeting one another's families. When Randi was asked if she would ever introduce her date to her family or roommates, she responded,

As long as they are ok with it, as long as they are really all the way out of the closet, my

ex was super nervous about it, she stayed here for two weeks after camp, and she was so

nervous, because she lives in Europe, and in Germany where its like not ok to be gay, and

I am like my parents are fine with it, they have seen me date women, it is not a big deal,

and she was just like petrified immediately with the whole idea.

Privacy had a second effect on dating scripts. Femme participants often discussed

wanting to go on more of an active date such as kayaking, picnics, or going to museums. This at

first was thought to simply be a difference in preference between femme and butch lesbians;

however, one participant noted that this type of date allows for privacy from onlookers. This type

of privacy allows lesbian women to focus more on their date, and less on their fears of judgment.

<u>Additional Findings</u>

In this section, two themes that did not fit under the three research questions will be

discussed. These two discoveries help shed light on the lesbian dating experience while not

specifically tied to the lesbian dating script. First, many participants discussed frustrations with

their partner's on-going relationship held with their previous girlfriends. It was mentioned

several times that lesbian women tend to remain friends with their previous partners. Janelle

thoroughly described why previous partners can become such an issue when she reported

I feel like a big thing is ex's. I feel like any kind of ex's can ruin it. I don't know how, but

when you get to that emotional level, and it is so intense and you have so much

background with this person, so many memories, and then you just cut it off. I feel like it

is hard to just make it black and white and just cut it off. I feel like girls really quickly

make an emotional attachment that married people make, like really deep and really fast,

and then they cut it off, and it is hard, and then they have so many rebounds, and then

they wind back up with that person. I think lesbians can't be alone, and they never want

to be alone. It has come into every relationship. I am always having to deal with their still

present attachment to their ex, and it ruins it most of the time.

Participants also claimed that running into previous girlfriends while on dates with new partners

commonly occurred. When discussing this issue, Randi complained that,

It did always happen with my ex Amanda, where all these girls are fucking coming up to

her like 'Amanda I HAVENT SEEN YOU IN SO LONG!!' And then they turn to me and

say 'I wont tell you how we know each other…' Like thank you, I know EXACTLY how

you fucking know her now, I know, like you don't have to tell me. I have been down this

road before.

This often causes an awkward tension or frustration between the couple who are currently dating.

One participant stated,

I'll go on a date thinking it will turn into a good relationship, and then an ex pops up, and

now I'm all worried she is always going to pop up, like how often am I going to have to

see this bitch? All the time? Then I'm out.

The second additional finding supported Rose and Zand's (2008) idea that lesbian dating

is more like courtship than the latter. Tabatha mentioned, "I think it is more like relationship

building, like I don't just date around, I just jump into relationships mostly." Sasha agreed when

she expressed, "I haven't really gone on a date in a while, I just end up always in a relationship,

and we live together, so it's like we see each other all the time." One participant explained how

she thought of dating as more of a high school or heterosexual activity. Brittany explained, "I

haven't even used the term dating since like high school, but I know I will talk to my girlfriend's

mom, and her mom went on a date, I think of straight people going on dates." When participants

were asked if there was another term they would prefer using, many could not think of a better

term. When the term courtship was suggested, participants were still dissatisfied. Courtship felt

too traditional, or heterosexual, for explaining the lesbian dating experience.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study examined script theory and attempted to understand its use by lesbian women. Three research questions were asked: (1) what is the lesbian dating script, (2) how are roles assigned in lesbian dating scripts, if at all, and (3) how does privacy affect lesbian women's desires to introduce their partner to families on a first date, if at all?

Lesbian Dating Script

Previous research on lesbian dating scripts has been outdated, or lacked the presence of an actual script (Klinkenberg & Rose, 1994; Rose & Zand, 2002). While the previous studies offer valuable information, there are benefits to updating and better understanding lesbian dating scripts and comparing them to homosexual scripts.

Butch versus femme

While conducting interviews, it became apparent that there are differences in script depending on identity of either butch or femme. A butch lesbian often appears more masculine, while a femme lesbian often characterizes as more feminine in appearance. Participants expressed that in lesbian dating rituals, butch and femme identities go beyond appearances. Based on the individual's identity, dating scripts had minor differences such as preferred date activities (movies and dinner or common interest activity), methods of transportation (meeting at a neutral location or picking up their partner), and acceptance of traditional actions (opening doors and asking straight forward for date). Because lesbian women have greater satisfaction in their relationships when they perceive higher equality and fairness in their relationships (Peplau & Beals, 2004), it was unexpected to find that lesbian women tend to have gendered first date

scripts. However, Rose and Frieze (1993) stated that heterosexual dates tend to have more salient gender roles because "during the initiation phase, individuals rely on socially defined roles to guide behavior" (p 500). Lesbian women seem to also rely on these socially defined roles when initiating a relationship, and as the relationship builds, these gender roles become less salient. Participants described this phenomenon by comparing it to a birds mating dance. Birds fluff their feathers and dance and hop side to side to attract mates, however when the birds mate, they are still both birds. Participants said that these butch and femme roles are similar to a bird doing a dance to attract a partner, however when they go home, they are both women, hence the saying "butch in the streets, femme in the sheets." Literature shows that there are other times in a lesbian relationship in which equality and lack of gendered roles diminishes. Pelk (2009) found that when lesbian women have a child biologically, partners often separate as food mother and fun mother. In this scenario, one mother is sought out for food and comfort (traditional mother role), and one mother is sought out for fun and experience (traditional father role). It seems that depending on the stage of the relationship that the couple is presently in, gendered roles have waves of salience. One period of high salience seems to be during the initiation phase.

Initiation

Initiation in a lesbian relationship can be more difficult than in heterosexual relationships. Three methods of initiation were discussed by participants; baiting in face-to-face situations, dating through social networks, and connecting through social media.

Baiting. Bating is a method used by lesbian women to discover whether or not a woman they are interested in is lesbian or not. This method seems to carry one main function; face-saving. When using this method, women are disclosing information about themselves and asking multiple questions to bait the woman they are interested in into disclosing about herself. The

main goal of this reciprocal disclosure is to learn the sexuality of the woman they are interested in. While reciprocal self-disclosure of sexuality is not discussed in any heterosexual dating script studies, reciprocal self-disclosure is important when initiating any relationship. Sprecher, Treger, Wondra, Hilaire, and Wallpe (2013) found in their study that when self-disclosure is reciprocated early on, especially in the first interaction, that partners report more liking, closeness, perceived similarity, and enjoyment of the interactions than partners who did not reciprocate self-disclosures early on. This method not only gives women a safe opportunity to find out the sexual orientation of other women without directly asking and feeling embarrassed if the woman discloses that she is straight, but it also begins the reciprocal self-disclosure early on (most commonly in the first interaction) in the relationship.

Social networks and social media. Finding a partner via social networks or social media is common among heterosexuals and homosexuals. These methods allow for individuals to pull from a larger dating network, and give partners opportunities to get to know each other before their first encounter. Previous lesbian dating script studies (Klinkenberg & Rose, 1994; Rose & Zand, 2002) were conducted before the opening of Facebook to the public. In this study, it was found that having this online outlet may have changed the frequency of friendship and romance scripts. Rose and Zand's study discovered that in 2002, lesbian women preferred romance scripts over friendship scripts, however, because it was harder to find openly gay women, friendship scripts were the most common method used by participants. In 2002 social media was not as immense as it is now. MySpace was started in 2003, Facebook opened to the public in 2005, and Twitter launched in 2006 (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social media has given lesbian women access to more women to date without having to use the less preferred friendship script. Now that lesbian women can use social media that indicates a person's sexual identity right away, romance

scripts may be becoming a more common method among lesbian women. Also, now that women are given a chance to date outside of their social network, actions such as preparing for a date are becoming more important.

Preparation for date

In a heterosexual hypothetical script, women groom and dress, get nervous, worry about their appearance and wait for their date to pick them up when preparing for a date. In this study, lesbian women groom and dress, and spend time mentally preparing. In the actual (interpersonal) script, lesbian women also creep their partners online.

Online creeping. Online creeping, commonly called lurking, is a term used to describe online users who are present on social media without commenting or interacting (Schlosser, 2005). Lesbian women use social media sites to learn more about their dates. If using a dating website, individuals will read and re-read others' dating profiles before meeting, however if they are using a site such as Facebook, this creeping can be more intense. Facebook allows individuals to go through all posts, photos, likes, and check-ins that their friends have shared online. Sarah Kate, and Anush (2012) discovered in their study on the benefits of lurking, that creeping has benefits such as being able to obtain information, but also has negative impacts. If a lurker is discovered, they are often seen as a free loader by online communities or are perceived as a person who is hiding information about themselves. In the present investigation, lesbian women knew the risk of creeping, however, the benefit of gaining valuable information outweighed the risks. Lesbian women are able to use this information to get to know their potential dates before ever meeting them in person. This allows for them to come up with common interest and topics of conversation, which coincides with their mental preparations.

Mental preparation. Mental preparation is not specifically found on heterosexual dating scripts (Emmers-Sommer et al., 2010; Laner & Ventone, 2000; Rose & Frieze, 1993; Sassler & Miller, 2010; Schleicher & Gilbert, 2005). Being nervous and worrying about appearance, however, are on the heterosexual script. While participants did mention being nervous, this mental preparation seemed to go a step further. Because many lesbian women date with the intent of building a relationship, this mental preparation is extremely important. Participants want to be in a mental state in which they can create emotional intimacy within the first few dates. Rose and Zand (2002) found that lesbian women favor this emotional intimacy more so or equally to sexual desire, making each date feel extremely important. One step on the script that is hard to prepare for is the payment method.

Payment method

In a heterosexual script, it is standard that the man pays for the date. In a lesbian script, there are two options for paying for a date, going Dutch, or a date-by-date payment method. If the two standard methods of payment do not occur, there is a presence of frustration and lack satisfaction.

Going Dutch. Going Dutch is a term used to describe when each person pays for their own part of the date. This was an expected finding as lesbian women often are satisfied in their relationships when there is a perceived equality in finances between partners (Peplau & Beals, 2004). It seems that this equality in finances begins with the first date. In cases where going Dutch does not happen, lesbian women often use a date-by-date method to ensure the fairness in finances still exists.

Date-by-date method. The date-by-date method seems to serve two functions. The first function is to keep the aforementioned equality between partners, and the second function is to signal desire for a second date. Date-by-date payment happens when one partner, for any reason, pays for an entire date, and the second partner promises to pay for the next date. This method allows partners to feel as though they are taking care of their partner without feeling like they are responsible for their partner.

In modern heterosexual interpersonal dating scripts, it is becoming more popular for couples to use the "go Dutch" or date-by-date method as well (Schleicher & Gilbert, 2005), however, it is still not part of their hypothetical script as it is for lesbian women. This illustrates the difference in expectations among lesbian women and heterosexual couples. Lesbian women expect to have equality in finances and power, whereas heterosexual couples *expect* for men to have the financial burden and dominant power position. The expectation of the man paying is sometimes dropped, due to the unique situation or by the power asserted by the woman, in the interpersonal script. Lesbian women, however, do not drop this expectation, keeping the power in the date even. When this norm is not followed, participants in this study reported being aggravated with their date. This may imply that unlike heterosexual couples who allow the gender rules to dictate the power roles, lesbian women separate their gender (butch and femme) rules from the power roles. Since the meaning behind the highly mentioned actions such as paying for the date, initiating the date, and difference between butch and femme lesbians is better understood, the lesbian dating script can now be discussed.

The script

The lesbian dating script found in this study (table 2) is both similar and different to the heterosexual dating script. In a heterosexual script, hypothetical scripts are culturally developed sequences of events and give individuals a base line for expectations held on dates (Frieze, 1989). Interpersonal or actual dating scripts, on the other hand, are steps that are actually taken during the date. Interpersonal scripts allow for more flexibility and adaptation to fit the needs for your specific date (Rose & Frieze, 1993). Just as Klikenberg and Rose (1994) found, this study found that lesbian women do indeed have both hypothetical and interpersonal scripts. Interpersonal scripts are extremely important in the lesbian community, as the location in which you live may drastically change your dating experience. Participants in this study were predominantly from an urban city, allowing for participants to be more open and free to date. In more rural areas, while the hypothetical script may be the same base line used, many adaptations may need to be made in order to have a successful date, specifically in areas where acceptance of gay and lesbian couples is low.

Another similarity between heterosexual and lesbian dating scripts is the intent and goals listed by women in a dating relationship. Roscoe, Diana, and Brooks (1987) found that women in heterosexual relationships often cite intimacy as their goal in a dating relationship. Further, Rose and Zand (2002) discovered that lesbian women favor this emotional intimacy over or equal to sexual desire. This study has found the same. Lesbian women listed several steps such as mutually deciding on plans, online creeping, and mentally preparing, in order to ensure that they would be able to make that emotional connection before they have even met their date.

The physical lesbian script had some similarities to the heterosexual script as well. In the 15 actions on the lesbian dating script, five actions were exact matches to that of women in

heterosexual scripts (groom, go to movie/activity, eat/get drinks, talk/laugh/joke, and physically announcing if date was enjoyable). In the interpersonal script, the most notable similarity between the scripts was the partner-initiated actions mentioned by women. Rose and Frieze (1993) noticed that in heterosexual scripts, only women included partner-initated steps. It is then logical that lesbian women would also mention partner-initiated actions as they did in this study. Klinkenberg and Rose (1994) also confirmed this finding when they discovered that lesbian women mentioned partner-initiated actions, and gay males did not. Partner initiations are common among all women, gay or straight. Lesbian women do have to assign roles that straight women do not have to think about on a regular basis.

Script Role Assignment

Societies have written dating scripts for heterosexual individuals. The lesbian community has written their scripts themselves. Lesbian women have combined a traditional script with actions that benefit their relationships. In some cases, being either butch of femme allows for easy role assignment, while in other cases, individuals have to discover what roles their partner is comfortable with. These discoveries come from the constant communication that lesbian women partake in.

Constant communication

Nearly all participants in this study mentioned some form of continual communication with their potential partner. In some cases this was through Facebook messenger, and in other cases it was text messaging, Skyping, calling, or standard face-to-face communication that continues for hours on end. This constant communication serves more than one function. The obvious function is to make the emotional connection that women desire. This more obvious function may be present in both heterosexual and lesbian dating scripts. The second function,

which is unique to lesbians, is role assignment. Constant communication between the two partners allows for individuals to learn what roles and actions their partner is comfortable partaking in. The roles could include who asks for the date, who picks up whom, and who initiates physical contact. The actions can include deciding on a movie and dinner date or an activity and meal date (i.e. hiking and a picnic). Lesbian women can find out a lot about someone they are interested in before ever meeting them, allowing for role assignment to be preference based and negotiated instead of assumed by appearance.

Privacy Effects on Lesbian Dating Scripts

Femme lesbians uniquely mentioned the desire to go on dates that were less traditional. These dates included actions such as going kayaking, going to national parks or museums, or finding a common interest such as painting. These types of dates offer a unique quality that traditional 'movie and dinner' dates do not offer; privacy. Kurdek (2011) stated that lesbian couples have higher levels of self-awareness and privacy in their relationships. This means that they are more aware of what other people think of their relationship, and tend to be more private in their dating experience. An activity such as a hike in the woods, or kayaking down a river gives lesbian women the privacy they seek and the cathartic release they need in order to truly enjoy their date. This desire for privacy also affected their desire to introduce partners to their families.

Research question 3 asked how does privacy effect lesbian women's desire to introduce their partner to their families on a first date, if at all. Participants were not firm and slightly uncomfortable with questions surrounding this research question. While participants were not against either meeting their partner's family, or vice versa, on a first date, they did not wish to do so either. Because the couples were on their first date, they did not know how accepting each

other's families were of their daughters being gay. Kurdek (2011) found that lesbian women have a lower level of approval from their families than gay males or heterosexual individuals do. This high occurrence of low approval equates in lesbian women being reluctant to meet families or roommates as early on as heterosexual couples commonly do.

<u>Additional Findings</u>

Two additional findings outside of the research questions were discovered when coding the transcriptions. First, non-romantic relationships carried on with previous girlfriends were an issue mentioned by multiple participants. Many participants complained that potential partners were often still friends with their previous partners. This issue causes turmoil early on in the new relationship. This continued relationship with previous partners might be an extension of the emotional intimacy that lesbian women set out to achieve (Roscoe, Diana, & Brooks, 1987). In heterosexual relationships, men's goals are listed to achieve sexual activity, making it easier to cut off all ties with their previous partners. When a man cuts off ties with his previous partner, the woman is forced to do the same. In a lesbian relationship, where emotional intimacy was the goal of both partners, these ties are not as easily cut, possibly resulting in friendships that carry on even when one person begins a new relationship. These friendships then cause jealousy and tension in new relationships.

The second additional finding was the lack of agreement on what term lesbian women feel comfortable when describing a date. Rose and Zand (2002) found that lesbian women's dating is more of a courtship experience. They defined courtship as "a system of searching for a mate with whom to make an emotional commitment and enter into a permanent marriage" (p86-87). While this definition is what lesbian women described the intent of their dating experiences to be, participants were uncomfortable with this term. This term "felt" too traditional to

participants. Very traditional or religious families often use courtship when they court their children for marriage to another traditional or religious family. When asked if they were comfortable with the term dating, mixed reviews were received. Some participants accepted this term while others thought the term dating was used by less experienced lesbians. When asked if there was a different term they would like to use, no participants were able to come up with a comfortable term. This inability to agree on an official term may be due to wrong timing. As these couples become more accepted in society they may acknowledge dating as their term, or come up with a new term, however, at the moment, there is no clear answer.

Limitations and Future Research

This study was unable to embrace diversity. All participants were from a Midwestern area in the United States, had similar economic status, and were all Caucasian. It would be extremely important in future studies to recruit participants with diverse backgrounds and ethnicities. Without studies done in these areas, knowledge obtained may not be generalized for the greater population. This study did however, dive deep into understanding the "why and how" of lesbian dating scripts. The findings are detailed, understandable, and have detailed reasoning that quantitative studies on this subject may not offer.

Future research is necessary to fully understand the LGBTQ's dating experiences and expectations. While this study focused solely on lesbian women, it is suggested that similar research directly focused on gay men's dating scripts is conducted as well. Gay men may present some variation of the Butch/Femme phenomenon within their early stages of dating, which would be valuable for researchers to understand. Furthermore, an investigation similar to the present study will allow researchers to better understand *how* gay men have constructed their scripts. It may also be of interest for researchers to carry out a similar study on bisexual

individuals and their take on both scripts (heterosexual and homosexual). These individuals may be able to give unique insights and perspectives on the crossover that exists between the heterosexual and homosexual scripts, as well as help better explain the reasoning behind the differences in the scripts. Bisexual individuals may also present valuable information about the discrimination of bisexuals within the LGBTQ community, and the dating avoidance presented to them by lesbians and gay males.

Specific future research for lesbian dating scripts needs to focus on different geological locations. The present study focused on an urban area in the Midwest. Participants from rural and highly religious communities may have different scripts. In these communities, lesbian women may have to be more protective of themselves and their disclosures to others, making dating more difficult and risky. These women may report dating straight women more often than lesbian women who reside in cities, or they may rely solely on online interactions with heightened occurrences of long distant relationships. Lesbian women who are in their first lesbian relationship, who may be difficult to recruit, may also give new insights to lesbian dating, as they are in the learning stages of a new community. The majority of children in the United States are raised in a heterosexual family and inherently taught heterosexual dating rules. While some of these rules are transferable, when an woman first 'comes out' she must learn the lesbian dating rules. Her experiences while going through this learning process may be valuable. It may be found that more experienced lesbian women are reluctant to date newly out women, as they do not wish to be teachers. Lesbian women who are in their first relationship may also discuss the difficulty between balancing their first-ever lesbian relationship while simultaneously dealing with family reactions.

It may also be of benefit to follow this study up with a quantitative measure similar to ones often used in heterosexual dating script studies. This method will allow for a researcher to recruit more participants, and to better generalize their findings. An online survey version of Rose and Frieze's (1989) survey would allow investigators to obtain the numbers needed to generalize findings found in this study. Suggested procedure would be to present the following scenario:

> List the actions which a lesbian woman would do as she initiated contact with a woman of romantic interest, prepared for a first date with someone new, then met her date, spent time during her date, and ended the date. Include at least 20 actions or events which would occur in a routine first date, putting them in the order in which they should occur (adapted from Rose & Frieze, 1989, p. 263).

Participants should then be asked to describe their own dating experience, beginning to end, including at least 20 actions in the order they should occur. Some new actions may present themselves in this type of study, however, it is predicted that findings would be similar to this study.

Conclusion

Understanding the process in which people get to know their potential mates is important because it contains long-term implications for break ups, cohabitation, and for more permanent pairings such as marriage (Laner & Ventrone, 2000). The purpose of this investigation was to examine romantic lesbian dating scripts, understand the meanings shared among them, and compare them to heterosexual dating scripts. Results indicated that lesbian women have both hypothetical and interpersonal dating scripts. Butch and femme identities, as well as high levels of privacy and self-awareness that characterize lesbian women, affect these scripts. Actions such

as initiation, preparation, and paying for the date were the most common steps discussed by all participants. Initiation for lesbian women has revolutionized with the use of social media. Social media not only allows lesbian women find potential partners, it also helps them to mentally prepare for their date. This mental preparation carries a heavier concern in lesbian dating than physical preparation. Results also indicated that deciding how to pay for a date can be awkward, however, it has defined rules. Lesbian dating scripts have evolved since the last time they were examined, however, one thing remains constant; communication is *the* key factor in the negotiation and assignment of roles in lesbian romantic scripts.

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APPENDIX A

Acknowledgment of Informed Consent

Section I: **Identification of Project and Responsible Investigator:**

I hereby agree to participate in a research project entitled Lesbian Dating Scripts to be conducted by Darcy Hahn as principal investigator.

Section II: **Participant Rights and Information:**

1. **Purpose of the Project:**

The purpose of this study is to better understand the ways in which lesbian women find and carry out romantic dates. This study is being carried out for research purposes to complete my thesis. For this study you will be answering questions in an in-depth interview developed by myself for approximately 1 hour. During this interview I will ask questions about your dating life to better understand the dating scene of lesbian women. You will be audio-recorded and will be asked to complete a form indicating basic demographic information such as your age, gender, and year in school.

2. Description of Risks:

The risks to you as a participant are minimal. These include feeling uncomfortable answering some of the questions due to their personal nature or feeling unsure how to responds to some of the questions. You have the right to refuse to answer a question at any time. Please know that your name will not be connected to your responses in anyway. Pseudonyms will be used for all reporting of the interview responses.

3. Description of Benefits:

Participation in this study will not likely benefit you directly, however, you will be allowing myself to complete my thesis, and possibly helping the academic world better understand lesbian dating.

4. **Disclosure of Alternative Procedures:**

You can choose not to participate. If you decide not to participate, there will <u>not</u> be a penalty to you or loss of any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw from this study at any time.

5. Confidentiality of Records:

Your name and identity will not be revealed and your recording will remain confidential. Audio recordings of the interviews will be destroyed after they have been transcribed. Transcriptions will only contain pseudonyms to help participants remain anonymous.

7. Contact Information:

If you have questions about this research study, you may call or email Darcy Hahn at 636-232-5169. You may also contact Alicia Alexander, the faculty advisor of this study, at 618-650-3069 or at aalexan@siue.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you can call the SIUE Institutional Review Board at 618-650-2958 or email at lskelto@siue.edu.

8. Statement of Voluntary Participation:

If you choose to be a participant in my research, your participation will be voluntary. You may withdraw at any time.

APPENDIX B

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE

Audio/Video/Digital Recording Release Consent Form
[Recordings include transcripts, study, and analysis]

"Lesbian Dating Scripts"

You will be audiotaped, videotaped, and/or digitally recorded as part of your participation in this research study. These recordings will be viewed and/or listened to by members of the research team to transcribe, code, and analyze data collected for the study. We may present findings from the study in professional setting if you consent below. Please indicate below any additional educational and professional uses of the recordings you consent to. Your consent in these areas is completely voluntary. Lack of consent will not affect your participation in this study. If recordings of you are used in any of these contexts, anonymity will be maintained. No identifying information (such as full names) will be used. In addition, if you agree to allow us to use the recordings for any of these purposes, we will destroyed the recordings upon completion of the study.

I consent, by placing my initials next to any/each statement below, that:

_____ 1. The recordings or still pictures made from recordings can be used in
Initials   scientific publications.

_____ 2. The recordings can be used in presentations at professional meetings/
Initials   conferences.

I have read and understood this consent form and give my permission for the uses initialed above.

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol

Opening

I. Introduction: Thank you for taking you time to do this interview with me. Today I will be asking you about your dating experiences as a lesbian woman. Have you had time to sign your consent form and fill out your quick questionnaire?

II. Rapport Builder: Again, thank you for doing this for me today. You are helping me write my thesis to obtain my masters, as well as help create a more inclusive view on relationships in the academic area. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

III. Orientation: We will be covering 4 topics today, some general questions about lesbian dating, initiating dates between women, recent dates you have been on, and some expectations you hold when it comes to dating. Are you ready to begin?

Body

I. Lesbian Dating

    a. Do lesbian women go on dates?

        i. Is there a better term to use than "date?"

    b. Where do you commonly find women to date?

II. Initiation

    a. If you see a woman you would like to date, what actions do you take?

        i. How do you initiate contact?

        ii. What do you say to her?

        iii. Do you use specific tactics to persuade or influence her into going on a date with you?

b. How do you let a woman know you are romantically interested in her?

c. How do women typically initiate contact with you?

    i. What do woman typically say to you?

d. How do you know if a woman is romantically interested in you?

III. Interpersonal Dating (dating experiences)

a. Tell me about your most recent date?

    i. How did you prepare for the date?

    ii. How did you decide what to do on the date?

    iii. Who initiated the date?

    iv. Who paid for the date?

    v. Did you want a second date?

    vi. What happened after the date?

    vii. What did you talk about?

        1. What intimate topics did you discuss?

b. Tell me about your most positive date?

    i. How did you prepare for the date?

    ii. How did you decide what to do on the date?

    iii. Who initiated the date?

    iv. Who paid for the date?

    v. Did you want a second date?

    vi. What happened after the date?

    vii. What did you talk about?

        1. What intimate topics did you discuss?

    c. Tell me about your worse date?

          i. How did you prepare for the date?

          ii. How did you decide what to do on the date?

          iii. Who initiated the date?

          iv. Who paid for the date?

          v. What happened after the date?

          vi. What did you talk about?

                1. What intimate topics did you discuss?

IV. Hypothetical dating (dating expectations)

    a. Take me through the steps that you typically do when getting ready for a date

          i. Is this the same for every date?

          ii. What makes it change?

          iii. Do you know what your dates often does when getting ready for dates?

    b. Take me through the steps that you typically do on a date

          i. Is this the same for most dates?

          ii. What makes it change?

          iii. Do you know the steps your dates often take when on dates?

    c. What are normal topics of conversation on your dates?

          i. Is there anything you will not discuss on a first date?

          ii. Is there anything you think you need to discuss on the first date?

    d. Do you introduce your date to your friends or family on the first date?

          i. Do they introduce you to any of their family?

    e. Take me through the steps that you typically do when ending a date

      i.   Is this the same for most dates?

     ii.   What makes it change?

    iii.   Take me through the steps that your date normally goes through when ending a date?

   f.   If you enjoyed the date how do you let the other woman know?

      i.   If you would like another date, what do you do?

         1.   Are there rules for follow ups?

             a.   Do you need to wait a certain time length before contacting her?

     ii.   How long do you wait to speak to that person again?

         1.   Do you wait for them to speak to you?

   g.   What needs to happen in a date for it to be successful?

   h.   What happens on dates that you characterize as un-successful?

   i.   Is there anything you did not mention that you think a woman should do on a lesbian date?

      i.   Yourself?

     ii.   The other woman?

Closing

I.   Summary: I was able to find out a lot more about (XYZ)

II. Future Contact: If I need to get in touch again, I may email or call you if that is ok. If you have any questions, you may also call or email me any time.

III. Reestablish rapport: Again, I really appreciate you taking time to help me today in gathering information for my thesis. Thank you.

APPENDIX D

Face Sheet

Race/ Ethnicity _____

Current Relationship status _____

Current Relationship length _____Weeks/Months (circle one)

Education Level (circle one)

High School

     Some College   2 Year College Degree

     4 Year College Degree   Graduate Degree

Income_____/ year

Years out as a lesbian _____

Number of previous lesbian relationships _____

Length of most recent previous lesbian relationship _____weeks/months/years (circle one)

Number of people dated in past year_____