

ABSTRACT

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A FEMINIST FALLS IN LOVE? ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP IDEALS AND FEMINIST IDENTITY.

By Elizabeth Ann Wilson

This study sought to discover if feminists have different romantic relationship ideals than women who choose not to assume such an identity. Downing and Roush's (1985) feminist identity model and the Feminist Identity Composite created by Fisher et al. (2000) were used to determine the identity of each woman. After determining the females' identity placement, the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) was used to discover the romantic relationship ideals of each group of women, which ultimately lead to the creation of a concept map utilized to compare the groups. The similarities and differences concerning the romantic relationship ideals of each group of women were reviewed from the perspectives of both Fitzpatrick's typologies and relational dialectics. The participants' views on romantic relationship ideals through the lens of Fitzpatrick's typologies found feminists most like independents, and non-feminists most like Fitzpatrick's independents. The dialectics of autonomy-connectedness, predictability-novelty, openness-closeness are discussed for each group.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A FEMINIST FALLS IN LOVE?
ROMANTIC IDEALS AND FEMINIST IDENTITY.

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Miami University

in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Communication

by

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2005

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DEDICATION/ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would first like to thank my amazing thesis advisor, Dr. Gary Shulman for his continuous patience, encouragement, hard work and support. Gary's positive attitude and faith in my abilities allowed the completion of this project when I was not even sure how to begin. Secondly, I wish to thank my incredible committee for their input, time and substantial knowledge. Dr. Ann Bainbridge Frymier worked closely with me on all matters quantitative, which she continues to tell me one day I will understand. Larry Nadler provided the interpersonal communication theory knowledge that allowed considerable connections with my feminist theory interest. Larry's ideas introduced creative and meaningful associations. Dr. Marjorie Keeshan Nadler's assistance continued vastly beyond her participation in my thesis defense, but also in helping me decide what I want to do with the rest of my life. Dr. Marj Nadler was the best teaching advisor anyone could ever ask for, her leadership and dedication to the practice of collegiate education is to be commended. I also wish to thank my coder, Aarik Ames whose attention to detail and hard work ethic expedited the completion of my paper.

Sincere thanks to my friend Kathleen Gulitus who provided not only a comfortable escape from my thesis at times, but also a roadmap to get to my destination. Special thanks to my family, especially Aunt Sue and my mom for listening to my rants and raves about this crazy thing I love called feminism. And last, but certainly not least, thank you to my romantic relationship ideal, Thomas Bayley for having the courage to love a "radical" feminist in stage II of her feminist identity. Your patience, support and dedication to our romantic relationship gave me the idea that perhaps feminists have keen radar for detecting ideal mates

Chapter One: Review of the Literature

Overview

Hollway (1993) observes “love is a word which has been absent from feminist discourse,” (p. 416). However, this absence should not surprise interpersonal relationship or feminist scholars when the movement often describes heterosexual romantic relationships as “sleeping with the enemy” (Croghan, 1992; Gill & Walker, 1992; Jacklin, 1992). Scholars explain feminism’s tendency to frame romantic love (when mentioned) in a negative light, stating “from a feminist perspective romantic love was and is seen to obscure or disguise gender inequality and women’s oppression in intimate heterosexual relationships” (Burns, 2000, p. 481). Other feminist scholars argue that heterosexuality for women is exhausting and dangerous (Kitzinger, Wilkinson & Perkins, 1992), makes women into prisoners or casualties of war (Wilton, 1992), and that the very term feminist marriage “is like the term military intelligence, an oxymoron” (DeHardt, 1992, p. 498).

Lips and Freedman (1992) clarify that while being a feminist in the presence of men is never a “neutral experience,” there are still women who are both a feminist and a heterosexual. Furthermore, these same women experience conflicting loyalties towards their male lovers, brothers, fathers, friends and their feminist beliefs and prerogatives. The tension that these women experience is often “unrelenting, involving the long term couple relationship...she may sometimes have an inescapable sense of separateness, a feeling her feminism is private, not shared completely with her partner. She may feel her strong feelings about certain feminist issues are simply not totally explainable to even the most supportive man in her life” (p. 442). Thus, feminists in heterosexual romantic relationships seem to have two conflicting identities. This is noteworthy because Krenke-Seiffge, Shulmand and Klessinger (2001) argue that a person’s identity is an important factor in the establishment and formation of romantic relationships.

There is a need for more research that simultaneously takes into account feminist and relational perspectives because, “Generative connections between feminist and relationship studies have not been fully appreciated” (Wood, 1995, p. 103). More specifically, Kitzinger, Wilkinson and Perkins (1992) believe the term heterosexual to be “largely un-theorized,” by feminist scholars. The authors admit that such a statement should shock feminists who realize that everything is already heterosexual, as well as white, able-bodied, and male. However, Gill and Walker (1992) call scholars to realize that while heterosexual romantic relationship research

is well documented the term heterosexual is silent, “assumed unless otherwise stated”(p. 453). Furthermore the authors conclude “to be (a) white, heterosexual feminist... is to live inside contradictions,” meaning feminist identity educates the implications of the patriarchy, but a want for a romantic relationship often comes with the pairing of a particular member from that patriarchy (p. 454). Only two studies have looked at feminist identity and romantic relationships (Fraser, 2003; Rickard, 1989). Ramazanoglu (1992) characterized this topic as “politically sensitive, personally painful and insufficiently studied” (p. 444). Fraser (2003) sought to understand feminist identity as a variable in dating satisfaction and Rickard (1989) examined feminist identity and dating behaviors.

Fraser’s (2003) study has limitations because it defined feminism too loosely, calling a feminist one who has an egalitarian belief system. Buschman and Lenart (1996) explained that young women today have no working knowledge that traditional roles apply to them and that “traditional roles are no longer definitive, or even relevant predictors for support for feminism” (p. 72). Furthermore, Morgan (1996) questioned the feminism in feminist scales themselves, exclaiming “a feminist scale needs to reflect the reality of feminism as a political movement with interpretations, agendas and implications larger and more diverse than people’s perceptions of proper gender roles and behaviors” (p. 362). To define a feminist as someone who espouses egalitarian beliefs is to leave out issues of importance to feminists like interest in collective action, (Cowan, Mestlin & Masek, 1992) women’s oppression as a shared experience (Hooks, 1989; Rowland, 1986) personal concern in women--specific issues like sexual harassment (Townsend & Geist, 2000), equal wage, abortion rights (Steinem, 2003) and a feeling of personal responsibility to fight against all forms of oppression due to race, class, socio-economical background, ethnicity, religion and sexuality (Renegar & Sowards, 2003). Therefore, while Fraser (2003) found support that feminist identity leads to higher relational satisfaction for women, and men, feminist identity was measured as rejecting traditional gender roles. This definition of a feminist identity is inclusive to the point that feminism is not even definitive anymore. Key issues related to feminist theory are ignored and it seems as though almost anyone who believes in relationship equality could be considered a feminist under Fraser’s (2003) definition. While multiple perspectives (radical, liberal, Christian, lesbian, etc.) and definitions of feminism exist, for the purposes of this study feminism is defined as a,

“politicized gender consciousness which is characterized by the following elements (a) a sense of interdependence and shared fate with other women, (b) recognition of women’s relatively low status and power compared to men, (c) attribution of power differentials to illegitimate sources, such as institutionalized sexism, and (d) an orientation towards collective action to improve women’s position in society...to identify as feminist, women must also hold positive (or at least not hold negative) opinions of the social group feminists” (Reid and Purcell, 2004, p. 760). Furthermore, both Fraser (2003) and Rickard’s (1989) studies of feminist identity and its effects on romantic relationships, while revealing, are both quantitative studies. Feminist identity and romantic relationships have not been studied from a qualitative perspective.

Rickard’s (1989) study is sixteen years old and with many scholars questioning the relevance of traditional roles to young men and women today (Horen, Matthews, Detrie, Burke, & Cook, 2001) in relation to studying feminism (Buschman & Lenart 1996), as well as a general call from feminist and interpersonal scholars to study feminism and heterosexual romantic relationships (Wilton, 1992; Burns, 2000; Fraser, 2003; Wood, 1995) a new and contemporary study that looks at feminist identity and romantic relationships is needed to understand these young, heterosexual feminists who were described as “on the frontline of the struggle to work out mutually satisfying and egalitarian sexual relationships” (Gill & Walker, 1992, p. 455).

The present study seeks to understand if varying degrees of feminist identity (passive acceptance, revelation, embeddedness-emanation, synthesis and active commitment) as proposed by Downing and Roush (1985) are related to one’s perceptions of an ideal romantic relationship. While the feminist identity model is described in detail later on in the paper, a brief explanation of this model is reviewed now. A woman in passive acceptance believes in the traditional role of women and denies the existence of sexism. This particular woman does not have a feminist identity, nor would she claim to espouse a feminist identity. The second stage of revelation characterizes a very angry female who feels “duped” by the system. Sexism can not be ignored at this stage and feelings of guilt and anger are experienced once the woman realizes there were times she participated in her own oppression. This stage typically cause problems in interpersonal relationships (Downing & Roush, 1985) as well as feelings of distress (Fisher & Good, 2004). In this stage most problems experienced in one’s life becomes the fault of men, the patriarchy, with the believed sole catalyst resting on her sex. The third stage called embeddedness-emanation is a time where relationships with women are very important. In this

stage women want to be with other likeminded women. The fourth stage of synthesis depicts a woman who can differentiate between situations that are sexist and crises that happen because of unrelated events. A merging of one's feminist identity begins to settle into the self, and a "truce" is made with the world. The final stage of active commitment, is much like its namesake, a true commitment to women's rights, advancement and sex role transcendence. The operational definition of feminism and these stages in particular will be calculated by using the Feminist Identity Composite as created by Fisher et al. (2000). Participants with passive acceptance scores will be coded as non-feminists, and women in the revelation, embeddedness-emanation, synthesis and active commitment will be coded as feminists. Feminists and non-feminists will explain romantic relationship ideals and these ideals will be compared using the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation technique. In the past romantic relationship ideals have been found to depict a variety of relational purposes.

Romantic relationship ideals can indicate satisfaction (Sternberg & Barnes, 1985) personal happiness and quality of relationships (Fletcher et al., 1999), and to serve as anchors of evaluative measures for partners and the relationship in general (Fletcher, Thomas, & Simpson; Campbell, Simpson, Kashy & Fletcher, 2001) but they have never been studied in relation to feminist identity. Furthermore, feminist identity is also a well researched area of the women's studies discipline and has been investigated in relation to anger and psychological distress (Fisher & Good, 2004), as a predictor for satisfaction within a heterosexual romantic relationship (Fraser, 2003) and used to discover the relationship between gender consciousness and identity (Rhodebeck, 1996; Toller et al., 2004; Burn, et al., 2000). Still other studies have investigated feminist identity in relation to self-monitored dating behaviors (Rickard, 1989), weight concerns and self esteem (Tiggemann and Stevens, 1999) and body image issues of college women (Cash, Ancis & Srachan, 1997). None of these studies has looked at romantic ideals in respect to a feminist identity. In these studies, varying feminist identity measures were used, which included Rickard's (1989) feminist identity scale (FIS), the Fisher et al. (2000) feminist identity composite (FIC) and the Bargad and Hyde (1991) feminist identity development scale (FID). Regardless of the particular measure, all three models (FIS, FIC, FIDS) follow the five stages proposed by Downing and Roush (1985) and define a feminist identity within these stages, which include passive acceptance, revelation, embeddedness-emanation, synthesis and active commitment.

Women's studies scholars explore feminist identity, and interpersonal communication and social scientists research romantic relationship ideals, however the two concepts are not investigated as possible agents influencing each other. This lack of research exists despite a call for more interpersonal research from a feminist perspective (Wood, 1995) and indications from romantic relationship scholars that one's relational ideals are closely related to the self (Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas, & Giles, 1999) as well as predictions (Wayment & Campbell, 2000) that similarities could exist between evaluation of self and relationships. Therefore, because of this paucity of research findings only inferential predictions are offered to indicate the possible relation of feminist identity on romantic relationship ideals when these two topics are discussed simultaneously.

A detailed review of feminist identity literature is offered to provide a context in which to place the feminist identity model, which is the focus of this study. The feminist identity model is only a small segment of the literature regarding feminist identity. Since feminist identity is believed to affect romantic relationship ideals, it needs to be quite clear what a researcher defines as a feminist identity as well as the factors that affect one's ability to form a feminist identity, and how sex works to influence feminist identity. This review describes reasons why women are uncomfortable claiming a feminist identity and, men's feelings towards the movement and its supporters (included because it is possible a potential partner's feelings about feminism could influence one's likelihood of espousing such an identity). Other factors that determine feminist identity are reviewed, including issues of race and feminist identity and finally the specific population of college students and their feminist identity. Then, the feminist identity model is reviewed to explain the foundation on which the Fischer et al. (2000) feminist identity composite (FIC) was based. Following a review of the model, the proposed link between romantic relationship ideals and feminist identity is presented. Next, the romantic relationship ideals literature is reviewed to indicate what past studies of relational ideals have found.

Feminist identity

Studying feminism in general and feminist identity in particular does not come without some costs, as well as plenty of baggage. Issues including feminism's terminology as perceived by today's youth, and the pervasive negative image of feminism/feminists as viewed by feminisms' potential advocates are causing fewer women to identify as a feminist. As a researcher, seeking to understand the connection between feminist identity and perceived romantic relationship

ideals, these potential problems could initially lead to a lack of participants, and ultimately a lack of significant results. These topics are discussed because they are key issues in the study of feminist identity. Certain factors affect a woman's likelihood of espousing a feminist identity and could therefore act as mediating variables in her formation of romantic relationship ideals. Particular kinds of women for varying reasons, which will be discussed later, will find their feminist identities, while others will continue to think of feminism as the other "f" word (Twenge & Zucker, 1999). These attitudes about feminism/feminists, as well as predictors of feminist identity (race, class, ethnicity, socio-economic background, sex, religion, age, etc.) are a part of their whole identity and self. Since the self has been reviewed by Fletcher et al. (1999) as the location of cognitive thought regarding ideals it is important to also understand how the formation of the feminist identity is formed or as, is more often the case, not formed.

"Feminism" as a terminology problem

Stone (1999) explained both the strength and limitation of feminism explaining, "one movement within which identity and identity politics has been most significant is 'feminisms' itself named in the plural to indicate diversity of persons and viewpoints" (p. 328). Feminism's strength is the ability to encompass multiple viewpoints, beliefs, and values under one term. Within this strength lies a weakness, in that in attempting to be inclusive, it has led to ambiguity and confusion regarding the term's meaning, and a lack of clarity (Rowland, 1986) regarding the movement's goals. Even in feminists' efforts to be inclusive, such attempts have fallen short of the potential to, and expectations of, welcoming members of varying feminist ideologies (Renegar & Sowards, 2003), races, and ethnicities (Rowe, 2000). Miller and Metcalfe (1998) admit the divide between feminists "within and beyond the academy" who must grapple with "the need to respect difference on the one hand (e.g. the many varieties of feminism, or the diversity of women's experiences), and the need to present a united front for political purposes on the other" (p. 236). Frye (1983) suggests it is this divide among us of hashing up women into different race and economic structures that does not allow us to see our "common cage," and "to get past this it helps to notice that in fact women of all races and classes are together in a ghetto of sorts" (p. 9). Miller and Metcalfe (1998) clarify the negative effects of such a proposed united front and in defining 'feminist identity' and 'woman' one reduces experiences to a singular explanation, which inevitably silences those in the very same manner men once attempted to silence women.

The 'defining terms' conundrum confounds our ability to establish meanings to communicate important tenets of feminism and feminist identity. Feminist literature itself has struggled for sometime in the debate regarding speaking for 'the other.' In keeping silent and not utilizing white privilege, the feminists negate power that could facilitate change. Kinser (2003) discusses another byproduct of this silence; while acknowledging privilege, one must also fight not to silence the self. However, by speaking for 'the other' the feminist makes the assumption she understands the other's needs and issues. For the purposes of clarity, and not in an attempt to assume to know the other's needs or to reduce the all-encompassing term to one meaning, the original authors of the feminist identity model offer a definition of feminist identity. Downing and Roush (1985) state "women who live in contemporary society must first acknowledge, then struggle with, and repeatedly work through their feelings about the prejudice and discrimination they experience as women in order to achieve authentic and positive feminist identity" (p. 695). Varying definitions that are offered for feminist identity range from holding egalitarian beliefs (Fraser, 2003) to a more specific list of symptoms of a feminist identity, specifically providing benefits to one's well being and at the same time causing difficulties in interpersonal relationships (Fischer & Good, 2004). Carpenter and Johnson (2001) were so general as to explain feminist identity as "the meaning of being a woman" (p. 255). Such an all-encompassing definition of feminist identity may be necessary, when so few young women understand what the word feminism "really" means.

"No...but feminists"

Feminist scholars are at a loss for "true feminist" participants for their studies, because an interesting paradox is occurring in the next generation of possible supporters for the women's movement. Scholars are describing this paradox as the generation of "no but..." feminists; they approve of many feminist beliefs, but no, they are not feminists (Wallis, 1989). Aronson (2004) explains they are "post-feminists," a term used in the 1980's to describe women who also benefited from women's liberation "through access to employment and education and new family arrangements, but at the same time do not push for further political change" (p. 904). Most participants in feminist studies will agree with egalitarian beliefs, and may even support the women's movement, but will still not self-identify as a feminist (Peltola, Milkie & Presser, 2004; Burn, Aboud, & Moyles, 2000; Reid & Purcell, 2004; Renegar & Sowards, 2003). When researchers made feminist identity a forced choice (Liss, O'Connor, Morosky & Crawford, 2001)

or separated feminist identity from feminist opinions through their measurements (Rhodebeck, 1996) support for the women's movement increased. When Huddy, Neely and Lafay (2000) made feelings about feminists a forced choice between favorable and unfavorable, more people stated their feelings were unfavorable towards feminists, with the author concluding that some Americans still view the word "feminist" as an insult. It is not surprising that many females do not want to accept the title, as the media has framed the definition of feminism in both a false and negative light (Peltola, et al., 2004; Aronson, 2003; Burn, et al., 2000; Huddy et al., 2000; Renegar & Sowards, 2003).

Proposed reasons for the lack of feminists

In the late 80's Renzetti (1987) explained the shortage of admitted feminists due to the wave of conservative politics taking over the nation and the inability of the platform of feminism to correctly represent incoming feminists. Recently, when asked to describe what a feminist looks like many younger adults will offer characteristics of "hairy, scary, mean, aggressive, angry, man-hating, bra-burning, never wanting to get married, dyke, lesbian, butch and bitchy" (Silvers, 2004, p. 64). What young female would want to self-proclaim such a title when these characteristics could be associated with her?

Homophobia is apparently another reason why many younger individuals do not want to admit a feminist identity (Liss, O'Connor, Morosky, & Crawford, 2001). The stigma that feminist are lesbians has not faltered (Williams & Wittig, 1997) and many women are afraid of admitting their feminist beliefs for fear of losing their heterosexual identities. More specifically, individuals still think of a feminist as a woman who dislikes men and disrespects stay at home mothers. However, these same individuals explain phrases like women's liberation and the women's movement as more favorable because these terms conjure up images of equal rights and equal pay (Huddy et al., 2000).

Is it possible the current definition of a "feminist" and "feminism" is tainted beyond repair? Will the proposed education of what feminism's "true" definition is not be as effective as just creating a new term? Such a restructuring of terminology may be necessary for the movement to continue to gain active participants. Renzetti (1987) stated "the future growth and prosperity of the feminist movement largely depends on the successful recruitment of new members" (p. 277). The problem of terminology has been a repeated theme in many scholars' findings concerning a lack of admitted feminists (Petrola et al., 2004; Fisher & Good, 2004; Burn et al., 2000). Fischer

and Good (2004) stated “feminist consciousness can leave one feeling isolated and deviant in a culture sometimes labeled postfeminist, with many people believing that women have made all the advances they need to make” (p. 437). A male participant in Edley & Wetherell’s (2001) study agreed stating, “Personally, I don’t think there’s much more need for any change of rights, as far as I’m concerned you know, women have got enough rights as it is at the moment and I mean there may not be complete equality but it’s near enough isn’t it?” (p. 448).

Sex as a factor for feminist identity

Heterosexual men described perceptions of feminists as radical, wanting to kill all men, hating all men, lesbians, ugly, unable to secure a man, extreme, and bra-burning (Edley & Wetherell, 2001). Huddy et al. (2000) explained that roughly 25% of Americans feel that the movement has done nothing to help men, and more explicitly, it has damaged their lives in relation to their jobs, self-image, and their relationships with women in general. With such perceptions of feminists and the women’s movement lingering in the minds of heterosexual men, it seems probable that few would admit a feminist identity. Feminists themselves have questioned if men can even be feminists, and if not feminists, than at least a “pro-feminist.” Studies that looked at feminist identity often will purposely exclude men (Reid & Purcell, 2004; Rickard, 1989; Liss et al., 2001; Fischer, Tokar, Mergl, Good, Hill, & Blum, 2000). Perhaps these researchers believe much like Nancy Downing (one of the creators of the feminist identity model), that the existing research regarding feminist identity would be inappropriate to use in discovering if men can be profeminist or feminist. Information in this study regarding heterosexual males’ feelings about feminism and the feminist movement is included due to the possibility males’ feelings about feminism could influence their partners’ feelings and likelihood of espousing a feminist identity. This information is crucial to be aware of since Buss and Shackelford (1997) found that individuals wanted partners like themselves. Women who are feminists may be seeking partners that are feminists, and it would be helpful to understand what factors encourage men to become feminists, or pro-feminists.

Men who are included in feminist identity studies are overwhelmingly less likely to admit a feminist identity than the females (Fraser, 2003; Burn, et al., 2000; Toller et al., 2000). Specifically, Huddy et al. (2000) reported lower levels of feminist identity among the younger male population. Gender role identity has been found to affect feminist identity (Burn et al., 2000; Toller et al., 2004). Toller et al. (2004) explained that men often perceive feminism as

admitting a feminine personality, and many men, especially extremely masculine men, do not feel comfortable using this term to describe themselves. Burn et al. (2000) found similar results in their sample, discovering that men who have a strong gender social identity find supporting feminism or claiming a feminist identity is in direct opposition and threatening to their masculine identity. Burn et al. (2000) suggest educating “definitions of feminism and masculinity that do not view support of women’s equality at odds with a masculine identity” (p. 1088). Toller et al. (2004) echoed this advice, and suggested that perceptions of feminists should be framed as feminine to attract women (because perceptions of feminists as dominating and aggressive continue), but warned while this strategy could be effective in attracting females it could also continue to reinforce that feminism is only for women. A contrasting opinion on the matter of how sex affects support for feminists is found within Rhodebeck’s (1996) study. It found that while men may not identify with women the same way other women do, “the enthusiasm men show for feminist policy goals is on par with that of women,” and that political ideology and demographics are better predictors of support for feminist causes. (p. 401). Huddy et al. (2000) agree, finding that men support the movement just as much as women do, until activism is included, and then women are the most committed supporters.

Demographic factors of feminist identity

While sex is often a determinant of feminist identity, other factors like race, economic standing, education, age, political and religious beliefs also influence the decision to support the women’s movement. Peltola et al. (2004) found that women who are better educated, have a lower income, have egalitarian beliefs, support a woman’s right to choose, are nonwhite, and hold liberal political views are more likely to identify as a feminist, while women who frequently attend religious services, are white, have a higher income, believe in traditional gender roles and hold more conservative political views are less likely to admit a feminist identity. Rhodebeck (1996) included men in her sample and found some similarities, reporting that men who are older and highly educated are more likely to report a feminist identity. Men who attend religious services on a regular basis were found to be less likely to admit a feminist identity. Women in the sample were similar with the exception of age. However, Downing and Roush (1985) have explained that as women grow older their feminist identities are more likely to form. With the inclusion of men in the sample, Rhodebeck (1996) found that political ideology affects men more than women regarding their support of feminism. Rhodebeck (1996) also added predictors

of feminist identity to those presented in Peltola's et al. (2004) study, such as living in rural areas, personal experiences (like sexual harassment and employment and gender discrimination), number of children, and family life.

Participants who had experienced sexual harassment and held less traditional gender roles in Renzetti's (1987) study supported claims made in Rhodebeck's (1996) study concerning personal experience. Those who did not live in rural areas, had personal experiences with sexual harassment or other gender boundaries, as well as those who had working mothers were more likely to support opinions that coincide with many feminism beliefs (Rhodebeck, 1996). Respondents that had more children, were a homemaker or were married to one were less likely to identify as feminists. Homemakers and poor women in Huddy et al.'s (2000) study felt ignored by the women's movement, and expressed that the movement caused problems with making marriages work, raising children, and that the negative impact created by the movement on families is still prevalent. There is some disagreement between Peltola et al., (2004) and Rhodebeck's (1996) results regarding race. In Peltola et al.'s (1996) sample those who were nonwhite were less likely to report a feminist identity, but in Rhodebeck's (1996) sample, men and women who were nonwhite were more likely to report a feminist identity.

Boisnier (2003) found that Black women experience their feminist identity differently from white women, and feel more comfortable with the term "womanist," rather than the term "feminist." A womanist identity is one in which a "woman comes to value herself as a woman in whatever role she may choose for herself" (p. 212). Hooks (1989) explained that when Black women use the term "womanist" it is in opposition to the term feminist. Aronson (2003) clarified that knowledge of feminism and the ability to proclaim a feminist identity is a luxury for white, middle class, college educated women and those who have time to take women's studies classes. Rowe (2000) echoes this opinion stating "white male affluence provides white women with the economic cushion that permits them the necessary free time and access to higher education that enable them to theorize in the first place" (p. 70). This information regarding race and its effects on the formation of a feminist identity is included because participants may be a member of a minority and conceptualize feminism in a different way. Therefore, literature that could help understand if the process is different for minority groups is beneficial to a study that could include such participants. It is also important to be aware of a rather uncomfortable, persistent

dialogue that continues to brew in feminist literature that describes the concerns Black women have of white women who study, publish and then speak for the 'other.'

Many scholars have admitted that at the core of feminism are white, middle class concerns and there is a complete ignorance and lack of representation for issues affecting women of color (Aronson, 2003; Cowan, Mestlin & Masek; 1992; hooks, 1989; Ried & Purcell, 2004; Rowe, 2000). However, researchers continue to take convenience samples of young, white, middle class college students in the hopes of understanding phenomena within varying disciplines, and then call for other researchers to look at samples that are more representative. This process seems to continue, and few researchers look at samples that are representative of the actual population. In regard to the phenomena of feminist identity, Boisnier (2003) specifically meant to understand how race affects women's identity development and then reported "the majority of participants identified themselves as White (64.8)%, (20)% identified as Black," (p. 213). How can researchers draw anything regarding race differences when more than half of the sample is white, ironically enough in a study seeking to find the effects of race? Boisnier's (2003) sample was still more representative than other feminist identity and gender role studies that reported far lower percentages of varying ethnicities (Burn, et al., 2000, Street, Kimmel & Kromrey, 1995; Toller et al., 2004; Fischer & Good, 2004; Cash, Ancis & Strachan; Fischer et al., 2000; Liss et al., 2001; Edley & Wetherell; Renzetti, 1987). Within these same studies, it is important to note (regarding the problem of homogeneity of participants within feminist identity studies) that many of the participants will also report religious beliefs that coincide with Catholicism. Reid and Purcell (2004) took a population of predominantly Hispanic and Black participants and found that the process through which these women come to find their feminist identity is comparable to the process white women go through. However, one study is not enough to continue to assume findings from predominantly white samples will accurately represent all ethnic groups, especially since research (Boisnier, 2003) has explained that feminist identity is experienced differently by varying ethnic groups. If enough minority participants are reached and agree to be included in this study it is possible literature can be added to this lacking topic in feminist research.

College students' feminist identity

Since most feminist identity researchers use convenience samples of young, white, middle class college aged students, a body of literature exists that seeks to understand how college students come to form both their gender and feminist identities. Silvers (2004) claimed that

college age women in particular would reject a feminist label because they are afraid of other people's perceptions (others may gather that because they report a feminist identity, they must be a lesbian, man-hater, angry, masculine, etc.) of their feminist identities. Negative stereotypes of feminist continue in this population, but when students were exposed to feminism and feminist ideas, they had a stronger feminist identity than those that had no exposure or a negative exposure (Reid & Purcell, 2004). Huddy, Neely and Lafay (2000) explained younger people's support, finding them to be "some of the movement's staunchest supporters" (p. 311).

Participants that had recently discovered their feminist identity explained that as soon as a straightforward definition of feminism was presented (feminists want equality for women) to them in their graduate studies they could no longer buy in to the negative and "radical" representation of feminists from the media (Horen, Matthews, Detrie, Burke, & Cook, 2001). The media representation of feminism has been found to affect support for the women's movement, but Liss et al. (2001) suggested an influence a little closer to home. Many college-aged females with mothers who were involved in the "second wave" of feminism may be more likely to support feminism. This support could be formed by their mother's explanation of the purposes of the women's movement and serving as a real life representative of what a women's rights activist looks like (Liss et al., 2001).

Previously mentioned studies have found that those who hold traditional gender beliefs are less likely to espouse a feminist identity (Rhodebeck, 1996; Peltola et al., 2004) and this is no different in a college-aged population, according to Toller et al. (2004) and Liss et al. (2001), but Reid and Purcell (2004) found no correlation. Horen et al. (2001) found no correlation as well, and explained that perhaps "they were raised to believe that traditional sex roles were no longer applicable" (p. 5). However, Street et al. (1995) claimed that students in college are still clinging to the same gender role perceptions they did 15 years ago. Street et al.'s study is obviously dated, whereas Reid and Purcell's study is more recent, and it could be possible traditional gender roles are affecting feminist identity less, especially since Toller et al.'s (2004) data (while recent) had correlations "lower than conventionally found in gender role research" (p. 89).

The Feminist Identity Model

The feminist identity model, proposed by Downing and Roush (1985), led the way in feminist identity research regarding the stages a feminist takes through her journey to self-discovery and feminist enlightenment. Even though a number of measures for feminist identity vary within

feminist research studies, the feminist identity model created by Downing and Roush continues to be the framework through which scales are created. Downing and Roush's (1985) model of feminist identity is based on Cross's (1971) theory of Black identity, and both of these models have influenced feminist and social science researchers. The feminist identity model was used to create the feminist identity scale (Rickard, 1989), the feminist identity composite (Fisher et al., 2000) and the feminist identity development scale (Bargad & Hyde, 1991).

The feminist identity model is a five-stage model (passive acceptance, revelation, embeddedness-emanation, synthesis, and active commitment) that was created based on Downing and Roush's clinical experiences with women as well as their own research (Bargad & Hyde, 1991). A female in the first stage of passive acceptance "is either unaware of or denies the individual, institutional and cultural prejudice and discrimination against her" (Downing & Roush, 1985, p. 698). Traditional roles (White/American) are not only accepted by this woman, but are seen as providing her with a specific advantage. This woman may view the male sex to be superior to the female sex. These kinds of attitudes continue until the end of the current stage where levels of ego-development and self-esteem increase. This rise in self-discovering and self-worth prepares the woman for the next stage of revelation.

Entrance into the revelation stage occurs because of a crisis (instance of sexual harassment, denial of justified promotion or advancement, or ending a relationship) and the female can no longer ignore sexism. Movement is precipitated, according to Downing and Roush (1985), by the individual woman's readiness to change her perceptions, and the intensity, frequency and quality of the crisis that caused entrance into the stage in the first place. Women in this stage experience intense anger and it is no surprise that women who adopt a feminist identity experience varying interpersonal problems (Fisher & Good, 2004), and that relationships with men may suffer in particular (Downing & Roush, 1985; Lips & Freedman, 1992; Rickard, 1989; Pearce & Rossi, 1984; Huddy et al., 2000). Women also feel a certain amount of guilt in this stage, understanding on multiple levels that they have also participated in their own oppression. Fisher and Good (2004) explained the stage of revelation will often lead to distress. Women's ability to differentiate between situations that are the result of sexist attitudes or simply negative situations in general, is impeded in this stage. They see everything relating back to their oppression, and include most (if not all) men in that group of oppressors. While viewing men in a negative light,

they view women so positively that “female chauvinism” will often occur. This identity while seemingly strong is actually a false identity.

It is not surprising that the next stage of embeddedness-emanation involves prioritizing and seeking out relationships with females of like-mindedness considering the overwhelming anger and frustration with most males in the revelation stage. Women want to be around other women who understand and will validate their anger, often unlike the males in their life who may be baffled or fed up with their newfound identity, especially their intense feelings of anger. Fisher and Good (2004) reviewed the literature regarding feminist anger as an “outlaw emotion,” and claimed the new feminist’s anger would be interpreted in one of three ways (she must be crazy, hysterical, or just have a very unpleasant personality). Downing and Roush (1985) pointed out the importance of this model for men stating it “may help the unfortunate male who becomes the focus of the anger of the stage II women” and would lead to males being more understanding and supportive of these feelings of anger and rage once they have been educated about the model (p. 707). Downing and Roush (1985) explain that white women in particular have a problem entering this stage, more so than Black women do. White, heterosexual women as mentioned before are in a sense sleeping with the number one enemy.

While white, heterosexual feminists entering the embeddedness stage experience difficulty, they have an easier time moving onto the emanation part of the stage. Women move from embeddedness to emanation because they slowly begin to realize all of their anger and stated frustration are falling on deaf ears. They finally comprehend that their rage will not change women’s current situation or eliminate the patriarchy. The woman must now “grieve the loss of self as defined by either traditional sex roles or the rigid beliefs of the embeddedness phase and (find) the capacity to separate from the strong female friendships developed in Stage II” (Downing & Roush, 1985, p. 701).

In the next stage, the veil is lifted, and women can differentiate between situations that are sexist and those that are caused by other forces. Women in this stage evaluate men on an individual basis. They now realize the positive aspects of being a female and have a realistic concept of themselves. Their anger has settled and they have come to a “truce” with the world (Downing & Roush, 1985). Many individuals do not reach the last stage of the model termed active commitment. Active commitment is a true dedication to social change involving “the translation of the newly developed consolidated identity into meaningful and effective action”

where “sex role transcendence is a valued and encouraged (personal) goal” (Downing & Roush, 1985, p. 702). The authors conclude women who look as though they have reached active commitment (are active in the movement) may just be “functioning out of needs from earlier stages” (p. 702).

Within this model, it is important to note women can recycle through stages, revert to old stages in times of crisis, and stagnate in one particular stage. From a basic review of the model, it is not difficult to imagine how the intense emotions, changed values, and purposeful behavior that occur to the woman moving forward, regressing to earlier stages or stagnating in one stage may affect romantic relationships with men, specifically romantic relationship ideals. Each stage of feminist identity is unique and may necessitate different ideals for the heterosexual feminist, especially since Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas and Giles (1999) explained that “cognitions that represent ideals are most naturally located in areas that overlap the self and the partner” (p. 73). A feminist at varying stages may require different ideals concerning the relationship itself and the potential mate due to self-identity and its relation to formations of ideals. The emotions of the new feminist are intense, angry, and misunderstood (Downing & Roush, 1985) in stage II, where it is likely that relationships with men may suffer in particular, (Downing & Roush, 1985; Lips & Freedman, 1992; Rickard, 1989; Pearce & Rossi, 1984; Huddy et al., 2000) due to a feeling that all men are lumped into a negative category. Krenke, Shulmand and Klessinger (2001) explained that women have a need to relate, and it is possible that women in the stage II model will express ideals that include this understanding of her intense feelings and a need for her partner to be a feminist.

Imagine what a romantic relationship would be like with a woman who is stagnating or keeps regressing back to stage II. The only study that could be used to indicate what it might be like was Rickard’s (1989) study that found that stage II women had the fewest dates. In stage III the feminist seeks out like minded women and sees these relationships as a priority, so much so that the importance of maintaining relationships with men falls by the wayside. It is possible that women in this stage will express romantic relationship ideals that allow her to be independent and be involved with someone who understands her need to relate to other women. However, given the importance of female relationships in this stage the woman may not be interested in forming a romantic relationship, let alone have spent cognitive energy producing ideals.

Emanation allows the feminist to realize her identity is false and she moves onto synthesis where men and situations are examined on an individual basis. Now not every circumstance is a reflection of her sex, or an instance of a well-orchestrated act of the patriarchy. While the psychological distress that is experienced in earlier levels of feminist identity is over, it is still possible that feminists at any stage could still “decide to break away from old relationships that are not able to accommodate their new understandings of the world” (Fischer & Good, 2004, p. 444). This statement seems to suggest that feminist identity is such an important aspect to the woman that if her partner does not share those same ideals, relationship termination is an option. If a lack of appreciation of feminism and its tenets leads to decay or relationship termination for current relationships, it is possible feminist identity is an ideal in itself that feminists seek out in relational partners. The last stage while not often reached (Downing & Roush, 1985) could also affect relationships given the time demands of being a “true” advocate for women’s rights, given that the purpose of active commitment is to “create a future in sex-role transcendence” (Downing & Roush, 1985, p. 702). Such a relationship and partner would seemingly have to respect and understand the importance of feminism that the stage of active commitment holds. This respect and understanding of feminism as a personal commitment could be an ideal held by women in the active commitment stage, especially since Campbell et al. (2001) found that people are less flexible concerning ideals that are important to them. Active commitment is a stage where feminism and its goals are of the utmost importance.

Romantic Relationship Ideals and Feminist Identity

These inferences regarding feminist identity and its ability to affect romantic ideals are set forth because feminist identity has never been studied in relation to romantic relationship ideals. Sternberg and Barnes (1985) reveal that while “romantic relationships typically involve two flesh and blood individuals...participants in such relationships sometimes sense the presence of two other, elusive but nevertheless intrusive individuals: each partner’s ideal other” (p. 1586). Likewise, Fletcher and Simpson (2000) called ideals “hidden third parties—mental images of ideal partners and ideal relationships—that also play a critical role in influencing judgments about relationships” (p. 105). Ideals within a romantic relationship have been defined as “specifying a set of expectations, hopes, or standards that are truly relational in character” (Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas & Giles, 1999, p. 73). Fletcher et al. (1999) clarified, “personally held ideals should be more firmly connected to the self than is the case for more general beliefs

or attitudes concerning relationships” (p. 73). Wayment and Campbell (2000) agreed stating, “personal relationships are an important aspect of one’s overall self-identity, there must be similarities in the nature of the evaluation process for the self and the relationship” (p. 32). If romantic relationship ideals, as evaluative measures, are connected to the self and the relationship, and part of one’s identity is a feminist identity, studying these concepts together could yield novel information to both interpersonal and feminist scholars.

Sternberg (1995) conceptualized love as a story and found that the stories we create are a reflection of our interests, “simply having an interest does not mean you will transfer that interest to your relationships, but if that interest is consuming, you well might” (p. 542). Once a woman has formed a feminist identity the interest of feminism becomes quite important in her everyday life (Downing & Roush, 1985); it is possible the feminist takes her interests in feminism into her romantic relationship as well, forming these interests as expected ideals in partners. Botwin, Buss, and Shackelford (1997) found that individuals wanted partners like themselves and if this finding is true for feminists, they may want a partner with a feminist identity.

Fletcher and Simpson (2000) admitted they did not know if holding ideals that were similar to one’s partner would bring about relationship functioning or quality and called for more research in this area. Women with varying levels of feminist identity may necessitate and describe ideal partners that are different from a woman in an alternative stage of her feminist identity. Fletcher et al. (1999) also called for similar research claiming that the way self-perceptions are related to ideal standards is important. A woman in each stage of the feminist identity model perceives herself, other women and men in different ways; therefore, her ideals may change as she moves from one stage to the next, stagnates in one particular stage, or regresses to earlier stages. While romantic relationship ideals have never been researched as formed by one’s feminist identity, a look at the literature concerning what people typically express as romantic ideals, and a more in depth look at how ideals function in relation to romantic relationships is in order. Such a review can provide a means of comparison once feminists’ romantic ideals are discovered.

Romantic Relationship Ideals

The literature concerning romantic relationship ideals varies from articles that specifically discuss ideals and their effect on romantic relationships, (Sternberg & Barnes, 1985; Fletcher, Thomas, Giles & Simpson, 1999; Fletcher, Thomas & Simpson, 2000; Ruvolo & Veroff, 1997; Campbell, Simpson, Kashy & Fletcher, 2001; Fletcher & Simpson, 2000) to how people

linguistically discuss (Kovecses, 1991) and cognitively and culturally perceive (Sternberg, 1995; Sprecher & Metts, 1999) an ideal love, to preferences regarding mate characteristics, personality traits, (Botwin, et al., 1997; Sprecher & Regan, 2002; Buss et al., 1990) gender (Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999; Lamke, Sollie, Durbin & Fitzpatrick, 1994;) and relationship beliefs (Wayment & Campbell, 2000). The majority of the literature claims that at least some of the ideals individuals form regarding their mate preferences are formed from an evolutionary perspective (Fletcher & Simpson, 2000; Fletcher, et al., 1999; Sprecher & Regan, 2002; Botwin et al., 1997), while others claim romantic relationship ideals are shaped by attachment processes (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Tolmacz, Goldzweig & Guttman, 2004).

The evolutionary perspective (for a review see Buss et al., 1990 or Botwin et al., 1997) explains that because women have more invested in the reproduction process they tend to be more selective concerning the mates they choose. Women in particular are theorized to care more about a man's ability to offer resources for her and her potential child than other characteristics (commonly referred to as seeking a mate with resource acquisition). Fletcher and Simpson (2000) reviewed their ideal standards model, which was based on an evolutionary perspective. Their model (in Fletcher & Simpson, 2000; Fletcher, Thomas, & Simpson, 2000) claims that there are three categories of partner ideals (warmth-loyalty, vitality-attractiveness, and status-resources) and that these ideals function to provide the individual something upon which to evaluate, explain and regulate their relationships. According to the authors, people seek out the characteristics of warmth and loyalty because these characteristics would coincide with someone who would be a good parent. People want the characteristics of vitality-attractiveness because such a mate is assumed to be healthy, fertile (for men choosing women), and younger. Lastly, people want a mate with worthy status and resources because this trait in particular indicates an ability to rise to the upper levels of social hierarchies and form relationships with others of higher social status. Small discrepancies between real and ideal romantic relationship and partners will lead to more satisfaction and perception of relationship quality. Fletcher and his colleagues contend that any explained discrepancy between one's real partner and their ideal partner will change based on whether the individual needs to be accurate or positive about their partner and their relationship. In situations where the relationship evaluation is in order to determine possible serious commitments like marriage, individuals are more likely to be accurate about the discrepancies. However, the authors explain that due to known facts regarding failed

marriages and a generic need to be positive about one's partner and relationship, many times people will be more positive than accurate.

Continuing with the evolutionary perspective Buss et al. (1990) and Botwin et al. (1997) found sex differences that showed females preferred mates with traits that are related to their earning or resource acquisition potential like ambition, industriousness, educational background, favorable social status, intelligence, power, ascendance, dominance, and whether the potential mate had a college education. Fitzpatrick and Sollie (1999) and Michaels, Acock and Edwards (1986) found that women were more committed to their relationships than men and Ruvolo and Veroff (1997) theorized that men spend less cognitive energy on solidifying their ideals than females do. However, a study by Lamke et al. (1994) found that both males and females preferred a mate with feminine characteristics (nurturing, emotionally responsive and supportive), and that when the partner had these characteristics, relationship satisfaction increased. In contrast, men focused on the importance of a potential mate's appearance, as well as her cooking and housekeeping abilities. In Sprecher and Regan's (2002) study that looked at trait preferences regarding both friendship and romantic relationships, individuals were more selective and demanding of certain traits from romantic relationships and friendships with members of the opposite sex, than they were with friendships with members of the same sex. They theorized this was due to the evolutionary perspective because reproduction is still possible with opposite sex friends.

Hendrick and Hendrick (2002) found more love themes than sex themes when exploring about undergraduates' perception of how love and sex are related in their relationships, pointed out that "the evolutionary psychology approach has understandably emphasized sex as the mechanism for reproduction and has been much less concerned with love's contribution" (p. 362). The attachment styles approach does focus on love's contribution in mate selection from the very first relationships all people experience: the mother/caregiver-child bond. Tolmacz et al. (2004) and Hazan and Shaver (1987) offer a good review of attachment theory. Specifically, Tolmacz et al. (2004) explain that Bowlby formed attachment theory in 1979 and that the theory seeks to explain that the relationship the infant forms with her mother will affect relationships she has in her adult life. Specifically Bowlby observed infants that were taken away from their mothers for varying lengths of time and found that a series of emotional reactions occur: first, the infant would protest by crying, then they would show despair by displaying obvious sadness, and

lastly they would detach, potentially avoiding the mother if she were to return (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Jan, Smith and Levine (2002) also reviewed attachment theory and explained that children are happy and successful in displaying their talents when they feel safe. Furthermore, they indicated that the attachment style varies depending on how responsive the caretaker is to the child's needs, as well as that caretaker's ability to be there for the child emotionally. These attachment styles are explained as either secure, anxious/ambivalent, or avoidant (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Furthermore Hazan & Shaver (1987) explain that when an infant is "healthy, alert, unafraid, and in the presence of its mother, it seems interested in exploring and mastering the environment and in establishing affiliative contact with other family and community members" (p. 512). This child is exhibiting the secure style, whereas when mothers are inconsistent or slow to care for their children's needs, as well as limiting their ability to explore, the child will show the anxious style. Finally, if the mother fights off attempted affection by the child in a consistent manner the child will eventually learn to form the avoidant style. It was Hazan and Shaver (2004) who paired romantic love and attachment styles, finding that people with different attachment styles had different beliefs about romantic love, how much they can trust their partner as well as how much they feel they are worthy of that love.

Tolmacz et al. (2004) suggested that ideal images of mates were related to varying attachment styles. They did find a relationship between one's attachment style, ideal images of mates, ideal images of self and one's mother. If the subject had a secure style, they would be more flexible about their needs in a relational partner. The authors explain that those with anxious/ambivalent styles should want an ideal mate like that of their mother, whereas an individual with an avoidant style should want a mate like himself or herself (due to having to rely on themselves for so long). However, in their study there were no differences in the styles of anxious/ambivalent and avoidant, but they found that those who were secure were more flexible about their ideal images of mates whereas the insecure styles were more specific regarding these ideals.

Sternberg (1995), who believes romantic relationship ideals are best understood as stories, explains attachment styles precede and help construct the stories individuals create about love. Sternberg (1995) claims love stories people create have beginnings, middles and ends (and if we have not ended the relationship we usually make inferences about what the ending will be like). As was mentioned earlier in the review, the interests individuals have affect their stories, and since the formation of a feminist identity in the later stages is of great interest it is possible

feminism plays a part in these stories, or ideals of what a romantic relationship should be like. The stories are formatted based on our childhoods, personality traits, and the individual past and present relationships we have with others (parents, brothers, sisters, friends, romantic partners).

Apparently ideals hinder the relationship slightly according to Sternberg (1995) who explains “often, the problem in a relationship is not the actual thinking that people do, but the presuppositions of that thinking—the stories people bring to relationships about what love should be and how it should work” (p. 542). Since Sternberg (1995) explains that individuals never see anything independently from their stories and he conceptualizes ideas as stories, if a feminist identity is a part of the self and potentially a story (if interests are consuming they can become a part of our stories), how are ideals affected by these stories? In a relationship there are two stories being formed and “in order to understand our partner’s story about us, we need to understand our partner’s story about ideal relationships, not just our own” (p. 544). Each person’s story is different and Sternberg offered some examples of stories of love. Depending on your past relationship with others (parents, boyfriends, spouses, friends) you accrue a perception of love and this serves as your story, so for some “love may be a romance; but for some people, or the same people in other relationships, love may be empty” (p. 545). In the collection of examples of stories of love it is possible that for a woman in the second phase of her feminist identity love is (as Sternberg has categorized it) “government” meaning “relationships are about power. In relationships as in all else, there are those who control and those who are controlled” (p. 534). However, for a woman in passive acceptance perhaps love is a “fantasy” where some knight in shining armor comes to her rescue. While romantic relationship ideals can be described as stories, along the same vein Kovecses (1991) sees romantic relationship ideals as metaphors.

Kovecses (1991) agrees with Sternberg that “language plays a major role in the way we conceptualize and experience love,” only this author views the conceptualization in the form of metaphors rather than stories. Their explanation of stories and metaphors, though somewhat different, still overlap conceptually (p. 78). According to Kovecses (1991) metaphors serve two main properties, they “have the power to create the concept (meaning they help us comprehend the concept of love, as well as form our conception of love)...and they all lead to a set of inferences concerning the target domain (love)” (p. 81). Some examples of Kovecses’ metaphors that he explains are a part of our cultural canon and basic beliefs about love are as follows: love is a unity, nutrient, valuable commodity, fire, natural force, magic, insanity, rapture. Each of

these metaphors has deeper meanings, an example of this deeper meaning is found in love is a unity. This ideal about love is that the two people in the relationship

“view themselves as a unity that is composed of two complementary parts (forming a perfect match)...furthermore, it will follow that there is a true love....and love should last forever...since ‘we were made for each other’ every ‘half’ can only be complemented by a single ‘other half’...there can only be one perfect fit or match for everyone” (p. 82).

Ideals were reviewed from an evolutionary and attachment styles perspective, as well as characterized in the form of stories and metaphors, but they have never been studied in relation to feminist identity. Feminist identity and its formation entails a large body of literature that lends itself to a greater understanding of what it means to be a feminist, how feminist identity is formed, as well as perceptions of feminists from the media and varying social groups that affect group membership. To understand how a feminist identity affects romantic relationship ideals, one must first understand feminist identity beyond just the feminist identity model, which represents only a small portion of the feminist identity literature.

Summary

Reid and Purcell (2004) reported that rates of self-identified feminists are both stable and low and from a review of the issues affecting feminist identity, it becomes clear why this is the case. Confusion regarding the definition of feminism and media representation of feminists may play a part in this low rate. Studies that include homogenous participants keep feminist scholars from understanding if this is just a problem for heterosexual white women. Predictors for feminist identity shed some light as to what characteristics potential participants in this study may have. It is important to understand what leads a woman to her feminist identity as well as what impairs that process. No research to date has looked at romantic relationship ideals and feminist identity.

The romantic relationship ideals literature has found that ideals serve as knowledge structures to help understand interpersonal relationships, and that people whose ideals are met are more satisfied in their relationships (Fletcher & Simpson, 2000; Sternberg & Barnes, 1985). Literature also shows that people are more flexible about ideals that are less important to them (Campbell, Simpson, Kashy and Fletcher, 2001). Ruvolo and Veroff (1997) found that men are less likely to have formed salient romantic relationship ideals and Sprecher and Regan (2002) learned that women who thought more highly of themselves were more demanding that their potential partners meet their ideal standards. Botwin, Buss, and Shackelford (1997) believed that people

want partners like themselves. Literature in the attachment theory realm and the evolutionary perspective has offered some knowledge of how ideals are formed. Metaphors and stories have also been explained as a representation of romantic relationship ideals.

Through a review of the ideal romantic relationship literature and the feminist identity literature inferences have been offered regarding their impact and relationships to one another. This purpose of this research is to study the relationship between feminist identity and perceptions of an ideal romantic relationship. The next chapter discusses the method used to investigate this relationship.

Chapter Two: Methodology

Participants

Students from the introductory public relations class and various sections of the introductory public speaking classes were recruited to fill out (See Appendix 1) the Feminist Identity Composite (FIC) created by Fischer et al. (2002). Participants from both groups were recruited on a volunteer basis. These participants indicated whether they were interested in participating in the second portion of the study on the initial survey. If participants indicated a willingness to participate in the second portion of the study and were found to fit within one standard deviation above the mean for passive acceptance and for revelation, they were recruited for the second portion of the study. Participants who were recruited for passive acceptance had the following scores: 27, 30, 28, 28, and 29, with a grand mean of 28. Participants recruited for revelation had the following scores: 28, 39, 30, 31, and 28, with a grand mean of 31. Participants with the most extreme and representative scores for both revelation and passive acceptance stages were chosen.

Students enrolled in the public speaking classes were compensated with course credit. Participants from the introductory public relations class were not offered any compensation other than the opportunity to learn more about these topics. There were other opportunities for those in the public speaking class to satisfy this course requirement, in addition to this particular opportunity. All of the participants were informed about the research study by individual class instructors who announced the research opportunity in class. The instructor informed their students about the research opportunity and if they wished to participate, they were instructed to sign up outside of class. The class was informed of the demographic requirements (participants must be heterosexual females) for signing up for the research opportunity.

Research Team Demographics

The research team included one white female graduate student (the researcher) and one white male faculty member (thesis advisor), as well as one white male independent coder.

Feminist identity

Based on the feminist identity model as proposed by Downing and Roush (1985), the Feminist Identity Composite was used to measure the varying levels of feminist identity (passive acceptance, revelation, embeddedness-emanation, synthesis, and active commitment). According to Linneback (2004), sub-scores can range from 7-35 for passive acceptance, 8-40 for revelation, 4-20 for embeddedness, 5-25 for synthesis, and 9-45 for active commitment. Five women with

the most extreme sub-scores in the passive acceptance stage and five women with the most extreme sub-scores in the revelation stage were recruited. It is important to note that passive acceptance and revelation were chosen as the two sub-categories to be compared, because these two stages are what differentiate a woman who is not a feminist (passive acceptance) from a woman in a stage of intense realization of her feminist identity. This study focuses in on the interpersonal romantic relationship ideals of feminists and because women in the revelation stage are potentially in the most intense stage of their feminist identity (concerning the effect it has on interpersonal relationships, specifically those with men) this particular stage was chosen. Women in this stage are also characterized as having intense anger towards men and the status of women in society; therefore, it was assumed that the data collected from this sample would be starkly different from those in the passive acceptance stage. The thrust of this study was to discover the potential differences in romantic ideals for women who are feminists versus those who are in the passive acceptance stage, so the comparison between these two groups was determined by the FIC.

Instrumentation: The Feminist Identity Composite (FIC). The FIC (Feminist Identity Composite) is a 33 item composite of 20 Feminist Identity Scale items and 13 Feminist Identity Development Scale items used to categorize females into varying stages of feminist identity. To obtain each sub-score, according to Moradi and Subich (2002), the items from each stage were averaged and “higher mean scores for each subscale indicate greater agreement with the corresponding feminist identity stage” (p. 70). This measure capitalizes on the strengths of these two measures (FIDS and the FIS) and eliminates the weaknesses (Moradi & Subich, 2002). This measure was used instead of the other feminist identity scales (FIDS, FIS) because Moradi and Subich (2002) found only the FIC to have acceptable internal consistency reliability for all of the five subscales when compared to the other two feminist identity measures, and was rated as superior to the FIS.

While the FIDS had strong content validity, it was also found to have unacceptable alpha reliabilities for the revelation and synthesis subscales. Fisher et al. (2000) reported alpha reliabilities for the FIC of .75 for PA (passive acceptance), .80 for R (revelation), .84 for EE (embeddedness-emanation), .68 for S (synthesis) and .77 for AC (active commitment). Moradi and Suich (2002) found alpha reliabilities of .74 for PA, .76 for R, .84 for EE, .84 for S, and .73 for AC. In the present study, the alpha reliabilities were .74 for PA, .80 for R, .85 for EE, .82 for S, and .85 for AC. The means for each of the sub scales were as follows: 20 for PA, 22 for R, 13

for EE, 22 for S, and 32 for AC. The standard deviation for each of the sub scales were as follows: 5.05 for PA, 5.27 for R, 3.00 for EE, 2.64 for S, and 5.15 for AC.

Instrumentation (FIC) Procedure. Eighty participants recruited from two basic communication courses (various sections of Introduction to Public Speaking and Critical Inquiry and one section of Introduction to Strategic Communication) were asked to fill out the Feminist Identity Composite, which is a 33 item Likert type scale that is designed to assess the five stages of the feminist identity model as proposed by Downing and Roush (1985). Seventy-two women who initially participated expressed interest in participating in the second portion of the study. Eight women declined participating in the second portion of the project, and were not contacted further. Only the first sixty women's scores who completed the measure were analyzed for the second portion of the study due to an adequate pool of subjects, however scheduled data collection for the survey portion of the study continued until it reached eighty subjects. Seven women who exhibited the passive acceptance stage were contacted to participate in the second portion of the study, and two participants declined to further participate. Five women who exhibited the revelation stage were contacted to participate in the second portion of the study, and all five participants agreed to participate in the second half of the study. Participants were contacted via email and phone to request their participation in the second phase of the study. Participation in the second phase was on a volunteer basis only. Participants in the basic communication classes received research credit for completing the research project. Other participants from the public relations class had the opportunity to learn more about their feelings about romantic relationship ideals, but no other incentives were offered. Once the participant agreed to participate further in the study the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) methodology was employed to learn about females' perceptions of an ideal romantic relationship.

Romantic Relationship Ideals

Past ideal romantic relationships scholars have seen love as stories (Sternberg, 1995) and metaphors (Kovecses) that are culturally influenced. One methodology in particular recognizes the importance of metaphors and stories, explaining that memory itself is story based (Zaltman, 2001). The Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique was an appropriate way to study feminists' romantic relationship ideals because of the significance of metaphors and stories within the methodology. In Zaltman's (2003) own words "metaphors are so basic to our thinking that

(people are) often unaware of them... metaphors can bring important but unconscious thoughts and feelings to the surface... metaphors constitute a powerful tool for unearthing the hidden thoughts and feelings” of participants (p. 38).

Metaphors are not the only way ideals are expressed. According to Kovecses (1991) there are also metonymies of love. This concept is best explained by the author who states, “in metonymy, ‘A stands for B’ while in metaphor ‘A is B,’” (p. 84). Kovecses claims these “physiological (love is internal but causes external signs), expressive and behavioral” representations our culture understands to stand for love (p. 84). According to Kovecses (1991) the following stand for love: increase in body heat and heart rate, blushing, dizziness, physical weakness, sweaty palms, inability to breathe, inability to think straight, being preoccupied, physical closeness, intimate sexual behavior, sex, loving visual and joyful visual behavior. An example of one such metonymy (dizziness) would be “She makes me weak in the knees” (p. 84). The ZMET methodology fits in line with this belief, explaining, “many metaphors consist of references to physical motion, bodily sensations or sensory experiences. This embodied cognition isn’t surprising. We begin creating metaphors early in life in order to make sense of the world” (p. 89). Furthermore, a later step in the methodology attempts to tackle this sensory metaphor idea even more as the informant is asked to describe the taste, touch, smell, color and emotional feeling of the topic at hand (Coulter, Zaltman, and Coulter, 2001).

Kovecses (1991) offers a more detailed review of what each of these metaphors mean, but the important concept to recognize is that individuals think of love in terms of both stories and metaphors. We use these stories to understand past and present relationships with others, and metaphors can explain to others as well as to ourselves how love makes us feel, behave and express ourselves. Kovecses determines that the metaphors and metonymies he compiles make up the concept of the ideal romantic relationship. Furthermore, the recognition of love as metaphors is worthy to note because “it is an idealization that may determine the way people think about and actually live their love lives” (Kovecses, 1991, p. 90). From the very first step in the ZMET methodology, the importance of storytelling is understood. The first step of the process is even entitled “story telling” because “human memory and communication is story based” (Coulter, Zaltman, Coulter, 2001, p. 4).

While Kovecses explains our metaphors of love help us understand love, the ZMET methodology promises to lend understanding of the topic at hand through the study of

metaphors. Therefore, if love is understood in a metaphorical way, the most appropriate methodology to understand romantic ideals is with a methodology that both understands and utilizes the importance of metaphors. Furthermore, love has been described as a story, and that the stories people carry serve as knowledge structures to help them make sense of romantic ideals (Sternberg, 1995). Therefore, it is important that the methodology used reflects the importance of the individuals and their own voice to properly lend credence to the vitality of their own story of love. The ZMET methodology is unique in that it refuses to “neglect the nature of human thought or behavior” and recognizes that often certain research has made “researchers (themselves) overly prominent in the research process” (p. Zaltman, 1997, p. 424). Specifically, the first step in the ZMET process that is used to guide the remaining steps explains, “the stories that accompany visual metaphors are highly revealing” (Zaltman, 1997, p. 249). The result of this methodology was two different concept maps from the two groups of women (feminist and non-feminist). A concept map is a:

display showing how the thoughts and feelings a group of (people) share about a particular topic are also connected in similar ways. Put differently, a consensus map shows most of the thinking of most (people) on a topic. Although the number of constructs varies from project to project, metaphor elicitation technique usually produces consensus maps that contain about 90 percent of all key ideas expressed by any individual interviewed. (Zaltman, 2003, p. 144).

These consensus maps of feminists and non-feminists were compared to one another to learn if feminists have different romantic relationship ideals. Such knowledge of feminists’ romantic relationship ideals will add to the literature concerning love and feminism, which according to Hollway (1993) is lacking, as well as answer Wood’s (1995) call for more relational scholars to take a feminist approach to the study of interpersonal relationships. In the following section the steps of the ZMET procedure are described.

ZMET Procedure. The Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique or ZMET created by Gerald Zaltman is a qualitative interview protocol normally used in marketing research, however Vorell (2003) found it to be an applicable and telling methodology outside the world of marketing. This methodology “involves semi-structured, in depth, personal interviews ...grounded in various literature, including verbal and nonverbal communication, visual sociology, visual anthropology, literary criticism, semiotics, mental imagery, cognitive neuroscience, and

phototherapy...centered around visual images that the informant brings to the interview (Coulter, Zaltman and Coulter, 2001, p. 1-2). Zaltman explained that the ZMET has “the ability to think across disciplines...ideas don’t know what discipline they’re in” (Pink, 1998, p. 6).

The methodology seeks to understand the thoughts and feelings related to the subject at hand. In this case, participants were asked to report their thoughts and feelings regarding perceptions of what an ideal romantic relationship should be like. This particular methodology was chosen for a variety of reasons. Past research regarding both feminist identity and romantic relationship ideals has been quantitative. The ZMET methodology is a qualitative interview protocol. While many quantitative studies in both feminist identity and romantic relationship ideals have demonstrated both novel and interesting findings, using a qualitative method will only add to the confidence we have in these current findings. Zaltman (2000) describes what many feminist scholars would more than likely also advocate, and that is the importance of one’s own voice our methodologies generally require (participants)

to consciously focus on what researchers think to ask them. Also, many research questions originate in the researcher’s conscious, personal reflections and/or in data amenable to analyses using tools consciously acquired as part of disciplinary training...while sometimes quite useful it does not qualify as an exploration of the (participant’s) cognitive conscious or unconscious (p. 428).

The ZMET’s emphasis on the importance of one’s own voice relates well to Sternberg’s (1995) conception of ideals as stories. Furthermore, the ZMET’s appreciation of metaphors as central to thought and important in eliciting hidden knowledge (Zaltman, 1997) fits well with Kovecses (1991) conception of love as a collection of metaphors. Since no research to date has looked at feminist identity and romantic relationships from a qualitative perspective, the ZMET offers such an alternative. With emphasis placed on finding one’s voice in feminism, and the literature in romantic relationship ideal literature concerning how stories and metaphors are ways of explaining love, the ZMET appears to be an appropriate choice for a methodology.

Participants were given a camera and asked to take pictures of what they feel represented an ideal romantic relationship. Participants were also asked to bring in magazine clippings, or photographs of what they feel a romantic relationship should look like. Participants were instructed to bring in no less than 10 and no more than 14 pictures/magazine clippings. After the participant brought the camera and images in, an interview was scheduled within 7 to 10 days

after the camera and images were received. Interviews were typically one to two hours long and were video taped. Only the researcher, the thesis advisor and the independent coder had access to these tapes.

ZMET Steps. The ZMET interview has eight steps that helps demonstrate the participants' thoughts and feelings about (in this case) ideal romantic relationships. The steps are 1) story telling, 2) missed images, 3) sorting task, 4) triad task, 5) expand the frame, 6) sensory (non-visual) metaphors, 7) the vignette, 8) mental map.

The first step of story telling involved the participant explaining why they took that specific picture, and how it represents their thoughts and feelings about ideal romantic relationships. According to the ZMET research process "stories are excellent sources of metaphors and important source of insight about participants" (p. 6).

The second step of missed images asked participants if there were any important thoughts, feelings or ideas they had about romantic relationship ideals but could not find or capture on film. Once the participant had explained the missed image(s) the researcher questioned what that image represents in relation to their thoughts and feelings about ideal romantic relationships.

The third step is the sorting task where participants take the pictures and/or magazine clippings they brought in and put them in piles that are meaningful to them. There were no limits to the number of piles the participant can have and each participant was instructed to label the pile with a descriptive word or phrase.

The fourth step was the triad task and the interviewer picked three pictures and then asked the participant to describe how any two pictures are similar, but different from the third (ZMET research process).

The fifth step asked participants to "expand the frame." This step asked participants to describe the picture beyond its natural borders. This particular step could bring about "hidden meaning as well as to validate ideas surfaced in other steps" (ZMET research process, p. 8)

In the six step, the researcher asked the participant what the sound, taste, touch, smell and color of an ideal romantic relationship would be like. This step meant to "uncover further dimensions of the person's thinking" (ZMET research process, p. 9)

The seventh step asked participants to describe a movie or one act play because "people engage different segments of the brain when they think about time sequence and motion that they do when thinking about still pictures" (ZMET research process, p. 9).

The eighth step asked the participants if they have missed any constructs, or if all of the constructs that were found by the researcher were accurate. A construct is a thought behind statements or behavior given label, they are not the actual thoughts or behaviors; rather they are representations of interpretations of thoughts and behaviors” (Zaltman, 2003, p. 132). Only constructs the participant felt were present in the interview were kept. Then the participant were asked to create a map of the key concepts. Once the map was completed, the participant was asked to explain the map to the researcher.

After the researcher had conducted all 10 interviews, an independent coder was recruited to code the videos for accuracy of constructs present. The coder independently analyzed the interviews after a training session. The maps that were produced were essentially the same. The few differences that appeared were discussed and after reviewing the videotaped source material they were reconciled to both coders satisfaction. After viewing both feminist and non-feminist construct maps, it was apparent that the ideals formed or conceptualized were different for these two groups of women by comparing components of their respective construct maps.

Data Analysis

Once the interviews were complete, the tapes were reviewed to compile key constructs that are present in the videotapes. The constructs were recorded as metaphorical expressions (these are the words, phrases or sentences) used by the interviewee (Coulter, Zaltman, and Coulter, 2001). Once these were recorded, thematic categories were assigned to these words, phrases or sentences used by the interviewee to make up categories that organize the metaphorical expressions in a meaningful way as well as recording the number of times similar constructs were mentioned by interviewees (Coulter, Zaltman and Coulter, 2001). This process is done because

an isolated construct has little meaning on its own. It has meaning only through its ‘conversations’ with other constructs. A construct becomes multifaceted the more it interacts with other constructs. Associations among constructs, not constructs in isolation drive (human) behavior. Thus the associations among constructs start the journey toward actual behavior (Zaltman, 2003, p. 142).

To determine what was considered a construct “it must be cited by half or more of the participants in a project and be associated directly with another such construct by one-third of the

participants. A completed consensus map usually includes between 25 to 30 constructs and represents 85% of the constructs surfaced by one participant” (Zaltman, 1997, p 423). Once constructs were determined, consensus maps can be formed. According to the overview of the ZMET research process consensus maps are “mental models that help them get along in the world...created consensus maps are networks of interrelated constructs” (p. 13). To create these consensus maps, connections between the constructs were identified by noticing the associations or links between key constructs by focusing on both the content and structure of the taped interview according to the ZMET coding guide. Connections from key constructs were noted by drawing lines from one construct to the other. Completed construct maps, lists of constructs and the number of times constructs were mentioned were independently coded by the researcher and the independent coder to check for accuracy of construct presence. Any discrepancies found were settled by watching the taped interview. Upon completion of the independent coder's work, the data was reviewed to check for differences/similarities of feminist and non-feminist romantic relationship ideals by studying the consensus maps.

Chapter Three: Results

The research question sought to exam if feminists have different ideals concerning romantic relationships than women who choose not to assume such an identity. A review of the concepts and the relationships that emerged between the samples helps to answer the research question posed concerning the romantic ideals of feminists; these are presented in Table 2 and 3. However, before this question is reviewed the correlations found within the sub scales of the FIC are presented in Table 1. This information is offered because of the current debate amongst women’s studies scholars regarding which scale is most appropriate and effective to use in measuring Downing and Roush’s (1985) feminist identity model. An interpretation of the following correlations is discussed in the final chapter.

Table 1: Correlations from the FIC Survey

	PA	R	EE	S	AC
Passive Acceptance	1	-.336**	-.431**	-.370**	-.179
Revelation		1	.454**	.408**	.120
Embeddedness/ Emanation			1	.481**	.282*
Synthesis				1	.401**
Active Commitment					1

** .Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 2 outlines the constructs that emerged from the interviewing process that were both specific to each sample, as well as those that were shared. Only six constructs were shared by the samples, and the constructs specific to each sample seem to indicate that feminists may have different romantic relationship ideals than those in the passive acceptance stage. Table 3 reviews the construct relationships mentioned by the samples. There were no shared construct relationships for the combined samples, even though six constructs were common between the two groups. This also indicates feminists may have different romantic relationship ideals and an alternative way of understanding the relationships between those constructs. Following Table 3, the constructs and the construct relationships will be defined and explained by using participants’

actual words. After the constructs and construct relationships are clear, the actual combined construct map will follow. First, the feminist constructs, relationships and map will be presented, and then the same information will be reviewed for participants in the passive acceptance stage.

Table 2: Constructs Mentioned by the Samples

Constructs Specific to the Feminist Sample	Constructs Specific to the Passive Acceptance Sample	Constructs Common to Both Samples
Attention to partner needs Comfortable Common Action Experiences Communication Conflict Equality Independence Support Trust	Time Commitment Evolving Family Ideal Mate Traits Love Monogamy Passion Religion Romance	Attention to my needs Friends Positive Affect Marriage Physical Togetherness

Table 3: Construct Relationships Mentioned by the Samples

There were no construct relationships common to both samples

Construct Relationships Specific to the Feminist Sample	Construct Relationship Specific to the Passive Acceptance Sample
<p>Equality → Independence → Support → Marriage → Attention to my partners' needs</p> <p>Friends → Comfortable → Physical → Trust → Positive Affect → Communication → Common Action Experiences</p> <p>Common Action Experiences → Positive Affect</p> <p>Attention to my needs → Conflict → Support</p> <p>Attention to partners' needs → Togetherness → Communication</p> <p>Communication → Comfortable</p> <p>Marriage → Physical</p>	<p>Love → Religion → Positive Affect → Passion → Marriage → Evolving → Attention to my needs</p> <p>Marriage → Family → Passion → Commitment → Religion</p> <p>Passion → Togetherness</p> <p>Attention to my needs → Time</p> <p>Ideal Mate → Friends → Tradition → Family</p> <p>Commitment → Monogamy</p> <p>Physical → Romance → Togetherness</p>

Operationalization of Feminist Constructs

Attentiveness to my needs. This construct encompasses how the partner needs to act to make the romantic relationship an ideal one. For example, participants mentioned the importance of being considerate, caring, pampered, understanding, and included gifts and surprises like flowers or notes. However, while this construct was a shared one, participants in this group mentioned the importance of going beyond typical romantic gestures to find what she specifically finds to be important.

Participant 10: “Surprises are important, you know, the little things are huge, they show you they really care, like the laundry is done or the car is cleaned, or notes or flowers, it’s not just presents given after a mistake.

Participant 3: “It’s about finding what is special to that particular person—not what is typical like roses or teddy bears.”

Participant 10: “When he gives me a painting he created, he’s giving me a part of himself.”

Attentiveness to partner’s needs. The construct explains that the ideal romantic relationship involves being a giving partner. Being giving means having passion and offering support for the partners’ goals, interests and beliefs. When one is giving, they give in the literal sense where the partner is pampered and supported, as well as the figurative sense where one gives a part of the self by sharing open and honest information.

Participant 9: “They think of the other person and their feelings and well being, they are being attentive.”

Participant 7: “If you need a break, I can step in, I’m always there for you to tag me in”

Comfortable. This concept means one can be “real” in the relationship, often this means that physical beauty is less important to maintain continuously. Comfortable as a concept also means that the constant chatter that breaks uncomfortable silences in new relationships is not necessary. Both silence and lower expectations of physical maintenance are now accepted in the relationship.

Participant 1: “He would still find me attractive, even if I looked gross...it’s not a problem to get caught looking less than your best.”

Participant 7: “He would accept me, besides, you shouldn’t have to keep up with some social physical standard.”

Participant 10: “You need to be able to be comfortable and quiet with the other person, life is ridiculous and you have to be able to be calm and chill.”

Common Action Experiences. This construct explains activities the couple does together for fun, entertainment or even to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Activities described ranged from attending theater events, to working out. Part of this construct implies the importance of some degree of shared interest in various sports or entertainment activities.

Participant 3: “You need to have a few things in common, you should be able to do things together, and also be willing to try new things the other person enjoys. Every couple has their own unique things that they like to do together. You could enjoy these activities by yourself (working out, theater, and travel) but enjoying it with someone else is more meaningful.”

Participant 9: “Couples should be together, having fun and doing activities together.”

Communication. The concept of communication includes conversations (with an emphasis on intellectual conversation), listening, and being able to communicate without words. Additionally this concept includes how in an ideal romantic relationship communication is hyper-perceptive, synchronized and fine-tuned.

Participant 1: “Looking at each other, but not talking...not saying anything at all, but still having the best conversation of your life.”

Participant 3: “You should be able to tell them anything, but also be able to be completely comfortable in silence. Participant 9: “You are able to read one another, their emotions and how they think.”

Conflict. The construct of conflict within the ideal romantic relationship, while admitted as inevitable, and even held as an important concept to maintain the equality of both parties interests is also scripted. Conflict should be purposeful, not mean spirited, and should lend itself to positive outcomes.

Participant 1: “You should be able to hash things out and still love the other person...conflict can be good, but conflict for conflicts sake is not.”

Participant 3: “Fighting is okay, but no name calling, you have to understand the power of words, you have to work through problems, and you can’t just let them fly.”

Participant 7: “Some of the best relationships have gone through the worst problems...your going to have bad days.”

Participant 10: “There needs to be enough drama to keep the relationship exciting, but really, I am afraid of relationship conflict; it should never get to the level of fighting and screaming.”

Equality. The construct of equality means that taking care of one another is accepted and encouraged, but that even caring for one another has limits and can be dangerous if one partner gives more than the other. In the ideal romantic relationship, work, care and concern is balanced between partners. The female’s life, goals and career are just as important as the male’s. Equality in a relationship comes from the female realizing her own potential and then communicating the importance of her life and goals to an understanding and supportive partner. Equality in the relationship shows partners who take turns picking up the bill, or if one is in a long distance relationship shows partners taking turns visiting the other. The topic of equality often branched outside of the topic of interpersonal romantic relationships with many participants discussing concepts of equality like the glass ceiling, and even the inappropriate way women are portrayed in music.

Participant 7: “The ideal romantic relationship should make you feel empowered and equal. Don’t let your guard down because he will take advantage of that, I mean, taking care of each other is okay, but you have to severely limit that, if your willing to do everything (household chores) why would a man ever want to help?”

Participant 3: “I hold the door for him; he holds the door for me.”

Participant 10: “The glass ceiling will not happen to me...I will not accept that.”

Friends. While the construct of friends was a shared one, feminists seem to put more emphasis on the importance of having a separate group of friends (from the group they may share with their partner). Friends seemed to be a more frequently mentioned construct for the feminist population. Friends were seen as an indispensable resource that provided support, fun and understanding for this sample. The construct of friends represented two different ideas, first that it is important to have one’s own group of friends--as well as get along with his friends, and additionally that a relationship should begin by being friends with one another. Some members of the sample thought the partner should be your best friend. However, in this sample, the most frequently mentioned piece of advice was how important it is to not lose ones’ friends once one enters the ideal romantic relationship.

Participant 7: “You can’t ostracize them just because you’re in a romantic relationship. Friends need to be a priority. Friends need to stay separate solid units. Don’t put your friends beneath anything and don’t take friendships for granted...guy friends will never be the same rock foundation, they’re just not the same as same sex friends.”

Participant 1: “If you can’t be friends with one another, there is no hope for anything else.”

Participant 3: “You should have separate friends, but still get along with each other’s friends.”

Independence. Independence as a construct is the acknowledgment of the self even within a romantic relationship. The understanding is that there was life before the partner, and that friendships, activities, and independence are not cast aside simply because time is spent with the partner. Often independence is expressed as wanting to have one’s own bank account, or as a point of concern when discussing how hard it will be to juggle trying to have a family and maintain one’s career. Independence is most often expressed by participants by how important it is to have time alone for the self, autonomy and reach one’s own goals. Independence is often expressed as a precursor to finding or beginning the ideal romantic relationship, as well as how crucial it is to maintain while in the relationship.

Participant 10: “I am a strong and confident woman and I am capable of running my own life.”

Participant 3: “You need alone time and your own space.”

Participant 7: “Finding yourself is important before finding the ideal romantic relationship. You don’t use a relationship to define yourself. You need time for yourself, you need to do something alone, you can’t lose yourself, or your individuality, and you should not be dependent on your partner.”

Physical. This construct included both the visual cues of love, including hugs, kisses, cuddling, holding hands and sex, as well as cues that are physically experienced but not necessarily visual, like chemistry and attraction. Again, while physical was a shared construct, for this sample it was important to note such physical displays of affection (PDA) were shown for the purposes of showing love, and not to show ownership or the control the partner has over the other. This sample emphasized the physical element should be mutually agreed upon, and not done “just for show.” The social acceptability and appropriateness of some PDA’s were also discussed by the sample.

Participant 9: “Being physically close, you don’t need as much personal space, sensuality is another level of closeness.”

Participant 10: “It’s the hand on the small of your back—but it’s not in your way, it’s beside you, supporting you.”

Participant 7: “It’s holding the person, and showing them you care, but not holding them back from anything.”

Positive Affect. The construct of positive affect represents all of the positive emotions one feels and experiences while in the ideal romantic relationship. The most often mentioned feeling is one of health. In the ideal romantic relationship one has fun, laughs, experiences enjoyment, and feels a general “glow” when thinking about the relationship. The emotions that are felt because of, and within this relationship are positive.

Participant 10: “The ideal romantic relationship doesn’t just look good, it is healthy.”

Participant 1: “It represents home, and feeling comfortable, it is calm and serene.”

Participant 3: “The ideal romantic relationship is happy, content and excited.”

Marriage. While the construct of marriage was a shared one, this sample tended to mention it in a strained way. Participants seemed to want to get married and have their own family, but were not sure where their own lives and goals fit into the concept. For example often when the construct was mentioned it was explained it could only happen under certain circumstances, for example after they had completed their education, or once their career was established. Most seemed very concerned with the idea of being able to “have it all” (both a family and a career). When the construct was mentioned in a more positive fashion, they explained that their partner would be their best friend. This sample also mentioned it was okay if a person chose not to get married.

Participant 10: “I am afraid of commitment because I just don’t trust men. They haven’t really been there for me...no marriage until after my master’s degree. I want a family and children, but I need to find a balance.”

Participant 7: “Some girls go to college to find a husband, and others to find bridesmaids—I’m the second type, I am not here for my Mrs.”

Participant 3: “Everyone wants to be married to their best friend.”

Participant 9: “You should be able to reach this level of commitment in the ideal, it’s a combination of love and trust, you should be happy spending the rest of your life with the other person.”

Support. In the ideal relationship partners feel an increased responsibility to be there for one another. Support is not monetary, but emotional. The ideal mate will encourage you when times are difficult, often when no one else will. However, within the construct there is also an emphasis on the role friends and family play in supporting the participant. It is very important that the partner not act as the only means of support. Support, much like other constructs for the feminist sample is expected to be reciprocal.

Participant 7: “He will be right beside me saying you can do this.”

Participant 1: “They would be there for you when no one else is”

Participant 10: “You are there for each other and each other alone.”

Togetherness. The construct of togetherness, while a shared construct closely defined by those in the passive acceptance stage as time spent alone together, held a different context for this sample. This sample mentioned that togetherness is important and enjoyable, but that it can also be excessive and unhealthy. Other relationships in one’s life are still important while in the ideal romantic relationship, and deserve the attention they received before the relationship began. Togetherness in the ideal has limits, and does not involve constant attachment. The sample mentioned that togetherness means because of the time invested in the relationship the other person comes to know you better, and often they are on the same wavelength or page you are. You consider the partner to be your “other half,” or “best friend.” However, one is careful not to become too attached to the partner, or spend too much time together.

Participant 7: “What are you going to have if all you have is the other person, you still need to spend time with your friends and family.”

Participant 1: “You don’t need to be together all of the time, you need to spend time with other people.”

Participant 10: “You should not be completely attached all of the time.”

Trust. Trust as a construct is often emphasized through maintaining fidelity. The ideal romantic relationship involves no cheating and honesty is expected. Within the relationship other relationships, like friendships with males, is acceptable because of the presence of trust. Open honest communication is often credited for the presence of trust.

Participant 1: “They trust you when you are with someone else.”

Participant 9: “Trust needs to be reciprocal.”

Participant 10: “It’s not okay to hide things, you need to be honest, and no cheating.”

Operationalization of Feminist Construct Relationships

Now that the constructs have been defined and illustrated by the quotes of participants, it is important to also examine the relationships among the constructs. These relationships should not necessarily be construed as causal in nature. These relationships are a starting point for researchers who may be interested in how romantic relationship ideals are related to one another. The reader should be cautious as the stated relationship between constructs are only the opinions and beliefs of the participants in each sample. First, the relationship between the constructs will be defined, and then actual excerpts from participants will be presented to illustrate the relationships between constructs.

Equality → Independence. This construct relationship discusses the idea that once one is in the ideal romantic relationship each person maintains their own individuality. One is still able to enjoy time and activities with the other partner but one does not lose the self. An equal and balanced relationship includes time for the self.

Participant 7: “You stay at the center of the relationship; I always want to remain separate. But once you have the ideal romantic relationship, you can have fun and are able to learn and motivate each other, but still have that balance.”

Participant 3: “You should have your own interests, as well as they have their own interests, and be independent, if you have respect they shouldn’t be blocking one another. It requires balance, not every couple has enough or thinks they have enough alone time or even enough space, you have to have your own time.”

Equality → Support. The construct relationship discusses how support should be administered in the ideal romantic relationship. Both partners should be supporting one another equally. Gender roles should not determine what type of support is granted to the partner, rather it is based on what the partner needs. Often participants will mention how important reciprocity and teamwork are when discussing support. Support is not monetary for this sample, but emotional.

Participant 3: “It’s a give and take thing, they should be considerate and be decent...each person brings a different quality to it, you have to have equal opportunity to say how you

think things should go, like a decision to move to a certain school or town.”

Participant 7: “When you have the ideal romantic relationship, you are a team, but you still have balance. The ideal relationship is about support, but its also about individuality A lot of women will do to much work, and men dominate, there needs to be a happy medium.”

Equality → Marriage. This construct reveals an interesting concern for this sample in particular. While the feminist population would like to be married, they still have concerns about their wants and goals within the construct. Many times participants questioned, can you have a family and a career? Usually, the participant reasoned that one could, but that meant a balancing act. This sample expects their marriage to be egalitarian. Additionally, it is interesting that this sample discusses the acceptability of those who chose not to marry.

Participant 3: “Marriage should be equality. Not all couples should have kids, even if they love each other. Not all moms should be the stay at home moms, not all the men should get to make the decisions. Marriage is the preferred thing for me, but its okay that not everybody marries. It depends on your culture, and what marriage means to you. Lots of people don’t have good role models. It’s about your experience and if you even belief in marriage.”

Participant 10: “A wedding is scary to think about, it could be happy and provide some stability, but it could be unhappy and cause a loss of independence and adventure. I want my success and my validation, but I hope its not this (job) or that (family) and I don’t think it is, I think it’s a balancing act.”

Equality → Attention to my partner’s needs. For this sample, while they discuss the needs they have, they are also aware of the needs of their partner. This construct relationship means that while they acknowledge their partner has specific needs in the relationship, those needs, once met should be acknowledged by their partner. To maintain an equal and balanced relationship when the female attends to her partner’s needs he appreciates her actions by thanking her or acknowledging it in some fashion. The idea of mutually taking care of one another is important to this sample. Care is not administered unilaterally.

Participant 7: “You notice the little things, and you appreciate them, if I do something nice for you—acknowledge it.”

Participant 9: “You should mutually take care of each other, if only one is giving it will put a strain on the relationship”

Friends → Comfortable. This construct relationship represents what occurs before a romantic relationship is established. For this sample, it is not necessary to look to existing friends for a potential partner, but rather to become friends with the person and feel comfortable around them before initiating a romantic relationship. Additionally, this construct relationship explains how participants feel about their friends. While the focus of discussion was on a romantic partner, many times participants would discuss the importance of maintaining friendships once in the romantic relationship. This caused participants to also describe how they felt about their friendships. Furthermore, this sample also believes partners should be friends, and a part of friendship is being comfortable around the other person. However, the most important thing to note about this construct relationship is being comfortable and becoming friends occurs before a romantic relationship can take place.

Participant 9: “It starts with being comfortable with the person and then you move from there with friendship.”

Participant 3: “You should have respect, trust and friendship before a relationship can be established. They should be comfortable around one another.”

Friends → Physical. This construct relationship explains how partners are friends before they become physically intimate with one another. The participants often explained how important it is to be comfortable around the person and be friends first. Once the participant feels comfortable, they can acknowledge feelings of attraction and potentially be affectionate with the person. Additionally, the sample sometimes described how they are affectionate with their own female friends. This construct relationship seems to break the line between friendship and the ideal romantic relationship. It is within this relationship the female has started to move from friendship into a different type of relationship with the male.

Participant 3: “I hold hands with my friends all of the time, I am a very affectionate person, I love hugging my friends, it shows them you care about them.”

Participant 1: “You have to be able to feel safe with that person, you have to trust them, friendship and trust go hand in hand...the more comfortable you are with them the more attracted to them you are, and you also have to feel comfortable with them being attracted to you.”

Participant 10: "Passion is important, it's built on friendship."

Friends → Trust. Participants see this construct relationship as necessary to maintain the ideal romantic relationship. Because this sample values time spent in the company of others besides one's mate, one must trust the partner while the pair is not together. The participants also explained that to be friends with someone you must be able to trust them. The couple goes through a friendship stage before they become romantic partners, and it is in this stage trust is established.

Participant 1: "You have to have trust with that person, when they spend time away from you with their friends."

Participant 3: "Friendship requires trust and consideration."

Friends → Positive Affect. The construct relationship again highlights the importance of friends within the ideal romantic relationship. The time spent with friends should be enjoyable, fun and not seen as negative just because the partner is not always present. Relationships with other females represent a special and unique time to bond with one another. Often friendships with same sex friends are described as paramount and unique to friendship with men. Friendships make you happy and include doing fun activities together.

Participant 1: "You should also be enjoying your time apart, when you are with your friends."

Participant 7: "With same sex friends you can talk about funny things and laugh about the relationships you in, I know I couldn't have gotten through college without these girls."

Friends → Communication. The construct relationship discusses how it is okay to go to other people (like friends and family), besides the partner to talk about issues and concerns. This relationship also explains how it is still important to communicate with friends once in the ideal romantic relationship. Lastly, this relationship reviews the importance of communication once in the ideal romantic relationship.

Participant 7: "I have this friend, and she is now in this 'ideal romantic relationship' and wow, great for her, but she won't return my calls, you know he might not last, I will remain longer, its not hard to be there for your friends, to listen to them for ten minutes while their upset."

Participant 3: "Friendship involves communication, it's important to communicate obviously."

Participant 1: “Its okay not to go to them (the partner) all of the time, you may need another person who is a step away from a problem, you know...get another person’s perspective.”

Friends → Common Action Experiences. Again, because of the stressed importance of spending time with friends, and being friends before starting a romantic relationship this construct relationship was mentioned. The construct relationship explains what friends do when they spend time together. This relationship also discusses how romantic partners have action based activities together as well. For this sample it is particularly important to not get “caught up,” or “lost” inside the ideal romantic relationship. The participants discuss the importance of still hanging out with friends and family. However, participants also realize the importance of doing activities together as a couple.

Participant 7: “You need to acknowledge your surroundings, and spend time with friends and family.”

Participant 3: “Friendship involves doing such things as talking or getting together, doing things together, like actions you do together, you go to the arts, you go to see plays together, you travel together, you do things together.”

Common Action Experiences → Positive Affect. This construct relationship describes how they feel about the time they spend with their friends and partners. The time spent in the company of friends, family and their partners is a positive one. They experience laughter, fun and enjoyment from the activities they do together.

Participant 1: “You get enjoyment from your time together.”

Participant 9: “You develop a friendship, and then you spend more time together, and have fun together and do activities.”

Attention to my needs → Support. The construct relationship explains that the participant has certain needs within the relationship that are also balanced with her need to be an individual. In the ideal romantic relationship, the partner provides support like being understanding, patient, and kind, but also allows her to maintain her individuality. The support granted from the partner is not monetary, but emotional.

Participant 7: “It’s more about being friends, the reciprocity, the helping, the welcoming, the helping--they are just your best friend, in the ideal romantic relationship you will be able to maintain individuality, but still be supported.”

Participant 10: “It’s like the independent woman thing, but its also about giving a part of yourself.”

Attention to my needs → *Conflict*. The relationship between the constructs explains that one of the participants’ needs is to address issues of conflict within the relationship. Even in the ideal romantic relationship there are issues and problems that must be addressed through open and honest communication. In the ideal romantic relationship problems are faced head on. Ignoring issues is not an option. This relationship explains there is a certain way to deal with conflict. In a conflict situation, one should remain calm, and be understanding.

Participant 1: “Conflict is an important part of communication. You have to be patient with the other person when in conflict, and you have to be understanding. Avoiding conflict is bad, if something is wrong you need to talk about it.”

Participant 9: “Unconditional love means dealing with issues and problems; you just have to be considerate and versatile.”

Participant 7: “It happens when you’re in a relationship, you have bad days, you have imperfections, but you love the person inside and out.”

Attention to partners’ needs → *Togetherness*. The construct relationship demonstrates another issue for this sample. Some participants felt that while time spent together attending to their partners’ needs is a positive thing; it could also be at the sacrifice of their own success. Within the construct relationship is again, the acknowledgement of how important time alone with the self is. However, participants also realize how important it is to spend time with their significant other.

Participant 10: “Its like do you want things (the relationship) to be new and awesome, or do you want your own success?”

Participant 3: “You need the romantic side-- plus the space and alone time...you can sometimes spend too much time together, sometimes people don’t give each other enough space.”

Participant 1: “You should spend time together even if you’re busy, if you really care, you’ll want to see them.”

Attention to partners’ needs → *Communication*. For this sample, part of attending to their partners’ needs is listening and engaging in conversation with their mate. Additionally, this sample discussed how hard life can be sometimes, and that you have to encourage each other to be able to reach your

individual goals. The most often mentioned way to attend to this need for encouragement and motivation is through communication. By telling your partner you believe in him and motivating him towards his goals, one is being attentive.

Participant 9: “Being giving and being perceptive--it means conversation and listening, you read them.”

Participant 3: “You have to be encouraging, it can get hard, but you have to work to encourage them. You want your partner to believe in you, and you believe in them, that they can reach their goals.”

Communication → *Comfortable*. This construct relationship explains that communication with the mate and with friends should be comfortable. One should be able to tell the partner whatever is on the others’ mind. One should also be comfortable not talking. Often in a new relationship, conversation is forced to overcome uncomfortable silences, now such silence is welcomed as another form of communication. Communication was also explained as the way to keep a relationship together.

Participant 1: “You should feel comfortable talking to one another, but also be comfortable with silence, because it is a form of communication; you should feel comfortable not saying anything.”

Participant 3: “If you communicate, you are guaranteed to keep your marriage together.”

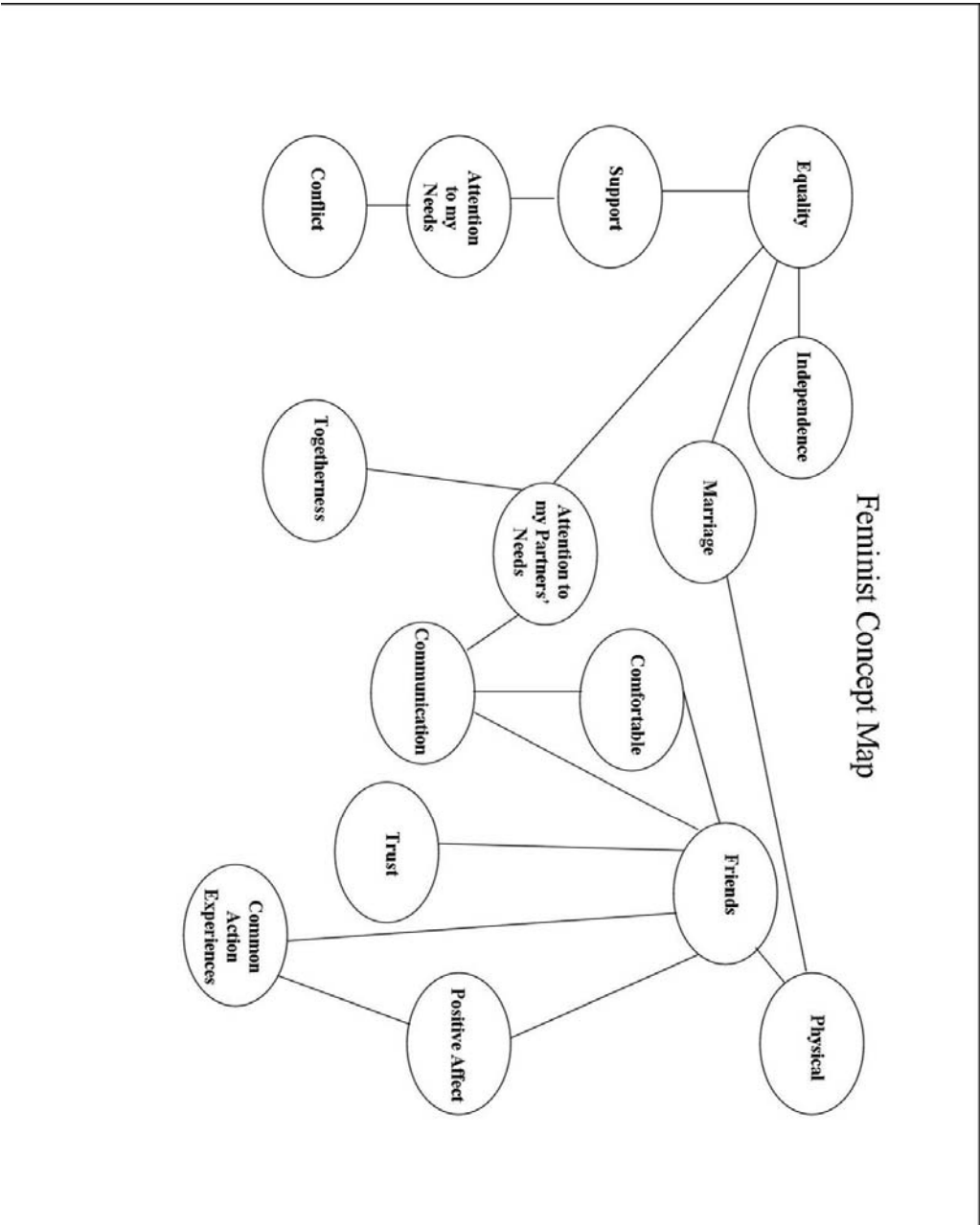
Marriage → *Physical*. Much like the passive acceptance sample the issue of sex is often only discussed around the topic of marriage. One participant discussed how she would like to be able to talk about sex, and eventually even experience it, but that marriage would have to come first. For this sample all other forms of physical displays of affection should not be done to show possession or for show. For this sample, it is important that PDA’s do not cause them to lose their individuality.

Participant 7: “Hugging and showing care is okay...the hugs and kisses are all about finding your life long partner—I guess it’s the hopeless romantic in me, but its those couples that choose to engross in each other, its awkward, people in the ideal don’t need to prove it to anyone. I hate PDA’s, I think hand holding is okay, but hand holding also represents letting people be individuals.”

Participant 10: “I want the element of sex and guilt free passion, but I feel like marriage is a huge thing with that.”

Participant 3: “Have you seen the movie Hitch? Well, it’s the 90/10 thing. You don’t go all the way, the guy should make sure your okay with things. It frustrated me the first time I got kissed, I was like whoa, what just happened, give me a chance... maybe you don’t always want to hold hands, but its important to have affection and to show affection--you have to know how the other feels.”

Figure 1: Feminist Construct Map



Operationalization of Passive Acceptance Constructs

Time. Time as a construct was explained by participants as necessity to build a foundation that will lead towards greater commitment and knowledge about the partner. Time should be spent alone with the partner and is often relaxing and romantic. Time is also spent thinking about the person when not in their presence. It is important not to spend too much time together in the beginning of the relationship, but necessary to spend significant amounts of time building towards a commitment as well as maintaining connection throughout the relationship by spending time with the partner. It is also important to spend time with the partner in the presence of friends and family.

Participant 2: “The more time you spend together, the better it will be.”

Participant 6: “You need alone time...time to just relax and enjoy each other.”

Participant 5: “I want to spend all of my time thinking about them because they are spending all of their time thinking about me.”

Commitment. Commitment as a construct was mentioned in a purposeful way. One doesn't seek out relationships without the explicit function of moving towards commitment. Commitment is the natural and healthy progression relationships take. Marriage is seen as a particular kind of commitment, but one can also be in a serious relationship without being married to the partner. The commitment relationship involves being emotionally and physically monogamous with one male. This relationship is understood to be leading towards marriage. When one is in a committed relationship one is monogamous and the commitment should not be broken. Many participants mentioned that divorce was not an option.

Participant 6: “I would not be dating someone unless I had the intention of getting married to them.”

Participant 8: “Commitment is part of a healthy and ideal relationship.”

Evolving. The construct of evolving explains the relationship as a living entity. Most participants mentioned the relationship starts slow, meaning you spend time learning about them, and delaying physical intimacy. However, the expectation is that once significant time has been spent with the other person one should be moving towards a greater commitment with that person. It is expected that the relationship should not stagnate or get boring for either partner. One should always be learning different information about the partner, or doing new activities with the mate.

Participant 5: “You need continuous growth, if it isn’t growing, its not going anywhere. At the beginning its starts small, but it has enormous potential for growth.”

Participant 2: “You need to start at the ground, you need to build from the ground up—start off basic and as you get to know more you can get off the sidewalk.”

Participant 8: “The ideal romantic relationship is growing, prosperous, and fruitful, you are always changing for the better.”

Participant 6: “You need to be able to deal with each other for at least a year before you get into some commitment like that (marriage).”

Family. The construct of family has two functions for the participants. First, many participants mentioned the importance of family approval for the partner. One’s family should like the person, and that person should live up to the family’s standards. Family approval of the significant other trumps what friends may think about the mate. Additionally, the participants mentioned the importance of being a family together, joining each other’s families as well as forming their own new family with children. Interestingly enough the partners’ family is also examined, it is preferred the partner has parents that are happily married.

Participant 6: “You need family approval—your family should be involved in your life—but making a new family is the most important thing.”

Participant 8: “All families are important, his, hers, and their new family...the man’s parents shouldn’t be divorced, that kind of experience influences the person.”

Participant 5: “The ideal romantic relationship has firmly planted roots, and the ability to give fruit (have children).”

Ideal Mate Characteristics. Participants seem to be very clear about what they want about this particular construct. Each participant had specific traits she wished her partner to possess. Some were mentioned as absolute, others were more flexible. Religion was the most often mentioned necessary construct, often specific to her denomination and beliefs. Other traits the partner should possess were good looks, ability to provide, and intelligence. The most important piece of information to note about this construct is the importance of similarity. One should be very similar to their mate, including class and attractiveness.

Participant 4: “I need him to be intelligent, dress nice, be fun, attractive, fit, with confidence and good hygiene, good looks, and I want him to play golf. Successful entrepreneurs golf with clients—golf seems to be a good game for a husband to play...he could

be a doctor or a lawyer, I don't care as long as he is passionate about what he does.”

Participant 6: “The ideal mate shares the values you have. He must be taller, intellectual, with similar likes and dislikes, physically attractive, caring, loving, Christian, and your bodies should fit together, and you should be able to hold each other comfortably.”

Participant 2: “You need someone on the same level as you. They should reflect yourself, they should have lots of similar characteristics—they should be genuine, respectable, understanding, clean-cut, short hair, crisp looking, similar dress, similar class and look.”

Love. As a construct love is central to the ideal romantic relationship. One is not in the ideal romantic relationship without the presence of this construct. Love was often described by participants as indefinable, yet always framed as vital. Love as an emotion feels safe, welcoming and happy. Love is also physical and can be displayed through actions like holding hands, kissing and holding one another. Love acts in certain ways, meaning one is forgiving, patient, and most importantly, love is unconditional.

Participant 6: “Love is unconditional, patient, nonjudgmental, forgiving; you love each other no matter what happens.”

Participant 8: “You want the world to know your love for the other...you have to say I love you.”

Participant 5: “You can't control who you love, it doesn't come down to a decision in your mind...love is the most important thing.”

Monogamy. This construct explains that when one is in the ideal romantic relationship, one only has one partner. This partner is the only person one is with physically, however one should also be emotionally monogamous as well. Some participants mentioned that the man should maintain this construct as well, but that if he cheated on her she should show forgiveness and maintain the relationship, despite his mistake. However, this construct also explains that one delays sexual intimacy until marriage to the partner, even if one is currently with the potential husband.

Participant 8: “Sex absolutely waits until marriage. You should be faithful and monogamous.”

Participant 2: “Abstinence is important; you should wait till you're in love.”

Participant 6: “No sex until marriage, and once married you should be monogamous, but if they mess up (cheat), you still love them and forgive them, you love each other no matter what. Divorce is not an option, you just stick it through.”

Passion. The construct of passion represents the intense emotion and action of physical attraction. However, participants noted that while passion is positive, it is not always necessary or consistently present in the ideal romantic relationship. Passion as a construct should not be overwhelming or obsessive.

Participant 8: “The relationship doesn’t always have to have fire and passion.”

Participant 6: “Energy is important, it’s vibrant and the fire and passion are an intense feeling.”

Religion. This construct is mentioned as the foundation or center of the ideal romantic relationship. In the ideal romantic relationship there are three present: the man, woman and God. It is expected one will attend services together, share the same faith, and raise children inside the church. For many participants if the mate is not of the same religion, one will not enter into a serious relationship with the partner, nor would one ever be willing to change religions for the partner.

Participant 8: “You should go to church together, be active participants in the church, and raise your children to be active participants in the church. The most important aspect of a relationship is religion...you can just feel God’s arms reaching down and guiding you.”

Participant 5: “Religion is very important. The relationship should be founded in faith. God makes the third person in your relationship. Having God in your relationship is very important.”

Participant 6: “Having God in the center of your relationship and life is important.”

Romance. Romance as a construct includes specific activities the couple does together that produces a feeling of love and passion. These activities range from candlelight dinners, to sitting alone in a park. Times of romance are usually explained as private, secluded, and powerful. It is important that this construct be present throughout the entirety of the relationship, and should never subside merely due to time.

Participant 4: “That (romance) is the atmosphere and emotion behind the ideal romantic relationship. It should be soothing and romantic.”

Participant 6: “The feeling of an ideal romantic relationship is closeness and support, and romance.”

Participant 8: “Holding hands and having quiet time together is romantic.”

Tradition. The construct of tradition incorporates many different type of expectations regarding the roles and duties of men and women. It is expected for these participants that the male will be the primary provider (meaning he will support the female and her children with his income). The female will act as the emotional support system for her partner and their children. The partner should be traditional, and have traditional beliefs. He should act gentlemanly, meaning he should open the door for her, make her feel safe and act as the leader in the relationship.

Participant 4: “He would be the primary provider. He needs to be a gentleman, he needs to support my draining lifestyle.”

Participant 2: “He should be able to provide, to go out and work. I want the cliché American family. Where the husband comes home from work in a suit and a tie and he makes the most money, and the children get spoiled, but they still have values. The mother is the support system of the family, but she can work also, the husband enforces and provides and the woman encourages and supports.”

Participant 5: “It’s important to be equal—yet certain things are designated. I would never propose, that would be the man’s job. I’m just not willing to do that...I just assume that I will cook dinner, and he will work outside, not because we have to but it generally works better that way. I expect that.”

Attention to my needs. The construct focuses on the partner’s ability to satisfy the wants of the female. This construct was a shared one, however this group seemed to be more accepting of what was termed “typical gestures,” or things like flowers, teddy bears, and chocolates. This group also wanted the partner to make her feel safe, cared for financially, and the expectations of this group seemed to be more focused on financial needs.

Participant 4: “I want to be spoiled. It can be typical things like tiny things like flowers and chocolates. I want him to buy me nice things and support me. I want a nice house by the golf course, with a big bathroom. I want to travel, I need to be close to a city. No farm or boondocks. Oh, and I want a nice view from the house too.”

Participant 2: “You need someone to be there for you. Its important that you feel safe and protected. I like it when they surround and provide comfort and support.”

Participant 8: “You need those aww moments and little things. Those fairy tale moments. Like having a boy help you up, or pulling out the chair for you, or holding the door for you. Its alluring and safe.”

Friends. This construct was also a shared one, however for the passive acceptance group there was an increase emphasis on the need to have mutual friends, and that while friend’s approval of a mate is important, it is not crucial, and only secondary to a family’s approval. There is also an understanding that the friends one currently has may come and go, but that the mate is one’s new best friend.

Participant 2: “Friends need to like significant other—but family approval is more important.”

Participant 6: “Being friends is important. And your friends should get along with your fiancé—lots of friends will leave because you don’t have as much time to spend with them—but your partner becomes your best friend.”

Participant 8: “It’s very important to have mutual friends.”

Positive Affect. This construct is defined similarly in this group as with the feminist group as all of the positive emotions one feels and experiences while in the ideal romantic relationship.

Participant 6: “The ideal romantic relationship feels special and sacred. It is unusual, something you won’t just find anywhere.”

Participant 4: “You are able to make each other feel like everything is okay.”

Marriage. Unlike the feminist sample, the passive acceptance sample discussed this construct as the natural and positive outcome of the ideal romantic relationship. Marriage represents a communal unity that lasts a lifetime.

Participant 6: “A wedding is a result of the ideal romantic relationship.”

Participant 8: “When married, two become one.”

Participant 4: “The relationship lasts forever—its continuous, you are married forever.”

Physical. This construct is additionally similarly defined as both the visual cues of love, including hugs, kisses, cuddling, holding hands and sex, as well as cues that are physically experienced but not necessarily visual, like chemistry and attraction. However, this sample emphasized the importance of an emotional connection most often when discussing the physical connection. Additionally this sample was less likely to discuss sex as a form of physical intimacy, and when mentioned it was understood to explain how sex should wait for marriage.

Participant 6: “Liking each other’s touch, the physical is important, but the emotional is more important.”

Participant 4: “Love is emotional but romance includes the bedroom, physical romance is very important.”

Togetherness. This construct is understood as the time spent in each other’s company, usually it is explained as fun, includes various activities, and is necessary for a good relationship. While time with others is still important, time together alone is paramount.

Participant 8: “Your time together should be spent doing fun, spontaneous, and playful things.”

Participant 4: “No long distance relationships, I wouldn’t want to be far away, togetherness is important, you should spend a lot of time together.”

Participant 2: “You need to take time to spend with one another, like quality time talking, sharing your feelings, and also doing other things with one another like the movies and stuff.”

Operationalization of Passive Acceptance Construct Relationships

Love→ Religion. This construct relationship explains that often many participants equated God and even their own individual faiths with love, with many participants explaining that their religion teaches them what love should be like. The ideal romantic relationship should be faith based.

Participant 4: “Religion stems from love.”

Participant 5: “You should have a faith based relationship.”

Participant 6: “God brought us together to serve and honor him.”

Love→ Positive Affect. The relationship resolves that love is a positive thing, because when one is in love they experience positive emotions like happiness, joy and contentment. Some participants mentioned that finding love would make you happy.

Participant 2: “Once you achieve love, you achieve happiness.”

Participant 5: “It’s about laughter and smiles.”

Love→ Passion. This relationship deciphers that because one is in love they can be physically passionate with their partners. Many participants mentioned that physical intimacy waits for marriage, and other participants mentioned that intimacy at least waited until one was in love. Furthermore, if one is in love the participant explains that one can expect passion in the relationship.

Participant 4: “There should be tons of passion, lots of love, just tons of love.”

Participant 6: “We look at each other and remember how much we love each other, we start hugging and kissing, because intimacy is important.”

Love→ *Marriage*. This relationship illustrates the purpose and goal oriented side of love, because when the pair is in love the couple should get married. Getting married when one is in love is the natural progression of the ideal romantic relationship for this sample. Some participants mentioned they would not remain in a relationship unless they felt they could eventually marry their partner.

Participant 5: “Because you love them, you are devoted to them...to maybe other people it’s not this way, but for me it’s the goal, marriage is the same thing as the ideal romantic relationship.”

Participant 8: “Commitment like that (marriage) is central to the relationship.”

Love→ *Evolving*. The relationship between love and the construct of evolving has two meanings, first that when one is truly in love, the love one feels for the other will continue. The second meaning is that when two people are in love they will grow together. This sample mentioned how important it is to grow together and to always make sure the love one has for the other is continually progressing. One should always be learning more about the other person or showing the person how much they love them.

Participant 4: “Love lasts forever, its continuous, love just keeps it going.”

Participant 5: “Because you love them you will grow with them.”

Love → *Attention to my Needs*. This relationship clarifies that if one wishes to show love that action based communication is a good option. The partner is expected to fulfill the partners’ needs, because they have love for them. Many participants mentioned how important typical gestures of love are (like candy and chocolates), however one participant mentioned the partner should do something that is difficult for him, like holding her purse, to show love.

Participant 5: “My dad can’t make teddy bears, he can’t sew very well, but its something he wanted to do for my mom and me, I want someone who will do that, who will do what they can’t do, that they may not succeed at, but they do it just because they love me.”

Participant 6: “He can show love best by doing something with me or for me.”

Marriage→ *Family*. The relationship reasons that marriage includes making a family together. Both partners' families are still important, and they will still spend time with them, however the new family is of the utmost importance. Much like marriage, a family is something that is expected to come with time spent in the ideal romantic relationship.

Participant 4: "Marriage leads into the family we make together."

Participant 8: "Marriage consists of love, children and commitment."

Marriage→ *Passion*. Participants described this relationship as important to maintain once one is married. In this relationship passion is often equated with romantic gestures like the couple continuing to date after marriage. Additionally this relationship explains that one is passionate about the commitment of marriage itself. This commitment is not taken lightly and is not broken simply because of tough times. Participants explained it was necessary to maintain the passion that is easily created in the beginning of relationship once one is married, and continue to keep passion alive until the relationship ultimately ends with death. Interestingly enough most of the behaviors the participants wished to take place require action on the part of the husband.

Participant 4: "I want to be asked out on dates even after we are married."

Participant 6: "A wedding is the result of the ideal romantic relationship; you love each other no matter what, because divorce is not an option, you stick it out through the good and the bad."

Marriage→ *Commitment*. This construct relationship elucidates marriage as the ultimate commitment one can make to another person. This commitment includes being faithful emotionally and physically to only one person. This commitment, according to these participants is binding and cannot be broken, even due to infidelity. Marriage as a commitment again seems to be a construct that is expected after a certain amount of time elapses within a relationship.

Participant 8: "Both marriage and commitment are a matter of maturity."

Participant 6: "Marriage is sacred and it includes a commitment."

Marriage→ *Religion*. This relationship explains that because religion is often in the center of these participants' lives they will look towards their faith to pick the correct person to marry. The mate, in most cases must have the same faith as the female. Often participants would explain who they could not marry based on their faith. The relationship also includes the idea that in a marriage one goes to church on a regular basis and raises the children in the faith. God is explained as the third person in the marriage.

Participant 6: "I wouldn't date anyone who wasn't a Christian."

Participant 5: "I could not be married to someone who was Jewish, you know they don't share the same belief system."

Passion→ *Togetherness*. The construct relationship means that when the couple is together they experience passion. The time spent together is fun, romantic and intense.

Participant 4: "It is a huge thing to be passionate about each other, and what we do, it last forever."

Participant 6: "Marriage is special and it includes time spent alone together."

Attention to my needs→ *Time*. This construct relationship means that because of time spent in the company of one another you come to understand the things they need from you, including behaviors like being supportive, caring, and patient. The great amount of time spent with one another allows you to feel comfortable going to them for support.

Participant 2: "With time you can get understanding, you can come to rely on them."

Participant 8: "If you put time into a relationship, it includes being supportive."

Ideal Mate → *Friends*. The construct relationship calls into question the old adage to never date friends. Apparently, this sample finds it to not only acceptable, but a good idea, to first look to one's group of friends for the ideal mate. Additionally, this construct also means that your mate should come to be your best friend.

Participant 4: "He needs to be your absolute best friend."

Participant 5: "You should be best friends first; you can look to friends before just picking a random person."

Ideal Mate→ *Tradition*. This construct and its relationship seems to be the starkest and most critical difference between the two samples. Participants in this sample find that the ideal mate would be as traditional in his beliefs as she is. The ideal mate is expected to be the primary provider and the leader of the relationship, and eventually in the marriage.

Participant 4: "He will worry about the finances, I can work, but I don't want to ever have to worry about having to do so, I should not have to stress."

Participant 8: "The man should be the pursuer and the initiator in attempting to gain my attention and affection."

Ideal Mate → *Family*. This construct relationship has a double meaning. First, the ideal mate would need to be a lot like her, her friends and her family. The mate should be a reflection of the

self, this is significant to note because many participants noted the importance of similarity of the partners' class, dress and physical attraction. The mate should fit into her family and her world; this process is eased by having a partner that is similar to the self. Secondly, the ideal mate will eventually become a member of your family, as well as a member of the family you are building together.

Participant 2: "You want them to be a self reflection of you and your friends and family, because your friends and family is a direct connection to your personality."

Participant 5: "They become your family."

Commitment→ *Monogamy*. The construct relationship clarifies that because one is in a committed relationship, one must be monogamous. One must be physically intimate with only the partner. The partner is also expected to be monogamous, because of the commitment. For this sample, being monogamous includes waiting for sex until marriage, even if one is currently with their potential husband.

Participant 8: "They (the partner) should hold you to a high state of purity."

Participant 5: "You don't give up because you made the obligation. You are committed to just that person, both physically and emotionally."

Physical→ *Romance*. The construct relationship here describes the physical behaviors in the ideal relationship to be romantic. Often participants explained specific physical behaviors as more romantic than others. For example holding hands, cuddling, and kisses were often mentioned. This sample felt that it was very important that the physical behaviors should be appropriate and done in private. Sex was often only discussed as a physical behavior that could be romantic within the context of marriage.

Participant 4: "Showing affection, the physical and emotional are romantic things."

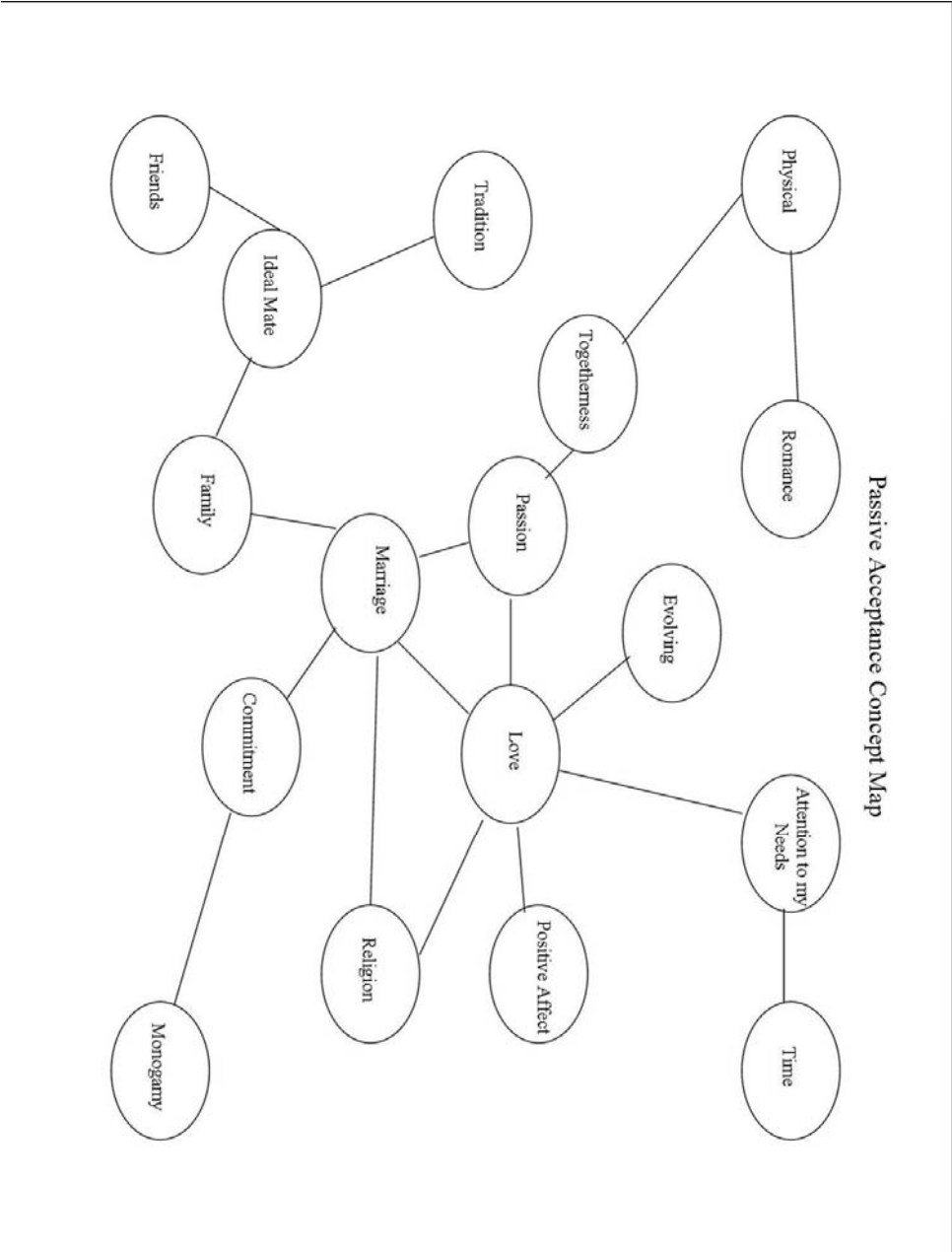
Participant 8: "Awh moments include holding hands and saying I love you."

Physical → *Togetherness*. This relationship explains that when together physical signs of affection are appropriate. The sample explained together as only the two members of the couple. Physical displays of affection are given and received due to the attraction one has for the other.

Participant 4: "You're that way with them because you're attracted to them."

Participant 8: PDA's (physical displays of affection) are okay if your together, and alone, hiding it from everyone."

Figure 2: Passive Acceptance Construct Map



Chapter Four: Discussion

Overview

The goal of this research study was to discover if feminists have different romantic relationship ideals than women who choose not to assume such an identity. The Feminist Identity Composite created by Fisher et al. (2000) was used to determine the identity (feminists as those in the revelation category and non-feminists as those in the passive acceptance category) of each young woman. After determining the females' identity placement, the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) was used to discover the romantic relationship ideals of each group of women, which ultimately lead to the creation of a concept map utilized to compare the groups. The chapter will discuss the similarities and differences concerning the romantic relationship ideals of each group of women reviewed from the perspectives of both Fitzpatrick's typologies and relational dialectics. Following the discussion, the limitations of these results, as well as direction for future research will conclude the chapter, but first a discussion concerning the FIC will begin the chapter.

Feminist Identity Composite (FIC)

Discovering the best way to measure Downing and Roush's (1985) feminist identity model has been the subject of numerous research articles (Hyde, 2002; Hansen, 2002) and conversation within the feminist research community. Primarily feminist scholars have three scales to choose from in measuring the feminist identity model (the Feminist Identity Composite, the Feminist Scale, and the Feminist Identity Development Scale). Articles have surrounded which scale is the most effective (Gerstmann & Kramer, 1997; Bargad & Hyde, 1991; Moradi & Subich, 2002), as well as suggesting alternative scales (Morgan, 1996). Some articles have suggested that the model itself, as well as the scales that measure it are only appropriate for white middle class feminist women (Boisnier, 2003) and cannot possibly capture the experiences of Black women. The FIC was chosen for the present study because Moradi and Subich (2002) found that it "outperformed the FIS and FIDS in terms of internal consistency reliability and structural validity" however, the FIC was not without one weakness (p. 83). The scale was found to inadequately assess the third stage of feminist identity (embeddedness-emanation). However, the third stage of feminist identity was not the focus of this study, only the first two stages were utilized, therefore measurement concerns regarding the third stage were not threatening to the purpose of the current study. Furthermore, Nancy Downing Hansen, (2003) one of the creators

of the feminist identity model agreed with Moradi and Subich's (2002) preference of the FIC calling it "sound and well-substantiated" (p. 87).

Vandiver (2002) called the FIC scale promising, but claimed, "More validity work is needed before it is used extensively as a measure of the feminist identity model" citing concern regarding the embeddedness-emanation sub-scale (p. 103). In chapter three, the correlations for the FIC were presented and while building support for use of the FIC and the feminist identity model overall was not the focus of this study it is valuable to note the statistical findings regarding the scale's validity. Vandiver (2002) explained that previous researchers did not have as positive results as the creators of the scale did, and further stated unease regarding if the various measures were able to clearly distinguish between the various stages. Reliability of the embeddedness-emanation stage reached .85 in the present study, and the other subscales fared just as well as those found by other researchers.

The passive acceptance subscale was differentiated from the other subscales as it was negatively correlated with the other four subscales. This is noteworthy because for the purpose of this study the most important distinction lies between the passive acceptance scale and the other four scales as what differentiates a woman who assumes a feminist identity from one who does not. Nancy Downing Hansen (2002) explains that the model in its current linear, sequential stage form "does not do justice to the nuances of lived experiences" (p. 90). Furthermore, Vandiver's (2002) concern regarding the ability to discern between the scales seems warranted quantitatively, but from a theoretical standpoint, she should remember that women could revert to past stages of the model and even continue to hold some beliefs from earlier stages. It should be noted that properly identifying a woman in one particular stage of her feminist identity is not an easy task. Hansen (2002) explains "depending on the salience of each dimension for a woman at any particular moment in her development, she may report differing subscale scores" (p. 93). Based on how the current study used the scale it seems possible that the feminist identity model and its scales could be used more to understand feminist identity overall. This suggestion is offered given the fluid nature of feminist identity and its particular stages. Perhaps other feminist scholars can focus on feminist identity as a complete concept rather than attempting to nail down a particular subscale (with the exception of those in the passive acceptance stage from the remaining stages).

Hansen (2002) called for “longitudinal design and qualitative data” that would aid in the understanding of the ever-changing experience of forming a feminist identity (p. 90). Perhaps it is more appropriate to use the model as a guiding distinction between feminists and non-feminists. Such a scale is still needed due to issues like social desirability and confusion regarding the definition/variation of feminism(s); it is not enough to merely ask a young woman if she is a feminist. Then if one wishes to learn more about theorized subscale stages one could use qualitative measures to learn more about the young woman’s feminist identity development, rather than depending solely on quantitative measures. Additionally, it also makes sense to go back to the feminist identity model and re-evaluate its present day effectiveness, given the fact that the model was created nineteen years ago, as well as the concern surrounding the appropriateness of the model for Black women.

Similarities and differences concerning construct and construct relationship results

The two groups of women only had six constructs in common--of which no common construct relationships emerged. It is possible construct relationships did not form due to the differences and variations between the two groups of women. For example while both groups of participants valued friends within the ideal romantic relationship, the feminist population stressed the importance of maintaining friendships while in the ideal, and the non-feminists accepted friends would come and go and that the partner would become one’s best friend. For the construct of attention to my needs, the passive acceptance population stressed monetary support, whereas the feminist sample stressed emotional support. While both samples were discussing the construct of support the variation lied in the importance of the particular type of support. This finding for the non-feminists is in line with the evolutionary perspective (Buss et al., 1990; Botwin et al., 1997) that explains females look for characteristics that suggest the male could provide for her and her future children. Fletcher and Simpson’s (2000) ideal standards model, which is also based on the evolutionary perspective, finds that there are three categories of partner ideals (warmth-loyalty, vitality-attractiveness, and status-resources). This model seems to work more for those in the passive acceptance stage given the importance of specifically stated ideal mate characteristics like faithfulness, attractiveness, and ability to provide monetary support. While feminists noted a want for their partner to be warm and caring, less focus was spent discussing attractiveness, and no feminist within the population expressed an expectation that a man should provide for her. Furthermore, the evolutionary perspective tends to be in line

with the passive acceptance participants' understanding of romantic relationship ideals given other specific ideal mate traits mentioned that are noted in Buss et al.'s, (1990) and Botwin et al.'s (1997) studies. Both Buss et al. (1990) and Botwin (1997) explain females preferred males with traits related to their earning or resource acquisition like favorable social status, intelligence, college education, and ambition. Many participants within the passive acceptance sample focused on the potential mates' intelligence, status, class and future career.

It is interesting to note the intensity of some participants in passive acceptance ideal mate trait expectations. Many mate characteristics were nonnegotiable, and if a mate was not of the right religion, intelligence, attractiveness, or could not provide from a monetary standpoint he was no longer considered a potential mate. The feminist population seemed to be more forgiving with traits of religion, class, attractiveness, and focused more on intelligence, belief in equality, motivation, and ability to support from an emotional standpoint. Given the stated rigidity of some preferred mate traits characteristics, the adult attachment theory could be informative. This theory finds that individuals' preferences for mates are influenced by the relationship formed during infancy with their mothers.

Adult attachment theory explains that adults can be categorized as secure, anxious/ambivalent or avoidant based on how attentive and caring the mother was during infancy. Those with an attentive and loving mother tend to have a secure attachment style and be more flexible about their ideal images. Those with an insecure style of avoidant had mothers who fought off affection from their child, or withheld affection, and these individuals are less flexible about their ideal mate images, and tend to prefer mates more like themselves. Those with the anxious/ambivalent style who had mothers who were unwilling to let the child leave them to explore or were slow to answer the child's basic needs are also less flexible about their ideal mate preferences, however they tend to want mates like their mother.

Feminists within the sample expressed more flexibility given their mates' characteristics, whereas the non-feminist sample was very specific and demanding about mate characteristics. Those in the passive acceptance category also stated a want for partners to be like their friends, family and themselves. Feminists did not express a need for their partner to be like themselves or even like their family, however, they did want the partner to be likeminded given the concept of equality within a relationship. While no attachment style measures were administered given the non-feminists' request for partners to be like themselves, and their family it is possible they

exhibit a less secure attachment style. Feminist within the sample seem to have a more secure adult attachment style, given their flexibility regarding ideal mate preferences.

Both groups of participants had a similar definition for the construct of positive affect, which explains how one should feel when in the ideal romantic relationship. The terms that describe the construct seem to follow Kovecses (1991) study that explains how people typically view love metaphorically, for example, love is unity, love is a fire, love is a nutrient. Kovecses (1991) participants described love as magic, a natural force and even rapture. Participants within this study explain the feelings of the ideal romantic relationship to be joy, glow, and an emotionally positive experience. While the participants agreed with one another and Kovecses (1991) regarding how the ideal romantic relationship makes them feel, their construct maps explained relationships between constructs differently. The maps show feminists and non-feminists find different concepts to be positive within the ideal romantic relationship. Those in the passive acceptance stage found love to be the source of their positive feelings and experiences, whereas the feminist population found friends and the common action experiences they have together to be the source of their happiness. The concept of physical was also similarly defined, but the contexts of the construct were different. Both samples mentioned the importance of being married to one's partner for some physical acts, like sexual intercourse. Those in the feminist category mentioned that affection should not hold one back, or administered for the purposes of displaying ownership or possession. Those within the passive acceptance stage were concerned with being socially appropriate with physical displays of affection, but not because of the concern of ownership. The feminist sample connected the construct of physical to both friends and marriage. For this population one can be intimate with another once one feels comfortable enough in a friendship. Passive acceptance participants found the construct of physical to connect most with being together and romance, finding that when the population is physical with the mate the time together can be described as romantic. For the remaining similar constructs and relationships, an informative lens is found within Fitzpatrick's typologies and the theory of relational dialectics.

Fitzpatrick's Typologies

One lens through which to analyze the remaining results is Fitzpatrick's Typologies (1984) of traditionals, separates and independents, which explain that couples with different communicative patterns can be placed within a particular typology of marriage. Gottman (1996)

discusses Fitzpatrick's work explaining traditionals as those who have traditional gender roles, share with one another and are comfortable depending on one another. Traditionals have high self-disclosure about positive issues. Independents are equal in their gender roles and have flexibility within their relationship. These pairs self-disclose about positive and negative issues. Separate couples are much more autonomous, they are not expressive like traditionals and they will avoid conflict, unlike independents.

For the construct similarity of marriage, those in the passive acceptance stage described the construct similarly as those traditionals within Fitzpatrick and Best's (1979) study. Gottman (1996) explains traditionals are those who "have conventional views about marriage and family life" (p. 41). Participants in the passive acceptance stage are most like the traditional type, given their beliefs of traditional values. Passive acceptance participants described marriage as the ideal romantic situation where children and family are the most importance aspects of life. Those in the revelation category were more concerned about their own independence within the construct of marriage, and were quick to dismiss traditional values or gender roles. They expect their marriage to be egalitarian and given Gottman's (1996) description of independents as those who "subscribe to non-conventional views of marriage," it seems those in the revelation stage are most like independents. Those in revelation are likely not separates given the samples' interest in solving conflict, and separates likelihood of engaging in conflict avoidance.

The last similarity between the samples was the importance of togetherness. The construct was defined similarly; however, the feminist sample was more concerned about the potential excessiveness of togetherness. Fitzpatrick and Best (1979) explain traditionals "experience very little autonomy in their primary relationships" and that independents' autonomy is much more negotiated finding that both autonomy and interdependence are more balanced (p.171). The feminist sample stresses the importance of alone time, which is echoed in Fitzpatrick and Best's (1979) explanation of independents' "commitment to an ideology of uncertainty and change," finding that "in marriage/close relationships there should be no constraints or restrictions on individual freedom" (p. 170). Given Fitzpatrick's' explanation of how each type feels about autonomy it makes sense that the feminist sample is concerned with their own autonomy more so than those in the passive acceptance sample.

The typologies of marriage also help when looking at the differences between the samples. Within the constructs mentioned by those in the passive acceptance sample the importance of

traditional values are evident. Participants mentioned constructs like monogamy, religion, family and commitment, while feminist participants mention more unconventional constructs like equality, independence and conflict. The absence of the concept of conflict (a seemingly inevitable concern for all couples) is not shocking given Fitzpatrick and Best's (1979) explanation of traditionals' ability to "achieve consensus on a number of issues related to dyadic functioning" (p. 178). Those in the passive acceptance stage additionally wanted a partner that was likeminded explaining ideal mate characteristics as one who has a similar background, traditional value system, class and family. This construct was also related to the construct of religion. It was very important for the passive acceptance participants that their partner share their faith. Fletcher et al. (1999) explained that ideals were connected to the self, and hypothesized that perhaps feminists would want a partner who was also a feminist, but this was not specifically stated. However, all of the feminists within the sample expressed a need for the relationship to be equal, fair, and to be with a partner who would respect her independence and need for equality. While they did not specifically state the need for a "feminist" partner, they seemingly described the characteristics of one. It appears that even though feminists and non-feminists want different mate characteristics, they both want likeminded mates. This finding seems to be in line with Botwin et al.'s (1997) study that found individuals wanted partners like themselves.

Constructs like passion, love, and romance as mentioned by the passive acceptance sample are not surprising as Fitzpatrick and Best (1979) explain traditionals as "the most cohesive of the couples, more likely to express affection" (p. 178). The presence of such concepts for the traditionals (passive acceptance participants) and not the independents (feminists) seems to be in line with Sternberg's (1995) explanation of love as a story. Sternberg explains that depending on past relationships people see love differently. It was proposed that perhaps feminists would see love as "government," meaning relationships are about power, and with the overwhelming concern of feminists to make even concepts like support, attention to partners needs, communication and trust reciprocal this assumption seems to be correct. It was also assumed that those in the passive acceptance category would see love as "fantasy" where some knight in shining armor comes to their rescue. This assumption also seems correct given the sample's preoccupation with love as a fairy tale, as well as the presence of concepts like ideal mate traits that require the mate to monetarily support the female. This sample also mentioned the construct

of attention to my needs, but seemed less concerned with issues of equality and fairness (unlike the feminist sample) given that they did not mention attention to their partner's needs.

The feminist map had the most connections to the concept of friends, communication, attention to partner's needs, and equality. The most emphasized construct was that of friends with six construct relationships. The presence of communication connecting to the construct of attention to the partner's needs, to that of friends shows the importance of both communication within the relationship as well as the overarching theme of not forgetting friends once one enters the ideal romantic relationship. This finding should have been anticipated due to Fitzpatrick and Best's (1979) explanation of independents' ability to "openly express their feelings to their mates...the independents retain their expressiveness with those outside the relationship, while the traditionals do not" (p. 178).

Those in the passive acceptance category had the most connections to the constructs of love, marriage and the ideal mate. With six construct connections, the construct of love had the most connections, followed by five connections to marriage and three to the ideal mate. The overwhelming presence of these constructs for those in the passive acceptance category is also not unexpected given Fitzpatrick's and Best's (1979) explanation of traditionals as individuals who "experience very little autonomy in their primary relationship...and a high degree of interdependence" (p. 171). While Fitzpatrick and Best generic discussion of dialectics is informative the remaining results are best studied from a more detailed view of relational dialectics.

Relational Dialectics

The theory of relational dialectics has many scholars (Altman, 1993) as well as many different dialectic tensions (autonomy-connectedness, predictability-novelty, openness-closeness, inclusion-seclusion, conventionality-uniqueness, revelation-concealment, etc.) with the main research focusing in on the first three dialectical tensions (Baxter & Erbert, 1999). The clearest presence of dialectical tension within the present research is one of autonomy-connectedness for both samples. Feeney (1999) describes Baxter's (1990) "me-we pull" where partners want to be their own person within the relationship, but also want to be with their partner. Relationships, according to Feeney (1999) cannot exist without some autonomous sacrifice; however too much connection could also ruin a relationship if individuals become lost within the pair.

For the feminist population their paramount concerns seems to be maintaining relationships with others, sustaining their individuality, while still balancing time for the relationship. For the passive acceptance population their main concern seems to be their relationship with their mate, sometimes even at the cost of lost friendships. Feeney (1999) additionally looked at adult attachment and relational dialectics and found that “individuals who were secure in attachment style preferred a balanced type of relationship, marked by high openness and closeness, but also by a degree of independence” (p. 573). This particular statement serves as another indicator that perhaps feminists have a more secure adult attachment style given the autonomy they necessitate for outside friendships, but also the connectedness they seek with their mates. Furthermore, Feeney (1999) explains that those who are anxious-ambivalent want the least amount of distance, and avoidant individuals want the most space. This statement could lead one to perceive that the passive acceptance sample is not in fact avoidant given their high need for connection, but rather their insecure style is more anxious-ambivalent.

The passive acceptance sample’s concern with the relationship and their partner is clear with the presence of constructs like time, commitment, and evolving. Their main concern is spending time with their mate, building and maintaining commitment and monitoring the lifeline of their relationship. For this sample, they view the ideal romantic relationship to be love that is evolving, where the partner takes time to be attentive to her needs and leads to the ultimate commitment of marriage. From a dialectical perspective, this sample seems to value more connectedness than autonomy. Women in the passive acceptance stage embrace their traditional role, which is dependent on a male partner to be superior within the relationship. Those in the passive acceptance stage, because of their perceived role in a romantic relationship want more connectedness and less autonomy. The opposite of course is true for the feminist population where their autonomy is of the most importance; however, they also see the value in a balance that includes a comfortable amount of connectedness.

The feminists’ population concern with connectedness with others besides their mate is clear when one views the construct map which seems to separate the relationship from their friends, with a common connection of communication. They view their friendships as comfortable relationships that positively affect their lives by providing someone besides their mate that they can have fun with and trust. However, the construct of friendship also represents how they hope to be friends with their mate as well. It is important to note the focus for this population is to

keep friendship separate as relationships to be valued in their own right, with or without the ideal romantic relationship's presence. Friends are not put on the back burner, and are seen as providing separate relational needs for the feminist. What is also abundantly clear is their need for autonomy with constructs like independence and equality. Even within the construct of marriage that "functions to create the social network, i.e. children, grandchildren, and long-term friends of the couple" this sample is concerned with their own career goals, aspirations and completion of their education (Braithwaite & Baxter, 1995, p. 196). Additionally with the construct of togetherness, of which the sole purpose is to promote autonomy there are still restrictions. It is interesting that togetherness is connected to attention to the partner's needs, rather than their own. It seems that the feminist sample, more so than the passive acceptance sample is hypersensitive to the costs of connectedness like "privacy invasion, loss of self, anxiety, and loss of control" (Spitzberg, 1993, p. 145). Women in the revelation stage, a stage characterized by anger and having relational problems with men, not surprisingly value autonomy more. Within this concern of autonomy is still an understanding of the importance of the second type of dialectical tension of openness-closeness.

Spitzberg (1993) explains the importance of the second dialectic of openness-closeness regarding relational progression stating "disclosure and openness stand as normatively favored means of initiating and promoting the development of intimacy in Western societies" (p. 145). While disclosure plays an important role in forming and maintaining relationships relational partners still necessitate some privacy and they must "deal with the basic interplay between how much candor or openness to have with one another, on one hand, and how much discretion or lack of openness to have in interacting with the other" (Baxter & Erbert, 1999, p. 555). The feminist population seems to be aware of this dialectic with the presence of constructs like conflict, communication and trust, but at the same time valuing their own independence. Participants would mention how important it is to deal with conflict within a relationship using open, honest communication, but at the same time explain that it is okay to go to people like friends and family to discuss problems, and not just the partner.

From the constructs mentioned in the passive acceptance sample, the dialectic seems to be less clear except for the presence of the construct of togetherness. The feminist population would bring up individuality even within constructs like marriage and forming a family together, while the passive acceptance population seemed to emphasize how when in the ideal romantic

relationship two become one. The non-feminist population described how one should never keep anything from the partner and should be able to tell the partner everything. For this population the partner becomes the best friend and most important member of her family. Those in the passive acceptance sample seem to value openness, which seems appropriate given the interdependence of traditionals and the preference for connectedness.

Given the constructs presence in both samples, the participants were aware of the dialectic of novelty-predictability. Baxter and Erbert (1999) explain this concept as the need for dependability and stability within the relationship, but also a want for surprise and mystery. The non-feminist sample stressed the importance of constructs like commitment, monogamy, religion, and tradition. The sample wanted to be sure the mate was faithful and could be trusted to be true to her. Additionally, participants valued religion and the role it would play within their relationship. Participants explained how the bible, God and their faith would dictate the way they lived their lives, such a concept shows how the participant values consistency and direction. Many participants also wanted the typical American family, where gender roles seem to dictate everyone's place. Such constructs display a want for predictability, however constructs like passion, romance and evolving show a want for novelty as well. Participants explained that while a stable marriage was important, they still wanted the fire and passion that was present in the beginning of the relationship. The population also mentioned the construct of evolving representing how one should always try to learn new information about their partner as well as a want to grow in their love for one another. This population stated a concern that love should not stagnate no matter how long the couple has been together. For the passive acceptance population both poles of this dialectic are crucial to the ideal romantic relationship.

The feminist sample seemed to favor predictability in their construct maps citing constructs like support, comfort, and trust. For this population their ideal mate is someone they formed a friendship with first and therefore they feel comfortable around them and feel as though they can trust their mate. Participants mentioned the importance of being able to "let loose" around their mate. They explain that as a relationship progresses it is okay to be seen looking less than one's best. The population also values a relationship when one can depend on the other to support them emotionally, and part of being supportive is dependability. However, the population didn't dismiss the importance of novelty altogether. Within the construct of attention to my needs and common action experiences an importance was placed on doing creative and new things together

and for one another. For the non-feminist population they seemed to be satisfied with traditional gifts like teddy bears and roses, (stereotypically viewed as very predictable romantic gifts) but the feminist population wanted unique gifts and surprises specific to their own personalities. When discussing common action experiences the population mentioned the importance of doing new things together, potentially trying new things specifically for the other person.

After reviewing the concept maps and deconstructing the results the presence of the three most researched dialectical tensions is clear. The feminist population seems to value autonomy more so than the passive acceptance sample given non-feminists' emphasis on connectedness. Even with the feminists' emphasis on individuality, they still value the dialectic of openness given the presence of communication and conflict, while the dialectic presence is slightly unclear in the passive acceptance population other than the construct of togetherness. However, given the population's emphasis on marriage and unity the dialectic of connectedness seems to also be favored by this population. Finally, the construct of predictability and novelty seems to be equally valued and dealt with accordingly by the passive acceptance population, while the feminist population favors the predictability, but still mentions the importance of some novelty. After reviewing the results from both perspectives there seem to be differences in romantic relationship ideals between women who are feminists and those in the passive acceptance stage. The results presented utilized the perspectives of relational dialectics and Fitzpatrick's typologies and were framed through the participants' views of what makes up an ideal romantic relationship, however they were not without some limitations.

Limitations

The readers should be cautious generalizing the findings of the present research study given the small sample size. While the ZMET typically allows for smaller sample sizes that produce similar research findings of larger quantitative studies, the present study had too few participants. Perhaps with a large sample, one could be more confident given the shared perceptions of the participants. However, this research study was more exploratory in nature in the hopes of potentially discovering if any difference existed concerning romantic relationship ideals for these two groups of women who do contrast regarding their beliefs in traditional gender roles.

Another concern lies within the population's ethnic, racial, religious, economic and political backgrounds. Only one participant was of African American decent, and the other nine participants were Caucasian. While no religious, economic or political data was specifically

collected, the majority of the participants during the course of the interview described themselves as Christian. Furthermore, the present study took place at a medium sized Mid-Western university stereotypically known for its conservative and wealthy students. However, past studies on feminist identity were collected on similar populations.

Directions for Future Research

Future research should attempt to replicate the present exploratory study with more participants of varying ethnic, racial, religious, economic, and political backgrounds to validate the present study's findings. Adult attachment measures could be included in an extension of the present study to learn if feminists do have a secure style and those in passive acceptance have a more insecure style. As an extension of the present study, one could also take different stages of feminist identity to learn if stages other than revelation and passive acceptance have different romantic relationship ideals. For example, perhaps those in the embeddedness-emanation stage have different ideals than those in the active commitment stage. Another potential future research study could investigate the romantic relationship ideals of homosexual feminist women to learn if they vary from heterosexual feminist women.

The feminist identity model and its various measures have room for improvement. Vandiver's (2002) concerns regarding the existence of stages of difference for feminist identity can only be addressed with more research, both quantitative and qualitative in nature, which can validate the existence of each of the individual stages of feminist identity. Feminist identity scholars must stop writing articles just to argue that their scale is best, and instead work on the scales that currently exist or propose new scales. The concerns of scholars like Boisnier (2003) who argue the validity of the feminist identity model and its ability to capture the feminist identity of African American women must be addressed in an argument that does not just include a dismissal due to the model's loose basis of Cross's theory of Black identity. Feminist identity model researchers need to go back to the drawing board and start with the model itself. Working on scales that measure a model that could potentially no longer apply to today's feminist is fruitless. Several qualitative studies that interview feminists forming their identity longitudinally could add to the understanding of what one of the feminist identity model creators called the "nuanced, likely fluid, unfolding experience of developing a feminist identity" (Hansen, 2002, p. 90).

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